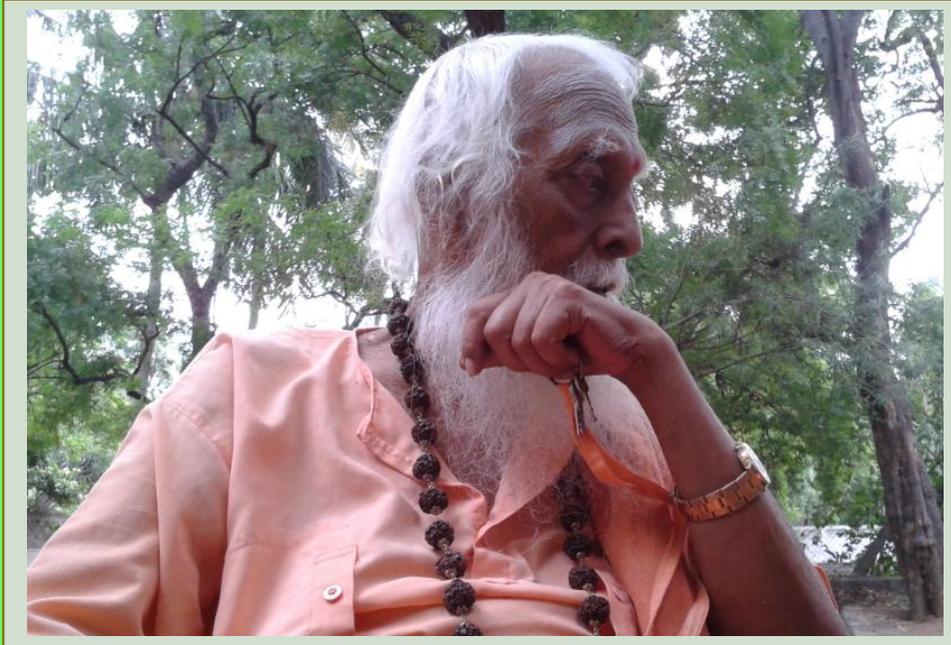


How to behave with Mahatmas [holy people] when they come to our house at our invitation, say for lunch, etc.

Narrated by Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj

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How to behave with Mahatmas [holy people] when they come to our house

We know how to treat worldly guests but when some holy men visit our house either by our invitation or by themselves, we are at a loss how to behave with them. Either we take them around our house and our garden showing various things with all pride and prepare various nice dishes for the guests or we may completely ignore them till the meals time and keep silent laughing over the cell phone with other friends. Here, to illustrate the point, there is a beautiful anecdote about Jesus Christ. Mary and Martha were two sisters who had an intense devotion to God and Jesus in their own different ways. While Mary was more intellectual, Martha was of the highly emotional type not given to much expression. Once Jesus went to their house at their invitation. After greeting the guest and seating him, Mary sat in front of him while Martha rushed back to the kitchen and was involved in the preparation of various delicacies. Mary took that opportunity to put various spiritual questions and getting the answers from Jesus. She was in ecstasy for having such a rare opportunity to talk to Jesus all alone and get the spiritual instructions. Mary was merged in that state while from the kitchen Martha was often calling, "Oh Mary what are you doing? Can't you come and give a helping hand to me? I am all alone preparing all delicacies." Mary simply said, "I am just coming." But never went into the kitchen. Jesus was so pleased that apart from the questions put to him, he gave a lot of spiritual advice on his own. When

the cooking was over, Martha called them all to the dining table but she herself was dead tired and was looking with accusing eyes at Mary. Mary laughed within herself – “What a fool Martha is. Jesus has not come only to eat things in our house. It is a rare blessing. It is for us to avail of it to spend more time with Jesus than in the kitchen preparing various delicacies unnecessarily.” This is an excellent teaching. We should spend time by listening more to such holy guests asking for their spiritual instructions and experiences than being engaged in elaborate preparations. Who cares for them.

**** Hari Om****

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