

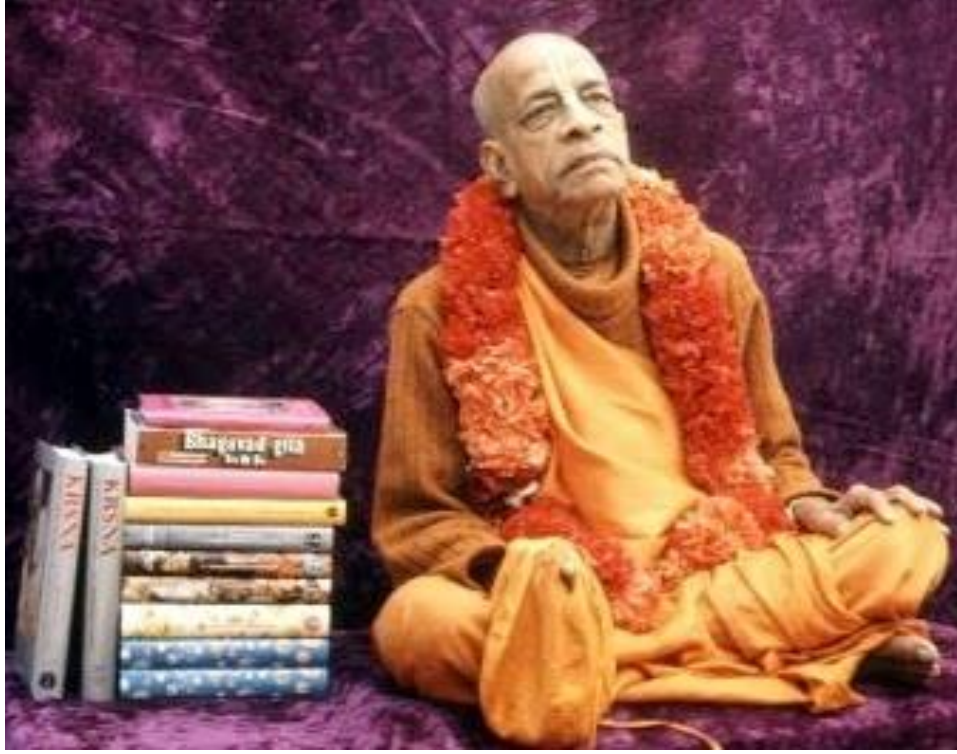
**Pāñcarātrika-vidhi and the  
Proposal of ISKCON's GBC for  
Instituting Female Dīkṣā-Gurus**

***A Critique***

**12 January 2019**

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Dedicated to

**His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda**  
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

and all his followers who continue to serve his mission  
within this difficult world.

May he bless us all with proper understanding of how best to do so.

***siddhānta baliyā citte nā kara alasa***  
***ihā ha-ite kṛṣṇe lāge sudṛḍha mānasa***

A sincere student should not neglect the discussion of such [scriptural] conclusions, considering them controversial, for such discussions strengthen the mind. Thus one's mind becomes attached to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 2.117)

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## Executive Summary

- The GBC subcommittee on Vaiṣṇavī Initiating Gurus was convened for the sake of creating recommendations for the implementation and practical functioning of female *dīkṣā-gurus*. ii
- Questionable recommendation: female *dīkṣā-gurus* give first initiation only but males give second initiation to the first-initiated disciples of female *dīkṣā-gurus*. ii
- Also questionable: 55-year-old minimum age limit on female *dīkṣā-gurus*. Nowhere supported by *guru-sādhu-śāstra*. iii
- The subcommittee suggests that *daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma* is in some measure incompatible with spiritual advancement. iii
- Purpose of this paper: to present the correct understanding about implementing female *dīkṣā-gurus* according to *guru-sādhu-śāstra* and Vedic hermeneutics. iv
- Evidence from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura shows that first initiation as practiced in ISKCON includes the first three *saṁskāras* (*tāpa*, *puṇḍra*, *nāma*) from the procedure of *pañca-saṁskāra*, as described in *Nārada Pañcarātra*. 2
- Evidence from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura further shows that second initiation as practiced in ISKCON covers the last two *saṁskāras* (*mantra*, *yāga*) from *pañca-saṁskāra*, where the disciple receives *mantras* used in Deity worship. 2
- *Harināma-dīkṣā* in ISKCON is a type of *pāñcarātrika* initiation, or *dīkṣā*. 1
- ISKCON second initiation (*mantra-dīkṣā*) is also a type of *pāñcarātrika* initiation, or *dīkṣā*. 2
- Therefore, *pāñcarātrikī* rules and regulations governing *dīkṣā-gurus* apply to female *dīkṣā-gurus*. 4
- Śrīla Prabhupāda confirms that *harināma-dīkṣā* is conducted according to *pāñcarātrika-vidhi*. 3
- A synopsis of the *Nārada Pañcarātra*, *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā*, 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of the *Parīśiṣṭa* (appendix), establishes that ISKCON initiations are fully based on *pāñcarātrika-vidhi*. 3
- According to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in *Harināma-cintāmaṇi*, the perfectional stage of *bhakti* begins at the level of *bhāva*. 5
- *Nārada Pañcarātra* allows women who are *siddha*, who are at the perfectional stage of *bhakti* (*pratyakṣitātma-nātha*), who have completely spiritual bodies, to become *dīkṣā-gurus*. 4
- But women who are *not siddha* are prohibited from becoming *dīkṣā-gurus*. 6
- *Without any need for speculation*, *Nārada Pañcarātra* fully harmonizes Śrīla Prabhupāda’s differing statements on female *dīkṣā-gurus*. 7
- The system of initiations in ISKCON is 100% based on the *ācāryas* and *Nārada Pañcarātra*. 9
- Appendix I discusses two previous efforts sponsored by the GBC to research female *dīkṣā-gurus* and why neither effort produced conclusive results. 10
- Appendix II provides *pramāṇas* showing that a guru qualified according to *pāñcarātrika-vidhi* can bestow the *brahma-gāyatrī* mantra with second initiation. 12
- Appendix III provides the original transcript of SB 4.12.32, the purport where Śrīla Prabhupāda says Sunīti could not be Dhruva’s *dīkṣā-guru* because she was his mother and a woman. 13
- Appendix IV gives the English translation of the first 56 *ślokas* of the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of the *Parīśiṣṭa* of *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* (*Nārada Pañcarātra*). **This has never been translated before into English.** 14

## Introduction

For three decades ISKCON has struggled with the fact that no woman has been made an initiating spiritual master, or *dīkṣā-guru*. This is because Śrīla Prabhupāda, his disciplic succession, and the scriptures ISKCON's members are supposed to follow contain numerous warnings and prohibitions against associating with women and giving them independence. Foundational scriptures like *Nārada Pañcarātra* even give specific rules against appointing women as *dīkṣā-gurus*, with exceptions made only for the most spiritually advanced among them.<sup>1</sup> Hence, with very few exceptions in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava history, women never became initiating spiritual masters.

This, however, could be about to change. Members of the GBC subcommittee on Vaiṣṇavī Initiating Gurus have come to an agreement on recommended guidelines for ISKCON's first female *dīkṣā-gurus*. The subcommittee's members include Śivarāma Swami, Bādrīnārāyaṇa Swami, Devāmṛta Swami, Mālatī Devī Dāsī, Rādhā Devī Dāsī, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Dāsa, and Anuttama Dāsa. They met at New Vṛndāvana from July 24–26, 2018 and since then, they have been in the process of producing recommendations for the approval and functioning of female *dīkṣā-gurus*.<sup>2</sup>

While the GBC has yet to accept the recommendations, in their current form the practices that have been recommended have little if any basis in *guru*, *sādhū*, or *śāstra*. Some of them are quite against it.

For example, the subcommittee recommends having a female *dīkṣā-guru* who gives *harināma* initiation only, and a male *dīkṣā-guru* who can give second initiation to her first initiates.

While we considered the logic that since Vaisnavis were given the mantra, they could also give it to others, our committee did not feel that we, or ISKCON, had the mandate to go beyond Srila Prabhupada's statements. Thus we recommend that Vaisnavis give only *hari-nama* initiation and not *mantra-diksa*.

How, then, will their disciples receive *mantra-diksa*?

A Vaisnavi guru can discuss with her disciples their choice of a male *diksa-guru*. That Vaisnava can then perform the fire sacrifice, offer the Gayatri mantras, and for male disciples, offer the sacred thread.

Why not have male gurus give the Brahma-gayatri mantra and female gurus give the other (*pāñcarātrika*) mantras? Srila Prabhupada gave his disciples all the mantras at once. Since we have no precedent for any other practice, we prefer to remain on the safe side and follow Srila Prabhupada's example.

By choosing this way forward we would also like to acknowledge the right of each devotee to accept a spiritual master of his or her choice, whether that guru be male or female. We would like to emphasize that this procedure does not dilute or diminish the relationship a candidate for second initiation has with his or her Vaisnavi guru.

The relationship disciples have with their male *mantra-diksa* guru may simply be a respectful formality or become a deep bond, There is room for variety and personal choice in devotee relationships, but *guru-kṛsna-prasade paya* – by the grace of Kṛsna, the fortunate get the opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master (Cc. *Madhya* 19.151).

This procedure is nowhere supported in *śāstra* or by the *ācāryas*. Nor is it supported by anything Śrīla Prabhupāda has said. They recommend that a female *dīkṣā-guru* should only give *harināma*, or first initiation, and a male *dīkṣā-*

<sup>1</sup> For example, *Nārada Pañcarātra*, *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā*, 1.42–44.

<sup>2</sup> The copy available to us appears to be in the advanced stages; major changes appear to be unlikely.

*guru* can give *her* disciples second initiation. But Śrīla Prabhupāda himself affirms that the *guru* who gives the first initiation (*harināma*) is *the dīkṣā-guru*,<sup>3</sup> not just another *dīkṣā-guru* in a disciple's life, and he points out that the *śāstras* forbid having two or more initiating spiritual masters—it is never allowed.<sup>4</sup> The subcommittee says that they “did not feel that we, or ISKCON, had the mandate to go beyond Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements,” but they did exactly that in this very strange recommendation.

Their next recommendation, which puts a minimum age limit of 55 years on female gurus, is no less strange. Again, there is no support for this in *any* of Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings, nor is it supported by any *ācārya* or *śāstra*. Much more could be said about what is wrong with this recommendation (for example, over time, their suggestion that the age limit be applied to men would result in the loss of gurus from the *grhastha āśrama*, even though *grhastha* gurus are the norm in Vedic culture) but for now it is enough to point out that the age limit is nowhere supported by *guru*, *sādhu* and *śāstra*.

Their other recommendations are similarly questionable for their lack the support from *guru*, *sādhu* and *śāstra*. However, the below discussion in the fourth recommendation seems to capture the essence of how their whole presentation has gone so far astray.

As stated, an underlying theme in our discussion was how to honor Srila Prabhupada's presentation on daivi-varnasrama while still moving forward with Vaisnavis giving initiation. We are each aware of the numerous statements Srila Prabhupada made about the need to protect women. While recognizing that the guru's service is a spiritual one, involving preaching and guiding disciples, we also felt we should not neglect Srila Prabhupada's statements about the daivi-varnasrama culture.

The above passage shows that they believe *daiva-varṇāśrama* and spiritual life to be incompatible in some way.<sup>5</sup> Otherwise, how could *daiva-varṇāśrama* culture possibly be neglected when one is directed by the correct understanding? It can't. “As the goal of spiritual realization is only one, love of God, so the *Vedas* stand as a single comprehensive whole in the matter of transcendental understanding,” says Śrīla Prabhupāda in his debate with Dr. J.F. Staal. “Only the incomplete views of various parties apart from the bona fide Vedic lines of teaching give a rupturous appearance to the *Bhagavad-gītā*.” They would not have described *daiva-varṇāśrama* as being the least bit discordant with spiritual life if their understanding were not in some way incomplete.

The problem seems to be that while they go to great lengths to quote Śrīla Prabhupāda, or refer to the testimony of those who had his close association, they neglect to reconcile their understanding with *śāstra*.

So this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, the initiation ceremony, the marriage ceremony, the sacred thread ceremony, whatever we observe, they are strictly according to the *śāstra*. That is our point. (Wedding lecture, 17 Nov. 1971, New Delhi)

Note Śrīla Prabhupāda's emphasis on *śāstra*, and that whatever we do *in* the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is strictly according to it. But as previously shown, the compromise the subcommittee reached is not only unsupported by *guru*, *sādhu* and *śāstra* but in many ways opposes it. If the GBC accepts the subcommittee's

<sup>3</sup> In a letter to Satsvarūpa, Vrindavana, Aug 7, 1977, Śrīla Prabhupāda states, “The spiritual master accepts the disciple's sinful reactions upon giving first initiation.” Accepting the sins of the disciple is a characteristic of *pāñcarātrika-dīkṣā*.

<sup>4</sup> “A devotee must have only one initiating spiritual master because in the scriptures acceptance of more than one is always forbidden.” (CC Adi 1.35 purport).

<sup>5</sup> This article by Śyāmasundara Dāsa (ACBSP) at *dandavats.com* gives the correct understanding of Lord Caitanya's rejection of *varṇāśrama-dharma*: “Varnasrama-dharma and Srila Prabhupada,” 19 Jul. 2013. <<http://www.dandavats.com/?p=11750>>.

recommendations, ISKCON will no longer be an authorized spiritual movement, and members of the GBC will no longer be fit to be respected as Śrīla Prabhupāda’s legitimate representatives.

To correct this grave situation, we have put forward in this paper an authorized account of the process of initiations, as given in the *śāstras* and approved by our *ācāryas*. This account demonstrates that the process of initiations in ISKCON, including “*harināma-dīkṣā*,” strictly follows *pāñcarātrika-vidhi* and *Nārada Pañcarātra* in particular. Herein it is further shown that the same *śāstras* cited by our *ācāryas* not only give rules for who is eligible to become a *dīkṣā-guru* but also give rules specifically regarding the eligibility of women for *dīkṣā-guru*. Moreover, this paper shows how *all* of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s differing statements on the matter of women becoming initiating spiritual masters are shown to be strictly in accordance with *Nārada Pañcarātra*.

The presentation given in this paper strictly follows this instruction of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s (emphasis added):

Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura says, *sādhu-śāstra-guru-vākya, cittete kariyā aikya*. One should accept a thing as genuine by studying the words of saintly people, the spiritual master and the *śāstra*. **The actual center is the *śāstra*, the revealed scripture.** If a spiritual master does not speak according to the revealed scripture, he is not to be accepted. Similarly, if a saintly person does not speak according to the *śāstra*, he is not a saintly person. **The *śāstra* is the center for all.** (CC Madhya 20.352 purport)

Using this approach that Śrīla Prabhupāda recommends, we present in the following pages an authorized account of the system of initiations ISKCON follows and how that understanding should guide policies in the matter of creating *dīkṣā-gurus*, including female *dīkṣā-gurus*.

To paraphrase the GBC-VDG proposal: Since we have no precedent for this proposed VDG system, we should remain on the safe side and not introduce it.

In addition to the main paper, the appendices provide further insight and useful information.

- **Appendix I** discusses two previous efforts sponsored by the GBC to research female *dīkṣā-gurus* and why neither effort produced conclusive results.
- **Appendix II** provides *śāstra pramāṇas* which prove that *dīkṣā-gurus* authorized through *pāñcarātrika-vidhi* are eligible to bestow the Brahma-gāyatrī *mantra* and other Vedic *mantras* on suitable disciples.
- **Appendix III** provides an image of the original transcript of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.12.32.
- **Appendix IV** gives an English translation of the first fifty-six ślokas from the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter (of the *Parīṣiṣṭa*) of the *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* section of the *Nārada Pañcarātra*. **This is the first time these verses have been translated into English.**

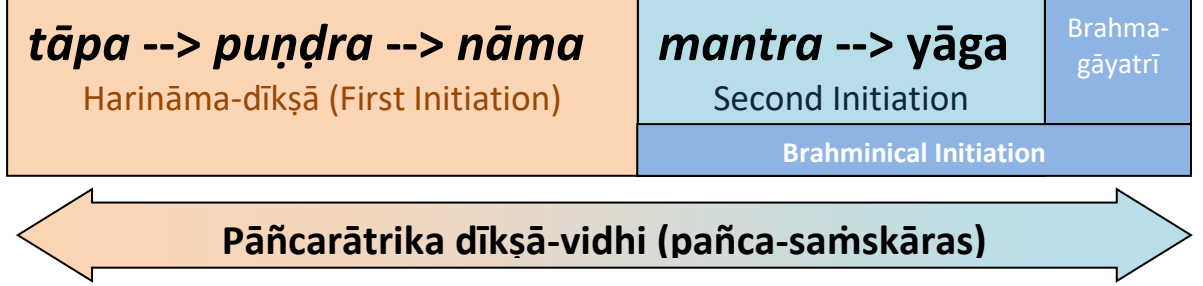
*Oṁ Tat Sat*

Your servants,

Dāmodara Dāsa (BVKS), Nandagrāma, Gujarat  
Kṛṣṇa-kīrti Dāsa (BVKS), New Delhi

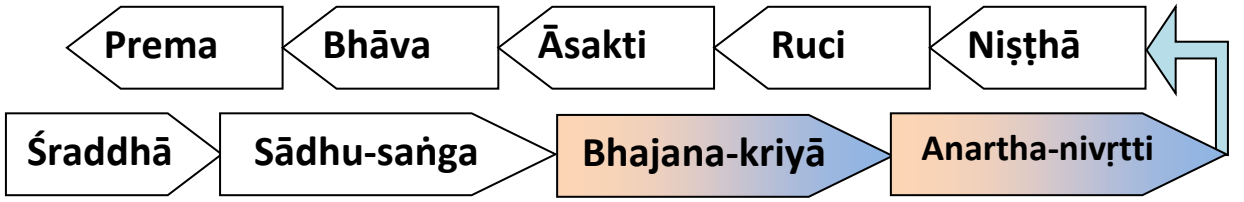
## Harināma-dīkṣā is Pāñcarātrikī

(from the teachings of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura)



Sources: *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 1885: vol. 2/1 & 1892: vol. 4/1; *Brāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇava, Harijana-kāṇḍa*

*Pañca-saṁskāras* form a part of *bhajana-kriyā* in the sequence of developing *prema*:



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in *Brāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇava, Harijana-kāṇḍa*, writes:

According to the *pāñcarātrika* teachings,

*tāpaḥ puṅḍraṁ tathā nāma    mantrō yāgaś ca pañcamah*  
*amī hi pañca-saṁskārāḥ    paramaikānti-hetavaḥ*

“These five *saṁskāras*—namely, (1) *tāpa*, (2) *puṅḍra*, (3) *nāma*, (4) *mantra*, and (5) *yāga*—are the causes for attaining the highest stage of unalloyed devotion to the Supreme Lord.”<sup>6</sup>

He quotes this verse from the teachings of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who quotes it from Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa’s *Prameya-ratnāvalī* (8.6)<sup>7</sup> which also quotes it from the *Padma Purāṇa*.

Additionally, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written an article on *pañca-saṁskāras*<sup>8</sup> in the *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, where, after quoting the above same verse, he writes:

<sup>6</sup> Original translation into English was done by a team of devotees—see Acknowledgements. A translation was not given in the original Bengali article. Also see Appendix IV, text 2, for the same *śloka*.

<sup>7</sup> This work philosophically connects the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* to the Mādhva *sampradāya*.

<sup>8</sup> For the full article go to <http://www.bvml.org/SBTP/pstpoi.html> (edited slightly).



When a faithful person learns about *pañca-saṁskāra*, he approaches a spiritual master and humbly requests him for initiation, or *dīkṣā*. After considering the student's sincerity, the spiritual master mercifully gives *tāpa* and *puṇḍra* to the student in order to sanctify his body. (...)

*Nāma* or name is the third *saṁskāra*. Mercifully the spiritual master utters the name of Hari into the ear of the faithful student. This name is to be recited daily by the student.<sup>9</sup>

Receiving *nāma* means that one understands one's self to be a servant of Hari. During initiation the teacher also gives a personal name to the student which indicates devotion to Hari. In the Śrī *sampradāya* of Rāmānuja, names like Rāma Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, Nārāyaṇa Dāsa, Rāmānuja Dāsa etc. are given. In the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* names such as Śrī Govinda Dāsa, Śrī Nityānanda Dāsa, Śrī Caitanya Dāsa etc. are used. Since the time of Śrīmān Mahāprabhu names like Ratnabāhu, Kavi Karṇapūra, Premanidhi etc. have been used. Subsequently even names such as Bhāgavata-bhūṣaṇa, Gītā-bhūṣaṇa, Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa etc. are employed.<sup>10</sup>

As described above, *harināma-dīkṣā* is given when the disciple attains the level of the third *saṁskāra* called *nāma* (i.e. *tāpa*, *puṇḍra*, *nāma*), among the five *saṁskāras*. Thus, as *pañca-saṁskāras* are part of *pāñcarātri*ka *vidhi*, *harināma-dīkṣā* is also a part of *pāñcarātri*ka *vidhi*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura continues,

The fourth *saṁskāra* is *mantra*. Out of his mercy the teacher gives an 18-syllable mantra to his beloved student. The fifth and final *saṁskāra* is *yāga* or Deity worship. Using the *mantra* which he has received from his teacher, the student begins the worship of *śālagrāma-śilā* or *śrī-murti*, the Deity of Viṣṇu. This is known as *yāga*. By receiving *pañca-saṁskāra*, the five sacraments, a faithful person enters into *bhajana-kriyā* or the personal worship of God, which eventually leads to pure love for Śrī Hari.<sup>11</sup>

In ISKCON the fourth and fifth *saṁskāra* are given separately from *harināma-dīkṣā* and together with bestowal of the Brahma-gāyatrī *mantra*; the combined procedure is known as "second initiation" or "brahminical initiation."<sup>12</sup>

*Pañca-saṁskāra* is a part of *bhajana-kriyā* in the step-by-step advancement sequence— *śraddhā*, *sādhu-saṅga*, *bhajana-kriyā*, *anartha-nivṛtti*, etc., as explained in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura continues:

When we analyze the stages that lead to love of God, we understand that faith or *śraddhā* is the first stage. Without *śraddhā*, there is no way to obtain love of God. From faith, one seeks saintly association which is called *sādhu-saṅga*. This leads to shelter at the feet of a spiritual master. Thereafter, *pañca-saṁskāra* or initiation follows. *Pañca-saṁskāra* gives rise to *bhajana-kriyā* or the personal worship of God. *Bhajana-kriyā* leads to *anartha-nivṛtti*, which is the stage where one clears up unwanted things from his heart. After *anartha-nivṛtti* one's faith can develop and one enters the stage called *niṣṭhā* or mature faith. From *niṣṭhā*, taste or *ruci* develops. This leads to the stage called *āsakti* or deep attachment. From *āsakti* spiritual emotions called *bhāva* spring forth. This eventually ripens into the stage called love of God, *prema*.

<sup>9</sup> *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 1885: vol. 2/1

<sup>10</sup> *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 1892: vol. 4/1

<sup>11</sup> *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 1885: vol. 2/1

<sup>12</sup> Some scholars object to Brahma-gāyatrī being offered with *pāñcarātrikī dīkṣā*, See [Appendix II](#) for refutation.

Therefore, everyone should seek shelter at the feet of a spiritual master and receive *pañca-saṁskāra*, which is the source of *bhajana*. Without *pañca-saṁskāra*, *bhajana* is not spontaneous. Instead, it is performed with difficulty.<sup>13</sup>

## Supported by Śrīla Prabhupāda

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

“*Dīkṣā* is the process by which one can awaken his transcendental knowledge and vanquish all reactions caused by sinful activity. A person expert in the study of the revealed scriptures knows this process as *dīkṣā*.”

This famous verse is quoted with regard to *pāñcarātrikī dīkṣā* in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, 2.9, and comes from a *pañcarātra tantra* known as the *Viṣṇu-yāmala*. Śrīla Prabhupāda also quotes it with regard to *pāñcarātrika* initiation in his purport to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 15.108. In a letter to Satsvarūpa, Vrindavana, Aug 7, 1977, Śrīla Prabhupāda states, “The spiritual master accepts the disciple’s sinful reactions upon giving first initiation.” Thus, the “*harināma-dīkṣā*” that Śrīla Prabhupāda established eradicates sins, which is a characteristic of *pāñcarātrikī dīkṣā*. And he often quoted this verse for his lectures on first initiations (for example, see Initiation of Bali-mardana Dāsa, Montreal, Jul 29, 1968). Thus *harināma-dīkṣā* is *pāñcarātrika* according to Śrīla Prabhupāda himself.

## Based on Nārada Pañcarātra

The second chapter of the *Parīśiṣṭa* (appendix) of the *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā*, of *Nārada Pañcarātra*, describes the process of initiation that ISKCON has followed to this day. The process is *pañca-saṁskāra*, and the chapter begins with the verse quoted above by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in *Bṛāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇava, Harijana-kāṇḍa*:

*tāpaḥ puṇḍraṁ tathā nāma mantra yāgaś ca pañcamah*  
*amī hi pañca-saṁskārāḥ paramaikāntya-hetavaḥ*

The rest of the chapter shows that the initiation process that ISKCON follows is fully based on the *pañcarātras*, as declared by our *ācāryas*.

A synopsis of the chapter is given here (full translation can be found in [Appendix IV](#)):

- After serving the guru for one year, one should approach him for getting initiated by the procedure of *pañca-saṁskāra*, which are conducive to developing unalloyed devotion to the Lord (2.1).
- These five *saṁskāras* are *tāpa*, *puṇḍra*, *nāma*, *mantra*, and *yāga* (2.2).
- The guru should first give *tāpa-saṁskāra* on an auspicious day. A procedure is given that includes a *yajña* and at the end feeding the Vaiṣṇavas (2.3–15).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 1885: vol. 2/1

<sup>14</sup> The procedure for the *yajña*, feeding the Vaiṣṇavas, and some other details are similar for all *saṁskāras*.

- Then, choosing an auspicious day, the *guru* should give *puṇḍra-saṁskāra* by making his disciple wear *ūrdhva-puṇḍra* (Vaiṣṇava *tilaka*) at different places on the body according to the proper procedure. (2.16–27)
- Then, choosing an auspicious day, the *guru* should give his disciple *nāma-saṁskāra*. In this *saṁskāra*:
  - The *guru* should make the disciple hear his new name, which starts with the Lord's name or a Vaiṣṇava's name, and ends with words like *dāsa*, which represents the mood of surrender or of servitorship. (2.32)
  - The full procedure is given. (2.28–33)
- After the spiritual master has already bestowed the first three *saṁskāras* upon his disciples, he may take time to evaluate their progress and their qualifications for receiving the fourth and the fifth *saṁskāras*. The text indicates that not everyone among the already initiated disciples necessarily receives the last two *saṁskāras*, namely the *mantra-* and the *yāga-saṁskāra*. (2.34)
- Then, choosing an auspicious day, the *guru* should give *mantra-saṁskāra*. (2.35–47)
- Then, choosing an auspicious day, the *guru* should give *yāga-saṁskāra* to engage his disciple in *arcana-vidhi*. (2.48–53)
- It is not necessary to give all the five *saṁskāras* together on the same day. Nor is it necessary to give them on separate days. One can, according to convenience and need, club together these different *saṁskāras* to be given on a particular auspicious day. For instance, one can club together the first three *saṁskāras* on one day and give the remaining two *saṁskāras* on some other day. (2.53–56)

The last point, explicitly stated in *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā*, fully justifies clubbing of *pañca-saṁskāras* in two installments of first- and second-initiations given by our *ācāryas*, which we follow in ISKCON to this day.

***Thus, without doubt, the process of initiation as established by our ācāryas and followed by Śrīla Prabhupāda is strictly based on Nārada Pañcarātra. The ācāryas have not innovated anything in the matter of initiations. And because ISKCON's initiations are based on this śāstra, its injunctions about who may or may not become guru apply in deciding the eligibility of female candidates for dīkṣā-guru.***

## Nārada Pañcarātra on the Eligibility of Women Giving Dīkṣā

In our paper *Nārada Pañcarātra on Female Dīkṣā-gurus*<sup>15</sup> it is conclusively established with evidence from the *śāstras* and our *ācāryas* that women who are not *siddha* are prohibited from becoming *dīkṣā-guru* and that women who are *siddha* are the exception.

### Qualities of Siddhas

What is meant by *siddha* is explained in the paper as follows:

The word *pratyakṣitātma-nātha* [referring to *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* 1.44] denotes a person who has perfected the process of *bhakti* (*sākṣāt-kṛta-bhagavat-tattva*) and means that he is a pure *siddha*

<sup>15</sup> See the paper here [http://siddhanta.com/.../fdg-narada\\_pancharatra-bharadvaja\\_samhita-final.pdf](http://siddhanta.com/.../fdg-narada_pancharatra-bharadvaja_samhita-final.pdf)

devotee beyond the modes of nature. Such a condition arises in three ways: 1) a *nitya-siddha* devotee like Prabhupāda, 2) one who has perfected *bhakti* by *sādhana* (*sādhana-siddha*), and 3) one who has attained perfection in *bhakti* due to receiving the causeless mercy of a pure devotee or of the Lord directly (*kṛpā-siddha*). In such cases anyone from any condition, including women, can become *dīkṣā-guru*, and there will be no *adharmā* or adverse effects. The body of such a man or a woman is not at all material but spiritual, there can be no inauspiciousness arising from such instances.<sup>16</sup>

In further clarification of the use of the term *siddha*, as it pertains to the qualification to become a *dīkṣā-guru*, the characteristics of the perfectional stage of *bhakti* as described in Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Harināma-cintāmaṇi*, 15, are relevant:

One can reach *āpana-daśā* either from *rāgānuga-sādhana*, where scriptural rules are minimal, or through *vaidhi-sādhana*, where relying on suitable rules from scripture is predominant. If one progresses through the stages of faith, practice, purification, steadiness, taste and attachment, in either *vaidhi* or *rāgānuga-sādhana*, one then comes to the stage of *bhāva*, preliminary *prema*. It is at this point that one attains *āpana-daśā*. At this stage, beyond the category of *sādhana-bhakti*, when scriptural rules will be discarded as troublesome to one's service, conceptions of *rāgānuga* and *vaidhi* will both be discarded.

Here, one's identification with the material body will vanish and identification with one's spiritual body will predominate. In that spiritual body (*svarūpa-siddhi*) one will always see Vṛndāvana and serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This final stage is called *sampatti-daśā*.

In other words, a female who is qualified to act as *dīkṣā-guru*, and has therefore perfected her devotional service (*pratyakṣitātma-nātha*), and her identification with the material body having completely vanished, must have at least attained the stage of *bhāva*. At this stage, her *svarūpa-siddhi* becomes manifest.

## The Rarity of Siddhas

The *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.17) accounts for the rarity of *bhāva-bhakti*:

*kleśa-ghnī śubhadā mokṣa- laghutā-kṛt sudurlabhā  
sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā śrī-kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī ca sā*

The six characteristics of pure devotional service enumerated in the above verse are listed in the *Nectar of Devotion* (chapter 1): (1) Pure devotional service brings immediate relief from all kinds of material distress. (2) Pure devotional service is the beginning of all auspiciousness. (3) Those in pure devotional service deride even the conception of liberation. (4) Pure devotional service is rarely achieved. (5) Pure devotional service automatically puts one in transcendental pleasure. (6) Pure devotional service is the only means to attract Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura states in his commentary to the above verse:

*bhāva-bhaktir mokṣa-laghutā-kṛd-rūpā sudurlabhā-rūpā ca*

<sup>16</sup> Dāmodara Dāsa, Kṛṣṇa-kīrti Dāsa, *Nārada Pañcarātra on Female Dīkṣā-gurus*, 11 Sep. 2017 (Updated 17 Dec. 2018), page 3.

The two characteristics, *mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt* and *sudurlabhā*, are manifested at the stage of *bhāva-bhakti*; i.e. *bhāva-bhakti* is very rarely attainable and is beyond liberation.

In addition to the rarity of *bhāva-bhakti* itself, those at this stage of devotional service nevertheless tend to follow the rules and regulations of the *śāstras* prescribed for ordinary people. Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself (*Bhagavad-gītā* 3.17 – 3.35) indicates that liberated souls, who have no prescribed duties in the *varṇāśrama* system to perform, are nonetheless encouraged to perform them in order to set an example for the conditioned souls. The scriptures amply describe how great, liberated women like Kuntī, Devahūti, Sītādevī, who is Lakṣmīdevī herself, etc. nevertheless performed their *varṇāśrama* duties.

Hence, because *bhāva-bhakti* itself is very rare, and because many among these who reach this stage continue to follow *daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma*, female *dīkṣā-gurus* would be *extremely rare*. This comports with Śrīla Prabhupāda’s statements about female *ācāryas*: “not so many,” and “in very special case.”

## Further Analysis from the Nārada Pañcarātra on the Eligibility of Female Ācāryas

The paper *Nārada Pañcarātra on Female Dīkṣā-gurus* provides further considerations from *Nārada Pañcarātra* (*Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā*) on the eligibility of women to be *dīkṣā-guru*.

- **Women who are not *siddha* cannot become *dīkṣā-gurus*.**  
*na jātu mantra-dā nārī*<sup>17</sup> — Women cannot become *dīkṣā-guru*.  
*nārhanty ācāryatām kvacit*<sup>18</sup> — Women should never take the position of an *ācārya*.
- **But they can become *śikṣā-guru*.**  
*striyaḥ śūdrādayaś caiva bodhayeyur hitāhitam*<sup>19</sup> — Women, *śūdras*, etc. can instruct about what is good and bad.
- **Women who are *siddha* can become *dīkṣā-guru*.**  
*pratyakṣītātma-nāthānām naiṣām cintyam kulādikam*<sup>20</sup> — For those who are liberated, self-realized souls, seeing God face-to-face, there need be no consideration of *varṇa*, *kula*, or gender in their becoming *dīkṣā-guru*.
- **Śrīla Prabhupāda’s statements that are to be synchronized with *sādhu* and *śāstra*.**
  - The *pañcarātra śāstras* prohibit women who are not *siddhas* from becoming *dīkṣā-guru*.
  - The *varṇāśrama* tradition also prohibits women from becoming *dīkṣā-guru*.
  - Śrīla Prabhupāda himself mentions that women cannot become *dīkṣā-guru*:

Sunīti, however, being a woman, and specifically his mother, could not become Dhruva Mahārāja’s *dīkṣā-guru*.<sup>21</sup> [edited version]

<sup>17</sup> *Nārada Pañcarātra, Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā*, 1.42.

<sup>18</sup> *Nārada Pañcarātra, Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā*, 1.43.

<sup>19</sup> *Nārada Pañcarātra, Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā*, 1.43.

<sup>20</sup> *Nārada Pañcarātra, Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā*, 1.44.

<sup>21</sup> SB 4.12.32, purport.

Suniti, however, being in family relationship with Dhruva, his mother, and also a woman, could not become the diksa guru of Dhruva Maharaja. [unedited transcription from manuscript, see [Appendix III](#)]

- But Śrīla Prabhupāda says at other times that women can become *dīkṣā-guru*.
- Yet Śrīla Prabhupāda also says that female *dīkṣā-gurus* should be “not so many” or in “very special case”:

**Prof. O’Connell:** Is it possible, Swamiji, for a woman to be a guru in the line of disciplic succession?

**Prabhupāda:** Yes. Jāhnavā devī was—Nityānanda’s wife. She became. If she is able to go to the highest perfection of life, why it is not possible to become guru? **But, not so many.** Actually one who has attained the perfection, she can become guru. But man or woman, unless one has attained the perfection.... *Yeī kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā sei guru haya* [Cc. 2.8.128]. The qualification of guru is that he must be fully cognizant of the science of Kṛṣṇa. Then he or she can become guru.<sup>22</sup>

**Ātreya Ṛṣi:** Lord Nityānanda?

**Prabhupāda:** Wife. Jāhnavā-devī. She was controlling the whole Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community.

**Ātreya Ṛṣi:** Do you have references about that in any of your books, Śrīla Prabhupāda?

**Prabhupāda:** I don’t think. But there are many *ācāryas*. Maybe somewhere I might have mentioned. It is not that woman cannot be *ācārya*. **Generally, they do not become. In very special case.** But Jāhnavā-devī was accepted as, but she did not declare.<sup>23</sup>

- **Synchronization without speculation**

*Nārada Pañcarātra, Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* (1.42–44) synchronizes all these statements by allowing women who are *siddha* to become *dīkṣā-guru* — this is “the special case.” And according to *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.35), such souls are “very rare,” and “not so many.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda stated that Sunīti was Dhruva’s *śikṣā-guru* but could not become his *dīkṣā-guru* due to her being a woman (SB 4.12.32, purport). Exactly the same is stated in the *Nārada Pañcarātra*:

*striyaḥ śūdrādayaś caiva bodhayeyur hitāhitam  
yathārham mānanīyāś ca nārhanty ācāryatām kvacit*

Women, *śūdras*, etc. can give ethical and moral instructions and are also worthy of respect as per their qualifications and conditions but are not entitled to get the position of *ācārya*. (*Nārada Pañcarātra, Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* 1.43)

But *Nārada Pañcarātra* also says women *can* be *dīkṣā-guru*, and it stipulates the condition under which this is allowed.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Prof. O’Connell, Toronto, Jun 18, 1976

<sup>23</sup> RC, San Diego, Jun 29, 1972

*kim apy atrābhijāyante yoginaḥ sarva-yoniṣu  
pratyakṣitātma-nāthānām naiṣām cintyaṁ kulādikam*

But, because perfect yogis (or *nitya-siddha* devotees) who are on the stage of *yoga-pratyakṣa* (i.e. are self-realized – seeing God face-to-face), *pratyakṣitātma-nāthas*, may take birth in any family tradition, in such cases no consideration of *kula*, gender, etc. as mentioned earlier apply (they can become *ācāryas*). (*Nārada Pañcarātra, Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* 1.44)

This dual set of qualifications for being guru, one set for those who are not yet *siddha* and another for those who are, is seen in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s other writings.

For example, in an early letter to Janārdana, Śrīla Prabhupāda gives a hint about these different standards, “A person who is liberated *acharya* and *guru* cannot commit any mistake, but there are persons who are less qualified or not liberated, but still can act as *guru* and *acharya* by strictly following the disciplic succession.”<sup>24</sup>

The topmost devotees follow one set of standards to become *ācārya* whereas the “less qualified or not liberated” must follow others. Both standards are given here in *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā*, of the *Nārada Pañcarātra*. Therefore, these authoritative statements from *śāstra* resolve, or synchronize, all the paradoxical statements Śrīla Prabhupāda has made at one time or another on the eligibility of women to become *dīkṣā-guru*.

According to the above synopsis, *śloka* 1.44 from *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* reconciles all of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s different statements made at different times about the eligibility of women to become *ācārya*, or *dīkṣā-guru*.

Once again, the conflicting statements include:

- **Affirmations:** “spiritual sons and daughters ... be allowed to initiate disciples” (Letter to Hansadutta, 3 Jan 1969; Conversation with Professor O’Connell 18 Jun 1976 Toronto, etc.)
- **Prohibitions:** “Sunīti, however, being a woman, and specifically his mother, could not become Dhruva Mahārāja’s *dīkṣā-guru*.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.12.32, purport)
- **Restrictions:** “not so many,” “Generally they do not become,” “In very special case.” (Conversation with Prof. O’Connell; Conversation 29 Jun 1972)

*Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* synchronizes all of these different evidences for female *dīkṣā-gurus*, against them, and restrictions on them *without need to interpret any of them indirectly*. That is, all of them retain their *mukhya-vṛtti*, or direct meaning, because they are shown to be applicable to different persons at different stages of spiritual advancement. In other words, with the discovery of *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* 1.44, all these statements can be understood without the need to interpret them indirectly or nullify or dismiss them.

<sup>24</sup> Letter to Janārdana, 26 April 1968.

## Conclusion

Since the time of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, initiations in our *sampradāya* have been conducted according to *pāñcarātrika-vidhi*. The authoritative *śāstras* for this include *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and *Nārada Pañcarātra*, which Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī quotes widely in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. *Ācāryas* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura substantiate that the initiation procedures we currently follow in ISKCON are based on *Nārada Pañcarātra*. This establishes the authority of the *vidhis*, or rules, of this *śāstra* over initiations within our disciplic succession.

According to these *vidhis* and Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own statements, “*harināma-dīkṣā*,” or “first initiation” is also conducted according to *nāma-saṁskāra*, which is the third of five *saṁskāras* or *pañca-saṁskāra*. Although the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* itself requires no special rules to be chanted, it is nonetheless bestowed upon the disciple by his *dīkṣā-guru* according to *pāñcarātrika* regulations. Thus, women who are being considered as candidates to formally initiate others according to *pāñcarātrika-vidhi* must also be qualified according to *pāñcarātrika-vidhi*.

According to the injunctions of *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā*, which is a part of *Nārada Pañcarātra*, women who are *siddha*, or on the stage of *bhāva-bhakti*, are eligible to become *ācārya*, or *dīkṣā-guru*. Because by definition *bhāva-bhakti* is rare, female *dīkṣā-gurus* are also rare. Those women who are not yet at the stage of *bhāva* are not permitted to be *dīkṣā-guru*. Therefore Śrīla Prabhupāda said that women can be *ācāryas* “but, not so many,” or “in very special case.” Hence, all of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s seemingly conflicting statements on the matter are resolved when the authoritative *śāstras* and *ācāryas* are consulted.

## Final Words

The motivation for undertaking the research for this paper came about when it became known that the GBC subcommittee for Vaiṣṇavī Initiating Gurus was going to recommend that women could give first initiation but not second initiation and that their disciples would receive second initiation from a male *dīkṣā-guru*. From documentation obtained from the committee, it was ascertained that this unauthorized change that the GBC is recommending is based on the mistaken belief that bestowing the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* through initiation is not regulated by *pāñcarātrika-vidhi*. Therefore, it was necessary to research this in order to ascertain whether the recommendation was bona fide, or if not, why not.

In addition to this, it was also necessary to a) establish by *guru*, *sādhū*, and *śāstra* what is the actual system of initiations conducted in ISKCON so that b) we could understand clearly what qualifications are required of that system generally for one to be allowed to be a *dīkṣā-guru*, and c) whether there are in fact any special requirements imposed on women to function as *mantra-guru*, or *dīkṣā-guru*. From the research, it turns out that there are indeed special considerations for women. Before, it was mistakenly assumed that there were none.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* has therefore given the following warning:

*śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi- pañcarātra-vidhiṁ vinā  
aikāntikī harer bhaktir utpātāyaiva kalpate*



Devotional service of the Lord that ignores the authorized Vedic literatures like the *Upaniṣads*, *Purāṇas* and *Nārada Pañcarātra* is simply an unnecessary disturbance in society.

If we do not heed this warning, we will end up like the sons of Śrī Advaitācārya who considered Lord Advaitācārya Himself to be the trunk of the desire tree of devotional service, but due to *māyā* did not accept Lord Caitanya as the true trunk. Due to their misunderstanding, they “thus neglected or disobeyed the instructions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, deprived themselves of the effect of being watered and thus dried up and died.”

In the same way, if our leaders in their extensive deliberations on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s statements do not try to understand spiritual topics the way he told us to understand them, which is to make *śāstra* the center, as per CC *Madhya* 20.352, and then adjust the understanding of *guru* and *sādhu* to *śāstra*, then they cannot expect ISKCON to prosper. Instead, it will die off, or become insignificant.

**“So this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, the initiation ceremony, the marriage ceremony, the sacred thread ceremony, whatever we observe, they are strictly according to the *śāstra*. That is our point.”<sup>25</sup>**

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<sup>25</sup> Wedding lecture, New Delhi, Nov 17, 1971

## Appendix I: Previous GBC-sponsored Research

Some words are in order about two other, previous, official attempts made by ISKCON's GBC to research the issue, and why the results of those efforts ultimately turned out to be unauthoritative.

The GBC's Śāstric Advisory Council produced two papers over an eight-year span—one in 2005 and the other in 2013. The authors of both papers seemed to be unaware of the extent of the authority of *pāñcarātrika-vidhi* over the system of initiations as conducted within ISKCON. Hence, they were unable to resolve apparent contradictions between various statements of Śrīla Prabhupada's without either resorting to extensive speculation, suppression of some of his statements in favor of others, or outright contradiction.

For example, the 2013 paper makes the following statement, which turns out to be untrue.

It is noted that while Vedic *smṛti-śāstras* restrict women from position of spiritual leadership, this limitation might be merely subsequent to the *smṛti* restriction on women accepting *dīkṣā* – a restriction obviously overridden by the *pāñcarātrika-vidhi* followed by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas . . . The overall conclusion is that there are not different sets of qualifications to be a guru for various classes of people, including women.

As revealed by the verses from *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* (1.42–44), which are part of *Nārada Pañcarātra*, there are in fact different sets of qualifications for different classes of people. *Daiva-varṇāśrama* considerations apply unless one is at the topmost level of spiritual advancement. Moreover, they assumed that the fact that one has received a mantra gives one the authority to bestow it. This is also untrue, as shown in these *ślokas*. The 2005 paper also suffered from the same lack of information about *pāñcarātrika-vidhi*.

Another fault in both papers is they both tried to suppress evidence that did not comport with the conclusions they were trying to reach. The 2005 paper tried to dismiss Śrīla Prabhupāda's statement about Sunīti not being able to be Dhruva Mahārāja's *dīkṣā-guru* (because she was a woman) by burying it under a greater amount of "positive evidence."

They say,

This is the strongest statement against the possibility of female *dīkṣā-gurus*. However, in itself, this statement is not conclusive, as we will see when we examine the positive evidence.

But in this case, we see that *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* supports this statement. Sunīti could not be *dīkṣā-guru* because besides being a woman, she was not a *siddha*.

The problem in the 2005 paper is that even accepting there is some greater quantity of conflicting evidence, it still does not nullify or overpower the authority of the conflicting *pramāṇa*—especially if the source is liberated.

For example, throughout Vedic literature, statements that one needs to be qualified by birth to be a *brāhmaṇa* are more numerous than statements that one needs simply to acquire the necessary

qualification. So, if quantity is fundamental to truth, then birth should win out over qualification. Instead, those two categories of statements need to be synchronized or reconciled regardless of how frequent one is over the other.

The ethical way for the authors to proceed would have been to report that they needed to do more research. But instead, they rushed to a conclusion that was not supported by the *guru-paramparā*.

There is one final example worth mentioning, and that is that the 2013 paper tried to nullify Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements on the rarity of female *dīkṣā-gurus* by contradicting him.

They say,

Given the absence of an uninterrupted and exhaustive hagiography of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava line with its many sub-branches, it is virtually impossible to provide a solid proof for the claim that FDGs were rare, as well as a mathematically accurate estimate of how rare they were.

This is an offense, because it shows that they don't accept his word. Given that Śrīla Prabhupāda is universally regarded as a liberated soul on the level of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, they have chosen *pratyakṣa*, or direct perception, over the verbal testimony of a liberated being. They have contradicted *guru-vākya*, and one who is a liberated *ācārya* at that. This is very inauspicious.

On top of that, the 2013 SAC paper then lists other Gauḍīya *sampradāyas*, some with a majority of female *ācāryas*. In one of them there are nine ladies and two men in disciplic succession from Jāhnavā Ṭhākuraṇī and Nārāyaṇī Devī. In another, the disciplic succession through Bipin Bihari Goswami, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *dīkṣā-guru*, is mentioned as having four women out of the twelve *ācāryas* in his lineage. No attempt to assess the legitimacy of any of these lines was made.

However, even if we accept that they are legitimate and authorized disciplic successions, trying to contradict your own *ācārya* with this evidence is still an offense. It is improper, and such so-called research necessarily leads to a faulty conclusion.

And even aside from this, there is still the fact that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura accepted the process of *pāñcarātrikī-dīkṣā*. This fact means we are obliged to assess what is permissible for us according to the *vidhis*, or rules, established by our *ācāryas*, not according to some other *sampradāya's* rules if they differ from ours. Trying to do otherwise is an offense against the *ācāryas* of our disciplic succession.

Whatever the motivations the differing sets of authors had in undertaking their work, the end result in both was highly questionable. Neither effort settled the issue decisively, which underscores both reports' lack of authority.

## Appendix II: The Process of Giving Brahma-gāyatrī with Second Initiation is Bona Fide

In *vaidika-vidhi* there were three births: First by father and mother, second by the *Vedas* and the guru i.e. *upanayana* (when the disciple gets *brahma-gāyatrī*) and third the *yājñika-dīkṣā* after which a disciple becomes qualified to worship the Deities.<sup>26</sup> For receiving the *upanayana*, purified birth is needed, and then also, if a *brāhmaṇa*'s son passes the age of 16 without receiving *upanayana* he is called *vrātya* and he needs to be purified by *pāñcarātri-vidhi*.<sup>27</sup> So what is the process followed for such a case?

He will get the *pāñcarātri saṁskāras* as mentioned above and after getting purified he will be given the *upanayana*. Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura have established the same process because in today's age everyone is *vrātya* and lower.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote (emphasis ours):

Why do you believe in rumors, that first initiation is not so important as second? I have already said that it is equally important, but you say rumor. Actually first initiation is more important. You can go without second initiation; if the first initiation is executed very thoroughly that is sufficient. First initiation stands strong. The spiritual master accepts the disciple's sinful reactions upon giving first initiation. **The Vedic system was to give the sacred thread at the first initiation.** We are following *pāñcarātrikī*. Vedic initiation was given to a person born to a *brāhmaṇa*. That is not possible in this age. **Therefore he has to be prepared by Harināma initiation and then second initiation.** He is given a chance. Therefore others protest that I am giving initiation: He is not born of a *brāhmaṇa*, how can he be initiated?<sup>28</sup>

Additionally, according to *Nārada Pañcarātra, Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* (1.50, 53-56), by *pāñcarātri vidhi* a guru can give *vaidika mantras* also. Thus, it is bona fide for a guru who is qualified according to *pāñcarātri vidhi* to bestow the Brahma-gāyatrī *mantra* on a disciple qualified to receive it.

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<sup>26</sup> SB 10.23.40

<sup>27</sup> *Viṣṇu-yāmala* quoted in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (5.5) and *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (1.8.7, purport)  
*aśuddhāḥ śūdra-kalpā hi brāhmaṇāḥ kali-sambhavāḥ | teṣāṁ āgama-mārgeṇa śuddhir na śrota-vartmanā.*

<sup>28</sup> From a letter by Śrīla Prabhupāda's secretary to Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami, Vrindavana, Aug 7, 1977.

Appendix III: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.12.32, Original Transcript

tape 7 (18) Srimad-bhagavatam (4.12.32) 2

*Dhruva had* PURPORT

This was a feeling of obligation to his mother, Suniti.

*It was who* Practically, Suniti gave him the clue by which, ~~at the present~~ *he was now had enabled* him to now be carried personally, ~~about~~ *carried* the moment, Dhruva Maharaja was ~~able~~ *to go to* the Vaikuntha ~~in~~ *planet*, personally carried by the associates of Lord Visnu. ~~even in the~~ *now remembered her and wanted to* ~~was thinking if he could take her~~ *take her* along with him. Actually, Dhruva Maharaja's mother, Suniti, was ~~the~~ *his* patha-pradarsaka guru. Patha-pradarsaka guru means the guru or the spiritual master who shows the way. Such ~~a~~ *a* guru is sometimes called siksa guru. Although Narada Muni was his diksa guru, (initiating spiritual master), Suniti, ~~the~~ *his* mother, of Dhruva Maharaja, was the first who gave him instruction how to achieve the favor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is the duty of the siksa guru or diksa guru to instruct the disciple ~~in~~ *in* the right way, and it depends on the disciple to execute the process. According to sastraic injunctions, there is no difference between siksa guru and diksa guru, and generally the siksa guru ~~becomes~~ *becomes the* later on diksa guru. Suniti, however, being ~~in~~ *a woman's* family relationship with Dhruva, his mother, and ~~also~~ *and specifically* woman, could not become ~~the~~ *Dhruva Maharaja's* diksa guru, of ~~DMR~~ Dhruva Maharaja. Still, he was not less obliged to Suniti. There was no question of ~~DMR~~ carrying Narada Muni to the Vaikunthaloka, but Dhruva Maharaja thought of his mother, ~~for carrying her to the~~ ~~vaikunthaloka~~. ~~This was simply a contemplation of Dhruva Maharaja.~~

*Whatever* The Supreme Personality of Godhead, ~~whatever~~ He contemplates, immediately ~~it~~ becomes fructified. Similarly, ~~even~~ a devotee, ~~who~~ is completely dependent on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, can also fulfill his contemplations by the grace of the Lord. The

## Appendix IV: The Process of Initiation and the Five Saṁskāras

(From the Nārada Pañcarātra, Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā, Pariśiṣṭa, chapter 2, verses 1–56 )

### TEXT 1

*upāsita-guror varṣam  
viṣṇor dāsyam abhīpsataḥ  
vihitāḥ pañca-saṁskārā  
yuktasyaikāntya-hetavaḥ*

A prospective disciple who is eager to become a servant of Lord Viṣṇu should worship and serve his bona fide spiritual master for a year, to qualify himself for receiving the five recommended saṁskāras which are the causes for attaining unalloyed devotional service to Lord Viṣṇu.<sup>29</sup>

### TEXT 2

*tāpaḥ puṇḍram tathā nāma  
mantra yāgaś ca pañcamah  
amī hi pañca-saṁskārāḥ  
pāramaikāntya-hetavaḥ*

These five saṁskāras—namely, (1) tāpa, (2) puṇḍra, (3) nāma, (4) mantra, and (5) yāga—are the causes for attaining the highest stage of unalloyed devotion to the Supreme Lord.

## Tāpa-saṁskāra

### TEXTS 3–4

*tāpaviṣyan guruḥ śiṣyam  
cakrādyair hetibhir hareḥ  
punye 'hni niyataḥ snātvā  
snātaṁ mantra-jalāplutam*

*rcā dakṣiṇataḥ kuryād  
vaiṣṇavyā baddha-kautukam  
tataḥ samarcayed devaṁ  
svārcāyām sthaṇḍile 'pi vā*

<sup>29</sup> The Sanskrit text speaks of male gurus and disciples, and this is reflected in the English translation.

Selecting an auspicious day for performing the t̥āpa-saṁskāra, i.e. impressing the symbols of Lord Hari such as the Sudarśana cakra on the body of his disciple, the spiritual master should bathe and perform mantra-ācamana, leading his disciple to do the same. The ācārya should then tie an auspicious thread on the right wrist of his disciple while reciting Vedic hymns glorifying Lord Viṣṇu [beginning with “viṣṇor nukam vīryāṇi” from the Śukla Yajur Veda].<sup>30</sup> Then he should worship the Supreme Lord either in the form of his own worshipable Deity [arcā-vigraha] or by invoking His presence in a sthaṇḍila [a sanctified square area of leveled sand, prepared for worship].<sup>31</sup>

### TEXTS 5–6

*paścime svena mantreṇa  
kṛtvāgneḥ sthāpanādikam  
mūla-mantreṇa hutvājyam  
tataḥ pratyakṣarāhutīḥ*

*ekāṁ punaś ca sarveṇa  
pauruṣībhiś ca ṣoḍaśa  
huvā trīn viṣṇu-gāyatrī  
vaiṣṇavyā cātha hetibhiḥ*

Thereafter, the spiritual master should face the west [being seated in front of Lord Viṣṇu who faces the east] and should perform the procedure for establishing the sacred fire, using the mantras received in his own tradition.<sup>32</sup> Then he should offer oblations of clarified butter into the fire, first with the mūla-mantra [the aṣṭākṣara-mantra or the eight-syllable mantra: om̐ namo nārāyaṇāya], then separately with each syllable of this mantra<sup>33</sup> and once again with the entire mūla-mantra.<sup>34</sup> Then he should offer sixteen oblations with the sixteen mantras of the Puruṣa-sūkta of the Ṛg Veda, three oblations with the Viṣṇu-gāyatrī [beginning with “nārāyaṇāya vidmahe”] and then five separate oblations with the pañcāyudha-mantras to honor Lord Viṣṇu’s principal weapons [mace, disc, sword, bow and conch].

<sup>30</sup> *Baddha-kautukam*: the guru ties an auspicious thread around the disciple’s wrist. This thread is supposed to protect the disciple from impurities. In South India this thread is prepared by dipping it into turmeric paste while reciting these same mantras.

<sup>31</sup> In South India *brāhmaṇas* put rice grains and in North India wheat grains into the *sthaṇḍila* to make a slightly raised platform for Deities and *kalaśas*, sometimes also marked by *rangoli* powder, wheat or rice flour (according to one’s means).

<sup>32</sup> *Svena mantreṇa*: There are different mantras for establishing the sacred fire according to one’s particular lineage or *sampradāya*.

<sup>33</sup> As follows: 1. om̐ om̐ namaḥ svāhā, 2. om̐ nam̐ namaḥ svāhā, 3. om̐ moṁ namaḥ svāhā, 4. om̐ nām̐ namaḥ svāhā, 5. om̐ rām̐ namaḥ svāhā, 6. om̐ yaṁ namaḥ svāhā, 7. om̐ nām̐ namaḥ svāhā, 8. om̐ yaṁ namaḥ svāhā.

<sup>34</sup> That is, om̐ namo nārāyaṇāya svāhā.

## TEXTS 7–11

*havir nivedya devāya  
tac-cheṣeṇa tathāhutīḥ  
athopasanne haimāni  
tāmrāṇi rājatāni vā*

*prakṣālya pañca-gavyena  
mantra-toyāplutāni ca  
bimbāni pūrva-hetnām  
svabhāga-nihitāni vai*

*nidhāya vahnau pratyekam  
tatrāvāhya sva-mantrataḥ  
arghyam pādyaṁ tathācamyaṁ  
gandham puṣpaṁ ca dhūpakam*

*dīpaṁ ca dattvāthābhyarcya  
praṇamyāgni-sama-prabham  
ācāryaḥ svayam ādāya  
niyukto vātha mantravit*

*prāṇmukhopaviṣṭasya  
nyased bāhau ca dakṣiṇe  
sudarśanaṁ tathā vāme  
pañcajanyaṁ sva-mantrataḥ*

Next, eatables like cooked food [haviṣya] should be offered to the Lord's Deity form, and the remaining portion of the food should be poured as oblations into the sacred fire in the same manner as clarified butter and in the same sequence as previously described.<sup>35</sup> Thereafter, the metal stamps [mudrās] of the disc and the conch, made of either gold, copper or silver, should be sprinkled with pañca-gavya and with water sanctified with mantras. Upon heating the stamps in the fire, the spiritual master should invoke in each stamp the presence of each particular weapon of Lord Viṣṇu with its appropriate mantra.<sup>36</sup> The red-hot stamps, effulgent like fire, should then be worshiped with pādya, arghya, ācamaniya, scents, flowers, incense, lamps, and naivedya [food offerings]. After the formal worship, the ācārya offers obeisances to these symbols of Lord Hari. Either he himself or his assistant conversant with the appropriate mantras to be employed then impresses these symbols on the upper arms of the disciple who should sit facing east. The symbol of the Sudarśana cakra [disc] should be imprinted on the right upper arm and the Pāñcajanya [conch] on the left upper arm since this is their actual position in the hands of Lord Viṣṇu. At the same time, the appropriate mantra for each weapon should be recited by the spiritual master [or his assistant].<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> In texts 5 and 6.

<sup>36</sup> I.e. one of the *pañcāyudha-mantras*.

<sup>37</sup> Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura states in his article on the *pañca-saṁskāras* (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* vol. 2, issue 1, 1885):



**TEXT 12**

*evam gadām dhanuḥ khaḍgam  
lalāṭe mūrdhni vakṣasi  
cakram vā śaṅkha-cakre vā  
dhārayet sarvam eva vā*

**In the same way, the spiritual master may impress heated stamps of the symbols of Lord Viṣṇu’s mace, bow, and sword respectively on the forehead, head, and chest of the disciple, reciting their appropriate mantras. One may opt only for the imprint of the disc, or both conch and disc, or all the five symbols.**

**TEXT 13**

*tantram samāpya deveśam  
saha-śiṣyaḥ pradakṣiṇām  
kṛtvā praṇamya sānnidhyaṁ  
prārthya śeṣam samāpayet*

**Thereafter, the ācārya concludes the homa [fire sacrifice] and circumambulates the Supreme Lord along with his disciple. Praying for the Lord’s kind presence and mercy, he brings the ceremony to a close.**

**TEXTS 14–15**

*kuryāt sarvatra karmānte  
dvijaiḥ puṇyāha-vācanam  
ācāryasyārcanam caiva  
vāsaḥ-srag-bhūṣaṇādibhiḥ*

*sarva-maṅgala-saṁyuktam  
iti cihnāni śārṅgiṇaḥ  
dhārayitvā yathotsāham  
vaiṣṇavān abhitarpayet*

**The tāpa-saṁskāra should be completed by engaging the brāhmaṇas in reciting the puṇyāha-vācanam [auspicious recitations done at the conclusion of a ceremony].<sup>38</sup> The disciple should then worship and honor his spiritual master with presents of clothes, garlands, ornaments, etc. In this way, the disciple should enthusiastically accept these all-auspicious symbols of Lord Viṣṇu [Śārṅgī] and satisfy the Vaiṣṇavas present [by serving them prasāda, offering gifts and so on].**

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In the Śrī *sampradāya* of Rāmānuja *tāpa* is given by branding the body with the symbols of conch and disc, but Śrī Caitanyadeva has instructed that we mark the body with *harināma* using sandal paste etc. instead of brands. This rule is a blessing for the souls of Kali-yuga.

<sup>38</sup> The *svasti-vācanam* is recited in the beginning while the *puṇyāha-vācanam* is recited at the end.

## Puṇḍra-saṃskāra

### TEXTS 16–17

*dhārayiṣyaṃs tataḥ śiṣyam  
ūrdhva-puṇḍrān yathā-vidhi  
puṇye 'hni niyataḥ snātvā  
pūrvavad baddha-kautukam*

*upaveśyātha deveśam  
bhogair dīpāntam arcayet  
sthaṇḍilam kalpayet paścāt  
puruṣasya pramānataḥ*

Selecting an auspicious day, the ācārya should perform the puṇḍra-saṃskāra, the ceremony of applying the ūrdhva-puṇḍras,<sup>39</sup> according to the prescribed procedure. As before, both the guru and the disciple should bathe and perform the preliminary purificatory rites. The spiritual master should tie an auspicious thread around the right wrist of the disciple. With the disciple seated next to him, the ācārya should worship the Supreme Lord with offerings of foodstuffs and other standard upacāras till the point of offering a lamp. He should then prepare a suitable sthaṇḍila measuring one hasta [the length of one's forearm].

### TEXTS 18–20

*sthānāni saikatāny atra  
varṇa-cūrṇa-mayāni vā  
kuryād dvādaśa pūrvādi-  
catur-dikṣu samāntaram*

*tathā madhye 'sya catvāri  
teṣv abhyarcāsanam pṛthak  
keśavādīms tatra tatra  
vāsudevādīkāms tathā*

*pratyekam ca yathā-rūpam  
dhyātvā nāmabhir āvahet  
havir-antais tathārghyādyair  
arcayet tāny athākramam*

Within the sthaṇḍila, the spiritual master should draw twelve ūrdhva-puṇḍra marks, using either sand or colored powder, beginning from the east and maintaining equal distance between each adjacent ūrdhva-puṇḍra. In the middle portion of the sthaṇḍila he should draw four additional marks in the four cardinal directions. He should worship each of these sixteen marks with the standard sixteen upacāras. Meditating on the twelve forms of the Lord

<sup>39</sup> Ūrdhva-puṇḍra—Vaiṣṇava tilaka.

beginning with Keśava, the spiritual master should invite each of Them to appear in Their respective places within the sthaṇḍila. He should then meditate on the four members of the catur-vyūha [Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha] and invite Them to Their respective places as well by uttering Their names. He should worship Them with the standard upacāras beginning with arghya and ending with haviḥ.

### TEXTS 21–23

*parītya saha-śiṣyeṇa  
sarvāms tān praṇipatyā ca  
upaviśyātha śiṣyāya  
praṇipatyopasīdate*

*eṣāṃ nāmāni rūpāṇi  
yathāvad upadarśayet  
śiṣyo hṛdi samāveśya  
tān sarvān krama-yogataḥ*

*nirghṛṣya mṛtsnām vidhivan  
mūla-mantrābhimantritām  
ādāyāṅgulibhir dadyāl  
lalāṭādy-ūrdhva-puṇḍrakān*

Along with his disciple, the spiritual master should circumambulate the sthaṇḍila and offer obeisances to all the forms of Lord Viṣṇu invoked in it. As they are both seated in front of the sthaṇḍila, the guru should instruct his disciple authoritatively about all these different names and forms of Lord Viṣṇu in sequence beginning with Keśava, so that the disciple is able to remember Them within his heart. The disciple should then take a piece of clay fit for tilaka [such as gopī-candana] and rub it into paste with water while reciting the prescribed mūla-mantras.<sup>40</sup> He should use his fingers to draw tilaka markings [or ūrdhva-puṇḍras] on his body, beginning with the forehead.

### TEXTS 24–27

*trayodaśa dvādaśa vā  
caturo caikam eva vā  
namo 'ntair nāmabhir dhyātvā  
sthāpayet tatra tatra ca*

*keśavādīn dvādaśasu  
vāsudevaṃ trayodaśe  
keśavaṃ vāsudevaṃ vā  
lalāṭe kevalaṃ nyaset  
vyūhāms caturṣu tān natvā*

<sup>40</sup> The Hindi translation of the *Bhāradvāja-saṃhitā* by Ācārya Śivaprasāda Dvivedī quotes from a scripture called *Brahma-śāstra* which gives detailed injunctions about applying *tilaka* markings.

*sadā sānnidhyam arthayet  
ato hi vaiṣṇavasyāṅgam  
viṣṇor āyatanam viduḥ*

*hvir nivedya devāya  
guruḥ śeṣam samāpayet  
tatra tv ācāryam abhyarcya  
bhōjayed vaiṣṇavān api*

The disciple may draw either twelve or thirteen tilaka markings on his body, or only four or even only one. The ūrdhva-puṇḍra should be applied while meditating on the forms of Lord Viṣṇu, uttering Their names and adding the word “namaḥ.” The twelve ūrdhva-puṇḍras are drawn while remembering the twelve standard forms of Lord Viṣṇu beginning with Keśava,<sup>41</sup> and if thirteen are drawn Lord Vāsudeva is included. If one wishes to apply only one ūrdhva-puṇḍra it should be drawn on the forehead and either Keśava or Vāsudeva are to be invoked.<sup>42</sup> If one wishes to apply four ūrdhva-puṇḍras then the four members of the caturvyūha should be invoked. In this way, offering obeisances to these different forms of the Lord, the disciple should pray for Their eternal residence in particular parts of his body. Therefore the body of a Vaiṣṇava is considered to be the abode or a temple of Lord Viṣṇu. The spiritual master should conclude the ceremony by pouring oblations into the sacred fire, consisting of the remaining portions of the various offerings that have been presented to the Lord, especially eatables like cooked food [haviṣya]. Thereafter, the disciple should worship his ācārya and at last satisfy the Vaiṣṇavas by feeding them a prasāda meal.

## Nāma-saṁskāra

### TEXTS 28–29

*kariṣyan vaiṣṇavam nāma  
vaiṣṇavāśrayam eva vā  
puṇye 'hani guruḥ snātvā  
pūjayitvā jagad-gurum*

*pūrvavat sthaṇḍilam kṛtvā  
pūrvavat sikatā-maye  
ṣoḍaśe pīṭham abhyarcyā-  
vāhayen nāma-devatām  
bhagavad-rūpiṇam dhyātvā  
hvir-antam athārcayet*

<sup>41</sup> The sequence of the twelve forms of Lord Viṣṇu: Keśava, Nārāyaṇa, Mādhava, Govinda, Viṣṇu, Madhusūdana, Trivikrama, Vāmana, Śrīdhara, Hṛṣīkeśa, Padmanābha, Dāmodara.

<sup>42</sup> The Sanskrit commentary by Paṇḍita Sarayū Prasāda Miśra, however, states that in the case of applying only one tilaka marking, Keśava is to be invoked on the forehead and Vāsudeva on the neck. There is no information about where Vāsudeva is to be invoked when He is listed as the thirteenth form of Lord Viṣṇu.

The spiritual master should select an auspicious day for performing the nāma-saṁskāra with the aim of bestowing upon his disciple a name of Lord Viṣṇu or a name indicating surrender to Lord Viṣṇu.<sup>43</sup> As in the previous saṁskāras, both the ācārya and his disciple should take bath and purify themselves. The spiritual master should first worship Lord Nārāyaṇa, the jagad-guru. Then, following the procedure already described, he should prepare a sthaṇḍila on a piece of open land and use sand to draw sixteen marks within it. He should invite the sixteen previously mentioned forms of Lord Viṣṇu to appear in Their respective designated places, and worship Them. He should then invoke the presence of the personality which bears the name chosen to be given to the disciple [the nāma-devatā]. The spiritual master should worship the nāma-devatā with the standard upacāras up to naivedya [the offering of cooked food] considering Him non-different from Lord Viṣṇu Himself.

### TEXT 30–32

*upapanne tataḥ śiṣye  
kaupīnaṁ kaṭi-bandhanam  
nivedya vastre ca nave  
tasmai taṁ grāhayed guruḥ*

*tac-cheṣaṁ gandha-mālyādi  
tathā cānnaṁ niveditam*

*nāma dāsādi-śabdāntaṁ  
śrāvayet kevalaṁ tu vā  
parītya praṇato 'bhyarcya  
devatāṁ hr̥di nikṣipet*

The disciple brings to his spiritual master a set of new clothes [the lower and upper cloth] which are then offered to the Lord and returned to the disciple. The disciple should now wear a new kaupīna [loin cloth] and kaṭi-bandhana [piece of cloth girdled around the waist] and dress in the new clothes received from the spiritual master. The disciple is then given prasāda remnants, scents, garlands etc. from the worship of the nāma-devatā. The ācārya then bestows upon him his new name that ends with a word like dāsa [which indicates servitorship to the Lord], or simply one of the names of Lord Hari. Then they both circumambulate the nāma-devatā invoked in the sthaṇḍila, offer obeisances, worship Him and request Him to be present in the heart of the disciple.

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<sup>43</sup> Possible additional meaning: names of Vaiṣṇavas or names indicating surrender to Vaiṣṇavas.

**TEXT 33**

*havir nivedya devāya  
tantra-śeṣaṁ samāpayet  
śiṣyo deśikam abhyarcya  
vaiṣṇavān paritoṣayet*

**Eatables like cooked food [haviṣya] should be offered to the Lord and then the fire sacrifice should be completed with the concluding oblations. The disciple should then worship his dīkṣā-guru and please the assembled Vaiṣṇavas [by feeding them prasāda].**

**Mantra-saṁskāra****TEXT 34**

*svayaṁ brahmaṇi nikṣiptān  
jātān eva ca mantrataḥ  
vinītān atha putrādīn  
saṁskṛtya pratibodhayet*

**After having performed the nāma-saṁskāra for his sons and other subordinates, the spiritual master personally evaluates them to select those who are dedicated to the service of the Lord [brahmaṇi nikṣiptān], who have been purified by mantras, and who are obedient and submissive by nature. For such disciples he performs the mantra-saṁskāra and reveals to them the meaning of the given mantras.**

**TEXTS 35–36**

*anukūle 'hani śubhe  
guruḥ snātvā samāhitaḥ  
hutāgniḥ pūrvavac chiṣyaṁ  
niṣpādya kṛta-kautukam*

*tataḥ saṁpūjya deveśaṁ  
paścād agniṁ nidhāya vai  
svena tantreṇa tatrātha  
hutvā pūrvavad āhutīḥ*

**The spiritual master should select an auspicious day<sup>44</sup> favorable for the mantra-saṁskāra ceremony. Before the ceremony, the spiritual master and the disciple should bathe and**

<sup>44</sup> The Sanskrit commentary of Paṇḍita Sarayū Prasāda Mīśra interprets this to mean choosing the exact *muhūrta*, planet, star of the *tithi* etc. which should all be auspicious and favorable.

perform the preliminary purification. After attending to his daily obligatory rites<sup>45</sup> with concentration, the ācārya should make his disciple sit at a proper place and tie an auspicious thread around his right wrist, as previously described. Thereafter, the ācārya should perform elaborate worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Nārāyaṇa, and then establish the sacred fire. Then, as described before,<sup>46</sup> he should offer oblations into the fire according to the injunctions of the scriptures accepted in his lineage.

### TEXTS 37–39

*sthāne hety-āhutīnām ca  
mūla-mantrāhutīḥ punaḥ  
havir nivedya devāya  
tac-cheṣeṇa tathāhutīḥ*

*sa-śiṣyo 'tha guruḥ kṛtvā  
sāgniṁ devaṁ pradakṣiṇām  
praṇamya punar āsīnaḥ  
praṇipatyopaseduṣaḥ*

*samhārādi-kramaṁ kuryād  
vidhivac choṣaṇādikam  
astra-mantreṇa rakṣām ca  
praṇamayya guruṁs tataḥ*

Instead of the pañcāyudha-mantras, oblations should be offered with the mūla-mantra.<sup>47</sup> The Supreme Lord should be offered eatables like cooked food [haviḥ], and the remaining portion of the food should be poured into the fire as oblations. The homa is then completed. The ācārya, along with his disciple, should circumambulate both the sacrificial fire and the Lord invoked in the sthaṇḍila, and offer obeisances. The spiritual master should then make his disciple sit near him and lead him to perform the samhāra-nyāsa and other kinds of purification<sup>48</sup> according to proper procedures. He should then perform śoṣaṇa-karma and rakṣaṇa-karma with astra-mantras for the protection of the disciple. He should then instruct the disciple to pay obeisances to him, his spiritual master.

### TEXTS 40–42

*nyāsākhyam paramam mantram  
vācayitvātha bodhayet  
śrīman nārāyaṇaḥ svāmī  
dāsas tvam asi tasya vai*

<sup>45</sup> *Hutāgniḥ* is explained as “one who has performed his obligatory daily fire sacrifice.” (Sanskrit gloss by Paṇḍita Sarayū Prasāda Miśra)

<sup>46</sup> In texts 5 and 6 within the *tāpa-saṁskāra* section.

<sup>47</sup> Here the procedure is the same as that during the *tāpa-saṁskāra* with the exception of offering oblations with *pañcāyudha-mantras* to Lord Śrī Viṣṇu’s weapons.

<sup>48</sup> Mentioned in SB 6.8.6, translation.

*param īpsus tam evārtham  
anukūlo visarjayet  
prātikūlyam suvisrabdhah  
samprārthya śaraṇam harim*

*vraja tasyaiva caraṇau  
tatraivātmānam arpayā  
iti sambodhitas tv evam  
mantreṇātmānam arpayet*

The spiritual master should bestow upon the disciple the ultimate mantra known as the nyāsa-mantra [the mantra of surrender]<sup>49</sup> and explain to him its meaning as follows: “The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Nārāyaṇa, with His divine consort Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune, is the master of everyone and you are His eternal servant. Be eager to engage in devotional service to Him and therefore always accept that which is favorable for it and always reject that which is detrimental. Thus, be confident of Lord Hari’s protection, always take shelter of His lotus feet and dedicate yourself to Him exclusively.” Thus instructed by his spiritual master, the disciple should surrender himself to Lord Hari while uttering the nyāsa-mantra.

#### TEXT 43

*tataś ca vyāpakān mantrān  
anyāms cāṅgaiḥ samanvitān  
dattvāsmāi punar evaivaṁ  
grhītvā vṛttim ādiśet*

After thus revealing to the disciple the vyāpaka-mantras [the sixteen-syllable, twelve-syllable, and eight-syllable mantras related to Lord Viṣṇu] and other mantras such as those used in aṅga-nyāsa, the spiritual master should formally accept the disciple and instruct him about his spiritual duties and proper behavior [vṛtti], as outlined below.

#### TEXT 44

*nityam viṣṇu-param karma  
kuru nindyāni mā kṛthāḥ  
sadātmānam vibudhyasva  
mā kāmeṣu manah kṛthāḥ*

“Always work only for the sake of Lord Viṣṇu and never engage in abominable activities. Always remain on the spiritual platform and do not let your mind succumb to material desires.”

<sup>49</sup> The term *nyāsa* is equivalent to *śaraṇāgati*.



**TEXT 46**

*yajasva nityam ātmeśam  
mā naṁsīr anya-devatāḥ  
lakṣyasva lakṣaṇair bhartur  
lakṣiṣṭhā mānya-lakṣaṇaiḥ*

**“Always worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Nārāyaṇa, the controller of everyone, and never worship the demigods. Ornament your body with the signs of your Lord and master and not those of the demigods.”**

**TEXT 47**

*upāsva vaiṣṇavān nityam  
asato mopasīsarah  
guruṁ praṇamyom ity uktvā  
hy ātmānaṁ ca nivedayet*

**“Always serve the Vaiṣṇavas and stay away from those who are not in line with the principles of unalloyed surrender.”** Thus instructed, the disciple should offer obeisances to his spiritual master and should offer himself to him [ātma-nivedana or self-surrender] while uttering the sacred syllable ‘om.’

**TEXT 48**

*tataḥ samāpite śeṣe  
devam ātmani nikṣipet  
guruṁ vidhivad abhyarcya  
vaiṣṇavān paritoṣayet*

**After the ceremony has been completed and the disciple has been taught the meaning of surrender, he should endeavor to keep Lord Nārāyaṇa in his heart. Following the established rules and regulations, the disciple should now worship his ācārya and please the Vaiṣṇavas present [by serving them a prasāda meal].**

## Yāga-saṁskāra

### TEXTS 48–50

*yojayiṣyan guruḥ śiṣyam  
nityārcana-vidhau hareḥ  
śobhane 'hani nakṣatre  
devam abhyarcya pūrvavat*

*mantravat tu hutam hutvā  
niṣṭhayāthopasāditam  
yathokta-vidhinā pūrvam  
sthāpitam śubha-vidham*

*śrī-bhūmi-līlā-sahitam  
parivāraiḥ samanvitam  
avyakta-parivāram vā  
devam saṅgrāhya yājayet*

To engage his disciple in daily worship of the Deity form of Lord Hari, the ācārya should perform the yāga-saṁskāra after selecting a day and a nakṣatra which are both auspicious. On the chosen day, as described before, the spiritual master should worship Lord Nārāyaṇa and perform a fire sacrifice, offering the oblations of clarified butter and haviṣya into the sacred fire as described in the procedure for the mantra-saṁskāra. Then the spiritual master should arrange for the worship of an already formally installed arcā-vidham of Lord Viṣṇu, along with vidhamas of Śrī-devī, Bhūmi-devī, Līlā-devī, and the Lord's family [such as His eternal weapons and ornaments in personified forms, His eternal servants and associates]. The Lord's entourage and paraphernalia may also be present as avyakta-vidhamas [to be worshiped mentally]. The ācārya should then perform the fire sacrifice.

### TEXT 51–52

*śrauta-divyārṣa-kalpānām  
iṣṭenānyatamena ca  
sthāpanam yajanam vāpi  
miśrā hy atrādhikāriṇaḥ*

*tataḥ pariḡhītena  
gurubhir yena kenacit  
vidhinā yājyitvaivam  
atha śeṣam samāpayet*

The kalpa-sūtras [manuals of Vedic rituals] describe three different procedures of worship, namely śrauta, divya, and āṛṣa. Brāhmaṇas who are called miśra worshipers<sup>50</sup> are eligible to take up this kind of worship. The spiritual master chooses the procedure which is preferred by the predecessors in his own lineage and teaches the disciple the process of Deity installation and subsequent worship<sup>51</sup> as detailed in the scriptures. The ācārya should then conclude the ceremony of the yāga-saṁskāra.

### TEXT 53

*tataḥ sva-kāle svādhyāyam  
tato yogam ca kārayet  
ijyānte guru-pūjām ca  
vaiṣṇavānām ca tarpaṇam*

The spiritual master should then encourage his disciple to undertake svādhyāya [study of the sacred scriptures] and yoga at their prescribed proper times of the day. As the entire ceremony of the yāga-saṁskāra is concluded, the disciple should offer formal worship to his spiritual master and satisfy the Vaiṣṇavas [by offering them prasāda and other presents].

Thus ends the section detailing the procedures in receiving the *pañca-saṁskāras*.

### TEXT 54

*kecic caturṇām pūrveṣām  
kramaṁ necchanti karmaṇām  
sahaika-divase vā dve  
trīṇi catvāri pañca vā*

Some ācāryas do not wish to perform these saṁskāras in the previously mentioned sequence [each one of them on a separate day]. One, two, three, four or even five saṁskāras can be performed together on the same day.

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<sup>50</sup> This may refer to their performance of both *niṣkāma* and *sakāma* rites, or the fact that they follow both the Vedic and the *pāñcarātri* system of worship simultaneously (*vaidika* and *tāntrika*).

<sup>51</sup> Alternatively, the terms *sthāpana* and *yajana* could refer to procedures for establishing the sacrificial fire and performing the fire sacrifice. Nevertheless, all the available editions of the *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* with Hindi translations seem to opt for the more common understanding that these two terms here refer to Deity worship.

**TEXT 55**

*tadānyatama-homānte  
kṛtvāgny-ādy-upasammukham  
samāpayet pradhānam ca  
na mantrasyānya-śeṣatā*

**If more than one saṁskāra is to be performed on a single day, the sacrificial fire for the mantra-saṁskāra should be the principal while the other homas should be subordinate. The main homa should be completed after concluding the subordinate homas.**

**TEXT 56**

*yady eka-divase pañca  
tathā mantrāhuteḥ param  
kṛtvā yāgāntam akhilam  
tantra-śeṣam samāpayet*

**If all the five saṁskāras are to be performed on a single day, the mantra-āhutis should be offered in a single fire sacrifice and the remaining karmas of all the saṁskāras should be performed one after another to complete the ceremony.**

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