

I met my spiritual master when I was 25 years old. I was from a family who knew nothing about Krsna, had never heard the name Krsna. Had never heard the word vaisnavism. With true mleccha qualities. And I went to my younger sister's wedding, just like you are attending an incredible wedding in two days, so I went to my younger sister's wedding, and the day that I arrived for the wedding, I went to a luncheon and met Srila Prabhupada. It was a luncheon that Srila Prabhupada had cooked with his own hand, and served to his disciples, and it was my first taste of Krsna prasadam.

And after that meal, Srila Prabhupada said, "What is your name?" and I told him.

"Where are you from?"

"Three thousand miles away."

"When is the rest of the family coming for the wedding?"

"I am the only one coming Swamiji."

"Oh, this is so unusual, in India the family of the bride makes great arrangements for the wedding."

So today, when I asked Krsnachandra and his wife, Radhapriya, how many people will be coming to the wedding, she said, "Maybe three or four thousand, the intimate guests." So you can see the setting, the scenario.

So I said, "I am the only one coming."

So he said, "Never mind, you can help me cook."

So I thought, "This is going to be an interesting experience."

"Can you come tomorrow morning?"

"Yes, Swamiji, I can come." So I came the next day, in a little blue miniskirt and t-shirt, into Srila Prabhupada's quarters. Then he sat me down, in front of a five pound bag of Moida{?} and two pounds of butter, unsalted, not even ghee, and a pitcher of water.

And he said, "Can you make a medium hard dough?"

So I said, "Swamiji, what do you mean? You mean swanflodou, patte brisse, what kind of dough?"

So he really looked at me quizzically, and he raised his eyebrow, and he said, "Any child five years old in India can do this. How old are you?"

I said, "Twenty-five."

He said, "You are twenty-five, and you can't make a medium hard dough? Let me show you." From this very moment, Srila Prabhupada grabbed my invisible sikha, and he began to drag me to Krsna. And you know, if you can just imagine the strangeness of this, I remember his hands, he took the flour, he put it into a bowl, his hands began to work magic. Very quickly, he made a kachori dough. Now all of you

know, that kachori are some of the most challenging pastries in our line to master and do well. So my first job, as Prabhupada's aspiring assistant was to make kachoris for forty people alone. And in that first day that I cooked with Srila Prabhupada, there was a small little galley kitchen. That means that on one side there is a counter, and on the other side there is a counter, and Srila Prabhupada, in the period of six hours, made fourteen dishes for forty people alone, plus fried all of the kachoris.

And in the course of that, for about two or three hours, I tried to make and shape kachoris, finally I said to Srila Prabhupada, I said, to Srila Prabhupada "Srila Prabhupada, may I have a glass of water?"

He peeked his head around from the kitchen and he said, "Go wash your hands."

So I thought that was a very strange thing, but I went and washed my hands. And his first instruction to me was to explain "When we are cooking for Krsna. It is different than any other cooking. When we are cooking for Krsna, we are cooking for the pleasure of Krsna. We do not use our senses to enjoy the experience, we only think of the pleasure of Krsna." First instruction I get.

"Alright, thank you swamiji, I will try to do that." Some, maybe an hour and a half later I said, "Srila Prabhupada, may I take a cigarette break?"

He peeked around the corner and said, "Go wash your hands." It was then that Srila Prabhupada told me about the four rules and regulations, and that when we cook for Krsna, this is the beginning of the quality of purity. Beginning first instruction on the quality of purity. Some three hours later, it was close to five hours I was making kachoris, I said, Oh no, it was very hot in the room, and I took my arm and wiped my forehead, and Srila Prabhupada saw it and he said, "Go wash your hands."

So he began to explain, first, first idea of cleanliness. He said, when we cook for Krsna, we wear clean clothes. Our clothes do not come in contact, we don't allow the clothes to touch Krsna. We wear clean clothes only when cooking for Krsna. So, in the very first day, Srila Prabhupada began to give me some little instruction. And over the next eleven years, I had the fortune of many different situations where Srila Prabhupada gave me some little training in this art of cooking for Krsna. So how many of you in this audience have rendered some personal service to Their Lordships in Sri Sri Radha Gopinath Mandira, by doing some cooking for Their pleasure. Please raise your hand. A rather small group. I am sure that the standard that you have established here is perhaps the highest in Iskcon, especially with the guidance of the two saintliest pujaris in Iskcon. But there are many places, especially in the West, it is very hard to engage in the simplest kind of instructions.