

The Search for Purity

**A collection of conversations, letters,
and essays regarding purity in
Vaisnava institutions compiled by
Swami B. A. Paramadvaiti**

VRINDA

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This book is especially compiled for members of the Gaudiya Vaisnava family, disciples of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, and those of Srila Bhakti Raksaka Sridhar Maharaj as well as their respective disciples. They will get the greatest benefit from the historical details clarified here even though it may help scholars or anyone dealing with organized religion to get a better understanding of the vaisnava tradition and religious philosophy. The author herewith declares that this book was written for those who have been personally involved, and that simple observers will not be able to get a clear understanding simply by reading this book.

Abbreviations frequently used in this book:

SP: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila
Prabhupada

SSM: His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Raksaka Sridhar Deva
Maharaj

GBC: Governing Body Commission of ISKCON

ISKCON: International Society for Krishna Consciousness

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give relief to those whose full appreciation of all pure devotees
hasn't yet flourished

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all our Godbrothers, the disciples of Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada as well as to all those sincere souls who are trying to serve Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in any of His Transcendental Forms and Names and His Devotees.

We pray for the blessings of all the beloved Vaisnava Acaryas in the line of Srila Rupa Goswami.

Special thanks we offer to Srila Bhakti Raksaka Sridhar Maharaj for the unlimited patience and enlightenment he gave us, to Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Maharaj who kindly inspired us with his pure humility and who inspired so many devotees to come together in WVA, and to all those who work hard to preserve the nectar for all relief aspiring souls like ourselves.

Swami B.A. Paramadvaiti.

INTRODUCTION

*namah om visnupadaya krsna prestaya bhutale
swami sri bhaktivedanta prabhupadaya te nam
gurvajñam sirasi-dhariam sakyavesa sva-rupine
hare krsneti mantrena pascaty-pracya-tarine
visvacarya prabaryaya divya karunya murtaye
sri-bhagavata-madhurya-gita-jñana-pradayine
gaura-sri-rupa-siddhanta-saraswati nisevine
radha krsna-padambhoja-bhrngaya gurave namah*

I offer my humble obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who is very dear to Lord Krishna on this earth, having taken shelter at His lotus feet. Taking the order of his guru on his head, he became empowered by Nityananda Prabhu to act as a sakyavesa-avatara. He distributed the Hare Krishna mantra all over the Eastern and Western world, delivering and uplifting all fallen souls. He is the best of millions of jagat-gurus, because he is the personification of divine mercy. He has distributed the sweet nectar of Srimad Bhagavatam and the transcendental knowledge of Bhagavad-gita all over the world. He is constantly engaged in exclusive devotional service to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, Srila Rupa Goswami, and Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu. I offer my humble obeisances unto Srila Prabhupada, who is like a bumblebee always tasting the nectar of the lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha and Govinda.

My dear Godbrothers and members of the aspiring Vaisnava Community,

Please accept my obeisances in the dust of your feet. The upcoming celebration of Srila Prabhupada's Centennial Festival is a wonderful reason to reflect on the true greatness of our Guru. He was not a charismatic person who expertly maneuvered himself into the front-line by promoting "spiritualized" versions of egotism or sense gratification. Nor did he try to discourage other true masters or traditions. In a very humble way he showed

how out-standing Krishna Consciousness is by his personal sacrifice and integrity. Nobody, even his "enemies" could deny that he was commanding respect. In his own words he clarified the universality of the acharya principle, which he presented personally in a speech he gave in Bombay on the appearance day of his own spiritual master.

"Gentleman, the offering of such an homage as has been arranged this evening to the acharya is not a sectarian concern, for when we speak of the fundamental principle of gurudeva or acharyadeva, we speak of something that is of universal application. There does not arise any question of discriminating my guru from yours or anyone else's. There is only one guru, who appears in an infinity of forms to teach you, me and all others."

Let us meditate for a moment on these very significant words of Srila Prabhupada. He is undoubtedly one of the greatest preachers this earth-globe had the fortune to be touched by, and still he was describing his function as a general representation of the Supreme mercy of God, coming down to the sincere seekers through his true devotees. Thus Srila Prabhupada gave us the very important lesson not to deny in a sectarian fashion the worship of any spiritual master by his disciples as something inferior to what we were allowed to witness in our relationship with him.

Therefore in order to honor the broadness of our guru for the sake of all his disciples and grand-disciples, as well as other devotees of the Lord, we have compiled this documentation. Just as much as Srila Prabhupada's glory has to be recognized by this world for it's own benefit it is necessary for all of us and for the future generations to

understand the universality of the acharya principle and thus not deny the happy celebration of all the siksa or diksa disciples of Srila Sridhar Maharaj, Srila B.P. Puri Maharaj or any other true follower in their lines to be just as important to them as Srila Prabhupada is to us. Even more so, how happy all vaisnavas should be if there are some trustworthy living representatives of our sampradaya walking amongst us. As history has proven even self-effulgent acharyas are only recognized by some fortunate souls. But at least we should all be very careful to not lend any support to misconceptions regarding the process of how the mercy descends to this world.

In the moment of the disappearance of an acharya we find that different words are used to describe the transition to the next phase in their particular institution as well as to describe their spiritual continuity. Terms such as "chosen successor(s)", "gurus authorized by some governing body commission", or even such declarations as "the acharya for this age" shall not confuse us. The previous acharyas have attempted in different ways to secure the continuity of their mission both in legal as well as in spiritual ways. But none of these great souls have thus given any different direction which would contradict the laws of the shastras regarding the guru parampara by limiting the worldwide preaching to one or a few spiritual masters of some particular institution. Whoever propounds such erroneous views, even when they are expressed in words of exclusive devotion to some particular guru, actually offends their guru by presenting him as narrow-minded and non-shastric.

Otherwise how would the future generations of the whole world know about our gurus and Mahaprabhu's greatness, if the future gurus were less trustworthy than YOUR guru was?

Besides that how many disciples can any guru take care off? Who, except Krishna Himself, can adjust to the need of spiritual masters for the searching souls? Somehow this mistake has sneaked into the minds of some unhappy souls and thus their samskara or envy has hindered them to discover the full happy truth of our sampradaya. Even though they may organize the biggest fireworks in the world's history to commemorate Srila Prabhupada's Centennial Festival, it will not be enough to give the full honor to our holy master unless this stain of misconception can be removed from all devotees in the world. A neophyte may see his guru as the all in all, but a more advanced devotee should be capable to understand the simple words of Srila Prabhupada in Bombay and see any acharya as an inspired medium the Supreme Lord is using to protect and guide new aspiring vaisnavas in their spiritual life. If this publication can help in any way to accomplish that goal we pray that it may be considered an offering to our spiritual master's greatness as well as to the greatness of the transcendental family he introduced us to.

Your fallen servant, Swami B.A. Paramadvaiti.

We Left for Purity

To start this book on a very positive note: Everything Krishna does is perfect. More so, everything is perfect that he allows to happen to his movement which was started by his own pure devotee to spread His mercy around. In other words, whatever we present in these pages, including the outrageous misconduct and foolishness we, Srila Prabhupada's disciples have committed, contains very valuable lessons. These

sometimes painful experiences will teach the future vaisnava movements. This is a blessing in disguise. Surely we don't want to offend any-body and much less confuse others in their spiritual life, but it is a fact - in order to surrender to guru and Krishna for real and on a perma-nently increasing basis, we have to know who is who and what is what in this history and the vais-nava family or movement we are participating in.

We studied these situations for many years. We lived through the ordeal. We also know that today, March '93, ten years have already passed and most devotees even in leading positions have not had any personal, first hand experience in the way that Srila Prabhupada cultivated us with tender love and care. Often they are told that the ISKCON, GBC and new guru confusions are over. Little do they know of the conspiracy against Srila Prabhupada's godbrother and their well-wisher, a pure devotee of Krishna, who boldly tried to save us from disintegration and disgrace.

So many of you don't know the history and may ask yourself why sannyasis and so many other disciples of Srila Prabhupada left the GBC authority behind and started their own missions. This book is a short excerpt of the humongus quantity of first hand tape recordings, letters, position papers, GBC resolutions, etc., so that you can form your own picture and judge with your heart for your own benefit. We are fallen souls and by no means perfect, but we feel it is our duty to all of you who came later in history to set the record straight.

We will not mention any names in this book to avoid that somebody gets carried away by his ego then to follow the actual idea of our message and be able to arrive at the happy, all accommo-dating conclusion all vaisnavas and those who aspire to become their servants always hope for; the love and trust, the unity in diversity, the glory of the Supreme Harmonist, Sri Chaitanya Maha-prabhu. All glories to his pure devotees: Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, to mention just a few.

Nevertheless those who are not satisfied and who want to

study all the nitty-gritty details and names can contact us and we will share our archives with them. Please accept my dandavat pranams at your feet and always remember that this book is an insider book meant for all those who are concerned with the Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya-Sampradaya, their multiple families, and above all, their purity in purpose. Purity is the force and the only ingredient we may try to offer to attract the causeless mercy of Srimati Radharani and her devotees to our side.

An Important Message

Srila Narottama das Thakur wrote in his song Vaisnava Vijnapati:

*Hari sthane aparade tare hari nama
toma sthane aparadhe nahika enana*

If someone has committed an offense against Lord Hari, he can be freed from that sin, due to the mercy of the holy name, but if someone commits an offense against you (the holy Vaisnava), there is no way he can be liberated.

When I read this sloka I become very un-happy. What will happen to all of those who off-ended my Sannyas Guru SSM in order to hide their own wrongs? And what will happen to those who follow them blindly? Due to igno-rance so many other high Vaisnavas were also ignored or offended in the name of 'service' to SP.

Since Bhakti Yoga is a process of descending mercy we should carefully reflect upon how this mercy is actually descending and thus connect us truly to that highest domain.

Any authorized agent like SP will not tolerate any abuse done by his followers to another authorized agent like SSM. Since SP personally recruited souls to take shelter of SSM for many years it stands beyond the shadow of a doubt that he did consider SSM an authorized agent. Let us not forget that story

of Durvasa Muni offending Ambarish Maharaj. For many years now I have had to defend the dignity of SSM, often to devotees who recently joined ISKCON and who were taught to ignore SSM and his followers at best. But generally they are haunted by the following false conceptions widely spread through ISKCON .

1. SSM wanted to take over ISKCON and the GBC saved ISKCON from him and his followers.

2. To associate with SSM and his followers is identical to giving up SP, being unloyal to SP, in other words totally disobeying SP.

3. His books are ignored by ISKCON book-stores and in ISKCON locker raids are confiscated, sometimes burned, and often declared un-authorized. (Sastra Ninda)

4. SSM followers are described as selfish, ambitious, enemies of SP's real mission, from another sampradaya, fallen, etc, etc.

I am tired of repeating the same old story over and over. Even though it surely doesn't look good for those who created or gave silent support to that slanderous campaign, I feel it is time now for all to know the history of ISKCON after SP's departure.

When the governing members of a spiritual institution, out of fear of losing influence start to give support to unjust or impure members, the whole institution loses its credibility and ideals. ISKCON's GBCs often give continual support to fallen members amongst them, even when their local subjects risk their own service, in order to denounce the individual leader's deviations.

We pray that this unpalatable revelation may even change the hearts of some offenders, or at least it may help the vaishnava communities around the world to get closer to each other and discover the dream of SP: UNITY IN DIVERSITY.

Truly, unity exists for all followers of pure theism. Unless we recognize that, all further discussions would be a waste of time. And the diversity is also real. Generally it stands out in personalities and styles of preaching, in rituals and concerns. That is both natural as well as necessary. Every father's first

concern is with his own children. Still SP wanted a Vaisnava Unity far beyond ISKCON and its local interests. He wanted unity in order to strengthen the fight against materialism, unity to show the glory of the present Yuga Avatar, and unity in order to show that pure theism is above provincial sectarian material interests so necessary to make an affront to atheistic or Mayavadi reformers who currently dominate the scene of world concerns like environmental issues, etc.

We must develop or show our broadness in order to develop our own solid stand in this progressive development. That will truly show our love to SP, and it will require real spiritual advancement.

My own attempts to help ISKCON from within and also later from the outside are partially documented later in this book. They give us a good idea, what it was like to be a disciple of SP in ISKCON. Actually due to my own leadership position and due to working in South America I was relatively free, except when it came to attempting to address the faults of ISKCON. Others of my godbrothers were pushed around far worse until they could not take it anymore.

Actually I tried my best to cooperate with the GBC in South America until '79. SP had requested me by letter to make the preaching in Brazil my life and soul. In '79 the GBC kicked me out of Brazil. From then I observed so many GBC atrocities, ISKCON Zonal Gurus falling down, the total lack of justice and the indis-position of the GBC to resolve or even hear the problems of ISKCON's members. All that made me very critical.

Until '81 I traveled throughout ISKCON and served as regional secretary of Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, and Costa Rica. I was looking for a solution to our difficulty, but things only got worse. After building up my service again, the GBC kicked me out again. I went to the Miami GBC meeting to personally complain against the mistreatment of SP disciples in general. The GBCs refused to hear my case and only by my personal intervention in their meeting, my case was heard and I was reinstated in my service. But again the local GBC made

things impossible and I started to compile my protests against the GBC's misuse of my guru's mission. I still did not have the answer on how this mission could be managed nicely with the presence of so many gurus, their godbrothers, and their many new disciples. Finally, by Sri Krishna's grace I came in contact with a copy of the book - Sri Guru and His Grace by SSM. All of a sudden I found that all my questions were answered. The book was compiled from the conversations of the GBC with SSM. I felt like someone whose doubts about the injustice of this world had been removed by discovering Krishna's teachings on karma and reincarnation.

By then SSM was already declared an enemy of ISKCON. Due to my stay in South America from before SP's departure until then I did not know much about the personality of SSM. It was prohibited by then to visit SSM under the threat that anybody "crossing over the river" could not return to ISKCON any more. But here, all of a sudden I found the answers to our plight. Aware of that situation I worked through SP's books and letters. That research helped me demonstrate the very important points of SSM instructions simply by quoting from SP. The result I presented to the ISKCON leaders in the form of a 26 page presentation. I personally presented it to the GBC and temple presidents in March '84 in Mayapur. Even though the initial response of some GBC men had been positive and promising for a change, once the GBC meeting began, I was kicked out of my service, this time by everyone on the GBC, and I was cited before the privilege committee. That committee had the audacity to tell me that I should rather have committed suicide than to even suggest that I would leave ISKCON if no changes were going to be made. Besides that, the committee did not discuss any of the points I had presented.

After that meeting, by Sri Krishna's causeless grace, the devotees in Colombia due to their love and sincerity decided to relinquish their formal connection to ISKCON authority and to their formal ISKCON Zonal Acharya in favor of working together with me in love and trust, as we all felt was the best in our hearts. I am eternally indebted to those devotees who gave

up all formalities in order to follow their own understanding of guru sastra and sadhu. In this case siksa-guru and SSM's teachings had been given the preference over the GBC authority.

After accepting that proposal of the devotees in Colombia I wrote many letters to ISKCON leaders, of which some are included here. Much to my surprise I never received any official letter or communication from ISKCON trying to get us back. Obviously people like us are not wanted in ISKCON. My own invitation to the GBC to come and impartially study the situation in Colombia was answered with a coup attempt to turn the devotees against me and SSM. It failed, as much as all the other attempts of the GBC to have me eliminated, jailed or evicted from Colombia. Strangely enough, ISKCON was never officially informed about the Colombian situation, and not one GBC resolution deals with that topic.

After receiving the merciful initiation into the sannyas ashram from SSM on the day of SP's disappearance, I started our preaching also in other places outside of Colombia. I had gone to him six months after we left ISKCON to make clear that it was our private choice and not SSM who had convinced us to leave ISKCON.

I pleaded with SSM to give me initiation as a Vaisnava Sannyasi, even though I had taken Sannyas previously in '78 from one godbrother. But I did not want to have a superficial relationship with my Sannyas-guru. Also that god-brother, besides giving a very bad sannyas example, also distorted the philosophy and as a GBC member participated in the campaign against SSM. I wanted a sannyas-guru who deserved my love and trust. SSM granted that mercy to me, showing that he was not interested in any diplomacy, nor in the threats he had received if he would accept me.

My friends and I nevertheless always hoped for ISKCON to realize its mistaken position. In '90 I decided to make another attempt to ap-proach the GBC. Having closely observed ISKCON changes over the years I proposed to hold a debate with the GBC and their critics in a very nice vaisnava form in

order to advance SP's mission. Even though I sent letters to all ISKCON offices inviting them to send some representatives, or to come altogether, again, there was no answer. When I personally went to the debate I only met with one GBC man, who just happened to be there. He, and also a letter the GBC chairman sent to me after the date of the debate, informed me that the GBC will not discuss their problems with outsiders like me. Anyway, all these documents are presented here so that you can reach your own conclusions on how to save our spiritual heritage. No doubt I am just one little case of many SP disciples searching for shelter after the GBC's ISKCON became unbearable. SSM was the pillar for survival, but many until today do not know of his valuable contribution.

Also after SSM left this world, we experienced how some of his disciples became victims of their pride and ambition.

Some ex-followers of SSM seemed to be very eager to turn their affiliation to a high soul into money, woman and fame. Consulting tantrics and astrology they tried to create the impression that their connection to SSM was the only real one. SSM had made it clear that the world needs many acharyas because he had recognized several other Sannyasis and their disciples in affiliation to his mission under the name Mahamandala. In other words it was clearly understood that SSM approved that disciples may continue the sampradaya by accepting disciples after the Guru disappeared. But all Acharyas and their disciples should be very careful that no clash or conflict, may create any disturbance to other genuine preachers. Even though it is sometimes painful to see, the falsely motivated teachers fortunately are exposed by Krishna's arrangement and the true acharyas are recognized by their self-effulgence. There seems to always be confusion regarding how to carry on the sampradaya after the Founder Acharya leaves this world.

To fall away from the path of Vaisnava-seva, and to even turn into opportunists who want to use the seva of other vaisnavas for personal mundane gain is always a danger for neophytes.

The Zonal Guru misconception can actually take several shapes. Any claim on spiritual exclusivity or monopoly by some guru or his disciples should make us very worried. SSM said, If someone says, "I have it", we should offer him our respect from a place far away.

Anyone claiming that he or his guru is the only representative of the highest line is a cheater and is an enemy of our sampradaya who wants to take advantage of your ignorance.

Of course a disciple may happily feel that his connection is the best, and that he likes to connect others to that line and to his spiritual master but never at the cost of deriding other preachers. Actually the world is full of false prophets. Self proclaimed avatars, happiness promising witches, channelers, tantrics, karmis, jñanis and power-searching yogis. Generally they have in common that they ignore Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and have no Guru-parampara. Even after we rejected all non-devotional paths, we still have to be wary and pray profoundly not to fall victim to arrogant dictator like managers, sahajiyas, imitationists, Zonal Gurus of all kinds or anyone else who has not made the highest Bhakti his goal of life.

Therefore we should always look up towards a living pure devotee and serve him. If such a pure devotee is not in our sight, or if it is up to us to continue to represent the mission of our Guru, our own sincerity and humility will be the only hope to get the guide of the Paramatma, and thus become true servants of everyone.

SSM and SP are two souls from GOLOKA VRINDAVAN. They have come to save us all, and all those who serve them sincerely are able to connect others to that divine realm. Let us all learn from all these mistakes, to be able to serve the future Vaisnavas with more maturity.

There does not exist any institution in the world which can save anyone. Institutions are not perfect, they have no personality and thus no realizations. It is only by the mercy of a real sadhu, who knows how to shed more light on the written instructions that we may be saved from illusion and that we

will be taken back to home, home sweet home.

The First Contacts of the GBC with Srila Sridhar Maharaj

Different live important topics were discussed between GBC members and Srila Sridhar Maharaj in the period 1977 until 1980 while the GBC consulted their new situation with Srila Sridhar Maharaj as had been recommended by Srila Prabhupada. See for yourself what he said and what they made out of it, reaching its climax in the GBC's attempt to blame all their problems on Srila Sridhar Maharaj's advice to form Zonal Acharyas, which he had warned them to do on their very first meeting.

ISKCON members have the unhappy training to refer to Srila Sridhar Maharaj just as Sridhar or to his followers as the Sridharaitis. Little do they know that this belittling is an equivalent to calling Srila Narottama das Thakur just Narottama, or to calling the Gaudiya Math including Srila Prabhupada just the Sarasvatis. This is the way nonbelievers may talk, but not a humble vaisnava referring to his well-wishers who could grant him shelter in the divine service of Sri Vrindavan Dhama.

This history can explain to you how after the disappearance of Srila Prabhupada from this world, so many changes took place in ISKCON. You will also read what I and other members of ISKCON attempted to please our spiritual master by trying to correct so many mistakes which appeared. The subjects are so extensive that virtually hundreds of pages of information and protests were compiled and circulated. Thousands of nights were spent pondering the problems we were facing all of a sudden in our orphaned spiritual life. And after a while hundreds of ISKCON members inquired from Srila Sridhar Maharaj about the best plan of action out of their dilemma.

Actually it is a breath-taking adventure, and here in this book we have retained the original wordings of some of our outcries for help and rectification. Nevertheless it is only a slight reflection of what really touched so deeply the hearts of Krishna's devotees in ISKCON, when we had to make the choice of how to serve our spiritual master, facing the reality that the movement was developing many wrong attitudes.

For historical record we have compiled here a presentation with excerpts of the communication we had with ISKCON's GBC and other official organs until today. At least this will show that we made so many attempts to correct the wrong developments in Srila Prabhupada's movement. This also shows clearly how little interest ISKCON's leaders have shown to unite all vaisnavas until now.

After Srila Prabhupada disappeared, it took me a long time to actually realize that the GBC was having a difficult time figuring out how to establish new gurus in ISKCON. Since I was living far away in Brazil, working as ISKCON's representative there, I simply accepted whatever I was told, and thus I tried to establish Hriday-ananda Goswami as guru in Brazil.

But things were not to remain easy. As directed by Srila Prabhupada, the GBCs went to consult with Srila Sridhar Maharaj in Navadwipa on how new gurus could be established in ISKCON.

They told Srila Sridhar Maharaj that eleven members of the GBC had been appointed as Ritvik Acharyas during the presence of Srila Prabhupada and that Srila Prabhupada had clearly indicated that they would be real gurus after his departure. Also they said that the list of eleven would be expanded in the future.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj gave, in the first meeting of many to follow, some essential instructions which unfortunately were not really understood until today.

***Tape transcript of first discussion with GBC:**

Jayapataka Swami: After the departure of our spiritual master we have come to you to offer our respects and to hear your Upadesh... We came to

take your advice how our new spiritual masters should deal with certain questions.

Srila Prabhupada taught us his desires, but he also said that on certain technical points and matters of philosophy, if there were any question we should approach you. Srila Prabhupada when he was very ill appointed eleven devotees as *ritvik* and that after he disappeared that the ritviks will continue as spiritual masters and that they could be increased later. That would be decided by the GBC.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: A devotee can take his spiritual master according to his *sraddha*. The newcomers should be given some time to hear from different persons. And then his *sraddha* shall tell to whom he shall submit.

Purport: That alone was the clear concept given by Srila Sridhar Maharaj and fully backed by the scriptures.

All zonal concoctions were 100% GBC inventions, even though the GBC later dared to accuse Srila Sridhar Maharaj of being the culprit of their mistake.

One ISKCON guru even wrote a book called Vaisnava Ke where he accuses Srila Sridhar Maharaj of having given great pain to Srila Prabhupada after confirming here that Srila Prabhupada personally sent him for advice to Srila Sridhar Maharaj. This tape alone uncovers the entire political intrigue the GBC has been playing with. That book was published after the author went with other GBC men to fake repentance for their offenses against Srila Sridhar Maharaj to Navadwipa in 1986.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: Siksa-gurus and diksa-gurus are manifestations of Krishna's mercy. Whoever can help me to come closer to Krishna is siksa-guru. *Acaryaman viyanijam* - He comes in an infinite quantity of forms to save us. The vaisnavas are siksa-gurus.

He to whom I am most indebted to, he will be my most important guru, whether he is diksa, siksa or sanniyas-guru.

Purport: Here Srila Sridhar Maharaj soundly defeats the GBC zonal set-up with their control over the sentiment of devotees all over the world. Actually that should resolve everything, but somehow ISKCON devotees have still not gotten that message.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: Through whom the maximum grace has descended

to me, he is my supreme guru (spiritual common sense).

The guru also executes his function through the help of his guru. In this way the chain goes up to Krishna.

Guru must be transparent. The 100% servant of his guru, only he can be guru. This is the criteria.

Even a disciple may commit a mistake when accepting a guru, therefore it is the duty of other vaisnavas to guide him.

Purport: Here Srila Sridhar Maharaj declares that only if a local preacher is fully convinced of some spiritual master, is he authorized to re-commend him. Otherwise he is participating in a cheating process. But the GBC kicks out local preachers if they do not act according to their idea of "gurus" in their zone.

Tamal Krishna Goswami: How shall we deal with temples with several acharyas?

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: It is good that the guru has a place of his own with his disciples. But in the major centers, problems would arise if one guru would take the central position, because so many interests exist there.

Those centers which Srila Prabhupada personally established should keep a group photo with Srila Prabhupada in the center on the altar.

Purport: The picture was actually taken, but the new ISKCON gurus did not like Srila Sridhar Maharaj's advice. On the contrary, they established their headquarters all in the main centers founded by Srila Prabhupada and from there they extended their tight grip on all resources.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj: I recommended that every guru must have at least one place where his authority is not challenged, just like a man after he gets married needs at least a room for his family.

Purport: Srila Sridhar Maharaj never endorsed to impose yourself on your godbrothers as the only guru they can work with in temples which they had started single handedly.

That was the biggest mistake in the beginning and even today we find that some guru GBCs are running their areas in quite the same way.

The essential point here is that whoever may emerge as a new guru in an institution should do so by his own merits.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj said to retain main temples established by Srila Prabhupada as place for all members to come together on an equal level, but also allow new gurus to establish new places, where their relationship with those who could see the guru tattva manifest in them could freely flourish.

That policy would actually transcend most difficulties at once, and should be applied at once.

Unfortunately the new gurus' concern was quite the opposite. They wanted only to know how high their seats could be and how to take control of the part of ISKCON allotted to them.

The first major protest against the new guru policies came from no one less important than Pradyumna Prabhu. He had accompanied Srila Prabhupada for many years as his sanskrit secretary and was well acquainted with Gaudiya tradition. He was supposed to finish the translation work of Srila Prabhupada's life work, the Srimad Bhagavatam under the guidance of Srila Sridhar Maharaj as Srila Prabhupada had ordered.

A Letter of Pradyumna Prabhu to Satsvarupa Goswami

Sri Sri Guru Gauranga Yayatah

7 August, 1978

Dear Satsvarupa Maharaja,

Please accept my most humble obeisance. Maharaj, I am writing you this letter with great anxiety in my heart and after days and days and long nights of thought and careful consideration.

I have been staying in Vrindavan now for some time and have not visited any other center recently except Delhi. Therefore, the information I have of what is happening at our other centers comes only from devotees visiting here, occasional letters, newsletters and our society's magazines and other publications. But what news I hear from these sources is very alarming and therefore I am writing to you in some anxiety.

The matter concerns the Godbrothers who were selected by Srila Prabhupada to accept disciples. At the time of Srila Prabhupada's disappearance, it was most clearly understood by all of us present that Srila Prabhupada had made no successor. Everyone admitted that fact and

understood it clearly. Instead the GBCs were to jointly manage all affairs of ISKCON just as had been the case previously. This was the same solution as desired by Om Visnupada Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, who also had not made any successor, although his wishes were not followed. In addition to the GBC management, Srila Prabhupada also selected eleven somewhat advanced disciples to grant initiation to newcomers. However it was never mentioned at any time by His Divine Grace that these eleven were to be known as acharyas. He simply instructed that they may now accept disciples. Otherwise, as it was understood and practiced at that time, there was no special position given to these eleven, either in the society as a whole or in relation to their other Godbrothers. Management would depend on the joint GBC and among godbrothers and sisters. All are on the same level, with the exception of some special regard and respect shown to older (senior) disciples by these godbrothers and godsisters who are junior.

Now at present, I understand that the eleven gurus are all 1) adopting the title of acharya, 2) sitting on high Vyasasanas in front of Srila Prabhupada's Vyasasanas and their own Godbrothers, 3) accepting worship and great respect normally reserved for a guru from the rest of their Godbrothers and 4) that the previous GBC zones have all been given by mutual agreement or by invitation among the different acharyas.

First of all, the word acharya may be taken in three senses. Etymologically the word means "one who practices" or "one who practices what he preaches". This is the general meaning and may be used in relation to any pure devotee. Secondly, the word means "one who grants initiation to a disciple." This is specifically indicated one who is guru. Anyone who grants initiation or is a guru may be called as "acharyadeva," etc. - by his disciples only! - Whoever has accepted him as a guru must give all respects to him in every way, but this does not apply to those who are not his disciples.

Thirdly, the word acharya indicates "the spiritual head of an institution or pitha". This meaning is very specific. It does not mean just anyone. It means only one who has been specifically declared by the previous acharya to be his successor above all others to the seat of the spiritual institution which he heads. He alone, among all of his Godbrothers is given a raised seat and special honor. No other Godbrother may receive such respect and he is the authority in all spiritual and material matters. This is the strict tradition in all of the Gaudiya Sampradayas. Now Srila Prabhupada, it is clear, did not appoint any such successor because no one of his disciples at present is advanced to the level of Krishna Consciousness necessary to assume such a position. Nor did Srila Prabhupada make eleven such acharyas. This was never mentioned by him. They were only given permission to make disciples and the GBC was to jointly manage, materially and spiritually. There was never any distinction made by Srila Prabhupada between material management and spiritual management. Both are the concern of the

GBC. The eleven gurus may be only known as acharyas only in the second sense of the word - to their disciples as mantra-giving gurus, not in the third sense, as "the spiritual successors of Srila Prabhupada". That was never meant to be by His Divine Grace.

Secondly, among Godbrothers it is not correct that any one of them sit above the others, especially in the presence of Gurudeva. If Gurudeva is not present, sometimes the sannyasi Godbrothers may be given an asana, but that asana does not mean a huge gigantic seat. It simply means a square piece of cloth or wool not more than 1/8" or 1/4" thick. This is asana. If any one Godbrother or many Godbrothers sit above the others it is not at all proper.

Sometimes in an assembly there may be a raised platform or table on which the sannyasi speakers sit, but all sannyasi godbrothers must be invited to sit in an equal place on the speaker's platform. Sometimes a grihasta or brahmachari godbrother may also be invited to sit there if they are deserving by their advancement. If there is an appointed acharya as mentioned before (third sense of the word) than he alone may sit higher than the other godbrothers. Indeed in the different Gaudiya Mathas, even if one godbrother is in the position of acharya, he usually, out of humility, takes only a thin cloth asana, not anything higher. It is the symptom of a Vaisnava to be extremely humble. He must always be extremely careful of not putting himself in a position to become conceited. A guru may take a higher seat than his disciple - that is bonafide. But he cannot illegally take a higher seat than his godbrother. The relation between the guru and his godbrothers and a guru and his disciples is entirely different. He should not sit higher than godbrothers other than if he is a sannyasi, on a thin cloth as already mentioned if offered by his godbrothers, or accept respect from them without offering respect in return. This is the general *niti* or etiquette. Besides this there are, among godbrothers, some further rules to be observed among those who are senior and those who are junior. Seniority is calculated according to the time of receiving first (Harinam) initiation or by his ability to perform *bhajana*.

If one godbrother has disciples, the guru-puja and Vyasa-puja of that godbrother should be conducted in a separate place or his private room-- not in front of all his other godbrothers. In an assembly of Vaisnavas all sit on the same level together, godbrothers along with their sisyas. No one is permitted to accept separate respect from their disciples in any gathering of other godbrothers. In Gaudiya math, the Vyasa-puja of one godbrother who has disciples is usually performed in the following manner. The guru takes his raised seat in his private place and invites all his godbrothers to come to the function also. If his Godbrothers come to offer him some flowers, that godbrother guru immediately first worships his other godbrothers and offer them garland, candana, etc., and in some cases presents like cloth, umbrella, etc. They honor each other and are seated properly, then that guru's disciples

can come forward and offer their worship. This is the system being observed. Incidentally, the words of Om Visnupada Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura found in the English book Sri Chaitanya's Teachings regarding the sitting above everyone else are from a speech delivered in response to the offerings of his disciples on the occasion of his vyasa-puja. Those words are in relation to his disciples-- not to his godbrothers, of which there weren't any. The *niti* in regard to godbrothers is completely different from that to disciples.

One who is actually guru may make disciples anywhere he finds someone who is worthy. The connection between guru and disciple is made by Krishna directly and it is not subject to legislation. All the world-wide temples of ISKCON are controlled by the GBC. The temples are managed by them jointly and they decide each year which members of the GBC will manage in which place. The GBC who is appointed to be responsible for a certain zone somewhere on the planet, if a guru, will naturally make many disciples in that place - but how can he be illicitly restricted from accepting a disciple from somewhere else? That is material consideration. It has nothing to do with transcendental order by which guru and disciple make their meeting. It is not geographical.

Secondly, no GBC who is guru may make that zone of which he is temporarily in charge by appointment of joint GBC, into his own private place. If some other guru visits there and some newcomer wishes to accept him as spiritual preceptor, how can he be prohibited? Furthermore, all the temples of ISKCON are to be run by the GBC. No one GBC who is a guru may use the title acharya of such and such a zone. Srila Prabhupada never appointed one acharya of the whole ISKCON nor did he appoint several acharyas for parts of ISKCON. This will only lead to an ultimate division of the one ISKCON into many different fragments and destroy our united preaching work.

If someone sets up his personal seat as acharya in different temples, how can it be removed? Who else can sit in it? Then does that temple belong to that guru or does it belong to the GBC? That means the power or control is switched from joint GBC to the eleven gurus. Srila Prabhupada never intended this arrangement. More-over in the future, in accordance with His Divine Grace's instructions, other qualified godbrothers may also become gurus. Where will they go? In Srila Prabhupada's temple no raised seat should be given to anyone but Srila Prabhupada - all Godbrothers should sit on the same level. One exception may be made in the case of one speaking from the sastras like Srimad-Bhagavatam, Bhagavad-Gita, Chaitanya-Caritamrta, etc. during the class. But that seat is very special. It is not for the reader - it is meant for the book. After paying obeisance to that seat, he who is to read may, after taking permission from his senior Godbrothers and sannyasis, ascend to read from Bhagavatam. After finishing, he may again pay his obeisances.

Much of the knowledge written here is not found in sastras, but is called *sistacara* --that which has been taught by the conduct of the past guru parampara. It has not been specifically mentioned in the sastras, but still it is accepted as authoritative because of being seen to be the conduct of previous acharyas and their disciples.

Maharaja, after much consideration and consultation and also confirmation by older members of our sampradaya I am writing to you to see if you can rectify the present situation. Many of us here, older godbrothers, are very concerned in two ways — 1. that the eleven gurus not having been appointed to the position of acharya and for which they are unqualified both by 1) the insufficient knowledge of sastra and 2) the incomplete realization of Krishna Consciousness, are accepting worship on that level - and this may lead to anomalies in the society and personally, because of lack of complete detachment in *atmajnana*, to a build up of pride and subsequent falldown, and 2. That the united society ISKCON, because of illegal division and control by a few members instead of the joint GBC will become broken up in separate societies and the unified preaching effort very much hindered.

Hoping for your immediate attention and kind reply,

Pradyumna das Adhikari

P.S. These are not good signs for our society. Older godbrothers and sannyanis here are very concerned that if the present trend is not checked immediately, it will have passed beyond that point and ISKCON will be in chaos in the near future.

I hereby formally request that all these points be immediately brought to the attention of the GBC so that a very tactful solution for all concerned may be decided and amicably implemented in our society. Please note that there is nothing personal in this letter. It is some pertinent spiritual knowledge meant for the good of all. If anyone takes offense, I very humbly beg pardon at his feet.

Hoping that this meets you in the best of health

In the service of Srila Prabhupada

Pradyumna das Adhikari

Unfortunately the ISKCON GBC did not pay any attention to Pradyumna's warning, but did remove him from his translator service. Now the new system started to go into full swing. Again, it is impossible to describe the details of the following years.

Just by reading these documents you can get some idea, because the situation was full of mistakes and offenses of

ISKCON's against their godbrothers. Obviously some gurus showed symptoms of strong deviations. When the GBC finally decided to take action, they practically fired Hansadutta and Tamal Krishna Goswami from their zonal guru and GBC posts.

Surprise, upheaval, and confusion reached all of ISKCON. What happened to our eleven "perfect gurus"? Obviously other gurus became object of scrutinizing character evaluation.

The GBC was in trouble and approached Srila Sridhar Maharaj for help. Satsvarupa Goswami explained how Srila Sridhar Maharaj helped the GBC.

Satsvarupa's Presentation of Srila Sridhar Maharaj

Satsvarupa Maharaj: I am recording this talk at the ISKCON Potomac Center after hearing four cassette tapes of seven GBC members talking with Srila Sridhar Maharaj. I thought the issues they discussed were very significant for my disciples, especially because of the answers given by Srila Sridhar Maharaj, and the way the GBC members responded to him, bringing about a resolution under Srila Sridhar Maharaj's guidance. Just before his disappearance, His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada, our beloved spiritual master and the founder-acarya of ISKCON, said that we should go to his godbrother Sridhar Maharaj for guidance on philosophy, after the disappearance of Srila Prabhupada. So, this talk of October certainly showed the GBC doing this, and Srila Sridhar Maharaj fulfilling this role as Prabhupada requested he do for the disciples of Srila Prabhupada. I will summarize the talk briefly, up to a certain point, and then I will play excerpts from the time when Sridhar Maharaj did most of his talking.

The members were going to Sridhar Maharaj to settle big problems; particularly Srila Hansadutta Maharaj and Srila Tamal Krishna Maharaj wanted to present their grievances. As most of you already know, back in April (of 1980), the GBC had a meeting and took action against these two guru godbrothers for certain activities of theirs which were deemed improper. The two gurus submitted to their decision, and left their zones in the care of others, and they went to India. But there, when they heard from their different disciples how things were going on in their absence, they became disturbed and felt that the treatment by the GBC care-takers was causing a disturbance in their relationships with their disciples.

So, since the GBC members couldn't settle this themselves, both sides agreed to let Sridhar Maharaj judge what was an impasse for everyone else.

So, both sides were willing to go along with Srila Sridhar Maharaj. The gurus wanted a correction in their relationship with their disciples, not to be interfered with; others GBC members wanted Srila Sridhara Maharaj to fully hear the claims of wrong-doings and the need for the GBC to manage the society by law, because Srila Prabhupada did appoint the GBC as the final managerial authority. The main meeting was at another time when GBC members came, including Srila Bhagavan Maharaj, Jayapataka Swami, Srila Tamal Krishna Goswami, Prabhupada Kripa Maharaj, Srila Hansadutta Maharaj, and Gopal Krishna Prabhu.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj proceeded by asking each of them to say what they thought was going on, and what they thought should be done. He said that he wanted to help, but he wanted them to help him, by expressing how they saw it. So, in this way, all the issues were presented and brought out, expressing both the guru's disturbances and the other GBC's concern that the movement had to be governed, and that even a guru or a GBC member who misbehaves will cause a bad effect to the world-wide movement's preaching. ...The principles of the issues, especially as seen by Sridhar Maharaj, are important.

SSM: The position of acharya is very intricate. It is very difficult to bring an acharya under rule. You see, that is our practical experience. You please hear and note: The position of acharya is a relative thing, just as is mother-child, father-child, wife-husband; so it is a relative thing. The position of disciple is also relative. So, relative and absolute and their relation; to adjust between the two is a difficult thing and it is an eternal (problem). So, as in rasa: in the madhurya-rasa even there is enmity between vatsalya-rasa and madhurya-rasa. Yasoda is thinking, "My son is lost! They have captured my son!" And the gopis in madhurya rasa see that *vatsalya* is always jealous of our free mixing. That is the hindrance to the way of our free mixing. Still, two things to be continued; It is clearly written in sastra that vatsalya and madhurya are two antagonistic rasas. One is always suspicious that the other is encroaching on my rights. Very jealous. Jealously, encroachment is coming from the other side, against our rightful position. This is an eternal truth. So we have to accommodate with such mentality, and such broadness of our hearts. When the absolute consideration will come, they will have to attach both rasas within the fold. So, to the disciple, the acharya's position is supreme. Even more than God. In scripture we find it. The guru is more near and more affectionate than God. God has many to deal with, but guru is only careful about my welfare. The other day I told to some of you that it is described that guru is water around the lotus, and the sun is God. Remove the water, and the sun will burn the lotus. And when the water is around the lotus, the sun will foster the lotus. But guru removed, the very God, the sun will burn the lotus. The guru's position is more helpful to the disciple. If we have a natural growth, if we want a natural growth of the sraddha of the disciple, the regard of the disciple toward the guru and the Absolute, such

room must be allowed in the constitution, if the constitution is to live at all.

Some adjustment must have to come between the relation, and it is better that the acharyas themselves, they will come to directly make all the necessary adjustments. Between acharya and acharya, acharya and godbrother acharya and his disciples, and the disciples and the disciples. All these fine points of sentiment, sentiment is not to be neglected. Law is not everything. Law should be accommodating to grow the sentiment, otherwise this is no law. Law should come to promote the sraddha, make room for the faith to develop. Such law should come to help us. Sastra's jurisdiction is limited. Only to promote love, and when love comes it will be free. Smooth harmonious working is possible only in the area of love. Spontaneous. That is also some sort of hitch, as in madhurya rasa and vatsalya rasa.. (gap in tape) but all to please Krishna.

Harmony is there. But *ragavid bhava navadhi vaidhi bhakti adhikaras tu ragavid bhava navadhi*. Vaidhi bhakti: devotion under the guidance of sastra, laws and rules, that is to a certain extent. It will only help the inner awakening of love and affection, and then it will retire. Law will retire giving room to the spontaneous flow of love. Loving service to the Supreme. So, law is not all. Law is necessary and especially in the lower stage. And it should make room for free movement between the relationship, just as I once told that if one is not married, there is no necessity of any separate room. He may lay down here and there. But whenever he marries, he wants some room to behave in a particular way, some private arrangement. So, when one is next to a disciple, that sort of relationship should find some independent place to express its fullest feelings, unbridled feelings towards the master. That should not be curbed by law. There is also necessity of law, and law's object will be to work out freedom for everyone. Freedom is the highest thing. Free service is raga-marga, and that is service proper, not regulated and coerced, and pressed by law. That is not service. Especially our aim is Vrndavana, so, free service. Without freedom, survival is not valuable. Forced labor is no labor. Labor of love, that is required. And it is the thing for which all are out. Let us essentially think that we are all out not only for the constitution, but the thing for which the constitution has been made, to that object. The constitution should promote to that aim. With this feeling, the newcomers are coming with their faith, and faith should be encouraged and also adjusted, that the faith of one person may not disturb another. And the acharya will come down to settle, "No, I do not want such honor." Then the disciple has got nothing to do. I don't like this. The duty of the acharya, that is the responsibility of them. "Honor him, and I shall be honored. You honor my brother, I shall be honored." This sort of spirit should be taken in if we are to keep up the institution. And not that the committee is going to regulate the acharya. The limitation, what is necessary when we are in one organization, that must come from the acharya who is the real holder of

faith. Voluntary restriction they will take over them. They will voluntarily give honor to their godbrothers. Only this voluntary restriction over one's own self, that can only solve the differences. Am I clear?

-Tamal Krishna Goswami: Yes, very much.

SSM: Then how to do that? That is the question. So many laws and by-laws, but all should come from the voluntary, and no law will go to limit the acharya, to control the acharya, for then the sraddha of the disciple will vanish, all will be mechanized machine. Rather reduced to matter, free faith. We are the messiahs of developing free internal faith to the Lord.

Sraddha, faith, that is to be nurtured. In the garden that sort of creeper should be put, and they'll be watered and they'll be nourished. The very characteristic may not be lost by infringement by over pressure of the laws and rules. Freedom must be kept. Free flow of the heart. The movement of Mahaprabhu is more of heart than of intellect. We should consider it always. More of heart than of intellect. Intellect must not come to check the free flow of the heart.

And how to do that? Vrindavana is above Dwaraka. Krishna is a political man in Dwaraka-Mathura, and He is lower to Vrindavana, that Krishna, than of Vrindavana. That we must remember always. The free love, free faith. That is the only thing, the most valuable thing for which we have come out of our own house and joined the mission. That purity of purpose should always be kept intact. Of course, some help from law, regulation is necessary. But not so much so as to check the growth of the vitality. Promote the vitality! The real spirit, the real purpose of the mission, that should be given first hand. In this way, you have to deal. And there, some lenient dealings are necessary. The other day I told the example from Bhagavatam that the tongue is cut by the tooth. Should I take out the tooth for that, for that bad incident, unhappy incident? You should not take out the tooth. You are one organic whole; dealings should be such that the forgiveness of love, the giving of love, and not of law. That will conquer more. Why such formality and fashion, when ultimately we are all servants of the Lord? Amicably. Not resolution in the governing body, or a circular notice for all to know. These formal things, do you think that it should be necessary? At least for the first time you should omit that. When again the next time such unhappy things happen, then you may give out such a bad thing.

When Queen Victoria got the empire, the first case was brought before her related to a soldier. And the general was always pleading for a heavy punishment. But Victoria, she was reluctant. The first case she dealt with, that will be of punishment, and not of mercy? She was reluctant, and pushing and pushing: "Nothing you have to say for the soldier?" "Thrice he committed this offence, so this time, the law cannot give any forgiveness for him." "You are always saying against him, but can't you say anything, any example in his favor?" Victoria was pushing. Then, perhaps knowing about

the heart of the queen, the General told, "His private life is very good." "I forgive him", Queen Victoria told. "The first time I have come to judge, and that will be an instance of punishment?" She did not like that. So, please try to settle amicably, without making any resolution, and embarrassing all. You are all brother to brother. Welcome, and forgive and forget. Can't you come to that level? Next time we shall proceed, if there is an impasse, in a legal way, with constitutional law. In the meantime, you arrange your laws and bylaws leniently, and the details, the dealings between one group and another group will be natural. You can put a show to the public, but within you, you must be sincere within your administration. In the internal administration, you'll give more to affection, and towards your dealings with the public, you may proceed with some legal action. Legal, moral, all these things are to be shown in public. But forgive and forget. Forgive and forget within you, internally. (Quotes some sanskrit inaudible) "How can I be cruel to one? He is also mine, he is also mine." "He creates both big and small, our beloved God creates and love to all." (Coleridge). So, the principle of love and affection, that should be the greatest consideration.

Now I shall say, you know perhaps Alexander, when he came to conquer India, he conquered the then King of Punjab, Puru. And Puru was taken captive before him, and Alexander asked him, "What sort of treatment do you expect from me? How should I treat you?" Puru told him, "Like a king." Alexander was very impressed and satisfied, and he released him, saying, "Yes, I'll treat you like a king. You are at liberty to go." That is a famous story about Alexander and Puru. So you see, this is not the problem of a particular person, but it is the problem of principle. You yourself are acharyas. If you impeach one of you, and if that is in the record, then a bad history will continue. So be very cautious of your notes in black and white. The posterity will judge you. You are writing your Prabhupada lilamritam. What is lila? *Ahaituki apratihata* which is causeless, and which cannot be resisted. Irresistible, that is lila. The transcendental wave cannot be checked, spontaneous flow. No explanation can be thrown against it. Lila is selfsufficient, so Prabhupada's lila. Direct appointment acharya you are. You yourself should know, should feel how to show the dignity of the acharya. Disciples are in your front and should the posterior disciples see that our gurus are chastised in this way by the body? That will not be very happy. But if the vote deals favorably with the acharya, as you yourself represent the position, the governing body will capture more affection of the disciples of the posterity, the next generation. The future generation will see in a very good way, the governing body. The governing body will gain its power, GBC will gain its power by dealing magnanimously towards the acharyas. The followers of the acharyas are there, and it is a very hard nut, a very bitter pill to swallow, that their acharya is punished. Hard nut, a bitter pill to the posterity. Thinking that (taking this into consideration), you will do. You see? It is divine. To forgive is divine, to err is human. The error

should be concealed. It is the duty of a friend to conceal the defects of a friend, and to show the glorious, the bright to the public. That is the real test of friendship. Do like that. This is my entreaty, my request to you all, in the name of Swami Maharaj (Srila Prabhupada). Be generous, and it will be better if you call GBC here, the land of magnanimity. Mahaprabhu is Audharya Bhagavan, the Lord of forgiveness.

Bhagavan Goswami: We had concluded that downstairs, that it would be better if those who still have some question, they could come here. They could speak with you.

SSM: If you think they should also be present, let them be present. It will be a happy thing. All will embrace one another. All anomaly will vanish. We are preachers of love and affection; we must deal with ourselves in that line. That will be happy and practical. It is not? Then we can retire.

(All: Jai, Srila Sridhar Swami! All glories to Sridhar Swami Maharaj!)

SSM: Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj Ki.

All: Jai!

SSM: Jai *sevaka vrnda ki, acarya vrnda ki.*

All: Jai!

Devotee: Jai Bhakti Raksaka Sridhar Maharaj Ki jai!

SSM: Now I want to embrace you all. (everyone laughs)

(Satsvarup Maharaj's epilogue: I think it's very encouraging for everyone to hear how our spiritual uncle Srila Sridhar helped us.)

The Well-Wisher is Rejected

It was obvious that Srila Sridhar Maharaj respected the GBC and all of ISKCON's members very much. He did not regard, yet, that the institution was entitled to disregard the realizations of its members. He always sided with the truth alone. He wanted them to save the institution by working hard to happily accommodate all its members. But the GBC only took his advice in as far as it helped them to maintain their power structure.

Of course, worse things were coming. Jayatirtha das, zonal guru of Britain and other chunks of the world fell down from his position as a strict vaisnava. The GBC pressured him to take sannyas and try to not leave all together. Totally weak, Jayatirtha fell down again and left. Satsvarupa Goswami was sent to convince Jayatirtha to go and see Srila Sridhar Maharaj

in Navadwipa.

What happened now was the crucial mistake to turn ISKCON into an offensive movement against a pure devotee well-wisher.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj managed to inspire Jayatirtha to try to save his spiritual life.

At the same time some ISKCON members had heard the original tape recordings of the conversations between Srila Sridhar Maharaj and the GBC. They had discovered that the GBC was not paying attention to much important advice, which was leading ISKCON to a distressful condition.

Some of these devotees approached Srila Sridhar Maharaj for advice. It was really crazy. While the GBC sent messengers with many questions to Srila Sridhar Maharaj, they started to prohibit their other members to visit Srila Sridhar Maharaj.

When Srila Sridhar Maharaj, who granted sannyas to Srila Prabhupada's sannyas-guru, granted sannyas to three disheartened members, the GBCs became furious.

Even though Srila Sridhar Maharaj had asked those new sannyasis to keep working for ISKCON, the GBCs kicked them out from ISKCON and prohibited other ISKCON members to go and see Sridhar Maharaj.

At the same time, Jayatirtha was still recovering in the *ashram* of Srila Sridhar Maharaj full of praise for the inspiration he had received from Srila Sridhar Maharaj. When the GBC body was approached by the Temple President Board questioning how they could prohibit seeing Srila Sridhar Maharaj while they sent their own members there to get help, the GBC committed the biggest mistake in their history. They ordered Jayatirtha to reject Srila Sridhar Maharaj within 24 hours or face being removed as an ISKCON guru and member.

Jayatirtha rejected the demand, declaring that Srila Sridhar Maharaj was a true well-wisher of him and ISKCON. After the 24 hours were over the GBC rounded up about 300 of Jayatirtha's disciples in Mayapur. They told them of their guru's fall down and made them choose between accepting a new guru immediately or being expelled from ISKCON

together with him.

This created great pain in the heart of Srila Sridhar Maharaj and in the hearts of many other devotees. Now the real GBC lie and slander campaign against Srila Sridhar Maharaj began.

Satsvarupa Goswami publicly withdrew his previous appreciations and joined the slander campaign.

Achyutananda was pressured to write negatively about Srila Sridhar Maharaj. Since he had lived with Srila Sridhar Maharaj under Srila Prabhupada's order the GBC wanted to quote him as a knowing insider.

Achyutananda later repented this participation and asked Srila Sridhar Maharaj to forgive him. We will not give more space here to the ugly GBC propaganda, but it should be noted that they worked so thoroughly, that even today in ISKCON, devotees have a strong anti-Srila Sridhar Maharaj syndrome. (We hope that this book will be a powerful vaccine against that syndrome.)

I myself was close to be affected by the syndrome and was only saved by having visited Srila Sridhar Maharaj myself in '81, and having heard his pure teaching with my own ears.

After that visit to Srila Sridhar Maharaj in Navadwipa I started to study his comments on how the movement should really work. After years I finally got hold of the essential conversations. That made everything clear to me.

Knowing well of the general anti-Srila Sridhar Maharaj campaign of the GBC I did my home work and tried to find quotes of Srila Prabhu-pada, who would teach everything just like I heard or read it from Srila Sridhar Maharaj.

The outcome of that research I published and gave in '84 at the GBC meetings to all GBCs and temple presidents of ISKCON.

An Appeal to Sanity "Please Change"

All Glories to Sri Sri Guru and Gouranga. Dec.12,'83

Let us offer our humble obeisances to the Guru Parampara.

Let us offer our eternal dandavats at the lotus feet of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada, of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Let us offer our humble obeisances to the Guru Parampara. Let us offer our eternal dandavats to the lotus feet of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada, Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Let us offer our humble obeisances to all those who have taken shelter at his lotus feet.

The following is a presentation of the Krishna Consciousness philosophy based on books, letters, and reflections upon the ideas of Srila Prabhupada, in order to understand the correct course of action to maintain the vigor and enthusiasm of the preaching in our movement. We are living in difficult times after the disappearance of our beloved spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, and we hope that you will kindly listen.

We should always remember that Srila Prabhupada wanted all of the devotees to work together in a loving spirit and in this way to unite and establish an exemplary society which will attract all fallen souls. In a letter to Bhakta das dated April 9,'72, Srila Prabhupada writes:

"Of course, I can only suggest (to giving 50% to the BBT) wherever possible that can be applied, but I do not force anyone. After all, you are only working so hard to please Krishna only out of love for me, so there can be no question of force if love is there. We should never try to force anyone or reduce our society to an impersonal business exchange. This will kill everything."

So without this spirit of love and trust it will be impossible for us to overcome the problems confronting ISKCON. Big ISKCON means big hearted ISKCON. We have to be open to anyone, and not fall into the closed vision that - if I don't impose my authority, ISKCON will be lost. We have to be broadminded and unite ourselves in love under our Guru Maharaj. Union is strength, and this strength is necessary so that we can work together to expand the movement of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Similarly, in a letter to Srila Kirtanananda Maharaj on Oct.18,'73, Srila Prabhupada writes:

"Now this displeasing of godbrothers has already begun and gives me too much agitation in my mind. Our Gaudiya Math people fought with one another after the demise of Guru Maharaj but my disciples have already begun fighting even in my presence. So I am greatly concerned about it."

Similarly in a letter to Rupa Vilas dated Nov.18,'73, Srila Prabhupada writes:

"It is not a mechanical process where if we force in such a way they will come out like this, no. We are persons, and Krishna is a person, and our relationship with Krishna is He leaves open as a voluntary agreement always, and that voluntary attitude - Yes, Krishna, I shall gladly co-operate whatever you say - that ready willingness to obey is only possible if there is love. Forcing will not make me agree. But if there is love, oh, I shall gladly do it. That is bhakti, that is Krishna Consciousness."

The success of Srila Prabhupada's movement is based on his loving attitude of putting his confidence in his disciples all over the world. This automatically made them feel obliged to do everything that Srila Prabhupada wanted. Now the situation is that in many cases the GBC and spiritual masters of ISKCON have left aside this relationship of love and trust which Srila Prabhupada explained as being absolutely necessary for the Hare Krishna movement to work ecstatically. In the following pages we will analyze the principle points that should be corrected so that we can continue working in Krishna Consciousness under the order of Srila Prabhupada.

CENTRALIZATION DESTROYS ENTHUSIASM

In Srila Prabhupada's famous letter to Karandhar dated Dec.22,'72, he wrote:

"Regarding your points about taxation, corporate status, etc. I have heard from Jayatirtha you want to make a big plan for centralization of management, taxes, moneys, corporate status, bookkeeping, credit, like that. I do not at all approve of such a plan. Do not centralize anything. Each temple must remain independent and self-sufficient. That was my plan from the very beginning. What you are thinking otherwise? Once before you wanted to do something centralizing with your GBC meeting, and if I did not interfere the whole thing would have been killed. Do not think in this way of big corporation, big credits, centralization - these are all non-sense proposals. The only thing I wanted was that book printing and distribution should be centralized, therefore I appointed you and Bali Mardan to do it. Otherwise management, everything, should be done locally by local men. Accounts must be kept, things must be in order and lawfully done, but that should be each temple's concern, not yours. Krishna Consciousness movement is for training men to be independently thoughtful and competent in all types of departments of knowledge and action, not for making bureaucracy. Once there is bureaucracy the whole thing will be spoiled. There must be always individual striving and work and responsibility, competitive spirit, not that one shall dominate and distribute benefits to the others and they do nothing but beg from you and you provide. No. Never

mind there may be botheration to register each center, take tax certificate each, become separate corporations in each state. That will train men how to do these things, and they shall develop reliability and responsibility, that is the point I am observing now, especially in your country, that our men are losing their enthusiasm for spreading on our programs of Krishna Consciousness movement. Otherwise why so many letters of problems are coming dissatisfied? That is not a very good sign."

This is the principle point which discourages most devotees. The instruction of Srila Prabhupada was that the GBC should visit the temples to make sure that everyone was chanting 16 rounds, following the principles and the regulated temple program. He never wanted that they should force their authority and mix themselves in all the affairs of the temple. Srila Prabhupada wanted his temples to be independent, with their temple presidents as the acting authorities capable of protecting all the interests of Srila Prabhupada's movement. The same thing should have been respected by those spiritual masters, who received the spiritual leadership and the responsibility to encourage every devotee after Srila Prabhupada's disappearance.

There should always exist the feeling of love and union, not force. That would ruin everything.

In the same way Srila Prabhupada in his last instructions printed in his magazine BTG under "Srila Prabhupada Speaks Out":

Question: Who will succeed you as the leader of the Krishna Consciousness movement?

Srila Prabhupada:

"All of my disciples will take the legacy... I - one - may soon pass away. But they are hundreds, and this movement will increase. It's not that I'll give an order: 'Here is the next leader'. Anyone who follows the previous leadership is a leader."

Srila Prabhupada wrote in a letter to Damodar dated Jan.9,'73:

"Regarding the several smaller temples being dependent upon the central temple of Washington D.C., that is up to you to decide, but so far as I am concerned, I have not got much stock in such centralized management or organization. I never wanted that any of my temples shall be dependent upon the other temples. Rather our main business is to train up men to be self-sufficient and competent in many ways to carry on the preaching work, not to make them into specialists or to minimize their responsibility by centralizing everything. If each center must rely upon its own strength to stand, that will be better training ground for devotees. We must learn how to do all kinds of varieties of engagements on Krishna's service, not that we shall expect anyone else to act for us and thus avoid something ourselves."

If the gurus are considered absolute in terms of administration, and they demand complete loyalty to their desires of anyone in their zone, then the devotees in that zone have lost the independence and the ability to denounce

any discrepancies. In this way we lose the entire idea and instruction given by Srila Prabhupada. Because of the absolute power of the local guru in the present situation, change can only come about if the guru falls down which is a great embarrassment for the whole society and severely damages the entire zone. Centralization means that the devotees are not going to develop leadership qualities and enthusiasm. Devotees, especially those who have the tendency to take responsibility for the spiritual master, feel discouraged and often leave the movement or at least their service. Since the gurus and the GBC have centralized the power to make decisions the temple presidents have really no way to express their dissatisfaction with these policy changes after Srila Prabhupada's departure.

Actually, the administration of many of the affairs in the zone are difficult for the GBC to understand and direct, therefore all the zones should have a board of local leaders that can make decisions over local problems. In this way the GBC will be relieved of the excessive work during their annual meetings of having to deal with problems arising from not having competent and trusted members for all natural zones and preaching fields.

HIS ORDERS KEEP SRILA PRABHUPADA IN THE CENTER

Regarding the question of Srila Prabhupada's position towards the problems of ISKCON is facing nowadays, many devotees claim that Srila Prabhupada has been removed from being the central figure of the society founded by him. This is generally refuted by the argument that Srila Prabhupada's Vyasasana, Gurupuja, book distribution, and other projects are still continued today. But really it is Srila Prabhupada's personal style of love and trust which is lacking. He established many rules and guidelines for his society. If those instructions are disobeyed then we can understand by the sastra's warnings that great havoc will come about. Please refer to the book The Spiritual Master and His Disciples pages 273-279. Let us study if the claim that Srila Prabhupada's basic instructions regarding ISKCON management have been severely disobeyed is justified, so we can see if Srila Prabhupada is really still the center of his own society.

In Nov.'73 Srila Prabhupada wrote in a letter to Bali Mardan:

"We are not much after big, big buildings. We are interested to preach only. But if such buildings will enhance our preaching work and not distract us from our main business, then that is nice. But we must determine if it will be an easy task to raise so much money, not that we shall have to labour so much just to get money for maintaining, so much so that our spiritual life becomes neglected, no. Real business is to spread the message of Lord Chaitanya throughout the world."

In reality there are many places in ISKCON where the devotees collect just to maintain big building projects, and the preaching and the distribution

of Srila Prabhu-pada's books is minimized or virtually stopped.

In a letter to Hridayananda Goswami, Srila Prabhupada said on Nov. 5,'72:

"My idea is that a leader must agree to stick at one place, even they may have to remain their life-long. That is the ideal leader... one who is conscious of his duty."

Actually in ISKCON so many leaders have been changed so many times that it is very difficult to find a temple with the same temple president in charge from the time of Srila Prabhupada's merciful presence. If we speak with those persons they all say the same thing, that they weren't given facilities to work independently after the time of Srila Prabhupada. The official GBC line is if you cannot work with your local guru, there must be some guru, somewhere, with whom you will be able to work. This simple statement indicates that the interest of the preaching field is not the strong, but independent inspired leader, but the zonal guru, who may be visiting that place only twice a year for a few days. Srila Prabhupada emphasized in a letter to Nityananda on Nov. 25,'72:

"I am more impressed if someone has opened one center and that he has stayed there tightly and developed nicely, not going away whimsically."

The GBC is meant to encourage the devotees to remain responsible in their service. It is not that they dominate the place so much that nobody has enthusiasm to remain there.

Srila Prabhupada wrote to Bhakta das April 9,'72:

"But always remember that we are selling books not for making business but for pleasing Krishna, and by preaching we should sell books, not by cheating. If this simple method is followed, there will be tremendous success in selling our books, and the public will appreciate and take great benefit from our preaching and publications."

We don't think we have to comment too much about this point, judging our present public image and that very few zones actually still SELL Srila Prabhupada's books.

The same letter continues:

"This process of surrendering 50% of all profits made by the temple has been adopted by you, and I think that you are the pioneer in this giving up of 50% to my book fund, though I had recommended it should be general policy to Karandhar some months back. Of course, I can only suggest and wherever possible that can be applied... but I do not force anyone."

Also Srila Prabhupada mentions in the Srimad Bhagavatam that all those who don't follow that guideline will surely encounter great lamentation. We have seen that individual gurus started speaking out against ISKCON's book distribution. They stopped buying books from the BBT and their influence as gurus was so big, that even the entire GBC was powerless to rectify the situation.

Srila Prabhupada wanted his disciples to carefully study his books and to hold examinations, so that the devotees could graduate as learned vaisnavas.

In a letter to Hamsadutta Swami, Dec. 3,'68, he writes:

"Next January there will be an examination on this Bhagavad-gita. Papers will be sent by me to all centers, and those securing the minimum passing grade will be given the title as Bhakti-shastri. Similarly another examination will be held on Lord Chaitanya's Appearance Day in February, '70 and it will be upon Srimad Bhagavatam and Bhagavad-gita. Those passing will get the title of Bhakti-baibhava. Another examination will be held sometime in '71 on the four books, Bhagavad-gita, Srimad Bhagavatam, Teachings of Lord Chaitanya, and Nectar of Devotion. One who will pass this examination will be awarded with the title of Bhaktivedanta. I want that all of my spiritual sons and daughters will inherit this title of Bhaktivedanta, so that the family trans-cendental diploma will continue through the generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate disciples. Maybe by '75, all of my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the numbers of the generations. That is my program. So we should not simply publish these books for reading by outsiders, but our students must be well versed in all of our books so that we can be prepared to defeat all opposing parties in the matter of self-realization."

These orders of Srila Prabhupada are never stressed in our newsletters. Bhagavad-gita classes have almost disappeared from most ISKCON temple night programs. What to speak of intensive study programs? New devotees are trained how to collect laksmi, but they don't even know what a Bhakti-shastri is. If the leaders don't study and don't encourage them to read Srila Prabhupada's books, then how will the future generations of this movement even know what Srila Prabhupada wanted?

"I will always be with you through my books and my orders. I will always remain with you in that way. There is nothing new to be said. Whatever I have to say, I have already said in my books. Now you must all try to understand it and continue with your endeavors. I have already given the ideas in my books, so you should all read them." - BTG Final Instructions of Srila Prabhupada.

In this way we can see that Srila Prabhupada prepared for his departure by giving all instructions for the future ISKCON members to study his books.

As far as money is concerned Srila Prabhupada said: "Our money is only spent for Krishna - Krishna's palace, Krishna's temple, Krishna's worship, Krishna's glorification. It is not for our personal enjoyment. This is human life." (BTG Final Instructions).

And for our leaders he instructed in Karandhar's letter Dec. 22, 72: "We should not be very much after comforts and become complacent or self-contented. There must always be some tapasya, strictly observing the regulative principles."

This point has especially disturbed so many devotees. The gurus personally supervising the administration of millions of dollars have to be

careful, since in the Nectar of Devotion the warning is given that a spiritual master may be carried away by money and power. We see them do things Srila Prabhupada did not do. They spend money for living lavishly but cannot finish their spiritual master's samadhi. We don't want to enter into any details, but it is a fact that their example misguides others. What-ever a great man does, the common man will follow.

Srila Prabhupada accepted to be worshiped, but he didn't arrange his own worship, nor did he like his disciples to waste money on his worship at the cost of the preaching programs. After Shyamasundara rented a helicopter to fly Srila Prabhupada to Bhaktivedanta Manor while the temple was bankrupt, Srila Prabhupada told the famous story of the disciple who worshiped his guru lavishly and always said: It is all yours, gurudev, it is all by your mercy. Later on when gurudev asked for his money purse he discovered that all his money was gone. Asking his disciple what had happened, the disciple said: I told you gurudev, it was all yours.

In a lecture in Mayapur dated July 4, '75, Srila Prabhupada spoke about Tirtha Maharaj:

"He thought that he had started the mission together with my guru maharaj as partners. Now the senior partner has gone away, now I am the sole proprietor. Whoever are these godbrothers, let them go away. So this is maya, the same maya in which Dritarastra was."

It is nobody's right to use the funds of Srila Prabhu-pada's movement for living a luxurious life. This brings us dangerously close to having the dubious lifestyles of so many materialistic so called "spiritual leaders", which we are often accused of being by the general public. If we would just follow strictly what Srila Prabhupada says we would not face all these calamities and we would have space for all devotees to share in with their variety of activities and desires to push on this wonderful move-ment. In a letter to Srila Kirtananda Swami 18, 10.7 Srila Prabhupada writes:

"But for this Krishna Consciousness movement, its success will depend on agreement, even though there are varieties of engagements... The materialists cannot come into agreement with varieties, but if we keep Krishna in the center, then there will be agreement in varieties. This is called unity in diversity... WITH ALL GBC AND SENIOR MEN PRESENT IN MAYAPUR WE SHOULD DISCUSS HOW TO MAKE UNITY IN DIVERSITY. But if we fight on account of diversity, then it is simply the material platform. Please try to maintain the philosophy of unity in diversity. That will make our movement successful. One section of men have already gone out, (today you may say MOST SECTIONS) therefore we must be very careful to maintain unity in diversity."

Srila Prabhupada always gave a chance to everybody. He could understand somebody's desire to work indepen-dently and used those tendencies for opening up new preaching fields. Hardly any temples have

been opened after Srila Prabhupada's departure even though in a letter to Dhananjaya Dec. 23,'73, he wrote:

"I have been informed that you have opened an ISKCON Center in Rome, Italy. The transcendental bliss I have derived from hearing the news is not measurable within the three dimensions. I thank you very much for your humble service and I pray to Krishna to always protect you and bless you."

He did not want a few devotees to hold the power and all the others having to go beg from them. (See Karandhar's letter)

All of Srila Prabhupada's disciples as well as all new devotees who read Srila Prabhupada's books and are thus his disciples in the line of siksa, should unite in a nonsectarian mood. There is so much preaching to be done. We are hardly doing anything compared to these nonsense preachers. We have no time to dominate zones. We cannot even cover one city with solid preaching. Purity is the force, not that we should force others into our self-styled empire while the world goes to hell. Srila Prabhupada is our shelter, everyone's shelter.

Let the GBC and gurus give love and security to all. Yes, you can go and preach. No one will come and change your program as long as you follow Srila Prabhupada's rules.

And who will initiate there? Who will tell the devotees you make that they have to join their guru's personal project? Who will turn them against you at any moment? That we shall discuss in a later chapter where we present our philosophy to resolve those problems. Let us bring the spirit of love and trust back. That would bring many devotees back to ISKCON and would please Srila Prabhupada more than anything. And all of our other problems would easily be solved.

In the ADI LILA 12.8 Srila Prabhupada writes:

"Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur at the time of his passing requested all his disciples to form a governing body and conduct missionary activities co-operatively. He did not instruct a particular man to be the next acharya. But just after his passing away his leading secretaries made plans, without authority, to occupy the post of acharya and they split in two factions over who the next acharya would be. Consequently both factions were asara or useless because they had no authority having disobeyed their spiritual master."

We cannot find anywhere in Srila Prabhupada's books or letters that his movement should be divided into guru zones with a few of his disciples becoming so powerful that the very GBC body cannot control them anymore. They can only kick them out with all their followers who have never been properly trained about their relationship with Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON. Every disciple of Srila Prabhupada has a right to serve him, but not the right to claim absolute authority over his godbrothers. We are not eternally liberated like Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada is the natural

center in the life of all his disciples. How can somebody intrude into that relationship by forcing his own worship into the life of that devotee? Where is the love in such dealings? When are we going to understand?

The debate: INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY VERSUS GURU DOMINATION

Who is really the authority in ISKCON? If we can truly answer this question we will understand the root of all problems. Please analyze carefully this question and the consequences arising from it.

In his will Srila Prabhupada stated that there was no need for any change. That would mean that the present guru would have to accept the GBC body or the individual GBC as well as all the established rules regarding ISKCON policy, removing temple presidents, etc. Srila Prabhupada did not indicate that the new disciples have no choice for their guru. Srila Prabhupada writes in C.C. ML 24.330:

"In your book there should be the characteristics of the bonafide guru and the bonafide disciple. Then before accepting a spiritual master one can be assured of the spiritual master's position. Similarly the spiritual master can also be assured of the disciple's position..."

Purport: A serious disciple must be alert when selecting a bona fide spiritual master. He must be sure that the spiritual master can deliver all the transcendental necessities..."

What would be the position of a temple president complaining about this invention of the zonal guru to the GBC body based on the scriptures? The answer to this question will be shown by the way the GBC will deal with the author of this presentation. Due to this zonal domination we will see that the GBC is losing its power. Naturally if everybody could preach and show their qualifications in spreading Krishna Consciousness, they would be recognized by Srila Prabhupada and included into the GBC body. But that would mean that the zonal guru would loose influence and therefore he will be against it. Who would dare today tell a guru that he has to make somebody in his zone a GBC ? In this way, the guru position becomes a political position, and some-times a guru may threaten the entire GBC body on the basis of having so many disciples who never had the choice to be his disciples since by being born in a certain country their guru is already fixed. In other words we ask: No new strong men and all-powerful individuals. Those two together take away the idea of a GBC body maintaining the principles established for ISKCON by Srila Prabhupada.

One example in this regard is the distribution of karmi sex records which was banned twice by the GBC body, but still continues in some zones. And of course as time goes by, this situation amplifies and the zones will be completely dependent on the good will of one person, except if his deviations are so strong that the government will take action or he resigns

by his own choice.

If the guru is expert then he will maintain all his godbrothers happy and they will not leave. In Karandhar's letter Srila Prabhupada writes:

"The point is to be engaged in doing something for Krishna, never mind what is that job, but being so engaged in doing something very much satisfying to the devotee that he remains always enthusiastic. He will automatically follow the regulated principles, because they take part of his occupational duty."

So, why are they leaving in most zones, after years of devotional service? In the Visnu Smriti it is said:

"A person who by keeping disciples becomes desirous of receiving personal service and fame is certainly unfit to be considered on the platform of guru."

These godbrothers generally do the service of caring for the new devotees. They go along with establishing the zonal guru, but when they are forced to develop the disciple mood in relation to the godbrother, they feel helplessly discouraged. In the C.C. ADI L.1.32 it says:

"Lord Sri Krishna, both the initiating and instructing spiritual masters, the devotee, the incarnation, the expansion and potency - in these six forms the Lord enacts his pastimes."

Needless to say, only by the causeless mercy of Srila Prabhupada we can even talk of this philosophy. But if the new gurus can be called diksa-gurus, then their godbrothers, who train and make the new man, could surely be considered siksa-gurus.

In the Srimad Bhagavatam 4.12.32 it is said:

"According to sastric injunction, there is no difference between siksa-guru and diksa-guru, and generally the siksa-guru later on becomes the diksa-guru."

In the C.C. ADI 1.57 Srila Prabhupada writes:

"In the beginning he has offered his obeisances to his different gurus, and it is to be noted that he has adored them equally."

So, why is there this difference made amongst the godbrothers? Their disciples should see and treat them equally. Otherwise, whom do we adore, the person alone or the message divine? In which newsletter have you ever seen this situation explained? Even worse, in the case of any conflict, the guru will discredit his godbrother in order to maintain his interests. Nobody's devotional service can actually grow unless Krishna is pleased with him (this does not depend on his zonal growth caused by other guru's or GBC's falldowns), so if the GBC would recognize the service of any devotee and give him the standard ISKCON protection, you would see new teaching fields developing in many places. Srila Prabhupada shared everything with his disciples. No ISKCON preacher can be permanently successful unless he learns how to fully share with godbrothers and disciples alike, the nectar of going out and establishing the Krishna

Consciousness movement everywhere.

On the other side we have the relationship between the GBC and the temple president. Originally temple presidents could only be removed by three GBCs considering him unreformable. Also in many cases Srila Prabhupada accepted the temple presidents' complaints over some GBC decisions. In other words the temple presidents did have an important function in the checks and balances of ISKCON, but that has been rendered powerless. Practically the present ISKCON leaders don't have truly brahminical advisers any more because everybody in their zone has something to lose and thus will leave or shut up, even against their own conviction. Even though gurus and the GBC amongst themselves and in public will discredit and condemn each other, officially there is no one who can question an acharya in his zone, nor is there anybody to consult in such difficulties. The GBC, in order to overcome this situation would have to form a true privilege committee, authorized to investigate and resolve problems on the basis of our philosophy and ISKCON policy. These GBC investigators should be independent and without any private zonal interests. In order to be able to function such GBC investigators have to have the authority even over the gurus. Otherwise do we have to wait for the gurus to fall down completely? If such protection is not provided you will see more and more devotees leaving ISKCON to work separately for Srila Prabhupada. GBC meetings in Mayapur cannot provide the time to study all such problems, but if the zonal domination would change into sharing lovingly the preaching work, we would have very few major problems to resolve.

So the question arises again: Is the future of ISKCON dominated by individuals or dominated by the decisions of the GBC? In the case of the individual lives of the devotees, the present situation is that his life is dominated by one person. To consult or receive protection from the GBC is only possible for him if the guru falls down. So if the GBC is really Srila Prabhupada's representative and should protect all the devotees in the society, they should take some measure to restrict the influence of one person in an entire geographical zone.

GURUS AND INITIATION

The next point, that we should analyze carefully, is the situation of initiation and maintaining the message of spiritual love for Krishna in the Krishna Consciousness movement. We have already analyzed in the previous chapters that in Krishna Consciousness there cannot be force. In other words, if somebody is forced to accept a certain guru, that is also force. The disciple should be able to choose his own guru. Actually the idea of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and of Srila Prabhupada is that ideally everyone should be guru, but that should not be independent. It should be

approved by the GBC. Just like the brahmanas are authorized by the authorities, the new gurus also have to be approved by the GBC.

So that we can analyze well the situation, we should study the shastras to understand what is a spiritual master. We know that there are different gurus, that is to say siska-guru, diksa-guru, nama-guru, vartmana pradaksaka-guru, and caitya-guru. All of them together let the spiritual message come down from the spiritual world into the material world. Always when we can encounter any contribution for our spiritual advancement from one of our gurus, we should accept and welcome it. We accept the shastras, the siska-gurus who enthuse us in our search for Krishna, the diksa-guru, mantra-guru and nama-guru. Of course we don't accept as guru those persons who do not present the qualifications in terms of the scriptures. In the Maha Bharata, Udyoga Parva 179.25 it is explained:

"It is enjoined that one must abandon a guru who is guru only in name, and who is polluted by sense enjoyment, a fool devoid of intelligence to discriminate between the duty and non-duty, and who follows any path other than pure devotional service to the Lord."

Also in the Bhagavad- gita 1.5 Srila Prabhupada states:

"According to scriptural codes, a teacher who engages in an abominable action and has lost his sense of discrimination is fit to be abandoned."

Surrender is natural. People want to surrender to someone who can guide them to Krishna. They have received this faith from Srila Prabhupada's books. It is not artificial, there is no necessity of forcing anyone. By the mercy of Krishna one receives guru. It is not that the guru has to force anyone to be initiated by him, it is Krishna's mercy. Now we are forcing the devotee to be initiated by a certain guru and they have no choice. Later if they see some difficulties in this guru they will feel cheated. If someone surrenders to a guru, he has to be 100% sure that this person is a representative of God. So that the principle of surrender is not shallow, there should be no hurry. Therefore we should carefully study how one must see the spiritual master, and especially how one must see the spiritual master who initiates one in the movement founded by Srila Prabhupada. We should also study what must be his relationship with his godbrothers and what must be his relationship with his disciples. This is a key point to understand for the harmony of the ISKCON society.

First we should understand that the guru is not independent from the shastras. He needs the shastras to explain the Science of Krishna, and by the same shastras one can understand if the guru is qualified. On the other side one cannot understand the shastras without the guru. They are interdependent. The instruction of the guru is essential, and should agree with the shastras. Actually our Guru Parampara is a Parampara of siksa-gurus. In other words it is a disciplic succession of spiritual teachings. Jagannath das Babaji who figures in our parampara before Srila

Bhaktivinoda Thakur was not his diksa-guru, nor was Srila Bhaktivinoda the diksa-guru of Srila Goura Kishor das Babaji. What is important is the siksa instruction, and whenever and wherever we find that instruction, there is the guru. We have to recognize the guru whenever he appears before us. He who knows the most intimate aspects of the Supreme Lord, he is the guru. The Guru-Parampara is not a succession of bodies, it is a succession of teachings.

It is not that all gurus are equal. In the Upadesamrita Srila Prabhupada explains:

"In case one does not find a *utthama adbhikari* spiritual master present, then other qualified devotees can initiate. They cannot transmit as easily the same spiritual advancement."

Similarly in the Srimad Bhagavatam 4.18.5 Srila Prabhupada explains:

"This Krishna Consciousness movement directly receives instruction from the Supreme Personality of Godhead via persons who are strictly following His instructions. Although a follower may not be a liberated person, if he follows the Supreme liberating Personality of Godhead, his actions are naturally liberated from the contamination of material nature. Lord Caitanya therefore says: By my order you may become a spiritual master. One can immediately become a spiritual master by having full faith in the transcendental words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and by following his instructions."

So if you want to help others and follow Lord Caitanya's instructions, you have the help of all the other spiritual masters. Through books Srila Prabhupada and so many other gurus give instructions to all those who read those books. In this regard Srila Prabhupada spoke in San Francisco in 1973 at a press conference just before Ratha-Yatra Festival.

Reporter: Swamiji, you are an old man. What will happen to your movement after you die?

After a long pause accompanied by complete silence he said:

"I will never die. I live forever in my books."

In other words, there are spiritual masters who are not *uttama adbhikari* but who are capable of directing persons towards Krishna. Even though sometimes affected by this material world, the acharya fixed in the instruction of the shastras can inspire people in their spiritual life. Guru, sastra, sadhu, these three are one and the same, and by their grace we can reconfirm their very validity. If the guru is giving us devotional service and is inspiring our spiritual life, then we should appreciate and deeply admire him for his gift. We should see the guru through our ears. Especially in ISKCON we can see that the disciples have very little physical association with their diksa-gurus. But through the siksa the spiritual message is with them everywhere. By reading books, hearing classes, serving Krishna's devotees, and chanting the holy name we should always be anxious to

achieve the highest precious gift of bhakti. Did we not come to reach perfection? The guru is he who actually takes us to the highest realm. His form is not important. The way he chooses to come to us is his free will. Our Parampara follows this ideal. It is the disciplic succession of the vani, not the vapu, a succession of instructing spiritual teachers, not of formal initiating spiritual masters. Therefore the importance of Srila Prabhupada is absolute for every ISKCON member. This is explained by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati in his song to the Guru Parampara. The exalted acharyas of all times, who had the perfect realization are included in this line, not every formal diksa-guru. Diksa is more or less a formal thing; the siksa, or the instructions are the substantial ingre-dients for our spiritual advancement. If our initiating and instructing spiritual masters are perfectly congruent, then we are very fortunate. Krishna is in your heart as the caitya-guru. If you try to serve him seriously, he will make the arrangement that we get perfect instructions. Therefore it is stated in the C.C. ADI L 1.47:

"I know that the instructing spiritual master is the personality of Krishna. He is present in two ways: as the Lord present in everyone's heart and as the perfect devotee."

Similarly in the Vayu Purana we find the following description of the acharya:

"When one has assimilated all the conclusions of the revealed scriptures and thereby establishes the codes of perfect behavior for others, himself also acting strictly according to those codes, such a knower of the absolute truth of perfect character is glorified by the title of acharya."

The guru is qualified by his realization and his service, not by appointment. The guru is one in many forms, available to all those who search for his guidance. Srila Prabhupada in his Vyasa Puja homage in Bombay stated:

"There exists only one guru, but he appears in an infinite quantity of forms, to teach you and me and everyone."

So the new devotees must see their gurus as absolute, as much as they give them Krishna. But the godbrothers of the diksa-gurus have no obligation to see their godbrother gurus as guru. No, that is not their duty at all. Of course in front of their disciples they will not act in any way to discourage them, nor may the diksa-guru discourage his disciples in their relationship with their siksa-gurus. The gurus are brothers. That must be emphasized. If somebody wants to surrender to his brother, that is his own free will, but not by force. It is natural that the disciple has to see the guru as absolute, because he represents the Absolute. Just like the high court judge represents the government and must be respected, so also the guru is given highest respect. But the godbrothers are totally different. They surrender to the Absolute through their spiritual master. If someone in ISKCON is given the service of diksa-guru, this is a great opportunity for them to give Krishna to many new devotees because they automatically

look towards him with highest expectations. But that does not mean that they can claim superiority over the GBC body, or over the local GBC man, or over the temple president. In administrative aspects these devotees have the same right to their service, as during Srila Prabhupada's presence. And all spiritual subjects must be settled in love and trust, as brothers, in ecstasy, without personal interests of the guru for his private projects, etc.

The guru is guru for his disciples alone. The problem is our gurus claim to be the only gurus and they don't respect their godbrothers' position as siksa-gurus. Even in association of their godbrothers they want to be treated as the absolute guru. If anyone feels uneasy about that they will ask him: Why do you think Srila Prabhupada made me a guru and not you? Why do you think Krishna has empowered me and not you?, etc.

Actually the godbrothers should be equally worshiped as the diksa-guru, but that is not practical. Therefore the gurus have to be very careful, the way they act and talk with everyone. If they commit mistakes it will create great havoc in the spiritual life of others. Therefore the GBC has to be above the gurus in order to protect ISKCON from any mistakes caused by those relationships. Actually, godbrothers should be able to help the gurus if they are in difficulties. Of course, the guru should not teach differently than Krishna otherwise the guru is cheating his disciples. This is the duty of the guru, and his godbrothers should help him. The guru should not resent the help of the godbrother. The influence of the guru should be spiritual (purity, enthusiasm, renunciation, strict sadhana, etc.) He should not try to establish an empire by material influence (money, manpower, etc.). It is a big misunderstanding to think that everything the guru does is perfect. He must give perfect instructions how to go to Krishna. The guru is the servant of all those who want to advance spiritually. If he commits a mistake, he does not need to hide it. His disciples will love him even more when they see his humbleness. If he tries to hide his mistakes he may cause a disaster. Guru must give Krishna and every disciple should try to find the best available guru. It is not true that if he commits a mistake he cannot be guru anymore. Only in extreme cases the guru will put his own position in question. Guru should not try to appear perfect, rather he should try to be perfect. The life of a guru has to be an open book. There should be no secrets about it, or how will anyone have faith that he is really the representation of Krishna without any personal interest? Even Srila Prabhupada declared many times that he was not perfect. He said:

"I am not perfect, but the message I am bringing is perfect. That is my perfection."

Since the gurus try to make such a big difference between themselves and their godbrothers, no one can approach them with any criticism or constructive commentaries. They make themselves so unreachable that Krishna Himself has to correct them by making them fall down from their position so that they can realize that this was not Srila Prabhupada's desire.

The guru should not consider himself to be guru or a pure devotee and everyone else to be lower than him. This is not proper vaisnava consciousness. In the presence of their disciples the guru acts like a guru, but if he thinks himself guru in the presence of his godbrothers, this is not the proper attitude of a pure devotee.

WHO CAN INITIATE

Taking into consideration all the different aspects of the relationship of the spiritual master and the disciple, and the godbrother and the spiritual master, we should investigate who should really initiate disciples in this movement. In this relation Srila Prabhupada wrote various commentaries in his letters and books. We should analyze what Srila Prabhupada really wanted and what is practical for the advancement of Krishna Consciousness and the continuation of our Parampara. In a letter of Dec. 3,'68, to Hansadutta, Srila Prabhupada writes:

"I want that all my spiritual sons and daughters will inherit this title of Bhaktivedanta, so that the family transcendental diploma will continue through the generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate disciples. Maybe by '75 all of my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the number of generations. That is my program."

In a letter to Tusta Krishna Swami Dec. 2,'75, Srila Prabhupada writes more clearly what is the situation of initiation:

"Every student is expected to become acharya. Acharya means one who knows the scriptural injunctions and follows them practically in life, and teaches them to his disciples. I have given you sannyas with the great hope that in my absence you will preach the cult throughout the world and thus become recognized by Krishna as the most sincere servants of the Lord... Keep training up very rigidly and then you are bonafide guru, and you can accept disciples on the same principle. But as matter of etiquette it is the custom that during the lifetime of your spiritual master you bring the prospective disciples to him, and in his absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without limitation. THIS IS THE LAW OF DISCIPLIC SUCCESSION. I want to see my disciples become bona-fide spiritual masters and spread Krishna Consciousness very widely. That will make me and Krishna very happy."

Of course immediately one can think that the devotees remaining after the disappearance of Srila Prabhupada are clearly not on the same platform as him, so how can they give transcendental knowledge? The Nectar of Instruction explains:

"One should not try to become a spiritual master if he has not reached the platform of *Uttama Adikari*. A neophyte vaisnava or a vaisnava on the intermediate platform also can accept disciples, but such disciples should be

on the same platform as he. It should be understood that they cannot advance very easily to the ultimate goal of life under insufficient guidance. Therefore a disciple should try to get an *Utthama Adikari* as his spiritual master."

Obviously it is the desire of all disciples to have as guru the best there is. Fortunately, in the Krishna Consciousness movement, we are guided by Srila Prabhupada's books and thus he is the person who is guiding all the members of our movement. This was emphasized by Srila Prabhupada on many occasions: "I am always with you in my books."

Therefore all devotees should endeavor to make themselves qualified spiritual masters. But what about those that are not in the GBC? What about if they are really pure devotees and someone wants to take shelter of them?

No one should take initiation from anyone unless he is 100% convinced that this person can take him to Krishna. And there is no hurry. Srila Prabhupada waited eleven years before taking initiation. It is an important decision. He will give his life to the guru. What is the problem of waiting?

The bonafide spiritual master should not be a conditioned soul, nor is it that when one becomes spiritual master he is automatically liberated from all material influence. If somebody thinks that he is a pure devotee, he cannot act as guru. The principle qualification is that he have no selfish desires. Everything he does he does only for Krishna, to please Krishna. This means that he never cheats. The perfection would be that everyone would become guru, but for this to happen they have to be approved by the GBC. They should look for devotees who have really dedicated their lives to Krishna, who act only to please Krishna, and are loyal to Srila Prabhupada's movement. Such devotees are equally qualified to initiate as our present spiritual masters.

In the presence of your own spiritual master or in the presence of somebody who you consider superior to yourself, there is no need to initiate, but if a devotee feels that the zonal guru is not truly inspired, then the GBC have to be sensitive to that because he also has the order of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Srila Prabhupada to become a guru. But zonal restrictions will kill all inspiration. We have to realize that GBC and temple presidents by their natural service are all acting as gurus every day. People consult them daily about their spiritual lives and they have to teach by their example. If they are fixed in their service, why should they not initiate, too? Or the sannyasis, they have given their life to this movement, what is their disqualification? So if a person gives siksa instructions to the new devotees, and he is a trustworthy person, why shouldn't he initiate? That would be the logical situation. This is confirmed in the C.C. ML 8.7.27:

"Whether a person is a brahmana, a sannyasi or a sudra, if he is conversant with the science of Krishna, he is to be accepted as a spiritual master."

The idea is that we should help others in spiritual life. That is the primary

consideration. If there are few gurus and they don't have time to travel all over their zone and care for their disciples, it is then a completely artificial situation, especially if the local preachers are older disciples successfully preaching Krishna Consciousness. When a devotee has incorporated all the instructions of his spiritual master in his life and has controlled his senses, and is fixed in spiritual life, he also can initiate disciples. He has been able to transform his life following the instructions of Krishna, therefore he can raise himself up to fight with the representatives of maya. It is just like a person who is still sick but is being cured by the right medicine. He can recommend the medicine to others who are completely sick. Now this is a risk and there will still be problems, but even with the present gurus there are so many problems, and not only with the two that left. So risk is always there, but the godbrothers are there in one way or another to maintain what Srila Prabhupada wanted for the world, and this risk is meant to please him. To receive the respect of a guru is an easy thing. But to execute the duty of a guru is another thing.

The GBC has to recognize the necessity that there really exists a relationship between the representative of Krishna and the new disciples. For example, if a devotee has to recommend an acharya that has problems or doesn't have time, how is he going to feel inspired, much less, when he sees these very disciples losing their enthusiasm to participate in the movement because of that situation? The GBC should take all these points into consideration and act in such a way that the movement started by Srila Prabhupada can push on with great enthusiasm, and we can overcome the dissatisfaction caused by the erroneous conception of the position of the guru in ISKCON.

REALISTIC VIEW

Srila Prabhupada gave us so many instructions as you can see from his letters and books quoted in this essay as well as in all his transcendental writings. Let's be realistic. So many deviations have occurred. Be merciful with those who have left this movement and beg them to come back. Srila Prabhupada wanted a transcendental family and nothing else; not different sectarian groups.

Another problem is that the spiritual master develops a relationship of absolute authority with his disciples, and this relationship appears to him much more attractive than the relationship to his godbrothers. In this way he gradually becomes negligent with his godbrothers. He becomes partial to the absolute authority that he wields over his disciples, and in this position it becomes very difficult to maintain purity, and there exists the possibility of falling from the platform of acharya. The point is that it has to be emphasized that if the guru wants to be a guru within ISKCON this means that he has to submit himself totally to the orders of Srila Prabhupada. Or on

the other hand, the position of guru will cause a disturbance in the society because the position of guru is very hard to control. One has to understand simultaneously the absolute faith a disciple has in his guru and the relative position the guru is actually in. The acharya position is very complicated, and as history has shown, acharyas are very difficult to control. But our ISKCON acharyas are first of all Srila Prabhupada's disciples, and as such they are obliged to submit to the desires of the guru and work under the order of the GBC body and ISKCON structure, otherwise they cannot be gurus at all. To combine the understanding of relative guru and absolute guru we should simply follow Srila Prabhupada's instructions and then we will understand his mercy.

The laws governing our activities are necessary but their purpose is to bring us to love Krishna, not the laws. The laws are there to guide, especially the neophyte, but they must leave room for free movement in the relationships of the devotees, spontaneous service, etc. Our goal is Vrindavan, pure spontaneous devotional service. Without this freedom our service is not worth very much. Forced labor is not attractive, but labor of love, that is what we are looking for.

In other words the gurus face these different dangers:

1. He wants to work independently and enjoy the absolute domain he has over his disciples.
2. There's danger of deviation from the proper conduct. Both of these can bring a guru to fall. They are the enemies of the acharya. Anybody taking up the service of spiritual master should be particularly careful in this respect. It is a very dangerous position full of temptations. He should always endeavor to reach the highest devotional realm, otherwise becoming self-complacent he may come down. Or he may try to establish himself like a monarch. But the monarchy can bring him craziness. When one has kingly influence over men and money it is very difficult to maintain one's renounced position, what to speak of humility or the spirit of serving others.

We should always remember that we live in the world of exploitation so we should be careful in all of our relationships with others as well as with the fruitive activities or mental speculation." Oh, now I am the lord of all I survey". The symptom for healthy spiritual advancement is when we think that we are going down, helplessly fallen, looking for Srila Prabhupada's shelter. In this way we understand someone's advancement, not by the dollars in his account. Of course, it is a very unfortunate thing to happen, that a vaisnava guru goes down. Occasionally we have seen that happen. Either through money, women, or reputation, the first thing to happen is that he will lose his taste for his own spiritual master's instruction and for the sastras. Then he will dis-like the ecstatic association of his godbrothers, fearing that they can detect his weakness and his sadhana will be neglected. He'll stop chanting rounds or attending the programs. If someone is attracted to money or women, you can see easily what kind of sadhu he is. One can

collect money, but should spend it at once in service to the spiritual master and in service to the vaisnavas. But if one uses it for his own interests, that is deviation. One can use everything in Krishna's service, but should always remain unattached, and use everything for Krishna's satisfaction.

If the spiritual master actually falls from his spiritual platform, the disciples should pray for him and take shelter of the holy name of Krishna and the other vaisnavas. He should pray for the guru and expect him to return rapidly, but if he apparently is not going to come back, the disciple should reject him completely and look for another person to guide his spiritual life. This situation is very unfortunate for the disciple. We have to realize that we actually have these situations in ISKCON, and so that it doesn't destroy the faith of the disciples, we should treat these situations very carefully. But in our case, we are very fortunate because Srila Prabhupada will always be guiding us in his books. Everyone in ISKCON, including the new man, should take shelter in Srila Prabhupada's instructions, taking into account that all the present spiritual masters started their spiritual life not so long ago. This, of course, does not diminish their position in any way, but simply we are offered a great shelter and security in our siksa-guru, Srila Prabhupada.

CHECK AND BALANCE

A very important point that we should recognize is the necessity of a system of checks and balances, so that we can have the security that we are not depending on the whims of an individual. In a report written by Satsvarup Maharaj during his travels with Srila Prabhupada, he quotes Srila Prabhupada saying, "The old devotees must be like the saying — 'Caesar's wife is above suspicion'". He also mentions that if we maintain any material desire, then we have to take another birth. In the same report, Srila Prabhupada explains in Bhuvanesvara the necessity that our leaders be actually qualified. Confronted with the fact that many leaders were not actually following strictly, Srila Prabhupada responded, "You have to change those leaders which are very low now. Make this change now in your ISKCON. Otherwise how will you later help the masses? They have to follow a good example..."

1. Srila Prabhupada asked sannyasis and the GBC to travel and check that the proper standards were met in every ISKCON project. They should inspire and check the advancement of our society. Even the GBC needs to be checked. If the temple presidents are dissatisfied with their GBC, this must be taken into consideration by the GBC body. On July 28, '72, Srila Prabhupada gave his direction of management to the GBC.

2. His Divine Grace (Srila Prabhupada) will select the initial 12 members of the GBC. In the succeeding years the GBC will be elected by a vote of all

the temple presidents, which may also include any secretary who is in charge of a temple. Those eight with the greatest number of votes will be the members for the next term of GBC. Srila Prabhupada will choose to retain four commissioners. In the event of Srila Prabhupada's absence, the retiring members will decide which four will remain.

3. The commissioners will serve a period of three years, and they may be re-elected at the end of this period.

It is obvious from these instructions that Srila Prabhupada wanted every responsible ISKCON member to fully participate in the check and balance system to protect his movement. GBC members have to actually represent the interest of the temples in their zone and help to train new men to develop leadership qualities. But unfortunately today in ISKCON the words of the temple presidents have no more weight in ISKCON, not as a body, nor as an agent to protect the zone from abusive GBC members. The best proof of this is that in '83 in Mayapur, during the annual temple presidents' meeting the temple presidents unanimously rejected the GBC decision to limit the GBC group to only 25 members, based on nothing but the memory of one of its members. The GBC disregarded this rejection of the entire temple presidents body.

On the other hand we see that the relationship between the devotees who point out undesirable situations in ISKCON and the GBC have become impossible. In the great number of cases those devotees are forced to renounce their service since there is no acting body to investigate the discrepancies. In this way the devotees lose their enthusiasm. Srila Prabhupada in the Srimad Bhagavatam 4. Chapter 22.33 explains:

"Anyone can be successful in devotional service provided he displays no duplicity."

Politics have replaced purity to such an extent that not only the complainants receive no justice, but are labelled envious or over-ambitious. Srila Prabhupada also wrote in a letter to Satsvarupa in which he explained that he should send this letter to all temples dated Sept. 9,'75:

"The important thing is that all the moneys must be given to the treasurer and he records it and every day deposits everything in the bank. And whatever is spent, that also is withdrawn from the bank. That will stop the embezzling that is going on."

Srila Prabhupada wanted to assure that nobody uses the Krishna Consciousness movement for his personal benefit. For that reason the movement has a constitution, and all the expenses have to be made according to that constitution. Now we have gurus with their own bank accounts who spend their money as they like, and many devotees follow their example. Since we are talking about large sums of money, this situation endangers the position that the vaisnavas supposedly work without any personal interest.

This is also a danger before the government if we take into account that, especially in the US, the government is always observing spiritual leaders from the point of view of how much personal interest they have, and how they are exploiting their followers. It is the responsibility of the GBC to establish such systems of checks and balances for all the members of ISKCON, or else this movement will become a cult-like movement, dominated by some individuals.

STAY TOGETHER IN SRILA PRABHUPADA'S ISKCON

We have to admit that difficulties exist, and for that reason we have to join together to find the way to overcome these difficulties and make a success of what Srila Prabhupada has left us, the Krishna Consciousness movement. This is the movement that must save the world and for that reason it should be very open, broadminded, and merciful, and not limited to a few persons. The authority exists, and should exist. This is not the problem. But like everything, authority has to be used in Krishna's service, not artificially enforced. We have authority to win the trust of all people so that they will want to surrender to Krishna. One must surrender to the guru. One must surrender to Krishna. But this surrender is not forced, and must come from the heart. We should discuss these points openly amongst the devotees. If we try to evade them or sweep them under the rug, then the situation is only going to get worse.

Srila Prabhupada is the ever well-wisher of everyone. Everyone who sincerely tries to serve Srila Prabhupada is right, even if he commits mistakes by doing so. Let us suppose that all of the GBC and gurus are trying their best to please Srila Prabhupada. So they are right, but now let them recognize that many of their critics are also trying to serve Srila Prabhupada, so they are also right. What is happening in reality with the ISKCON situation and our transcendental philosophy has to be studied now. One devotee said:

"When I realize that the ISKCON philosophy and the ISKCON institution became incompatible I decided to stay with the philosophy."

The GBC cannot allow anybody in this movement to feel like that. Srila Prabhupada is very upset with such situations. In a prayerful, humble, Krishna Consciousness mood, remembering Srila Prabhupada, we should meet together without having to accuse anyone, to resolve these problems.

We should remember that ISKCON is the body of Srila Prabhupada, and that all the sentiments of all the devotees are very important. Only in this spirit can we reach unity and conclusions. Otherwise all we'll find is division and separation. We have to leave our personal desires behind and search to fulfill Srila Prabhupada's desires. Let us cooperate, side by side, with Krishna in the center, and all the mercy of our Guru Parampara will be

with us.

Alanath Swami

After presenting this paper to the ISKCON authorities, I was removed immediately from my service as sannyasi board representative on the GBC meetings, and even after their meeting the result was not encouraging. I was removed from my service as secretary of ISKCON in Colombia, Ecuador and Central America.

That led very soon to my withdrawal from official ISKCON. So many other points had made it obvious that ISKCON was going against Srila Prabhupada's orders, but the GBC kept claiming that all GBC critics and above all Srila Sridhar Maharaj were against Srila Prabhupada and his movement.

Now I will present some of the original transcripts which clearly show what Srila Sridhar Maharaj had been advising all along and how the GBC was dealing with him.

I cannot tolerate that anybody can talk bad about my siksa-guru and sannyas-guru Srila Sridhar Maharaj and at the same time pose as a genuine representative of our spiritual Gaudiya family. Not only is my guru right and always has the best intentions, but also his advice is of live importance for those who want to go back home, back to Godhead.

Anyhow these transcripts give you a chance to judge for yourself.

Satsvarupa Goswami asked Srila Sridhar Maharaj how they should act in the absence of their spiritual master.

Srla Sridhar Maharaj Speaks Out

SSM: Your duty is finished. You may try to be true to your guru. You have got a conception of your guru maharaj, you may ask to him. You should stand before his imaginary picture in you, and ask, "Which way am I to go?" And whatever we feel within, we will go without being prejudiced by the present circumstances. That will be the highest. Because the conscience that took you to your guru, he may not betray you. Is it not? After all, your spiritual conscience of the previous characteristic took you to the holy feet of your guru maharaja. He won't want to betray you. Sincerely stand before him, "What am I to do?" And that will be the final decision. And also you must have the love of the institution what he created. I see you in one way, and the institution you created in another way. There is a great difficulty in me, please guide me in what I am to do. Follow blindly the resultant or the conclusion of your committee, or my inner conscience as I imbibed from your advice directly? In rare cases. Generally, we shall try to work combined, but in rare cases, when such occasion will come, we have to take decision according to me. I must believe my inner sincere conscience. — *Atmate prthivim tyajet*. That is a saying of Canakya Risi, the great ancient politician of India. This is *niti*. *Niti* means advice. From the clan you should abandon one, one you may sacrifice for many. You may sacrifice one for the family. To save the family you may give up one of the family, one member. And in the case when the whole village and your family, they differ, you give up the family, and stand on the side of the village. Then, when the whole country is one side, and your village is on another, then give up the village and stand on the side of the country. — *Atmate prthivi tyajet*. But when the quarrels between yourself and all others, on one side, for your own interest you must give up the whole world.

Srla Sridhar Maharaj told us that we should not neglect our inner heart.

SSM: In the first stages, magnitude, but in the highest consideration, quality for self-interest to save your own self, your soul, you may sacrifice the whole world, universe. There is the question of quality, and for so long quantity, but the last decision — *atmate prthivim tyajet*. Hare Krishna. Your inner conscience took you, did not betray you, took you to your acharya, guru maharaj, you can't eliminate or neglect that spiritual conscience, your inner voice.

I have the happy advantage of fully accepting the words of Srila Sridhar Maharaj as I would accept the words of Srila Prabhupada. That makes it easy for me, and it could be just as easy for everyone else. But if they do not listen humbly, if they think they can put a pure devotee on the defendant's chair and their own mind to be the judge, then they will come into trouble.

Satsvarupa Goswami asked Srila Sridhar Maharaj about the guru's position.

SDG: You said in October that guru's position is a free one, and some are afraid. Many want to extend acharyaship, but there was a fear of anarchy with so many free persons, then anarchy. So, that is one fear.

SSM: Some sort of restriction should be, but life cannot be ruled by only law. Both must be accommodated. The scope to the merit. Scope to the merit must be allowed, and there should also be sort of rulings there. Law and vitality. Law is there, but merit or vitality cannot be checked. They must have field, proper field. Merit must have proper field. But law should not check the proper person and only encourage the improper one. Both sides regulation law is also necessary to be subservient to the natural growth. Suppose a boy request more food. He will grow, he will be more strong if you give him food. Then it will bring justice. According to his capacity he should be given food. He will get more strength and do more work. So, this sort of provision must be in the law, it is not? To make the movement quite living. That is my opinion.

SDG: You have this sensitivity. And Prabhupada, he also had such sensitivity.

SSM: What is...what is...sentientness?

SDG: To know when the person needs the growth, but in our governing body, this sensitivity...

SSM: Man must not be too rigid to government. This facility is to create a fair field, so it must be a living governing body, not a mechanical governing body, but a living governing body. That is just as I told, he will grow more, he needs more food, in this way, something like that. Fair field. Facility must be given to the merit, as much as possible. As much as possible, our aim should be towards that. Work is necessary and who will be the general? Only seniority? That may be reckoned, but always seniority may not do the work. Even a younger man may be promoted to be the general. Just as Rommel was given the position, and he cut a very good figure from the ordinary class he came. He was appreciated generally by the enemy and his own country. Is it not? Have you heard the name of Rommel? He had got appreciation from even the enemy quarter. He was given facility and he

showed his capacity. So the body should be formed in such a way that a fair field is created, and the energy, the qualified persons may have a better chance, otherwise you will be jealous of one another and the work will be lost. The merit must be given freedom and help. I think it should be liked that, a fair field. So, they are to take decision on that point in this meeting, a very important meeting.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj made an important point for the extension of acharyaship and how the GBC should act. He tried to help ISKCON to remain united but at the same time accommodate the true guru-disciple relationship.

SSM: In general, the local interests should be attended to, but in a particular case, even if a guru likes, he may take his *sisya*, in very rare case. But ordinarily, wherever he is recruited, he may be deputed there for the service, to keep the oneness of the whole ISKCON.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj explained to the GBC how to view their critics also:

SSM: Yes, of course, we will be always open. If I find that he is superior to me, in many events it is proved, then I must not have overconfidence in me. Not overconfidence, I shall try to give proper consideration and properly weigh their opinion and advice. But in the last resort, I am talking like that. We shall try to accommodate them as much as possible, won't believe my own self so much, that they are all false, all wrong, and I am right. Not that sort of pride should be encouraged. But still, the highest faculty of decision I cannot go on with to be an hypocrite's life, an artificial life, the last position would be that. That does not mean that I shall indulge all my sentiments to be the godly, and the others all bogus. I don't like that. Hare Krishna.

Many devotees were confused about the proper way of giving honor to the spiritual masters after Srila Prabhupada. Srila Sridhar Maharaj gave these guidelines which are absolutely essential to maintain the proper attitude in a world of guru plurality.

Dev: I had another question. When Prabhupada was here we had a certain standard that we were disciples and everyday we would offer guru-puja to

him and we would chant his name in the kirtana. So he allowed us to do that. So now, the suggestion has been made that this should also be adopted by the new gurus. So my feeling is that the new gurus, they are not so great as Prabhupada, so they do not have to adopt the same standard of daily guru-puja. That is my feeling. So this is a problem. What should be our standard?

SSM: Of course you are sincere. Such feeling is laudable but at the same time the sastra does not say what you say strictly. Because those that come as new recruitment should be encouraged. You must encourage to increase their faith. And if you limit there the faith is already wanting. We cannot put faith in anything in the world. And again if you discourage them, you will try to collect maximum faith of the disciples towards guru. And at the same time you look out that the guru, he, the acharya, also behaves well. It is of course a difficult task. Not a mere business, but there should be life. The living thing, a sincere living attempt there should be. That transaction requires to draw maximum faith from the disciple, that the guru is almost perfect, — *acharyam mam vijaniyan*. Not a small *mantra* for small guru. There is precision like this in the sastra. The same *mantra*, the same outlook. According to sastra we must try to specially save the young new recruits, their faith should not be bruised. As much as possible they should be drawn out from the cave of their heart, maximum respect towards guru and vaisnava as well. When they come to know the real acquaintance of the plane of vaisvanata, they not only will revere gurudeva, his own acharya. At the same time he will have reverence for other god-brothers, other vaisnavas also. And they also must have regard for them, their godbrothers.

We are going to the infinite blissfulness. We are proud of our status and of our life and we shall see like so many gods that are moving within the ISKCON. They have got a special life. They are not men of this ordinary world, though they are working on the earth, but still they are working in some atmosphere. Really their soul is working in another atmosphere, pure atmosphere, a divine atmosphere. This sort of outlook newcomers, the new members have within their heart. Then it will be a living one. One of our godbrothers told he was grihastha. At that time a good disciple he got. Then he took sannyasa and told, "This disciple has given me sannyasa. I was grihastha, and this young man, he left his wife and has come to serve me whole time. And I am a grihastha? This impression, this impressed me. This knowledge impressed me to take sannyasa. My disciple has given the *danda* to me, the sannyas dress. He is a young man. He has come to serve guru whole time, and still I am grihastha!" Though he was in a good condition of vaisnavism, still he said like that. So disciples will help the guru to keep up his dignity. That they regard me so much, how I can go down? How I can do this thing, that thing? What was their consideration, I will be in a degraded position? So it will help to keep up the acharya in his own temper. And other vaisnavas, godbrothers, they will also help them to keep their

high temper. Hare Krishna.

Dev: So Maharaja, just so you know what are the details, so this means in ISKCON temples that everyday the disciples they must offer *aratik* to the guru?

SSM: I heard that, but this seems too much to me. In our time I did not have any conception of such...

Dev: See Prabhupada allowed us to do that. This is the point.

SSM: We may be given two things to be considered. One thing that he was *jagat-guru*. *Jagat-guru* has some special inspiration, — *saktyavesa avatara* as I like to tell about him. He was *saktyavesa avatara*, the abode of some special potency of the Lord, whose work would not have been possible by any ordinary acharya, *saktyavesa*. So a special consideration for him, it is good. And now another thing is the opposite. *Mat-guru si jagat guru* - a newcomer, he should be given such understanding that my guru is not less in capacity of divinity. — *Acaryam man vijaniyam* — sastra has got no mean mantra for a small guru and a big mantra for a big guru. Do you see?

DKS: Yes.

SSM: Guru should be looked at by the disciple with maximum reverence. And to draw the maximum reverence or *sraddha*, faith, from the disciple, is not a very easy thing. The maximum faith must be drawn from the disciple so the guru should not be shown a dwarfed position. — *mat guru si jagat guru; acaryam man vijaniyam*. The mantram also same, sastric process of honor given also same. So two things should be considered and an intermediate process should be evolved.

Also everyone was excited over the proper way of *prema-dvani*.

SSM: According to my consideration as I hear, the grandeur of the acharya... of the puja of the present acharyas is too much and undesirable and that will create some difficulty. It should be modified. The way in which the acharya puja has been established, that should be modified to suit the circumstances and adjustments with the godbrothers. A spiritual protocol should be evolved which may not be very harmful to the body, to the association, organization, ISKCON. Because it is a very difficult thing tackling the fine point of the sentiment divine. So very carefully the adjustment in the spiritual protocol should be observed. Not only adjustment with the sentiment of the godbrothers, of the acharyas, but also the disciples of the acharyas amongst themselves, this difficulty will continue. So very sober and well thought conceptions should be evolved by the help of the scriptures and the statements of the vaisnavas and their experience considering all these things. Adjustment may help the mission to

grow. Adjustment may not be detri-mental to the missionary activity. It is a very difficult thing.

SSM: And those that are not disciples of the present gurus, they may keep silence and when the Prabhupada's, your Prabhupada's *nama jaya* begins you will join. It may be minimized in that way, harmonized.

Dev: But I am also talking, I understand that. That's *jaya premadvani, jaya om visnupada*. But in kirtana everyone will want that his guru's pranam mantra is sung, his guru's name is sung. So the whole kirtana becomes pranams and names and where is the Sri-Krsna-Chaitanya and Hare Krishna? So I was suggesting that just like if you chant Gurvastakam, everyone is thinking his guru, — *vande guroh sri caranaravindam*. So in the end of the song whoever, whatever name you chant may not accommodate all. But if you chant *jaya gurudeva* then everyone is thinking *gurudeva*. And after that, because Prabhupada, you have told us, is *saktyavesa avatara*, he has a special position, then after *jaya gurudeva*, we chant *jaya Prabhupada*. Then everyone...

SSM: Yes. I shall go that side. Until I am tired or until I am exhausted.

Another famous instance of Srila Sridhar Maharaj's good advice was when Ramesvara Swami took out his Vyasasana in '80 from the Los Angeles temple and went to seek advice from Srila Sridhar Maharaj. Srila Sridhar Maharaj tried very hard to convince him to help his non-initiating godbrothers.

Ramesvara: This year you may know that we experienced some disturbance about the position of our new initiating gurus. So I had some questions about the position of our gurus, because Prabhupada named me also as one of the devotee who would begin initiating. So I have felt a little disturbed that the position of the gurus was raised above all of our godbrothers because of too much worship. And this was very disturbing to me, that everyday our gurus are receiving very opulent worship. We all have seats which are in every temple and it seems to me that many of my godbrothers, they are equal or even greater. They can give Prabhupada's teachings just as well as anyone, but they are not named as gurus, so there seems too much difference between them and the gurus. So this has been a big disturbance to me.

SSM: That is a very serious question. Making much of his position of acharya he is misusing the position accorded to him. But that is a very serious question and on that point I have discussed, I have given my opinion many times. In brief, a system should be created or arranged for the proper adjustment. Of course it is necessary that guru will be given a special position by the disciple. For the disciple it is necessary.— *mad gurusi jagad guru*. He is the suprememost, at least in a particular way. In a particular way

he is the best.

Relative position

From the relative standpoint the disciple will see his guru to be the best. And there he will think, "The Lord has delegated him to come to me and to deliver me from the clutches of maya, there is some particular affinity there." And there are many acharyas, and what should be the behavior of the disciples of different acharyas? How and what should be the behavior or conduct towards the non-acharya, godbrothers of the acharya? That should be evolved. If direction is not given by Swami Maharaja, there might be some signs, some hints. But if it is not found there then we shall have to evolve some rules and regulations for a proper adjustment so that the mission may not suffer, suffer from the indifference or negligence or abhorrence to the non-acharya disciples of Swami Maharaj. As you say, there are more qualified disciples outside the acharya board, or GBC. It is not impossible. So we should sit together and try to evolve that valuable persons that came to serve Swami Maharaj with all their energy and sincerity will not go away, or it is very regrettable. We should try to save the mission from that great disaster. I heard that so many stalwarts, they are going away, being indifferent and going underground to the unknown quarter depressed because they do not see a fair field. So these things should not be set aside but must be taken in and these should be discussed. Some salient points, you should prepare it. A table, that these are the list of disadvantages, inconveniences, and how to treat them. This is our common cause, we are all interested in ISKCON.

We are members, we have given our lives, dedicated our lives for this mission. We are interested and we don't like that our godbrothers will go astray dissatisfied with the management. So try our best how we can evolve some rulings or some sort of laws, rules which should guide us all. At the same time it will push the cause of the mission of ISKCON. As dynamic as it is accom-modative, comprehensive and dynamic mission we want to have. We have a great field ahead. We must go to the length and the breadth of this world with the banner of our guru Maharaja Prabhupada, Swami Maharaja. Combined effort is necessary for that. Nothing we like to lose. We collect all our energy, money, men and we must go on with the banner of our Prabhupada. For this unity a fairness in the field, that is necessary, which will strengthen the heart of all the members of ISKCON. In this way you may put into the GBC's meeting that such an accommodating and dynamic program we want to have. And without doing that we won't allow you to dissolve your meeting. You will come to such a conclusion and give us such a program. Otherwise we won't allow them to go away from this math. Do it. Provide to feed all the members of how all can fill, have food, proper food. Everyone must have proper food to work on. Evolve such a

program and give us. If you are efficient enough, if you consider yourself to be that efficient, then give us this thing. So we can march on with the flag with our heads erect. We have to capture the new and the old already going back. They are driven, they are being driven and we are going. The old, the important members that got the grace of our guru maharaja, they are being discouraged and indifferent. And we are going to recruit new persons? Is it not a farce?

A little strongly (I am speaking). But as a friend of your guru maharaja I feel in my heart, so I say; this worldwide grand mission will thrive like anything. It will touch the heaven and cover the world and other planets also. And what is this? The old persons, they are going back? There may be one, a few exceptions, but generally people came with a good and a sincere heart and they are feeling discouragement. Some encouraging program must be, we want to have. So let us evolve. Not a formal meeting for two days, three days, but a meeting to satisfy the real necessity of the day. That is a living committee I, we want. Not a formal meeting. After one year a formal meeting, and some resolutions passed, and everyone is gone to his own field and they are doing as he likes. Hare Krishna. Gaura Hari Bol.

Unfortunately the other GBCs convinced Ramesvara to neglect all good advice he had received and to rejoin their inflexible reign. It did not last for long for him though. A very often asked question was in regard to who could dare to initiate anyone into Krishna Consciousness.

SSM: A *kanistha-adhikari* is unfit to conduct the work of guru. It is final. Only from the *madhyama-adhikari*, or middle stage, intermediate stage, that is only fit to a... for discharging the duty of the acharya. When *uttama-adhikari* comes to take the position of the acharya, he has also come down to the position of *madhyama-adhikari*. Inspired by the order of the Lord, *uttama-adhikari* comes down to the position of *madhyama-adhikari* and then he makes disciples. Because in the *utama-adhikari* proper, there is feeling universal angle of vision that everything is adjusted with the Supreme Absolute. He does not see that a part is revolting. That everything is perfectly adjusted, this is *uttama-adhikari*. And the *madhyama-adhikari* sees that this is proper adjustment and this is maladjustment, and from the maladjustment they should be taken to proper adjustment. This is *madhyama-adhikari*. So guru is always *madhyama-adhikari*. Whether he comes down from *uttama-adhikari* or is a bonafide *madhyama-adhikari*. But it is the duty of the *madhyama-adhikari* because he sees two things: divinity and non-divinity. This is *madhyama adhikari*. So the work of guru is the work of the *madhyama-adhikari*. Now the *madhyama-adhikari* also may be of different stages.

ISKCON members were told that Srila Sridhar Maharaj was teaching something different than Srila Prabhupada regarding the number of rounds to be chanted. All he did was to teach the right understanding of chanting Hare Krishna as taught by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura.

SSM: If he is busily engaged in other services, we should not hurry, we should not hurry.

Bhakti Caru Swami: But maharaj, Prabhupada gave us sixteen rounds as a minimum. Like he said that we must, everybody in this line....

SSM: Insist whether it's the only deviation. Is there any further deviation than that? This deviation is not sufficient criteria to be considered a deviation. Maha-prabhu has advised all of us to chant at least sixty-four rounds. Even better than a lack is three lack names. But that is not possible because of overwhelming practical devotional service; it is not being possible. So the question that I am asking is why has he reduced the number of rounds? Is it because of negligence or apathy? Maybe he has turned his attention more towards other practical services. But the consideration of the other service is with what depth of sincerity and intensity that is being executed. That must be measured. We simply cannot judge by saying that he has deviated. All these have to be taken into consideration. Mahaprabhu said that until and unless a devotee chants a minimum of sixty-four rounds I shall not accept any prasadam from his hands.

Bhakti Caru Swami: Srila Prabhupada being a devotee servant and servitor of Lord Chaitanya is more merciful than the Lord Chaitanya Himself and so he recommends only sixteen rounds.

SSM: But at the same time he said that it is better to chant one lack names. But generally it is seen that it is not possible for missionaries to complete that many number of rounds. At least four rounds minimum should be chanted by them so that we see that the *mala* not get starved.

Another big confusion was created in ISKCON when the GBC foolishly accused Srila Sridhar Maharaj of being a mayavadi for teaching that the jivas' origin lies in the brahman tatasta region. Until today confusion is predominant amongst ISKCON members, even though our acharyas are united in teaching the same message. Srila Sridhar Maharaj warns us against trying to analyze everything.

Dev: So, now you said in understanding the *eka*, that there is *raja*...

SSM: Another example: When the demon is killed by Him he attains Brahmaloaka. That is complete withdrawal and perfect rest in equilibrium stage. But ordinary power cannot detect him there to take out. Special power, by some ordinance he may be taken out as in the case of Jagai and Madhai. In all cases this is conditional. When Hiranyakasipu was killed by Nrsimhadeva he at once went to that *brahmajyoti*. General law: One who is killed by Hari, he later on comes to brahmajyoti. But some by-law was there. He had to come down again as Ravana and Kumbhakarna. Jaya and Vijaya went there and after some time, from that equilibrium stage, had to come down. So in no man's land, buffer state, there also some powerful agency can interfere in the buffer state, no man's land, marginal.

SSM: So again they retire to that, Sisupala and Dantavakra because there were conditions, three births. So they are entering there for some time and then again coming here. So, ostentatiously it is equilibrium, but to final vision everything is of differentiative character. We can only harmonize these different statements in this way. What is hazy to me, that is clear to another higher sight. Again Jagai Madhai we are told were the same, Sisupala, Dantavakra, Ravana, Kumbhakarna. They again came to help Mahaprabhu's lila. From the same Brahmaloaka, Jagai Madhai, so in this way ordinarily what is unapproachable is approachable by the experts.

Dev: So then, now *jiva-sakti* is coming from brahmajyoti as conditioned souls, *nithya-baddha*?

SSM: The brahmajyoti is not independent in itself, an independent entity. It is the marginal position of the two potencies, in-carrying and out-carrying. That is the consciousness and unconsciousness, the meeting point. Just like dawn, just like evening is the meeting position of day and night, something like that, twilight. So brahmajyoti means that. It is not an independent state. It depends on sun, depends on Krishna.

Dev: What I wanted to know with considering the *eko*, Krishna, that He has His associates. Are there some jivas who were never in the Brahmaloaka position?

SSM: You see the nature of much discussion that may oppose the faith. Ultimately everything is *adhoksaja*, Krishna, Narayana, that is *adhoksaja*. We must have some respect. And it is approachable only through faith, *sraddha*, not by intellectual reason or argument. Argument is necessary to help the intellectual people to a certain extent. But if we want that everything must come within my fist, it is a drawback for the devotee. So as much as possible we shall make it, we shall try to understand and to explain to others. But at the same time we maintain on the subconscious region that everything is backed by Krishna's sweet will, and none can be measured, — *maya tatam idam sarvam*. "I am everywhere, I am nowhere. Everything within Me, nothing within Me. Find what is my position, if you can, through your intellect, Arjuna." So that warning we must always keep on

my, our brain. Then we shall go to analyze, and analyze, and analyze. Ultimately we must think: unknown and unknowable and everything is in His hand. He is everywhere, He is nowhere. Everything in Him, and nothing within Him. That means it is *acintya*. Mahaprabhu said, — *bheda-abheda acintya*. It is not within the fist of anyone else. It is sweet will of Krishna. Our brain has been warned in such way. So we shall try to discuss, but we may not have too much of intellectualism. That will hamper our faith, may disturb our faith. It may be the basis. In the *madhyama-adhikari* it is necessary, and so Bhaktivinoda Thakura said *madhyama-adhikari* is a dangerous one. And by intel-lectualism God forbids we may come to atheism also, from *madhyama-adhikari*. A *kanistha-adhikari*, if he comes in contact with *uttama-adhikari*, he can clearly pass the space of *madhyama-adhikari*. But *madhyama-adhikari* is a dangerous zone. It is necessary also to consolidate our position, — *siddhanta boli ache* — our faith to a certain extent. But at the same time we must know that it should help the faith. It should strengthen the faith, *sraddha*. *Sraddha* can go and can approach infinite. Intellect can never approach infinite, only *sraddha*. And how much *sraddha* we can hope to have? A bit? A bit of *sraddha*. Nothing is impossible in the infinite area. On the basis of experience, how much *sraddha* we can send to fetch our object? So we are discussing things, only to understand the *sraddha siddhanta*. The positive things are given to us. We may try our best to use our experience to know the wholesome character of it. But too much of this thing will disturb our faith. That possibility is there. Always we must keep it in the background of our discussion, that Unknown and His ways are unknown. I cannot bring Him within my fist. It has got such a characteristic. So intellect may not lose that characteristic of that, of Krishna.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj explained so many aspects of our *siddhanta*. But always he had to clarify the guru's position.

SSM: Bengali. I would like you to refer to Bhaktivinoda Thakur's *Hari Nama Cintamani*. In that book the *tattva* on guru, acharya, has been dealt with very extensively. In Chaitanya-Charitamrita we find Chaitanya Mahaprabhu asking questions to Ramananda Raya and Ramananda Raya answering. But here in this book we find Chaitanya Mahaprabhu asks Haridasa Thakura about the efficacy and the transcendental position of the holy name of the Lord. He has dealt with the question of acharya very scrutinizingly in this particular book. So the point of accepting a guru under what conditions. Once you have accepted a guru there is no question of rejecting. This point has been discussed very subtly. And also the point where a disciple accepts a guru and under very peculiar conditions is forced to ultimately reject him has also been discussed in this book. It is actually a

misfortune for that disciple to have to reject his guru once he has accepted him. One must be very careful and judge everything according to sastra before he accepts a guru. Precaution should be taken before one actually accepts a guru. After considering who the actual guru is, then one places his head (symbolically speaking) at his lotus feet. And once he has placed it at his lotus feet it is very difficult to take it away again. All the symptoms of a bonafide guru should be scrutinizingly judged before accepting a guru. Here in India before the marriage, before the negotiations, everybody can judge the qualities of the bride. But once the marriage has been completed then it is a point of no return.

Devotee: He says that if you have an opinion different than the opinion of your guru then you are not guru, you are rascal.

SSM: It is a very risky thing, two or three vaisnavas together living and disciples of every person should give the maximum respect to his own guru. But if he sees that guru one, he seems to be higher, and his guru is lower, his regard will decrease, hmm. But it is a very perplexing and very difficult thing. The criterion will be of such nature. Suppose one guru is more educated. Another guru is less educated. But the disciple who appreciates education much, he'll see my guru is not educated, his guru is educated, so he disregards his own guru. But education and physical beauty and other things should not be taken into consideration. The question of faith, faith and service, only that point should be considered. *Sraddha*, *bhakti*, *prema*, that thing is to be considered and if in that case, if *sraddha* is real, then by education, or by figure, or by delivering lectures, or any other acts - that should not be considered at all. The question of faith... in regard. And even if a siksa-guru is allowed, diksa-guru should not be diminished very easily. But one may take siksa-guru and he may have respect for siksa-guru, but diksa-guru should not be dismissed if he is in faith. Normal faith in guru-parampara, in Krishna, in Gauranga, in Gurudeva. The faith should be considered first thing, *sraddha*, and not other garments like education, like good physical body, like delivering lectures, like social temperament -all these things are immaterial. The main thing is *sraddha*. Haridas Thakur was not much educated; Rupa, Sanatana highly educated. So a disciple of Haridas Thakura, he will run to Rupa, Sanatana? They may take, demand education, but the guru may not be removed. This sort of adjustment should be done. The guru who is without education, or without external grandeur, but has got strong faith, perhaps greater than the educated man and his disciple will be doomed?

Dev: Srila Prabhupada really appointed them as acharyas. Because...should I read this? These are the final instructions of Srila Prabhupada. In this he said...When asked who would succeed him as the leader of the Krishna Consciousness movement, Srila Prabhupada replied, "All my disciples will take the legacy. If you want, you can also take it. Sacrifice everything. I -one- may soon pass away but they are hundreds and

this movement will increase. It is not that I'll give an order, "Here is the next leader." Anyone who follows the previous leadership is a leader. I don't make any distinction between Indian and European. All my disciples are leaders as much as they follow purely. If you want to follow you can also lead..."

SSM: History will stand witness to it. In other words in the material form history will prove from the material standpoint they will see it *ikas saki*, who is right, who is wrong.

Srila Sidhar Maharaj Explained How to View the Situation if Your Guru is Not Qualified

SSM: But how are the disciples to view the discrimination? They see here is Srila Prabhupada in a very gorgeous setting and here is their guru in a very... You see, my mother is most affectionate to me, not my grandmother. This is nature. So one should show maximum respect to his own guru and a little less to his grand-guru, *param* guru, more respect to own guru than *param* guru.

My guru we see forms that link. I shall see my guru link. The link will be in this way. My guru is sure to hold his guru's feet fast. If I hold him, his feet fast, then I am safe. That is the underlying meaning. It is my duty to hold fast the feet of my guru that I may not fall down and it is.... I fully know that my gurudeva has held the feet of his guru fast so the chain is unbroken. It is not my lookout to see how my gurudeva is dealing with him. I am confident that my guru is holding fast. The chain comes in this way. All my power should be engaged to see... to hold my guru's feet fast... but if that is vulnerable and the particular chain is vulnerable, breaks down, then I shall fall. So in that case, if it is clear that the chain which I have held is vulnerable then of course I shall have to think and to hold any other chain so that I cannot be disconnected from the link coming from upward to this world.

That will be the first consideration. But this... if that unhappy circumstance appears to become fact by his great misfortune, it is of course none to be blamed. He has come to a wrong guru, that is also his fate or karma, his sukriti. He is responsible for that, to come to a false guru; his, not any other, not anyone else. So anyhow, if by the grace of the vaisnava he comes to find that he has done wrong in the selection of his guru then he will deviate, he will be indifferent for some time and consult with other vaisnavas, and then he will think of changing his guru. If his clear spiritual conscience urges him, he must accept his inner voice.

Real Gurus Have no Reason to Fight

Gurus won't come to clash with each other. They have got their intimate connection, helping one another. That should be the test. When in a relative position, not of a higher type, gurus are fighting one another; that is not desirable. Some mundane necessity may be there for fighting.

How to View a Godbrother who Gives you Gayatri Mantra Diksa

Devotee: Sometimes, like Purnacandra, he got hare nam diksa from Prabhupada, our Prabhupada. Sometimes there are others like him, and then they got, then Prabhupada disappeared, and they took their gayatri mantra initiation from one of Prabhupada's disciples. So sometimes they want to know how they should regard their gayatri mantra guru, and ask, "My relationship with my hare nam guru is eternal. Is my relationship with my gayatri guru also eternal?"

SSM: The first importance to nama-guru, second the initiation. But the diksa-guru must have respect. Then all the other disciples of Prabhupada. First honor to Prabhupada, nama-guru, guru of guru, and the second honor to the diksa-guru, and to the rest accommodating. According to their status will be accommodated.

Devotee: How should the devotee who has taken initiation, second initiation, regard his gayatri mantra, as a godbrother or as a guru?

SSM: *Acintya bheda abheda*. Generally guru, according to his present stage, but if he transcends, he goes to his previous history, then he will see something like godbrother. But generally, in his present stage he will see as guru. And in the background godbrother. Direct connection, guru, and his background godbrother. And that may be the general estimation.

Here Srila Sridhar Maharaj gives a hint. If my guru turns out an *aparadhi*, or if he is otherwise fallen, I will have no other choice. I will need a real guru. ISKCON attacked Srila Sridhar Maharaj for giving shelter to people who rejected ISKCON. But Srila Sridhar Maharaj only followed his inspiration to give relief to those who had lost their hope in ISKCON's leaders. Srila Sridhar Maharaj explained:

It is not a trade, not a monopoly. Where is Krishna Consciousness? The sincere souls must hanker and thank their stars that, "I can appreciate that this is Krishna Consciousness." Wherever it may be, I can appreciate, "Oh this is Krishna Consciousness!" We should thank our stars if we can feel it, understand it, conceive it, Krishna Consciousness proper. So I started with this idea, that so many sincere souls that came in my connection, they are becoming dissatisfied and indifferent to the present movement of ISKCON. They are avoiding them, they are going away. This touched my heart. And I was repeatedly requested by Swami Maharaj: "Look after them." I have taken them, some raw things, to you, especially to you. Please look after them." I did not think at that time that he would pass away before me. Above that I have got some affinity for the cause for which we have come to our guru, for the cause of Mahaprabhu, for the cause of Bhagavat. As our belief has come, I should have some interest in general, so if anyone is coming to seek Krishna Consciousness but is going away frustrated, then naturally some sympathy should come in my heart to help him, to give him relief. With that idea, I give help, whatever help I can, although it is very meager. I am simply sitting here. I am not running hither and tither to disturb the brains of the ISKCON followers. I am not running hither and tither, but I am sitting here, an idle man, and those that are coming to me, how can I send them away? In my heart there is some good will for guru maharaj, Swami Maharaj and Mahaprabhu and Bhagavatam and Krishna. If I've got some sympathy for them, then those who come to me, how can I sit tight without giving what I know, what I feel, without extending this sort of help to those persons? But the ISKCON administration has only some formal consideration. These few gentlemen, whom I consider to be students — students, not professors. Speaking from my Absolute consideration standpoint I consider them to be students, not professors. And they have become self-made authorities, thinking that whatever they dictate, I shall have to obey that? I am not a person of that type. With my clear conscience to God; that is to Krishna, Maha-prabhu, to my Gurudev, and to Swami Maharaj, what I am doing, I think it is justified.

DEV: For preaching around the world then...

SSM: Yes, what they are doing, for that I have appreciation. In a general way they can go on, to some extent, but in special cases, those who are not satisfied with them, what about them? They came to Swami Maharaj with their sincere heart to get something, and they will be frustrated and go back empty-handed and cry and they will scatter hither and tither. And they (the GBC) will march on their bigoted way? Let them go on in the world at large, the wide world. They may work, but only a few that are not satisfied with their conduct and policies, if they are given some sort of provision to maintain their religious life, spiritual life, then why are they creating such a row for that? That is detrimental to their own cause. I am not an aggressor,

I am not an enemy to them. I always like that they flourish. That is my interest. That is the interest of my guru, of Swami Maharaj, and Mahaprabhu. Let them capture the whole world!

Srila Sridhar Maharaj Advises to Discuss the Problems With the GBC

SD: So, if a devotee has a difference of opinion with his GBC, if he is thinking in a different way, that this is not right, how do you think he should act for the cause of peaceful...?

SSM: They should try by their combined efforts to solve any problem facing their mission. And whenever they are facing any difficulty, they should refer to me. I am affectionate to them in connection with Swami Maharaj and connection with my Guru Maharaj who wanted to preach in the West, and Mahaprabhu, Bhaga-vatam, Krishna Consciousness, for the interest of the principle, I am in favor of them. So, they do not have to apprehend anything from me. I am eager to serve you, to help you, but not against the principle, that which I understand to be the truth. In that case, I would be a traitor to my own cause, to my own master.— *na hi kalyana krt kascid, durgatim tata gacchati* (B.G. 6.40) Be sincere, and you'll understand everything,— *arjavam brahmane saksad*. Simplicity is the qualification of a *brahmana*. And then, not only simplicity, but serving-eagerness plus sincerity, that is the qualification of a *vaisnava*. Not to take but to give. Not to "lord it over", that was the favorite expression of my gurudev: "lord it over." Not to lord it over, but to be a servant, seeing that everything belongs to my divine master. When that is added to simplicity and sincerity, then one enters into the realm of *vaisnavism* in general. Calculating and spontaneous, voluntary and reflexive, two types of *vaisnavas*.

Dev: We are afraid that the institution is breaking. It seems they cannot understand that there is something within the institution, and the institution is like a shell.

SSM: If they are seekers after the truth, they'll be fearless and reckless. It is His movement, if He likes, He will keep it. It is spread by His will. So spacious and extensively, in such a small span of life, Swami Maharaj took it to the length and breadth of the world. It is by divine will. It is by divine will he could do such a great impossible magnitude of work. That divine will, that is all in all. We shall try to look in that way. Still, of course, as much as possible, we shall go on with our capital, what small capital we have got. Sincerely we shall try to utilize it in His service. But at the same time, there is a risk of coming in clash with the real truth.

Dev: Their position is that now that they're in so much difficulty and they

are knowing in their heart of hearts that everything is not going correctly, so they are just looking for somebody to blame. They don't want to blame themselves. They are just looking for someone outside.

SSM: It is human nature, general weakness of man.

Dev: But they don't understand that in spiritual life we have to be careful who we put the blame on.

But the GBCs did not appreciate his help. Kirtanananda Swami, as spokesman of the GBC delegation, tried to give "advice" to Srila Sridhar Maharaj.

KS: So, we wanted to come and speak to you a little bit, because we are anxious for your blessings, and we are more anxious that you understand us; what we are trying to do for Prabhupada.

SSM: Who is talking?

Dev: Kirtananda Swami.

SSM: Yes, yes, Kirtananda Maharaj is a very sober man and he does not speak much. Is it not?

KS: Well, when one is fool, if he opens his mouth very much, he will be detected.

I am trying simply to remember what Prabhupada told me, and to stick to that instruction.

SSM: Oh, it is good. But at the same time we shall think that, — *vyaso vetti na vetti va*. Vyasadev, who is considered to be Sakyavesa Avatar, he gave most of the revealed scriptures, but still we see Devarsi Narada has come and given strictures to him. "What you have given to the world so far, you have done positive mischief to the people." His guru is chastising him in a such way. So, to understand the words of gurudev is not so very easy. It is infinite. Gurudev is infinite.

— *acharyam man vijaniyam* (One should know the spiritual master as My very self. S.B.11.17.27) In his words, he deals also with the infinite. And we can't put it under limitation, that we have finished what he wanted to give us, we have understood it, we have finished. We are always student, we shall remain student forever, because the infinite cannot be finished. We shall have to remain student all through, all through. If we think that we have finished everything, then we are in the relativity of maya, not in the relativity of the infinite.

KS: His instruction is always there.

SSM: Our guru maharaj told that he is a monitor in a class, leader of the students. In his Madras speech, in a written speech, he expressed, "I am a monitor." Some-thing like that. We are all students, and will continue to be students, and we consider it to be fortunate to remain a student all our life. Can't finish, none can finish. Even the highest devotees of every type, they

are also of the same opinion. They are unsatisfied always. Unsatisfied that, "I am not able to do real service to my Lord." This should be the attitude.

KS: Yes.

SSM: So far we have understood, come to understand the thing.

KS: Prabhupada has given us so many volumes of books, we cannot begin to understand all that he has given us.

SSM: Yes, he did an extensive work. But it's not a question of his side. We have to question on our side. (Our attitude toward our guru should be) "You are full. But I am such a fool that I can't understand your fullness." That should be the attitude of a real student of the spiritual world. Especially those that are students of Krishna Consciousness. Mahaprabhu Himself, He is saying, "I have not a bit of divine love within Me." Kaviraj Goswami is posing that, "I am the worst of the worst, the meanest of the mean", and that is not a formal statement only. That is His sincere feeling. And how he could produce such a magnanimous work? That explanation is also given, that "Someone is forcing me to write." Sanatana Goswami said that, "Who am I to relate about the internal affairs of the harem of the Lord, the Queens? What audacity! But Someone is forcing my hand, forcing me to write all these things. But we are very low, we are so mean", they stood by that side. "We are nothing, but He is everything.

KS: That knowledge is coming down through guru.

SSM: Through guru, through scripture we may not think that guru is limited in a particular body, or in a particular mind. In Bhagavatam Mahaprabhu told that every word is Krishna, every word is infinite. We must have to come in connection in the relativity of the infinite. When Mahaprabhu gave explanations of the Atmarama sloka in 61 ways, then Sanatana Goswami said, "Oh, You are the Lord infinite, You can give infinite ways of meaning." Mahaprabhu replied, "Why do you praise me, Sanatan? Don't you know that Srimad Bhagavatam is Krishna Himself, and every letter is Krishna?" Every of the infinite is infinite, not that any number of finite can make infinite. So, we shall try to come very near the infinite but at the same time, we must be conscious that He is infinite, not finite. However near I aspire after to come I shall always try to remain under the relativity of the infinite, in connection with the infinite.

KS: Yes, we accept Prabhupada that way, because he is our guru.

SSM: That is a material conception: — *mat gurusi jagat guru* (My guru is jagad-guru) — *acaryam man vijaniyam* (One should know the guru to be my very self. S.B.11.17.27) A universal conception we must have about our guru.

KS: But that is the way he has taught us.

SSM: What?

KS: That is the way he has taught us.

SSM: Taught? No. He cannot have taught that. Our guru maharaj once told that if I am required to give an explanation of this *sloka* of

Bhagavatam, if I am under necessity to explain this *sloka*, should I leave the seat and run away? I shall have to give explanation of that very *sloka*. How? So he might have given explanation of this *sloka* and so many other *slokas*; the guru is infinite. He also says that his guru is infinite. In a telescopic system, the infinite is going up. Everyone thinks, in his place, that his guru is infinite. "I am nothing, and everything is coming from my guru." In this way, it is possible. Otherwise, this is the *sahajiya* section that will say. "I am guru, I am infinite." A guru never says so. In Prakrita Satadusani, Madhvacharya has written Mayavad Satadu-sani, so our guru maharaj, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, he also has written, — *Prakrta sahajiya satadu-sani*. There it is mentioned that the guru never says, "I am guru, I am infinite."

KS: No, no, Prabhupada never said that he was infinite, that he was God. But we can see God through him.

SSM: Of course try to see...

KS: He is the transparent via medium...

SSM: If you can see rightly, then. We must not think that we can see guru maharaj rightly, but as much as possible, for my condition... But for my seeing, I am dependent on Him. Whatever He wants me to see, I will see. We shall always try to think like that. At the same time, we shall think that, "I cannot attain the fullest degree. I shall try, I am out to try for that which is impossible; to know the infinite. I have come to try. I must try. But I can't try, I fail when I try", that should be the healthy attitude. "I am trying, but I am not trying satisfactorily. So I am not getting, I am always in want."

KS: Our concern is not so much to know the infinite, as to serve the infinite. Srila Prabhupada has asked us to serve him by preaching all over the world, therefore our movement is a preaching movement.

SSM: That is not a new thing. You are preaching, alright. You are preaching as directed by your guru maharaj, as much as you can catch, as you can understand it, sincerely, you are to do; but there are so many like you. We are also trying to move in the same way.

KS: We are not saying that we are the only ones, but we are trying to preach...

SSM: We don't think you are the only one. There are so many, and they aren't one, they are of different stages.

KS: We are trying to preach as he ordered us.

SSM: From different stages they are trying their utmost, and some may not try also. Gurubhogi is also there. Gurubhogi, he wants to exploit in the name of guru; that is also there, we find. Gurubhogi - exploitation of guru. It is also to be conceived, there may be. So, criticisms of many so-called "gurus" also in Gaudiya Math, we found.

KS: At any rate...

SSM: Yes...

KS: I wanted to speak to you on behalf of the GBC.

SSM: Yes.

KS: About what has been going on...

SSM: It is most deplorable. Swami Maharaj very earnestly invited me in ISKCON, and you are driving me out. All the good. It is all for the best. I am to take it in that way. I did not want to encroach within the precincts of ISKCON, but Swami Maharaj had much affection for me, all throughout his whole life. He abused many of my godbrothers, but with the exception of me alone. And I think that I have much affection for ISKCON, and he asked me several times, "You are to look after them", and he tried his best also. Once he proposed that I accept the post of president of ISKCON, but I am always a backward-pushing man, an ease-lover, so I did not venture. And I had no capacity also that I will be the president of a great institution throughout the whole length and breadth of the world. I am a man of small energy, and satisfied with very little things, not much ambition, but at the same time, some disinterestedness also is in me. And some sort of common sense. My guru maharaj and also my godbrothers had some certificate for me. Not an aggressor, I was forcibly almost, by affection's force, taken into the connection of ISKCON, and now, I am being driven out of ISKCON. But still I cannot give up my own faith, what I'm fostering throughout my whole life of fifty-five years in Gaudiya Math, which is well tried, and Swami Maharaj to his last days, up to his last days, he maintained his faith in me. And still I think that I am a well-wisher of that great institution, what is the result of the wonderful grace of Krishna in him. But anyhow...

KS: I think you are misunderstanding.

SSM: I think you are making much of formality, administration, and divorcing the very spirit from it. That is my understanding. You are all captured by the grandeur, the glamour, and not so much for the inner spirit or truth.

KS: Personally I have great affection, and I know that you had. Know that many of my godbrothers...

SSM: Don't think that you have made a monopoly of the truth, of the Absolute truth; you few heads have got monopoly, and it is the object of your trade you think. I am not such a fool to give recognition to the committee which is effected by a few heads like you. I consider you students; all students, not professors. In my consideration, you are all students. And you will be healthy if you can think that you are students, and not professors.

KS: We are students. But we are students of Prabhu-pada.

SSM: Yes.

KS: And we must study Prabhupada from his books.

SSM: And I am in the rank of his friend, not disciple.

KS: Therefore we give you respect.

SSM: Yes, you are giving.

Jayapataka Swami: We don't want to commit any offense unto you.

SSM: But now you are very much afraid of me, because I am a plain speaker.

KS: Not exactly because you are a plain speaker, but because Srila Prabhupada wanted to preserve this ISKCON.

SSM: In my last days I am (motivated) to some mean interest of making my position, before I go to death, you think me like that.

Jayapataka Swami: We have never said such things. Neither we have expressed any...

SSM: My position is clear. I am not an aggressor, but those that are coming to me and asking me my advice in particular cases I cannot but extend my sympathetic help to them. That is my position. I am not running hither, tither to entice persons or to capture them. I am sitting straight here, and anyone coming to me, according to my own conscience, I am extending my helping hand to them.

KS: But those who are coming are using you, they are using you for their own political ends.

SSM: I am not supposed to see things through your eyes. I have got my own eyes. I am fifty-five years in connection with the Gaudiya Math, and whether I am bonafide, I do not require your certificate, any of you in the whole of ISKCON. I don't want any certificate. I have got my own way of thinking, and many of my godbrothers, including Swami Maharaj, had confidence in me, in my thinking.

Aksayananda Maharaj: But not these gentlemen; they don't have confidence.

KS: Because Prabhupada told us not to come.

SSM: I am an old man, I am tired, excited, I am very very sorry, (crying) really I say with folded hands that you are ill-treating me. I am very sorry. Swami Maharaj was so affectionate. I also treated with such affection to him. And rudely you are behaving towards me. I am very much mortified for that, but what can I do? I am a small man...

KS: We have never said that you are not bonafide.

SSM: Anyhow.

Jayatirtha: We have never said that.

JTM: You have said it openly in your meetings, so much.

KS: I never said that he is not bonafide, I said that that's what Prabhupada said.

SSM: Kirtanananda Maharaj, Accha! Oh! Kirtanananda Maharaj, you see one point.

KS: (to Jayatirtha) It is in his books! Because you don't accept his books that's your problem!

Devotee: Because you've never read them that's your problem!

SSM: Quiet! Do not speak so much, in my presence at least. I don't like these things; rowdyism. Now, my final appeal to you is than I am old, I am tired, I can't talk anymore now. If you find any necessity to meet me, you

will have to come sometime after, perhaps in the morning-time. I am a little in good health at that time. Now, I am almost finished, I can't talk longer. If you come again, I shall try to put my things more slowly, and judiciously, and in an appealing way.

Jayatirtha: The point was that...

SSM: Now, I can't move, my energy finished almost. I can't speak anymore.

JPS: (to others) You can tell Maharaj that we just wanted to...

SSM: Jayapataka Maharaj.

JPS: We just wanted to stress that it is not a question of anything personal, and neither is anything personal; it is a question only of what policy to adopt in terms of allowing....

SSM: Why do you talk now? I can't listen to that. Because if you speak, then I shall have to reply, but I am unable to reply, so you will think that, "Maharaj could not reply". I don't like that. So, if you want to talk more, I am ready, but you must come at some suitable time, I am not lacking in reasoning, or in representing sastric quotation. Anyhow, I am finished now. I can't talk more. Gaura Hari Bol.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj tried his utmost to help, but the GBCs never informed ISKCON members about his real advice.

The GBC published a paper called "Purity is the Force". The GBC passed a resolution in 1982 which was directed against Srila Sridhar Maharaj. It states that no member of ISKCON shall go to any institution outside of ISKCON for seeking spiritual instructions. Whoever does so will sever his connection with ISKCON.

To back up that ridiculous resolution, the paper argued by quoting the Srimad Bhagavatam purport: "Anyone who is trying to be aloof from the Krishna Consciousness movement and yet engage in Krishna Consciousness is living in a great hallucination, for that is not possible." Srimad Bhagavatam 4.9.11 purport.

The idea conveyed here is that one must be in ISKCON to be in the Parampara, i.e, to be bonafide. This implies that Srila Sridhar Maharaj is not in the parampara nor do they consider him bonafide. That was clearly expressed in the words of Kirtanananda Swami. The meeting took place one day after the resolution was passed.

The text from the Srimad Bhagavatam was twisted by the GBC. The spirit of the verse is that the association of devotees is essential for spiritual advancement. Ironically the verse has been used to say that we should not associate with Srila Sridhar Maharaj, who is an advanced devotee of the highest order.

Add Insult to Injury

One day after the GBC delegation went to in-sult Srila Sridhar Maharaj on the 6th of March, 1982, the GBC sent Yasomatinandana das to make "their points" to Srila Sridhar Maharaj. After this conversation the GBC announced to its members:

"Srila Sridhar Maharaj wants to break the institution Srila Prabhupada made."

SSM: So, unity, everything is laudable as long as it is connection with Krishna Consciousness, for which Swami Maharaj went there empty-handed. I asked them, "Try to help in my name in a relieving way."

Y: Who did you ask, and in which case?

SSM: Pradyumna came first with eighteen points of dissatisfaction. I reported it to Tamal Krishna. He was busy in his propaganda work. Then he told me, "Things are going on very well. I can't go now. When I shall go during Gaura Purnima, I shall try to meet you." Then he came and went away, but did not care to meet with me. "Things are going on very well." Then one Yasoda-nandana, he was in charge of Vrindavana gurukula perhaps. He came, I saw he was a good man, but I heard that he has become indifferent; an important man has become indifferent. Then next they came (saying that), "Three gurus, they are unfit and they should be discharged and punished." They came to punish three gurus who had direct appointment of Swami Maharaj. Anyhow, I inter-fered, and some compromise was effected, including Tamal Krishna Maharaj also. In this way, so many came and I am hearing and I told (them), "Go on with some relief work."

Y: I am here, as you say, for "unity". This is a "unity" effort only. "United we stand, divided we fall."

SSM: I differ from you. Unity for what? Unity for a bad thing, that can create havoc.

Y: Well, how can it be a bad thing? ISKCON is meant for Krishna Consciousness.

SSM: I say that the ideal is all-important, and next, unity. Administration is the position of the ksatriya, and the acharya's work, that is for the brahmana who does not care for this worldly achievement. That is for the brahmanas, and administration is with the ksatriya, finance with the vaisya. This should be the general conception. So, those with brahmanic temperament, they should be concerned about sastric knowledge; that is their *laksana* (symptom). — *sabde pare ca nisnatam* (The qualification of a spiritual master is that he must have realized the conclusion of the scriptures by deliberation and arguments. - S.B.11.3.21).

Then in Gita — *tah viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya, upadesyanti te jnanan, jnaninas tattva darsinah* (Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you, because he has seen the truth. B.G.4.34) and Bhagavatam — *tasmad gurum prapadyeta jijnasu sreyah uttaman* (Any person who is seriously desirous of achieving real happiness must seek out a bonafide spiritual master and take shelter of him by initiation. S.B.11.3.21) and in Upanisad also, — *tad vijnan artham sa gurum evabhiyacchet, srotiyam brahma nistham* (In order to learn the transcendental science, one must approach the bonafide spiritual master in disciplic succession, who is fixed in the Absolute Truth. Mundaka Up. 1.2.12) That should be the criterion of the acharya. Not a man who can conduct good administration, make money and recruit more men, that is not the criterion of an acharya. So, the dissatisfied, to help them, that was my advice to the discontented. And before this, there is one thing I should say: anyone who came to me and asked anything, they took it on a tape. And that tape may be propagated anywhere and everyone who comes, whatever I say, they take a tape of that. And they began to preach in their own way. In this way, then, I heard that Dhira Krishna Maharaj took one tape from me, and he has copied it, and he is spreading it amongst the public, and I was told that that was appreciated. And those that came to hear that tape; I am told that they had got some sympathy for me. In this way perhaps some persons were attracted towards me through the tapes, and that is the cause of all this trouble. Those that can hear from me through the tapes, they are having some sympathy towards me, and they come to me seeking for help. I am here, and those that are coming to hear from me, irrespective of anyone, I speak. In this way, the trouble has arisen here. Some are more attracted towards my tape. Have you heard?

Y: Yes, I very much appreciate, I had heard with him also last year. Only thing, that their point is that by hearing your...

SSM: Yes, I also like... all of us are proud, those that have faith in Mahaprabhu, they cannot but be proud that Swami Maharaj has done such a wonderful work in his propagation, it is inconceivable to so many. And that his position and prestige will be diminished; that will be almost death to us. We want that Gaudiya Vaisnavism should have a spacious field. But still,

the justice should be there.

Y: Now, their point is that by hearing your tapes...

SSM: Their point I have heard. They say that whatever will be the majority of the committee (GBC) that is Ab-solute. I differ there. I consider that you are all students in the line of truth, so don't think that you are all perfect. You are students. So try to be accommodating, and strive to keep the standard.

Y: One thing they say is that by hearing your tapes the determination to serve in ISKCON should increase, but instead they are finding fault.

SSM: One doctor (Ph.D in neuro-psychology) was sent to me for initiation. He was sent by one of the zonal acharyas, and perhaps he heard my tape. Anyhow he got some faith in me, and I initiated him. I have written one book, Prapana-Jivanamrta, a compilation from many sources, and I have also composed some poems in Sanskrit. That doctor said that, "Your writings are helping ISKCON in an inestimable way, making ISKCON more deeply rooted, and it is also enlivening." That remark came to me, and it is not impossible. Swami Maharaj spread Mahaprabhu's instructions very widely, and what I collected in that book, many very selected passages from many higher devotees, that can help the movement. In this way, my connection was to consolidate and make it deep-rooted, but unfortunately, things are going in such a way as if I am standing in the opposite party. But, I don't think so. I think that my inclination, my advice and my friendship with Swami Maharaj can help you a great deal on both sides. On the constitutional, as well as the spiritual deal, this is my simple conviction.

In my whole life, I have not ambition, and in my old age I am not such a fool that this time, at the cost of ISKCON, I will try to emulate my condition. (improve my position)

Y: They have always had great reverence for you.

SSM: Only when they did not differ with me.

Y: That is true, but whenever there was a personal crisis in Jayatirtha Maharaj's personal life, the GBCs directed him towards your good self. The only thing that they are a little bitter now, is that some of the people who have some criticism against the movement have...

SSM: Reverence, reverence formally. What sort of reverence do they have towards me? Formal or material, substantial, spiritual?

Y: Well, I think that for your knowledge...

SSM: No, no, their reverence for me, it is in a formal way I think. At least now they have proved like that. They are more particular with form management, and formal help they want from me. But I am not a man who is concerned with form only. I more like spirit than form. Rather, I like to be a form-breaker than form-maker, if it is necessary for spiritual upliftment.

Y: That's pretty heavy.

SSM: And it is there — *sarva dharman parityajya*. What is that? What is

the ideal? — *sarva dharman paritajya*, and the highest goal: *svajanam arya patham ca hitva bhedur mukunda padavim srutibhir wimrgyam* (The gopis of Vrindavana have given up the association of their husbands, sons and other family members, who are very difficult to give up, and they have forsaken the path of chastity to take shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, Krishna, which one should search for by vedic knowledge. S.B.10.47.61) Are you acquainted with this sloka of Bhagavatam? Which is said by Uddhava, about the gopis of Vrindavana, about their qualification? Are you acquainted with this sloka of Srimad-Bhagavatam?

Y: No. Kindly tell me.

SSM: So you should have connection with the highest ideal in Gaudiya Vaisnavism. Where to go? What is our destination? What for have we come to ISKCON? A general call Swami Maharaj has given to so many, crushing the pride of the present scientific civilization. But what for? What is our aim, highest aim? You must be conscious of that. What for have you come? You soldiers, you are arrayed to fight with maya, but what for? What is your aim? What is the conception? There are so many conceptions: Islam conception, Christian conception, the Varnasram conception, Budhistic conception, Sankara's conception, so many, but what is the Krishna Consciousness that Swami Maharaj gave to you?

Y: Our thinking is that we do not know Krishna, we have no qualification to know Krishna. But we know Prabhupada, Swami Maharaj, therefore we want to serve him.

SSM: What is your Prabhupada? There are so many spiritual masters in the world, what is the peculiarity of your Prabhupada?

Y: He is putting us at the feet of Krishna.

SSM: Then what is Krishna? Did he not preach about Him? He preached about Krishna Consciousness. And what is that Krishna Consciousness?

Y: Surrendering to Prabhupada means preaching Krishna Consciousness, and to practice Krishna Consciousness.

SSM: He captured your mind through preaching Krishna Consciousness.

Y: Right.

SSM: And what do you find peculiar to Krishna Consciousness that you left your previous religious ideas and joined Swami Maharaj? You took so much risk, what is that great Krishna Consciousness? You must know that.

Y: Yes, yes, we know. Whatever Prabhupada has taught us.

SSM: Not hazy. You are simply taking the name of Prabhupada.

Y: Krishna is the Supreme Lord.

SSM: Krishna is the Supreme Lord, that is vague. Someone else will say that Allah is the Supreme Lord. Another will say that Jesus is the Supreme Lord.

Y: Well, He has His name, form, paraphernalia, pastimes, they are non-different from Krishna.

SSM: You have to know what is Krishna conception, Back to Godhead.

What is Godhead?

Y: We are being educated in our ISKCON society about that.

SSM: That education is not a mere fashion. That is reality.

Y: Our guru maharaj, he was there guiding this mission for thirteen years....

SSM: I know your guru maharaj more than you do. I knew him from the beginning to the last days of his life. So much so, that once he proposed to me to be the president of ISKCON. I refused. In his last days, he wanted me to live along with him, in ISKCON, to have my constant association.

Y: If I say something representing their side (the GBC), you please do not mind it.

SSM: Whatever you say, that will be superficial to me, that won't reach to the depth of my knowledge and experience of Krishna Consciousness. Whatever you will see, what all of you will see, that won't reach the depth of my knowledge about ISKCON, that is, Krishna Consciousness: what is, who is Krishna? You are all primary students. I think so.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj spoke harsh words when he heard how ISKCON's members were mistreated. Still he always advised his followers to strictly refrain from any aggression even after some of his disciples were physically attacked by ISKCON men in Dallas and Australia. But when he saw that devotees feelings were not regarded he spoke very strongly regarding the forced reinitiations of Jayatirtha's disciples. He said:

Devotee: But his siksas were not dissatisfied, they were preached in another way. They were preached too forcibly.

SSM: They will have to give explanation there. With this inner adjustment they will have to do that — whether he is being satisfied by this way.

Devotee: It is very painful to the sisya and the guru.

SSM: Very, very painful. Like cattle, they are given with the human sentiments, pure sentiments, like goats and sheep. Cattle, they are being dealt with like cattle. They belong to the community. Any sentiment between human hearts is being ignored - it is lost - the connection from heart to heart - from soul to soul. The tank is cursing the infantry. The tank is cursing the infantry - something like that.

In the consideration of humanity - also in the case of devotion - they have every grave consideration. It is not a place to play with the odds and the religious sentiments of the people like a military campaign. That I told - the dollar, diplomacy and despotism in the name of devotion, dedication and divinity. This is going on like that. This is my conception. This play of

dollar, diplomacy and despotism. In the name of devotion, dedication and divinity. Three D's in the name of three D's. We have to trade.

Devotee: In what cases a disciple can reject his own guru?

SSM: Who have got some sense, some appreciation about the fine feeling and sentiment of devotion, they cannot cast like a demoniac attempt. The computer is taking the position of the human soft heart. They have no appreciation for soft dealings. It seems to me that I told that to cross the infantry with the help of the tank - that is America - threw the atom bomb to the innocent people. The victory of missile over humanity - human hearts - human feelings. Fight, direct fighting, that may be accepted. Who has come to fight - fight with him. But the innocent man, they are engaged here and there and they are cursed by some machinery efficiency. Must be some reaction. They will say that for greater benefit we are bound to do these sort of things - for higher greater benefit.

Dev: That is less objectionable, personal dealings. I can't put my faith on his for such and such reason, a simple case. A simple case but forcible conversion like the Mohammedans, there is soul and there is Koran. Accept Koran or be beheaded.

But fortunately not all of Srila Prabhupada's disciples took such a negative approach and many of them gave relief to others by spreading the nectar of Srila Sridhar Maharaj's teaching.

Tripurari Swami and Jagad Guru Swami visited Srila Sridhar Maharaj:

Tripurari Swami: Generally, we all consider that your connection is the most valuable thing for everyone.

SSM: I thought like that, that I am always friendly to them. But I am sorry, much aggrieved that they misunderstand me. Even my enemies remark that my specialty is strong common sense and disinterested nature, not partial, not selfish - end of life - open to truth. Always, always open to truth, but out of genero-sity, broadness — *maha vadanyaya* — like Mahaprabhu.

I am not happy seeing the condition that Bhagavan Maharaj, that Ramesvara Maharaj, stalwarts are going down. We are so proud of Swami Maharaj. By the grace of our guru, but within ten years in conditions of hard working at least... I felt so proud of his uncommon extraordinary activity. In a lifetime I have had experience. A real great shock not only to ISKCON but to the preaching mission of the West of Sri Chaitanya cult, a setback.

TS: Only you can help them Maharaja.

SSM: As far as possible. (laughingly)

TS: That you are doing.

SSM: I thought that I was doing something like relief work.

TS: Many are coming to know that you are a great friend of Swami Maharaj and friend of everyone - friend of the world. Like Janardhana Maharaj, he has come.

SSM: Cannot but be; one who has got faith and love for Mahaprabhu and our Guru Maharaja; they cannot but feel proud of Swami Maharaja's preaching to all the world. There must be (fruit) by this inopportune thing.

Another famous man, Bhakti Caru Swami interviewed Srila Sridhar Maharaj regarding the GBC attitude:

BCS: Now that they are failing to show proper respect to you, what are we to understand from that?

SSM: Maybe you will consider that I am not a fit person to give proper advice. My advice may not be actually according to proper consideration. This question is very difficult for me to answer. The other day (name) came to me with the case concerning (name) . Please let me say what I want to say and clarify this point and then we can discuss further. (name) came the other day to find out whether all the crying and singing and laughing of (name), whether they were genuine feelings or not, whether they are genuine symptoms of ecstasy or not. So, I said, not. First I gave the scriptural injunction, and then I said that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has explained that it is very difficult. That I am crying is merely to get name and fame. This is so on a high platform. Lastly I pointed out that your spiritual master did not point out or manifest these symptoms in public, then why is he trying to go above your guru? At this (name) was satisfied and he said "Yes it is all right. I have got what I have come for."

Srila Sidhar Maharaj Always Encouraged to Increase the Number of Gurus

SSM: I told them right at the beginning when they came to discuss with me about this after Swami Maharaj departed. I suggested that this should be made into a dynamic practice. Then the relationship was cracked. This was my suggestion but they did not care about that. On the other hand, emphatically they said that "No, only these eleven that Srila Prabhupada has selected will remain. Outside these eleven they will not include anybody else."

But anyhow, they went away, did not oppose me here, but after going away from me, I heard they expressed that, we must not go outside the

eleven. That was their concerned opinion and I heard that. But my suggestion was that this body must be a living one. It will be... it should eliminate and it should add. Because you are now in such position that you will be able to confer or delegate your power to your disciple, then why not to the godbrother?

With you in, the succession won't end. Your disciple you must appoint to be... to do the work of an acharya. Then why do you not delegate your power to your good, fit godbrother to do the work of acharya? That was my contention. But they did not accept this idea. No, we won't go beyond the eleven. That was their decision and so they go on and rather avoid me. That was the cause of their avoidance and indifference towards me I think. Sometimes they come with particular cases, but not for general advice.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj Always Defended Our Srila Prabhupada

I heard once Akinan Maharaj asked him, "What are your other godbrothers doing?" So he replied, "Well they just eat and sleep and ring the bell." Hearing this they become very offended and then they come to me. But my observation is neutral. So I said, "The drum, that he is playing. If he accepts you as a player of the bell in that band, then you should consider this to be a great honor." I told this. My view is different. I saw that he is playing a huge drum, a battle drum, so if you get a chance to play the *kasi*, or cymbals, along with that, that is a great honor to you. A more dignified position you get. This I am speaking from absolute consideration.

SSM recommended to the ISKCON devotees to confront the GBC with their grievances. This led up to the Vrindavan clash between the GBC and the temple presidents. Unfortunately, even though so many of SSM's recommendations were implemented there, no recognition was given to the well-wisher.

SSM: If I had to say something formally from outside, then I had to say that among you who enjoy the greatest confidence of all the devotees, through such a man you call for a meeting in America or wherever the field is the most important. And in that meeting, those who are willing to boldly face the situation, participate, the GBCs, those who you feel are dissatisfied inwardly, call them and call a few acharyas like Ramesvara Maharaj who are sympathetic. And then in the meeting you record the feeling of different devotees and then with strength of that resolution you call for their

explanation of, "What are you doing in the name of Prabhupada? You are not absolutely infallible. Due to your activities the mass of the disciples of Prabhupada has become very bewildered. They are becoming very disappointed and they can see that a great loss is going to be incurred by ISKCON society. The ISKCON society is in danger. So now you all reconsider yourselves and appeal to them to readjust themselves and thus this disaster can be saved. So many devotees are leaving the movement. So many devotees have become half-dead, and so many devotees have already died. And so many are lamenting and we cannot just sit idly without trying to rectify the situation. We ourselves do not want any position, but what is going on is intolerable. It shows that the major position is going to die. So we want some action to rectify this situation. We want some remedy for this. This must be thought out and accepted." So with this idea you form a committee, make a resolution, and then selectively invite to come. In this way you call for a meeting, pass a resolution, and then call for them and ask them to readjust their position and reconsider. Otherwise we shall be in painful necessity to make progress independently. You can say this in this line.

Personal Contact

Those that are going independent, hopeless, disappointed, going off, away from the association, you may meet them personally one by one. Let us come together. In this way a stalwart meeting will be first and then the resolution will be given to them and then mass meeting. And there it should be mentioned that we cannot be sightseers. We have got life interest in the mission. We come to save. And if we say that in the name of saving... you are all killers, we cannot tolerate that. We have also got fire, the spark from our guru maharaj, eh?

Generally I want that both parties will come and I shall try to help that it may not be broken asunder, torn asunder. Such a great thing has been done by Swami Maharaj. I love it very much. That a worldwide movement, organization will be broken into factions, I can't tolerate this. So I like that both parties will come and I shall try to find out a middle solution. But the party in power may not care to come. I am... for a long time I am feeling that whenever I have come upon a person going dissatisfied, dissatisfaction is going within the party. I am certain and unhappy. But the party in power does not care to come to me. Both the parties come. I want some sort of compromise, of course helpful compromise, not half compromise. Helpful compromise may be effected and the united front will be kept up intact. That is desirable, for me at least. I am not... long time to live. I am sufficiently old but I don't like to see that Swami Maharaj's great work is disturbed in such a way. So laudable thing. — *prthivite ache yata nagar adi gram, sarvatra pracara hoibe mora nam*. This great action undertaken

by Swami Maharaj effectively successful. That is going to be ruined by internal feud? Intolerable. So if both parties come I shall try my best before I die that I want to see a unified front and a healthy thing. Healthy institution, that is my heart's desire.

BCS: That is what most of the godbrothers also feel. They feel that whatever Sridhara Maharaj says, we will accept the decision.

SSM: In the core of my heart I desire such. That, it may not be broken... it may remain a united front and do the victory over the other religious principles. There are enemies in the name of religion, they are flourishing and such a great future will be lost? It is intolerable. And especially Prabhupada asked me to go to the West. I could not go, but Prabhupada has brought the West to me, so I must have some holy duty to discharge about that, I feel. So anyhow, it may not be broken into pieces. United we stand, divided we fall. But if hopeless, then no alternative. For the sake of the truth... we must always side with the truth and not with the falsehood. Hare Krishna, Gaura Haribol.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj made every effort possible to keep ISKCON united and to keep all devotees happy. Unfortunately Bhakti Caru Swami later accepted ISKCON GBC and guru position and was used for propaganda against Srila Sridhar Maharaj.

Once I asked him why he rejected Srila Sridhar Maharaj. He told me that Sridhar Maharaj had asked him to translate his Bhagavad-Gita -The Hidden Treasure. He had replied to SSM, "What need is there to have another Gita since we have the Bhagavad-Gita As it Is?"

Sridhar Maharaj replied, "Just because the basic teachings are published does not mean the post graduate study should not be published." He left Sridhar Maharaj for this reason. I replied to Bhakti Caru Swami, "Bhaktivinoda Thakur published three different Gitas and even our Srila Prabhupada enjoyed hearing the confidential realizations of Srila Sridhar Maharaj on the Bhagavad-gita's Catur Sloki."

But some devotees tried their best to show the transparent nature of Srila Sridhar Maharaj. One collection of conversations between the great acharyas was published as the "Guardian of Devotion" and is reprinted here.

The "Guardian of Devotion"

SIKSA-GURU "Our Relationship is Very Intimate."

Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and Srila Bhakti Raksaka Sridhara Deva Goswami Maharaj first met sometime in the year 1930 in Allahabad India. In a taped conversation recorded in a 1973 meeting at Sridhara Maharaj's Matha at Navadvipa Dhama, Bhaktivedanta Swami recalls: "So we are very fortunate to hear His Divine Grace, Om Visnupada Paramahansa Parivraj-akacarya Bhakti Raksaka Sridhara Maharaj. By age and by experience, in both ways, he is senior to me. I was fortunate to have his association since a very long time, perhaps in 1930, something like that. At that time, he did not accept sannyasa; he just left home, and as a vanaprastha, in white dress, he went to Allahabad.

"(To Sridhara Maharaj): Maharaja, I think you remember the incident when you went to Allahabad? On that auspicious occasion, we were connected. There is a long story, it will take time, but I had the opportunity of associating with Sridhar Maharaj for several years. Krishna and Prabhupada liked him to prepare me.

"Sridhara Maharaj lived in my house for many years, so naturally, we had very intimate talks and he was my good advisor. I took his advice, instructions, very seriously because from the very beginning I know that he is a pure vaisnava, a pure devotee, and I wanted to associate with him and try to help him also. Our relationship is very intimate."

Herein, we find the history of a transcendental relationship between these two pure devotees of the Lord. Addressing Sridhara Maharaj as "His Divine Grace" and Om Visnupada — form of address for one regarded as a spiritual master — Bhaktivedanta Swami has transcended the norms of social etiquette and superficial formality. Intimately associating together for a concentrated period of over five years, often for five to seven hours daily, Bhaktivedanta Swami considered that "Krishna and Prabhupada liked him to prepare me" for his future expansive missionary activities in the Western World.

While remembering their intimate talks, specifically in regard to Bhagavad-Gita, Sridhara Maharaj recalls the depth in penetrations of their discussions. "Once while discussing the verse — *dadami buddhi yogam tam yena mam upayanti te* ("I give them the understanding by which they can come to me." BG.10.10) I submitted to him that here, *upayanti* is indicative of *parakiya rasa* (paramour relationship). On this point he agreed with me, saying, "Yes, at this point there cannot be anything but the *parakiya rasa* of Vraja. The conclusion of Bhagavad-Gita must come to this." Thus he recognized Sridhara Maharaj as "a pure vaisnava, a pure devotee" since the beginning of their relationship.

Bhaktivedanta Swami most highly valued his instructions and advice. He

would often consult with him regarding the spiritual significance of his failing business and family relationships. An example of how Bhaktivedanta Swami tried to help Sridhara Maharaj in his preaching work is seen in his appreciating Sridhara Maharaj's uncanny ability for extracting the essence of the scriptures. He helped to finance the publication of Sridhara Maharaja's original Sanskrit-Bengali work entitled *Prapanna-jivanamrta: The Nectar of Surrender*. The book, as well as containing original Sanskrit verses composed by Sridhara Maharaj, is a compilation of verses from various vaisnava scriptures such as Srimad-Bhagavatam, and includes excerpts from the works of Rupa Goswami. It is divided according to the six divisions of surrender.

Constantly associating, whether in Allahabad, Calcutta, or other parts of India, Bhaktivedanta Swami and Sridhara Maharajs' relationship continually developed.

Bhaktivedanta Swami continues to recall their meeting: "In my householder life I had opened an office in Bombay for our business. The Bombay Gaudiya Math was established by Sridhara Maharaj and myself. We made two parties for begging, collecting alms. Sridhara Maharaj, myself, and Bhakti Saranga Goswami Maharaj. So, I took them to my chemist friends and I collected about five hundred rupees. Sridhara Maharaj would speak, I would introduce, and Goswami Maharaj would canvass."

In the Srila Prabhupada lilamrita, Satsvarupa das Goswami writes, "Abhay would often accompany Sridhara Maharaj and his assistants at preaching pro-grams, where he would play the mridanga. And when Sridhara Maharaj fell ill, Abhay led the other devotees on preaching engagements, performing kirtana, playing mridanga, and giving lectures on the Bhagavatam."

While still in Bombay, Bhaktivedanta Swami and Sridhara Maharaj were the receiving party for a Gaudiya Math sannyasi upon his return from Europe. Although dismayed by his changed appearance which was missing the tridanda of a Gaudiya sannyasi, the siksa of a vaisnava, as well as the traditional robes, they still eagerly inquired in regard to the preaching field in the West. The sannyasi remarked, "They ask questions that cannot be answered." Concerned, Bhaktivedanta Swami inquired further as to the nature of those questions. One after another Sridhara Maharaj answered them all. At last, the sannyasi was left dumbfounded and Bhaktivedanta Swami boldly declared, "Today, Europe has been defeated by Asia!"

During the lifetime of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, Sridhar Maharaja once composed a poem describing the ontological positions of Bhaktivinoda Thakura and the line of disciplic succession stemming from Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura was so pleased with the poem's ontological depth and its happy style that he remarked, "Bhaktivinoda Thakura has written this through him. Now I am satisfied that although I may go, at least one man remains behind who can

represent my conclusions." In further appreciation of Sridhara Maharaja's writing, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur informed the editors of Gaudiya Math's periodicals, "If you include articles written by Sridhara Maharaj, the quality of your publications will be greatly improved."

After the disappearance of Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, the Gaudiya Math gradually diverged. With full knowledge of the events surrounding the disintegration of the Gaudiya Math, Bhaktivedanta Swami told his disciples in the same 1973 conversation, "Our relationship is very intimate. After the breakdown of the Gaudiya Math, I wanted to organize another organization, making Sridhara Maharaj the head."

Reciprocating the appreciation, Sridhar Maharaj advised the leaders of the Gaudiya Sangha to confer the title "Bhaktivedanta" upon the then Abhay Caran. Later, his sannyasa-guru, Sripad Bhakti Prajñana Kesava Maharaj, one of the most senior disciples of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, and the first sannyasa-disciple of Sridhar Maharaj, gave sannyasa to Abhay Caran, retaining the title "Bhaktivedanta" and conferring the sannyasa name "Swami."

Additionally, when Bhaktivedanta Swami returned to India in October of 1967, after his successful preaching initiative in America, he stayed with Sridhar Maharaj in Navadwipa, and observed his Vyasa-puja celebration. At that time, Bhaktivedanta Swami wrote a letter to a disciple saying, "Yesterday, we have all come to Navadwipa dhama. This place is an establishment of one of my godbrothers. It is a very nice and extensive place, and my godbrother B.R. Sridhar Maharaja has spared one entire house for our stay. He has also agreed to cooperate with our society. We shall observe his birthday celebration, and the brahmacharis shall learn how to celebrate the spiritual master's birthday." Shortly afterwards, Bhaktivedanta Swami asked Sridhara Maharaja to be the president of his newly formed society — The Inter-national Society for Krishna Consciousness.

During the Vyasa-puja celebration, one of Bhaktivedanta Swami's disciples saw Bhaktivedanta Swami and Sridhara Maharaj fully absorbed in a deep discussion in Bengali. The disciple inquired from Bhaktivedanta Swami what was the nature of their talk, and he replied, "If I were to tell you, you would faint. Sridhara Maharaj has very high realizations."

That Bhaktivedanta Swami continually regarded Sridhara Maharaj as his advisor throughout his life is clear in the following quote from a letter written by him to one of Sridhar Maharaj's disciples. Concerned about his failing health, he had written Sridhara Maharaj asking whether he should continue living in the United States or return to India to live his last days in Vrndavana. After receiving Sridhara Maharaja's reply, he wrote, "What Sripad Sridhar Maharaj has directed, I take it on my head. He is my always well-wisher. After the departure of Prabhupada it is appropriate that I should accept his direction. I got direction from him that I shall live in this

country forever."

Sometimes it is said that one's preaching contribution can be judged according to the number of temples established, devotees converted, and books published and distributed.

Sridhar Maharaj travelled and preached extensively all over India, personally accompanying Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura for many years. Nearly fifty years ago, he established the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math on the banks of the Ganges in Navadvipa dhama, which is now a thriving institution. His followers have established temples in major cities around the world. His Sanskrit and Bengali writings had been appreciated by both scholars and devotees for their originality, depth of realization, and happy poetic style. Published and widely distributed throughout the world, they are now available in English, Spanish, Hindi, Portuguese, German, French and are being translated into other languages.

Throughout his life, Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj always maintained the highest respect and confidence in Sridhara Maharaj. He considered that whenever it was not possible for his disciples to proceed directly under his guidance, that they should take direction from Sridhara Maharaj. He once wrote in a letter to one of his students, "Because you are my disciple, and I think, a sincere soul, it is my duty to refer you to someone who is competent to act as a siksa-guru. For spiritual advancement of life, we must go to someone who is actually practicing spiritual life. So, if you are actually serious to take instructions from a siksa-guru I can refer you to the one who is the most highly competent of all my godbrothers. This is B.R. Sridhar Maharaj, whom I consider to be even my siksa-guru, so what to speak of the benefit that you can have by his association. So, if you are serious about the advancement of your spiritual life, I will advise you to go to Sridhar Maharaj. It will be very good for your spiritual benefit, and I will feel that you are safe. When I was in India with the others, we lived with Sridhar Maharaja. You can also make arrangements for your other godbrothers to go there in the future. So, live peacefully with Sridhara Maharaj, and thereby you will be spiritually enlightened."

In this passage, Bhaktivedanta Swami describes Sridhara Maharaja as "the most competent of all my godbrothers, someone competent to act as siksa-guru", and in an astounding statement, he declares, "I consider Sridhara Maharaja to be my siksa-guru, so what to speak of the benefit that you can have from his association"!

What Bhaktivedanta Swami means by siksa-guru is best explained in his own words. In his purports to the Adi-lila of Chaitanya Charitamrita, he states: "One should know the instructing spiritual master to be the Personality of Krishna. Krishna das Kaviraj Goswami states that there are two kinds of instructing spiritual masters. One is the liberated person fully absorbed in meditation in devotional service and the other is he who invokes the disciple's spiritual consciousness by means of relevant

instructions. There is no difference between the shelter-giving Supreme Lord and the initiating and instructing spiritual masters. If one foolishly discriminates between them, he commits an offense in the discharge of devotional service." (C.C. Adi.1.47)

Although it may be said that Bhaktivedanta Swami encouraged his godbrothers in general, no one anywhere can produce a similar statement of endorsement. The fact is that Bhaktivedanta Swami possessed the highest respect and appreciation for Sridhara Maharaj, and Sridhara Maharaj is unparalleled in his understanding and admiration of Bhaktivedanta Swami as evinced in the following eulogy:

"So our Swami Maharaja has done a miracle! Thakura Bhaktivinoda conceived and Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura began to translate this conception into action. And we find that through Swami Maharaj, in his last days, it has been fulfilled to such a great extent. We are happy, we are glad, we are proud!"

In response to this, Bhaktivedanta Swami with great humility, his voice choked with emotion, tearfully replied, " So, by guru and vaisnava, whatever position I have got it is by guru's mercy and the blessings of the vaisnavas. Otherwise, how I may have? So, I wish that Sridhara Maharaj may bestow his blessings as he was doing always, and may guru maharaja help me so I can do some service. By his grace it has become successful. I have no credit. I do not know how things are happening because I am not at all qualified, — *chadiya vaisnava seva, nistara payeche keba*. (Without serving an ideal vaisnava, who can be delivered from the clutches of maya?)"

And after the disappearance of Bhaktivedanta Swami, Sridhara Maharaj declared, "I consider him to be *saktyavesa avatara*, and it is confirmed in his writings on his spiritual journey through the Atlantic. How he landed there in America, and the nature of his beginning the movement, his intense degree of dedication to Krishna and dependence, and how much he made himself empty of any other desire than the order of his gurudeva — quite empty that Krishna came down to help him, and it is corroborated that Krishna worked on his behalf. In his poem, Prayer to the Lotus Feet of Krishna, we find him pleading with Krishna, "My dear Brother, your good fortune will come to You only when Srimati Radharani becomes pleased with You." Seeing his gurudeva Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati as Radharani's delegation and his order as Her divine service, he humbly submitted that he did not feel himself worthy or fit to discharge the divine service, so he enlisted Krishna in the service of his guru. He had completely dedicated himself to the purpose, he was so earnest in his prayer to Krishna that he may discharge the duty that he has been given by his guru maharaja, that divine force, power, came down to help him. Otherwise, it is impossible. It is not a thing of the ordinary level that anyone will do, but the highest thing has been taken down to the lowest position so extensively. It

cannot but be the divine power, embodied and in a great intensity and magnitude! So, *saktyavesa-avatara*, I cannot but take him to be so."

With such appreciation, there should be little doubt why Bhaktivedanta Swami had implicit faith in Sridhara Maharaja. He had even heard directly from Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura of the exceptional qualifications of Sridhara Maharaja. In their last known recorded meeting in '77, just prior to Bhaktivedanta Swami's leaving this mortal world, we find him imploring Sridhara Maharaj to take up residence at his temple in Sridham Mayapura.

The conversation that ensues is a transcript of their taped conversation of March '77.

Bhaktivedanta Swami: I do not know for how long I will be able to carry on. So, I came to see Sridhara Maharaja.

Devotee: If you all go away, then the world will become dark.

Sridhara Maharaja: (To Bhaktivedanta Swami) It is so wonderful that the will of the Lord becomes manifest through someone.

Bhaktivedanta Swami: I want very much, Maharaja, that you come and stay at Mayapura. Because Prabhupada always desired that you preach. He told me quite a few times, "Why don't you pull him out?" (They both laugh) You know, I also tried to come extend before, but somehow or other did not work out. Now, why don't you come and stay at Mayapura? Srila Prabhupada told me also, "Sridhara Maharaj is one of the finest preachers." I want to take you everywhere. At least at the place we have in Mayapur, people are coming from all over the world. Why don't you come and stay there? If you just agree, then whatever kind of building you want, I will arrange it for you. They are trying to build a house for me. So both of us will stay there. And whenever you want, you can come here to your *Matha*.

Sridhara Maharaja: Yes, as long as I am alive to fulfill Prabhupada's desire.

Bhaktivedanta Swami: This is my earnest desire. Since you could not go around the world and preach, at least stay there and people will come to you. I shall make that arrangement. If you stay, then it will be helpful to me also. Sometimes I need to consult with someone but there is no one. There is no one that I can consult. I feel this deficiency very greatly.

Devotee: If he stays in Mayapura, then all kinds of people will get to hear from him.

Bhaktivedanta Swami: Yes, that's right.

Sridhara Maharaj: Yes, people from all kinds of cultural backgrounds will come there.

Bhaktivedanta Swami: Yes, and they are already coming. And in that house I will make arrangements for an elevator so that you won't have to go through the difficulty of walking up and down the stairs. You won't even have to move a step yourself. I'll make arrangements for a car and a lift. My disciples are telling me that they will build a house for me. So, both of us

will stay in that house. Most of the time I am travelling around, so if you are there, then they can get some guidance. So, maharaja, please, give me the order and I will make all the arrangements for you.

That planetarium (The "Temple of Understanding") also will be built under your direction. My idea is to combine the Indian culture and the American money — the lame man and the blind man policy. I tell them also that this will be very beneficial for the world.

Here, in their final meeting, Bhaktivedanta Swami prophetically refers to his imminent disappearance and reveals that it is in this connection that he has come to see Sridhara Maharaj. In friendly jesting, they discuss Sridhara Maharaja's reticence regarding the large-scale preaching world. Of himself, Sridhara Maharaj has remarked, "I did not want to become a big person. That is not my nature. I did not want to move around with many people. I am just satisfied with whatever I have. My spiritual thinking is my life. The conclusions of the scriptures, the advices of the mahajanas, to relish them and practice them and to discuss them in a small confidential circle, that is the main goal of my life." In the Ninth Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam, Bhaktivedanta Swami, quoting Dhruva Maharaj writes: "My dear Lord, I am fully satisfied with whatever you have given me. I have nothing else to ask from You, for I am fully satisfied to be engaged in Your service." This is the mentality of a pure devotee who does not want anything material or spiritual from the Personality of Godhead. Our Krishna Consciousness movement is therefore called *Krishna bhavanamrta-sangha*, "the association of persons who are simply interested in thoughts of Krishna."

Bhaktivedanta Swami testifies to his having personally heard Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati mark the high qualifications of Sridhara Maharaj, whom he had once requested to go to the West. In this regard, Sridhara Maharaj once remarked, "My guru-maharaja wanted me to go to the West for preaching, but I don't consider myself a fit person to preach in the West.

Because, you see, I can't follow your intonation. So,[laughing] I must listen clearly, then I shall tell. So, in this way, I told that if you order, I must go, but I don't think that I am fit to preach in the West. Anyhow, it was stopped, and Goswami Maharaja was sent to the West." When Sridhara Maharaja had been selected, one of his godbrothers came to him and revealed the reason why Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura had chosen him to preach in the West. This godbrother explained, "Do you know why Prabhupada wanted you to be sent to the West?" He said, "Because he can't be converted."

And just twenty-four hours before his departure from this mortal world, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura called for his beloved disciple Sridhara Maharaja, and asked him to sing the song of Narottama dasa Thakura: *Sri Rupa Manjari pada* (The Lotus Feet of Rupa Manjari are my Treasure). Sridhara Maharaj recalls: "So I did, hesitatingly. My nature is always

hesitating, pushing back. Then, Kunja Babu asked me to stop. I was not a good singer, so as soon as he suggested, I stopped. Then, Kunja Babu asked Puri Maharaja of Kalna, 'You sing'. So he began. Then, Srila Prabhupada was a little disturbed. 'I don't like to hear the sweet tune of that song,' he said. Then he stopped, and I had to begin again with — *sri-rupa-manjari-pada, sei mora sampada*. He wanted me to sing that song. That is the fulfillment of life for every one of us, to be rupanuga — followers of Sri Rupa."

Senior godbrothers who witnessed this exchange have described it as a "mystic transmission" in which Sridhara Maharaja was given admittance into the eternal entourage of Sri Rupa Manjari. Sridhara Maharaja's humble vision, however, is that he was posted as the gatekeeper, the guardian of devotion (*bhakti-raksaka*), to protect the storehouse of conclusive truths about the full-fledged theistic conception of Sri Krishna, as given by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Further expressing his appreciation for Sridhara Maharaja's "high realizations" in Krishna Consciousness, Bhaktivedanta Swami says, "I want to take you everywhere. At least at the place we have in Mayapura, people are coming from all over the world. Why don't you stay there?" Sometimes it is wondered why Sridhara Maharaja apparently did not take up Bhaktivedanta Swami's offer. Sridhara Maharaja explain, "I said, 'Of course I shall try to help you. Sometimes I shall go and stay there with you,' but I really did not think at the time that I shall survive him."

Finally, Bhaktivedanta Swami refers to "that planetarium." Sridhara Maharaja is very fond of Sanatana Goswami's most famous work, the Brihad-Bhagavatam-ritam, in which devotees, devotional service, and Krishna are described very scientifically. On the basis of this transcendental literature, Sridhara Maharaj had contemplated an elaborate preaching exhibition, showing graphically, with the use of dioramas depicting the varieties of mater-ial and spiritual destinations, Krishna's own abode, Golo-ka Vrindavana. Due to insufficient funds, Sridhara Maha-raj humbly submitted his idea to Bhaktivedanta Swami, who approved, saying, "It will be built under your direction."

And just prior to his departure from this mortal world, Bhaktivedanta Swami advised his senior disciples that in his absence, when the necessity arose to consult higher authority, that they should consult Sridhara Maharaja.

In conclusion, we humbly submit that the transcendental relationship between Bhaktivedanta Swami and Sridhar Maharaja be viewed and respected in terms of their eternal spiritual positions, and long-standing appreciation and affection for one another.

Since the departure of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the "Guardian of Devotion," His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Raksaka Sridhara Deva Maharaj, has repeatedly protected the teachings of the disciplic succession from perversion and misrepresentation as he has

done for more than half a century, and has come to be recognized as a jagad-guru or world-acharya.

As far as I was concerned, I had first hand experience of all the difficulties ISKCON was facing.

After having being removed twice from my services and loving relationships with other vaisnavas, after years of building up those services for my spiritual master, it was my extreme fortune that the devotees in Colombia rejected the GBC for trying to kick me out of my service again.

We had the fortune that our GBC had publicly admitted to all devotees that ISKCON was going the wrong way. When they changed and rejected me for writing my paper "Please Change", the local devotees gave their support to me and almost unanimously, we left ISKCON, inspired by the teachings of Srila Sridhar Maharaj to serve our Srila Prabhupada according to our hearts.

But we never gave up our hope that ISKCON could change and open the doors to real vaisnava understanding.

For that reason I kept writing many letters to the GBC and visited together with Pradyumna Prabhu the chairman Ravindra Svarup, as well as many other members.

Unfortunately all my attempts met only deaf ears and false promises.

We were told not to open temples and not to distribute Srila Prabhupada's books, and the only time the GBC claimed to want to listen to our problems with them was three month after I sent them the "Why We Left You" letter.

Unfortunately their visit turned out to be an invasion attempt of our temples which failed because one of their team members was friendly enough to warn us in advance of their plans.

Why We Left You, 1984

All Glories to Sri Sri Guru and Gouranga!
All Glories to Srila Prabhupada our lord and saviour!
TO ALL GBCs and to whomever else it concerns.
Bogota 14-4-84
Beloved Godbrothers,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your feet. May Lord Chaitanya be merciful upon us all, so that we may help to push on with His mission to every town and village in the world.

The subject of this communication is one more sad news item after the disappearance of Srila Prabhupada. I feel it is my duty to inform you of the detailed reasons why the majority of the devotees including myself have (hopefully temporarily) renounced the connection with the GBC. (ISKCON's supreme spiritual authority).

The reasons are many, and if I try to give them all it would fill hundreds of pages. Let me stick to those essential ones which will show to all of you that we, just as thousands of Srila Prabhupada's beloved disciples, have been practically pushed out of the spiritual family founded by our Guru Maharaj for all of us. If I use harsh words to denounce the reality it is not meant to offend anybody. It shall be by the Lord's grace for the benefit of all of us and all those to come for shelter in this Krishna Consciousness movement.

Those who want to condemn us as demons and snakes please reflect on two subjects:

A. All our "contamination" is nothing more than a closely experienced agony of current ISKCON guru misconceptions as well as the clear knowledge of actual corruption going on within the leadership of this society.

B. Although all this information was made available to me from the very mouths of ISKCON gurus and GBCs, they are not even willing to discuss the sufferings of those who live under their so called shelter.

Also, I'd like to make one issue very clear from the beginning. We have neither been persuaded, nor did we join the movement of Srila Sridhar Maharaj. Driven to the point of almost hopeless despair (the so called privilege committee suggested suicide to me in Mayapur), we have lost our faith in the seriousness of the GBC body and therefore we took shelter of Srila Prabhupada's clear instruction to take advice from his godbrother Sridhar Maharaj. It will be noted in history that it was he who offered shelter to Srila Prabhupada's disciples when they were on the way to the material world. This was not for name and fame as over-ambitious persons will naturally conclude, but rather to do some service to his beloved godbrother. GBCs are expert and famous for badmouthing anybody who

dares to criticize their megalomaniac life and governing style. So similarly they made everybody in ISKCON feel that Srila Sridhar Maharaj is our enemy, unworthy to be called by Srila Prabhupada his siksa-guru, even after the long time since the letter he wrote about their differences.

Srila Prabhupada lived with Srila Sridhar Maharaj in one house for years and years. He invited him to stay with him in ISKCON permanently. He was the only person to share Srila Prabhupada's Vyasasana. He said many wonderful things about him and above all he entrusted us into his loving hands for guidance after his disappearance, which the GBC took for five years in all their big failures like Tamal Krishna Maharaj, Jayatirtha, Hansadutta, and many more. Only after Srila Sridhar Maharaj could not tolerate anymore to see the exodus of Srila Prabhupada's beloved sons who frequently came to him in total despair, he started to pronounce strongly the immature nonsense many gurus were subjecting every-body to. The GBC turned around and condemned their very well-wisher.

We don't want to substitute Srila Prabhupada with anybody, but much less with one of the current zonal gurus. Those who claim we have left Srila Prabhupada's movement, please note that rather we have abandoned those who want to make Srila Prabhupada a mummy by deviating from his essential instructions about management (see letter to Karandhar 1972). They try to occupy his post regardless of the protests of the entire vaisnava community — Srila Prabhupada's godbrothers, virtually all ISKCON sannyasis (1984 Mayapur meet-ing), many of the newcomers after reading Srila Prabhu-pada's books, and his disciples (except a few who still dream that by licking somebody's boots they will be able to resolve problems or at least get to do some nice service for Srila Prabhupada). I have presented to the GBC body a paper studying the situation and proposing solutions at Mayapur 84. Though I had warned them that many devotees were on the verge of leaving ISKCON, they refused to discuss it.

If anybody who reads this letter has not yet received this paper which I presented to the GBC, please write to me in Bogota and I will send you a copy.

After reading this paper I received the following feedback:

"ISKCON needs immediately 30 to 50 more initiated gurus to be saved."

"I would not work personally with any of these GBCs or gurus."
Hridayananda Goswami

"I thank you very much for writing this paper. It has helped me very much and must be discussed in Mayapur."
Tamal Krishna Goswami

"ISKCON is very very contaminated. If the GBC is not willing to change that situation Srila Sridhar Maharaj's men are not that bad."
Panchadravida Swami

And also in my discussions on a personal basis I got amazing feedback!

"I am tired of this guru game. I want to gracefully back out of it."
Rupanuga das A.

"They are not ready to listen." Balavanta das A.

"I am fighting these guys for years."

Atreya Rsi das A.

"They are just like old cardinals who don't want to move to make room for others until they die."

Kirtanananda Swami

"They are just like unripe mangos, but you have to be expert to recognize the ripe one."

Bhagavan Goswami

(Question: What about if the mango is rotten and is presented as the only zonal savior?)

So much for elevated witnesses. But what will you hear when you ask those who have had to suffer? You won't believe it but you may cry anyway.

Some astrologers in Navadwip announced that one guru would die this year.

"That is a good way to get rid of them." - ISKCON sannyasi temple president in good standing

"I hope they will fall down and I hope I will fall down." - One sannyasi regional secretary

It is a line without end, and most of the comments we never had to hear because the speaker had already fallen back to the material world. Also Panchadravida Maharaj, after speaking about the difficulties, had a dangerous attack of honesty and compassion which moved him to write his famous paper. This won applause from almost everyone and curses from the exposed gurus. Of course he saved himself in Mayapur by condemning all his newly earned friends as envious snakes which had contaminated our poor gurudevji. North American Temple Presidents in their meeting in 1982 analyzed the situation by the suggestion to publish a magazine with all the GBCs sitting in a circle, one scratching the back of the next. A title was suggested — WHO THE HELL DO THEY THINK THEY ARE?

Please don't laugh. The most outspoken presidents in the meeting were

threatened to be kicked out right after the meeting by ISKCON's famous morality defender B..... Swami.

Now let us come to the serious philosophical misinterpretations of our Siddhanta (final conclusions) by GBC standards:

1. They teach (or sometimes only practice) that the guru is the body of the diksa-guru instead of the inspiring divine principle which may be delivered by so many persons (siksa-gurus). Thus they have destroyed in uncountable cases the faith of their own initiated, and also have destroyed the enthusiasm in the experienced preacher to inspire new devotees to take shelter of Krishna. (Very frequently older devotees say: I still work for ISKCON, but I would not preach for any of those gurus).

To truly understand this point I recommend to you to read in the Chaitanya Charitamrita everything that is said about siksa and diksa-gurus (Use the index). Or if you want to be bold, read the book Sri Guru And His Grace, which describes the initial talks held between the ISKCON GBCs and Srila Sridhar Maharaj after Srila Prabhupada's disappearance (available from Guardian of Devotion Press, San Jose).

2. They use mundane "divide and conquer" techniques and thus instead of inspiring love and trust and the mood of Lord Chaitanya, they contaminate the preaching field with worldly desires, untruthfulness and total insecurity, which is only counteracted by daily japas and reading Srila Prabhupada's books.

3. They have changed the position of the temple president into a zombie-like job, whereas during Srila Prabhupada's time and in his instructions it is confirmed, the temple president is supposed to be a full scaled leader with only advisers above him in case of emergency.

4. They have invented the regional secretary, most times another zombie job, to be able to centralize all power, 100% against Srila Prabhupada's instructions.

5. They have castrated the complaint system. The so called privilege committee doesn't deal with problems, or if they ever do, nobody cares for their decisions. The temple president body has to struggle to avoid being suspended and if they do complain, even unanimously (such as their rejection in 1983 to limit the GBC to only 25 members), the GBC does not care a fig for it. All this results in such a crazy situation that unless you can present a photo plus GBC witnesses of some guru or GBC having sex or injecting heroine on the vyasasana he will remain always perfect, pure and absolute even if the oldest preachers have to flee from his zone or bite the dust in hopelessness. Hansadutta and Jayatirtha are the disasters of the past, but today we still have living examples and it will be a sad scene when these abuses come to light.

6. The BBT divisions are placed against Srila Prabhupada's order in the hand and control of INDIVIDUALS, of whom some cheat and abuse this power. By simply auditing their departments you will find 100% evidence.

They are talking of increasing book distribution, but nobody wants to sell their collections to them. No BBT trustee wants to expose the other, so that they will not lose their own powerful position of the control of millions of dollars, which give them all prestige and influence by buying new zones or showing opulent results on their private "loans". Note on the other side the conditions in the zones of GBCs without BBT pocket. First of all they generally have to abide to the wishes of their powerful BBT "friends" to get any help at all, and on the other side they just collect money almost all the time so that they can show photos next Mayapur. This nonsense has destroyed book distribution in so many places and the devotees suffer without even knowing the cause of this misery.

7. They allow people to remain amongst them who are proven to be dishonest in their dealings. Krishna has to kick out some of them Himself. Otherwise they cover up for each other and never get their 75% vote to remove fallen members. And with such a fine crew they expect everybody to be happy if they vote on your life without even giving you a chance to defend yourself. They think that nobody else deserves the same trust. Thus they discourage their leaders and endanger the sacred mission.

8. They demand total surrender to the GBC from everybody though they themselves in many cases don't accept the GBC, and often pull dirty tricks with their absolute control over their disciples to force their will. (Such as Hridayananda who told the GBC that they have to give him Florida as his zone and remove Balavanta or he would leave with his disciples, or Bhavananda in Vrindavana, etc., etc.) And they disregard inconvenient GBC decisions such as NO KARMI RECORD DISTRIBUTION, staying for the Mayapur festival, buying BTGs (even while ISKCON's backbone is already broken), registering properties in ISKCON's name, allowing to be audited, no double marriages, two spiritual programs daily in the temples, etc. Whatever gurudeva wants, any means are justified. Those who complain are black snakes, demons, karmis, etc.

We still trust in Krishna and Srimati Radharani, but we reject corruption and preaching destruction.

9. They present themselves as highly self-realized, empowered world saviors, riding high on the achievements of their godbrothers, and everybody else is "schmuck". Shame on our sampradaya, where humility and kindness are an order even for the beginners. In which book can they justify such manners? And if they would be kind and humble, how happy we would be to serve them. What actually happened in Columbia and Latin America in the last six years cannot be explained in a few pages. No one knows where the old devotees are and what happened in Chile, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Panama, Venezuela, Mexico, and now Columbia. How many newsletters have to be written before you understand? I was kicked out twice from my service though I never disobeyed my GBC. You build up a zone, you love your service and the devotees and then his divine grace

comes to disgrace you. He is afraid you might be loved too much, that he might have to live up to standard, or he may lose his absolute power which he is attached to more than he is attached to Krishna.

...Our Guru Maharaj Srila Prabhupada ...humble as a blade of grass, tolerant as a tree. Now you will say I am the greatest contradiction, but please my brothers, I am speaking on behalf of my suffering godbrothers and if I must be punished, let it be so. Krishna knows my heart. Only in such a mood can we reunite again in the biggest kirtan of all time. I am sure Narada Muni would be there to bless all of us with Krishna Bhakti. If we have no taste for chanting and hearing, no desire to share with our brothers, children, uncles, and all the vaisnavas or those aspiring, then what is wrong? Is the world too small for more inspired preachers? If you do not give then you will not get the higher taste for loving, spontaneous devotional service, free from adulterated speculation or fruitive desires. Are you not preaching that every day? Where is this spontaneous (raganuga) devotional service going to come from? Political gurus worried about their influence, fame, bank accounts, enemies and friends, are they going to substitute the humble sadhus (of which we have in ISKCON quite a few), who only want to give and get Sri Krishna, sold out to Srila Prabhupada, who wonder about looking for those who want to hear the latest news of Lord Chaitanya's ecstatic preaching pastimes?

Dear Brothers, we have not left you to join the Baul Sampradaya or any other concoction. We have taken shelter in Srila Prabhupada's instructions and we are waiting for you. We love you and want to be with you. We want to remember Srila Prabhupada and work for him bigger and bigger and bigger, while we become smaller and smaller right at his lotus feet. And please take care, even if you condemn us, there are many of us right with you, attached to their services and to the devotees they made by Krishna's mercy. That is what keeps us. We cannot allow what we are doing all together. The brainwashing was more complete there. Nobody trusts anybody. All will leave eventually if you don't understand our plea. We don't want your US\$ 50,000.00 bathroom, or to have everyone chant our name all day either. We don't want to copy your mistakes to share some of your anarthas. **IT IS THE GBC'S DUTY TO BRING ALL TOGETHER AGAIN.**

If you think that can be accomplished by screaming surrender into all directions then you are in a big illusion. As a matter of fact, in the meantime, while you may research the subject, we want to preach undisturbed the movement of Lord Chaitanya. There is no more need for proof for any intelligent, honest persons, though if you are not receptive you may force Krishna to embarrass this sampradaya even more by publicly exposing more and more gurus to come down. Hansadutta Swami said:

"The lie I was living was so big that I could only maintain myself in the vyasasana every day by getting drunk first."

Two years you kept him there drunk in his vyasasana. What more is there? What more do you want to see until you understand that Krishna is displeased? Srimati Radharani disappeared from Sridham Mayapur. Why do you think that happened? You all know, come to your senses. We are not the OWNERS OF ANYTHING. WE ARE THE TRUSTEES ONLY ON BEHALF OF SRILA PRABHUPADA. Trustees don't fear to share the trust because they know that they are not the owners anyway. You are not the owners of your zones, nor godbrothers, nor disciples, nor bank accounts. If you are not willing to share the full trust with others then you have fallen to the level of a thief. Everything is allowed except consulting with Srila Sridhar Maharaj. Then you are no longer a member of ISKCON, but an outcast.

You push us out, one by one, group by group. You may as well stay alone. Twelve gurus and their disciples; the others, where are they? What are you going to say when you meet Srila Prabhupada again? (however long that may take) "All your disciples were envious of us but it does not matter. Here, look at my disciples." No, you are going to be smart. You'll tell him, "Your godbrother Sridhar Maharaj, he destroyed your mission."

But don't worry as long as you can explain to Srila Prabhupada this unfortunate letter. I wish you all the best on your journey back home. Please pray for me. The mercy of the vaisnavas is all that can save me.

Your worthless servant,

Alanath Swami

The reaction to this letter was an attempt by the GBC chairman to organize an invasion of our temple in Bogota with six sannyasis including Satsvarupa Maharaj himself. Actually they just wanted to get me out. They had no interest in our feelings. Their attempt failed because all the devotees were very strong in their conviction, and because one of their members called us to warn us of their intentions. After that I wrote many letters to the GBC's.

After not getting any positive reply to my letters to Satsvarupa Goswami and other ISKCON members one funny thing happened. My previous GBC and zonal ISKCON guru Panchadravida Swami, who had personally made my ISKCON life quite miserable, realized his unfortunate position and took shelter at the feet of Srila Sridhar Maharaj.

In 1989 I read a new ISKCON publication called The Vaisnava Journal.

It was broadminded and I felt hope that they may give an ear to our proposals. I sent them a paper which they refused to publish out of fear of being closed down by the GBC. Unfortunately The Vaisnava Journal was shut down even without my letter, which I sent to the GBC anyway.

Letter to the Vaisnava Journal

This letter was addressed to the GBC through The Vaisnava Journal. The editor replied that it was too controversial to be published and that he would send it to the GBC. The GBC never responded.

ALL GLORIES TO SRI GURU AND GOURANGA

Feb. 5, 1989.

An open letter to the GBC and all others concerned with the harmony amongst the Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

Let this be an offering to the lotus feet of Srila Prabhupada and all sincere followers.

What does Unity in Diversity mean?

The purpose of writing these lines is my desire to contribute some thought provoking ideas to the search for unity in the Vaisnava Sampradaya. Rather than presenting a collection of quotes from the sastras I approach the issue with what we call common sense.

1. The validity and the uselessness of the philosophical debate in Krishna Consciousness.

By the examples of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's discussions with Digvijay, Sarvabhauma and Prakasananda we see that philosophical debate is necessary whenever a doubt arises or pure devotional service is being put down by any party. Still we see that the grace of Krishna cannot be forced by such discussions. Only when the Lord decides to give His mercy can He be understood.

Regarding ISKCON, all devotees have a right and a need to be informed about all details of policy-making, philosophical outlook and problem resolving to eliminate their doubts and get a clear picture of what is expected from them in their search for the Absolute Truth. Unless they can have such information and possible debate, their surrender will become rather blind, fanatical, false or motivated.

Srila Prabhupada did not use any "you must do". He convinced either by proper explanation or by his loving dealings. No guru can force somebody to be and live as a disciple, much less a godbrother should dare to impose

'You must' on his godbrothers. That leaves only space for the convincing which captures the heart of others after their minds are satisfied.

2. Analyze to surrender versus surrender to be able to analyze.

Krishna clearly approaches Arjuna with all the material to analyze his position carefully and to surrender was Arjuna's conclusion.

Everybody must be convinced of what he is doing and consider it the most happy discovery of his life. Everybody must think for himself and not be told that a faithful follower of Srila Prabhupada does not need a criteria of his own and that a GBC will come up with all conclusions for his inner development and eternal life.

The GBC as a body is incapable of studying time, place and circumstance of any local problem. If they demand surrender to their decisions without understanding the local situations, the devotees faith will be destroyed.

So many useless things were imposed in the past like zonal gurus, etc. Further errors may be avoided by extending the authority to the local leaders to decide their own futures — (what devotees do they do anyway by leaving the society when their heart is dissatisfied)!

Only *sadhu-sanga* or enlightening one another could be called a genuine GBC function. They can convince the local preachers of their realizations. We need individual wisdom, wisdom as we learn to expose our own reflections to convince others. If the GBC wants to recover its reputation at all, it must reach the heart of the preachers. After years of supporting irregularities and smoke-screening against critics we need an entirely new concept of the duty of a spiritual authority. Krishna Consciousness means to create God-centered thinking, feeling and willing. Just as Srila Prabhupada demon-strated by trusting newcomers almost at once to establish temples, zones, restaurants, publishing divisions on their own, protected by their sincerity to follow a pure devotee. If a man can receive local support due to his preaching then his opinion has the highest value, unless he feels inspired to surrender to some higher vaisnava.

In other words his project will be practically self-sufficient and independent as long as he is not a cheater. But who can stop the cheaters anyway? All we did was stop the sincere efforts claiming that centralization would protect the mission. But Srila Prabhupada condemned centralization as a killer of the individual challenge and responsibility. GBC misconceives that by depriving all non-GBC's or gurus from the free decision making of where, how and with whom to live and preach, they would get better preaching results.

The guru inspires someone to take up spiritual life. Never monopolize the right to represent your guru. Vaisnavas want to serve their guru and the world.

We cannot force anyone to accept our service, nor is there any need to do so.

An institution may fear such freedom, since it cannot predict or plan the

outcome. But unless ISKCON is a spiritual institution it is useless. And being a spiritual institution it must make space for individual freedom and creativity. Otherwise only by leaving ISKCON can you live Srila Prabhupada's spirit of ISKCON.

After the founder acharya leaves, his books are sastras. They are passive, and any interpretation is only as true as the interpreter is pure and inspired. "It is all in Prabhupada's books", is only a slogan. We cannot follow bookshelves, we have to follow our own inner guide (*cittete koriya aikya*). That means to search for a valid sadhu and guru and to consult the sastra on all issues with their help. And at least you need the peace of your conscience.

Srila Prabhupada recommends holy association almost everywhere in his books. GBC's try to limit that to only themselves or those surrendered to them. What an arbitrary exertion this is if you consider that they change their views and resolutions sometimes. And what to speak of when some major figures get by for years preaching and practicing misconceptions.

3. Centralization kills internal capacity and happy exchanges. Whoever opens a temple or a preaching center is solely responsible for that project. That is what Srila Prabhupada taught us.

Authorities in a mood of exploitation would surely love to get a colonial share of at least the preaching prathista or the money collected by their godbrothers. But here we miss a point. If someone wants to open a spiritual center he feels he has a mission. I am sure he loves to be visited by a loving GBC brother to get help, but not by puffed up interferences justified by official status. We all need help, but that only through love and trust. Even sometimes a mistake is good to develop strength and vision. We have nothing to loose, but all to gain. If a new temple is founded in sincerity it will be a success, if not time will tell. The GBC's function is only to inspire more and more individual preaching efforts and a loving exchange. In an emergency they might be advisers for troubled vaisnavas and projects. But it seems that most emergencies are with them or created by them. Besides that, a temple president has to have the support of the devotees in his temple. If for some secondary reason some devotees don't like him, let them go out and do better. And let the president choose who inspires him and who he wants to work with cooperatively.

Every spiritual master may want to set it up differently but this is the way Srila Prabhupada did it and if someone wants it differently he should first make sure that he actually has made himself some disciples and not violate the feelings of preaching godbrothers, or try to geographically monopolize the mercy distribution. Institutional centralization is totally unrelatable to the before mentioned, characteristic only to mundane organizations which are owned by someone. But this movement only belongs to Krishna, and He gave us all common sense to look for its welfare and to fight any abuse.

4. Love and truth is the Divine Law No.1.

If Krishna wanted to force us to serve Him, He would not have created a material world and our free will. So, please let us not try to outdo Krishna.

We worship the Second Avenue Temple because of the love of Srila Prabhupada for all of us. If we can love and trust him we can go home following his footsteps.

He loved and trusted our childish efforts and that made us feel indebted. You love and trust those surrendered to you, but why should they love or trust you if you do not give them the same space Srila Prabhupada gave to you?

We hope you love your godbrothers, but why don't you trust them? What is it? Have you become more than Srila Prabhupada? Was it by popular vote that Srila Prabhupada gave sannyas, allowed to open temples, sent out preachers? No, it was by trust. No rules, rules and rules. No! Love and Trust. Would you like to live in an over-governed situation, with GBC's, gurus, regional secretaries, ministers for everything, horizontal and vertical, a mountain who feels that you are to consult it on everything you do? Frankly speaking, my answer is no. And so do most godbrothers feel that Krishna gave us individuality to enjoy a variety of loving services. The only binding force is: Love and Trust.

The change is needed urgently. Nobody of the GBC should go home to do as they like until the last member of this movement is happily accommodated in the preaching mission. "Impossible" you might say only because you don't trust the sincerity of the others.

Srila Prabhupada started so many valuable projects and envisioned many more. They should never remain to be places of envious fights over the control of the money, otherwise their purpose will be destroyed. Therefore those projects need solid local, hopefully lifelong administrations, which protect those projects and their incomes or future donations from even small embezzlements.

That type of control is GBC duty and obviously those proceeds can only go, as Srila Prabhupada personally set up, into other international Srila Prabhupada projects such as book printing and further constructions to increase the Founder Acharya's glory.

We must understand the following:

Spiritual Authority and Material Authority

The disciple sees in his guru spiritual authority and material authority. But for managing Srila Prabhupada's Book funds or main temples such a relationship is detrimental. In the new temples, founded by Srila Prabhupada's disciples, obviously the new disciples trust their guru, but among them their leading godbrothers again will be accountable for everything they do with Krishna's laksmi.

Spiritual, public accounts can only be controlled by functioning trusts.

That is why the BBT and international construction have been severely misused, mixing the accounts with the "faith in guru, or GBC" understanding.

Still we see in the 1988 GBC resolutions that there is no change to those essential defects. Instead of locally controlled BBT divisions we have now seven absolute controllers of their individual division. Do we never learn?

And still gurus are permitted to declare geographic zones to be their "exclusive mercy areas". In other words, the control functions of accounts and material authority of Srila Prabhupada's projects should be delegated to groups of trustworthy disciples who report to whomever it concerns (including governments). Otherwise the title "obscure cult" is rather applicable.

Some Considerations of Emotional Motivations

Everybody has to be accommodated happily in the vaisnava community. Actually it is simple. The relationship between the spiritual master and his disciple is surrounded by a certain exclusive emotion of holiness, which is necessary for the progressive surrender of the disciples, but possibly intolerable to godbrothers accustomed to view the relative side of the guru. This reality requires separate temples for every spiritual master in most cases.

You will find this exclusive holiness atmosphere in every ashram, whether it is Srila Prabhupada's, Srila Sridhar Maharaja's, or any other Acharya's establishment.

And since holy things should never be imposed, certain principle temples of Srila Prabhupada must always focus on Srila Prabhupada as the exclusive Founder Acharya and the guru-tattva principle as progressive protection for the newcomers, who eventually will find their guru, by Krishna's grace. Otherwise some disciples of Srila Prabhupada, who are not sure what to do yet, have no ashram where they can live peacefully and preach. Nobody should ever, harboring ill-feelings towards a certain preacher, visit his ashram or transmit such feelings to disciples of that preacher. Live and let live. Surrender and let others surrender. Nobody can complain if the faith in some preacher naturally grows in somebody's heart, due to his missionary activities. Even if he fails later, nevertheless he did help that person a lot, and instead of feeling cheated, that disciple who lost his guru should feel: Due to me not being serious enough Krishna has sent my bad karma to give me a strong lesson. Now let me pray and if the guru does not recover let me find a new protector having learned by Krishna's grace that he must be a true devotee of Krishna free of the cheating tendency. And all of that can and must be accommodated within ISKCON. Thus Srila Prabhupada's disciples can preach in his main temples or help a godbrother of their sacred

choice in his preaching or if they feel that serving their gurus means that they should start accepting disciples, it will be at his own risk. Nobody else could really interfere in such a decision. Only if he is a known cheater, surrounding godbrothers may object. But since he would have to start on his own strength, Krishna, as always will have the last word.

There are no incidents in the history of the Gaudiya Sampradaya of ritvik initiations on behalf of a disappeared spiritual master. New gurus will organize their projects as they see fit since they have spiritual authority and material authority before their disciples, but if they wish to see progress in the long run, they will have to apply the same procedures in order to prevent exploitations of the holy mission, as soon as things become too big to be controlled single handedly. The real GBC's simply have to teach the attitude and the vaisnava etiquettes. They cannot enforce their rules anyway, since Srila Prabhupada never created a government-like enforcing instrument, but rather resolved even great difficulties with love and trust.

Only with such positive local control will the inspiration of love and trust return to Srila Prabhupada's movement.

Let all be happy preaching as they like and feel connected to Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON, and the sampradaya. This is a happy mission. Only being happy can we be successful in attracting others.

Give love, if you want bhakti. If you don't agree you joined the wrong movement. Srila Prabhupada did not create an army or a corporation where you push your way to success by outdoing the competition and later misuse the power position you achieved to pressure the previous competitors into submission to your whim.

5. Sweetness, beauty and love: The base of Krishna Consciousness. We came to get something real, something different. Power, knowledge and money are not the credentials for vaisnava sadhus. Krishna is the owner of all worlds, but He likes to play flute for His loving friends and to keep cows. ISKCON must promote true values. Money is to be organized locally, that not a penny can be misspent.

A zone or Prabhu Datta Desh is where someone loves you and wants you to preach under your guru's order. Srila Prabhupada ordered us to preach everywhere, not to fight, and to lovingly cooperate amongst brothers. The very word cooperation means a mutual respect and comprehension amongst equal parties, not the simple artificial submission to a non-sastric, non rational situation to avoid being ousted or called heretic. The six goswamis didn't seem to have zonal problems as they preached all in the same village.

And above all, this is the most practical. Vaisnavas should embrace each other and feel relief in the pangs of separation from their guru by meeting each other. You should only visit a temple where you love the leader and believe in his purity of purpose. Only help a guru in his mission if you feel he teaches his disciples properly. Let's not cheat ourselves and the newcomers. There is no space in Krishna Consciousness for duplicity. If

you feel there is nobody close by to do the needful or trustworthy, then what about you? Are you a disciple or not? Do you live your guru's orders or not? A disciple should try to please his guru by trying to do for others what his guru did for him.

Stop intimidating devotees saying that they offend their guru, when they hear nectar from other vaisnavas (as if gold is only gold when the GBC puts a rubber-stamp on it). In case you have any doubts about this, please read the beautiful article of Gour Govinda Swami in the Vaisnava Journal 1-88.

Years of learning and we don't understand that the truth stands on its own feet. What about all those classes given and books written by GBC's and gurus and other devotees? Why do we need more truth if we have Srila Prabhupada books? Stop intimidating devotees saying that they cannot be in ISKCON if they don't like to do what you want them to do. They can preach in the same city in their own way. Let's not be afraid of the success of other preachers. If they are better, maybe it helps to make us more humble.

What will unite us will be our desire for Sweetness, Beauty and Love. Krishna likes His devotees to be like that.

6. Krishna Consciousness; the need of the brain in Krishna Consciousness.

That sounds challenging. Not only the GBC's have a right to assert and reject according to their realizations. Let us realize that an ex-devotee or non-devotee is that person who has no desire whatsoever to become Krishna conscious. This does not include those burned out, thrown out, changed up, victims of Ramesvara, Hamsa-dutta, Bhavananda, Bhagavan, Jayatirtha; to mention just a few less controversial ones.

Our criteria should not be:

Well, the rascals are gone and you can surrender again under one of the new choices. When will we realize that the natural defense for purity comes from the constructive critic? This means those persons who don't only talk, but are willing to preach, if you let them.

They may be doing that anyway outside of GBC jurisdiction even though you still have them on an inquisitional black snake list, or they may be discouraged by what you did with them and Srila Prabhupada's movement when you sent them back begging from their parents or back to school. Recognize the need for brains, even though your false ego will have to make many new adjustments.

So many formalities and laws, but do they improve the situation or bring old preachers back into the mission? Reject the superficiality and duplicity in vaisnava dealings. The tie is through love not through laws. Accept the loving vaisnavas and worship them to your heart's content. If they criticize you, they may be your best friends. Make friendship with them and sing and dance. Instead of trying to control everything through impersonal bureaucracy let us establish uncountable small, sweet preaching centers. If we want to control — why not start with our senses? Let us stop allowing

that vaisnavas are kicked around to disgrace our life and Srila Prabhupada's mission. And the foremost vaisnava who has been counselling the suffering vaisnavas after the disappearance of Srila Prabhupada as the special mercy of Lord Chaitanya is Srila Sridhar Maharaj. His loving teachings are crystal clear truths of the Vaisnava Siddhanta. By Krishna's plan, this truth is obscured to many. There is a need to create big eagerness in all hearts to become pure devotees at any cost and to resolve the problem of our immaturity and puffed up ignorance.

In other words, the difficulties of ISKCON are awakening signals for the good of the world. Let us see them as such and march further with new desire and responsibility, so that we can serve the world and in a manner prove fit to be called the followers of Srila Prabhupada. To recognize the purity of the service of Srila Sridhar Maharaj for Srila Prabhupada's movement is a progressive necessity to overcome the ill past for the good of all ISKCON devotees. This should either be preached or defeated in written form for all to know.

To say we don't need anybody else is synonymous to saying we don't need sadhu-sanga, sravanan nor the Absolute Truth. I doubt anybody would say that.

7. Some practical suggestions regarding the GBC.

Many years ago Srila Prabhupada designed the GBC. Some peculiar points he made showed what his ideas were, even though in time they manifested differently. A major changing point was the New Vrindavana '86 Anti-GBC Protest by the temple presidents. I think that the protest was dealt with by a "keep most oldies and feed the rebels" technique and by many new laws, which have very little reach into the intricate problems Srila Prabhupada's movement is actually facing in different parts of the world.

Any council with too many members renders itself incapable to deal with most issues efficiently. This is true especially when your decisions involve individual souls and their free choice to serve their guru, generally unknown to the decision and policy-makers, or if you have to vote on issues which have neither been studied in a just manner nor are they explained by the affected persons. So then what is the idea?

Srila Prabhupada said that no GBC should have more than six temples (but he may as well have only one- Vasudeva Fijji) and he should be voted into his post by the presidents he represents.

They could discuss international projects and maybe printing plans. All other subjects can be resolved locally. That means that the GBC is in a position which should serve the presidents to run more purely locally and to represent their service interest before a worldwide society. And a spiritual master who really serves his guru will organize the group of his disciples in such a way that in full harmony they can associate with the other vaisnavas and benefit the international projects of the guru-parampara. He cannot be

under any other control than his sincerity, but he would have gained his service by his preaching, not the preaching of his brothers, who he coerced into submission through ecclesiastical pressure.

Since with this system there may be hundreds of GBCs they would create efficient subcommittees to manage details and they would have their main duty by establishing loving relationships with all vaisnavas in the world and carrying that loving spirit all the way to the bhaktas.

8. There is no need to be bitter.

First of all, it was a good lesson to learn, a reminder of our mleccha and yavana samskara.

Secondly, it was a good way to pay off some real bad karma even though I deserve by my sins at least 1000 years of eleven guru rule.

Third, only in this way our brain started awakening to the fact that to serve our guru we've got to be alert, and thus we realized that we must think for ourselves, not copy others' mistakes and offenses.

And at least there is a positive solution. Krishna Consciousness is still blissful and sweet. Let us try to find how, by fixing ourselves to the highest goal of Prema, never to drop it again. No need to discuss the mistakes of others, unless they beg you for enlightenment. Feel free to preach to your heart's content, and if you don't know what to say or what to do, then meditate how Srila Prabhupada started this movement. Then read the books of Srila Prabhupada and do what they say. They say to find a holy vaisnava, who is pure and enlightened. If you don't find one, pray that Krishna sends you one or enlightens you from within. It is still the same process. Until you reach Krishna's lotus feet, you don't know yet who are all those who helped you to get there. Don't say, "I've got Srila Prabhupada, I don't need anybody else's help." Such a statement contradicts every single one of Srila Prabhupada's books. So let us be ready to be disciples again and again. Let's not be satisfied with our achievements. Let's not self-proclaim ourselves auto-sufficient because our guru has left this world.

Let's not try to look on others and judge the world. Now we have to understand the meaning of the holy instruction, not just quote fractions to defeat the whole purpose. Let's not become smartas who follow without understanding. Let's not become caste Goswamis who claim that they inherited the truth.

Let's not become popes, infallible due to some votes.

Better, let us become servants of the servants of the vaisnavas.

In this way the duty of the GBCs would turn into a burden of love. The most loving would be chosen from amongst every group to distribute that love and also show to the world what Srila Prabhupada really founded — a movement as big as a house in which the whole world can live.

Let's compete for love and purity. That is a dynamic way to eliminate or overcome the negative past.

Let us create such an atmosphere, something according to Srila

Prabhupada's original plans and acceptable to common sense.

Let the temple presidents realize the weight of their duty. Let them choose locally amongst the disciples of Srila Prabhupada and other leading preachers how many natural groups and how many GBC's they want to have.

Be open to accept representatives from non-ISKCON groups as long as they have a desire to serve Srila Prabhupada's mission and aspire to become vaisnavas.

It's not an illusion, it just requires surrender, but that decision depends on the current GBCs.

9. Sympathies, antipathies and personal feelings impede a clear view. "Let local people manage" was a famous statement by Srila Prabhupada. It means as far as possible.

Let Brazilians manage Brazil, let Londoners manage London, let devotees manage the projects they open, let the unsatisfied open more projects instead of destroying the existing ones.

Let the devotees be able to reject a president or a GBC if they feel spiritually unprotected by him, not after years of abuse as previous. Nobody will deny such a rejected leader to distribute books again. Hate the sin, but not the sinner. When we act motivated by our sympathies or antipathies we are not broadminded. Whether American, Australian, Ex-Jew or Ex-Christian, white or black, man or woman, give space to all. Let us not force anybody under the rule of others. Let the truly qualified manifest their qualities. And let the others learn of their limitations.

Only through that challenge local men will emerge self-confident and happy to conquer their town, country or race for Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Jahnava devi, the wife of Lord Nityananda, was the source of inspiration to many great Acharyas.

Let us stop creating artificial elite groups.

Let our concern be the sweet desire of Srila Prabhupada.

10. Let's make ISKCON such a house that the whole world could be happy to live inside.

We owe something to Srila Prabhupada and to the world. Srila Prabhupada asked all his disciples to become spiritual masters. To begin we should all be concerned and willing to repair the image and the philosophy of that movement which is supposed to create such a house. He said he laid the foundation and made the structure. We have to fill in. But we have to admit (in order to improve) that we have distorted that foundation. But now we can repair, if we are humble. Surely these suggestions are full of mistakes. You can take them as a basis for your discussions to improve the ideas. Judge with your common sense.

Let us create a new ISKCON, the real ISKCON.

Some have different ideas. Some are so burned that they would like to burn all the institutions, and abolish initiation by anyone except Srila

Prabhupada but it will take time and sincere research to get enlightenment. Until then we can go on with all our projects.

Let's not tolerate any more abuses though. Enough hearts have been broken.

All should serve the center Krishna and the critics should come with love and a decision to harmonize, harmonize the wonderful message of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu with our terribly conditional life and our highest duty.

There can be an ascending check and balance system, but we can only survive by the descending mercy of the vaisnavas. They are our life and soul and we will recognize them by our sincerity.

I pray that these lines can be of some service to the purpose they were written for.

Dandavats, Haribol.

Swami B.A. Paramadvaiti (Alanath das Brahmacari)

P.S. I would like to express to my godbrothers, utilizing this wonderful forum of the Vaisnava Journal, that I never lost my desire nor stopped my effort to become a servant of Srila Prabhupada. Whatever help we received from Srila Sridhar Maharaj has only increased our desire to become better servants of the Divine Mercy Manifestation — Sri Gurudeva.

To serve our guru's mission with heart and soul and to associate freely with our godbrothers is the treasure of our life. Thus we are speaking not only for ourselves but also for some 25 preaching projects, some of my very dear and near godbrothers and many aspiring vaisnavas who would all love to see ISKCON united and up to the standard of its name.

Please excuse the awkward English presentation and forgive any offense you feel I've committed.

Feel free to contact me by mail with any comments or suggestions or through the Vaisnava Journal.

Without response again I meditated how to awaken my godbrothers to a new attempt to come together.

No doubt, many things had changed in ISKCON, but basic faults were still prominent.

In the meantime one other publication from outside ISKCON accused Srila Sridhar Maharaj and the GBC to be both wrong. They claimed that after Srila Prabhupada only Ritvik Acharyas could be accepted and that ISKCON was cheating everyone. They claimed, like the GBC, that Srila Prabhupada never wanted anyone consulting with his own godbrothers. In order to defend Srila Sridhar Maharaj I sent a letter refuting their

arguments which I reprint here.

Letter to VVR (Vedic Village Review)

All Glories to Sri Guru and Gauranga
Miami Mandir, 20-8-88

From: Paramadvaiti Swami, sannyas disciple of B.R. Sridhara Maharaj
First and second initiation from Srila Prabhupada
(Alanath das B.)

To: Sriman Rupa Vilasa Prabhu and others who share his opinion about
Srila Prabhupada's intentions."

Please accept my humble obeisances,

After reading your article I felt compelled to write something to clarify the position of my beloved godbrothers who you glorify to be sridharits. To begin let me refer to your article from the Vaisnava Journal which convinces me that your great learning has been covered by some misinterpretation out of bitterness, from being pushed around for such a long time by your godbrothers, that you concluded to take shelter of your own imagination. Your loving feeling for Srila Prabhupada was mixed with the before mentioned and thus you gave a distorted picture of Srila Prabhupada's intentions contradicting shastra and reality.

Here are some of the points I'd like to make:

1. Srila Sridhar Maharaj never reinitiated a disciple of Srila Prabhupada. In some cases he gave new names, as it is the custom to give names in India at the second initiation. Those who only had the first initiation from Srila Prabhupada and took second initiation from Srila Sridhar Maharaj, also some sannyasis, received titles from Srila Sridhar Maharaj but were never reinitiated. Even Srila Prabhupada received the title Bhaktivedanta from Srila Sridhar Maharaj. If you carefully read these lines you will see that all your points have been considered and are without standing.

You quote so many pro-Srila Sridhar Maharaj statements from Srila Prabhupada and very few critical ones, which you try to patch up by quoting totally unrelated comments Srila Prabhupada made about others godbrother or general godbrother statements which were produced by some antagonist attitudes of some godbrothers. Never by Srila Sridhar Maharaj.

Do you realize that by doing so you try to become more than Srila Prabhupada? Here is why:

1 - The sastra tell us of the history of the guru and his disciple and the rope. The guru said, "Beat it, it's an snake." Then, "Why do you, fool, beat a

rope?," then, " I told you to kill that snake" and so on. As you quoted in your article, our master's last instruction was in regard to Srila Sridhar Maharaj — go and get his help and advice. So, why is your faith now shaken? Has Srila Sridhar Maharaj contradicted the vaisnava siddhanta? Why do you paint the saktayvesa avatar as someone who doesn't know too well what he is saying?

2 - Srila Prabhupada naturally disagreed with the break up of the Gaudiya Math and naturally Srila Sridhar Maharaj, who travelled as Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati's secretary was involved and has his opinion. Nevertheless, after that Srila Prabhupada wanted to make that very same person president of ISKCON and acharya of a new institution. Do you dare to indicate that Srila Prabhupad wanted to send the members of such institutions into despair and to being misled?

3 - When we judge the right or wrong thing to do we take shelter of guru, sastra, and sadhu. That means vaisnava Bhakti Siddhanta.

Could Srila Prabhupada ever contradict the Absolute Truth? To quote "Prabhupada said" was prohibited by Srila Prabhupada while he was still on the planet. To avoid abuse and distortion in order to prove something, like, "Don't consult higher vaisnavas", thus contradicting Bhaktisiddhanta, you are insulting the misused name of your guru.

Nevertheless Srila Prabhupada did say many things and we are not to understand them all necessarily.

To give you a practical example:

I am training new students to my best capacity as I learned from Srila Prabhupada. I don't tell them: "Never read other vaisnavas books," or, "you don't need any other vaisnava's mercy." But if a godbrother of mine behaves wrongly, I may point that out to avoid misunderstanding in the students.

But if I am to die today and the godbrother is the most advanced vaisnava available, I will tell my students, "If you have trouble or questions please consult with my dear godbrother."

If after I die, one student will say to the others, "Just listen to me, don't consult with that godbrother. Don't you remember that our teacher before pointed out some mistake in him? Never read his books, we don't need other vaisnava's mercy" (except you need my mercy, he means to say); we must be "faithful" to our master.

That is cheating, distorting and offending which will kill my advancement. In order not to extend this answer too long I beg the interested reader to carefully read Gour Govinda Swami's article Guru Tattva and Rupa Vilas' article: Some Considerations Concerning Siksa and Diksa-Gurus.

Both appeared in the Vaisnava Journal Vol. 2 No.1. Thus you will conclude that Srila Prabhupada could never have been against reinitiations, if the need arises. Obviously he was against envious attack against his mission and kindly protected his sons and daughters with his protest. It is

beyond a shadow of a doubt that Srila Prabhupada wanted his movement to remain unified, and so desired Srila Bhaktisiddhanta for the Gaudiya Math. But it is by now already an historical fact that those two institutions did not maintain the original structure they started off with. We are learning undoubtedly, but now our beloved guardians have rejoined their Eternal Lord in Goloka and we can only ever see them again if we become as loving and compassionate with others and amongst ourselves, that we may develop pure love for them and Krishna.

Please point out any mistake I may have made in this article. With detailed proof if we have any doubt about the best way to serve our guru Srila Prabhupada, we are allowed, and I recommend, to study Srila Sridhar Maharaj's books and you can accept or reject in accordance with the bhaktisiddhanta and you will discover the same as I did. Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu inspired his pure devotee to help us in the separation of our beloved Srila Prabhupada. Where is that strange idea coming from that by glorifying and loving a certain vaisnava it puts down or places in the shadow what we feel for our guru? This is frequently used as a scare technique within ISKCON. Where in the sastras do we find evidence for such a strange attitude?

Of course, it is wrong to neglect your guru's presence and go to consult others without special reason, as a doubt about the guru's proper action. (Bhajanamrta by Narahari). But to say that those who took shelter of Srila Sridhar Maharaj are unchaste, while the GBC did not even lend an ear to the difficulties of the individuals, but just covered up for one another sounds to me like old fashioned GBC propaganda. It is offensive to discriminate between siksa and diksa-gurus in both how to treat or how to respect them. And by the way, who knows who is who's guru? These are individual hearts' decisions. When one has received a spiritual gift, the desire to become Lord Chaitanya's pure devotee, then, and only, then has he met his guru and he may meet him again in other forms later until he reaches the spiritual sky where they all live together forever. Nobody can vote who is guru, nobody can say he is or he is not. He may not be your guru, but don't try to play Krishna, because only He knows who He wants to empower and who He will allow to discover His transcendental agents in this world.

Your fallen servant, B.A. Paramadvaiti.

ISKCON tried to smash the VVR with the ISKCON Journal and by expelling its editors from ISKCON. But unfortunately ISKCON had adopted the covert ritvik philosophy, like Sankara who preached covert Bhuddism in India. Because the gurus in ISKCON were down graded so much under the institutional hierarchy, they practically are more a priestly

function than gurus as the scriptures have taught us.

Unfortunately the VVR did not print our reply. My next thought was, let me challenge the GBC body to a public debate. At least in this way I thought, they must be ready to meet with me, even if it were only for the pride to defend their mission.

Using the VVR and the ISKCON Journal I sent my challenge paper to all GBC institutions and the chairman.

Invitation to the Debate

Berlin 9/10/90

MY BELOVED GODBROTHERS,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Once again I address you to rectify a lie which some motivated persons have tried to spread.

Srila Bhakti Raksaka Sridhar never promoted or supported any zonal acharya system as wrongly proclaimed. I read VVR simply to know a little more about the current feelings of my beloved brothers. Some write-ups are excellent and some are to become sad. All in all, we suppose the majority of the writers are well intentioned, but often obviously very ill informed. Nityananda Prabhu is right when he claims that VVR is the only publication where anybody can raise a complaint against the rigid GBC style of management and communications, but only if the complaint makes it through the VVR censorship of cutting, omitting or distorting the message. Thus VVR fails to be really unbiased and open to the discussion they claim to present to save ISKCON from similar monopolization of authority and information. For that reason I had stopped answering Rupa Vilas, since my answers were cut to the level of meaninglessness. There is always space to repeat the VVR editor's opinion over and over, but not always opposing expositions. So there is no true debate, just like with the GBC. They vote over people's lives without them having a chance to even speak. This is the system of debating somebody with 3000 watts who has no mike of his own. But today I will try again to make this offering to all of you with a straw between my teeth. Rupa Vilas was one more of the great judges and critics of Srila Sridhar Maharaj just like so many famous ISKCON GBCs and leaders. Now we learn that he could not even follow the basic rules but felt fit to publicly denounce the intentions of his god-uncle and Sannyas general of our Sampradaya.

But let us come to facts. What did Sridhar Maharaj promote to ISKCON

after he was consulted in 1978 by the GBC following that recommendation Srila Prabhupada personally gave them?

(From a recording) He said:

...Those who are going to accept disciples should go out of the temples and start new temples — especially the bigger centers of Srila Prabhupada should be kept for the disciples of Srila Prabhupada. Nobody should occupy those temples for the relationship with their disciples. Like a married man needs his own room, the disciples need at least one place where their guru is appreciated. A group photo should be kept of those devotees accepting disciples in Srila Prabhupada's temples so that newcomers can find out that some devotees accept disciples. Don't impose on anyone a guru against his will, what to speak to oblige godbrothers to work for a particular guru.

Then Jayapataka Swami asks: Which ones of the gurus is the important one — siksa, diksa or sanniyas-guru?

Sridhar Maharaj: The one who has helped you the most to come closer to Krishna — he is the most important guru.

(Additional information: The group picture was actually taken and published in a Vyasa Puja book of Srila Prabhupada.)

Sridhar Maharaj instructions are basically that we have to follow our heart. That means we have to decide individually how to go on serving and preaching to others with full enthusiasm and conviction after the departure of our beloved guru. If the GBC does not contradict guru, shastra, sadhu and what your heart tells you, there is no harm to follow such a GBC. Otherwise following a GBC's order without their sacred consent turns ISKCON into a cult.

What he clearly promoted was UNITY IN DIVERSITY and LOVE AND TRUST.

The very cause of the success of Srila Prabhupada and what he promoted amongst all of us seems to be the most difficult to understand.

We have centralization, bureaucracy, endless guru arguing over issues that cannot be understood without love and trust. Those who proudly proclaimed that everything is in Srila Prabhupada's books, now are exposing ideas which the Saktyavesa-Avatar never happened to write about. Of course, there is a loving answer to all questions, no doubt. That is the claim of guru parampara, but I am sure that unless the true principle of love and trust and unity in diversity is understood you will not find any living guru and you won't understand any sastra-guru either. Guru is always there but who can understand him? Srila Prabhupada writes: "If the disciple is seriously aggrieved after the departure of his Gurudeva then the chaitya-guru from within his heart will guide him onwards." We, the disciples of Srila Prabhupada do need each other, but not to argue nor to fight for positions, not to envy nor to flatter, much less to threaten or to impose upon. We need to just learn from each other to lovingly remember and to serve

our Gurudeva Srila Prabhupada.

Often many of us think that we are the only ones truly sincere, even though we are not pure devotees and don't know how to continue, what to speak of to increase that original enthusiasm to surrender we experienced when we were with Srila Prabhupada.

Never forget that we are all in dire need for help and we will never get that help if we just offend others in the name of arguing the superiority of our sectarian views. Sridhar Maharaj is almost generally looked down upon by my ISKCON brothers and even by many who left the GBC rule. Truly the defamation was well done. My heart is crying. If they cannot even love their great vaisnava uncle, if they cannot appreciate that Srila Prabhupada was great amongst even the great, if they cannot understand that in a vaisnava family you have to accommodate everybody and their FEELINGS, then there will not be a big vaisnava family. How do you expect them to appreciate the work Tripurari Swami is doing, or the work Padmapani Prabhu was doing, or Trivikrama Swami, or Nityananda, what to speak of an worm-like being as myself? We cannot argue our way out of this material world, nor will our ecclesiastical ISKCON position give us an entry card for the spiritual world like the prasadam hall entry card at the Mayapur festival. Nityananda Prabhu's challenge horse is well decorated and loaded with far fetched arguments as well as with a lot of sad evidence. But the horse is proud and arrogant, starving itself of love, characteristics we know only too well always fail in approaching the absolute. And those who are challenged have not much love either. That's why they are happy when critical people just disappear so that they can ignore or defame them as traitors for their interpretation of what Srila Prabhupada wanted to happen. But if any good whatsoever should come from all that, then let us change altogether the approach to this issue. Let us learn to truly appreciate the fact that there are more people than just me who try to get the grace of Krishna. How wonderful. That is the first step to Unity in Diversity.

The faith of a newcomer will always be influenced by the people he met by the will of providence (Krishna), thus some newcomers are joining ISKCON, some the Chaitanya Saraswat Math, some join with a ritvik system believer and some with New Vrindavana. So are we to feel sorry for all the other poor misled fellows who did not join our camp, or are we to denounce them as big fools without even knowing them? Krishna is the Supreme Lord and nobody else should foolishly think that he is going to become some big controller to remove the misunderstanding of others by executive force. Only by love and trust may we be accepted as a servant of the vaisnavas. And that way we may even become eternal servants at last.

I would like to present the following proposals as a service to Srila Prabhupada.

**MY PROPOSALS TO CREATE A LOVING SOCIETY OF
ASPIRING VAISNAVAS**

1. Nobody should work under the authority of any guru or GBC he considers impure in his purpose.

2. Everybody who wants to participate in Srila Prabhupada's family should be welcomed, no strings attached, except that he should accept the basic rules of vaisnava life and appreciate the others.

3. Every temple should be able to choose their own GBC.

4. There should be no limits on how many GBCs there are. There should be no limits on how many GBCs may function in one city or country.

5. A GBC's zone should be all the temples who love and trust him.

6. The faith of a searcher alone decides who his gurus are.

The real problem in our line is the lack of love and trust, and all true servants of Srila Prabhupada should come together to find out how to create such a wonderful environment that others will feel deprived from the highest privilege if they cannot be with you and all of us in a united vaisnava family. Then we will have no difficulty in finding solutions which will convince everybody about any tattva in question. I will present my proposals publicly to all those interested, or claiming to be responsible leaders in Srila Prabhupada's movement for debate the day before Srila Prabhupada Disappearance Day 1991 in Vrindavana in the Garden of the Gurukul building. We must create a Vaisnava society which will accommodate everybody and openly exchange transcen-dental sound for the sake of maintaining the proper guru, sastra, and sadhu understanding. Anybody interested in participating who wants to discuss this plan or wants to start the debate with me through mail please write to me in Miami USA 692 NE 70th Str, Florida 33138. Tel: 305-7515938

We will prepare a joint proposal to be presented at the Goura Purnima 1992 to the GBC and temple presidents for further debate and enlightenment.

Your fallen servant B.A. Paramadvaiti also known before as Alanath das Brahmachary.

After deliberating on the upcoming debate, I decided that a clear challenge was necessary in order to seriously approach the GBC. The following list of points I sent to the GBC chairman in order to prepare for our meeting. Here we are dealing with modern forms of ISKCON problems, since quite a few things in ISKCON had changed over the years.

Some Points Hampering ISKCON's Advancement

THE FOLLOWING LIST OF POINTS HAMPER THE ADVANCEMENT OF ISKCON TOWARDS A TRULY SHELTER-GIVING ORGANIZATION. VRINDAVANA 4-12-90. ALL GLORIES TO SRILA PRABHUPADA AND TO ALL OTHER GENUINE VAISNAVA ACHARYAS.

The following points and suggestions are not meant to offend anyone, nor do they pretend to be perfect, but they are felt to be urgent subjects to be dealt with for the sake of ISKCON by the author.

I. Those GBC laws that are meant to control the acharyas go against the principle of a divine connection, which is the only real reason for a newcomer to surrender wholeheartedly to his guru.

II. You cannot control an acharya. If you don't believe that he can be responsible for his own representation of his guru then he is not an acharya to begin with and should not receive any kind of voting endorsement. Srila Prabhupada trusted his disciples to go out and to preach on his behalf. Any temple president has the chance to cheat. Still he is the key to encourage the devotees in his temple. You cannot stop the mayavadis from opening their missions. Only two persons can know how to go about a spiritual connection. The one is the shelter seeking new devotee and the other is the shelter giving preacher. If any one of them is not genuine their connection becomes invalid and that will be revealed by Krishna in due course of time, since Krishna promised to protect his devotees.

III. But if you have any circumstance where you sanction somebody as an acharya on the basis of an ecclesiastical decision, and oblige others to support him and promote him as a shelter giving guru, then you will be responsible for any wrong created by that decision.

Examples:

A. Zonal gurus who have the right to rule over their godbrothers.

B. Gurus who oblige the disciples of their godbrothers to promote them.

C. Any so called shelter-giving function which gives spiritual authority over someone else on the base of ecclesiastical decisions with geographical interference in the life of others. In other words, temple presidents, regional secretaries, GBCs or small or big zonal acharyas who want to limit the connection to Srila Prabhupada and to Krishna in a certain geographical area to a connection with them. That goes against the very spirit of Srila Prabhupada's mood and mission. Even though this is supported by the GBC and they adamantly push the line that Srila Prabhupada wanted the GBC to govern ISKCON, we should take into consideration the following points.

1. Srila Prabhupada made rules and broke them as soon as he saw fit.

2. Srila Prabhupada never requested a devotee to work under some authority who he was not inspired by.

3. To my knowledge Srila Prabhupada encouraged everyone of his disciples at any time to start their own program for his mission.

4. Srila Prabhupada dismissed twice the entire GBC and put all the decisions onto the temple presidents. One time was exactly because they were making plans to centralize everything.

5. Srila Prabhupada condemned centralization and over management. He declared them as killers of the spontaneous devotional development.

6. Srila Prabhupada always tried to make sure that everybody was happily accommodated in his movement.

IV. Suspicion leads to suspension. ISKCON rules lead to suspicion. 'Nobody trusts anybody' is the development. Temples and major financial departments do not give (devotees) public statements of their financial moves. Brahmacharies now pay rent in many temples and keep their own share in private accounts. Sunday "love feasts" now charge entrance fees in many temples. Some temples are managed by Hindi business oriented managers who can save a spiritually uninspired financial disaster but cannot inspire anybody to practice unmotivated uninterrupted devotional service. The direction is clear. Temples of ISKCON become more and more like Caste Goswami temples, with officials to collect the donations "on behalf" of Srila Prabhupada and gurus who have to get permission of a board of managers before they can instruct their disciples. Also you face the smarta brahmana syndrome; officials who are carefully protected by ISKCON laws to be "advanced" devotees. They have somehow captured ecclesiastical posts in the institution. Now they decide who is good and who is bad, who is a well-wisher and who has "abandoned Srila Prabhupada", who is low caste and who is high caste on the basis of the rubber stamp approval of a committee who does not even know the individuals nor their relationship with others. And even worse, they condemn association with anybody who does not silently approve their "absolute" authority. They drive the nail of distrust and fear for your security and positions between godbrothers and devotees alike. They don't deal with philosophical challenges and kill the reputation of anybody questioning their right to act as they do. They give those who don't hold posts or positions like them the feeling that they should not think for themselves, that anything "divine" will come down to them carefully packaged by them with the GBC approval stamp. They disregard the possibility that anything new may be revealed to the movement or to the individual disciple. A devotee has to learn to stand on his own feet, maybe open his own temple, be Krishna Conscious even if his guru, what to speak of the next GBC meeting, is far away from him. He must be able to face all challenges and deal with them on the basis of what he has learned and realized. Just intellectual knowledge won't do. And if he cannot answer properly then he must be humble enough to search out a real

sadhu who can say something which he cannot discover even after reading all of Srila Prabhupada's books. Because the reader is limited by his own distorted conceptions, selfish motives, lack of realizations and prejudices. But a merciful sadhu can remove all those shortcomings by his mercy. We trust in that and not impersonal voting and general suspicion. The sastras are full of example that glorify the association with sadhus as the most important aspect of devotional life. By supporting so many misconceptions the smarta tendency in ISKCON has destroyed the feature of a house in which the whole world could live happily, but rather has alienated many wonderful devotees and declared it the house where anybody submissive to their misconceptions can live. As the past has show even those holding very important preaching services in ISKCON were done away with, without even dealing philosophically with any of their misgivings, as soon as they became undesirable to their local acharya or GBC or zonal "saviour."

V. Neophytes are bound to make mistakes. The mistakes made in ISKCON are historical revelations on how not to do it for the sake of all the future vaisnava generations. Krishna Consciousness as a world wide movement with gurus who previously lived in Mlecha conditions is so unique that we cannot lament even if so many mistakes have been committed. But now I feel is the time to learn from our mistakes and to accommodate the movement to the reality of the world. The vaisnava philosophy is so unique that it will help the whole world as much as there are persons existing who have realized at least something of it. The world is fed up with institutions, fed up with dogmatism, fed up with false authorities and dictators. It's thirsty for something real, something from the heart. Therefore ISKCON as an institution had to fail to be absolute, but ISKCON as an inspiration for the whole world to become Krishna Conscious is just on its way to being successful and any failure is only instrumental for the real gift our acharyas want to give to the world.

Suggestions:

Break loose the tight grip of a few monopolizers of so called "spiritual authority".

Save ISKCON from over management and trust killing exclusivity which discourages the honest enquiry and the humble questioning of anything anybody may do wrong in the name of Srila Prabhupada.

Let devotees have the chance to show their desire to serve Srila Prabhupada to their hearts' content.

Encourage deep spiritual exchange to discover the great secrets of bhakti which can only be revealed to a sincere soul by true sadhu-sanga.

Let anybody who wants to accept disciples start a new temple and work by the strength of Krishna's mercy as it will come to him, rather than to continue to subdivide the ISKCON movement into small acharya zones.

(That was originally proposed by Srila Sridhar Maharaj to the GBC, and would avoid the majority of all problems).

Recognize all well-wishers, including all the devotees who have left ISKCON due to the unbearable conditions of the last thirteen years, apologize to them for all aparadhas committed and simply accept them as working members of a truly international vaisnava society if they still follow the vaisnava life-style.

Establish love and trust, Unity in Diversity above all other considerations.

Establish Srila Prabhupada's personally founded temples as special places for the disciples of Srila Prabhupada. (They should not be dominated by any other acharya). Srila Prabhupada's disciples should manage them as siksagurus and thus develop a wonderful all accommodating atmosphere both for their godbrothers as well as for their godnephews. Clear financial statements of those temples as well as other departments like book production will surely encourage devotees to support them from all sides. Other newly founded temples should work as their acharyas see fit. No doubt they can only learn, both from the positive development of the future as well as from the disasters of the past.

The above written points and suggestions form part of my challenge to the GBC body and to all those who feel responsible for serving Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON which I will personally present for public debate in the Krishna Balaram Mandir-Gurukula Garden the day before Srila Prabhupada's Disappearance Festival 1991 at 10 AM. In case the ISKCON authorities refuse us per-mission to hold that debate on their premises it will be transferred to the garden of Radha Damodar Temple at the foot of Srila Rupa Goswami's Samadhi.

Signed, the most unfortunate beggar to become a ser

vant of the devotees of Sri Guru and Gouranga.

Swami B.A. Paramadvaiti

Totally frustrated with all my attempts I fear that ISKCON may go the way of the Catholic Church for thousands of years.

But at least for the record I feel compelled and inspired to serve my spiritual masters to compile this book. I prepared a special paper for the debate, which I also gave to all my family and friends as a guideline on how to watch carefully over the transition period from one departing acharya to his genuine successors. We pray it may be of help to others who face such a painful moment in their lives.

Please Consider for the Future

Subject: Open letter to all who are concerned with the spiritual continuation in the Brahma Madhva Gaudiya Sampradaya

SRI SRI GURU GOURANGA JAYATE

Miami 3-7-91

DEAR VAISNAVAS AND DEAR FRIENDS,

ALL OF YOU WHO ARE SEARCHING FOR THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH AND THE CAUSELESS MERCY

PLEASE ACCEPT MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCES:

Being a very fallen soul myself, nevertheless I felt that I owe all of you the following observations I made by the mercy of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Sridhar Maharaj. (A short description of what happened in ISKCON is taken out, since it's already discussed in this book.)

For those in the future who will face similar situations after the departure of their guru, I wanted to alert them to be aware of the following symptoms, which are signs of imminent danger and indicate the need to do something about it, in order to save one's spiritual life.

1. Materialistic lifestyles appear even though vaisnavas are supposed to be renounced and simple. Now luxurious comforts will be justified by public relations and "too holy to be affected by those things".

2. The holy teachings are monopolized, (modern; copyrighted) distorted, hidden, or simply ignored. History shows us that uncomfortable books find their way into the fire, even when truly worshipful, and critics are declared heretics, condemned, exiled, and sometimes killed.

3. The representation of God on earth and the holy truth is limited to voting committees or governing bodies, birthrights, or other social considerations.

4. Love is exchanged with fear and the "nobody trusts nobody" atmosphere starts to predominate.

5. Discussions and creative philosophical exchanges with outsiders are totally discouraged. Vaisnava philosophy can defeat any opposing concept. We still recall Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati declaring the totalitarian war against all misconceptions.

6. Intoxication, greed for money, lies, conspiracy, and mundane sexuality are general side symptoms of such false "saints". No religious community is immune against such deadly diseases. It only takes one leader to be a hypocrite. That is the reason why the Vedas have recommended to us to take shelter of a pure spiritual master and not of any institution. Cooperative thinking, typical for our western multi-national corporations, will not help

us much in keeping the line of our Srila Prabhupada alive.

But all these before mentioned symptoms should not discourage us in our attempt to surrender and to actively spread Krishna Consciousness. Behind every suffering there is a great lesson to be learned. Krishna personally allowed all this to happen for the sake of all of us. This lesson is: wake up before we are all in our eighties as well as for all the future western vaisnavas. The world is not interested in any organized religion except when it comes to politicians gathering votes. Churches are dead as far as true religion is concerned. But one truly realized soul and his truly beneficial contribution to society can win over many hearts, and like Srila Prabhupada proved, make a distinct impression on the consciousness of mankind without the need to be backed by any rubber-stamp committee. So it will depend on all of us how loud the true glory of Srila Prabhupada will be heard in our lifetime. Or should we all become big businessmen now, since we couldn't maintain his mission nicely until now?

I see many encouraging signs. New Vaisnava literature makes its appearance. More new temples and many individual devotees are shaking off the dogmatism and searching for the nectar we once so easily had access to when Srila Prabhupada personally supervised us and protected us from our own craziness.

I see that by the great loving sacrifice of so many of my friends and brothers new projects come to life and I pray that I may serve them sincerely.

I studied the will of Srila Jiva Goswami and the wills of my spiritual masters and I am thinking of those who will stand tomorrow by themselves in separation of their spiritual masters, but without a personal memory of the wonderful days when we had Srila Prabhupada and Srila Sridhar Maharaj personally with us giving us guidance.

Of course it is always true that the chaitya-guru in our heart will protect the sincere searcher and guide us to the proper protection. But whenever we have nobody to ask and we have to make our own decision about the continuation of our guru's mission I beg to present the following recommendations to be taken into consideration. They appear to me to be of vital importance.

Regarding the Continuation of the Spiritual Succession

Without sacrifice there is no mission. Without love and trust there will be no sacrifice and surrender. After my Guru departed from the physical plane there was only really one question of importance for me. How can I go on serving him? How can I increase my desire to serve him and love Krishna? How can I enthuse others now, to take up spiritual life seriously?

Previously, I happily took the new friends to my Guru and told them: "With all confidence you can surrender to him. I am trying to do the same. He can take us back to the Supreme Lord." But how will I preach now? Without having a good answer to that question we are in trouble. Our spiritual dignity is at stake. I can only represent what is fully approved within my heart, otherwise I will fall down to mundane considerations like: Who will give me the nicest job with the most fringe benefits? Who's disciple would I like to marry? Who will bother me the least?...

* How lovingly Srila Prabhupada handled every individual until the day he left the physical plane. How much knowledge and maturity will we need to be able to serve him properly?

* The search for purity, simplicity, modesty, humility and the true selfless service attitude must be an undisputed base for a divine revelation to come down to us.

* Never forget that the guru is also not his body. His body is engaged in Krishna's service and therefore not ordinary, but he is not limited by his body. Actually Sri Krishna is the original spiritual master. All his representatives (gurus) will come to those who sincerely want to serve him. To those honest souls some inspiration of the guru-tattva will come to show the proper way.

* Brahmanas and sannyasis have a great responsibility. Practically they are the spiritual masters in this world, and we are all requested to qualify to be able to assume those services.

To accept disciples, who have felt in their heart that Krishna has sent them to you for protection, is a holy duty and a right in the guru parampara, after your spiritual master disappears. But you alone have the responsibility for your actions. It is on your own risk.

If you are a bad representative you will have to be removed in due course of time and your service to your guru will be ruined. If we are not sure if we are capable to represent Lord Chaitanya and our guru truly, and that for the rest of our life, then it is better to take the new devotee to some other vaisnava of whose sincerity we must be completely convinced. The new devotee will have to examine the vaisnava you recommend, and/or any other he feels inclined towards.

* Whoever brings about that sentiment in our heart, that we want to become pure devotees of Sri Krishna, or whoever later increases that sentiment in us is really our spiritual master, who deserves our eternal love and respect. By carefully studying Srila Sridhar Maharaj's book Sri Guru and His Grace, we can get an appreciation of the mystery of guru-tattva.

* Let new gurus start new temples. Nobody should intrude anywhere and claim that he is the successor acharya of his guru unless particularly indicated by his guru and even then limited to the actual place where he conducts his preaching and not with any geographical implication. Krishna will lead the true searcher to his guru.

If a new devotee joins a temple founded by an already departed acharya and managed by devotees who don't personally accept disciples, he will gradually know the other initiated devotees and their disciples, since they are also welcomed to the main temples and in this way he can find his personal diksa-guru.

There is no one obliged to accept you as a guru or to help you in your mission unless they feel that urge in their heart and that they should continue to serve their guru by helping you. Of course vaisnava etiquette teaches us to be very cautious not to disturb the faith of the new devotees, another big reason why gurus have to have their special place(s) where their relationship with their disciples is not challenged. That is another reason why the main temples of the founder acharya must simply be open to all without anybody trying to become the new acharya there. A movement without such understandings will end up like a big swimming pool without water and people jumping inside in order to learn how to swim (surrender).

* Preacher or spiritual master means someone who is a real surrendered servant. He serves his disciples. He renounces his privacy and he works hard himself to spread his guru's message.

* Don't think that you know all of your gurus unless you have already reached Krishna's lotus feet or pure love for Krishna is flowing in your heart.

* Do not visit the temples of those devotees whose sincerity you doubt, or if you cannot share and support the feelings of the devotees there. Don't be envious or overly critical with those who may be more successful in serving your guru.

* Criticizing those who have no chance to help is like spitting against the wind. To dwell on the rumors about others or even over the true mistakes of others who we are unable to help, will bring their faults into our own mental world and they will want to manifest again in our gross world as a reaction. Only be eager to correct those who beg you for your help. We should only visit temples when we want to help them, and only join them to make them better and better and better.

Regarding Institutions and Spiritual Life

* If you are a leader of any group, please always respect the opinion of others who join to help your preaching mission. Don't become a victim of the deadly disease called megalomania. Let others participate in your projects and creatively contribute to the development. Make weekly board meetings. Appreciate the new devotees' need for space to develop. Exchange ideas, let everyone think freely and allow them to express their constructive participation, just like Srila Prabhupada did with all of his disciples. This attitude will protect your projects from lethargy and indifference. Whoever allows me to serve him is actually giving his mercy to me and a representative of my spiritual master.

* Don't ever condemn anybody who doesn't want to serve under your leadership. Rather search out how you can serve him.

* Every temple has some need for organization; president, treasurer, weekly meetings of responsible devotees. Every devotee should understand the basic concept of how to do all things in Krishna Consciousness. That is the principle for personal growth and the success of the entire community. Without the mystic, loving inspiration every organization will ultimately fail. Train leaders if you want to be a good servant of your guru.

* Vaisnavas in leading positions should be very cautious about their huge responsibility before the devotees and the general public. Therefore they should live in a very open way, without any secrets regarding their finances and their moral life. Their temple should have clear bookkeeping. Every devotee should give to Krishna what he likes to give from his heart. Krishna is not interested in anyone's money or property. He only wants our heart. At the same time, all which has been donated to Krishna by the devotees and friends must be carefully protected. All properties bought by the devotees for Krishna must be registered in such a way that no individual can ever sell it or use it for his private interest. The founder acharya may choose the future leadership before his departure to avoid fighting, or if he did not give particular instruction in this regard, then those temples should be maintained as a place of unity for the new growing diversity in the vaisnava family. The leadership in that case should be disciples who themselves are not accepting disciples. Such a place will only remain a sacred place of pilgrimage if the loving respect to all true members of the family is alive.

* Nobody should venture to become a temple or ashram leader if he doesn't want to do that service selflessly for the pleasure of Krishna.

* Give love if you want to get love. Do your service with all your heart. Stick to it. Never let anyone down. Srila Prabhupada expected his preachers to make lifelong commitments.

* Never fight with other devotees over mundane benefits or power.

* Pure preachers are always needed. Mundane governors are always surrounded by false friends. Nobody loves them.

* Don't get into any conflicts with mundane authorities. They can destroy our good name as vaisnavas, servants of the Supreme Lord, and the whole world with their propagandist machine. Therefore devotees should deal legally with their contacts in this world. We want to teach the world to have faith in the devotees so we can serve them their highest benefit of their human birth.

* Don't impose your views but expose your wisdom. Don't demand respect, but command respect by your example.

* Organizations and their legislative operations are justified and necessary in their existence only as far as they truly promote and facilitate the essential principles of the vaisnava ideal. The sacred principle is unity in diversity. Krishna is the real enjoyer of His real devotees' efforts. He is

happily worshiped in His Deity form in the ashrams and temples. It is not so important who is in charge as long as he is appreciated by the other devotees. From the oldest to the youngest member, all of them should be HAPPILY ACCOMMODATED WITHIN THE MISSION. That is the duty of leadership. If the reality in your place is different, then everybody should try to change that situation following the heart of the sadhu-sanga principles. If all good efforts have failed, one should search for a different ashram to serve in the association of loving devotees, or start a new ashram in the same place to truly worship Krishna and his pure devotees. Since practically every neighborhood should have devotees preaching there it may even turn out that the problem ends as a blessing in disguise.

* Every devotee should work exclusively with and under those vaisnavas who he feels completely sure are pure in their transcendental purpose. Anyone may commit a mistake, but hidden motivations will destroy the love, trust and surrender in the community.

Some General Recommendations

* Anger and hate are generally just symptoms of our frustrated lust, therefore always try to deal kindly with all others. Don't scream unnecessarily at anybody.

* Always be ready to question your approach to everything. Utilize the help of guru, sastra and sadhu to fight your dogmatic tendencies. Conformism, sleepiness, laziness, laxness with one's self, surrounding oneself with flattering "yes-men" will cover our objective view of reality.

* Preaching is always the essence and it must be essential to fit the claim of presenting the absolute truth.

* Don't get attached to money or real estate. It is better to begin a new mission, if that is necessary, in order to follow our ideals. Krishna can give us the whole world in one moment if He would think that to be fit. On the other hand He can take away everything that we have if He sees that material things start obscuring our advancement.

* It is not the goal of the process of Krishna Consciousness to follow many external rules. The true goal is to develop love for God. In this connection everything helpful should be accepted and every disturbance should be removed.

* Always take shelter of Krishna's Holy Name, both by chanting the rounds as well as by the congregational chanting in the temples and on the streets.

* Never expect anybody to do anything which they don't want to do or which they are unable to do. That is a golden rule for wonderful vaisnava relationships. Of course a member of a community should be willing to voluntarily and happily share the burden of love with the others in order to qualify for living in a vaisnava community.

* Never stop reading the transcendental literature of the vaisnava acharyas, preferably in the association of other devotees. Dive deep into the confidential meanings by exchanging with others and by clarifying any doubt which you may have.

* Always try to do things the best way possible. Accept no mediocrity, please. To the Supreme only the best should be offered. If you don't try your best it means that you yourself don't really believe in what you are doing. Human life is too short for nonsense. Brahmachari, grihastha, or sannyasi, cook, preacher, or pujari, always try to be excellent, to give your best full of love.

* Never fear to accept responsibility. Real compassion means that you have to be ready to sacrifice your energy in the service of Krishna to make others happy and hopeful.

* We should serve everyone, but with some discrimination.

We serve the advanced - with full surrender
We serve our equals - with friendship and love
We serve the newcomer
- with good example and dedication
If you have wisdom and knowledge
- enlighten the others

* Never forget that this movement started by the important ashrams organized by Srila Prabhupada, and that the ashrams are the center for shelter and true welfare work.

* Sadhana Bhakti will give us the strength to go on with our spiritual vows.

* Our most important guru is the one who has helped us the most to become Krishna conscious. Only a disciple knows who all his gurus are. Others may or may not know. Only you know how important Srila Prabhupada or Srila Sridhar Maharaj is for you. But fortunately there is no petty competition amongst pure devotees to be the only one loved by their disciples.

* If you cannot find anybody around you who carries on the living line of loving devotional service, then it will be up to you to take responsibility. Your guru will always be there when the only desire burning in your heart is to serve him. And that flame should never be extinguished. Always search how to increase it and then your exchange with other devotees will truly be sadhu- sanga.

* Never forget: Krishna and his pure devotees are never bankrupt.

I want to thank all of my beloved brothers and friends, all who have tolerated me and my shortcomings, all who allowed me to learn from their mistakes, all who trusted me and supported me in the most difficult moments of my spiritual search, all who have allowed me to speak about

Krishna and his devotees, all who remind me of my spiritual masters and engage me in their service, all who have sacrificed so much and given me their love and friendship. I am eternally indebted to all of you.

Please try to maintain this wonderful Krishna Consciousness always alive within your hearts and actions. Always try to deliver it to others in the same way as we have received it from above by the causeless mercy of our eternal guardians and for that purpose we have to become pure devotees.

Forever your servant, friend, and aspirant to become a member of the extraordinary servant of the Rupanuga Sampradaya

B.A. Paramadvaiti

Our siddhanta covers unlimited subjects. It is impossible to justly cover many aspects in one book. Just to clarify further important points I have compiled more points to clarify the position of Srila Sridhar Maharaj and of the ISKCON situation as I see it today for all sincere searchers. Things will hopefully change in the near future. Let us try to be positive. But even if they change it will be helpful to know how many dangers are lurking to always pull us down into the material world, even when we try to live in a spiritual community.

Srila Prabhupada and Raganuga Bhakti

Another often discussed subject these days is regarding Raganuga Bhakti.

A very dear godbrother of mine, Narasimha Maharaj, gave a very nice clarification he confirmed to me that without raga-marga, none of us Westerners would have ever been initiated into this sampradaya, because according to the vedic rules we should never have qualified.

Question: It is being said that your guru Maharaj, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj taught his disciples vaidhi- bhakti and not raganuga-bhakti. It is true?

Answer: No, that is misunderstanding. Actually our spiritual

master engaged us in raganuga-bhakti following the line of Sri Rupa Goswami, Sanatana Goswami and Raghunatha Das Goswami. Vaidhi-bhakti is of lower order. Devotion that is performed according to the rules and regulations found in the vedic scriptures such as those used by the Ramanuja Sampradaya, characterized by awe and reverence, that is vaidhi bhakti. This vaidhi-bhakti we find in Vaikuntha but not in Vrindavana. Raganuga, exclusive spontaneous dedication is unique to the Vrindavana devotees.

Rupa Goswami was chosen by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as the most fit person to distribute raganuga-bhakti. The rules and regulations our spiritual master gave us are found in the Bhakti Rasa-Amrita Sindhu (The Nectar of Devotion) compiled by Rupa Goswami. Bhakti Rasa-Amrita Sindhu is the hand book of bhakti yoga or sadhana-bhakti. Sadhana-bhakti has two divisions or categories, vaidhi and raganuga. They are in one sense separate while at the same time inseparable in that they are complimentary components of the same substance, sadhana-bhakti.

Saranagati and astaka-lila, full surrender and twenty four hours engagement in the service of Radha Govinda was the sum and substance of all that His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada spoke and of every action he performed. Unfortunately, due to offenses to the holy name and to the vaisnavas some of our godbrothers have fallen from the path of devotion while others have been captured by the grandeur, the glamour of a big society and have divorced themselves from the inner spirit or truth for which they originally came to Srila Prabhupada's movement.

Somehow the idea has also come about that raganuga-bhakti means to perform bhajan and not to preach or at least not to preach very enthusiastically. That is not correct thinking. Everything we can understand correctly from the viewpoint of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's lila. Chaitanya lila is audharya-lila, i.e. the distribution of the highest mellows of spontaneous love of God, following in the footsteps of the cow maidens of Vrindavana. This audharya is the result of the most advanced

stage of prema i.e. mahabhava. Tasting the mellows of ecstatic love for Krishna in the ecstatic mood of the daughter of King Vrisabhanu, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu becomes like a madman and wishes to distribute the mellow taste of that love in all directions. In other words raganuga-bhakti is not exclusive of preaching. Rather real raganuga is where real preaching begins.

It was in this divine flow of tasting the drops of nectar that fell from the lotus feet of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu that Srila Prabhupada carried on his campaign of distributing love of Krishna all over the world. In fact his program of engaging everyone in spontaneous devotion was so dynamic that his rule of thumb was, "Krishna Consciousness now — rules and regulations later", as enunciated by Srila Rupa Goswami:

*yena tena prakarena manah krsna nivesayet
sarve vidhi-nisedha syur etayor eva kinkarah*

"An acharya should devise a means by which people may somehow or other come to Krishna Consciousness. First, they should become Krishna conscious and all the prescribed rules and regulations may later be introduced gradually."

Due to our spiritual master's lack of concern about some points of regulations other less advanced vaisnavas sometimes criticize him.

For example, in the beginning of ISKCON Srila Prabhupada's sannyasi disciples carried the tridanda staff that was at least a foot taller than the particular sannyasi. Once at Mayapur some persons complained, "Their dandas are too big!" The regulation for the staff is that it should be the same height as the sannyasi but this detail was being overlooked. When Srila Prabhupada heard of the criticism he laughed and said, "That is because we are big preachers."

It is true, however, that in the days of Srila Prabhupada his students could not always catch the deepest meaning of everything. It is also noted that Srila Prabhupada was very cautious about giving instruction in certain confidential areas

of Krishna-lila, specifically Madhurya Rasa. His caution was to save us from the sahajiya section — a fate a thousand times worse than hell. But it is incorrect to think that he did not give us the path of raganuga.

There is another reason for Srila Prabhupada not speaking at length or in great detail about certain subjects such as Radha-Dasyam, the divine service of Srimati Radharani and her manjari class, i.e. the confidential assistants of Radhika. That reason is similar in substance to why Sukadeva Goswami has not directly mentioned the name of Radha in Srimad Bhagavatam.

It has been stated by renowned acharyas in the Gaudiya Sampradaya that had Sukadeva spoken the name of Radharani directly he would have entered avistha-citta, a state of trance, and become inert for six months. Thus Pariksit Maharaj would not have been able to hear the Bhagavatam in seven days. Similarly, had Srila Prabhupada entered into discussions of the intimate love affairs of Radha Govinda Sundara and Their confidential associates he clearly would not have been able to carry on his world wide preaching activities. Therefore, for the benefit of the world he checked his deeper interests and emotions in order to stay in connection with us.

In this line of thinking there is a narrative of how once while having to speak about Srimati Radharani in a public place Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur lost his external consciousness and fell from the chair in which he was sitting. Such was his deep devotion for Srimati Radharani. Many devotees now want to know about all the confidential subjects of madhurya rasa and to collect some knowledge and show their learnedness on the subject they run here and there talking to everyone and anyone and reading everything and anything. After that they want to produce some rasa literatures. This is also a faulty process. The madhurya-lila is the most confidential and just acquiring categorical knowledge of the subject one does not actually enter into that realm of consciousness. One can only know the super subjective plane of intimate lilas of Radha Govinda by submissive inquiry and

service at the lotus feet of one who is himself situated in that realm. The confidential lilas of Krishna are never knowable by the primary students of Krishna Consciousness. The proof that we have no standing there even after searching so much knowledge is that we utter the name of Radharani and her confidential friends but remain absorbed in kanaka, kamini and pratistha: money, women, name, and fame. The fact that we talk about these things and still remain conscious is proof that we have no real devotion. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu used to say that the proof of his not having any love for Krishna was the fact that he did not die immediately.

The immature approach by some of Srila Prabhupada's older and senior most disciples has given a bad impression to the community of senior vaisnavas in India. Seeing the superficial way in which they approach the highest concepts of Krishna Consciousness even the senior vaisnava community starts to think that Srila Prabhupada may have only brought his disciples the ABC's of Krishna Consciousness and not more. This is very unfortunate indeed.

When the sun sets, darkness follows. Similarly, after the disappearance of Srila Prabhupada maya or darkness once again overcomes many of his disciples. In the presence of the spiritual master we may find our way in Krishna Consciousness more easily due to his illuminating presence. But after his departure from this world we will be put to test. Maya will try to cover our faith and impede our progress.

The sudden departure of Srila Prabhupada from our midst created a great need which arose in the hearts of his sincere disciples, just to increase our attachment to him. Krishna had called the very life of our life back to His eternal abode. The spiritual master had returned to the supreme realm of Radha Govinda to engage in the eternal lila but the direction in which he had gone and in which we should follow somehow became unclear. Many were again lost and others prayed earnestly for help from above. Krishna fulfilled the prayer of the earnest devotees and met their necessity in the hour of their greatest need by manifesting once again before us in the form of His

Divine Grace Bhakti Raksaka Sridhar Maharaj.

We are very grateful and fully indebted to Srila Sridhar Maharaj, our siksa-guru, who out of his infinite mercy and kindness saw the need of Srila Prabhupada's disciples and taking us by the hand has shown us the full-fledged glory of Krishna Consciousness and its unlimited unique loveliness.

So, by the grace of these two renowned agents of Krishna, Srila Prabhupada and Srila Sridhar Maharaj we have now obtained a clear picture of raganuga bhakti of the madhurya section and are moving forward on the path. That is our good fortune.

And here are some reflections of the history of Srila Sridhar Maharaj and Srila Prabhupada.

A Few Facts You Should Know!

1. SP's dear sister Pisima approached SSM for second initiation. SSM sent her to Bhaktisaranga Goswami, since she lived very close to his ashram in Calcutta.

SP asked SSM for sannyas. SSM did not consider that a very good idea because he had such intimate contact with the whole family of SP, and he did not want them to be angry with him. SP took Sannyas from Keshava M. which was the same since Keshava M. who had taken sannyas from SSM.

2. SSM was very intimate with SP's family. Sometimes he even helped to stop family quarrels.

3. SP said on the day of the installation of Gouranga Radha Madhava in the Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir upon the arrival of SSM: "Because of the arrival of Krishna's pure devotee the dieties are already installed."

4. SP financed the construction of SSM's Nathamandir as a token of his appreciation.

5. Pisima financed the first printing of the famous book of SSM called Prapanna Jivanam-ritam. SP and many other

godbrothers kept personal copies of that book with them always and praised it highly.

6. SSM gave sannyas to many godbrothers of his. Famous amongst them is Bhakti Saranga Goswami M., who had been requested to accept disciples by Srila Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati in London, even while he still lived. SSM also gave sannyas to many other devotees who started their own missions with his blessings.

7. SSM gave our spiritual master SP the title Bhaktivedanta. After SP took Sannyas the name Swami was added. That is why SP is known in the Gaudiya Math as Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj. SSM even gave a name to our spiritual master. How could it be wrong if he gives a title to one of SP's disciples? Actually that is an honor to them. Some of the ISKCON zonal gurus gave new names to themselves such as this pad and that dev. That and so many other worship practices ISKCON introduced to their zonal system were never approved by SSM nor by the Gaudiya tradition.

8. SSM never reinitiated even one disciple of SP, as wrongly proclaimed.

9. SSM sometimes corrected names or added titles to names of disciples of SP for three different reasons:

a.) because he gave sannyas to someone or gave a sannyas title to those who had already taken sannyasa from SP.

b.) because someone's sanskrit-name had been wrongly given due to some mistake of SP's secretaries.

c.) because he gave second initiation to someone who had received first initiation from SP, he sometimes added another part to the name. Actually in India the name is given with the second initiation.

10. SSM never influenced any soul to turn an inch away from SP or from serving him. Much to the contrary, he tried to encourage those who had lost their hope in the GBC's to continue somehow with their spiritual life, but in many cases he was not successful in saving them. SSM never complained about SP. He openly admired and served the cause of SP. After SP's departure he remarked;" Swami Maharaj is so merciful to

me that even after his departure he keeps engaging me."

But SSM had his difficulties with the GBC body as the transcripts show and you can read in this book. Here is a list of what he objected to:

A.) The exodus of old ISKCON members such as Pradyumna, Achyutananda, Yasodananda, who frequently came to him with their grievances and tended to go to the hidden quarters.

B.) The way his advice was distorted to suit the GBC's plans and interests.

C.) The GBC's attempt to have SSM submit to their authority and wrong resolutions. At one point they asked him under which GBC he would like to work.

D.) The way the GBC's dealt with the guru-godbrother relationship.

E.) The way the GBC's dealt with the guru-disciple relationship.

F.) The way the GBC's imposed their authority on everybody regardless of their feelings.

G.) The claim of the GBC's that they did everything out of loyalty, to please SP, and their zonal guru system, which they shamelessly even tried to blame on him.

H.) The overburdened bureaucracy and power centralization of the GBC's, which killed their ability to deal with the needs of the individuals.

Nevertheless SSM never lost his admiration for ISKCON and all active preachers regardless of how neophyte they were. He even embraced the GBC group who went to him to formally ask him to forgive the offenses they had committed (and would continue to commit). He said: "Nobody can offend me, I am a fallen soul." He sacrificed the peace of his old age to serve the disciples of his godbrother SP despite heavy criticism and threats. While others like Narayana M., Puri M. of South India and many others openly denounced the GBC's deviations, it was only SSM who offered relief to the agonized western devotee community. By his grace I was saved from going to the hidden quarters.

11. SP told Hansadutta twice: "Everything I know I learned from Sridhar Maharaj."

12. SP told Jayapataka Swami: "We should try to unite the whole vaisnava world."

13. SP is great, even amongst the great. He is the pride of our entire sampradaya. But what would be the greatness of SP's guru if he could only train one good man, who happened to not even have much personal contact with him? We should immediately stop turning SP into another Christ. All vaisnavas are great, and without a personal vaisnava guide we can fully trust just as much as we trust SP, surrender will become impossible. Vaisnava and guru are mentioned in one breath in our Mangalacarana. Let us glorify Srila Prabhupada forever but never neglect our entire family. And a family so happens to have loving uncles, grandfathers, brothers and sisters. That is real life in Krishna Consciousness, even if one spends the great majority of one's time in just one temple doing his humble service.

14. It is unhappy to mention, but nevertheless the truth that GBC's organized physical attacks on SSM's disciples and their godbrothers in the US, Australia, and South America. They threatened SSM in letters with violence and reportedly ordered one gunda in Mayapur to place a bomb in the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math. The gunda refused and instead warned the Math. In return SSM gave strict orders to his followers to never even retaliate in the least to any ISKCON aggression, but to leave everything up to Krishna's grace. When he heard that Kirtanananda was beaten over the head I was sitting next to him. His comment was: "Please send him immediately a telegram. I am praying for his recovery. Our gurus love everyone. They want us to love and respect each other. For that to become possible, nevertheless, the GBC's have to realize first what the real meaning of vaisnava service and renunciation is."

A Difficult Lesson to Learn

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati tried to form a GBC to manage the Gaudiya Math. The attempt failed and the Gaudiya Math split into many groups.

SSM felt that Ananta Vasudeva could be the next acharya. The idea proved wrong. Ananta Vasudeva later fell down.

After that SP proposed to form a new society and to make SSM the acharya. That idea never manifested on a large scale.

SP founded his own separate mission, ISKCON. He gave many instructions regarding his disciples becoming true gurus, but after his departure many of his previous secretaries imposed their zonal guru position on godbrothers and the institution. That caused many to leave and ugly falldowns partially destroying the ISKCON mission.

Why do I remind you of these unhappy occurrences?

Because they mark an important message for all of us.

Undoubtedly our acharyas are pure in their purpose. But in their preaching work sometimes they reveal unawareness of Krishna's final plans by Krishna's own arrangement. Apparently they commit mistakes like giving Sannyas to someone who later harms the mission.

Are we to blame our preceptors for these circumstances?

Are we to blame SP for calling SSM his own siksa-guru and for recommending us to get his advice, after he had previously said that we should not go and see his godbrothers, or after having previously pointed out some mistake in SSM?

Are we to blame SP for speaking sometimes harshly to protect his mission or for asking to be forgiven by his godbrothers for the offenses he had committed against them?

Or are we to consider Gurudeva's instructions to be sometimes incoherent?

No, no, no, my brothers and friends — such a vision is suicidal.

Why did the GBC men consult SSM for many years, but in 1980 start to turn everybody against him?

Later in 1987 they apologized through a resolution and sent some of their members to SSM to ask forgiveness for their offenses. But until today ('92) they condemn those who took shelter of SSM and continue to discredit SSM by distributing negative remarks SP made about his godbrothers and about SSM in the past.

What are they trying to do? Even some devotees who long ago rejected the GBC for their dubious dealings have not been able to realize that the anti-SSM campaign is completely against the principles of our vaisnava acharyas. It is political smokescreening against that one authority who was authorized by SP and capable of shedding light on the ISKCON confusion. By invoking the sentimental love all ISKCON members have for Srila Prabhupada and by misleading the ISKCON members by claims that SSM and his followers present a danger to SP's mission, they successfully discouraged many devotees from approaching the right topic with the right attitude, thus depriving their members of the greatest nectar installation which Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu sent to this world after the departure of SP.

Nevertheless, just to clarify once and for all for the sake of those who are still misguided I will give a list of those reasons which made SP unhappy with his godbrothers and I will show how SSM's position stands in regard to those particular points.

We can see that almost all causes which frustrated SP with his godbrothers were resolved by SSM himself.

1. Case. Some godbrothers objected to the Western devotees of SP having property in Mayapur. - SSM called a meeting of them, chastised them and personally helped to get the land of Chandrodaya Mandir.

2. Case. Some godbrothers objected to the use of the name Srila Prabhupada. - SSM called them and explained how that was perfectly alright, since Srila Prabhupada was fulfilling the wishes of his guru Srila Prabhupada and that it was a title for great personalities.

3. Case. Some godbrothers objected to SP's criticism of them to just ring the bells in their temples. - SSM told them: He is

leading the greatest kirtan party and to us he has mercifully given the position of bell-ringer. We should be very happy.

4. Case. One godbrother proposed reinitiation to one of SP's disciples and also widely criticized SP. - SSM was chosen by SP to take care of that devotee as well as the other newcomers in India to save them. He taught them the vaisnava songs and how to observe the guru's birthday. - SSM always glorified SP and declared him a Saktyavesa Avatar who fulfilled what was conceived by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur and which was started by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta.

5. Case. Some disciples of SP visited Gaudiya Math temples including the one of SSM while SP gave class in Mayapur. He noticed the missing sannyasis and later told them that their spiritual life had been severely hurt. "In the presence of your guru, you should not go anywhere, but sit at his feet and listen."

6. Case. The fact that the Gaudiya Math split up and that the preaching was disturbed greatly dissatisfied SP. Also he considered SSM's acceptance of the proposal to make Ananta Vasudeva acharya to be a mistake. - No doubt every disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati was disturbed about the developments in the Gaudiya Math, just like the disciples of SP are disturbed today over the GBC's way of running ISKCON, and SSM was disturbed also. That is why he left the Gaudiya Math, just like Srila Prabhupada did. But remarkably it was SP who wanted SSM to become the head of a new mission, and it was in the house of SP in Calcutta where the main Gaudiya Math dispute was settled by SSM. SP had already started to preach on behalf of SSM. They started the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math in SP's own house.

We highly recommend to you, our readers, to free yourself from all prejudices which over the years may have been established within you by the GBC propaganda. Don't copy the offenses of others.

The Universal Principle of Guru

By the will of the Lord, pure devotees may differ with each other, but they always emphasize the same siddhanta. According to our siddhanta the guru or acharya position is a post which can be occupied by any pure transparent devotee. In case any doubt arises, only guru, sastra and sadhu can clear the way. In an institution there may be a successor acharya, who inherits the particular mandir and government registration from his guru, but never can anybody inherit the transparency or capacity to represent the highest bhakti sidhanta. That will depend on his realization alone. But for the sake of sanity in vaisnava relationships we have to admit that the disciples of different gurus will all see their guru as the expressive representative of God sent to them and thus the most merciful one for them. Whoever cannot agree to that and tries to overemphasize his own guru to the degree of deriding someone else's guru, claiming that his guru has some extraordinary claim or institution to monopolize the guru position, is really far away from the siddhanta. Gurus, or their disciples who teach that type of sectarianism rather give a bad name to their own guru and will eventually be rejected. Therefore it is wrong to consider the body or the past life of any contributing agent of our sampradaya to resolve our problems. Truth must be the only consideration. This is valid in mathematics as well as in defining the purity of gold. A superior mathematician is recognized by his ability to resolve problems others could not resolve and a jeweler will have to prove his capacity to recognize the types of gold to avoid going broke.

When we face problems we need a superior guide, a guide who can resolve the conflicts by his wisdom and sidhanta. We don't need screaming authorities who's credentials are vaisnava aparadhas, gossip, smokescreening, diplomacy or distorted and misrepresented quotes of our Gurudeva.

In order to cover their own mistakes the GBC's self-assumed

the judge's chair, and put those who deserved their praise and submission (as Srila Prabhupada's godbrothers) on the defendant's chair. But they never present any systematic accusation either. Much less do they give any chance for a defense. They just flip the page on so many issues, leaving the impression that they are the only real authority on earth. And why? Because SP put us in this position. That gives us the right to do as we please. It lasts as long as the power of intimidation lasts. And even though no truth or siddhanta has been presented ISKCON members are expected to accept silently, since there isn't really any place to speak out. Or they make a new committee or found a new ministry. Still subjects like the origin of the soul or the real position of the spiritual master they could not define.

Guru - Relative and Absolute

We have observed that our gurus in their lifetimes say many things which are relative, yes sometimes irrelevant when it comes to defining our philosophy. Time, place, and circumstance impose Krishna's highest control over all of us.

Statements of SP like: He has transcendental intelligence, or he will be president of the US are just to encourage someone, and not to endorse their future actions.

Also SP's instruction at one point not to go and see his godbrothers, or not to read the books of the Gaudiya Math were given at a certain time and circumstance to certain devotees alone. This is obvious. Otherwise, how could he have contradicted himself frequently by sending many of his disciples to SSM, taking them there personally and finally endorsing his advice to all his disciples? We never heard any statement to consult Satsvarupa M., for example, if we had any problems.

SP said: "Distribute my books by hook or by crook." He was trying to enthruse us to give out his books in the mood of a

mother who gives bitter medicine to the child telling him that it is sweet. SP never encouraged any one of his disciples to break any law even though maliciously that statement could be interpreted that way.

Sometimes the guru may exhibit anger, and later he may forgive. Has anyone the right to maintain his anger after he forgave? SP said that Tirtha Maharaj went to Vaikuntha after his departure. Shall we, who we are still here in this world dwell on SP's comments which he made previously about Tirtha Maharaj?

There are innumerable examples like that. Therefore we should be very careful not to base our attitudes on something SP said in a certain situation in the past. We have to base our attitudes on the OVERALL TEACHING of our guru and the spirit lying behind the spoken and written words. The supersoul in our heart, guru, sastra and sadhu are the only ones to properly guide us. Only through sadhu sanga — enlightenment received from higher devotees than ourselves, the truth will come to light. What motivated SP to leave the Gaudiya Math and join with SSM? What motivated him to declare SSM his own Siksa Guru? What motivated him to lead others to become SSM disciples and help train them? What motivated SP to sit with him alone on the same Vyasasana and to try to make him a leader in ISKCON?

The GBC generally say it was SP's attempt to engage his old friend (to "save him"), but that he was unwilling to help our SP.

But we see things quiet differently. First of all SP left the Gaudiya Math because he saw that his guru's ideal of spiritual protection was not provided any more in that institution, but on the contrary, he knew that SSM was perfectly capable of giving the true connection to our sampradaya. As preachers we all have the duty to find a way so that those we preach to can actually get the proper protection, a way we can also fully trust.

It is the tradition in the Gaudiya school to offer a senior devotee the first seat, the first plate to eat, the first honor and chance to speak. Seniority shall be considered by ashram, or

by the time in the mission of the guru, by age and as well, by services performed. Because it has several considerations we will frequently observe vaisnava saints fighting with each other insisting that the first consideration should not be given to them, but rather to the other. But the other refuses giving reasons of his own incapacity and the outstanding qualities of the other. In this way it may go back and forth. We also see that attitude in the Brihat Bhagavatamrita. Amongst neophytes it happens that the dispute is opposite: everyone wants to come first and be served.

SP showed the Gaudiya respect for SSM and confirmed on the other side to his disciples, "Here is someone very special. Even in my ISKCON he should be president. Even I will help construct his temple," etc. But SSM declined that special honor thus expressing to all just like he said many times: "Swami Maharaj is the pride of our whole Sampradaya, he has done what nobody else could do. He does not need me for his great service."

But in reality we experienced how SSM was always ready to assist SP and his disciples. His humility and determination to always do the needful greatly increased his anxiety in his last years as a sacrifice for us. Let the dust of his lotus feet always remain on our heads and that will help us to start seeing things clearly.

The Bottom Line

So much has been debated regarding the relationship between SP and SSM. I am in a fortunate position, because I always get to speak about the glories of the pure devotees. We may glorify a vaisnava, but we should never indulge in criticizing him. Even our very critical approach to the GBC and leaders of ISKCON, who SSM always regarded as great fortunate souls for having come in contact with Mahaprabhu's mis-sion, is just a matter of duty to protect them and all from these misconceptions. As SSM put it to the GBC: "Everybody must be allowed to his fullest hearts' content to give to others what

he has received from his spiritual master. That is the only real GBC duty to look after. Everybody has to be happily accommodated within ISKCON."

Never impose your views on others. Either you can convince them with your realizations, or you'd better listen carefully to their points of view. If neither can lead to a harmonious outcome, you'd better look for other associates to work with in your spiritual service.

Quoting our guru to back up our mistakes against the truth and goodwill will not do any good to anybody. How could anybody, who really reads SP's books come to the conclusion that one may not love more than one guru or that one should only consult the books of the guru after his disappearance, when those very books on almost every page advise us to search out realized souls, serve them and listen carefully to their loving advice?

Sociological Reflections - on ISKCON -

What happened in ISKCON is not new in religious history. A mystical transcendental school is mutilated by the attempt to press itself into a corporate structure. Revelations are substituted with resolutions. Officers define spirituality within the limits of their influence.

There is a long long list of such developments in history, and actually vaisnavism denounces such monopolies and distortions by quoting the famous sloka :

Kiba Vipra Kiba Nyasi sei Guru haya

"Whether someone is a learned Brahman or from a low birth, if he knows the science of Krishna Consciousness, only then can he become a guru."

Here are some examples:

The fundamentalist Muslims claim that only they can go to God. Claiming the backing of Mohamed, they condemn all other religions.

Or take the Born-Again Christians. They claim that by belonging to their institutions alone can a person can get God's mercy.

Even the Smarta Brahmanas of India have degraded the Sanatana Dharma by introducing their birthright priesthood, even though most of them do not have brahminical qualities what to speak of representing the mystical connection from God to man.

Or take the Jews. They call themselves as an ethnic group, the chosen people. Originally to be a Jew meant to be a devotee of the Lord. But that is not limited to a specific group or birth. Every human being may get a chance by the Lord's mercy to become a devotee, (a real Jew, a real follower of Jesus Christ, a real Brahman, etc).

To limit the mercy of God to a certain group, ethnic heritage, institution or what ever shows clear ignorance.

Everybody wants to be the owner, controller and enjoyer in this world, not understanding that mystical descending mercy is never limited, and that God is not even recognized in the mundane field of exploitation, many people try to get a hold of religion in the same way that conquerors, politicians, and business-managers try to take over more mundane influence.

Even in our own sampradaya such attempts have been traditionally condemned.

Take the caste Goswamis. They claim the right to represent Lord Chaitanya because they belong to the descendants of the first grihasta disciples of the original six Goswamis.

The same type of claim, to be the only real connection to Mahaprabhu, comes from the Nityananda vamsa and the Advaita vamsa group.

You see, the list of this type of deviation goes on and on. ISKCON is nothing but a westernized corporate version of the same mistake if it keeps claiming that a real follower of Lord Chaitanya must be approved by their GBC and if they keep

claiming that they are the only followers of SP, or that some international committee can define when and where some transcendental exchange in this world may or may not take place.

Even above that consideration we will find another very important hint in the scriptures. Even the empowered preacher is never owner of his capacity, what to speak of the results coming from his preaching. Krishna is perfectly capable of using a surrendered devotee to deliver messages he himself had not heard of before. By the Lord's grace He will come to any sincere searcher, whatever way He chooses, and will forever remain under the exclusive domain of the Lord and His chosen ones.

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Defective Bhakti Seeds

This is a very delicate subject. The guru delivers the mantra to his disciple, which is compared to a seed. Seminal reproduction causes the first birth. Mantra reproduction causes the second birth. But what type of a seed is distributed by someone? That depends on the conception he represents, the seed he received, and the personal attitude on how he cultivates his bhakti plant.

Example: Even the Maha-mantra when delivered by a Mayavadi does not carry the bhakti potency. It is a dead mantra and will produce no devotion. Mukti will be the maximum result to obtain from such a seed, or a sahajiya seed, or the seed of an aparadhi. We should be concerned to get our seed from a pure source representing the highest siddhanta of our transcendental school. There is no possibility of any monopoly in a mystical transcendental exchange. Those who claim such a monopoly lose their seed quality and mysticism and degrade to speculators and sentimentalists.

Another example: The Sannyas mantra is also a seed. It

reveals our highest service. We have seen that many sannyasis have fallen away. Actually, anyone who has no regard for SSM is questioning the validity of the quality of the sannyas mantra distributed by SP. A seed is as much defective as the giver or receiver's lack in sincerity.

I do not doubt that the sannyas seed was given in a true mystical transaction from Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati to Srila Sridhar Maharaj. In the same wonderful way SSM gave it to Bhakti Prajnan Kesava Maharaj, and in full purity it was received by Srila Prabhupada. But what is the quality of the seed distributed by those who have no regard for the previous acharyas, those who do not even recognize the right of the sannyas guru of Kesava Maharaj to give sannyas to other devotees by rejecting them from ISKCON? A spoiled seed will not produce a happy plant. Even though guru is one, when he really represents the pure vaisnava life and teachings, we have to admit that many of SP's disciples accepted the post of acharya but their own offenses spoiled the seeds they distribute and distributed and their own bhakti plant as well.

ISKCON is falsely teaching that being a member of the institution is really enough, and due to that nowadays many ISKCON leading positions and sannyasis have no healthy bhakti seed of their own. Naturally, so many other misconceptions are finding their way into the institution, because healthy bhakti seed means also healthy bhakti conception. And that is obviously lacking.

Sannyas Ashram Without Challenge

There are four stages of sannyasi mentioned in the scriptures. The first sannyas stage is called *bahudak*. The man leaves his home and lives in a cottage outside of his village. His family still sends food to him. After a while he starts to beg from door

to door; a process called *madhukari*. That sannyasi stage is called *kuticak*. When he leaves that cottage and starts preaching from town to town without a fixed residence that stage is called *parivrajakacarya*. After a sannyasi is completely accomplished in pure devotion he is under no fixed rule of conduct and is called a *paramahamsa*.

It is my contention that to take sannyas inside an institution like ISKCON is more an institutional privilege than a real challenge. It is somewhat on the level of a *bahudak sannyasi*. Also it is very difficult to obtain, because similar to the GBC post, it gives the person the possibility to lean back and relax, without having to face the problems of survival any grihasta has to face. Of course that must not always be the case. Still we can see that in a situation where the Bhakti-seeds are not in a healthy condition, and the relationship to the sannyas-acaryas of our line is distorted, it is not a rare case. Sannyasis should actually go out and start new temples, but we see that the leaders are often afraid of the sannyasis and that zonal politics often interfere with their service.

Save Iskcon Now !!!

Let us study ISKCON, the wonderful movement started by SP. What has happened to the characteristics which made the movement so successful in the beginning? This study about a few aspects will try to touch all the major issues. We should never stop struggling to provide to others what SP gave mercifully to us. In this study I also include solutions. They are actually proposals to be worked out in cooperation with all members, and that will take a good deal of selfless dedication if we want to accomplish our service to SAVE ISKCON NOW.

I HAVE STUDIED A FEW ASPECTS OF ISKCON WHICH LATER AFTER SP'S DISAPPEARANCE ALSO DISAPPEARED FROM ISKCON. OR THEY WERE DISTORTED TO CAUSE THE DISENCHANTMENT OF MOST OF SP'S DISCIPLES AND OF ISKCON'S NEW

MEMBERS AS WELL. Actually it could be argued forever over so many points, but not for the sake of controversy, but rather in a mood of service to the relief agents, I will give short descriptions of what happened to ISKCON's wonderful characteristics after SP's ISKCON became the GBC's ISKCON. If I were to die today and one new devotee would ask me what is the most important thing to consider for living together with other devotees and to conduct vaisnava missionary activities, I would wish him to know all that which is written in this book. It may be disappointing for him to find out that even in the mission of a pure devotee so many dangers are found and obstacles appear to test our faith and determination. Nevertheless **this is a battle guide in our battle against maya.**

Also it should be noted that many of the present observations are not applicable to all ISKCON situations. First of all because ISKCON is changing every day, and secondly because every temple has quite different approaches to many issues, sometimes diametrically opposed to what the others do and say. This reveals the GBC's mental wrangles on all levels. No clear line exists anymore in trying to adjust to internal revolutions (like the one of the temple presidents against the GBC's in New Vrindavana), new questions and problems they face, etc. Therefore I cannot stress enough that this book is meant to provoke a real loving exchange to search for the personal realizations of real sadhus. They alone can further develop this study into an all accommodating solution by studying all times, places and circumstances. This is my prayer for the blessings of Sri Guru and Gouranga for all of us. Whatever I have received by the mercy of my eternal gurus, I am trying to put into reality in my own service outside of official ISKCON in our own ISKCON world, praying for the blessings of all genuine acharyas and members of all vaisnava families and missions. My godbrothers who closely work with me as well as those who consider themselves as my disciples are all my saviours and I pray that they may continue forever to

spread the true spirit of humble vaisnava families in our sampradaya.

Don't be afraid to be critical with me and this book. I am convinced, as I have experienced so many times, that after careful consideration we will arrive at the same conclusions.

Everything Krishna does is perfect. So for the well being of all we suffered the consequences of our immaturity. By sharing the experiences gained from those sufferings we also pray to help to make future vaisnava missions more successful.

It is beyond a doubt that most of the human faults being described here are commonly found in all human structures both religious or secular. This is actually not past history. It is an ongoing challenge for the seekers of the truth and represents the true obstacles we will have to meet again and again in our search for purity. One day I read the description of the medieval Catholic Church and their policies. All of a sudden it dawned on me. If I substitute church with ISKCON and popes with GBC, the text could practically remain as it was. Similarly you will be able to identify many of the problems described in this book within your own structures in minor or major size, because they are maya's agents in this world.

When power is in the hand of impure persons, or managed by someone unqualified, it quickly resembles the symptoms of any totalitarian system. It becomes unjust, dogmatic and without any real connection to truth and revelation. Only a spiritual revolution can save us then from becoming victims of our own opportunism, conformism and lack of spiritual love and surrender. Whether it is the Gaudiya Math, ISKCON or any other real religion or sam-pradaya, success will always depend on a true living teacher, a real devotee. Therefore we should always look to be connected to such a person, Bhagavata. There are descriptions in the scriptures to recognize such souls, and all others should be rejected, even if we have received initiation from someone, who himself proves insufficiently connected and qualified. It will result in my self loosing all spiritual enthusiasm and willingness to surrender and to serve if I allow the relationship with my siksa-guru,

diksa-guru, Hari Nam Guru or Sannyas Guru, to become just a formality. These connections have to be without diplomacy and give me real happiness to be fruitful. We have been taught to give such a high trust to our gurus, and that can only be given to God's true transparent via media. If for some reason of our own previous bad karma we come in contact with lower concepts of theism, distortions, what to speak of Mayavada or materialistic teachers, we should move on quickly and thank the Lord that he has allowed us to recognize the real path to Him, our sweet home. Even if I am initiated by a true vaisnava, but due to circumstances I am not receiving the care, instruction, and protection I need, and at the same time I am feeling that I may fall at any moment, I need to quickly search out a siksa-guru. The guru must have some time for me, to engage me in his service. In such a case, if my diksa-guru is a true vaisnava he will not have any objection towards a siksa-guru of mine, who is soundly situated. Rather he will be happy that somebody is delivering the protection to me, which he is unable to give now. In case my initiating Guru is unreasonably opposed to my siksa-guru, I will have to decide carefully what to do. I cannot live without the blessings of a real guru and the truth is one. Then I can take initiation from my siksa-guru. This will not happen if my first guru was really bonafide. Otherwise the first initiation was not really valid, and did not fulfill what it was supposed to do. That conclusion is not offensive, it is necessary. We cannot live without a full and strong happy faith. Even in the Bhagavat-Gita we find that Krishna tells Arjuna to kill his weapon-guru because he had positioned himself against the highest Dharma. SP writes in this regard in the C.C. Adi-lila Chapter 1, Text 35 purport: Srila Jiva Goswami advises that one should not accept a spiritual master on the basis of social conventions, or ecclesiastical or hereditary structures or traditions. One should simply try to find one who is genuinely qualified, and truly advanced in spiritual understanding. (In other words all caste Goswamis, all zonal Gurus, all elected Gurus and Smarta Brahmanas suit that prohibition given by Jiva Goswami and SP.)

In ISKCON particularly we have seen that the zonal guru initiations turned out to be useless in the majority of cases, because the preaching godbrothers were practically invalidated by many zonal gurus and with nonsensical arguments the nail of distrust was driven into the movement, practically prevailing until today. Again and again, such situations may occur in any structure, ashram, math, etc. Our dear SSM had given us the saving recommendation, that new acharyas and their followers needed at least one place of their own, which they should start themselves within the greater mission. Let the new gurus show their sakti to actually convert others to Krishna Consciousness. Every temple president fulfills so many duties like a siksa-guru. Actually only he may decide to which guru(s) he wants to lead his new recruits for spiritual shelter. Unfortunately the human tendency of wanting to sit yourself into an already made nest was so big that SSM's advise was disregarded in ISKCON and the CUCKOO SYNDROME started to manifest.

The Cuckoo Syndrome

A cuckoo is a particular bird which is too lazy to build a nest of its own, or to bring up his own birdies. So it looks for a nest of another smaller bird where recently the first egg was laid. In a moment at the bird's lunchtime, the cuckoo quickly puts its egg in the nest and splits. The returning bird cannot figure out what happened and faithfully sits on the invader's egg. After the little birds hatch the cuckoo turns out bigger, screams more and gets more to eat. Quickly the nest becomes too small for all of them. No problem for the little cuckoo, he simply kicks out the real offsprings to die and ends up the only "surviving child". This much surprises the involuntary fosterparents, especially when their bird takes off with the cuckoos.

In a very similar way, the GBC established some of ISKCON's gurus, claiming them to be the rightful successors of SP's temples. Soon after they had managed to get some disciples, they started to kick out their godbrothers, totally disregarding that they had actually convinced the new disciples

to join, and they had actually started those temples. Since many godbrothers, especially grihastas, were economically dependent on the infrastructure established by them, they tried hard to adjust to the new way ISKCON was turning. Upset, and confused most of them finally left and some of them joined the new leaders with a similar attitude: to use ISKCON and other devotees for increasing their personal assets and sense gratification. One clear symptom of that is that ISKCON GBC has gigantic zones impossible to take care of. So they invented the regional secretary, a position unheard of in SP's times. Temple presidents lost most of their power and the local devotees are never asked whether they like or dislike their leader or the new changes of a leader. Thus many positions in ISKCON became occupied by many impure persons. It practically became some kind of position mafia shared amongst a group with apparent national and ethnic preferences. Those GBC's and regional secretaries systematically tried to quiet the protest of local godbrothers and impose their often ridiculous rule. If one of them became publicly exposed, the others came running to cut his zone in pieces and distribute amongst themselves. No consideration of whether they had time for that additional service, or whether they spoke the language was given. Again, local devotees were mostly disregarded. Frequently we have seen that those positions actually were misused to squander resources or simply steal for personal enrichment from SP's mission. In the name of service to SP the GBC kicked out numberless SP disciples, lost many of SP's temples and farms, offended SP's godbrother SSM (and others), and disregarded the suffering and opinion of their members, and planted the seed of distrust amongst all. Actually thinking members were no more welcomed, and discussions about problems were often impossible due to a bureaucratic IRON CURTAIN which they established. The GBC either changed or often publicly ridiculed local leaders. As long as someone produced money and did not ask many questions he was highly welcomed.

Even though at one time Krishna exposed all the regional

secretaries together with their zonal GBC's in Southern Europe, nevertheless the GBC's maintained their policy of disregarding the local devotees and distributed Southern Europe to old GBC members who had already badly failed in other parts of the world.

20 Characteristics of Srila Prabhupada's Movement, His Wishes, and What Happened

1. Unified love for our spiritual master created an ever enthusiastic atmosphere.

1. The first important introduction was the zonal gurus. They were allowed to distort the philosophy and to establish themselves over everybody, including the GBC. Frequently non- initiating GBC's had to negotiate with the zonal gurus their influence and territory. Later after that system started to break to pieces, the gurus lost importance almost all together and membership in the institution was made to be the most important aspect of spiritual life.

Solution: Let devotees preach to their hearts' content and freely chose their places, and associates they feel inspired to work with. Stop intimidating the ISKCON members into thinking that they are "incapable to decide anything for themselves". Use the organization structure of the institution only to coordinate world projects and let the local groups of devotees figure out who shall lead them and how to maintain their purity.

2. The acceptance that Srila Prabhupada's vision can resolve any problem gave everybody peace. Srila Prabhupada even changed his own rules whenever that was necessary in order to accommodate somebody happily.

2. Stifling rules, incapable leaders and justice committees —

all that red tape created the opposite effect. The bureaucrats took over and inspired preachers were discouraged. No open discussions, no free field could be found.

Solution: Accept anybody who wants to serve SP's mission and the way he wants to serve, unless he creates havoc in SP's name (precisely the reason why this book is being produced, since the GBC was not willing to voluntarily address the topics of our concern.)

3. A clear line of our transcendental philosophy and siddhanta was always available through SP's personal presence.

3. Constantly changing conceptions, unanswered questions, contradictory GBC resolutions became the way of ISKCON from GBC meeting to GBC meeting.

Example: In one year they published three different GBC resolutions regarding SSM which read as follows.

1. It was decided that the GBC should apologize to SSM for the offenses committed against him. (A group was sent).

2. Panchadravida Swami is removed from ISKCON because he went to stay with SSM.

3. ISKCON members are advised not to associate with SSM or those devotees connected to him in order to avoid "offenses".

Relationship to vaisnavas outside of ISKCON becomes a big confusion. Nobody is allowed to go, but even zonal gurus frequently go, consult, distort, offend, or even try to play out one Gaudiya Math Guru against the other.

Solution: Establish a true forum for the exchange of vaisnava thought, for example,

A - some publications which actually research the contributions from all sides of guru sastra and sadhu,

B - A place without party-line control,

C - A forum which will allow the light of truth to shine by its own effulgence, and without fear that the truth will confuse more than the attempt to hide it. Currently the ISKCON World

Review is only making propaganda and fund driving. It confuses more than it clarifies. And the BTG is a party-line paper claiming to be open and intellectual. ISKCON Review on the other hand claims to promote discussions but is used to simply slash opponents. All confusions have to come out in the open, in order to be digested and transcended. Trusting in guru sastra and sadhu will be successful.

4. The temple presidents had a direct connection with their gurus. They acted almost like Ritvik Acharyas, including holding the initiation fire sacrifices and fully representing SP in their temple. Nobody had a right to interfere into their temples, lest they were rejected by the members of their temples. In some instances when certain sanniyasis or GBC's caused disturbance to a temple president, SP dismissed that GBC and established a direct link to the presidents. On two occasions he even dismissed the entire GBC body for their speculation.

4. Temple presidents lost their importance. SP's order to take that service as a lifelong commitment was totally ignored. Temple presidents were changed on the whim of any GBC and his friends. There is no protection. The previous protector from power-hungry managers, SP, was now substituted by those very power-hungry managers, the new zonal acharya and his cooperators (regional secretaries).

Solution: Take away the zonal control. A zone is a temple and the preaching field of someone. Don't interfere in your brother's love and trust field. That is a bonafide zone, not a geographical zone. Those hearts who are encouraged to serve Krishna by somebody's preaching, that is his real zone. Even a low born sudra realizes that he has to be responsible for the children he produces. Preachers produce spiritual children. Therefore spiritual fathers have to be responsible to provide to their children a loving environment where they can grow and also start preaching happily. ISKCON has failed to do so, because due to their geographic zones restrictions and due to

their endorsement of gurus who did not actually have the capacity to give protection, the new preachers are mostly discouraged because they do not see a loving place to guide new devotees there, nor are they free to establish such places. Besides that, how could they establish a place to give shelter when their own diksa-gurus turned out to be confused and unprepared? Geographical zones destroy the real needs of every place. One city can have many many temples and many GBC's as well. Regional secretaries should no more be imposed, instead a free choice of a GBC amongst the local devotees allowed. The temple presidents can become again, what they were meant to be.

5. All services were available to all ISKCON members. All you had to do to get a certain service was to request SP to do some special service and generally he very gladly accepted.

5. It is remarkable how little trust the GBC's showed in their godbrothers. SP trusted anyone of his disciples, even sometimes after some disciple had already committed some fault. But the GBC, in the name of "protecting ISKCON" gave only support to their own members. And they often removed even senior disciples of SP from services which they had started from scratch to big success, just in order to maintain the power in their faulty system. One famous example of that was when SP's panditji Pradyumna Prabhu pointed out to the GBC the wrongs in the zonal acharya system. He was removed from his service to finish the translation of the Srimad Bhagavatam which SP personally had asked him to do under the guidance of SSM. After depriving Pradyumna from his service and protection, they appointed one of them to do that work, who did not even know Sanskrit. They announced this to all of ISKCON's members. Pradyumna has been defeated and the reaction is that nobody really wants to read the missing volumes of the Srimad Bhagavatam.

But the list of human atrocities is so long that it would fill

many volumes. Krishna definitely wanted all the disciples of SP to wake up from their slumber, because all of them were affected by the new ISKCON GBC style. And also because all of the disciples of a Guru are equally responsible that his mission is carried on properly.

Generally the complaint of the godbrothers were answered by the GBC suggesting to the involved person; "Why don't you work under someone else, in another part of the world? Don't be too attached to protecting others. We, the GBC's, are the rightful protectors. Whoever tries to point out any wrong in us must be an offender of SP". In this way many disciples of SP started to make the rounds of the world, from one zonal guru to the other, only to discover, that they were all the same and that in ISKCON there was no more home for them, what to speak of a peaceful place to give protection to others and live happily in Krishna Consciousness.

Any service in ISKCON became attached with the shoe-kissing of some zonal acharya. In some zones daily flower offerings to your godbrother became an obligation and if you really still need more details you can read the book "Monkey on a Stick". It is a very disgusting subject.

Solution: Realize that a vaisnava leader is a leader in humility and service. He serves anyone who gives him the mercy and allows that leader to serve him. Krishna wants to serve his devotees, but they won't let him do so. Therefore Krishna is very pleased if you serve his devotees. And you can be sure, if you like to serve somebody he will be very happy with you, not disgusted.

6. Nobody was expected to work under someone he considered in any way harmful to SP's mission.

6. Not only were devotees obliged to serve, many were intimidated to take initiation from zonal gurus who they either did not know, or did not feel inspired by. ISKCON proved to completely neglect the position of Siksa Gurus, which according to SP writings in C.C. is a grave offense since they

are on the same level as the diksa-gurus. Frequently the situation was so bad, that new disciples were requested to reject as offenders of SP the very same devotees who happened to have convinced them to join the movement of SP.

Later that mistake was partially recognized but never really rectified.

Rather the wrong overdose of power was shifted away from the zonal Guru to the Zonal GBC.

Gurus were now restricted under GBC control with innumerable laws and restrictions. Even temple presidents can check the necessarily free relationship between a devotee and his guru. Actually the old problem remained plus a few new problems appeared.

The zonal Diksa-Guru was transformed into a Zonal GBC Siksa-Guru, or into a Zonal Temple President Siksa-Guru, or into Zonal Regional Secretary Siksa-Guru.

Not understanding that the problem lies in the zonal aspect of these services, not in the guru or preaching aspect, the GBC's confused the situation even more and clearly emphasized the institution and the managers (themselves) to be the rightful successors of SP. Thus again they undermined the personal individual characteristics of surrender in love and trust. And also because so many new diksa-gurus appeared in ISKCON, many of them captured these zonal siksa-guru posts, and established new MINI ZONAL GURU zones. There they straitened to force the disciples of other gurus to lend support to them or face the same destiny, which SP disciples had to experience under the first ZONAL GURU GOVERNMENT. (THE CUCKOO FAMILY EXPANDS.)

Solution: Reject the zonal control all together. Let leading preachers voluntarily choose representatives to participate and be communicated with over all ISKCON news, world projects and facilities. Let leaders be loved once again, because of their excellent service performed to all, or let them be rejected at once if they are just on a big ego or enjoy trip or if the temples and Vaisnava population felt dissatisfied with their level of

dedication.

7. Leaders in SP's mission who were to eager to be in the center, rather than to humbly serve SP and the other vaisnava members were easily detected and rejected, or at least repositioned and corrected, regardless of how high an office they had occupied. Thus it was always clearly understood that only someone pure in purpose could keep a leading position in ISKCON.

7. It is unbelievable how much damage a zonal guru or zonal GBC can do to SP's movement, without being checked. It is practically up to Krishna himself to kick out the worst offenders. But that problem is far from over and we pray that this book will accelerate the purification process.

Solution: Let mercy be above justice, but also provide that intense tender love and care to all members of SP's mission, not just the leaders amongst themselves. Every member is a potential sannyasi, guru, GBC or whatever and should be fully respected with his respective feelings. **Otherwise our leaders, instead of becoming Rajarsis, will be like rotten aristocrats.**

8. SP's movement was highly personal in the loving dealings amongst SP's representatives and their particular groups. On a very individual basis anybody could get the mercy of SP and his attention by doing some outstanding service.

8. Very few outstanding personalities have risen on the sky of ISKCON after the GBC's ISKCON rule began. Rather former outstanding personalities fell into disgrace or keep disappearing. ISKCON POLITICS have dominated the energy and conversations of its members now for many years. Out of fear of being diminished in their "glory", the GBC has organized that very ugly campaign against SSM. They accused SSM of wanting to take over ISKCON, while they were in the middle of doing that very same thing. You see others with your own

condition we have learned from SP. SSM had not left even his room for ten years before they started consulting him and his main request was: "You are coming together for your yearly meeting. Now don't let anybody go home before everybody is happily accommodated in your ISKCON movement. Leading preachers are going to the hidden quarters. Don't let that happen. That is the only real GBC duty! Not to come together, make a few resolutions and then go home and everybody does what he wants. That is my urgent request."

ISKCON GBC's have hardly trusted anyone to open new temples or zones. Generally so much red tape is attached that nobody wants to do it anymore. Even previously highly prestigious posts like the LA presidency, etc., don't find candidates, who are eager to perform that service and many GBC's have resorted to paying high salaries to their managers. And who wants to collect for such a program? Many temples cannot even pay their mortgage or they are living from the energy which was accumulated in the past. Some temples have more dieties than devotees, but still the GBC's don't want to change.

Solution: Let everybody who feels an affinity for SP inside and outside of ISKCON know all this and invite them to join and **Help to create the Real ISKCON**.

Assure them that everything will be completely different. The GBC should publicly recognize in detail all the mistakes they have committed in the past, otherwise nobody will believe that there is a true change happening. The devotees will not loose their faith, but rather gain an incredible new strength to help to save ISKCON.

9. SP obviously preferred administrative disputes to be resolved by his zonal secre-taries, it being impossible for SP to person-ally attend all reappearing complications, but NEVER to the point of disregarding one of his disciples who requested SP's perfect consent to resolve problems they had.

9. The GBC systematically ignores their critics. To reach them is close to impossible. To reach them quickly is altogether impossible. Usually they deal with a topic when it is already damaged. Their bureaucracy, centralization and ecclesiastical structure is close to useless and completely against SP's vision of administration. The result is no protection for ISKCON's members and projects. Their justice ministry is a joke and another invention like the regional secretaries, etc.

Solution: Let problems be resolved amongst those who have them, not by committees who are out of touch, time, and realization to resolve anything. Only insiders of a problem are capable of giving the personal attention everybody in this world deserves.

10. Individual, spontaneous and creative contributions were highly appreciated by SP. Especially personal preaching capacities attracted his attention.

It was expected that a good preacher be life-long dedicated to his project, expert in the philosophy, able to face any challenge. In other words SP wanted his disciples to be personally convinced and also speak about the siddhanta, to stand on their own feet. Regardless of who you were, it was under-stood that a member of SP's family had the right and duty to protect the mission. It was for example a mataji who exposed the 1970 New Vrindavana nonsense, where some sanniyasis tried to distort SP's teachings.

And it were the grihasta temple presidents who saved ISKCON from the power-trip of some GBC members, who tried to kick the unmarried mothers out of the temples and to ban grihastas from being temple presi-dents. SP's initial comment was: "I wanted you all to become gurus, and these girls got this human form of life and they came to their guru's mission, and you (GBC's) want to kick them away."

10. ISKCON membership became conditioned to figuratively signing a paper declaring one's own incapacity to think and decide for himself, like judges declare senile persons on request of the family. We already discussed what happens to those who don't accept ISKCON's dogmatism as absolute.

Solution: Only personal realization and true humility can change this. Don't forget that most members of ISKCON also see their material security in ISKCON and therefore don't dare to openly criticize those who control the system that provides their bread. Only if the daring critics are heard and satisfied can we believe in a change, not if a number of YES MEN shout, "The system is good, let it remain as it is."

11. SP originally established the GBC to be voted out of a group of six temple presi-dents for a three year period (see original GBC By-laws). He also said that no GBC should have more then six temples in his service area. SP always wanted a check and balance system for all ISKCON officers.

11. The GBC resolved that only if 75% of their members would reject someone amongst them could they be removed from the GBC body. Similar conditions were there in order to admit new members. The problem is the following. Unfortunately more then 50% of the GBC's are materially motivated. Therefore they did not kick out the bad ones and never admit a new good one. Only the New Vrindavana meeting, where all the temple presidents requested the GBC's to simply take off or make changes brought a temporary change. Some changes were forced upon the GBC. Quickly they promoted a few critics into their group, but successfully main-tained the GBC's inability to change the pro-blems. All they did was to give more power to themselves. Not even the grossest mistakes they could rectify, like having local GBC's with backgrounds incompatible with the resentment of the local people. Often they did not speak the local language, and

showed no sensitivity for the reality they were supposed to lead. Imagine an Arabian born Vaisnava as temple president in Tel Aviv.

Solution: SP wanted a viable check and balance system to regulate the relationship between leaders and their other cooperators. That is the main point. It has to be practical and it has to make everyone happy. Do you agree?

GBC SHOULD FORGET THAT ITS SERVICE IS SO IMPORTANT.

ACTUALLY THE TEMPLE PRESIDENT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT. ANY GOOD TEMPLE PRESIDENT WILL MAKE AN EXCELLENT GBC. It is no doubt a very important Vaisnava seva, but isn't the actual way the GBC is presenting itself. They just congratulate each other for wrongly acquired privileges. Many of them, I fear would not be able by themselves to open a temple, to actually make some bhaktas, or to actually go out and collect the rent. What will it take for a dictator to recognize that his dictatorship is useless — all the intellectuals must flee the country? In the material world dictators don't change but with vaisnavas we still have a little hope.

12. SP did not like bureaucracy and centralization. He requested the yearly GBC meeting to only last a few hours, he wanted every temple to be separately incorporated and locally managed.

12. The evidence is mountain high, but obviously all these plans of SP's diminish zonal control and give power to local devotees. That is why they were hardly given any attention. It was in Colombia where all the local leading devotees complained and after deciding that ISKCON was not going the right way, they decided to change their affiliation from ISKCON's GBC into the ISKCON it was really meant to be. Obviously the GBC denounced us as thieves, etc. But actually if you analyze eight years later impartially, you will see that all these temples are still used to glorify SP. On top there are so

many new temples and properties in the name of SP's ISKCON in Colombia. New vaisnava literature is published and many new devotees are chanting the holy names. We did not print many of SP's books because the GBC threatened to sue us in the courts, and we did not want to waste our energy in such a childish fight. Also we take it as Krishna's hint to publish other vaisnava nectar which the GBC has not discovered as yet. It is just painful to see how this Spanish-speaking BBT was plundered for so many years and could never produce even laser-written copies of SP's books for the devotees. But they do have time to discourage others from printing SP books who could do so. I call that power-hungry and not service conscious.

Solution: There are so many different problems, but really only one solution which we are looking at from different viewpoints. That is love and trust, unity in diversity.

13. SP always stressed, "Let local people manage". Even though he sent his disciples all over the world, he wanted them to immediately train up local devotees to do all services.

13. Those who are fried in the US or fried the US often find another place in the ISKCON world to become a leader. Local devotees are ignored even though they would be more qualified and thus the local needs are often totally neglected. Local devotees generally cooperate out of respect for the older devotees, but the real message is, we should all qualify and become true leaders to properly serve the world.

Solution: Krishna can give anything and also take away everything. If you do not have a program now of your own, don't count on others to give you big facilities. Just search out a vaisnava friend and try to start a new program. As far as permission from the GBC is concerned, they have no permission to act as they do to begin with. It is not easy to believe either that they will change in the near future. (Hope against hope). Don't worry about anything except SP's loving

grace. He can empower you, just as he has empowered all his other sincere followers.

If you cannot find one friend who is ready to join with your effort and conviction, then try to start alone or search out people who are preaching outside of ISKCON, inspired by SP and SSM. Here you will find a friend who wants to join with you. If you are not a disciple of SP, pray to Lord Nityananda to take you to a real Sadhu whose realizations help you to go foreword. We cannot follow a guru who is only teaching and living contradictions. Otherwise how will you be able to preach, if you yourself have no real trust in anybody? Even devotees who accept disciples always search, always aspire for sadhu-sanga. (SP told SSM in 1977: "Please come to live with me in Mayapur. I will construct an elevator for you. Sometimes I have nobody to consult with.")

It is always wonderful to have the association of Vaisnavas like Srila B.P. Puri Goswami Maharaj or other true Vaisnava saints. They clear away our doubts quickly.

If you want to take sannyas don't expect to be maintained by some institution. Go out into the world of preaching, just like SSM sent his new sannyasis out to start their work immediately. ISKCON Sannyas has often become an institutional privilege. That is why they make it so hard to take. But really all godbrothers should be dancing if another one wants to join the sold out preacher who is going to roam the world distributing Krishna Katha.

14. SP never wanted any temple to be closed and he was furious if someone closed or even moved one temple to another city. SP wrote to Hanuman: You can open a temple anywhere in the world you like, but with one condition, it shall not be closed after.

14. ISKCON has reached a level where closing temples and falling gurus don't even make topics in the GBC meetings anymore. It is just too common, and if there is not much money involved; who cares?

The preaching spirit of SP's times has disappeared into institution consciousness.

Solution: Let local people have free hand to reopen all the temples which have been closed. Promote lifelong dedication of temple presidents and teach all members to love, respect and serve every devotee, and friends of the devotees. Any temple is a permanent representation of the glories of SP.

15. SP wrote a letter to Hansadutta prohibiting the installation of Sri Narasinga Bhagavan in the same temple with Radha-Krishna.

15. Nevertheless SP was disobeyed and Lord Narasinga was installed in Germany dominating over the worship of Radha Madan-Mohan. Later that same speculation was introduced in Sridam Mayapur, where deity worship was already distorted. Even the diety of Srimati Radharani had been stolen from the ISKCON temple. SP had installed the dieties of Gouranga and of Radha-Madhava. That particular type of worship is generally found in temples of Srila Bhakti-siddhanta Sarasvati and his followers. It is representative of the revelation to Ramananda Roy and it is in the mood of Madhurya rasa. *Sri Krishna Chaitanya Radha-Krishna nahe anya*. It is very high to even conceive of that mercy which SP bestowed on us. Later when the GBC decided to expand that worship, they got back Radha-Madhava dieties but so happened to forget Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Lord of Mayapur. At one point they even separated the small Mahaprabhu from Radha Madhava and put him on the opposite side of the huge altar. There's no end to the speculation. Then they wanted to bring in eight huge gopis to join (four actually arrived), to create more Vrindavana atmosphere, all that right next to the Lord of Vaikuntha Sri Narasinga-Bhagavan. We all know how great offenses were committed by ISKCON leaders right in Mayapur, without proper rectification. Little surprise that they did not understand the proper way of *puja*, but amazingly enough the rest of the GBC did not object either.

If Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is worshiped alone, like SP had on his altar in Jhansi, that worship is in madhurya-rasa inviting Radha-Krishna to appear if they are pleased. In that worship lord Nityananda is represented as Guru and that worship is called Guru Gouranga seva. When Gour Nitai or Krishna Balaram are worshiped together, that worship is in sakya-rasa. When Sri Jagannath Subhadra and Balaram are worshiped, that is in the mood of Dvaraka. When Sri Narasinga Bhagavan is worshiped that is seva in the mood of aisvarya, the mood of Vaikuntha.

Solution: Construct extra temples for Lord Narasinga as requested by SP. Install a big diety of Sri Gouranga next to Radha-Madhava. Ex-plain to the devotees the real meaning of the Istadeva of our Sampradaya and of other dieties.

16. SP, out of his love, trust and necessity rewarded Sannyas initiation to some devotees as soon as, in some cases, less than two years in his mission, GBC offices with only three years in the mission, and any worldwide temple president or preacher position to anyone at any time he wished to render such a service.

16. We already discussed what is happening in the GBC's ISKCON.

Solution: Follow the example of SP and you will be amply rewarded.

17. SP forgave very easily even grave offenses when someone wanted to return to his shelter after having failed.

17.ISKCON GBC's only forgive those who bolster their power structure. If you have enough money you may become a GBC too. One GBC I met asked me repeatedly: when are you coming back to the family of SP? I explained for quite a while how ISKCON was not given an open field for real preaching. After he kept asking the same question. Again I answered; "We will be back in the family of SP the day you GBC's realize that

we never left the real family of SP."

Solution: A real vision of Vaisnava union could undoubtedly do wonders in this world.

18. SP would have never accepted that his Puspa Samadhi in Sridham Mayapur is higher then the temple of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Lord of Mayapur.

18. BIG IS BEAUTIFUL. Let us show that we are the best disciples by making the biggest Samadhi ever for a guru, so it truly becomes a monument. SP wanted to construct in Mayapur the "Temple of Understanding" with a planet-arium which was suppose to be constructed according the Brihat Bhagavatamrita under the guidance of SSM. **But they constructed the Monument of Misunderstanding instead.**

This is a gigantic Puspa Samadhi, ill conceived from the beginning, just to show off. They wasted money like water and got ripped off from their own always changing construction administration. They did not finish the first Samadhi, but they started the second one. At the same time they offended their godbrothers as well as SP's godbrothers and could not even understand that SP would not like to have his samadhi to be constructed higher than his Lord's temple. Srila Jiva Goswami had no lack of funds and much less of devotion when Srila Rupa Goswami's Samadhi was constructed. And look at the size of the Radha Govinda temple. Why do everything opposite? By not consulting higher Vaisnavas it becomes very noticeable that we don't really understand much of this philosophy. That is the message of the monument of misunderstanding.

Solution: Make the Puspa Samadhi the temple of Gouranga Radha Madhava, at least until a bigger temple is constructed for the dieties. This is Antardvip, the birthplace of our Supreme Lord. Every Gaudiya acharya will give him the first and outstanding glorification. It is not that that little building is too big for the glory of our SP, but we should follow in his mood of worship. In the meantime Srila Prabhupada will be very

happy to have his puspa samadhi closed to his eternal Lords.

19. SP enthused his disciples to do very hard service totally voluntarily. He stressed that you cannot force the devotees, you can only inspire them. Do not demand respect, but command respect by your example.

19. Brahmacharis with private bank accounts, GBC's traveling with first-class air tickets and Rolex competitions will not inspire new devotees to give up their own fruitive desires. Indian businessmen managing ISKCON temples may turn out to be better management than frustrated members embezzling the resources of the mission. But again, our highest ideal is the full surrender SP taught us. Without such an example, very soon everything is lost and another normal church will remain, with paid priests only for Sunday worship.

Solution: The vow of voluntary poverty is the vow of sannyasis and Brahmacharis. That has to be stressed and shown to the public. Preachers should live very simple lifestyles. Fancy silks and big cars are good for bhogi yogis. And the television guru is only for those who want to fall into sense gratification (you remember — while contemplating the objects...) That is not the style of Gaudiya Vaisnavas. It will not be easy, but our gurus expect that sacrifice.

20. SP never stressed rituals or formalities, what to speak of tantric practices. He did not recommend devotees to go to astrologers. SP priorities were the need of the day, to spread Krishna Consciousness. SP never encouraged devotees to neglect the preaching and to procure Gopi sentiments. Like SSM he preached to serve the order of Sri Guru and thus come to realize the internal meanings of Sastras like Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu etc. SP stressed that he had written all his important messages in his books and that it was not a valid authority that somebody simply quotes a: "Srila Prabhupada said..."

20. Just like the monument of misunderstanding, there are quiet a few other symptoms which reveal that ISKCON is off the right track. The most obvious is the introduction of crazy ghost exorcisms organized inside ISKCON temples involving GBC's and gurus and ripping off stupid devotees by supposedly locking thousands of ghosts in bottles, holding midnight yajñas and confusing the entire devotee community. As if the Bhagavad-gita and the C.C. had not condemned all type of ghost consciousness, they claim to only follow what SP said. Where the hell did he write about bringing exorcisers into our life, or having initiated devotees consult astrologers to know their karmic fate!! IS IT NOT UNDERSTOOD THAT THE MERCY OF GURUDEVA INTERFERES AGAINST OUR KARMIC FATE? Even several gurus claimed that the exorcist took away their ghosts, but I fear if they don't watch it, they may be ghosts very soon themselves.

All these hand-readers, tantrics, gypsies and other charlatans you can simply ask to leave us alone. Krishna's laksmi is not to be spoiled on cheaters. Astrology to preach karma and reincarnation may be a system to attract new devotees, but when even the BTG starts reporting how gurus, sannyasis and GBC's are consulting tantrics in India. This is a great irresponsibility. Why accept a guru then? The tantrics are cheaper.

But there is much more. Huge South Indian style yajñas may look very impressive to the public, but they do not create the mood of our Srila Rupa Goswami bhajan.

Now in ISKCON every new bhakta carries Rasa literature and shows his learning by quoting books SP mentioned in his books to be very confidential. The fashion of talking about those topics goes around and foolish conclusions are resound, such as SP did not teach us Raga, etc. Without Raga, none of us would have been initiated to begin with, because by the rules we all disqualify. Everybody writes books now, but when you ask them about the siddhanta, they have no answer. Temples charge money even for prasadam on Sunday feasts, etc. etc.

Solution: The path of Bhakti is full of bliss, and preaching in

a proper way will protect the preacher and will give him so much wonderful engagement that he want even have time for all that nonsense like tantrics, videos or other entertainments. He can even stay celibate if he careful serves the vaisnavas and carefully avoids all offenses. And he will not experience any scarcity. It is a wonderful life SP has given us, and SSM has elaborated further nectar to make it even more nectarian. And they both can save us from the dangers of sense enjoyment, Mayavada, Sahajaism, pride, speculation, and even from service in awe and reverence to take us back to their eternal Lordship in Goloka Vrindavana. Gour Hari Bol.

Final Words

We humbly pray at the feet of all vaisnavas that they may learn to love Srila Sridhar Maharaj just as much as they should learn to love Srila Prabhupada, just as much as we should love Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur or the six Goswamis. Actually they are the unique messengers who wrote such wonderful books that any humble reader cannot but fall in love with them. Their kindness is our life and soul. Their service will bless the world.

To love them will open our heart to be able to appreciate all teachers of the Truth.

I beg to be excused for all mistakes, which managed to sneak into this presentation.

I have to tried to cover the subject of my masters from all angles possible. I pray that our readers may not be able to retain the slightest doubt regarding the spotless divinity of Srila Sridhar Maharaj after reading this book. By Krishna's grace we were blessed with Srila Prabhupada and by Srila Prabhupada's mercy we were blessed by Srila Sridhar Maharaj. By their grace we can get love for Krishna and his devotees. Only love and devotional service will fill our hearts with happiness.

Let us come together as close as possible. The real meaning of Sankirtan is to join together.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur's vision was that people from all over the world would come to unite in Sridham Mayapur to jointly glorify Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Devotees from all over the world thirst to come to such an under-standing that this prediction may actually come true. All true devotees are wonderful, even if they have committed faults or had fall downs. All vaisnavas are like precious jewels, some yet unpolished and uncut, nevertheless our dearest friends. All transcendental books which are published and distributed increase the good hope for humanity. And every harinama party who takes the holy name into this world, as well as every prasadam plate which is distributed purify the atmosphere.

Still sometimes pure theism becomes over-shadowed by

lower conceptions and the defects of personally motivated prakrita bhaktas. Thus we always have to search for the highest purity. Above all we have to analyze ourselves, to how much we are lacking to really follow in the footsteps of the previous acharyas. It is therefore necessary to study what has been proven wrong to unite the devotees or to make them happy. The search for purity is part of the six principles of surrender. We have to reject everything unfavorable to our devotional development. All the previous acharyas have given us so much nectar and lila to be favorably absorbed. We have taken it upon ourselves to dwell on these aspects of devotees' community life and spiritual succession which turn out unfavorable to our progress if we are not careful.

A real ashram is an oasis in the desert of material existence and every sadhu is like a fresh fountain who can quench our thirst. Thus we should work hard for our purity and for the purity of the ashram. We should find ways how devotees of all ashrams (brahmacari, grihasta, etc.) can engage themselves purely without big worries, and simultaneously keep connected to pure preaching and diety worship. We will never stop being students and the more we realize how much our brothers, friends, and disciples can help and teach us, the more a humble vaisnava we will become. We pray that very soon we can all meet together in that wonderful kirtan Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur predicted, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati planned, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada took all over the world, Srila Bhakti Raksaka Sridhara Maharaj protected and we all are allowed to participate in by making this sankirtana our life and soul.

If we can be of any help in this regard we would consider our life to be very fortunate. Falling in the dust with a straw in our mouth before all are respected readers we beg them to forgive our short-comings and offenses and to join the eternal sankirtan party which the pancha-tattva brought to this world.

Hare Krishna.
OM TAT SAT

For an updated address list see the VRINDA Homepage:
www.vrindavan.org

BOOKS...are the basis...

We urge our respected readers to procure and read our books in different languages. Lists you find on our homepages.

All of Srila Sridhar Maharajas books in all languages are available from the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, Navadwipa. Shri Chaitanya Saraswat Math Kolergang, P.O. Nabadwip, Dist. Nadia, W. Bengal, PIN 74132, INDIA:

Sri Guru and His Grace, The Golden Volcano of Divine Love, Loving Search for the Lost Servant, Subjective Evolution - (The Play of the Sweet Absolute), The Guardian of Devotion, Srimad Bhagavad-gita (The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute), Sri-Sri Prapanna Jivanamrtam (Positive and Progressive Immortality), Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion Vols. I,II,III,IV, The Divine Servitor.

Many of Srila Sridhar Maharaj's books in English are available from the Sri Chaitanya Sarawat Math, 15 Gladding Road, Manor Park, London E12 5DD, U.K. (Tel: 081-478 2283)

Many English publications on Sannyas Ashrams, Kumbha Mela, Levels of Teism, etc., are available from the Gaudiya Vaisnava Society (GVS), Vrindavana. Vrindavana, INDIA. 177 Rangji Ka Nagla 281121.

A highly recommended periodical is the Sri Vaishnava Tosani, 503 Water Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060. U.S.A.

Vaisnavas of the World; Unite!

Srila Prabhupada envisioned his movement to unite the efforts of all genuine acharyas and their organization under the banner of his ISKCON in order to bless the entire world. Up to date though, rather the opposite has taken place. Due to this a lot of the wisdom and the recourses of so many vaisnava acharyas and their missions is unavailable, often even unknown to other vaisnavas. This makes space for a joint effort of all those who desire to intensify our service to the vaisnava acharyas.

Currently we are organizing **WVA: the World Vaisnava Association**. This is a very ambitious plan and it will take a while to really manifest some solid contribution. But we have started to establish relationships with many vaisnava acharyas and their organizations as well as with many individual devotees who are concerned with such ideals.

You are also invited to participate

Please write to our headquarter with the following information:

Visit www.wva-vvrs.org or www.vina.cc

Truth is always necessary to overcome illusion.

**For many years the information in this book
was not available to most devotees.**

**Many confusions and illusions
can be eliminated by discussing the information
and suggestions of this book.**

**Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur said:
"Only if we are utterly disgusted with our own levels
of achievements, do we become open
to humbly analyze our own faults
and thus make spiritual progress."**

**Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
used to say: "Purity is the force".**

**It will take us a lot of strength
to not fall prey to the enticements of illusions
before this life is over. Therefore
purity shall always be our primal concern
in all our individual and collective endeavors.
The "Search for Purity" is meant to help you
in the service of your spiritual master.**