Struggle for Peace

Part Three

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
(Founder-Acharya **ISKCON**)

September 2013 Article

Summary of the mediation efforts between ISKCON-Bangalore and ISKCON-Mumbai to find an amicable settlement to the dispute outside the court, and its outcome.

- ISKCON Bangalore and ISKCON Mumbai, the broad contours of the discussion >
- Combined Response of the International GBC and Bureau of ISKCON-Mumbai >
- The Bluff of ISKCON-Mumbai Exposed >
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ISKCON Bangalore and ISKCON Mumbai, the broad contours of the discussion

> In connection with the dispute between ISKCON-Bangalore and ISKCON-Mumbai, one of the interim orders of the Supreme Court of India, dated June 6, 2011 stated: *"However, we express a pious hope that the learned counsel appearing for the respective parties shall find some time and examine the possibility of amicably resolving the issues involved in the present matter. We would also expect that the different sections of this august institution would avoid unnecessary litigation and the office bearers of both the societies shall fully cooperate in this behalf."*

On March 28, 2012, both ISKCON-Bangalore and ISKCON-Mumbai requested the retired Judge of the Supreme Court of India, Justice Sri RV Raveendran, who is also the Chairman of the Oversight Committee appointed by the Supreme Court of India, if he can attempt an out-of-court settlement for the dispute through mediation.

The combined request of ISKCON-Bangalore and ISKCON-Mumbai to Justice Sri RV Raveendran was kindly accepted by him.

The first mediation meeting was held on April 3, 2012 in the premises of the Bangalore Mediation Centre under the chairmanship of Justice Raveendran. He also invited Smt. Laila Ollampalli, a professional mediator[1] to assist him and facilitate the mediation process.

The first mediation meeting was attended by HG Dayaram Dasa, HH Bhakti Rasamrita Swami and HG Revathi Raman Dasa representing the Bureau (the Governing Body) of ISKCON-Mumbai. HG Madhu Pandit Dasa, HG Chanchalapathi Dasa and HG Jai Chaitanya Dasa representing the Governing Body of ISKCON-Bangalore attended the meeting. Several proposals and counter proposals were made from both sides over the next several months. Several meetings were conducted between both the parties. Hundreds of pages of documentation were painstakingly prepared, amended and rewritten over the next twelve months. The broad contours of the discussion, are summarized herein.

Broad Contours of the Discussion

Demands of ISKCON-Mumbai	Response of ISKCON-Bangalore
Demand M1: ISKCON-Mumbai wanted the ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra Temple on Hare Krishna Hill, Rajajinagar, Bangalore to be fully brought under the ownership and control of ISKCON-Mumbai.	**Response:** ISKCON-Bangalore accepted this demand entirely-with just one condition. That only Srila Prabhupada be revered as the *guru* or *Acharya* of ISKCON in the ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra Temple on Hare Krishna Hill* and the same be accepted before the Supreme Court as part of a written compromise decree.
Demand M2: There shall be two Temple Presidents for the ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra Temple on Hare Krishna Hill: one from the ISKCON-Mumbai group and the other from the ISKCON-Bangalore group. The financial, legal and administrative control of the temple will vest with the Temple President of the ISKCON-Mumbai group. The Deity worship, preaching and initiation aspects will be overseen by the Temple President of the ISKCON-Bangalore group.	**Response:** ISKCON-Bangalore accepted this demand entirely-with just one condition. That only Srila Prabhupada be revered as the *guru* or *Acharya* of ISKCON in the ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra Temple on Hare Krishna Hill.
• Presently many disciples of Srila Prabhupada are claiming to be *guru* or *Acharya* and initiating their own disciples. Currently ISKCON law prohibits accepting Srila Prabhupada as one's initiating Spiritual Master or *Acharya*.	
Demand M3: ISKCON-Mumbai wanted all the properties of ISKCON-Bangalore Society apart from the ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra Temple on Hare Krishna Hill, the property on Kanakapura Road, Mysore, and Hubli to also be brought under the full control and ownership of ISKCON-Mumbai.	**Response:** ISKCON-Bangalore accepted this demand entirely-with just one condition. That only Srila Prabhupada be revered as the *guru* or *Acharya* of ISKCON in the temples on Kanakapura Road, Mysore and Hubli.
Demand M4: Hare Krishna Movement trusts in 16 different locations in India and their properties should also be brought under the control and ownership of ISKCON-Mumbai.	**Response:** ISKCON-Bangalore accepted this demand entirely-with just one condition. That only Srila Prabhupada be revered as the *guru* or *Acharya* of ISKCON in all these 16 temples.
Demand M5: Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa, Sri Chanchalapathi Dasa, Sri Jai Chaitanya Dasa and Sri Chitranga Chaitanya Dasa should not be office bearers in ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra temple on Hare Krishna Hill temple in Bangalore.	**Response:** ISKCON-Bangalore accepted this demand entirely-with just one condition. That only Srila Prabhupada be revered as the *guru* or *Acharya* of ISKCON in the ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra Temple on Hare Krishna Hill.

Demands of ISKCON-Mumbai

Demand M1:

ISKCON-Mumbai wanted the ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra Temple on Hare Krishna Hill, Rajajinagar, Bangalore to be entirely brought under the ownership and control of ISKCON-Mumbai.

Response of ISKCON-Bangalore to Demand M1:

ISKCON-Bangalore accepted this demand entirely-with just one condition. That only Srila Prabhupada be revered as the *guru* or *Acharya* of ISKCON in the ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra Temple on Hare Krishna Hill.

No one else should occupy the revered position of *Acharya* of ISKCON and all the devotees made in the temple will be initiated by the *riteiks* or representatives of the *Acharya* as per the institutional directive of the Founder-*Acharya* of ISKCON, Srila Prabhupada, dated July 9, 1977.

As per the directive, devotees so initiated will be regarded as the disciples of Srila Prabhupada. *This has been the single point cause for the dispute with ISKCON-Mumbai.*

Demand M2:

There shall be two Temple Presidents for ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra temple on Hare Krishna Hill. Rajajinagar, Bangalore: one from the ISKCON-Mumbai group and the other from the ISKCON-Bangalore group. The financial, legal and administrative control of the temple will vest with the Temple President of the ISKCON-Mumbai group. The Deity worship, preaching and initiation aspects will be overseen by the Temple President of the ISKCON-Bangalore group.

Response of ISKCON-Bangalore to Demand M2:

ISKCON-Bangalore accepted this demand entirely-with just one condition. That only Srila Prabhupada be revered as the *guru* or *Acharya* of ISKCON in the ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra Temple on Hare Krishna Hill.

Demand M3:

ISKCON-Mumbai wanted all the properties of ISKCON-Bangalore Society apart from the ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra Temple on Hare Krishna Hill, the property on Kanakapura Road, Mysore, and Hubli to also be brought under the full control and ownership of ISKCON-Mumbai.

> *Normally the mediation in a certain suit should be restricted to the suit schedule property alone which is in this case, the ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra Temple on Hare Krishna Hill.*
>
> *ISKCON-Bangalore society (registered in Bangalore on May 7, 1978 under Karnataka Society Registration Act) had acquired properties (land allotted by the government for specific projects) on Kanakapura Road in Bangalore, Mysore and Hubli. All these properties were acquired after the litigation began.*
>
> *And these properties are not part of the present litigation. Hence the mediation should have been normally restricted to the suit schedule property which is the ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra Temple on Hare Krishna Hill.*

However the representatives of the Bureau of ISKCON-Mumbai insisted that the mediation should integrate the two groups together completely as one ISKCON in India, and this can happen only if all the properties of ISKCON-Bangalore society, including the undisputed ones, are brought under the control and ownership of ISKCON-Mumbai.

Response of ISKCON-Bangalore to Demand M3:

ISKCON-Bangalore accepted this demand entirely-with just one condition. That only Srila Prabhupada be revered as the *guru* or *Acharya* of ISKCON in the temples on Kanakapura Road, Mysore and Hubli.

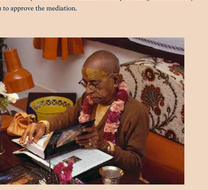
Demand M4:

> *After the litigation between ISKCON-Mumbai and ISKCON-Bangalore began in 1999, the devotees of ISKCON-Bangalore have expanded the mission of Srila Prabhupada by setting up preaching centres and temples in 16 different places in India.*
>
> *To institutionalize the preaching activities in these different places, as per the institutional blue print given by Srila Prabhupada, separate trusts have been registered in the name and style of Hare Krishna Movement. For over a decade in some of these trusts activities of spreading Krishna consciousness have been going on and some of them have also acquired properties.*

ISKCON-Mumbai further insisted that all these trusts and their properties, although they are beyond the purview of the present suit, should also be brought under the control and ownership of ISKCON-Mumbai for complete integration and only then will they be able to get a majority vote in the Bureau to approve the mediation.

Response of ISKCON-Bangalore to Demand M4:

ISKCON-Bangalore accepted this demand entirely-with just one condition. That only Srila Prabhupada be revered as the *guru* or *Acharya* of ISKCON in all these 16 temples.



Demand M5:

ISKCON-Mumbai demanded that Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa, Sri Chanchalapathi Dasa, Sri Jai Chaitanya Dasa and Sri Chitranga Chaitanya Dasa should not be office bearers in ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra temple on Hare Krishna Hill in Bangalore since they were all involved in the litigation.

> The Hare Krishna Hill temple has been the home to these devotees since its very inception in 1988. They were the ones who had persevered to get the land allotted, raised money and supporters and built the magnificent temple that stands today as Hare Krishna Hill and brought pride to the city of Bangalore. They were supported by a team of dedicated and hard working devotees.
> But now ISKCON-Mumbai was demanding that they give up their services to take up service in other temples. The representatives of Bureau of ISKCON-Mumbai demanded that only if this condition is accepted, there is a possibility for the entire mediated settlement.

Response of ISKCON-Bangalore to Demand M5:

ISKCON-Bangalore accepted this demand entirely-with just one condition. That only Srila Prabhupada be revered as the *guru* or *Acharya* of ISKCON in the ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra Temple on Hare Krishna Hill.

Position of ISKCON-Mumbai

The Bureau of ISKCON-Mumbai took the position that the requirement of ISKCON-Bangalore that Srila Prabhupada alone should be revered as the *guru* or *Acharya* of ISKCON and initiation to be conducted by *riteiks* or representatives of *Acharya* will be placed before the International GBC (Governing Body Commission) and the Bureau shall deal with the property matters only.

Now that all the demands M1, M2, M3, M4 and M5, of ISKCON-Mumbai have been accepted by ISKCON-Bangalore, the ball was in the court of ISKCON-Mumbai to fulfill the requirement of ISKCON-Bangalore, **the prime and only cause of the dispute accepted by the International GBC.**

Combined Response of the International GBC and Bureau of ISKCON-Mumbai

During March 2013, the International GBC and Bureau of ISKCON-Mumbai met in Sridham Mayapur to discuss the matter and their final conclusive reply was communicated to ISKCON-Bangalore in a letter dated March 9, 2013.

In this communication the International GBC refused to accept the only demand of ISKCON-Bangalore:

> *That only Srila Prabhupada be revered as the guru or Acharya of ISKCON in the ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra Temple on Hare Krishna Hill.*
> *No one else should occupy the revered position of Acharya of ISKCON and all the devotees made in the temple will be initiated by the ritviks or representatives of the Acharya as per the institutional directive of the Founder-Acharya of ISKCON, Srila Prabhupada, dated July 9, 1977.*
> *As per the directive, devotees so initiated will be regarded as the disciples of Srila Prabhupada. This has been the single point cause for the dispute with ISKCON-Mumbai.*

In other words the self-appointed current *gurus* of ISKCON wanted to initiate disciples for themselves in the Bangalore group of temples instead of initiating them as disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada as per his July 9, 1977 directive.

In addition, the International GBC offered to make some of the senior devotees of ISKCON-Bangalore regular *gurus*!

They had miserably failed to understand the foundation of ISKCON-Bangalore's cause which has always been theological in nature. They were unable to reinstate Srila Prabhupada in his actual spiritual position in ISKCON, as ISKCON-Bangalore had been pleading.

> *How can one become a regular guru? This is the actual subject of contention, since Srila Prabhupada has repeatedly taught - that one can become a regular guru only when the predecessor guru specifically orders a certain disciple to become one. And Srila Prabhupada did not order anyone:*
>
> ***One should take initiation from a bona fide spiritual master coming in the disciplic succession, who is authorized by his predecessor spiritual master. This is called*** *dīkṣā-vidhāna.*
> (*Srimad Bhagavatam purport to verse 4.8.54 by Srila Prabhupada*)
>
> **Comment:** *This is an important reference in the Srimad Bhagavatam that confirms the principle that one can become a bona fide spiritual master when he is authorized by his predecessor spiritual master. And it is well established that Srila Prabhupada did not authorize anyone to become such an initiating spiritual master, but explicitly and clearly ordered eleven of his senior disciples to act as ritviks or representatives of the Acharya and conduct initiation.*
>
> ***Srila Prabhupada: When I order, "You become guru," he becomes regular guru. That's all.*** (Recorded room conversation on May 28, 1977, between Srila Prabhupada and the then GBC members on the process of initiation when Srila Prabhupada is no longer physically present on this planet).
>
> **Comment:** *On this important occasion, Srila Prabhupada has clearly stated that when he gives a specific order to a certain devotee (When I order, "You become guru,") to become a guru, he becomes a regular guru. After five months of this conversation, Srila Prabhupada disappeared from this world. And it is historically well established that Srila Prabhupada did not order any of his disciples to become a regular guru but explicitly and clearly ordered eleven of his senior disciples to act as ritviks or representatives of the Acharya and conduct initiation.*

Conclusion

Although ISKCON-Bangalore accepted all the demands of ISKCON-Mumbai to give the temple property on the Hare Krishna Hill under the full ownership and control of ISKCON-Mumbai along with all the properties of the Bangalore group of temples -

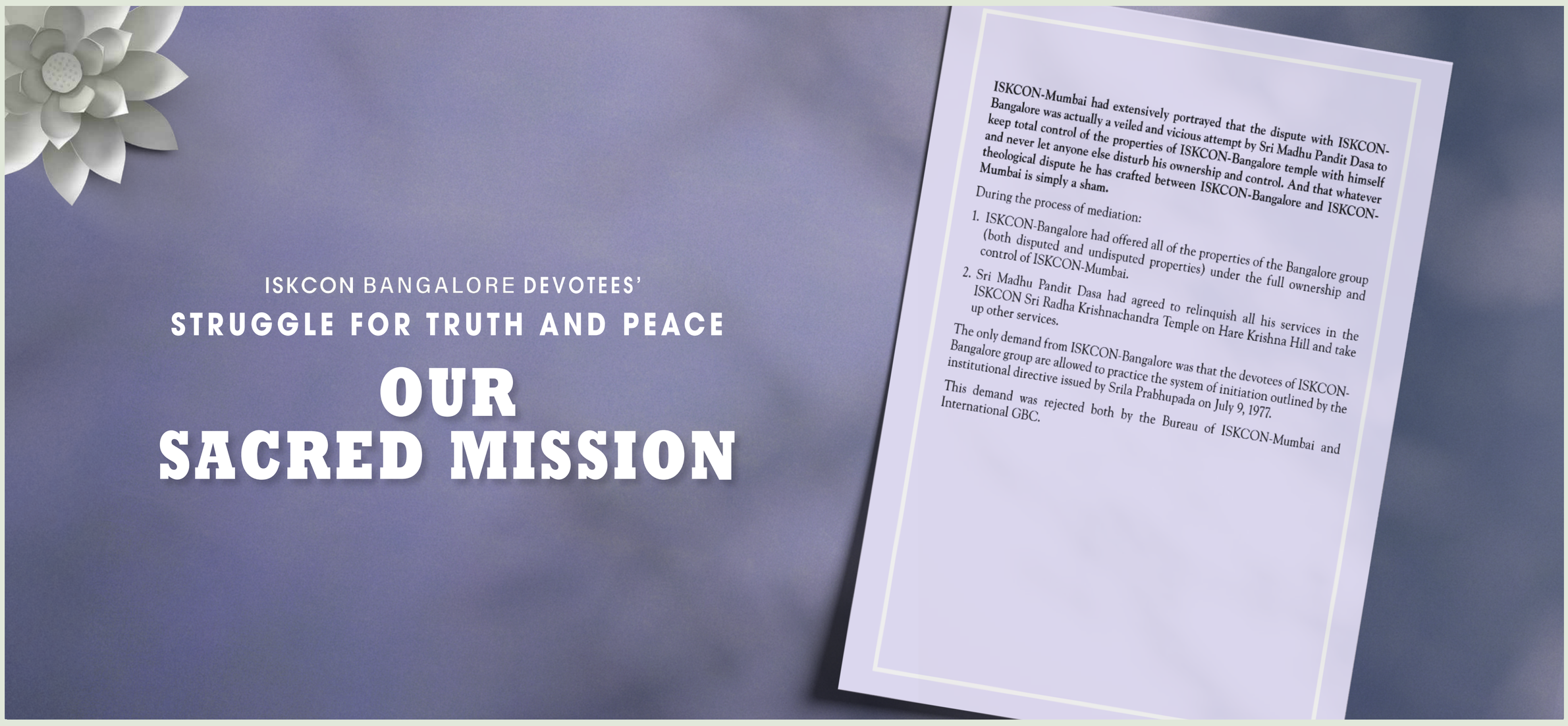
ISKCON-Mumbai and the International GBC failed to meet the demand of ISKCON-Bangalore to accept the practice that Srila Prabhupada shall be the only *Acharya* **and initiating** *guru* **for the devotees of ISKCON-Bangalore group of temples.**

Further the International GBC has invited the senior devotees of ISKCON-Bangalore group also to join them in becoming self-appointed *Acharyas* **or regular** *gurus.*

ISKCON-Bangalore has firmly rejected this offer in a letter dated March 14, 2013 (Letter to International GBC and Bureau, Enclosure-2 page 18) as they do not want to join this act of disobedience to Srila Prabhupada and perpetrate the moral and financial corruption current in ISKCON.

> *This mediation process and it's failure clearly establish that the basis of the dispute between ISKCON-Mumbai and ISKCON-Bangalore is the theological issue of whether Srila Prabhupada can be the Acharya of his institution after his physical disappearance from this world, or his disciples should become self-appointed Acharyas, although Srila Prabhupada did not appoint or order anyone to become a regular guru.*

The Bluff of ISKCON-Mumbai Exposed



ISKCON-Mumbai had extensively portrayed that the dispute with ISKCON-Bangalore was actually a veiled and vicious attempt by Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa to keep total control of the properties of ISKCON-Bangalore temple with himself and never let anyone else disturb his ownership and control. And that whatever theological dispute he has crafted between ISKCON-Bangalore and ISKCON-Mumbai is simply a sham.

During the process of mediation:

1. ISKCON-Bangalore had offered all of the properties of the Bangalore group (both disputed and undisputed properties) under the full ownership and control of ISKCON-Mumbai.
2. Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa had agreed to relinquish all his services in the ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra Temple on Hare Krishna Hill and take up other services.

The only demand from ISKCON-Bangalore was that the devotees of ISKCON-Bangalore group are allowed to practice the system of initiation outlined by the institutional directive issued by Srila Prabhupada on July 9, 1977.

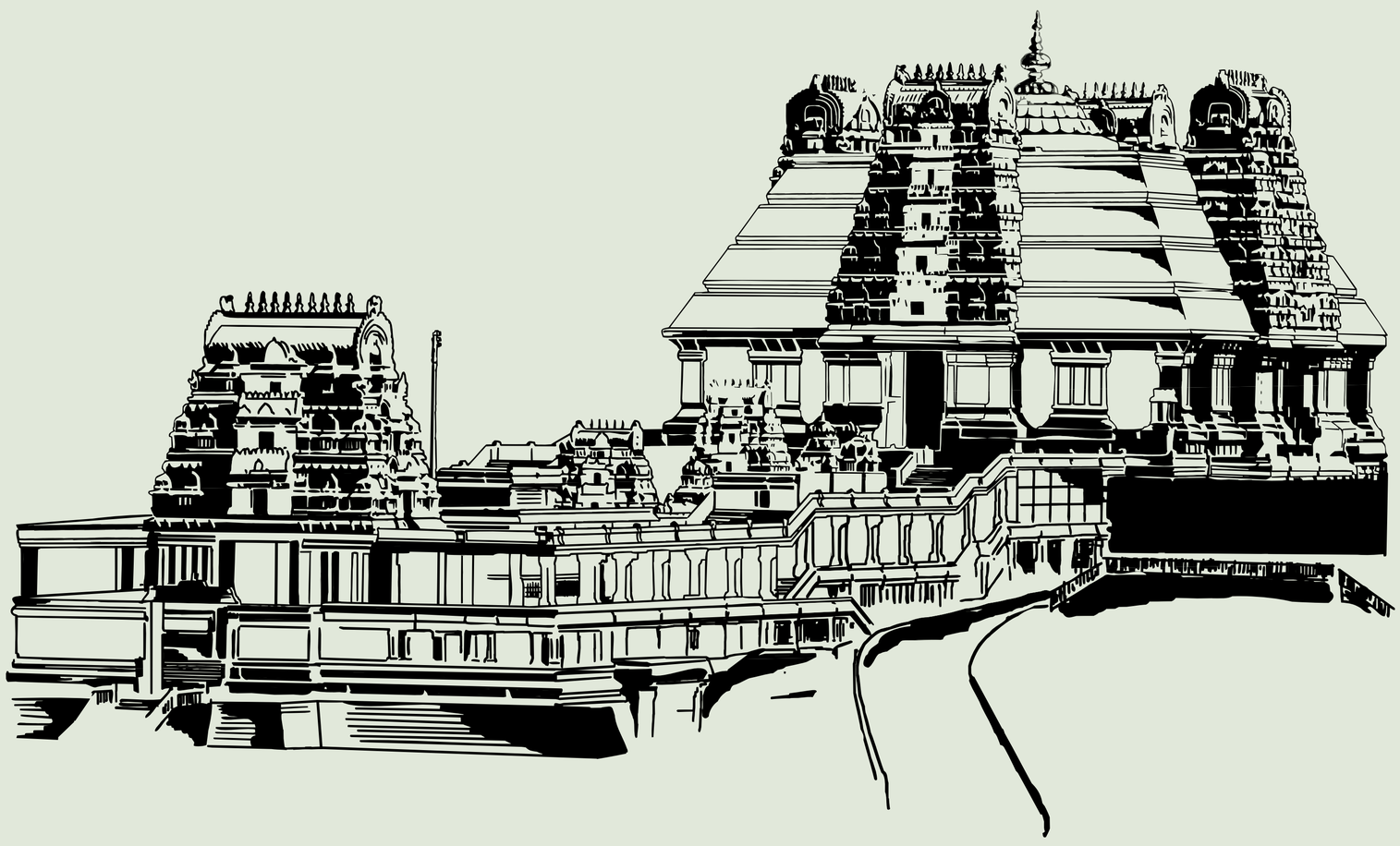
This demand was rejected both by the Bureau of ISKCON-Mumbai and International GBC.

The bluff of ISKCON-Mumbai's propaganda that the legal dispute is simply a smoke screen created by Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa to keep control of the ISKCON Sri Radha Krishnachandra Temple on Hare Krishna Hill has become exposed!

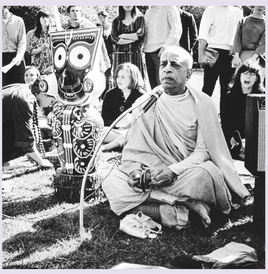
And proved entirely false.

Epilogue

ISKCON-Bangalore invites all devotees, donors, life patrons and all concerned with the well being of Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON movement to kindly continue to extend their support in this struggle for establishing Srila Prabhupada's own directives on succession in ISKCON and end the moral and financial corruption that has become rampant in ISKCON today.



Background to the Issue



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, reverentially addressed as Srila Prabhupada by his followers, travelled to New York city in 1965, when he was 70 years old, to teach the principles of Krishna consciousness. He was ordered by his spiritual master to spread the knowledge of *Bhagavad-gītā* and Srimad Bhagavatam all over the world, to bring about harmony in the spiritually misdirected society and help peoples of the world to achieve the highest perfection of life. In pursuance of this order of his revered spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada had made incessant attempts for three decades (1936 - 1965), to spread the message of *Bhagavad-gītā* and Srimad Bhagavatam by publishing magazines, authoring books, conducting public programs, founding an institution. But these attempts did not yield much success. As a final attempt he ventured to travel out of the country to create interest among Westerners in the message of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and Srimad Bhagavatam. When he set out of the country in a cargo ship, he carried with him a mere Rs.40, a trunk load of Srimad Bhagavatam books in three volumes, (which he had translated to English with elaborate commentaries) and unlimited faith in the order of his spiritual master.

In summer of 1966, he founded ISKCON (International Society for Krishna consciousness) in New York City. To his surprise, the young men and women of western countries took keen interest in the message of *Bhagavad-gītā* and Srimad Bhagavatam and came forward to assist him in spreading his mission. Between 1966 and 1977, he travelled fourteen times around the globe and established 108 Krishna temples all over the world. In the midst of his travel schedule, organizing and managing a worldwide institution and inspiring and directing thousands of disciples, he authored over seventy books on the science of Krishna consciousness from the Vedic literatures. Srila Prabhupada spent his final days in his own temple in Vrindavan and disappeared from this world in November 1977.

Srila Prabhupada entrusted the management of the worldwide ISKCON in the hands of the International Governing Body Council (GBC), a body of his senior disciples.

During Srila Prabhupada's physical presence, he initiated all the spiritual aspirants who came to ISKCON as his disciples. He was their *guru*, *Acharya* and spiritual master. In the initial days of ISKCON, he personally trained his disciples and guided them. As ISKCON grew into a worldwide organization, he continued to inspire, teach and train thousands of disciples all over the world through his lectures, correspondence (he wrote thousands of letters), books, senior disciples and the institution he established.

Towards the end of his life, knowing that his disciples were still young and novices in their spiritual lives, and some of them still afflicted with material ambitions for power and authority in the institution,[1] Srila Prabhupada did not appoint any one of them as an *Acharya* of ISKCON to succeed him after his physical departure in 1977. After his physical presence, for initiating new spiritual aspirants who join ISKCON, he appointed eleven of his senior disciples to act as *ritviks* or representatives of the *Acharya*. In a written institutional directive that he issued on July 9, 1977, five months before his passing away, he outlined how initiation of new spiritual aspirants should be conducted through the *ritviks* and that they will be his disciples. (Institutional directive of July 9, 1977 - Enclosure-3 page 20). In this way, he intended to be the *Acharya* of ISKCON and continue to initiate the new devotees who approach ISKCON for spiritual shelter through the *ritviks*.

But soon after his passing away in November 1977, these eleven disciples declared themselves to be successor *Acharyas* and started initiating new spiritual aspirants coming to ISKCON as their disciples. They started accepting the highest level of adoration, supplication and submission from their earnest and innocent disciples. They sat on decorated thrones in the ISKCON temples and received elaborate worship (*guru* and Vyasa puja) that included feet bathing with milk and honey. While they received such level of worship from their disciples, many of them secretly pursued a private life of most deplorable and sinful activities. To protect their positions of power and authority and continue their exploitation of the innocent sentiments of spiritual seekers, they were also involved in complex intrigues, plotting and cover-ups. All of this in contrast to the simple and saintly life Srila Prabhupada had led and taught for all his disciples, especially his leaders.[2] The abuse of power and authority by these eleven self-appointed *Acharyas* is a less exposed and well guarded secret that constitutes the dark history of ISKCON. Subsequently most of the eleven self-appointed *Acharyas* had dramatic and disgraceful fall down from basic spiritual standards to such sinful lives that should embarrass any decent devotee of Krishna to even mention. Such fall downs of the erstwhile worshipped and revered self-appointed *Acharyas* shocked their surrendered disciples

Who is accountable for the breach and betrayal of trust of the thousands of innocent spiritual seekers? Drawn by the pure path of Krishna consciousness given by Srila Prabhupada, these seekers had surrendered their lives after abandoning their material jobs, career and education and severing their family ties. After joining the ISKCON temples, these spiritual aspirants had trusted the self-appointed *Acharyas* as their spiritual masters and saviors, as they were authorized and projected by the ISKCON institution. But they painfully discovered such double standards in the highest level of leaderships in ISKCON. Now their faith in Krishna consciousness itself was shattered. The ISKCON institution also lost its good reputation and millions of dollars worth of properties..

How did ISKCON leadership deal with all of this?

What followed this period of ISKCON history from 1977 to 1985 in the name of *Guru* Reform of 1985 was another tragic turn of policies and events. Srila Prabhupada had meticulously built the ISKCON institution with great care and concern as a loving offering to his spiritual master and Lord Sri Krishna. He wanted this institution to be an instrument to further his mission to spread Krishna consciousness and bring everlasting peace and joy to the peoples of the world. Instead of going back to the directions of Srila Prabhupada on the matter of spiritual succession in his institution, his senior disciples in leadership roles crafted another system of *Gurus* and *Acharyas* which has come to be called as Multiple *Acharya* System (MAS). The standards and procedures for becoming *Acharyas* were liberalized and the level of worship they could receive was reduced. Instead of the eleven self-appointed *Acharyas*, ISKCON leadership appointed nearly thirty *Acharyas* all over the world. Today in 2013, as we write, ISKCON has over eighty self-appointed *Acharyas*!

Every year some of these self-appointed *Acharyas* fall from grace and new ones are enlisted. (As we write in August 2013, the news has just broken out that one more self-appointed *Acharya* of ISKCON has been found to be involved in immoral activities and is stepping down from his services as a *guru*). Thousands of bewildered disciples leave ISKCON services when their trusted spiritual masters fall down from spiritual standards. There is no accountability for these spiritual disasters and the treachery that has befallen and continue to befall innocent seekers of spiritual life.

Unlike the first eleven self-appointed *Acharyas* who were more gross and blatant in the exploitation of their positions of authority and power, the new breed of self-appointed *Acharyas* have more evolved and sophisticated techniques of machinations and have mastered the art of exploitation of the innocence of spiritual aspirants. The present self-appointed *Acharyas* (or at least some of them) are humble in their demeanor and abhor ostentatious worship. But they tacitly accept the appurtenance that comes when one is called the *guru* or *Acharya*. Srila Prabhupada's books are replete with descriptions of the spiritual qualifications of a *guru* or *Acharya*[3]. They also describe how the disciple should regard the *guru*[4]. The young devotees naturally attribute all these descriptions in Srila Prabhupada's books about the spiritual master, to the spiritual master who has initiated them. And since the ISKCON GBC has officially recognized them as initiating *Gurus*, the problem is more serious as it gives legitimacy to the innocent new comers to misattribute these qualities to the one from whom they received the initiation. And when a *guru* falls down, which is not infrequent in ISKCON history post 1977 (42 cases of *guru* fall downs from 1978 to 2013), the fall down has disastrous effect in the devotees' lives, not to mention the setback it causes in ISKCON as an institution.

The problems associated with these fall downs are admitted by HG Ravindra Swarupa Dasa, one of the senior members of the International GBC: "People are very dubious about *gurus*, everyone is wondering when the next one is going to fall. And the GBC seems to be floundering and cannot do anything about it.....Devotees are really afraid that their *gurus* will fall down." (Restoring the Authority of GBC by Ravindra Svarupa Dasa, 2000, ISKCON Communication Journal # 8.1 (Jan / June 2000))

Yet another challenge concerns the *guru dakshina* (as it is common in Vedic tradition, the disciple is advised to offer donations in cash or kind to his spiritual master as a token of gratitude) given by the rich disciples to their *gurus* in ISKCON. The disciple offers *guru dakshina* to the *guru* and not all of these amounts are deposited into ISKCON's institutional accounts, nor are they properly accounted for, since they come as cash. Alternatively, some of the self-appointed *Acharyas* have created trusts in which they and their disciples alone are the trustees and funds are parked in these trusts. There are many self-appointed *Acharyas* in ISKCON today who are richer than many of the ISKCON temples, as per reliable estimations. This has led to lack of financial accountability and corruption, which is acknowledged as one of the serious problems facing ISKCON today, even by the International GBC[5].

A few other challenges that are acknowledged by all the leaders of ISKCON worldwide are:

How to keep Srila Prabhupada in the center of the movement, and in the hearts of the devotees?

How to avoid *guru*-centered sub-factions within the larger ISKCON movement?

How to avoid the parallel authority structure that emerges due to the preeminent position of the *Guru* in the life of a disciple and the Temple President–GBC structure that Srila Prabhupada constantly reinforced in ISKCON?

ISKCON-Bangalore holds that the root cause of all these challenges facing ISKCON is the disobedience of the order of Srila Prabhupada on the system of initiation after his physical disappearance and the concomitant introduction of the self-appointed *Acharya* system.

Devotees of ISKCON-Bangalore group shall continue to serve and expand the mission of Srila Prabhupada and hope that International GBC and the Bureau of ISKCON-Mumbai recognize and implement the institutional directive of Srila Prabhupada on how initiation should be conducted in ISKCON after Srila Prabhupada's disappearance.

We seek your support in our struggle to establish the true directions of Srila Prabhupada in ISKCON even in the face of failure of our struggle for peace through the mediation attempt.

For more information on this subject, please visit:

- https://www.struggle-for-truth.org/
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- https://www.krsna.org/
- https://prabhupadvision.com/
- https://www.prabhupadasuga.org/
- https://prabhupadasuga.blogspot.com/
- http://www.vnn.org/

Letter from GBC of ISKCON and Bureau of ISKCON-Mumbai

March 9, 2013
To the Leaders of the Bangalore Group of Temples:
With A Hope of Settlement

Dear Prabhus,

Please accept our respectful obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

With this letter we, the Governing Body Commission (GBC) of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and members of the Bureau of ISKCON India, wish to express our sincere and earnest appeal for all of you to return to the greater family of ISKCON. This would be a glorious reunion wherein everyone would benefit immensely.

We have been informed of your many significant accomplishments and your continued dedication to Srila Prabhupada and the path of Krishna Consciousness, and we honor them. It is our sincerest appeal that we come together as brothers and sisters, putting aside our disputes, forgiving our past dealings with each other to rebuild our love and trust through mutually respectful relations in pursuit of the higher cause that Srila Prabhupada has entrusted us with.

We have been informed of, and definitely share, some of the pain and concerns you have for the personal and social upheavals caused by misconceptions of Srila Prabhupada's instructions regarding ISKCON's diksha *guru* system. There has been an unrealistic, artificial conception, widely promoted, about the diksha *guru*'s actual position, which has, at times, tragically minimized the position of Srila Prabhupada as the preeminent *guru* for everyone, for all generations within ISKCON.

We, the GBC and Bureau members, have been earnestly endeavoring over the past many years, in a systematic way, to correct these misconceptions and restore a healthy, realistic culture with Srila Prabhupada, our Founder-*Acharya*, and Lord Krishna in the center.

Although your group has disassociated itself from us for many years, we share the same primary concerns. We appeal to all of you to sincerely look into our efforts and conclusions toward our common goals.

Enclosed in this package is a resolution recently passed by the GBC. It is mandatory for this resolution to be circulated to all our temples and become standard education for all ISKCON members, including aspiring initiates. Also included is the document "ISKCON's Lines of Authority". This document was worked on for several years by a committee of some of ISKCON's senior-most scholars, spiritual leaders and managers. A GBC resolution mandates that this document be an essential element of ISKCON education.

We believe that you will find our shared concerns addressed in these documents, with a concrete plan of action. We are prayerful and hopeful that we can reunite on this basis and work together as a united family to continue dialogue for further improvements.

We would like to briefly explain why your insistence on your interpretation of the July 9 letter is creating a barrier to our common purpose:

It is documented that on July 7, 1977, Srila Prabhupada discussed how devotees who had been waiting for initiation could be initiated during his illness. At that time, Srila Prabhupada named specific senior disciples who would initiate on his behalf during his illness." Two days later, the July 9 letter was written to inform devotees about the July 7 conversation and these instructions of Srila Prabhupada.

During an earlier conversation between Srila Prabhupada and GBC leaders, on May 28, the leaders of ISKCON who were present with Srila Prabhupada were clear that Srila Prabhupada gave the instruction that after his physical departure those who would initiate would be "regular *guru*" and that the initiates would be, in Srila Prabhupada's own words, "He is grand disciple... disciple of my disciple."

This instruction is consistent with how initiations are presented throughout Srila Prabhupada's teachings and as they have been performed throughout the history of our spiritual lineage.

It was not until many years later—after our society suffered terribly from minimizing Srila Prabhupada's preeminent position and the resultant over-exaggerated worship of those serving in the roles of initiating *guru*s, and in some cases their abuse of power—that your interpretation of the July 9 letter came to be.

Based upon traditional, philosophical and scriptural references too numerous to include in this document, there will be a major outcry and dissent from our society's scholars as well as thousands of devotees worldwide if the GBC were to include your interpretation of Tamal Krishna Goswami's July 9 letter within our system of initiation.

Still, we believe we share your concerns and are working to achieve the same goals. We continue to take positive action on the *guru* issue to correct the misconceptions and deviations that seriously injured our worldwide society and subsequently brought about the focus on the July 9 letter.

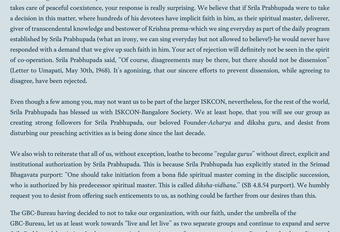
On this basis we open the doors of our society and our hearts to you. We believe that the mediation process, which has been conducted in a fair and reasonable manner, can lead to a suitable agreement between the Bureau of ISKCON India and the Bangalore Group.

We invite several of your senior devotees to take up the service of regular *guru*s. They will be free, within this system, to inspire unlimited faith in Srila Prabhupada as the primary *guru* of each disciple.

We can assure you that, if you agree to reunite with us according to the above, we will safeguard as far as possible a respectful welcoming from our part wherein all fears and apprehensions that you may have will be alleviated.

Together we can discuss how to resolve the challenges before us. Let us forgive each other for what may have been done or said in the heat of our devotional concerns. Let us serve together as a united family for the higher principle of assisting Srila Prabhupada in spreading unconditional love for Krishna throughout the world. This will be a time of immense joy for all.

Your servants,
ISKCON GBC and Members of the Bureau of ISKCON India



Letter from Temple Presidents of ISKCON Bangalore Group to GBC of ISKCON and Bureau of ISKCON Mumbai

To The GBC of ISKCON and Bureau of ISKCON-Mumbai **14 Mar 2013**

Dear Maharajas and Prabhus,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

We are very grateful to you for your clear response in your joint letter dated March 9th, 2013. It is unfortunate that for you, Srila Prabhupada's system of initiation as outlined in the July 9th, 1977 written directive, is a barrier for an out-of-court settlement. This is in spite of our offering of the ownership/control of all the properties of our group temples in India, in return for your leaving intact our present system of initiations, as per Srila Prabhupada's July 9th, directive, and allowing it to be practised and preached in our temples.

While recognizing our concerns of minimization of Srila Prabhupada's position in ISKCON, it is unfortunate that you are not embracing the straight forward solution of declaring all initiating *guru*s to be initiating on behalf of Srila Prabhupada. This alone ensures that His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada will spiritually rule the heart of every devotee in ISKCON. This is a one stroke solution to the admittedly major problems that ISKCON is facing on this front today: parallel and conflicting lines of authorities, full down of *guru*, internal *guru*-centered factions within ISKCON, lack of financial accountability of *guru* due to the unavoidable tradition of *guru-dakshina*, etc. Yet, we see your reluctance to accept the simple and straight forward solution, provided by Srila Prabhupada.

We appreciate the efforts and measures being taken to keep Srila Prabhupada in the preeminent position in ISKCON. Now there are many of you, who are Srila Prabhupada's pre-1977 disciples in the GBC and Bureau, with a concern to keep Srila Prabhupada in his preeminent position in ISKCON. But, after a few generations of *guru*s who are externally and visibly successful, with their large number of disciples, there will be no impetus to attempt to maintain Srila Prabhupada's preeminent position. This is because their external and noticeable "apparent success in preaching", could blind the *guru*s and their disciples, from recognizing the influence that Srila Prabhupada will continue to play in the hearts of devotees! We shudder at this thought. Whereas, in the alternative that we have been practising in our group of temples, through the July 9th system of initiation, Srila Prabhupada will inescapably shine, not only in the institution, but also in the heart of every ISKCON devotee.

We hoped that we could work peacefully together as a single organization even though we may differ in our understandings of Srila Prabhupada's instructions. When we have assured you of a mutual code of conduct, which takes care of peaceful coexistence, your response is really surprising. We believe that if Srila Prabhupada were to take a decision in this matter, where hundreds of his devotees have implicit faith in him, as their spiritual master, deliverer, giver of transcendental knowledge and bestower of Krishna prema-which we sing everyday as part of the daily program established by Srila Prabhupada (what an irony, we can sing everyday but not allowed to believe!)-he would never have responded with a demand that we give up such faith in him. Your act of rejection will definitely not be seen in the spirit of co-operation. Srila Prabhupada said, "Of course, disagreements may be there, but these should not be dissension" (Letter to Umapati, May 30th, 1968). It's agonizing, that our sincere efforts to prevent dissension, while agreeing to disagree, have been rejected.

Even though a few among you, may not want us to be part of the larger ISKCON, nevertheless, for the rest of the world, Srila Prabhupada has blessed us with ISKCON-Bangalore Society. We at least hope, that you will see our group as creating strong followers for Srila Prabhupada, our beloved Founder-*Acharya* and diksha *guru*, and desist from disturbing our preaching activities as is being done since the last decade.

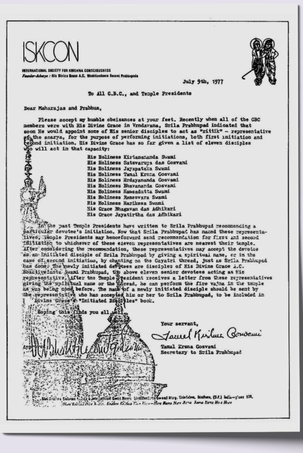
We also wish to reiterate that all of us, without exception, loathe to become "regular *guru*s" without direct, explicit and institutional authorization by Srila Prabhupada. This is because Srila Prabhupada has explicitly stated in the Srimad Bhagavata purport: "One should take initiation from a bona fide spiritual master coming in the disciplic succession, who is authorized by his predecessor spiritual master. This is called *diksha-vidhana*." (SB 4.8.54 purport). We humbly request you to desist from offering such enticements to us, as nothing could be farther from our desires than this.

The GBC-Bureau having decided to not to take our organization, with our faith, under the umbrella of the GBC-Bureau, let us at least work towards "live and let live" as two separate groups and continue to expand and serve Srila Prabhupada's mission. In the past, certain destructive acts of your representatives at Bangalore, has been disowned by you as an organization, but these individuals continue unabated with their below the belt, avaishnava strikes against our group in public. Although you may disown such acts, in the eyes of the public, they are definitely attributable to ISKCON-Mumbai, which only brings about disrepute to GBC-Bureau and ISKCON as a whole.

Let this mediation exercise at least bear the fruit of peaceful co-existence as two different groups, spreading their own missionary works. In this direction, we could set up an on-going mechanism of dispute resolution between the two groups, with the help of a mutually accepted ombudsman. When we have decided to part ways keeping our differences intact, let us both think creatively how to produce more preaching results in terms of more temples, devotees, books etc., for Srila Prabhupada's larger mission of spreading the Krishna Consciousness Movement throughout the world.

Thanking you,
Your humble servants,
[Signature appears on the original]

Madhu Pandit Dasa President, ISKCON-Bangalore	**Chanchalapathi Dasa** Sr Vice President, ISKCON-Bangalore	**Jai Chaitanya Dasa** Co-President, ISKCON-Mysore	**Stoka Krishna Dasa** Vice President, ISKCON-Bangalore, Co-President, ISKCON-Mysore
Amitasana Dasa Vice President, ISKCON-Bangalore	**Satya Gaura Chandra Dasa** President, Hare Krishna Movement-Hyderabad	**Rajiv Lochan Dasa** President, ISKCON-Hubli	**Vasudev Keshav Dasa** Vice President, ISKCON-Bangalore
Ratnagada Govinda Dasa President, Hare Krishna Movement-Jaipur	**Chitranga Chaitanya Dasa** President, Hare Krishna Movement-Chennai	**Vyomapada Dasa** President, Hare Krishna Movement-Raipur	**Jagannathan Krishna Dasa** President, Hare Krishna Movement-Ahmedabad
Suryakra Narasimha Dasa Vice President, Hare Krishna Movement-Vrindavan	**Achyuta Krishna Dasa** President, Hare Krishna Movement-Puri	**Karunya Sagar Dasa** President, Hare Krishna Movement-Mangalore	**Sridharn Krishna Dasa** Chief-Fund Mobilization ISKCON-Bangalore
Venavalana Gopala Dasa Senior Devotee	**Bharatarshabha Dasa** Head-Public Relations ISKCON-Bangalor	**Janardhana Dasa** President, Hare Krishna Movement-Guwahat	**Radhakantha Dasa** Sr Vice President ISKCON-Mysore
Nishinchaya Bhakta Dasa President, Hare Krishna Movement-Vizag			



ISKCON

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS
Founder-Acharya : His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

July 9th, 1977

To All G.B.C., and Temple Presidents

Dear Maharajas and Prabhus,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your feet. Recently when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vendavana, Srila Prabhupad indicated that soon He would appoint some of His senior disciples to act as "rittvik" - representative of the acarya, for the purpose of performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation. His Divine Grace has so far given a list of eleven disciples who will act in that capacity:

His Holiness Kirtanananda Swami
His Holiness Satsvarupa dasa Gosvami
His Holiness Jayapataka Swami
His Holiness Tamal Krsna Gosvami
His Holiness Hrdayananda Gosvami
His Holiness Bhavananda Gosvami
His Holiness Hamsaduta Swami
His Holiness Ramesvara Swami
His Holiness Harikesa Swami
His Grace Bhagavan dasa Adhikari
His Grace Jayatirtha dasa Adhikari

In the past Temple Presidents have written to Srila Prabhupad recommending a particular devotee's initiation. Now that Srila Prabhupad has named these representatives, Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation for first and second initiation, to whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple. After considering the recommendation, these representatives may accept the devotee as an initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada by giving a spiritual name, or in the case of second initiation, by chanting on the Gayatri thread, just as Srila Prabhupad has done. The newly initiated devotees are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad, the above eleven senior devotees acting as his representative. After the Temple President receives a letter from these representatives giving the spiritual name or the thread, he can perform the fire yajna in the temple as was being done before. The name of a newly initiated disciple should be sent by the representative who has accepted him or her to Srila Prabhupada, to be included in His Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book.

Hoping this finds you all well.
Approved

Your servant,
Tamal Krsna Gosvami
Secretary to Srila Prabhupad

Institutional directive on initiation approved by Srila Prabhupada

ISKCON INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS
Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

July 9th, 1977

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Hoping this finds you all well.
Approved

[Srila Prabhupada's signature appears on the original]
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Your servant,
[Tamala Krsna Gosvami's signature appears on the original]
Tamala Krsna Gosvami
Secretary to Srila Prabhupad

Notes

1. There is a failure to appreciate the problem Srila Prabhupada faced in his last days. We can be sure that he knew his own disciples better than they knew themselves; he had no illusions about their spiritual qualification. Yet they were pressing for a selection of successor *gurus*, the ultimate position for the ambitious. Hansadutta and Kirtanananda had already been rebuked by Srila Prabhupada for receiving *guru-puja* in the presence of the spiritual master, a serious transgression. (*Cleaning House, Cleaning Hearts*, an article by Ravindra Swarupa Dasa, International GBC member)
2. So the *Vaiṣnava,* therefore, will have no politics. Politics means planning for one's own happiness. That is politics. So in our society there should be no diplomacy, no politics. Everyone should be eager how to do good to others. That is *Vaiṣnava.* If he's planning something, that "I shall be leader," "I shall be doing something," that is not *Vaiṣnavism.* That politics is not good. (Srila Prabhupada talk during morning walk in Vrindavan, March 15, 1974)
   And sato *vrtteh,* dealing very straightforward. No diplomacy, no politics, no duplicity. That will not help. Sato *vrtteḥ. Vrtteḥ,* his profession should be very straightforward. No underhand dealings. (Srila Prabhupada talk in Los Angeles temple, Aug 2, 1970)
3. Unless one is a resident of Krishna Loka, one cannot be a Spiritual Master. That is the first proposition. A layman cannot be a Spiritual Master, and if he becomes so then he will simply create disturbance. And who is a liberated person? One who knows Krishna. It is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, fourth chapter, anyone who knows Krishna in truth is immediately liberated, and after quitting the present body, he immediately goes to Krishna. That means he becomes a resident of Krishna Loka. As soon as one is liberated he is immediately a resident of Krishna Loka, and anyone who knows the truth of Krishna can become Spiritual Master. That is the version of Lord Caitanya. So to summarize the whole thing, it is to be understood that a bona fide Spiritual Master is a resident of Krishna Loka. (Srila Prabhupada letter to Mukunda, June 10, 1969)
4. A disciple should never be a hypocrite or be unfaithful to his Spiritual Master. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.17.27), the Spiritual Master is also called *ācārya. Ācāryaṁ māṁ vijānīyāṇ:* the Supreme Personality of Godhead says that one should respect the Spiritual Master, accepting him as the Lord Himself. *Nāvamanyeta karhicit*: one should not disrespect the *ācārya* at any time. Na *martya-buddhyāsūyeta*: one should never think the ācārya an ordinary person. Familiarity sometimes breeds contempt, but one should be very careful in one's dealings with the *ācārya. Agādha-dhiṣaṇaṁ dvijam*: the *ācārya* is a perfect brāhmaëa and has unlimited intelligence in guiding the activities of his disciple. (Srila Prabhupada's purport to *Śrīmad- Bhāgavatam* 6.7.15)
   The Spiritual Master is as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and therefore one who is very serious about spiritual advancement must regard the Spiritual Master in this way. Even a slight deviation from this understanding can create disaster in the disciple's Vedic studies and austerities. (Srila Prabhupada's purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.15.27)
5. "But in ISKCON we have some practical problems well known to all of us which are mainly *guru* fall down, parallel authority, *guru* groupism and *guru dakshina.*" (In a correspondence by one of the International GBC members).
6. Room conversation, 770707r2.vrn