

October 4, 1985

Memorandum to any interested initiated Vaisnava  
in Radha Kalachandji dhama -

From: Bhaktarupa dasa and on behalf of Navina Krsna Prabhu

Please read the attached excerpt from this weeks Sankirtan Newsletter and give me your thoughts on the following:

1. Should this newsletter be posted as they are every week?
2. In light of the fact that Srila Gurudeva is not here and that the temple leadership has chosen not to implement any of these resolutions until he returns, should there be an Istagosthi wherein this is read and questions asked and discussed? Keep in mind that there may be some very strong opinions about implementation brought out at such an Istagosthi.
3. If it is decided not to have an Istagosthi, how will the devotees' many questions be answered?

Please let me know by Sunday evening so that an Istagosthi can be scheduled if necessary.

HARIBOL!

# It Happened In New Vrindaban

by Sriman Balavanta Prabhu, Chairman of the GBC

As most of you are well aware, there was a week-long maha-istagosthi attended by the GBC and senior devotees of ISKCON in New Vrindaban last week. The purpose was to evaluate the condition of the movement, and to determine what direction to take in order to increase the preaching. Many options were discussed and resolutions taken on how the society could best project itself, and expand its sphere of influence in the world. In a conversation, last Monday, with Balavanta Prabhu, this year's GBC Chairman, he shared

with us his thoughts as well as some of the resolutions that are relevant to preaching.

There are a number of themes that I think were prominent at the meeting in New Vrindaban. Of course, the resolutions are already there, and they speak for themselves. But just in terms of my own editorial comment, I could see that the GBC Body was recognizing the unique spiritual position of Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada was unquestionably a maha-bhagavata. He was

36 seeing Krsna everywhere  
34 at all times, and thus there  
27 is no chance of Srila  
26 Prabhupada ever being  
23 deviated by the material  
energy for any purpose.  
Thus, all of us—all the  
members of ISKCON—  
whether we are Srila  
14 Prabhupada's disciples or  
10 grand-disciples or great-  
grand-disciples or great-  
great-grand-disciples,  
can be perfectly protected under the shelter of  
Srila Prabhupada's lotus  
feet. And the GBC wants to  
establish that position  
very strongly. In other  
words, the GBC could  
perceive that Srila

Prabhupada is **the** acarya for ISKCON, and will remain as the acarya for ISKCON, as far as we can see, for the indefinite future. That is **his** position.

The second theme I noticed was that the GBC recognizes the importance of the opinions of all the Vaisnavas in the movement. ISKCON is a spiritual movement of saintly persons, or *sadhus*. And just as we see by guru, *sadhu* and *sastra*, the opinion of the *sadhu* is very important. After all, Srila Prabhupada's and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's concept

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of the GBC, is by nature a sort of democratic concept. Just as sages in ancient times would meet together to resolve a problem, the concept of working together through a common vehicle like the GBC is meant to represent the feelings of all Vaisnavas. And that concept is becoming very important in our society.

Lord Caitanya was not so much concerned with status. In that sense, all of Lord Caitanya's followers had a common goal and comradery. And that's the way that ISKCON is

whether you're Srila Prabhupada's disciple or someone else's disciple, whether you're a guru or a *sannyasi*, a *grhastha* or a *brahmachari*. We are all followers of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His *sankirtana* movement, which is very special.

I think some Vaisnavas were perceiving this comradery or oneness of all the followers of Srila Prabhupada and Lord Caitanya had been replaced with status ("I'm this-guru's disciple" or "I'm that-guru's disciple" or "I'm a guru" or "I'm not

a guru" or "I'm in this or that zone") Somehow or other the oneness or the unity of this movement, which is so crucial, was being somewhat neglected. So, I think some of the resolutions are designed to reestablish this great oneness of the Vaisnavas.

I think the GBC also exemplified a great confidence in the members of this movement; accepting their opinion as being very important, significant and valid. Now it's been some eight years since Srila Prabhupada has

disappeared. Many of Srila Prabhupada's disciples are now mature Vaisnavas. The GBC has confidence that these persons, should they desire so, can take up the responsibility of initiation. At the same time, the GBC has great enthusiasm and optimism that a great new energy will come into the movement, as people begin to expand the preaching by going out to every town and village with the message of Lord Caitanya. We're hoping that this great energy will

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take hold, and that these resolutions will result in a great expansion of the preaching efforts. We want to expand the preaching through freedom. A Vaisnava is ultimately the only free person, because a Vaisnava is surrendered to Krsna and free from material attachment. Therefore, he is the only one with real freedom. As our society becomes more mature, the GBC wants to recognize that maturity, and recognize the inherent freedom of the Vaisnava.

And thirdly, I think another theme was that

the GBC wants to establish without any question that **there are absolute standards** in our movement. There are absolute standards involved with the chanting of 16 rounds and following the four regulative principles. These standards are not relative in any way. They are absolute standards for all time and for all persons. Especially the **leaders** of this movement must follow them because they are Lord Caitanya's standards. We can't "relative-ize" them. They are absolute.

These are the three themes that I saw at work

in the meeting, and I think that these themes will continue to be very prominent in our society as the years go by.

### Excerpts from the Minutes of the GBC Meetings

September 19th

1. RESOLVED: If a Vaisnava is approached for initiation, or desires to initiate in connection with opening a new preaching field, or is otherwise inclined to initiate, he must first consult with the local temple authorities, if he

expects to initiate persons residing within the jurisdiction of that temple. In addition, he must consult with three GBC members, two of whom may be selected by him, the third being the GBC member responsible for the area in which he wishes to initiate. Unless he is disapproved by either the temple authorities or by one of the three GBC members, he may take up the responsibility of initiation. Any disapproval must be based upon the Rules and Guidelines established by the GBC (see resolution #4 in these minutes).

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Further, any disapproval must be submitted for confirmation to a five-man committee consisting of the three current *GBC* officers, the current Chairman of the International Temple Presidents Body, and the current Chairman of the International Body of *Sannyasis*. On receiving such a petition, that body will carefully deliberate on the issue in consultation with all parties.

The above committee will then make a final determination as to whether or not the devotee's request to initiate is disapproved.

It is further understood that all *ISKCON gurus* may only initiate candidates who have been regularly chanting and following the regulative principles for a minimum of one year.

**2. RESOLVED:** Any *ISKCON guru* may sit on any *ISKCON vyasasana* (except of course Srila Prabhupada's) anywhere in the world.

**3. RESOLVED:** Photographs of any of Srila Prabhupada's disciples who are initiating *gurus*, when placed on the altar of any *ISKCON* temple, shall be placed on a level lower than that of the pictures of members of our disciplic succession (consisting of Srila Prabhupada, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, etc.).

**4. RESOLVED:** The following Rules and Guidelines are established for giving approval for an *ISKCON Vaisnava* to begin initiating disciples.

## RULES

- Must be strictly following the four regulative principles and chanting 16 rounds daily.
- Must have been an initiated disciple for at least 10 years.
- Must not have had a falldown within five years

record of moral turpitude  
e. Must not have allegiance to a spiritual authority outside of *ISKCON*, unless approved by the *GBC*.

- Must not be lacking in understanding and knowledge of the *sastra*.
- Must support the *GBC*.

## GUIDELINES

- Should have a *Bhaktivedanta* or *Bhakti-vaibhava* degree in philosophy.
- Should not cause doubt about his ability to follow the code of conduct.
- Should not be involved in "abnormal situations". An example of this is cited as a disrupted or abnormal family life which could distract a *guru* from his *guru* duties or otherwise prove a disruption for him.
- Must always be conscientious about presenting proper philosophy.
- Must always behave responsibly.

September 20th

**5. RESOLVED:** Srila Hari-kesa will draft a blueprint for *Varnasrama* as Srila Prabhupada indicated *varnasrama* should be implemented in and by *ISKCON*. This paper will be presented at the annual *GBC* meeting in Mayapur, 1986.

**6. RESOLVED:** Between now and the 1986 Mayapur Annual *GBC* meeting, all *GBC* members will think about, discuss and prepare themselves to discuss and/or present proposals regarding structuring the *GBC* and *ISKCON* such that it includes proper legislative, executive, judicial and ministerial systems as well as other mechanisms that shall provide for an appropriate management structure for the society.

**7. RESOLVED:** The temple presidents and regional secretaries in each zone can take a vote of confidence/no-

*GBC* member when they feel the situation is severe enough to warrant intervention by the *GBC* body. If the vote is one of no-confidence, the *GBC* body will review the position of the *GBC* member in question, in consultation with the appropriate president and regional secretary, with the aim of rectifying the problem. If the *GBC* body and local leaders are not able to reach an accord, the *GBC* body, in consultation with the appropriate local leaders, can appoint a new *GBC* member for that particular temple. They should also consider the suitability of that *GBC* member to remain on the *GBC* body. If 75% of the International Temple Presidents Body gives a vote of no-confidence for a *GBC* member, then the same procedure will apply.

Further, to insure the compatibility of all leaders in the society, especially during the times of breakdown of love and trust, there should also be a vote of confidence/no-confidence for the regional secretary by the presidents in his area, and a similar vote for the president by the initiated devotees in his temple.

However, if there is a situation wherein a devotee is found to be instigating a situation with an aim to seriously disrupt the peaceful functioning of *ISKCON*'s mission, the *GBC* body, after investigation, may remove that person from his position.

**8. RESOLVED:** The following general guidelines should be adopted by all *ISKCON* temples, although it is understood that in certain preaching areas of the world, circumstances may have to be adjusted.

- No nameplates or engravings of the names of any *ISKCON gurus* other than Srila Prabhupada's shall appear on any *ISKCON vyasasana*.

**one vyasasana** other than Srila Prabhupada's in each temple and there shall be no "guest vyasasana".

c. The non-Prabhupada *vyasasana* shall be of such a height that when any *ISKCON guru* sits on it, his head shall not be higher than Srila Prabhupada's chest (Srila Prabhupada here refers to the Deity of Srila Prabhupada on His *vyasasana*).

d. Any pictures of *ISKCON gurus* placed on the non-Prabhupada *vyasasana* shall all be of the same size.

**9. RESOLVED:** In response to a suggestion from the body of temple presidents, *sannyasis*, regional secretaries and other non-*GBC* members present at the New Vrindaban meetings Sept. 16-20, 1985, the *GBC* body of *ISKCON* has agreed to issue the following statement to all *ISKCON* members:

The Governing Body of *ISKCON* recognizes and regrets that many faithful *ISKCON* devotees have left the service of *ISKCON* because of difficulties in fashioning appropriate disciple and *guru*-godbrother relationships after Srila Prabhupada's departure. However, the *GBC* feels that the spirit of the current resolutions made in New Vrindaban on 16-20 Sept., 1985, clearly indicates that appropriate actions are underway to correct the situation. The *GBC*, therefore, invites all such devotees to return to their service to help us in our determination to strengthen and purify this great movement.