



Bhiksha Guidelines for Visiting Swamijis/Swaminijis/Acharyas

dvija uvacha:

*nayam jano me sukha-duhkha-hetuh, na devatatma graha-karma-kalah
manah param karanam-amananti, samsara-chakram parivartayed-yat*

The brahmana said, "People, deities, the body, planets, karma, or time—none of these are the cause of my joy and sorrow. The mind alone is said to be the cause of samsara."

- Bhiskhu Gita – Shrimad Bhagawatam – Canto 11, Chapter 23, Verse 42.

Living in the present world, we perceive objects and circumstances as what our mind tells it to be so by habit and colored by our likes and dislikes. When we invite a Mahatma for *Bhiksha* who has devoted their life to the pursuit of self knowledge and truth; it gives us a unique opportunity to see it through the lenses of wisdom of the scriptures. It is a unique experience to have a Mahatma at one's home for *Bhiksha* as just by regular interaction over a dinner or lunch; they impart such a unique perspective on our day to day circumstances; that we had never thought of.

Chinmaya Mission Calgary (CMC) offers an opportunity to all to invite visiting Swamijis/Swaminijis/Acharyas (hereafter referred to as Swamiji) for *Bhiksha*.

What is *Bhiksha*?

It is an offering to a Guru from whom one has received knowledge. It is a *sadhana*, an act of reverence, and an expression of gratitude.

Offering *Bhiksha* to a *Sannyasi* or *Brahmachary* has been considered one of the foremost duties (*Dharma*) of a householder in the Hindu tradition. Just as scientists who are in pursuit of truth are being supported by present-day society, in Vedic tradition, it is considered the duty of the householder to support renunciates who spend their life in pursuit of Truth for the benefit of society as a whole.

How does one offer *Bhiksha*?

All CM Swamijis are very casual and easy going in their attitude and approach.

The process below lists the protocol that is usually followed.

Receiving at the door

The Swamiji is received at the door step, wherein the *bhiksha* members welcome him with a "thali" containing **kumkum & a "diya"**. The Kumkum is put on Swamiji's forehead, and aarti is done while chanting the following shloka: (**last stanza of the Vedic Aarti**) :

Na tatra suryo bhati, Na chandra tarakam

Ne maa vidhyuto bhanti, kuto ayam agnihi

Tvam me va bhantam , anubhati sarvam

Tasya bhasa sarvam vibhati

If however, you receive the Swamiji with a "Kumbha" i.e. with a coconut in a kalasha, then you will need to chant the Vedic Aarti : **Na Karmanaa , Na Prajayaa** (Verses are provided at the end of this guideline).

The *bhiksha* family members then prostrate & take His blessings.

* While receiving *Acharyas*, who are not *Brahmcharis* or *Sannyasis*, you need to chant the first 3 verses of *Gurustotram* (Verses provided at the end of this guideline).

Offering seat & inviting him to the table

A seat is offered to the Swamiji and the *bhiksha* members can introduce themselves or carry on a conversation. When food is ready to be served, Swamiji is invited to the table.

A glass of water needs to be ready at the table, so that prayers can be offered before the meal.

Serving Food

All family members are encouraged to take turns to serve Swamiji.

Other *bhiksha* members not serving the food can take food in their plate and eat along with Swamiji.

Satsang with Swamiji

After finishing the meal, the Swamiji returns to the living room accompanied by the host family and guests. Swamiji then has a private satsang with the host family or group.

This is a good time to ask any questions that you may have, or have the kids/other members sing a bhajan etc. Chinmaya Mission Swamijis are quite comfortable with people of all ages.

Offering Guru Dakshina

After the satsang, the whole family offers *Guru Dakshina* to Swamiji. This is generally done with a tray filled with whole fruits (at least as many as the number of members in the family) and an envelope, which contains a donation (make cheques payable to "Chinmaya Mission Calgary").

Each family goes together to prostrate before Guru to receive His blessings and prasad (fruit from the tray).

Importance of Bhiksha

As a *Grahastha* (householder), serving *Bhiksha* (food) to a Swamiji is considered to be a

punya karma.

The *Dakshina* (donation) that is given at this time is an expression of gratitude for having given you the opportunity to serve Swamiji and for having the family blessed. Someone else had offered such contributions in the past to *Guru-Sishya Parampara*, which enabled this Swamiji to reach you. It is our duty to continue the tradition for the benefit of future generations.

According to our scriptures, one has to take many births to come to deserve to serve a Swamiji in such a blessed and sacred way. It is very rare indeed.

Do's

- Setup an altar with Gurudev's (Swami Chinmayananda) picture and light a lamp
- Ask questions related to Hinduism and spirituality to clear your doubts
- Maintain a peaceful and conducive atmosphere for the Swamiji
- Invite friends and family members who are spiritually inclined
- Check Swamiji's dietary restrictions, if any, with the CMC contacts

Don'ts

- Do not prepare an elaborate feast
- Do not offer gifts other than donation
- Avoid side conversations and chatting loudly
- Do not feel stressed as Chinmaya Mission Swamijis are casual and easy going.



Vedic Aarati

om na karmana na prajaya dhanena parena nakam nihitam guhayam	tyagenaike amrtatvam anasuh vibhrajate yad yatayo visanti
vedanta-vijnana suniscatartha te brahma-loke tu paranta-kale	sannyasa yogad-yataya-suddha-sattvah paramrtat-parimucyanti sarve
dahram vipapam parame' sma bhutam tatrapi dahram gaganam visokas	yat-pundarikam pura-madhya sagmstham tasmin yad antas tad upasitavyam
yo vedadau svarah prokto tasya prakrti-linasya	vedante ca pratistatah yah para-sa mahesvarah
na tatra suryo bhaati na chandra taara tameva bhaantam anubhaati sarvam	kam nemea vidhyuto bhaanti kuto yamagnh tasya bhaasa sarwamidham vibhaati

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न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः ।
 परेण नाकन्निहितङ्गुहायाँव्विभ्राजते यद्यतयो विशन्ति ।
 वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्थास्सन्न्यासयोगाद्यतयश्शुद्धसत्त्वाः ॥
 ते ब्रह्मलोके तु परान्तकाले परामृतात्परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे ॥
 दहँव्विपापम्परमेऽश्मभूतँय्यत्पुण्ड्रीकम्पुरमध्यसंस्थम् ।
 तत्रापि दहङ्गनँव्विशोकस्तस्मिन्यदन्तस्तदुपासितव्यम् ।
 यो वेदादौ स्वरः प्रोक्तो वेदान्ते च प्रतिष्ठितः ।
 तस्य प्रकृतिलीनस्य यः परस्स महेश्वरः ॥
 न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं

नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।

तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं

तस्य भासा सर्वमिदँव्विभाति ॥

Gurustotram

अखण्डमण्डलाकारं व्याप्तं येन चराचरम् ।
 तत्पदं दर्शितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥ १ ॥
 akhaṇḍamaṇḍalākāraṁ vyāptaṁ yena carācaram ।
 tatpadaṁ darśitaṁ yena tasmai śrīgurave namaḥ ॥ 1 ॥

अज्ञानतिमिरान्धस्य ज्ञानाञ्जनशलाकया ।
 चक्षुरुन्मीलितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥ २ ॥
 ajñānatimirāndhasya jñānāñjanaśalākayā ।
 cakṣurunmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrīgurave namaḥ ॥ 2 ॥

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।
 गुरुरेव परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥ ३ ॥
 gururbrahmā gururviṣṇuḥ gururdevo maheśvaraḥ ।
 gurureva paraṁ brahma tasmai śrīgurave namaḥ ॥ 3 ॥