

Srila Bhaktipada answering questions on the "Guru Reform" issue, December 30, 1986, at Vrndavana brahmachari asrama.

Devamrita Swami: It has turned out that the worship-style Prabhupada accepted had not occurred before in the sampradaya. Logic obviously leads us to deduce that this style is specially meant only for ISKCON's founder-acarya. Somehow or other, Prabhupada neglected to explain this to us. Probably to test us, he did not say that the mode of guru treatment he taught us should be dismantled. Left bereft and ill-equipped, after Prabhupada's departure we blindly followed tightly, due to our lack of scholarly research into Vaisnava history, and our scarcity of intelligent reasoning. Thus we foolishly deviated from the parampara, and thus vanity reigned.

Srila Bhaktipada: So you're saying that Prabhupada deviated from the parampara, and I don't accept that because Prabhupada, as far as I am concerned, IS the parampara. I don't know anything about the parampara except what Prabhupada has taught me, nor do I need to know anything else. That's my conviction. He is my representative of Krsna. Otherwise, what do you mean by guru? .

Guru is not a personality. If we are engaged in personality worship, then we are open to the charge of being a personality cult. We are NOT a personality cult because we are rooted in philosophy. The philosophy, of course, is manifest in personality, but the philosophy is more than a personality. A personality has meaning because of his relationship with the philosophy, not the other way around.

In a personality cult, whatever the personality says, that has meaning. But that's not our philosophy; that's not our movement. Prabhupada is the most dear to Krsna because he presented the philosophy of Krsna Consciousness exactly correct for our understanding. And to say that he neglected to instruct us in the proper way to do guru-puja, I think, is a great offense to Prabhupada. I don't think he neglected anything. In fact, his own statement was, "I have have put everything in my first three volumes of *Srimad Bhagavatam*." In the first three volumes of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, there is the proper way to worship guru. There is nothing about dismantling.

Even if you say, "This is for the founder-acarya of ISKCON, if you say he is the founder-acarya of ISKCON, it means he set up ISKCON the way he wanted it to go. Otherwise, what do you mean by founder-acarya? As the founder-acarya, he established the worship of guru in a certain way. But if we are to be true to our founder-acarya, we cannot deviate from that. Otherwise, what do you mean that he is founder-acarya? This whole thing is very offensive to Prabhupada. Under the guise of wanting to elevate Prabhupada to a unique position, they are dismantling everything that Prabhupada did.

D.S.: We tried doing whatever Prabhupada did, accepting almost the same worship as him. Now we realize that our so-called. . .

Srila Bhaktipada: *That's a lie!* You haven't tried doing everything that Prabhupada did. Many of them haven't even tried following the four regulative principles. Let them try to follow Prabhupada in order: first, chant Hare Krsna--16 rounds everyday; second, follow four regulative principles. Notice I put the chanting in front of the four regulative principles. That is the order Prabhupada put them in.

Actually, Prabhupada did not tell us about the four regulative principles at first. He told us to chant 16 rounds of Hare Krsna. Then he told us how to chant without offense by following the four regulative principles. And chanting 16 rounds gives you the strength to follow the four regulative principles. So the chanting does come first, but that does not mean that you don't have to follow four regulative principles. Go on.

Questions to Srila Bhaktipada regarding Prabhupada Disciples meeting in Towaca New Jersey.

~~Ques: The New York Devotees are interested in the following questions...~~

N.J. in order to associate with the Devotees there, our God brothers, other Prabhupada diciples, and try to present the teachings of Srila Prabhupada as you have helped us to see so clearly. They have a list of twenty points they wish to discuss and in studying them we still feel we need some help in seeing clearly. In one sense it is a little hard to distinguish between points that are meant for philosophical understanding and points which have political motivation. They have chosen five members to select a fifty-man istagosthi. That fifty-man istagosthi is going to decide upon certain resolutions and present them to the GBC who will then meet and discuss them.....

SB: Where do those five men get their authority?

Ques: They were selected by the North American GBC, I believe.

SB: Where do they get their authority?

QUES: The qualifications of these individuals.....

SB: The qualifications is another matter. Still, the group has no authority by any authorized document of association or management that Prabhupada left us. That's the first point.

QUES: The first thing they want to discuss is listed under Purpose; that is the possible reconfirmation of the International GBC body and the recommendations as to the appointment.....

SB: What does that mean? A reconfirmation of the GBC body? Who will confirm them? If one has the qualifications of a GBC man, he is a GBC man. And Prabhupada clearly stated what were the qualifications. He travels, he preaches, he maintains the standards. That's a real GBC man. It's not a political post, it doesn't need a re-election. This is politics. If they would try to find fifty men in the society who traveled and preached and maintained the standards, then they could have a real GBC.

QUES: One of the things they want to discuss is the offering of apologies to Srila Prabhupada, his disciples, and grand disciples by the members of the GBC

SB: [continuing statement] of a GBC man, he is a GBC man. And Prabhupada clearly stated what were the qualifications. He travels, he preaches, and he maintains the standard. That's a real GBC man. It's not a political post. It doesn't need a re-election. This is politics. If they would try to find 50 men in the Society who traveled and preached and maintained the standards, then they could have a real GBC.

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