

# Whoever Thinks They Can Manage ISKCON is Disqualified

by mayesvara dasa

Since I began recommending that the GBC adopt BOTH systems of initiation in ISKCON some devotees have suggested that I am not taking a strong enough stand against the atrocities that have been committed in the name of the "Disciplic Succession." It is understandable why there is such a strong reaction to devotees who have misused the power they were entrusted with to carry out personal schemes that were inappropriately ambitious. We have been warned several times that there will be severe consequences for anyone who poses as a spiritual authority for personal gain. We have already seen how those who have done so eventually become consumed by their own dishonesty. This is just as one would expect. Lord Krishna is certainly watching over our efforts very closely and has promised to orchestrate everything according to what each rightly deserves.

"As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Prtha (Bg. 4.11)"

Although I have requested we consider honoring BOTH systems by allowing BOTH systems to be implemented and practiced within ISKCON, some have interpreted this to mean "Forgive and Forget." Yes, I do believe it is healthy, and often more appropriate... even saintly, to simply forgive the foolish things other devotees say or do. In fact it is hard for me to understand how someone who has truly embraced the concept of "lower than the straw in the street" could be so easily offended. But I do not say forget. We also know that it is appropriate for a devotee to become extremely angry when he sees the servants of the Lord being mistreated. There is no argument here. The difficulty is in defining the dastardly deed that has actually been committed and pinpointing who is really responsible for doing it.

When we speak of the GBC we do not speak of an individual. We speak of a group of several people who have little or no practical education in regards to managing an extremely revolutionary, international, orthodox, religious movement. This is understandable because other than the Gaudia Math, which set an example of what not to do, there are very few models we have to learn from.

It seems evident by the extremely bad reputation the GBC has that the members have little or no awareness of even the most basic principals of how to govern effectively or intelligently. This is demonstrated by their reliance on closed door meetings, dictatorial proclamations, and an incomprehensible indifference towards input from their constituents who, for the most part, happen to be great Vaishnavas of the Lord. These themes keep re-surfacing and they threaten to shatter the movement into several independent splinter temples just like the Gaudia Math is today.

Unfortunately, it seems equally true that the GBC doesn't even have much of an understanding of the prominent psychological factors that creep in and influence the outcome of how an individual or a quorum makes a decision. Ignorance of the way the four human defects manifest in the form of group-think, insecurity, corporate culture, sublimation and other well studied behavioral science principals is evident by the steady flow of dramatic and controversial events that surround the profiles of those who sit on the GBC body.

In all fairness we consent that these particular fields of knowledge are "Mundane Sciences" and therefore not relevant in discussions about the nature of the Absolute. However, managing ISKCON requires more than just blind sentimental faith that "Krishna will protect us." Only fools lie down in the middle of the highway and expect Krishna to protect them.

Our philosophy is that everything can be used in the service of Krishna. It is appropriate that those who cook for Krishna understand how the stove works, just as those who drive sankirtan vans are expected to have a license and know how to drive safely. The same principal applies to our lawmakers. Management is

## Whoever Thinks They Can Manage ISKCON is Disqualified

*Tuesday December 14, 1998 Page 1 of 28.*

c/o mayesvara dasa Ojai, California (805) 640-0405

a science. Research confirms that the concept of the “Natural Born Leader” is a myth. Organizations prosper when they follow good management principles taught by industry leaders like Peter Druker, Andrew Carnegie, Frederick Taylor, Abraham Maslow, Tom Peters, and Edward Demmings to name a few. It should not be surprising to discover that the conclusions these people arrived at concur with Krishna Consciousness. We teach the principles of mutual respect, honor, concern, fairness and appropriate recognition for those that make the organization successful, but we have failed to practice it. Because Srila Prabhupada was fully Krishna Consciousness he automatically incorporated all these proven management principals into his decision making and the result was the unrivaled historic event which started our society.

The larger the organization, the more imperative it is that good management principles are practiced or it will suffer and could collapse completely. We can not expect poorly trained legislators to make intelligent decisions anymore then we can expect someone who can't do arithmetic to do a good job keeping the temple accounts. One of the best pieces of recent news was on the front page of the Sep/Dec98 edition of the Hare Krishna World “Training a Must for the Future”. ...Amen. This is also why I have supported those devotees who wanted to get some “secular” training at Landmark Education last year. (Article: “Landmark Education & Iskcon” Available from VNN under “World” Jan98)

Because I am speaking of the GBC as a group, these characteristics obviously do not apply to every member individually. In fact there are some GBC men who are quite erudite about some of the things I have mentioned. But because of the way the GBC has evolved individual expertise is often under utilized, misdirected, outvoted, completely ignored or considered mundane, irrelevant or inappropriate. Because of the serious lack of expertise, the group is left to sink to the lowest common denominator of acceptability in order to get concurrence.

What I am referring to is obvious for anyone who has a little common sense, understands the dynamics of group psychology, and is paying attention to what is going on. I do this for those of you who have gotten the impression that by recommending BOTH systems I am unaware of how much foolishness has been done by our leaders in the name of Krishna Consciousness. Many of you have been generous about sharing with me the gory details about who offended, insulted, cheated, lied, scammed or exploited who and I empathize with all the tales of woe. Indeed it is very sad. But we must be very careful to lay out a plan of action that is based on sound Krishna Consciousness principles and not the more usual human reactions to such offences that produce feelings of hurt, revenge, anger, retaliation, etc.

If and when an INDIVIDUAL is clearly convicted for illegal behavior then they should be prosecuted to the full extend of the law. This is Vedic and I don't think anyone disagrees with it. The fact that the GBC body has failed to correct transgressions in a timely manner is not, in the opinion of many devotees, a carefully planed conspiracy of corrupt crooks intent on cheating the public for personal gain. It may appear that way but the more likely explanation is that we have completely mixed up the varna-ashram roles within our society.

Sanyasis act like vaishas when they are involved in the book publishing BUSINESS. The temple presidents must have the strength and tenacity of Ksatrias to carry out and uphold ISKCON law but our temples should be run by brahmans. Vaishas end up making the decisions reserved for Brahmans if they have ever suede ISKCON policy, globally or regionally with their wealth, influence, mundane status or tangible assets. Underlying all this is the fact that we are all really just a bunch of meleccha sudras who have been blessed with the opportunity to masquerade as something greater. It's really quite miraculous that things aren't even worse then they are and that anything gets done at all because of our natural proclivity for pride, greed and general incompetence.

So the reason for this meditation is to remind all of us to recognize that there may only be a very few extremely rare devotees who are actually mature enough and properly qualified to manage and lead this movement well. It really is an extremely difficult thing for any devotee to know exactly what needs to be done on behalf of the entire movement. Then one must also know how to perfectly carry it out while simultaneously setting an impeccable standard in one's own personal life.

## **Whoever Thinks They Can Manage ISKCON is Disqualified**

***Tuesday December 14, 1998 Page 2 of 28.***

c/o mayesvara dasa Ojai, California (805) 640-0405

When we all recognize these conditions honestly we will naturally become a little more understanding of why the GBC is digging themselves into a hole. Many of them are simply overwhelmed. It's like a group of boy scouts trying to save the passengers on a plane which has an engine out, a hole in the fuselage, low fuel, no radio, and broken landing gear. They are trying sincerely, but it's really a very desperate situation and more than any of us are really capable of handling.

So I think it is prudent for EVERYONE to stop making it sound so easy to run this movement. Even if the RtVik solution is eventually adopted there will be a lot of difficult issues that have to get pounded out. It wouldn't be as simple as reverting back to before the fall of 1977. We must all strive for personal honesty if there is to be any progress individually or collectively. As soon as anyone even implies that they got it all figured out we should be very concerned.

In this regard it is useful to remember the mood Srila Prabhupada had on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 1965 when he first came to this country. He prayed ...

"... I am very unfortunate, unqualified, and the most fallen. Therefore I am seeking Your benediction so that I can convince them, for I am powerless to do so on my own... my Lord, it is up to You to make me a success or failure as You like... Only by Your causeless mercy will my words become pure....O Lord, I am just like a puppet in Your hands... I have no devotion, nor do I have any knowledge, but I have strong faith in the holy name of Krsna"

The only chance we have of resolving our internal difficulties without destroying everything is by acting on the highest levels of Krishna Consciousness. This is especially true when speaking about and dealing with our Governing Body members. According to all the teachings of great personalities from the beginning of time this is the only way to soften a hardened heart. When the heart starts pumping again paramatma will guide the sincere soul to act with integrity and personal honesty. Then a new standard of leadership will evolve.

We have seen on more than one case (Jagadisha & Harikesa & Ramesvara to name three) that members of the GBC went along with the group due to peer pressure but DID NOT REALLY personally agree with the decisions that were being handed down. The very same thing is no doubt going on right now today. We need to make such a high presentation that those who are wrestling with this cognitive dissonance, or internal spiritual conflict, will have something to lean towards so they can take a stand within the GBC body and prevent further degradation of spirit. (Like Paul Newman in the movie 12 Angry Men!)

Ultimately we should become like Ghandi or Haridas Thakur. Anyone wishing reform must speak and act from the HIGHEST application of Vaishnava Principals. People are attracted to that...not all the finger pointing and name calling! Haridasa Thakur wanted the simple freedom to chant and he was lashed for it but he never spoke badly or reacted to the beating.

Those campaigning for reform must realize that what they are requesting is not a small thing. The least that is required will be that the GBC has to face some serious work and address some extremely controversial problems. They are probably overwhelmed with trying to deal with these issues because it is beyond their ability to even grasp how complex they are, what to speak of coming up with an agreement regarding how to resolve them. Nobody likes being forced into having to address something that is over their head. I see this everyday where I work. People do all sorts of weird things to avoid admitting that they just don't know how to do what you are asking them to do. It's false ego operating with all throttles wide open.

Some of the GBC undoubtedly feel their whole position is being DIRECTLY threatened. The more reasonable we can be the less they will feel threatened. Then they will be able to hear what we have to say and eventually get comfortable about doing what is really in everyone's best Interest. It's like trying to lure a wounded dog out of a sewer.

If the GBC insists on acting unreasonably even after being presented with a very nice Krishna Consciousness proposal, they will loose the support of the sane, mature, and generally good hearted devotees. They will in essence self-destruct one by one. This is the way Ghandi defeated the entire British

## **Whoever Thinks They Can Manage ISKCON is Disqualified**

***Tuesday December 14, 1998 Page 3 of 28.***

c/o mayesvara dasa Ojai, California (805) 640-0405

Government. This is how Martin Luther King changed the course of segregation history in America. This is how Jesus won the love of millions of souls across the centuries. This IS HOW those who want serious reform from a defective system will be victorious.

“Wherever there is Krishna the master of all mystics, and wherever there is Arjuna, the supreme archer, there will also certainly be opulence, victory, extraordinary power, and morality. That is my opinion.”  
Bg. 18.78

## How To Contact The Author

mayeresvara dasa  
AKA: William G. Roberts MBA/IS, CDP  
687 Villanova Road  
Ojai, California 93023  
United States Of America  
(805) 640-0405 Home

## Other Articles By This Author:

(Available on VNN under “USA” Archives)

*Guru Crisis* – Personal Letter to GBC

(October 15, 1998 - Two Pages)

*The Process of Vaishnava Initiation and ISKCON*

(October 3, 1998 - 28 pages)

*Drop the Bomb and End the War*

(December 1, 1998 - 5 Pages)

*Whoever Thinks They Can Manage ISKCON is Disqualified*

(December 15, 1998 - 4 Pages)

*Put The Extremists Where They Belong*

(December 27, 1998 - 6 Pages)

*The Art Of War In ISKCON*

(January 7, 1998 - 8 Pages)

(Available on VNN under “WORLD” Archives)

*Landmark Education and ISKCON*

(January 1, 1998 - 16 Pages )

**Whoever Thinks They Can Manage ISKCON is Disqualified**

**Tuesday December 14, 1998 Page 4 of 28.**

c/o mayesvara dasa Ojai, California (805) 640-0405