

Zonal Representatives - Service description

Definition

The Zonal Representative is a member of ISKCON who is appointed by the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry in conjunction with local regional authorities, who oversees all deity worship related matters at ISKCON centers in an assigned geographical region.

The Zonal Representative is adept in all functions of deity worship. The primary role of a Zonal Representative is training. They also personally guide and inspire devotees engaged in deity worship on behalf of the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry.

They act to keep local and regional authorities and the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry informed of local developments in deity worship and give them a better understanding of the worship being offering in ISKCON centers.

The devotees serving in this role are all graduates of the Mayapur Academy Diploma course. They have been personally trained in the various arts and skills of deity worship in Sridham Mayapur (West Bengal) by Jananivasa and Nrsimha Kavaca prabhus.

A Zonal Representative has received pancatrika gayatri diksa in an authorized Vaisnava sampradaya.

Principles

The instructions of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada are guiding principles for the deity worship in ISKCON. The Zonal Representative gives guidance based on these instructions, ISKCON's deity worship publications, and the guidance of the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry.

The Zonal Representative is a strict *sadhaka* who regularly, if not daily, attends maṅgala arati and *Srimad Bhagavatam* class, and also gives class regularly. They follow the four regulative principles and chant at least 16 rounds of japa daily.

The Zonal Representative is directly answerable to the ISKCON Deity Worship Minister and the local GBC(s).

Duties

Worship standards

To oversee the daily worship in ISKCON temples and centers and ensure that it is conducted according to ISKCON standards, as presented by ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry. This includes:

Worship on the altar

The Zonal Representative:

- Trains and guides devotees to enable them to carry out deity worship according to the directions of *guru*, *sādhū* and *sāstra* as given in ISKCON's deity worship publications.
- Assists devotees in understanding how to establish and maintain appropriate standards of cleanliness.
- Encourages that all functions are conducted punctually.
- Monitors quality and preparation of deity offerings
- Helps devotees to understand appropriate standards of daily worship such as ensuring there are adequate resources for the deities' daily needs, sufficient number of new outfits are offered to the deities each year and that the worship is conducted within the temples' means.

Backup services

The Zonal Representative:

- Educates devotees how to properly care for the deities' paraphernalia along with explaining various systems for clothing and jewelry storage where needed.

Tulasi

The Zonal Representative:

- Trains and guides devotees so they can understand the appropriate standards for the care and worship of Tulasi, including her being cared for by suitably qualified devotees in a clean and protective environment.

Care of Śrīla Prabhupāda's deity in the temple room

The Zonal Representative:

- Trains and guides devotees so they can understand appropriate standards of care of Śrīla Prabhupāda's deity in the temple room, including:
 - The care of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Vyāsāsana and surrounding area
 - Garlands and flowers being offered to Śrīla Prabhupāda every day.
 - Maintaining Śrīla Prabhupāda's clothes and other paraphernalia
 - Offering Śrīla Prabhupāda new clothes every year.

Festivals

Festivals are an important part of the deity worship, therefore the Zonal Representative:

- Guides devotees how to plan, coordinate and develop festivals for the pleasure of the deities and the community of devotees and guests, including:
 - Engaging devotees and visiting guests to assist in the festivals,
 - Encouraging cooking additional offerings
 - Bringing gifts for the deities
 - Offering additional services, etc.

Protection of the Deities

- Ensures that temples make adequate arrangements for the protection of the deities and Their property.

Personal

The Zonal Representative:

- Adheres to ISKCON Law.
- Makes no claim of ownership over property that has been allocated for use in their service or that has come as a result of their service via fund-raising, gifts or any other means. All such items are considered to be the property of ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry and the Zonal Representative must return such property upon request by the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry, or when one has decided to leave the service.

Finances:

The Zonal Representative:

- Will explore ways and means of generating income for ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry.
- May receive donations on behalf of ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry and encourage donations by different means.
- Are required to file annual personal financial reports to the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry and where requested, their National Executive Body. These reports shall contain a standard income statement and balance sheet (to be reported in a standard software format). The report should also include a list of all ISKCON-related bank accounts (including Account Name, Signers, and Balance) for which these individuals are a signer or have some control.
- All annual reports must be submitted by January 14th of each year and be signed with the following statement:

I solemnly swear that this report represents a true and accurate statement of my financial activities and status for the previous year.

Name _____ Date ___/___/___

Training and Education

As the Zonal Representative is responsible for encouraging and educating devotees about the standards of worship offered to the temple deities, it is therefore their responsibility to train pūjārīs in the knowledge, skills and values of deity worship. This includes:

- Holding regular courses to educate devotees in deity worship standards.
- Evaluating worship of deities in ISKCON temples in order to assess what training is required.
- Making worship manuals available
- Holding regular refresher courses
- Offering personal guidance to *pūjārīs* where appropriate

Additional responsibilities

- Encouraging the devotees and friends of Kṛṣṇa to serve the deities as much as possible.
- Conducting pūjārī meetings when visiting temples and submit reports of these meetings to the Temple President and ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry.
- Keeping local leaders and ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry informed about local developments
- Facilitating the Deity Installation application process for temples and centers within one's region.
- Teaching at the Mayapur Academy
- Writing articles for Arcana Journal and the quarterly newsletter