

The Process of Vaishnava Initiation & ISKCON

Observations, Concerns & Suggestions

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might benefit from it.
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obtained
from the author in either digital
or paper format.

It is also said, *phalena paricīyate*: one's success or defeat
in any activity is understood by its result.

(Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 8, Chapter 9.Text 28 Purport)

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1.1.1 Executive Summary

Since the departure of His Divine Grace Bhaktivedanta Swami his disciples have been debating the issue of how one should become an initiated member of ISKCON. This paper presents the reader a brief review of how this dispute has led to a stalemate crisis that jeopardizes the future of the entire society. Some specific problems are identified along with the possible events that led to those difficulties.

The paper appeals to common sense and requests everyone to “*judge things by results*” which was the basis of nearly every decision made by His Divine Grace Bhaktivedanta Swami. Observation of the facts leads to the suggestion that if there is any chance of preventing ISKCON from fracturing into several splinter groups everyone on both sides of the Guru/Rtvik debate must give up the attitude of “*We are right-They are Wrong*”

The paper concludes with a proposal that the current Guru system continue as it is but that some form of the Rtvik system be adopted for new members who wish to join ISKCON but do not want to play Guru-Roulette. The recommendation is based on what would best serve the interest of all the initiated devotees, as well as the public wishing to join the Sankirtan movement of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu

2 Introduction

2.1 Respects and Obeisance's

I offer my respectful obeisance's unto all the Vaishnava Devotees of the Lord and beg they accept this contribution in a thoughtful and introspective way.

I offer my respectful obeisance's unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada who is the founder Acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and the ever well-wisher of all the living entities.

I offer my respectful obeisance's unto Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu who appeared in the year of 1486 to deliver the fallen conditioned souls with the sublime transcendental gift of Hari Nama Sankirtan.

I offer my respectful obeisance's unto Lord Sri Krishna who is the eternal friend of everyone, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead

2.2 Personal Notation

2.2.1 Why I Present This Paper Now

Although I had the good fortune of being accepted as a disciple of His Divine Grace, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swamii, I can not say I deserve that honor nor have I set a very good example of what he requested of me. I am also not experienced in dealing with issues on the magnitude of the Guru/Rtvik controversy in ISKCON and do not feel worthy to make this contribution but have agreed to present my thoughts only after having been encouraged to do so by the devotee community.

I am hesitant to jump into the political controversy that the Guru/Rtvik issue has caused because I really do not wish to offend anyone on either side of the debate. However, it is my observation that anyone willing to make an honest inquiry will conclude that the International Society For Krishna Consciousness is suffering from serious internal functional difficulties. It is also preposterous to suggest that resolving the Guru/Rtvik issue will correct all these difficulties but it does seem apparent that resolving this one issue could do a lot to improve the current state of affairs.

It is for that reason, my love for the devotees and my concern for the future of ISKCON that I have taken the time to put together this presentation. I have no ambition for title, position, acknowledgement, blessing or curse because of this effort. If by some mystical arrangement something useful is derived from the suggestions that follow, I will be quite content knowing that Krishna has allowed me to be part of the plan to unify the devotees for Srila Prabhupada's glorification.

If due to spiritual immaturity, or just plain foolish ignorance, I offend anyone then I beg their forgiveness. The truth is I am a terribly conditioned soul and struggle with the harsh realities of material

existence every day. Yet despite that serious handicap I offer what I can with the prayer that if Krishna so desires this effort will have some positive effect we can all benefit from.

2.3 Format and Scope of This Presentation

2.3.1 This Is A Way To Move Forward

The contents of this paper consist mostly of my own thoughts and realizations regarding the process of how one gets initiated into the service of Lord Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu's Sankirtana Movement. However, many of the ideas expressed herein I have discussed in depth with a variety of devotees and although I do not claim they will all agree with every detail of this presentation but it is accurate to say they support the underlying conclusions. I have tried to present things rationally and logically but this work is not intended to be a philosophically exhaustive study. It is simply a compilation of realizations shared by many that need to be put on paper.

Although I have used several references from the VedaBase to support the conclusions of this paper, I have deliberately stayed away from trying to make it an iron clad scholarly study because of time constraints. If presenting it in that manner is what it would take for the conclusion to be accepted then I am sure it can be accomplished however such legal arguments tend to get bogged down and miss the obvious. Instead I am trying to simply look at the issues through the lenses of common sense and I appeal to the wisdom of the assembled devotees to receive it in that way.

Personally, I have become tired of reading what seems to be endless amounts of technical references, arguments, and counter arguments compiled on both sides of the Guru/Rtvik issue. I have written this paper for those devotees who share that sentiment and would like to consider a fresh new way to try and reach concurrence among the disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

3 Historical Review

3.1 ISKCON Mission Statement

3.1.1 Article Five of ISKCON Incorporation Statement

When Srila Prabhupada Founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness he declared eight specific articles for Incorporation as the basic mission of the movement. No serious devotee would disagree that the vision Srila Prabhupada had for ISKCON is clearly outlined in these eight clauses. His Divine Grace wrote this mission statement for ISKCON in 1966 and he never considered changing or amending it during the next 11 years while the movement spread all over the world.

Article 5 of the ISKCON mission statement is the subject matter of this study and it reads as follows:

“We should learn the Vedic Knowledge from a genuine spiritual master, - one who has no selfish motives and whose mind is firmly fixed on Krishna.”

If we can conclude after reviewing the facts, that ISKCON management has fulfilled the objective of Article 5 in the ISKCON Mission Statement, we can surmise that Srila Prabhupad is pleased and nothing should change.

If however this directive has not been honored, then the issue must be addressed and a strategic plan immediately designed to comply with the wishes of His Divine Grace. A failure to do so can only mean that those who are entrusted to guide ISKCON are either unable or unwilling to manage ISKCON according to the desires of Srila Prabhupada. If that is the situation then they are not qualified to carry out his interests and should either resign or be removed from their position. A failure to do so implicates everyone.

3.2 Current Situation Is A Functional Dilemma

3.2.1 Difficulty Immediately After Srila Prabhupadas Departure

Immediately after Srila Prabhupada departed the inquiry about how ISKCON should function began. Because initiation is such an important part of our tradition that issue quickly became a major part of the inquiry. When devotees who had accepted the role of an initiating spiritual master began to fall down the issue of who was really qualified to initiate came under a lot of scrutiny.

3.2.2 Two Alternative Systems Have Surfaced

For the most part the question of how initiation should be handled in ISKCON has broken down to two different alternatives. There is the currently ISKCON system based on selected individuals who have been approved to give initiation and accept disciples, and the alternative system most commonly referred to as the "Rtvik" System. Although there are several variations of the Rtvik initiation theme they share a basic commonality. That is the current members of ISKCON would simply Initiate on behalf of Srila Prabhupada, just the way it was done when he was still alive, but not act in the role of a fully self-realized devotee of the Lord.

3.2.3 The ISKCON/Rtvik Line in the Sand Has Been Drawn

For the last decade there has been an ongoing debate between mainstream ISKCON management and anyone who disagrees with the current initiation process. Anyone who falls into the second category has been conveniently tagged with the "Rtvik" label regardless of how radical or conservative they may be. Pundits on both sides of the fence have dug up a tremendous amount of convincing material to make the appropriate philosophical arguments necessary to support their respective positions. The devotee community is then asked to weigh the evidence and decide for themselves who is actually following Srila Prabhupada's order. The line has been drawn in the sand and everyone is being pressured to take a side just like the Kurus and Pandavas did at Kurusketra.

The resulting environment is that one is forced to either be with ISKCON or against it. A neutral middle road position is virtually non-existent. Both camps are looking for allegiance and, in some cases, when it is not forthcoming years of fraternal friendship is quickly abandoned.

3.3 Everyone Loses When Collective Effort Erodes

3.3.1 No Way of Really Knowing What Temple Devotees Believe.

It is currently necessary for management to have power, authority, influence and recognition in order to be effective. Unfortunately, this presents a very big temptation that could tempt ISKCON leaders into making decisions based on personal gain instead of philosophical accuracy. We all know that true Brahmans would never agree to trade their convictions for a meal, a warm place to sleep, or even a position of authority, yet we have seen on more than one occasion how devotees who should know better have fallen into this trap.

This may be because any opinion contrary to the latest GBC decree could put one's reputation into question and perhaps a whole lot more.

If one is tactful and speaks out, they may simply be excused as being under the influence of Maya and politely ignored. But if they are too vocal, they could be refused the opportunity to perform even a simple service to the society and will certainly not be entrusted with anything of significance. Those who believe strongly in the need for reform could be warned not to attend a public event sponsored by ISKCON and in extreme cases may even be threatened with personal injury if they insist on doing so.

The result of keeping honesty in check by bribery, either intentional or circumstantial, is confusion, dishonesty, betrayal, paranoia, and general havoc which undermines the integrity of the whole society. It is therefore hard to know at this time who really supports the current system, and who is simply afraid of speaking out against it.

So it is no wonder why we face a pathetic stalemate where instead of our collective energy being focused in harmony to glorify Srila Prabhupada we are divided among ourselves and both sides suffer.

3.3.2 The Current Environment Is Offensive to Srila Prabhupada & Krishna!

Regardless of one's position, how they came to Krishna Consciousness, or which camp they are in if one is not disgusted with the current situation they are not looking close enough at what has happened. Any devotee with a basic understanding of what Srila Prabhupada taught should be embarrassed with how constipated we have become over the issue of initiation. Srila Prabhupada was very disturbed when his disciples quarreled among themselves. (References 9.2.5,6) The conflicts that upset him in the early 70's are insignificant compared to how vile and offensive we have become toward each other over the last several years.

The situation is very inauspicious and a disgrace we will all be known for in the history books if we aren't mature enough to turn things around. Repeatedly Srila Prabhupada warned us about Vaishnava aparada yet the finger pointing goes on and the criticisms get more blasphemous. For those who may have forgotten Krishna makes it very clear:

“All these devotees are undoubtedly magnanimous souls, but he who is situated in knowledge of Me I consider to be just like My own self. Being engaged in My transcendental service, he is sure to attain Me, the highest and most perfect goal.” - Bg. 7.18

The Supreme Lord does not distinguish how one got initiated who their spiritual master was or if even if they are a member of ISKCON. The important point is that anyone who is fortunate enough to start on the path of restoring ones eternal relation with Krishna they are described as *Magnanimous* and we should be careful about what we say about them.

3.3.3 Who Among Us Claims to Be Free From All Illusion (Sin)?

Finding a solution to the current stalemate is not just a matter of who can politically out-maneuver or out-quote the opposing party. It is essential for everyone who wishes to progress in spiritual life to get unstuck and see the bigger picture that is at stake. How much longer can we expect Srila Prabhupada and Lord Krishna to tolerate this foolish fighting while things continue to deteriorate and offenses between Vaishnavas are on the increase while the public laughs at our hypocrisy and there is no apparent resolution in sight?

We have been given the most powerful philosophy in the entire creation yet we are still bickering over the need to be right from our own limited viewpoint. Who among us is audacious enough to claim that they know anything with absolute certainty and is willing to stand up and say they are free from all possibility of error, misinterpretation, or illusion? What kind of servant of the vaishnava is it if one is hurling insults and offenses at the one they are claiming to serve?

We have survived this far only by the grace of Srila Prabhupada but we should not take his mercy for granted. If we do not become vigilant about cleaning up the mess we are currently in by truly applying the instructions of Lord Caitanya then our own spiritual life will be destroyed and the mission of Lord Caitanya will be set back. Those consequences alone should be enough to make a compassionate person seriously re-examine what they would be willing to give up in order to prevent it.

3.3.4 Effectiveness Suffers Because of Unrealistic Expectations.

The rivets Srila Prabhupada put in place to hold the ISKCON superstructure together 20 years are starting to pop. Within the movement managers are getting burned out because of the almost impossible pressure of trying to keep everything operating nicely without adequate funds, time, qualified manpower or resources. Our temple presidents must be ideal diplomats in order to fulfill the expectations of the in-house temple devotees, the local congregation, the Indian Community, the News Media and of course the policies adopted by the GBC. Then, as if that were not enough, anyone who is officially acting as a representative of ISKCON must not show any personal weakness, shortcoming or foible because they are expected to have completely conquered the human condition with the weapon of knowledge never to slip again.

If we are to find a long-range solution that will work it must relieve the stress from the few remaining rivets that have not popped yet and we need to start reinforcing the places where we have become weak. A failure to plan is a plan to fail.

The plan must be based on a soul-searching honest evaluation of where we are really at, not some idealistic concept that ignores, rationalizes, justifies or denies our own very real shortcomings and failures. That is not only un-brahminical but it guarantees the inevitable collapse of everything we wish to preserve and leave us all branded with the embarrassing failure of disappointing Srila Prabhupada just like he felt his God brothers disappointed Bhaktisiddhanta

4 Acknowledging the Problems

Any dullard can observe that the current system ISKCON has for initiating members into the movement is a failing system because both Guru's and disciples have deserted ISKCON. Scholarly arguments may be presented to defend the design of the Titanic, but the simple fact is that the ship sank because those who were entrusted to steer it were either ill equipped, over confident, or asleep at the wheel. Management can deny the reality of the situation and may even present all sorts of convincing arguments to euphemistically portray disturbing particulars in a more positive light, but that does not change the severity of the exodus and what is really at stake.

4.1 Relevant Statistical Studies Required

To separate opinions, impressions, interpretations and political posturing from reality it would be appropriate to study some simple statistical facts. If ISKCON is prospering then we should see the growth trends in with new members as a high retention of existing members. This could be determined if we knew some of the following things.

4.1.1 Srila Prabhupadas' Disciples

How many people did Srila Prabhupada's initiate?	(SampleSpace/ Range)
How many have passed away?	(Corrected Range)
How many left ISKCON but are NOT favorable to Krishna Consciousness Now?	(Degree of Failure*)
How many left ISKCON and ARE STILL favorable to Krishna Consciousness?	(Potential Congregation)

4.1.2 Post Prabhupada Disciples

How many people got initiated since Srila Prabhupada's departure?	(Sample Space/ Range)
How many have passed away?	(Corrected Range)
How many left ISKCON but are NOT favorable to Krishna Consciousness Now?	(Degree of Failure)
How many left ISKCON and ARE STILL favorable to Krishna Consciousness?	(Potential Congregation)

4.1.3 Guru Statistics

How many devotees have been authorized by ISKCON to give initiation?	(Sample Space/Scope)
How many are still practicing Krishna Consciousness? (No fall down)	(Degree of Failure)
How many are still accepting disciples?	(Degree of Effectiveness)
How many have standard set rules and policies for accepting disciples?	(Degree of Consistency)
How many have avoided serious internal controversy or investigation?	(Degree of Credibility)

4.1.4 GBC Statistics

How many members make up the GBC Body?	(Sample Space/Scope)
How many are Initiating Guru's?	(Potential Conflict Of Interest)
How many are dependent on ISKCON for bodily maintenance?	(Potential Conflict Of Interest)

4.1.5 Congregation

How many people attend our temples or regularly but are not initiated?	(Potential Congregation)
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How many attend our temples and have been denied initiation? (Degree of Effectiveness)
How many attend but are uncomfortable taking initiation under current system? (Degree of Failure)
How many used to come but stopped attending because of lack of interest? (Degree of Failure)

* This is not to imply Srila Prabhupad failed us in anyway. The mature Vaishnava sees this as our failure to properly carry out Srila Prabhupadas instructions. IE: The movement went on and prospered by the potency of His Divine Grace in spite of our own shortcoming or incompetence.

At this time I do not know if anyone has collected these types of statistics but it would help us know how effective things currently are. The consensus on the street seems to be that if we knew these facts they would probably not be very flattering. That impression may be less true in certain countries like the newly emerging Soviet states or India, and more relevant in North America where temples are struggling financially, have little or no growth plan, and have difficulty engaging intelligent guests or retaining temple devotees.

Unless ISKCON management is prepared to say that things are about as good as can be expected and that better support from the public is not a realistic evaluation, we have found a point all can agree on. IE:

Lord Caitanya's movement is suffering from our failures and some of the preaching programs, temples or division in ISKCON may succeed completely if significant changes do not occur.

4.2 Membership Stagnation Due to Spiritual Stalemate!

4.2.1 Intelligent People Will not Wager their Soul in the Game of Guru-Roulette

As the teaching of His Divine Grace become more widely disseminated a greater number of well-educated people are showing interest in Krishna Consciousness. One of the four regulative principals that our whole philosophy is based on is that one shouldn't gamble. But it doesn't take too long for an intelligent person to realize that is exactly what they must do with their spiritual life if they wish to become a member of ISKCON the way initiations are handled now. How can we seriously ask an intelligent person not to gamble and then insist that he wager the most valuable thing he has, his devotional creeper, on the ever-changing table of Guru-Roulette?

4.2.2 Intelligent Guru's Will Not Volunteer To Suicide by Disciples

Although Srila Prabhupada had his own standard for accepting disciples we can see how he was extremely lenient when disciples had difficulties. History shows that new candidates were sometimes initiated very pre-maturely and in some cases without comprehending the severity of what they were agreeing to. Srila Prabhupada undoubtedly was aware of all this and yet he continued accepting disciples and in so doing demonstrating that he was indeed Patita Pavana and non-other that the true Jagat Guru.

The flip side of Guru-Roulette is Suicide by Disciples. Unless one somehow is foolishly deceived into believing that he is more qualified than Srila Prabhupada those who are currently initiating spiritual masters must also have a standard for accepting new disciples. The wisdom of anyone who initiates without some qualifying guidelines must be seriously questioned. This is actually a good thing and the way it ought to be.

But the problem with this system is that many sincere people are severely discouraged in trying to become a member of the ISKCON family. Someone may be very spiritually serious yet psychologically immature. It is prudent for guru to hesitate initiating a candidate that appears immature, but from the point of view of the candidate who has become convinced and has given his heart to Krishna, they are anxious to become an active and participating member of our society. In all fairness, which one of us can claim, we were adequately mature enough to fully understand what we were doing when we presented ourselves to Srila Prabhupada for initiation? If maturity was one of Srila Prabhupada's requirements how many of the disciples that he accepted could he have initiated?

4.3 How Can ISKCON Grow?

4.3.1 The Current System Is Designed for Failure!

So on the outside we have intelligent people refusing to play Guru-roulette with their spiritual life, and on the inside we have gurus refusing to accept immature disciples. Meanwhile ISKCON is struggling to attract members simply to maintain and there is little or no practical plan for growth. Unless one is eccentric, knows somebody, has money, or is extremely fortunate, the average new congregational members we attract from the general public feels hopelessly incapable of working through the plexus of policies, principals, and politics required to become a bona-fide member of ISKCON. If people do not feel they are a part of something they will not stay around very long and soon find other organizations or societies to surrender to. To say the student is not sincere is a cheap cop-out that skirts our responsibility to give everyone a chance to serve Krishna an progress in their realizations just like we did. If they leave our society because of this catch 22 then how will that be possible? Srila Prabhupada would weep when someone would go away. If a college student stops visiting our temple because we had no program to engage him then we have all seriously failed to understand the full scope of our responsibility and the founder acarya of ISKCON.

5 Presenting Krishna Consciousness In North America

5.1 Meeting the Public On Their Terms

5.1.1 Ten years of Back Yard Programs

It is relevant to this presentation to point out to the reader that for the last 10 years my wife and I have maintained a small Nama Hutta outreach program from my home in Ojai. Many of the realizations that follow are a result of actually interacting with mainstream, upper- and middle-class Americans. More details about our preaching efforts are included at the end of this report for those interested in reading it.

We have modeled our presentation of Krishna Consciousness from the traditional Sunday program that is practiced in our temples with just a few extra personal touches. Every guest is greeted, given a friendly nametag, offered a refreshing drink, and then invited to tour our garden which is set up with quotations from Srila Prabhupada's books illustrating his teachings. Then we have a kirtan, presentation of the verse, sanskrit recital, and a Bhagavad Gita lecture followed by questions and the vegetarian feast.

We made the tactical decision to present ourselves to the public as the American Vedic Association (AVA) in 1988, simply to break down the stigma the public developed towards the Hare Krishna due to many years of poor public relations. What we have learned is that both visiting devotee's and the unsuspecting public are very comfortable with our presentation.

5.1.2 Addressing the American Middle-class Target Market

What is relevant here is that it sometimes it takes new guests a while to make the connection that AVA is in fact no different from the Hare Krishna Movement. Often when that occurs they will sheepishly approach us to confess that they had no idea we were Hare Krishna Devotees but if they did know that they would not have come. However having heard what we had to say and after participated in the program they were pleasantly surprised with what we offered them and they were glad to have attended.

The reason why this is relevant to the Guru/Rtvik debate is because the issue of initiation has come up several times with the members of our congregation. It is also important to point out here that out of the hundreds of people who have attended the AVA programs, less then 1% of our attendees are from India. Many have never heard of the Bhagavad Gita and if they have, most don't know how to pronounce it correctly!

5.1.3 Public Opinion Should Not Be Ignored!

To suggest to the discerning American Public that any of us have perfected our own Krishna Consciousness to the degree where elaborate worship is not just proper etiquette but thoroughly appropriate,

is expecting too much. What we have observed is that many intelligent people are put off when we assume that a newcomer is capable of making this stretch of faith. At the risk of being accused of contradicting my own advice consider the discomfort a devotee experiences when they pick up a copy of Siddhaswarupa self-serving *"Life Fore News"* magazine. Inside the reader soon discovers a large advertisement with a photo proclaiming that *"Siddhaswarupananda Parahahamsa"* is *"Jagad Guru"*. Yuck! We have our reasons for rejecting such an arrogant presentation and over the years a portion of the public we are trying to attract has developed a similar reaction towards our well-advertised claims.

Srila Prabhupada became very upset when he discovered that dishonest means were being used to sell his books. (Reference 9.2.8) He knew this would be very unfavorable and asked that it be stopped immediately because it gave a very bad impression about ISKCON. He was also concerned about public misunderstanding regarding the women teachers in Mayapur and told them to stop teaching if there was a chance it might become scandalous. (Reference 9.3.2)

We can disregard these points and adamantly insist that the sincere will overcome our ostentatiously presentation, or we could practice some good PR work and make it easier for an educated person to pierce through the guru stereotype they have been conditioned to believe.

6 Who Are We Trying to Fool?

6.1 What Does Guru Mean Anyway?

6.1.1 Two-Fold Meaning Of Guru

The word guru loosely interpreted means "teacher". But depending on how it is specifically used in the English language it can carry either the idea of "Great Reverence", or "Know It All", When devotees use the term we assume the listener will receive it in the mood of the first definition.

Unfortunately, the American public has become so bombarded with cheap "Guru's" from the east that in educated circles the word conjures up almost humorous if not cynical connotations. The most obvious example is when someone says: "He's a computer guru". Regardless of what someone really means when they say that, it doesn't help our cause because it lowers the use of the word to just another mundane term like *"toothbrush"*. The simple fact is the public has gotten tired of hearing about enlightened beings who are so spiritually mature they will solve all our problems because for the most part it isn't true and they have no way of knowing that we actually offer something that is genuine and significant.

6.1.2 The Traditional Guru

Although we do not recognize the legitimacy of them all, there have been a few examples of global guru's in the last 50 years. But from an historic perspective this is a relatively new phenomenon. Traditionally the guru was the local priest who lived in the village, gave spiritual advice, and settled disputes based on his knowledge of the Vedas. In America the local priest at the town church does much the same thing for the members of his congregation.

Under these conditions the relationship between the guru and the disciple is very personal and intimate. The guru understands the family, the local traditions, the current political issues, and in general the whole background of those who approach him for advice and direction. As soon as the guru finds himself having to travel all over the world, they become inaccessible and disconnected to their students and this breaks down the personal interaction which is what the Guru-Disciple relationship is based on.

6.1.3 The Transcendental Irony of Becoming a Guru

A student of Krishna Consciousness knows that the reason we find ourselves stuck in this material world is because we became envious of Krishna. The Supreme Lord perceived that desire and created this corner of the universe to let us play out this fantasy where we fool ourselves everyday by acting as if we are the most wonderfully intelligent and try to control everything and everyone around us.

Srila Prabhupada taught us that in the process of self-realization the last snare maya uses to keep the living entity trapped here is to trick him into concluding that the ultimate destination is to merge with God, or even worse, to think one is God!

In the material world everyone is struggling in some way, gross or subtle, for prophet, adoration or distinction. The culmination of this is contained within the single concept we refer to as “power”. In the material world power is measured by how much you can control others or influence events. Judges, architects, doctors, lawyers, politicians, athletic superstars, popular musicians and executives of large corporations all command tremendous amounts of power by dint of positional or financial success. Yet none of these examples come close to the power one commands when they are literally worshipped as the only conduit one has to attain God!

There is a sardonic irony to all this. As an organization we caution everyone to be very careful not to slip into this last snare and we emphasize how imperative it is to be humble if one is to be spiritual successful. But then the model we have created appears to be just the opposite! Although there are numerous traditional arguments that can be used to justify this type of thinking the bottom line is that the intelligent public can see right through the bs. (bovine stool). No Vaishnava brahmana in his right mind from our background would dare to claim they are a pure-devotee, yet that is exactly the message we project to the public by insisting on the “Best we can do” approach to finding devotees to perform initiations.

6.1.4 Guru means Heavy

Srila Prabhupada was successful at what he did because he was actually so extremely empowered that who ever took the time to scrutinize him, which we all did at one time, found not a trace of hypocrisy or desire for personal gain. To put it in the vernacular: *“He talked the talk and walked the walk!”*

Anyone who fully comprehends how extraordinary Srila Prabhupada was will simultaneously realize how serious his task was and how onerous his commitment is to us. To emphasize this point Srila Prabhupada would often remind us by stating that; “Guru means **Heavy!**”

If we observe a man attempting to lift a car we would consider him crazy because it’s just too heavy for one man to do unless he happened to be a champion Olympic weightlifter. But even an Olympic weight lifer has limits and a real champion knows exactly what they are and is not ashamed to reveal them. They are very aware that if they are incapable of both lifting and sustaining the attempted weight, they risk injury to themselves and maybe even those who are nearby.

6.2 Maya’s Trap. The Gallant Guru Complex

6.2.1 Macho Guru is Oxymoron

Perhaps all the difficulties we now encounter is Krishna’s way of telling us it’s time to consider if any of us can actually sustain the weight and responsibility of guru without making a mockery of it. It’s not a matter of performing a role like an actor on a stage where success is measured by how well one knows the correct lines, wears the proper costume, and makes the right gestures. We all know this, but we have no way of distinguishing between one who is simply acting and one who is genuine until it’s too late.

It’s not even fair, or proper, to assume that one who has fallen from the status of an ISKCON spiritual master was even conscious of his own hidden material weeds prior to accepting the position. There is a very fine line between arrogant pride and genuine confidence and it’s easy for any of us to collapse the two characteristics together at any moment because of our conditioning.

One may see the duty of guru as a spiritual challenge, but the consequences of failure is not restricted to the individual. The credibility of our whole society suffers when one of our extremely visible senior devotees is crushed by the overwhelming weight that comes with the title and responsibility of guru.

Anyone who approaches the role of Guru with a spiritually macho mentality is automatically disqualified by definition. Hopefully we have not become so removed from reality that we are incapable of identifying the Clint Eastwood approach to spiritual leadership when it is there because the educated public has demonstrated on numerous occasions that they have no difficulty seeing it.

6.2.2 But the Guru Must Train Disciples How To Worship & Serve Properly!

The argument that one needs a Living Guru because it gives the disciple an opportunity to learn how to worship and serve the personification of the guru is just not substantial.

I myself am a disciple of Srila Prabhupada but never was fortunate enough to interact with him personally after my initiation ceremony. The fact that others have had much more association with Srila Prabhupada than myself does not invalidate my initiation or relationship with him. Nor has anybody ever suggested that I am less of a disciple because I did not speak with him personally. My personal example may be an extreme illustration but the fact remains that many devotees who were initiated by Srila Prabhupada had very little or no personal association with him. Yet despite this their spiritual life was not any less authentic than those who met with him daily.

Most of Srila Prabhupada's disciples learned how to worship and serve him very nicely from their local temple president. The movement grew and prospered quickly with this system which was based on conventional hierarchy management that all focuses on the same spot at the top.

6.2.3 Exclusive Guru Economics 101

The other practical flaw in the living guru argument is a simple economics principal known as: "*Supply and Demand*." There is substantial evidence that even though we may not be seeing a lot of new members join our temple staff, the philosophy of Krishna Consciousness is spreading like wildfire. We are starting to see the harvest of Srila Prabhupada's strategy for planting millions of seeds in the form of books. But where are all the pure devotee guru's going to come from to lead these aspiring souls?

Srila prabhupada said he would be pleased if even one of us could properly understand what he gave us and become a pure devotee. We have either performed way beyond his humble expectation, or we are extremely out of touch with just how messed up we really are.

6.2.4 A Global Guru Is Not Easily Accessible

When there are not enough kosher certified gurus to go around the disciple has very limited, or perhaps no immediate access to the instructions of his spiritual master. When gurus are on the opposite side of the world and have several thousand disciples to reciprocate with daily how is it possible for them to respond to everyone properly? The simple fact is they cannot.

6.2.5 Completion in the Spiritual Marketplace

On one hand we must be extremely careful to ensure that the spiritual master at least appears authentic, bona-fide, and reliable yet on the other hand the marketplace demands gurus faster than our society can purify them. In business economics this is called "*Opportunity Lost*". When a company fails to meet the demand the marketplace calls for the competition moves in to grab the sale regardless of the quality of their product. Unfortunately this is a very real threat to ISKCON and exactly what we are beginning to see happen.

6.3 Diversified Efforts

6.3.1 Multi Guru System and Srila Prabhupada Focus is Mutually Exclusive!

One of the most controversial and obvious illustrations of this occurs when one agrees that Srila Prabhupada should be the focus of our movement yet continues to accept service that comes at the expense of Srila Prabhupada's glorification. To think that it is not observable to the whole world is not only insulting but it tries the patience of temple presidents, cooks, and sakirtan party leaders who struggle to keep the local organization functioning properly.

6.3.2 Large Temples are Smelting Pots of Diversification!

The best way to make this point is to simply illustrate how the focus drifts off Srila Prabhupada in large temples. Instead of all the devotees working harmoniously towards one given objective, devotees are now divided into groups based on who initiated them. If an initiating guru happens to attend a major event

such as Gour Purnima, Rathayatra, or Janmastami the disciples focus immediately becomes; “How can I serve MY guru”, instead of “How can I serve Srila Prabhupada”.

In all fairness to those who may be implicated by this statement I realize that ISKCON gurus will usually instruct their disciples to cooperate with the objectives of the local temple and not concern themselves with the formalities related to serving the guru. But despite this instruction what happens is disciples don't have the time to cook the feast, set up displays, receive guests, or serve the deities because the must wash the cloth of their guru, chauffeur him somewhere, purchase his air tickers, or cook his meal etc.

The result is there are fewer devotees available to help put on the event that is meant to expand ISKCON, spread Krishna Consciousness, and glorify Srila Prabhupada.

6.3.3 The Multi Guru System Is Diversification Waiting To Happen

We have already seen several very capable and sincere devotees fall down or wander off into other organizations, temples, or personal ashrams. The reasons for this are numerous, but one prominent reason no doubt is because the focus was taken off of Srila Prabhupada.

We all know of senior devotees who left ISKCON because they had the ambition to become a Guru. When they felt left out of the club, they simply went somewhere else to offer their service. Often, we are told the reason for this is just fine because they were just envious anyway and their behavior proves they were never qualified to be a guru anyway. Their departure is there for good and it is compared to the boiling of milk.

But to a mature person this argument sounds arrogant, self-serving, and even childish. One who is really advanced would never think; *“I'm just more advanced than you and that's why I got the job!”* Instead they would cry and be willing to give up their own position if it would save someone else from drifting away from Srila Prabhupada's loving protection and guidance.

The reality is that as long as there is a multi-guru system, there will continue to be more divisions and reasons for others to just go off and do their own thing. Often devotees who have committed so much to the Hare Krishna Movement do not just passively wander off with a sigh and lament *“Oh Well”*. We have seen that they often show up again to challenge or compete with ISKCON. In some cases, they return with legal challenges designed to undermine the very foundations ISKCON is dependent on. No matter how a disgruntled devotee chooses to handle his dissatisfaction, it's not complementary that he left in the first place and certainly is not what Srila Prabhupada wanted.

7 Discovering a Solution.

7.1 Consulting Srila Prabhupada

7.1.1 What would Srila Prabhupada say today if We Could Ask Him?

By now every devotee has had the opportunity to weigh the evidence and consider which method of initiation they believe was the one Srila Prabhupada authorized. After two decades of debate we have not been able to agree on how Srila Prabhupada wanted initiations to be done so let us consider a different question at this time

For the sake of analysis let us concede that Srila Prabhupada did instruct his disciples to become their own fully initiating spiritual masters with their own respective disciples exactly the way ISKCON has been operating since his departure.

Now let us imagine that Srila Prabhupada is sitting before us right now and we could ask him to critique how well ISKCON is going. Would he be happy with our behavior? Would he be pleased with how we have managed his movement since his departure? Would he sit back with his angelic smile and approvingly say *“Carry on... this is very nice”*?

Or if given the opportunity is it possible that Srila Prabhupada might withdraw his original instruction after considering carefully the current state of affairs? We can see by the quotes included in the References

section of this document, (9.3) that Srila Prabhupada often reversed his instructions if he perceived the circumstances to have changed or that his disciples were unable to carry out his instructions properly.

7.1.2 Evaluate Something By The Result. (*Phalena paricīyate*)

One of the core things Srila Prabhupada emphasized is that utility should be the principal behind everything that we do. If any given situation, service, or endeavor was not useful to the mission of spreading Krishna Consciousness he would certainly question its validity to determine if it should be pursued or discontinued.

Another thing that Srila Prabhupada championed was the need for us to be practical with how we handle Krishna’s finances, the resources he entrusts us with and the time we are given. One need only look at Srila Prabhupada diary and his personal accounting to see how frugal he was with everything Krishna gave him to grasp the validity of this point.

Both of these concepts were so important to Srila Prabhupada that he would often quote the Sanskrit words: “*Phalena paricīyate*”. Then he would go on to explain in his lecture how these words meant that we should judge things by the result. The references in at the end of this paper (9.1) provide plenty of examples of how he wanted us to apply this concept in our daily life.

7.1.3 Vedabase offers a way to Quantitatively Measure Important Subjects

When we query the VedaBase we get an idea of what subjects Srila Prabhupad spoke about the most and from that we can understand what he wanted to emphasize. The following table provides key words and how many times His Divine Grace uses them in his recorded books, lectures and conversations. Even this simple list is itself instructive because it reveals what Srila Prabhupada was trying to pound into our dull heads by how often he would repeat similar concepts.

Frequency of Some Common Themes That Reappear In Srila Prabhupada’s Teachings

Low Frequency Usage		High Frequency Usage		7.1.3.1 Extremely High Usage	
Utility	64	Cheating	1,094	Krishna	5,347
Truthful	225	Practical	2,205	Service	15,219
Honest	397	Devotion	2,361	Caitanya	17,686
Clean	626	Radha	2,406	Devotees	18,094
Wise	663	Result*	2,884		
Peaceful	1,000	Nonsense	3,026		
Results*	1,054	Rascal	3,299		
		Intelligent	3,886		

* Many words will appear with slight grammatical differences and are counted independently although they all share a common theme. This table is not a comprehensive analysis of similar words but it is significant enough to prove the point it was intended to make.

7.2 The Real Question We Should Be Asking

7.2.1 The Initiation Debate has Been a Double Edged Sword.

Originally there was only; “The ISKCON Way” and the general policy was either take it or leave it. Many did one or the other. Some chose to do neither but challenge it. Over the last several years there have been numerous papers written which have raised everyone’s understanding of what it means to be a Guru and how

initiation should be done. Because of this diligent effort many devotees who once supported the original system have read the arguments and are now convinced that the alternative system is more appropriate.

This has been both a victory and a defeat. It is a victory in the sense that there is now a choice and a lot of support to move towards that choice. It is a defeat in the sense that it has divided the movement to the point of an internal-revolution and everything has become unstable.

Many of those who remain loyal to the original ISKCON system hold influential and powerful positions over resources, assets, and manpower. Human nature is such that if those key people feel significantly threatened, they could succeed from the arena completely taking whatever they can legally grab or influence. If the premises is that they are not significantly advanced to be initiating spiritual masters then this type of thinking should not only be expected but it should be planned for.

7.2.2 *The Olive Branch Of Common Ground*

Devotees have made all types of mistakes for all sorts of reasons. There are many horror stories of how someone mistreated, took advantage of, exploited or perhaps even knowingly deceived someone else. Some have even clearly acted with selfish intent, but for the most part everyone has tried to do the best they knew how. If we insist on crucifying each other for mistakes we are all guilty of having made to some degree at one time or other then there is no possibility of moving forward as one.

The sad fact is that both sides have too much invested in being right to be able to back up far enough and see what this type of thinking will lead to. If both sides can resist the temptation to nuke the opposition long enough to find a common ground then we have a chance of turning events around. That is the objective of this paper. So let us see if we can find a way out of the past and into the future that will free us from having to settle the dispute over which system is the *orthodox* system. Let's try to dismantle the warheads for now.

7.2.3 *It's Not a matter of ISKCON vr. Rtvik Initiation Anymore.*

The question that we should be examining at this time is not whether or not Srila Prabhupada wanted the Rtvik system or the ISKCON system. ***The question is what is the result of the current system that is in place?*** Would Srila Prabhupada want the things to continue exactly as it is now if he were here to tell us what to do?

Even if Srila Prabhupada did originally request the ISKCON guru system to be put in place, there are strong reasons to believe that he would reverse that decision now because of all the havoc that *"Now you see him now you don't"* guru's have caused. The references at the end of this paper (9.2) provide numerous examples of how we often derailed, tainted, or just plain messed up in fulfilling Srila Prabhupada's desire. The fact is most of us are still very immature, ambitious, proud, or inflicted with any of maya's numerous other deceitful tricks to hardly do anything right.

Although it's a sad reflection of our own incompetence, it is an honest and acceptable position for us to properly recognize that once again Srila Prabhupada is the only one capable of leading us out of the current predicament we find ourselves in. Srila Prabhupada always encouraged his disciples to *"Shoot for the Rhinoceros"*. But at the same time, he was always there standing behind us to pick us when we fell on our face.

The question we must honestly ask now is: *"How are things going at this time?"* Is everything progressing nicely, or is there evidence to indicate that we are falling on our face again? If the latter is true and we ignore or deny it we are doomed. If we can see how fallen we really are and beg Srila Prabhupada's forgiveness he will certainly agree to step back in and help us just like the loving father lifts the child who falls and cries out for help. Certainly, Srila Prabhupada would prefer to accept all the new candidates anxious to join Krishna's Sankritan party then to see us mishandle their spiritual trust that leaves one discouraged, disappointed or heartbroken.

7.3 *Why not Both Systems?*

7.3.1 *Guru Shastra Sadu?*

We are all familiar with this three-fold system used to determine if something is bona-fide or not. Up to now most of the Guru/RtVik battle has focused on the instructions given by Srila Prabhupada. Some

references to the large body of Vedic literature has also inevitably found its way into the arguments but what we are interested in here is the opinion of the Sadus.

We have already pointed out that Krishna considers all the devotees magnanimous and we know Srila Prabhupada feels that way about each and every one of his disciples. Why then are we so quick to discredit those we do not agree with? Ultimately the collective realizations of all the sadus should be carefully considered and not so ruthlessly trashed. This is the attitude of brahmin who is not so proud to think. *"I know what Srila Prabhupad wanted and you do not!"*

If we take into consideration the third branch of the checks & balances system, the sadus, we find that they are strongly divided among themselves on this important issue of initiation. We do not necessarily accept any foolish nonsense an individual might speak but when a large body of mature vaishnavas align themselves on two sides of an issue like we have here, we should take pause.

Active humility means to honor that collective opinion not insult it. That is something we all should stop and think about lest we commit so many offenses we disgrace the thread we have been awarded. This paper is built on the foundation that there is wisdom in the realizations of both camps.

7.3.2 Both Systems Is The Only Possible Way Forward

After ten years of digging up all the scriptural references to argue the two sides of the issue it should be apparent to all that there are good arguments to support both systems. So why not allow both systems to function within ISKCON? If we insisting that it must be either one way or the other only one of two things will happen. We will just keep fighting or the movement will split up. Considering how impatient everyone has become on this issue the latter is eminent.

The nice thing about adopting both systems is that it solves many of the difficulties we have identified in this paper. Those who are already initiated by a certified authentic ISKCON spiritual master will have the opportunity to continue with that relationship. If a new member is attracted and comfortable with the guidance of a particular spiritual master, they can join us under that system.

The new approach will also allow each acting guru to individually decide based on their realizations if they wish to surrender their disciple's back to Srila Prabhupada or maintain things just the way they have been all along.

In this way new members are given a free and independent choice on how they wish to get initiated. If they are attracted to the existing system and want a personal relationship with a living Spiritual master they can have it. If someone prefers to be initiated as a disciple of Srila Prabhupada then that is also available to them.

7.3.3 The 65th quality of a devotee,.. Anarchy or Dictatorship?

Neither anarchist or dictator are found on the list of the 64 qualities of a devotee. Both mentalities are equally distasteful and a disgrace for anyone claiming to be a Vaishnava. The initiation debate has been healthy in the sense that it has drawn attention to some serious internal problems. But many believe that an: *"out with the old, in with the new"* approach to management would not change very much. In fact many devotees believe it would make no difference at all! The only thing Anarchy will accomplish is the names of the decision makers will change. To often anarchy is just the flip side of dictatorship.

ISKCON management can adopt an iron fist dictatorial mood and drive out anyone that may be sympathetic to some of the issues exposed by the RtVik camp if they insist on doing so. They run the risk of choking what's left of the movement out of existence if they do.

The RtVic camp can insist on a strategy of taking no prisoners but that too is dangerous. Despite the mistakes that ISKCON leadership has made they do have valuable experience that should not be so quickly dismissed. If the RtVics have such a superior understanding, and insist on total allegiance to that understanding only, then they are free to start their own organization and Krishna will reciprocate accordingly.

7.4 Possible Counter Arguments

7.4.1 Arguing Is An Endless Trap That Will Destroy Everything

We must remember that both sides will have their respective arguments and reasons for rejecting the proposal that both systems should exist. The strongest reasons for rejecting it will undoubtedly be that by proposing both systems we appear like we aren't sure about what we are doing! But that is exactly what the situation is that we face. The fact is that both camps are 100% convinced that they REALLY understand what Srila Prabhupada wants yet collectively there is no consensus.

ISKCON management accuses the proponents of the Rtvik system as being envious and simply trying to destroy ISKCON. The Rtvik camp claims that ISKCON management is corrupt and only interested in retaining power to maintain their comfortable positions. This will get us nowhere except more deeply entrenched in finger pointing and faultfinding. Neither of these things are appropriate behavior for Vaishnavas and neither are really 100% true so what value is there in arguing like this about something that will never be resolved?

7.4.2 ISKCON Gurus Claim Srila Prabhupada is In the Center!

Everyone in ISKCON is wise enough to state that Srila Prabhupada is in the center of the movement. Even the slightest hint of something contrary to that usually leads to rapid reprimand or dismissal. But we have already shown with practical example how Srila Prabhupada's position has become minimized despite how often this is frequently stated.

7.4.3 Rtvik's Claim Not to Dwell on Gory Details of Individual Failures.

Similarly the Rtviks are savvy enough to state that they do not wish to "...dredge up the gory details of unfortunate individual's spiritual difficulties." But not everyone who wants to see a change honors this principal and often very offensive things are said. The fact that the Final Order paper has been successful in cohering the fractured ISKCON splinter groups is not necessarily a blanket confirmation that everyone fully accepts it's conclusions or methods.

7.4.4 It's NOT What Someone Says That Counts!

Psychologist's estimate that up to 70% of what we communicate is not done with words. Politicians are expert at constructing sentences that are carefully crafted to be politically correct and legally intact, yet politicians have developed the reputation of being the most untrustworthy.

So regardless of what anyone says, if the events that surround them are inconsistent with what they proclaim an intelligent person will not accept what amounts to cheap talk or political posturing. Prabhupada called those type of people "Word Jugglers."

7.4.5 Both Sides Will Have Their Reasons to Object!

ISKCON management might claim that introducing a second system will be confusing to new candidates and some might be concerned about how it will make the current Guru's appear. They will not be inclined to change the current system simply because change itself is disruptive and requires new policies to be adopted, new procedures to be put in place and most importantly a new attitude to be accepted. All of this will not be simple but that is what management is all about and if one isn't prepared to carry out the duties of the job then if they are a Brahmins the honorable thing for them to do is resign.

The Rtvik people will complain that the existing system should be discontinued because it is dishonest and perpetuates fraud on new candidates that may wish to get initiated by an authorized ISKCON guru. They may use any of the many arguments presented in this paper to substantiate their reasons for completely dismantling the existing guru system, but that will just perpetuate the problem. The Rtviks must remember the old saying: "Possession is 9/10's of the law."

Either side can fall back into the trap of: "We are RIGHT and we know we are Right! Why should we compromise with something that we believe is wrong!" That type of thinking is exactly the way the fanatical born-again Christians speak. We all have been offended and put off by it and now that is what we are doing to each other. Is that the best we can do with the beautiful message Srila Prabhupada originally taught?

7.4.6 What Are We Really Trying To Do Anyway?

If ISKCON management can see the wisdom of allowing the alternative system to exist then the movement can start growing again and no-matter how one wants to get initiated everyone will be given an opportunity to assist in the mission of Lord Caitanya and Srila Prabhupada. After all that is the real practical objective which should always come before ritualistic formalities and dogma.

Srila Prabhupada demonstrated this type of thinking when he established the practice of allowing women to serve the deities and he gave them Gaitri initiation. The other historic example of this type of radical change is how Srila Prabhupada adjusted the number of rounds from 64 down to 32 down to 16 because of our fallen condition. Traditionally these things were not acceptable in the Vaishnava tradition. Srila Prabhupada was wise enough to make those adjustments for the sake of giving the world the message of Krishna Consciousness that we all so badly needed.

7.4.7 Krishna Will Reveal what He Wants In Time

It is clear that we will never be able to collectively resolve the issue of determining which system Srila Prabhupada wanted us to follow for initiating after he left. But one of the nice things about allowing both systems to co-exist is that it allows Krishna to reveal to us how to move past this point into the future. We should not adopt both systems with the attitude that one will live on at the expense of the other, although that is a possibility we should be willing to accept if it becomes evident. But more likely systems will prosper nicely with each serving a different target market

For example the Individual Guru would probably be more effective and relevant in areas where the Guru remains local, is easily approachable, well respected and has offered years of quality service. Those who live in remote sections, where the only contact with Krishna Consciousness one has is via the BBT books, might prefer to be initiated as a disciple of Srila Prabhupada. Different needs... different solutions. Krishna can respond to everyone according to his or her need and this is how we can set things up to facilitate everyone.

This is what I believe most devotees would agree is the main purpose of ISKCON; *To engage people in serving Srila Prabhupada so they can restore their lost relationship with Kishna.* We should be careful not become like a bunch of smarta-brahmana politicians who bicker over esoteric issues most people don't understand or even care about. This has always been Srila Prabhupada's mood and if we wish to truly honor him it should be our mood as well.

8 Conclusion

8.1 Legalism and Philosophy, Has Its Limits

8.1.1 Scripture, The Law & Statistics (My Logic Is Better than Yours Is!)

Anyone who has worked with lawyers or statisticians knows that they can take any position on any subject and find some way of "proving" that their understanding is the only reasonable position. This phenomenon is very observable with the way Christians use the Bible to justify the slaughter of animals.

The fact is a very good argument can be made to justify their viewpoints if the final arbitration is dependent on just the text of the Bible. To get a clearer understanding of the issue some common sense is required. Jesus, *the prince of peace*, would never condone the pathetic conclusion that a sentient, compassionate, friend of God would senselessly kill animals simple for the satisfaction of the pallet.

Another example is how the neo-nazi hate groups all claim to base their beliefs on the instructions found in the Bible! To an outsider the reasoning is so absurd it belies credibility... yet those who believe it are very convinced it is the proper conclusion.

We are currently entrenched in the same dead end thinking regarding the initiation issue. A good pundit can dig up the necessary scripture and interpret in such a way that they can prove whatever is required.

8.1.2 Philosophy has it's Purpose but There IS Even A Higher Principal.

There is no doubt that we should strive to maintain philosophical consistency. It is also imperative that there be opportunity for healthy debate among the scholarly vaishnavas. But we should also recognize that even philosophical intellectualizing has it's own traps and could lead to smarta-brahmans snobbishness. Rational thinking must be there, but if that is all we use to function by we have reasoned away the higher Vaishnava principal of kindness, understanding and compassion. Only a very small percent of the population will understand the finer points of lofty philosophical arguments but everyone can comprehend the honorable behavior of a true vaishnava when it is demonstrated.

8.1.3 Scholars Guide, but Real Pundits Lead.

The legal work must continue so we will know which direction we should aim our efforts towards. But at a time like this the finer principals that come from the heart, not the head, should guide us. This is the example Srila Prabhupada set and he confirms the limitations of argument and logic:

“All Vedic scriptures declare that transcendental subjects cannot be understood simply by argument or logic. Spiritual matters are far above experimental knowledge. Only by Kṛṣṇa’s mercy can one who is interested in His transcendental loving affairs understand them. If one tries to understand these transcendental topics simply by using one’s material brain substance, the attempt will be futile. Whether one is a prākṛta-sahajiyā or a mundane opportunist or scholar, one’s labor to understand these topics by mundane means will ultimately be frustrated. One therefore has to give up all mundane attempts and try to become a pure devotee of Lord Viṣṇu. When a devotee follows the regulative principles, the truth of these talks will be revealed to him.” – Madya 8.310 Purport.

So we see here the final measure in realization is not philosophical argument but who is following the principals of Krishna Consciousness... and who is bold enough to say they really know everything that occurs in the heart of someone else? We have only guidelines. By now it should be evident that there is no iron clad guarantee for any of us.

8.1.4 Srila Prabhupada's Wisdom Went Beyond Philosophy

His Divine Grace was supremely wise and certainly had the ability to corner and humiliate any one of us with rational argument and philosophy if he wanted to. But he did not use his extraordinary power to shatter the potential for someone who desired to perform devotional service. Instead he patiently tolerated our misguided hippie ways and chose to lovingly lead us to Krishna Consciousness. He coached every individual with the most undefeatable logic of Love and by that alone he encouraged us all to aspire to their fullest potential in serving Krishna. That should be the final guiding principal, not scriptural sledge hammers, arrows and swords.

8.2 Negotiating a Settlement

8.2.1 Acting Responsibly and Sensibly

Acting from the heart takes into consideration things that scripture might miss based on time and circumstance. Lord Caitanya had every legitimate reason, according to scripture, to kill Jagadi & Madhi, because of their serious offense to Lord Nityananda. But the original intent of Lord Chaitanya was checked with simple reasoning that came from the heart of Lord Nityananda and the result was a historic event.

For the sake of discussion let us assume that the conclusions of the Final Order are absolutely correct and all of the people wishing to reform ISKCON agreed with it 100%. Would it be either sensitive or wise to insist on fighting for a 100% unconditional surrender from ISKCON at this time knowing that doing so will lead to more fracturing and casualties?

8.2.2 Making Concessions is Politically Prudent and Wise.

Negotiations work much better if both sides are prepared to make concessions. If either side insists on having things their way ISKCON will continue to collapse into an embarrassing disgrace which we are all responsibility for. The best chance of salvaging ISKCON at this time is for peaceful coexistence.

Make no mistake about it, we are now talking politics. Only the brahmins are convinced by philosophy. Ksatrias are persuaded by appealing to their pride, Vaishyas want some profit, and Sudras must be threatened. A parallel system allows space for everyone to operate and prevents a total breakdown of the organization. Chanakya Pundit recommends that one make friends of with an enemy because it's a smart way to live.

8.3 Closing Statement

8.3.1 This is the Outline Now Do What's Right.

As stated in the beginning of this paper I have not attempted to make this a complete study of all the issues nor have I taken the time to find scriptural evidence to support every statement that I have made. I am sure there are things that I have overlooked, failed to consider, and may even have stated incorrect. But I have taken the time to write this as an appeal to the mature devotees who can understand the practical wisdom that I have tried to convey. If scriptural references are all that is required for this proposal to work, I am sure there will be many, including myself, who would be glad to do the homework.

But already we have a very profound principal clearly given: *Phalena paricīyate !* All the logic in the Vedas is useless if it turns Srila Prabhupada's movement into an exclusive club of elitist members held together by a military-like regime. Spiritual life requires guidance, not force, and matters of personal conviction cannot be legislated by anyone. Doing the right thing is the thing that comes closest to honoring the realizations of all the assembled devotees.

8.3.2 Don't Repeat Duryodhana's mistake!

The Pandavas had every scriptural right to demand their entire kingdom back, but they were so Nobel they were willing to accept even a small village. They did not try to slam Duryodhana with scriptural arguments and law suits. They simply appealed until it was clear that there, he had no intention to make any concessions for anyone or any reason. At this point if either side insists on 100% allegiance will be following in the footsteps Duryodhana. Because he was so stubborn and believed his position was the only position everything was destroyed. To find a path we can all live with at this time is wise, healthy, and strategically prudent. The real vaishnavas are the ones who follow in the footsteps of the Pandavas, not Duryodhana. That is the conclusion of this paper. It's based on the way people are, not some idealistic concept about how they ought to be.

8.4 Background of the Author

8.4.1 Disclaimer

I present this information only for identifying myself to those who I may have worked with over the last 20 years and introducing myself to those whom never met me before. I don't wish to imply that the short synopsis that follows means much of anything but it might add a little understanding to this presentation and for some perhaps a little more credibility.

8.4.2 Initiation

I first began studying the philosophy of Krishna Consciousness in 1973. In 1975 I dropped out of my senior year studying Industrial Design at the University Of Kansas to join the Radha Damodar Traveling Sankirtan Party in October 1995. I then did book distribution in the parking lots of America until the spring of 1976. In March 1976 I was personally accepted as a disciple of Bhaktivedanta Swami at the Krishna Balaram Temple in Vrindaban India.

8.4.3 Participation With ISKCON

Most of the contribution I made to ISKCON was in managing creative projects like temple construction and building Rathayatra carts. As a full time, devotee my first major project was to design and engineer the Radah-Govinda like facade to the New York temple on 55th street in 1976. I was then personally trained by Jayananda to build Rathcarts and did so for the cities of New York, Calcutta, Bombay and England where I designed and built the first really traveling Rathcart, the Gosta-a-rath of London in 1981.

I designed and engineered the largest fountain garden in Asia, (The Mayapur Lotus Fountain Garden), and supervised the initial construction of the Vrindaban Samadhi Mandir from 1979 to 1980. In Los Angeles I spent five years assisting Amarendra Das doing legal work for the BBT, accounting for the restaurant, and assisted with the deity worship program.

8.4.4 Academic Background

I complete my undergraduate work in Commercial Design, with an emphasis in Industrial Engineering and Computer Programming at Woodbury University in Los Angeles. I hold two professional titles for computer systems management and analysis from UCLA and I am a fully Certified Data Processor. I received my MBA with an emphasis in Management Information Systems from California Lutheran University.

8.4.5 Current Employment

I am currently employed as a Computer Systems Analyst Consultant for Anteon Corporation and work as federal contractor for the United States Navy at Port Hueneme California. I hold a "Confidential" government security clearance and direct a staff of technical programmers designing ORACLE database applications for fleet logistics, outfitting and supply.

8.4.6 Current Service

In 1988 I began preaching from my home under the name of the American Vedic Association (AVA). My wife and I have had regular programs that included classes on the Bhagavad Gita, plays by devotee performers, and prasadam distribution at events like the annual July 4th parade in Ojai. Our nama hutta program is listed under "Gatherings" in Back To Godhead and we have a mailing list of over 1000 people although only half of those people have demonstrated an interested in what we are doing by participating.

8.5 Invitation To Comment Or Respond

8.5.1 Invitation

This paper is just my small attempt to state what appears to be obvious and suggest practical solutions we can agree on and move forward with. Anyone wishing to comment or critique what I have presented is invited to contact me personally.

I am not expecting, requesting, or looking forward to placing myself in the middle of this ugly feud. I have my service presenting Krishna Consciousness to the local people in Ventura County and that will continue regardless of how this conflict gets resolved.

But for what it's worth, and I may be quite wrong here, my observation is that there are many who oppose the extreme posturing that both the legacy ISKCON managers and the RtVIK proponents are guilty of. This paper has been written for those people

8.5.2 Arbitration Offer

Regardless of which way you are currently leaning if you like the middle way approach then you must act promptly if there is any hope of preventing what at this time appears to be only extreme alternatives. I am inviting anyone who likes to the contents of this paper to contact me anyway you wish. Although I am a small player on a very big field, I want to make myself available as a clearing house for those who are of like minds.

I have absolutely no attachment to playing this role and encourage anyone to plagiarize whatever they like from this analysis if there is even a slight chance it could prevent further erosion of ISKCON. But if it becomes apparent by future events that Krishna would like me to personally assist in arbitrating a sane solution to this historic stalemate then I will accept that duty accordingly.

8.5.3 How To Contact The Author

mayeresvara dasa

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9 References

9.1 The Success Of Something Is Determined By the Result

It is also said, *phalena paricīyate*: one's success or defeat in any activity is understood by its result. (Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 8, Chapter 9.Text 28 Purport)

It is said, *phalena paricīyate*: one is recognized by the result of his actions. In Vaiṣṇava society there are many types of Vaiṣṇavas. Some of them are called gosvāmīs, some are called svāmīs, some are prabhū, and some are prabhupāda. One is not recognized, however, simply by such a name. A spiritual master is recognized as an actual guru when it is seen that he has changed the character of his disciples (Antya Lila, 3.143 Purport)

One has to learn by the result (*phalena paricīyate*). Our students are ordered to act like this, and they are not falling down. (Science of Self Realization, Discovering the Roots)

Yes. And he thinks he's advancing, the nonsense is advancing. No. *Phalena paricīyate*. By the result one has to be judged how far he has advanced. Similarly, there are so many persons, they are meditating. What meditating, nonsense? What is their character? If you challenge their character, nonsense. So these sort of things will not help. Come practically forward. (Bhagavad Gita Lecture December 20, 1968 Los Angeles 681220BG.LA)

Prabhupāda: Meditation? That you can see from the result. You'll find so many persons meditating, but see their life. *Phalena paricīyate*. One has to be judged by the result. You have worked very hard and supposed to be very rich man, but if I see that you have no nice apartment, neither any car, neither any opulence, so what kind of businessman you have earned? That can be understood immediately. So if one by practice of meditation is actually advancing in spiritual life, why he's materially affected? What is the difference between a person materially affected and spiritually advanced? (Bhagavad Gita 3.15 Lecture Los Angeles December 20, 1968 681220BG.LA)

No living entity should be given suffering, even by words. That is real life. Ātmavat... yaḥ paśyati. One who has such vision of life, he is called learned. He is called learned, not by educational qualifications. One who has acquired... *phalena paricīyate*. Education is understood, how far a man is educated, by his behavior. By his vision of life, it will be estimated, not by the degree. Ātmavat sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyati sa paṇḍitaḥ. Similarly, here also, here also the word paṇḍita, paṇḍita has been used. (Bhagavad Gita 4.14-19 Lecture New York August 3, 1966 660803BG.NY)

So many rituals and so many other things are there in every religion. But the, we have to test by the result, *phalena paricīyate*. Everything... Just like we have studied so much, a scientific man, but there is examination. If one passes the examination, then it is understood that he has studied nicely. That is our common sense. In school, colleges, everywhere. If I cannot pass the examination and if I advertise myself, "Oh, I have studied this, I have studied that," then what is the value of that? Suppose a man is doing business. So if we see that by doing business, he has acquired some money, he has become rich, then we can understand that he is successful businessman. But if he, he is a poor man, and he says, "I have done this, I have done that, I have done that," you can say so but we want to know by the result. *Phalena paricīyate*. That is a Sanskrit version. But we have to understand by the result, *phalena*, what result you have got. What the value of your examination paper you have, how much mark you have received. Similarly we can declare ourself very religionist, great religionist, follower of great religion, but what is this? What is...? How much you have developed your sense of God consciousness, how much you have learned to love God. (Srimad Bhagavatam Lectures 1.2.7 New Vrindaban September 5, 1972 720905SB.NV)

Phalena paricīyate. We have to understand by the result. If the result is not very satisfactory, then you must know that progress is not very nice. (Srimad Bhagavatam Lectures 1.2.24 Vrindaban November 4, 1972 721104SB.VRN)

And if you are actually chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, you will be enthusiastic, "Oh, I shall serve. I shall..." That is effect. *Phalena paricīyate*. We have to see by the result. He should be enthusiastic more and more. Ānandāmbudhivardhanam. It will increase. *The service attitude will increase.* (Srimad Bhagavatam Lectures 1.2.24 Aukland February 22, 1973 730222SB.AUC)

NOTE: This is just 8 of the 44 references to *Phalena paricīyate* found in the Veda Base.

9.2 Correct Misguided Disciples Who Unknowingly Went Off Track

9.2.1 Discontinue Entertainment to Attract Listeners to A Lecture 1972

Instructive Lesson: In an attempt to attract a larger audience to hear Srila Prabhupada speak the devotees began planning an event that included music and dance to accommodate Srila Prabhupada's lecture. Srila Prabhupada did not like this approach to presenting the high philosophy of Lord Caitanya and requested that it be abandoned immediately.

Because they heard of our program in Bombay along with the Zavery sisters Manipuri Dancers, here in London they had arranged one program of lecturing by me along with a recital by one man playing on the vina just to attract attention to my speaking. *I am not in approval of such arrangements*, and it will be dangerous thing in future if we begin this type of program just to attract the masses. Already I see this happening practically all over the Society, *so better we stop it now* and get ourselves firmly on the track chalked out for us by Lord Caitanya. We are simply Sankirtana men, our program is chanting, dancing, distributing prasadam, and speaking high philosophy, that's all. (Letter To Madhuvisa London July 8, 1972)

9.2.2 Discontinue Use of Just A Cow's Head Illustration 1974

Instructive Lesson: When Mukunda produced a promotional pamphlet for advertising Krishna Consciousness he used an illustration of just a cow's head that Srila Prabhupada was not pleased with so he requested that the pamphlet not be printed.

He has printed "Gokula Vrindaban". In the last picture there is a cowhead like a slaughterhouse cow with t-lock on. I have sent him a telegram to stop it and a detailed letter will follow to Mukunda. The telegram reads as follows: "*Pamphlet picture most objectionable. Stop immediately.* Letter follows." Please see that this is stopped by Mukunda. (Letter to Revatinandana Los Angeles 9 January, 1974 74-01-09)

9.2.3 Kirtananda should NOT present Krishna Conscious Philosophy 1967

Instructive Lesson: Srila Prabhupada was kind enough to give Kirtananda sanyasa initiation but the title soon went to his head. Shortly after Kirtananada began acting independently and started teaching his own concocted form of Krishna Consciousness. When Srila Prabhupada learned of this he instructed that Kirtananda should **stop** giving class.

My Dear Damodara,

Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter of Oct. 9. I am very sorry to hear that Kirtanananda is advising you to give up the robes and the flags on the head. *Please stop this nescience as I never instructed Kirtanananda to act like that. I am not at all satisfied with this action of Kirtanananda.* Kirtanananda has no right to instruct you in that way, without consulting me. People are being attracted to the chanting of Hare Krishna & not to Kirtanananda's devices. Kirtanananda suggested to me when he was here that the Americans do not like the robes & flag. I told him personally if you think that Americans in great numbers will follow you, simply for not having robes & flag, I therefore advised him to drop for a few days in London & test this theory. But he has gone directly to N.Y. & is now causing these disturbances without consulting me. *I have not sanctioned these methods.* In my opinion, Clean shaved Bramacharies & Grhasthas in saffron robes look like angels from Baikunta. Translation of prayers into

English is good & if somebody dresses like nice American gentleman without any robes, I have no objection; but every one of my disciples must have the flag & marks of tilak on forehead. This is essential. Besides that, nobody should do anything without my sanction.

I am very sorry to hear Kirtanananda, *without doing anything practical*, changes his ideas constantly. He was first man in our society to take the robes shave cleanly, & take flag & now he is changing his position. You have asked me to tell you whether you are right or carry one by the following the foolish advice of Kirtanananda, & I say straight that Kirtanananda is wrong and you are right when you say *that the movement will come to nothing if I am not satisfied with your actions*.

(Letter to Damodara, Calcutta, October 13, 1967)

Regarding Kirtanananda, he is undoubtedly a good soul, but lately he has been attacked by maya; he *thinks too much of himself*--even at the risk of disobeying his spiritual master & talking nonsense about Krishna. As a man haunted by a ghost talks so much nonsense, so also when a man is overpowered by the illusory energy--maya, also talks all sorts of nonsense. The last attack of maya upon the conditioned souls is impersonalism. There are 4 stages of attack of maya; viz.: 1 stage is that a man wants to be a protagonist of religion, 2 is that man neglects religiosity and tries to improve his economic development, 3) is to be protagonist of sense enjoyment & when a man is frustrated in all the above mentioned stages he comes to 4, which is impersonalism, and thinks himself one with the Supreme. *This last attack is very serious and fatal. Kirtanananda has very recently developed the 4th stage malady on account of his negligence & disobedience to his spiritual master*. Sometimes a foolish patient when he is out of feverish attack by the grace of the physician, thinks that he is cured and does not take precaution against relapse. Kirtanananda's position is like that. *Because he helped the society in starting the Montreal center I thought he is now able to start other branches* & when he asked me to give him sannyasa I agreed taking the opportunity of his presence in Vrndavana. *Simply by his Sannyas dress he thought himself as cured of all material diseases & all mistakes but under the influence of maya, he thought himself a liberated patient, just as the foolish patient thinks himself cured from the disease*. Under the spell of maya, he deliberately disobeyed me by not going to London & consequently his disease has relapsed. Now in N.Y. he has began to dictate nonsense in my name--such as giving up robes, flags etc. Instead of opening new centers he has began to deliver his nonsense sermons amongst his God-brothers which are all against our principles. For the *present he should simply chant Hare Krishna & cease to deliver lectures because he has not understood the whole philosophy very nicely*. (Letter to Pradyumna October 17, 1967)

9.2.4 Devotees Instructed to Stop Reading other Philosophy Books 1973

Instructive Lesson: At one point Srila Prabhupada's disciples began reading other books that were philosophically inferior to those written by His Divine Grace. When he learned of this deviation, he requested his disciples to stop it.

Brahmananda Swami has read me your letter regarding *the students there reading other books*. *I request you to stop this practice*. Our students have no time to read our own books, but they have time to read other's books, and the money to purchase them? Why this mentality is there? You are a serious student, therefore you have correctly found out the defect in these books. *We don't want babaji class. We want active preachers*. (Letter to Cyavana Bombay October 13, 1973)

9.2.5 Instruction Not to Sell Records But to Distribute Books! 1975

Instructive Lesson: Here we have another example of how the devotees began using dishonest methods and records to increase the distribution of books. Srila Prabhupada said it would cause havoc and requested it stop immediately.

My Dear Ajita Das,

Please accept my blessings. I am due receipt of your letter dated Dec. 27th, 1974 and have noted the contents. Regarding dishonest means being used I have never advised or taught anyone like that. That is not my idea. *This record distribution has caused havoc. It should be stopped immediately*. I have also asked Hamsaduta to stop it. Book distribution is our real business. If we give them a record, they simply hear some magical sounds and take it for sense gratification but if they receive one of our books and read even one page, they get eternally benefited.

Therefore I am stressing this book distribution, not other things. Stop record selling completely. This is my order.
(Letter to Ajita dasa Bombay January 1975)

9.2.6 Stop the Politics and Fighting! 1974

Instructive Lesson: Srila Prabhupada did not want the devotees to form cliques and politically campaign against other devotees. When he learned this was happening he requested the devotees to stop it.

Regarding the agitation to remove Tejas: No, Tejas must not be removed. *Stop this. This is a clique. I don't want this.* Why has Subala Maharaja gone there. He is an outsider, why are they interfering. Subala left India now why has he returned without permission? This removal of the president is very unconstitutional. The devotees who do not like to work with Tejas should immediately go away from the temple. But he may not. Those who feel against him can go away. Devotees come from the outside and interfere. No, they cannot change the president. Who sent Janmanjoya there? *Why is he taking to politics?* So your opinion is also mine, that Tejas is the most sincere worker of the lot. *Please stop this.*

(Letter to Tamal Krishna Los Angeles January 11, 1974)

9.2.7 How will others be influenced if we fight among ourselves? 1974

Instructive Lesson: Srila Prabhupada clearly states that we will not be successful if we don't rise above bad conditioning, stop fighting, and learn how to tolerate difficult situations.

You have dedicated your life for Krsna and therefore you should be ideal. We are introducing Krsna Consciousness movement for the harmony and good will of humanity. *But if you yourselves are suffering from the very ills we are trying to remove, how can the people be influenced favorably? Stop this fighting, tolerate, chant and read our books.* Use the intelligence and do some service for Krsna. My request to you is to *not fight anymore* (Letter to Trivikrama Bombay May 1, 1974)

9.2.8 Stop Activities That May Appear Suspicious to the Public 1976

Instructive Lesson: Here Srila Prabhupada became very concerned about illegal activities related to book distribution. He reminded us

My Dear Kirtanananda Maharaja,

Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter dated October 1, 1976 and have noted the contents carefully. A film showing *illegal techniques of distributing my books* (Money shuffle) was never authorized by me. *If it is actually a fact what you say, then stop it immediately. In all our dealings we should be above suspicion. They say first impressions are lasting. If someone feels cheated by our men because they are using dubious methods of distribution and collecting money our purity may be doubted and reputation spoiled.* So please do not allow such film showing to take place until I have seen the film personally. (Letter to Kirtanananda Chandigarh October 15, 1976)

9.2.9 Selling Records Causes Havoc. Stop it Immediately! 1970

Instructive Lesson: The devotees in Germany adopted tricks to sell records to the public. Srila Prabhupada considered it disruptive and requested that it be stopped.

So far your producing records there, that is a very nice proposal, so do it nicely, however you think is best. (Letter to Hamsaduta - Madras, February 14, 1972)

Hamsaduta was giving stress to *selling records using all tricks, by any means.* The incident in Germany has *caused havoc all over the world.* It is hampering our reputation everywhere. *I do not want this record distribution to continue. It must be stopped immediately.* I have already informed Hamsaduta. Distributing books is our real business, not these records. Has anyone ever become convinced in Krishna Consciousness by listening to this record? No. He will simply think it is nice magical sounds, that's all. But, if he reads one book, he will be convinced

about spiritual life. That is our success. So, stop this record distribution immediately everywhere. And stress book distribution more and more.

Enclosed is one letter from Ajita das who is the Stockholm temple president. He is expressing the typical type of anxiety and confusion, which arises from this record selling business.

(Letter to Brahmananda Bombay January 7, 1970)

9.2.10 Don't Go Outside For Other Lectures 1976

Instructive Lesson: Devotees in Vrindaban were attending classes given at other temples. Srila Prabhupada instructed to improve the class if necessary, but to stop going to other temples.

Strictly nobody should go outside to hear lectures by others. If you are not satisfied by the caliber of the classes at the Krishna Balarama Mandir, then you should give another class, *but you cannot go outside* for hearing others' lectures. Kindly stop this habit immediately. (Letter to Nitai New York July 14, 1976)

9.2.11 Stick to Krishna Don't Appear like New Age Propaganda. 1977

Instructive Lesson: BTG began to drift in how it presented Krishna Consciousness. When Srila Prabhupada learned what was going on he asked it to stop.

Brahmānanda: In *our Back to Godhead magazine* now the tendency is that they're not mentioning Kṛṣṇa's name so much. *They're not putting the picture of Kṛṣṇa. They're not putting the pictures of the devotees.* They're stressing on like simple, natural life in order to please the public.

Prabhupāda: No. Why this is going on?

Satsvarūpa: Probably because of this reasoning, that... They use this phrase, that "We have to make Kṛṣṇa consciousness more conventional, and with the shaved heads and pictures of Kṛṣṇa, people won't like it." So they've taken to *this description of simple life, vague talk of spiritual life, reincarnation, meditation.*

Tripurāri: Seems like a compromise.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: People are speaking about our movement now. Many people say to us that "You are selling out, compromising your position." And they...

Prabhupāda: *This should be stopped, immediately.* Why they are doing that without..., concocting?

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: There's a great deal of not approval among many of the senior devotees.

Prabhupāda: So, *immediately stop it.*

(Mayapur Room Conversation February 17, 1977 770217rc.may)

9.3 Withdrawal Of Original Instructions because Circumstances Changed

9.3.1 Discontinue BTG articles by Professor Sannyal 1968

Instructive Lesson: Even though the work of Srila Prabhupadas godbrother, Professor Sannyal had been included in early editions of BTG, Srila Prabhupada approved of discontinuing his articles because they were too scholarly and difficult for people to understand.

My Dear Rayarama,

Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter dated March 28, 1968, and I thank you very much for it. I am pleased to hear that you are devoting yourself to the work on Back To Godhead, and it is all right by me if you *discontinue the articles on Haridasa Thakura by Professor Sannyal.* I know it is difficult to read because it is so presented in a scholarly manner, therefore it was not very much sold. (Letter to Rayarama San Francisco April 2, 1968)

9.3.2 Women should stop teaching in Mayapur 1972

Instructive Lesson: When there was a possibility that the local Mayapur Bengalis could misunderstand how women were engaged in teaching at our Mayapur temple, Srila Prabhupada requested that they stop teaching to avoid the possibility of controversy.

Regarding the *women teaching at Mayapur*, if there is suspicion by the villagers, then *stop it* for the time being. But why there should be suspicion of women? Hoping this will meet you in good health. (*Letter to Bhavananda Honolulu May 9, 1972*)

9.3.3 House Purchase Stopped because Instructions Not Followed! 1967

Instructive Lesson: Originally there was a plan to purchase a property with the assistance of a man called Mr. Hill. But when Srila Prabhupada suspected that Mr. Hill might be cheating the devotees of \$5000 he put the plan into reverse gear and instructed that all efforts be directed to recovering the down payment that was in jeopardy.

Regarding the house, you are already in trouble. The best thing is to *stop this strain*. Mr. Lerner told me that Mr. Hill has no sufficient money to purchase the house. I definitely instructed you if Mr. Hill enters into agreement with Mr. Taylor it is then only you could hand over the check of \$5000.00 to Mr. Hill or his agent. *But you have not followed my instruction and now you are in trouble.*

(*Letter to Satsvarupa, San Francisco March 21, 1967*)

9.3.4 Prabhupada Stopped Publication of Sankirtana Newsletter 1975

Instructive Lesson: Although Srila Prabhupada approved of a Sankirtana Newsletter, he instructed Rupanuga to stop publishing it because of inadequate financial resources.

Regarding Baltimore, again deficit. This is not a good sign. Regarding the Sankirtana Newsletter, then stop it. If the BBT does not pay for it, then stop it. *The temple cannot afford to publish it, and if the BBT does not pay for it, then stop it. But it is good attempt.* (*Letter to Rupanuga Bombay November 9, 1975*)

9.3.5 Do Not Attempt to Cast Brass Deities Anymore. It's Not Practical 1969

Instructive Lesson: Although Srila Prabhupada originally instructed Nara Narayana to cast deities, when he saw that it was impractical he gave him a different service to perform.

Regarding Nara Narayana, I never advised him to organize a Sankirtana Party in New York. From the very beginning he was entrusted to cast Radha-Krishna murtis in brass. *He tried it in so many ways but it was not practical.* So at the present moment he is engaged there in preparing a dias and decorations for the temple. *That should be his business.* Next, if it is possible, let him cast some plaster of Paris Radha-Krishna murtis of the size you have got in the New York temple. If not, he may go for a few days to New Vrindaban and make schemes and plans for residential quarters and press accommodations, etc. (*Letter to Brahmananda Los Angeles January 18, 1969*)

9.3.6 Original Instruction Was One Painting a Day. Later It Was Changed. 1970

Instructive Lesson: Srila Prabhupada requested Jadurani to paint one painting a day. But later he relaxed this request when because it was not practical.

I was thinking that the paintings *should be produced at the rate of one per day.* That was my thought. *But if it is not practical, there is no cause for lamenting. Simply go on with your painting as far as possible.* Please do not neglect to engage yourself in the prescribed duties for maintaining your spiritual strength. Without keeping spiritual strength there is no question of any accomplishment like painting or anything else. (*Letter to Jadurani – Bombay, November 16, 1970*)