

One's consciousness is purified first by Vaishnava initiation, by which one receives Vaishnava mantras for worshiping the Lord; then it is purified by one's performing daily sadhana and practicing Vaishnava achar (proper Vaishnava behavior). Purification of consciousness is very much interrelated with physical purification. The Vishnu-smriti lists the purifying agents for the contaminated body and mind as spiritual knowledge, austerity, certain prescribed activities (such as chanting Gayatri at the sandhis), fire, certain eatables (such as pañca-gavya), earth, water, cow dung, air, the sun, time, and cooked grains.

Among these, the foods are very important. If a person eats pure food he becomes pure, and if he eats impure food he becomes impure. Even though a person undertakes other forms of purification, if he eats impure food he remains impure. Therefore one must always be careful to partake only of pure food at all times.

“By performance of yajña one's eatables become sanctified, and by eating sanctified foodstuffs one's very existence becomes purified; by the purification of existence finer tissues in the memory become sanctified, and when memory is sanctified one can think of the path of liberation, and all these combined together lead to Krishna consciousness, the great necessity of present-day society" (Bg. 3.11, purport).