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# **Jayapatākā Swāmī**

Acarya & Governing Body Commissioner

Trustee - Bhaktivedanta Book Trust

REPLY: ISKCON New Orleans (>Jan. 21, 1985)

2938 Esplanade Ave., La., 70119, USA.

LATER REPLY: C/O ISKCON CALCUTTA:

3C, Albert Rd., 700017, INDIA.

January 1, 1985

Date

H.D.G. Srila Hrdayananda das Goswami Acharyadeva

ISKCON'S BOARDWALK OASIS TEMPLE

2445 Collins Ave.

Miami Beach, Fl., 33140, USA.

My dear god-brother Srila Acharyadeva,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada, who gave the world pure Krishna Consciousness—inundating the people in the flood of Lord Sri Caitanya's mercy!

Thankyou for your letter which has brought onto the open discussion table of the Governing Body Commission a topic which should be discussed and brought to a conclusion by the members of the Governing Body Commission. It is important that we find a comprehensive solution representative of Srila Prabhupada's own desires,

As you have rightly pointed out in your letter, these matters have been discussed for some years now, but without a solution which satisfies all the godbrothers. However, my personal impression from discussing with different GBC members is that it is necessary to reach a consensus. The Governing Body Commission must provide a united opinion to end all the confusion and to provide enthusiasm to the body of ISKCON. In many ways there is a consensus of desire that ISKCON should have a practical system for expanding the authority to initiate to qualified god-brothers—a system which will set the standard for the future generations of Krsna consciousness.

It seems that apart from the dissatisfaction that a few godbrothers have with the present system of appointing initiating gurus—namely, through the zonal GBC members recommendation—it is still basically the most popular system. At the same time, there are devotees, both within and without the Governing Body Commission, who feel that, overall, a more comprehensive and explicit system is required—a system which will keep all the godbrothers enthused to expand the ISKCON preaching. Although discussions have been held to understand what the new revamped system might be ultimately everyone is looking to the Governing Body Commission to provide the solution.

Apart from everything else, the question seems to have reached a temporary stalemate over basic questions concerning what shape ISKCON will take in the future if there are many initiating spiritual masters. At present, dissatisfaction exists at some places over how the local GBC's inter-relate with Regional Secretaries and Temple Presidents, add to this the presence of many initiating gurus, and the scenario becomes more complex, posing new questions on how GBC's, Regional Secretaries, and Temple Presidents will inter-relate under those circumstances. For example, with a liberal policy of initiating guru appointment, it's quite possible that there might be a resident Sannyasi attached to a Temple (who isn't holding an administrative position) who has been authorized to initiate. The question is: how will such new initiating gurus inter-relate with other zonal and temple authorities?

Naturally, persons responsible for developing preaching in an area are concerned that the preaching programs, policies, and organization which have produced stability and momentum in their area not be lost or disturbed.

These concerns are underlined by a desire to know how the future expansion of preaching will be achieved and how any existing shortcomings might be solved in the future, considering everything important. Responsible leaders have condemned both "Token-ism" on the one side and over-simplified blanket "panacea" solutions which don't give due thought to many practical considerations.

While all these considerations are going on, to most godbrothers it is a more important question to know how Srila Prabhupada's central position as our Founder-Acharya and eternal guiding torch-light is being fortified in the midst of everything. This concern becomes a very sensitive issue and emotions run high if anyone thinks that due regard to Srila Prabhupada is not being maintained at the standard it should be.

This takes another dimension when a non-GBC god-brother feels his service to Srila Prabhupada, and thus his spiritual survival, is being threatened now—when during the physical presence of Srila Prabhupada he enjoyed security and a stable position. This creates an empty feeling of hopelessness in separation from Srila Prabhupada and even inspires opposition in some cases.

Certainly there are many questions which have not yet been fully answered by the Governing Body Commission to the satisfaction of many concerned godbrothers. I agree with you that simply to discuss and solve such serious and important topics during the few hours we meet together in Mayapur without any previous thought or communication on the subject would be no less than a miracle.

As it is against our principles to gamble and I don't want to depend upon a miracle. I want to take the opportunity of your "ice-breaking" letter to take the communication a step further towards finding a solution. I humbly thank your divine grace for gracing us with some of your spiritual vision, and request you further assist the Governing Body Commission in understanding the issues at hand.

This letter is given with the hope of providing the members of the Governing Body Commission a more concrete basis for communication with each other so that during this year's meeting the Governing Body Commission can make a complete decision which will clarify the questions which have arisen. We have been criticized for not discussing the different questions that our other responsible godbrothers have. I personally feel these criticisms of the G.B.C. are actually unfounded, as there has not been a formal attempt to officially intimate to the Governing Body Commission any specific questions (as the Chairman of the G.B.C. I haven't received any letter from any quarter in ISKCON regarding these topics), but, irregardless of receiving formal inquiries, the questions do exist and need to be discussed and answered by the Governing Body Commission for securing the stability of ISKCON, discussions.

Your earlier letter has made us eager to hear more, so that the answers to the pertinent questions might be more clear to us all. I have no doubt that there is sincerity and purity in the ISKCON leadership, both in the Governing Body Commission and amongst temple Presidents, and Regional Secretaries. I have no doubt that what has been done, since Srila Prabhupada's Maha-samadhi, has certainly been done in a pure service attitude in devotion to Srila Prabhupada. Nevertheless it is always our duty as preachers and devotees to evaluate our actions in terms of sadhu, shastra and guru; to further refine our pure devotional service; and to study the preaching systems in terms of kala-desha-patra for achieving maximum results for fulfilling Srila Prabhupada's dream of further spreading the glories of Lord Sri Krsna Caitanya Mahaprabhu's samkirtan movement all over the world.

That is my reason for replying your divine grace with copies to the G.B.C. members (they may show these questions to their zones leading Srila Prabhupada disciples for discussion as they consider applicable) to voice some of the questions I have heard on the above subjects and thereby

to get your valued opinion on these important points.

Some of the highlight questions I have heard are given below for your valued replies. In most cases I have not put any commentary, to keep it short. However, in some cases, to make the points clear, I have expanded the question to give the full picture, as I have understood it. Generally, the following questions have been posed by those who are favourably inclined to increase the number of initiating gurus, but have doubts or reservations. They want these to be resolved before they can feel confident about making a final decision.

I am taking the liberty of replying your letter with more questions. I feel that your transcendental intelligence will churn the ocean of nectar in such a way that the members of the Governing Body Commission may get a clearer understanding leading us to a solution during this years annual G.B.C. Meeting. Therefore, I am hoping that we may receive an illuminating reply to these current questions, and thus be further obliged to your divine grace.

KINDLY NOTE: these questions are not in any way to be considered as necessarily accepted by me or presented as correct, true in fact, or supported by a majority of ISKCON leaders. They are a collection of some of the queries and doubts which I have heard voiced. I am simply presenting them to you, and the G.B.C. members, as a matter of discussion and study, for information! There are other viewpoints which I will try to touch on later.

## QUESTIONS FOR CHANGE:

### QUESTION 1.

A common question, which basically agrees with the point you made that the structure at present is inadequate, is what system of management, applied-philosophy and structure can be established which will avoid the various dangers experienced already in ISKCON from reappearing; and also how to keep Srila Prabhupada firmly in the prominent centre of ISKCON?

Some leaders are hoping that the GBC should carefully consider in advance the structure of ISKCON under

the proposed system of "many initiating gurus" in order that there be a smooth expansion of the preaching with no mishaps. What suggestions would you have regarding restructuring ISKCON in lieu of the understanding of Srila Prabhupada's desires regarding expanding the number of its members? How to preserve the benefits inherent in the systems being followed now, and at the same time re-structure ISKCON to accommodate the mass expansion of preaching?

The vast majority of those with whom I have talked to do not feel that merely adding a few more initiating gurus is the solution. Although expanding with additional initiating gurus is a certainty, they feel a comprehensive study of the situation is required. It should be confirmed what is the most appropriate structure for ISKCON, under those circumstances, and according to Srila Prabhupada's instructions and desires. The question is, what adjustments in the structuring or functioning of ISKCON would be more pleasing to Srila Prabhupada, if any? Everyone wants a spiritual solution and not a material adjustment!

### QUESTION 2.

At present the names of the full members of the Governing Body Commission are automatically considered, according to GBC Rules, as candidates for receiving the divine order to act as an initiating guru. Non-GBC's must be nominated by their GBC to be considered as a candidate for receiving the divine order to be an initiating guru. This present system for expanding the number of initiating gurus, through the zonal concept, is satisfying to most GBC's, although some senior god-

brothers are not satisfied.

There question is, why can't this present zonal system be maintained with an addition? Namely, the addition of a parallel procedure which would nominate qualified senior godbrothers for consideration by the Governing Body Commission, as for GBC members. The suggestion is that a godbrother would be a candidate worthy of automatic nomination upon his reaching certain minimum qualifications established by the Governing Body Commission. These qualifications could include various standards, namely, strong service record, practical and theoretical knowledge of the Shashtra's, seniority and maturity in responsible services with unbroken continuity, freedom from amarta's, steadiness in sadhana. Once any disciple of Srila Prabhupada, would qualify under these general headings, his name would automatically come before the Governing Body Commission for consideration. Thereafter the GBC rules which apply to the appointment of a new initiating guru who is recommended by a GBC member would then apply. The argument is that this would satisfy the demands of those godbrothers who feel that under the present system even if someone is basically qualified, due to the lack of any uniform policy he may not be recommended as a candidate for being an initiating guru. This would offer an "across-the-board" system assuring that anyone reaching the established standards would be considered then on merit, by the entire Governing Body Commission, thus relieving the pressure on individual GBC's who would rather have the the entire Governing Body Commission deliberate directly on the matter. Of course, this would in no way restrict a GBC from nominating any senior member of his zone at whatever time he felt that that person was qualified to be considered. The question is: is there a way in which an automatic nomination system like this can work towards the benefit of ISKCON?

### QUESTION 3.

Responsible devotees have full faith that the binding force of maintaining ISKCON's purity is to follow Srila Prabhupada's orders. Therefore, preserving the strength of the Governing Body Commission is the prime concern for all of us—as that was the unequivocal order of His Divine Grace. His CC purports emphatically caution us by revealing how the Gaudiya Math organization disintegrated due to neglecting this absolute principle as also was ordered by the previous Acharyas. Therefore, a common concern for strengthening the hand of the Governing Body Commission is prevalent throughout ISKCON. Some questions have arisen centered around preserving the strength and credibility of the Governing Body Commission when they appoint new initiating gurus.

In some cases Srila Prabhupada appointed certain individuals to sit as members of the GBC who were not very strong spiritually. Later His Divine Grace admitted that he appointed persons who were not actually qualified to the Governing Body Commission for some "tactical" reason. His Divine Grace also personally warned the Governing Body Commission against making similar appointments on the basis of political considerations. This, Srila Prabhupada explained, was to protect the credibility of the Governing Body Commission.

Srila Prabhupada elaborated that he could do so because at that time he was personally present to adjust any discrepancies that might arise, therefore, he could take the risk of making appointments to otherwise unqualified persons for achieving some tactical purpose. His Divine Grace warned the Governing Body Commission not do the same as their credibility could be brought into question and thereby the faith the devotees hold in the Governing Body Commission could be endangered. This would weaken the Governing Body Commission and its ability to fulfil its duties to the disciplic succession. These considerations have raised the following question:

Two of the initiating gurus appointed by Srila Prabhupada have fallen down from their responsible Krsna consciousness positions and the Governing Body Commission had to step in to save the situation. Due to Srila Prabhupada's absolute position it is unhesitatingly accepted that the initiating gurus who fell down had the capacity to fulfill their duties, but due to not strictly following Srila Prabhupada's instructions they fell down.

However, when the Governing Body Commission begins to appoint many new initiating gurus, how will they preserve the credibility of the Governing Body Commission if there is a reduction of the standard? This would definitely create a feeling of doubt if appointments are made apparently to appease a political push by some god-brothers. Specifically, those who are threatening to leave ISKCON if they are not made initiating gurus raise yet another question that if such devotees have such shallow faith and are ready to neglect the orders of their Spiritual Master and leave ISKCON now, even when they have no followers to speak of, then what is to keep them from leaving, when they have many disciples to flatter them? Even some petty misunderstanding between the new non-GBC initiating guru and his GBC representative could be used as an excuse for leaving ISKCON, or some other petty problem.

Similarly, if a significant number of GBC appointed initiating gurus fall down, how will the credibility of the Governing Body Commission be maintained intact? Already ISKCON is plagued with rumours. The Temple Presidents are asking for a higher standard amongst initiating gurus and a strong Governing Body Commission to enforce it. They want to know how the Governing Body Commission is going to maintain quality control and behavior control over the initiating gurus in ISKCON?

How will the Governing Body Commission remain strong if appointments are made merely in consideration of someones unfulfilled ambitions to have followers and disciples? Such persons are actually unsubmitive to the Governing Body Commission's authority. Therefore, in their daily life they doubt Srila Prabhupada's absolute position as represented by his order. Therefore, how can they represent the disciplic succession?

The regional leaders want to know what arrangement the Governing Body Commission is going to make to correct any discrepancies amongst its' members which may be present now and also for any discrepancies which may arise amongst new initiating gurus in the future? Srila Prabhupada said that the Governing Body Commission is the "watch-dog" of ISKCON. Therefore, under all these circumstances what is the plan on how to maintain the purity in ISKCON and the faith of the devotees?

#### QUESTION 4.

Srila Prabhupada instituted the "zonal system" of management in ISKCON, and this has certainly led to a responsible development of preaching around the world. We've heard the maxim "Proprietorship turns sand to gold!", and in terms of giving preaching responsibilities to a zonal, regional or temple, etc. leader certainly is the ingredient which makes things expand. Therefore, it is certainly a system which will always exist in ISKCON.

Within any program of preaching development both initiative and expressions of personal ecstasy to spread Lord Caitanya's Samkirtan Movement will be present. This is also dictated by the local "time, place and circumstance" considerations for expanding the Movement in that particular area. Within the Worldwide ISKCON family this adds a touch of individual personal flavour to each zone and each temple. Just as each Deity of the Lord is, according to shastra, having "leela-vaichitra", or "unique and variegated pastimes"—each zone under the shelter of different Deities, Spiritual masters, and leaders with different wonderful devotees naturally possesses its own mellow of devotional expression.

Now in several places this is enhanced by having co-GBC's and co-initiating gurus creating a dynamic example of transcendental cooperation to satisfy the desires of Srila Prabhupada and Lord Sri Krsna Caitanya Mahaprabhu. These are all positive features of ISKCON which remind one of the original preaching cooperation and flavor seen during the first generation after the departure of Lord Sri Krsna Caitanya Mahaprabhu from this world! This is because ISKCON has the world vision for spreading the Samkirtan Movement of Lord Caitanya to every town, village in every country of the world.

However within this wonderful world of ISKCON sometimes there are questions which come up due to a certain alleged new concept which has appeared. This new concept is responsible, say many leaders, of endangering the "world-wide" or "family-spirit" of ISKCON. The accused "new concept" is the philosophy that states that every initiating guru must have his own "exclusive place" where he can be the sole object of worship.

The example was given that just like a honeymoon couple requires a private bedroom, similarly an initiating guru needs his "private place", -a distasteful analogy, but one which has been quoted by responsible devotees.

The antagonists of this ideology submit that this "private room" concept is a perverted reflection of the authorized vedic "guru-datta-desha" formula of spiritual responsibility taught to us by Srila Prabhupada. The "private place" concept tends to add a material touch into the otherwise spiritual body of ISKCON. They thus submit that this "private room" separatism is actually the same insidious poison that destroyed the Gaudiya Matha organization only in a slightly different bottle—the "zonal room" bottle.

The antagonists of "private room-ism" further express that the concept of a zonal GBC being the "acharya" of his zone only seems repulsive when it takes on the cloak of isolationism, exclusivism, and separatism. Which is why, they submit, ISKCON initially welcomed the new initiating gurus as the spiritual masters for zone, but now find it largely unacceptable so long as the "private room" poison remains active. They also state that the "private room" philosophy inhibits the GBC program of zonal expansion of initiating gurus as it creates confusion and contradiction in thought. Other specific "evils" have resulted from this and this has created more questions amongst the godbrothers. Some of the specific questions which have come up are given below:

A.

The first and most fatal complaint is that the concept of "exclusive worship" or the "private place" idea was not from Srila Prabhupada at all, but from a foreign source not favourable to Srila Prabhupada's "gosthi-ananda" worldwide expansive preaching organization mood for spreading Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's samkirtan movement. They say that it fits ill with Srila Prabhupada's mood, and is a poison which has entered ISKCON's spiritual body. They say it should be studied carefully and if it is indeed a poison it should be irradiated posthaste! They say that in zones with more than one initiating guru there is no problem and therefore the idea that each initiating guru must have a totally exclusive place is unfounded. Is the "private room" concept a bonafide Prabhupada authorized concept, or is it a poison having entered from outside ISKCON as Srila Prabhupada had warned it could come from certain quarters who could not help us but could harm us? Other specific problems originating from this concept, at present and possibly in future, are given below.

B.

The preferability of having persons accept initiation from a spiritual master who visits a particular place regularly and is responsible for preaching in that area is well accepted in

ISKCON. At the same time, sometimes things get seemingly out of hand when a new bhakta/bhaktin or FOLK member gets attracted to another initiating guru whose book they have read or darshan had enthused them from a visit or any other number of reasons.

At this time, under the "private room" ideology, the local manager is told he must now "convince" the new devotee that he must accept the zonal initiating guru as his spiritual

master. If it ended there it would probably be alright as certainly the faith of the new devotee should be tested in any case, but sometimes it reaches heights of drama which bewilder everyone concerned and create doubts in the spirituality of the Krsna consciousness movement. The new devotee is sometimes threatened directly or indirectly in different ways if he doesn't accept initiation from the zonal initiating guru. It is not unusual for a new devotee in such a circumstance to be put in rather extreme situations. Some of the examples are:

A qualified candidate is made to wait years together before recommendation; or the initiating guru himself personally gives an intense plug for accepting initiation, reducing the gravity of the whole relationship (the disciple is supposed to want eagerly to accept initiation); Temple Presidents are accused of collusion with "extra-zonal initiating gurus" and either put on the "hot seat" or in some cases removed. Sometimes the new devotee is told they must immediately leave the zone to "take personal association and guidance from his spiritual master" without even considering whether it is practical or not for the devotee to immediately leave; this happens even when the Temple President may need the new devotees service—but the initiating guru considers that the presence of a devotee having allegiance to another guru would have a detrimental effect for maintaining the mood of "exclusive worship" in the zone. Sometimes new devotees take initiation from an initiating guru from outside the zone they are in at present for one reason or another, and although there was no other problem and devotional service was going on nicely to the satisfaction of all concerned, that devotee left his service and the temple due to the preaching that "unless one is in the personal association of ones own godbrothers/sisters for offering "exclusive worship", one cannot make advancement in Krsna consciousness". When this happens then the concerned Temple/regional managers feel frustrated and upset. The list of problems go on and on. Temple/regional managers want to know what is the solution. Where has the good old ISKCON "world-wide family spirit" gone?

C.

Another doubt which has arisen from several quarters is that many new potential good devotees for serving Srila Prabhupada Movement are turned away because of the above pressure to accept initiation from a zonal initiating guru in whom they, in some instances, do not hold sufficient faith and devotion. They are not inspired to the extent of accept him as the eternal guide.

Some of the critics are so brazen that they are border-line offensive. They say that they "wouldn't have joined ISKCON" if they had only the choice to take initiation from the local initiating guru. The standard answer in this situation—"that the new devotee should then go shopping in other zones"—doesn't satisfy these temple's spiritual leaders because these new candidates or potential devotees that have come forward are the fruits of their hard preaching effort. They would rather have a good devotee, initiated by any bonafide ISKCON initiating guru, than lose that devotee because he isn't attracted by the local initiating guru.

The initial reaction of wanting to become initiating gurus themselves also doesn't satisfy these leaders because the same situation may develop with them—if some prospective devotees were not attracted by an often more senior and dynamic initiating guru of today then there may be many who would also not be inspired to surrender to the Temple President even if he is garlanded as an initiating guru. Therefore, the cry is given for first correcting these anomalies before further expansion confuses the issue.

They want to know what the Governing Body Commission's practical solutions are to the loss of valuable potential devotees from their temples, and in some cases from Krsna consciousness all together? They question why they should be forced to compel someone to accept initiation even in the unique case that the person has almost zero faith in the guru he is being compelled to accept? They ask the Governing Body Commission to give their final verdict whether this whole situation is in reality spiritual or a material contamination which has entered into ISKCON. They are strongly pro-Governing Body Commission as they see that that is the protection given



by Srila Prabhupada for protecting the purity of ISKCON.

D.

Srila Prabhupada used to travel constantly throughout the world to inspire the devotees in their Krsna consciousness. Srila Prabhupada's disciples isolated in different places hanker for association of advanced godbrothers now during the separation of His Divine Grace. Due to the protectionist tactics which have to be maintained to keep the "walls up", separating one "exclusive room" of one initiating guru from another "private room" of another initiating guru, they are not able to get needed association from other devotees. This is particularly acute if the visiting devotee is an initiating guru. They want to know how it can be arranged that their temples could be visited by other advanced preachers who may inspire them or their devotees to push on the sankirtan movement of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu with greater enthusiasm? They say that unless the fanaticism which has developed around the "isolated zones" policy is solved by the Governing Body Commission, they cannot have peace of mind.

E.

The final "evil" that has been attributed to the "private room" concept is the potential destruction of the Governing Body Commission policy given by Srila Prabhupada and the previous Acharyas. This could happen, the responsible leaders say, when new ISKCON initiating gurus are appointed due to the present pressure, without first irradiating the (alleged) misconceptions. The result is that new initiating gurus instead of wanting to interface and cooperate with his G.B.C., would also want their own "private exclusive place". This would naturally create so many new problems. Upon some minor disagreement between the G.B.C. member and a new initiating guru, who is not a G.B.C. member, the new initiating guru could even leave ISKCON to preserve his "private room"! Another problem, which they say happened in the first appointment of new initiating gurus, is that a new initiating guru would consider the disciples of the previous initiating gurus to be like step-children, or unwanted disturbances to creating his own "exclusive worship". In effect, the unity in diversity of ISKCON gets divided like the United Nations—instead of more unity, simply more division! They don't know what the solution is! They want to know the answer before anything else is done which can compound the problem further.

#### QUESTION 5.

In contemplating the present situation in ISKCON regarding the structure of the society and the future expansion of initiating gurus within ISKCON one sees that the initiating gurus are simultaneously administrators, in the present case "G.B.C.'s". Also, in some zones, there is an official initiating guru without any administrative responsibility. In both cases the preaching seems to be progressing nicely. The question is whether the responsibilities of initiating guru and the responsibility of holding an administrative position over an area or temple should be considered as separate distinct responsibilities or not. Just as some devotees are simultaneously sannyasis or grihastas as well as temple presidents, etc.. Both the duties go on but are considered separately. Those who propose that this is a good idea state that by considering the responsibility of being an initiating guru separately from other duties would keep the initiating gurus in a transcendental position. It would also aid the G.B.C. members who are initiating gurus in seeing the "world first and zone second", as well as keep the position of G.B.C. members on a proper platform irregardless of whether one is initiating new members into the sampradaya or not.

Another advantage, they submit, is since there are always some complaints which come up regarding initiating gurus, and for which the Governing Body Commission or privilege committee are not ideally suited for dealing with, at least on a preliminary level, the initiating guru's committee could deal with the subject.

The antagonists of this concept complain that practically speaking nothing would change. Also,



by combining both together one is able to command more clout as the "acharya" of that particular area. This might not be adequately recognized, they say, if both the responsibilities were dealt with on a separate footing.

Which outlook is correct? Has ISKCON got anything to gain by considering the two responsibilities on an individual footing? Will it make more of an identity crisis, or help to focus on each duty with greater clarity? Or, is it unnecessary to consider these things at all?

#### QUESTION 6.

In trying to understand the overall picture many smaller questions dealing with basicly practical procedures and less philosophical considerations were asked of me by senior devotees trying to themselves get a picture of what ISKCON will be like, or function like, in the future. Nonetheless, these questions are very important because without being answered they keep one doubtful about what the correct course of action is. One cannot under-estimate the importance of practical considerations! Some of the questions are:

A.

Will initiating guru's be assigned area's to concentrate their preaching in, as "PRABHU DUTTA DESHAS"? In other words, as initiating gurus are now being assigned to a zone in the future will initiating gurus be assigned to a region, or temple? Will there also be "initiating gurus without portfolio", who won't have any particular area to preach in but spend their time travelling around to different temples in ISKCON? In short, can an initiating guru be assigned by the Governing Body Commission an area as a "PRABHU DATTA DESHA"?

B.

Will ISKCON have different levels of initiating gurus on the basis of a pre-determined structure made by the Governing Body Commission or will all initiating gurus be considered the same, even the newly appointed, inexperienced initiating gurus who have yet to face many tests?

C.

Will all ISKCON initiating gurus be offered the full pranam mantra by their disciples? Will the jaya om prayers be given to them as "paramahansa paribrajakacharya ..." even if they are newly appointed, and even if they never travel outside of their temple? What will be the standard?

D.

Will Srila Prabhupada's system of first appointing new initiating gurus as "riktik acharyas" for one or two years before final confirmation as full initiating gurus be practiced? Is there another way of safeguarding the violent transitional periods after appointment of new initiating gurus which we witnessed in the past?

E.

In Srila Prabhupada's books His Divine Grace mentioned that someone who recieves the BHAKTIVEDANTA degree after passing the examinations for BHAKTI SHASTRI, etc. would be eligible for becoming an initiating guru in ISKCON. Will these examinations, therefore, be reinstituted, and used as a prerequisite for consideration for appointment as an initiating guru? If not what standard will be followed for establishing a persons philosophical understanding? Some of the leaders in ISKCON are accused of having a poor philosophical understanding of Srila Prabhupada's books, and some haven't even read all of His Divine Grace's books, what to speak of the 11th or 12th canto's, etc.. How to safeguard against placing initiating gurus on a vyasasana who cannot defend the sampradaya's philosophy against the attacks of mayavadi's and

other oponents?

F.

Will every initiating guru have his own vyasasana in the temple? With this become "vyasasana's from the himalaya's to the sea" as was sarcastically accused? How many vyasasana's should be in a temple permanently? Temple authorities get embarrassed thinking about how to solve this one without offending anyone in the future. If you have 3 co-GBC's, a regional secretary, and temple president all 5 of whom are initiating gurus does that mean that 5 permanent vyasasanas must be maintained in each temple? Add a resident sannyasi! Does that mean 6? What is the practical solution?

G.

Before a new initiating guru is assigned to a zone, region or temple with the respective GBC's, regional secretaries, and Temple Presidents have to agree to this assignment? What if a person is not wanted by a leader in a particular area? Will the new initiating gurus be forced upon them by the Governing Body Commission?

H.

At present initiating gurus have no assigned areas, but are appointed by the individual GBC members to their zones, and can be removed at any moment. In contrast to remove a Temple president requires (officially at least) three GBC members, and to remove a GBC from his zone requires 2/3rds vote of the whole Governing Body Commission. In the future will initiating gurus who may be assigned to a temple, region or zone have any protection from arbitrary removal by an authority? A split from ISKCON may occur due to some fanatical move by one manager against an initiating guru who may leave with his disciples due to the ill treatment. This is a very real possibility in India where old sadhu-type devotees are very sensitive to any offenses against their honor. Therefore, will a majority of the Governing Body Commission or some other minimum vote be required to reassign an initiating guru from one place to another?

I.

Is there any limit on how many initiating gurus may be in one temple?

J.

Can a new devotee continue to accept initiation from any initiating guru in ISKCON or will this be restricted? Can they reside anywhere in ISKCON if they otherwise cooperate with the authorities?

K.

Srila Prabhupada entrusted His disciples under the care of His disciples for training. Today disciples of the new initiating gurus are being continuing to be entrusted to the disciples of Srila Prabhupada for training in the different temples. Will this continue, or will it become a law that the initiating gurus must personally train each and every one of his disciples except in rare exceptions?

L.

Srila Prabhupada has created ISKCON to last for 10,000 years and spread the glories of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's samkirtan movement all over the world. Should decisions be made which could affect the future of the entire movement for hundreds and thousands of years on the basis of personal desires, or should decisions be made considering carefully the entire implications and repercussions in the future even after we leave the planet and our disciples will study our actions and take them as a precedent to be followed. Will they then be authorized to act on personal "need" and "desire" rather than the descending process? What would be the repercussions of this?

## QUESTIONS FOR ORGANIZATION:

### 1. QUESTION RE: FINALIZING ISKCON'S STRUCTURE.

Srila Prabhupada has given the framework of ISKCON and now the Governing Body Commission must fill in the remaining parts to carry out the desires of His Divine Grace, Srila Prabhupada instructed the Governing Body Commission to frame a constitution for ISKCON, but upto now that has not been done. Srila Prabhupada said we should study successful religious organizations like the Roman Catholic Church and see how they are organized. Srila Prabhupada wanted to fulfill the prediction of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur—that someone would come and establish a Worldwide preaching organization which would establish the Harinam Samkirtan Movement of Lord Caitanya all over the World. Srila Prabhupada has done that, but we have yet to fill in the details following His Divine Grace's blueprint.

Isn't now the time when the Governing Body Commission must deliberate and finalize a complete structure for ISKCON? A structure which fulfills the desires of Srila Prabhupada and also thus satisfies the needs of preaching Krishna Consciousness effectively in every town and village in every country of the World? How can ISKCON be strong and successful unless these obligations to Srila Prabhupada are fulfilled? We feel, they say, that the first priority of the Governing Body Commission is to give the needed direction to ISKCON? How can this be done as quickly as possible?

### 2. QUESTION RE: PRESERVING THE DESCENDING PROCESS IN ISKCON.

The Governing Body Commission has written in its papers the importance of the "descending process". This has recieved a wide acceptance amongst the vast majority of leaders who ask questions in regard to this topic. They want to know how the Governing Body Commission is going to preserve the sanctity of the appointment of new initiating gurus particularly in the face of visible pressure from some quarters? Should pressure by an individual for his own candidature be permitted? Would restricting personal lobbying be supportive of the principle of "descending process"? Without this type of action, what methods of preserving the sanctity and gravity of the Governing Body Commission's "descending process" might be considered? It doesn't seem possible that without the descending process there could be any credibility preserved for the institution of appointing new initiating gurus.

### 3. QUESTION RE: RESPECTING LOCAL LEADERS OPINION.

In this question a concern for local input both for continuing the smooth flow of the zonal preaching, as well as for maximum cooperation: Isn't it essential to have the support of the local leaders for a G.B.C. member or for initiating gurus to function effectively in their service? Isn't it also best to take the advice of local leaders who have a hand on the pulse of the preaching and needs of a particular area before making a decision on whether a new initiating guru is required and if required who would be suitable? Wouldn't it be preferable for the Governing Body Commission to create a system for soliciting the opinions of local Regional Secretaries and Temple Presidents regarding these sensitive issues?

### 4. QUESTION RE: WHAT IS BEST STRATEGY FOR WORLDWIDE PREACHING?

In this topic the question is as follows: What is the priority—to first discuss and reach an understanding concerning what is the "best strategy for spreading Krsna consciousness", or to make "ad-hoc" decisions even without a consensus on what the best strategy is? For the sake of worldwide preaching it may be that having many guru's in each zone would enhance the preaching effort.

On the other hand, having "zonal acharya's", ie. very prominently presented initiating gurus may actually be the best method for instilling faith in the conditioned souls. Many other considerations in regard to protecting the purity and integrity of Srila Prabhupada's Movement could be made if the

Governing Body Commission made a sincere effort at reaching a consensus on what the preferred method of preaching is in ISKCON. Would it be more pleasing to Srila Prabhupada if the Governing Body Commission arrived at a decision regarding the overall strategy on these new aspects of ISKCON which have come into prominence after Srila Prabhupada, or should we continue making decisions without an overall plan or program? Isn't our present methodology a type of "crisis management" of arriving at solutions without broad realization of the actual needs (both short-range and long-term) or deep understanding of the philosophical points?

##### 5. QUESTION RE: ALL THE QUESTIONS.

In conclusion, the final question which one hears is the question to end all questions. There are those devotees who after deliberating deeply on all the subtleties of the subject matter realize that the questions are very complex. They also express a concern for the importance of creating a totally positive climate in ISKCON for the advancement of the Krsna consciousness Movement, at the same time don't want some "first-aid" treatment to later lead to further complications. They are a type of "dynamic conservative" whose primary question is: "What is the answer?". They want to find a comprehensive and satisfactory answer before anything which could further complicate issues is done. They don't want anything done which later has to be undone. They sometimes say the Governing Body Commission made one mistake in not verifying the "Prabhupada says" regarding taking advice from certain members of the Gaudiya Matha until after a lot of problems surfaced in ISKCON. Later the Governing Body Commission had to make amends. They are concerned that the Governing Body Commission take the time not to make another mistake as well as to rectify the ill effects of any poisons in ISKCON. These devotees say now why doesn't the Governing Body Commission present a total solution before doing anything else? They ask, "What is the answer?".

Thankyou for your patience for reading all these questions from different quarters of ISKCON. Many leading godbrothers have been anxious for the Governing Body Commission to discuss these topics. I hope that they will be satisfied and relieved that it is being discussed by the Governing Body Commission. I would like to again humbly submit that these questions do not necessarily represent my personal opinion; nor by submitting them do I affirm that they in fact represent a true picture of the facts of any circumstance. These questions represent the opinions of some persons which have been presented as a report and inquiry for educating ourselves about the currents flowing in the minds of ISKCON's devotees. If I have made any mistake in presentation, expression or otherwise—I pray that I may be forgiven!

Your divine grace requested me to appoint a committee to discuss this subject matter. I find the subject so vast and far-reaching—with a concern for all—that I am hard-pressed who to appoint on such a committee. In fact, apart from yourself no one else volunteered themselves, although all have expressed an concern.

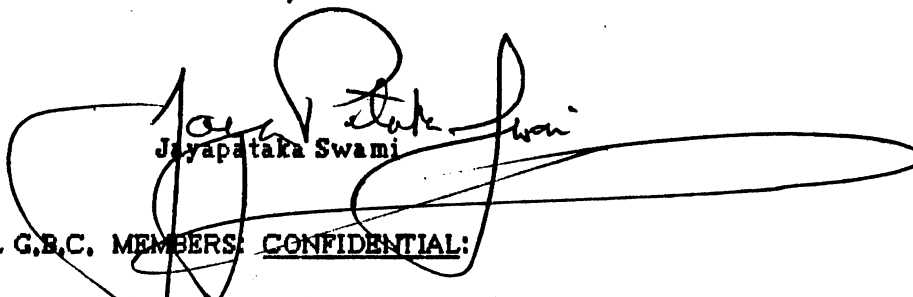
Therefore, it is my sober deliberation that at the venue of the North American G.B.C. Committee Meeting, immediately after the completion of the regional topics, a G.B.C. Istagosthi would be the best forum to discuss these and other pertinent subjects in regard to protecting ISKCON from any type of internal and external danger. I have not yet been able to confirm this with the North American GBC Committee Chairman. But, pending his ability to frame the N.A. agenda accordingly, it is my request, as the G.B.C. Chairman that a day be given (if N.A. GBC Committee can finish regional topics in one day (the 22nd) then the GBC Istagosthi could be held on the 23rd of January) for preliminary discussion to prepare us for the official meetings at Sridham Mayapur in February. At the GBC Istagosthi all G.B.C. members are invited to attend if they are able to conveniently do so. This would not be for reaching final decisions, but for better organizing ourselves to do so at Sri Mayapur.

Your divine grace's realizations in reply to the questions in this letter would certainly go a long

way in further clarifying the questions and for "zero-ing in" on the answers. I am sorry it took me so long to reply your letter. But, since you are such a prolific writer with an efficient staff, I am hopeful that we would be blessed with your deliberations before or during the meetings to be held at Miami Beach ISKCON, I would again like to take this opportunity to thank you for your kindness in writing to the Governing Body Commission and thus for giving us this opportunity to arrive at a final conclusion in our practical devotional understanding concerning these important matters. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

I hope that this finds you in good health and smiling with your empowered transcendental smile!

Your servant,

  
Jayapataka Swami

CC.:TO ALL G.B.C. MEMBERS: CONFIDENTIAL:

(Kindly discuss this letter only with senior god-brothers whom you feel should be conversant with these topics, KINDLY DON'T PUBLISH OR COPY THIS CONFIDENTIAL GBC PAPER...

(NOTE REGARDING MY SCHEDULE:

(My Contact points for the year are:

(January: New Orleans & Atlanta

(Feb.- April: Calcutta

(May - June: New Orleans & Atlanta

(July - August: Calcutta

(Sept. - Oct.: New Orleans & Atlanta

(Nov. - Dec.: Calcutta,

(ref:hrdreply.gbc)

