

**Note: this table of contents is not 100% accurate!**

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## Preface

This volume marks the revival of a resolution that directs the GBC to publish an annual up-to-date corpus of the Society's laws. It is also a significant step on the way to the drafting of a constitution for ISKCON, which Srila Prabhupada asked the GBC to put together in the early seventies. Finally, this volume will serve the GBC, ISKCON Leaders and all devotees as a useful source book of information in the practical affairs of executing devotional service within our institution. It is the hope of the GBC Body that the Vaisnavas in Srila Prabhupada's great movement will be satisfied with this compilation of ISKCON Law.

There may be laws that are obsolete, redundant, contradictory or poorly composed. And there are undoubtedly areas that our laws do not cover sufficiently. But in general, these laws are well thought out, each one representing many hours of deliberation on the part of many of the most experienced devotees in ISKCON. To get us from this corpus to a constitution, the help of all interested devotees throughout the movement is welcome.

-H.H. Suhotra Swami (GBC 2nd Vice Chairman 1997-98)

Readers may put their comments, suggestions and questions to the 1997-98 Chair of the GBC, His Grace Madhusevita Das, at his address:

His Grace Madhusevita Das  
Villaggio Hare Krsna  
Da Medolago Strada Per Terno D'Isola  
Chignolo D'Isola  
Bergamo  
ITALY

Fax: [39](35)4940705, 490945

E-mail: madhu.sevita.acbsp@com.bbt.se

or to the editor of this volume,

H.H. Jayapataka Swami  
P.O. Box 16108  
Circus Avenue  
Calcutta 700017  
INDIA

Fax: +91-3472-45238

E-mail: Jayapataka.swami@com.bbt.se

## 1

### International Society for Krishna Consciousness

#### 1.1 Definition

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) is the spiritual institution founded by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in July 1966 as a continuation of the *Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya sampradaya*. ISKCON was personally directed by its Founder-Acarya Srila Prabhupada until his departure on November 14, 1977. According to Srila Prabhupada's will, ISKCON continued thereafter under the ultimate managing authority of the Governing Body Commission (GBC). Accordingly, ISKCON is that institution founded by Srila Prabhupada and originally directed by him, which continues to be directed after his departure by the GBC.

#### 1.2 Principles: The Seven Purposes of ISKCON

1. To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life, and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.
2. To propagate consciousness of Krsna as it is revealed in the *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.
3. To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Krsna, the prime entity, and thus develop the idea within the members and humanity at large that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Krsna).
4. To teach and encourage the *sankirtana* movement of congregational chanting of the holy name of God as revealed in the teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.
5. To erect for the members, and for society at large, a holy place of transcendental pastimes, dedicated to the Personality of Krsna.
6. To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler and more natural way of life.
7. With a view towards achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, magazines, books, and other writings.

**Srila Prabhupada,  
the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON**

**2.1 Definition**

To fulfill the previous acarya's desire for a united worldwide preaching organization to expand Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mission, Srila Prabhupada founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness as a distinct branch of the *Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya-Vaisnava-sampradaya*. Therefore he is the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada is the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON. This means that he is ISKCON's link with the *Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya sampradaya*, that his writings, oral teachings, and exemplary actions remain the permanent and irreplaceable basis for all subsequent teachings and activities of ISKCON. He is and will remain always the instructing spiritual master of all devotees in ISKCON. (Law Revision committee 9.6.90)

**2.2 Principles**

**2.2.1 The Significance of Srila Prabhupada to ISKCON**

1. Srila Prabhupada is the foundational *siksa-guru* for all ISKCON devotees because he has realized and presented the teachings of the previous *acaryas* of the *Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya-sampradaya* appropriately for the modern age.
2. Srila Prabhupada's instructions are the essential teachings for every ISKCON devotee.
3. Srila Prabhupada's books are the embodiment of his teachings and should be accepted as the standard by all future generations of ISKCON.
4. Srila Prabhupada should be worshipped daily by every ISKCON member.
5. Every ISKCON spiritual master is responsible to guide his disciples to follow Srila Prabhupada's instructions.
6. As Founder-Acarya, Srila Prabhupada gave directions for management, principles of cooperation, and other practical guidelines which form the basis and inspiration for ISKCON's policies.
7. Srila Prabhupada established the Governing Body Commission to execute his will, following the order of the previous acaryas.(94)

**2.2.2 Recognition of Srila Prabhupada's Position as the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON**

The position of Srila Prabhupada as Founder-Acarya shall be recognized in ISKCON through the use of the titles "Founder-Acarya," "Founder," and "Prabhupada," and through the establishment of shrines in places of Srila Prabhupada's pastimes, memorials and plaques to his memory.

**2.3 Regulations**

**2.3.1 Use of Title**

1. The titles "Founder-Acarya," "Founder," and "Prabhupada" can be used only in reference to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada's full name shall be displayed along with his titles "Founder-Acarya" and "Prabhupada" on all printed materials, signs, letterheads, and in connection with all ISKCON projects.(83)
2. The title "Prabhupada" should be included on all printed materials, signs, etc. and only be used for Srila Prabhupada.(83)
3. All ISKCON publications such as books, magazines, newsletters, leaflets, fliers, invitations, etc., should clearly display the full name and titles of Srila Prabhupada including Founder-Acarya, Prabhupada, and His Divine Grace, for example:  
"His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada,  
Founder-Acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness".(96)

**2.3.2 Shrines and Memorials**

1. Places of Srila Prabhupada's pastimes shall be maintained as permanent shrines, and his paraphernalia shall be collected and preserved in memorials to him.
2. The responsibility for maintaining the worship of Srila Prabhupada shall be borne by ISKCON as a whole and distributed among the temples and initiated devotees of the Society.
3. There shall be a committee named "The Bhaktivedanta Swami Memorial Committee" whose members are appointed by the GBC. It will determine where and how Srila Prabhupada's rooms and paraphernalia shall be preserved.

Srila Prabhupada's rooms in the following places shall be maintained as permanent shrines in remembrance of his pastimes:

1. Vrndavana-dhama
2. Mayapur-dhama
3. Bombay
4. Los Angeles
5. Honolulu
6. Atlanta
7. Detroit

Srila Prabhupada's original grass hut (*Bhajana Kutira*) at Sri Mayapur shall be a Bhaktivedanta Swami memorial shrine.(81)

The *Sannyasa* Ministry and the Vrndavana Temple Management shall take joint responsibility for maintaining the worship in Srila Prabhupada's rooms at Radha-Damodara temple.(90)

**2.3.2.1 Samadhi Mandirs at Sri Vrndavana-dhama and Sri Mayapur-dhama**

ISKCON shall establish and perpetually maintain worship of Srila Prabhupada in his Samadhi Mandir at Sri Vrndavana-dhama and his Puspa-Samadhi Mandir at Sri Mayapur-dhama.

Temples or zones shall pledge to maintain the worship of Srila Prabhupada's Samadhi in Vrndavana according to the established system.

**2.3.3 Plaques**

1. All ISKCON temples and prominent buildings which do not already have Srila Prabhupada's name inscribed upon them, shall install plaques stating Srila Prabhupada's full name and his position as the Founder-Acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.
2. This shall also apply to prominent buildings of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Bhaktivedanta Institute and any other society founded by Srila Prabhupada or affiliated to ISKCON.
3. The Ministry of Communications shall give a standard format and wording for these plaques upon request.(95)

### 3

## Governing Body Commission

### 3.1 GBC Body

#### 3.1.1. Definition

1. The Governing Body Commission (GBC) is the ultimate managing authority of the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness.
2. The GBC has been established by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada to represent him in carrying out the responsibility of managing the International Society for Krishna Consciousness ISKCON of which he is the Founder-Acarya and supreme authority.

#### 3.1.2 Principles

The GBC accepts as its life and soul, the divine instructions of His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada and recognizes that it is completely dependent on his mercy in all respects. The GBC has no other function or purpose other than to execute the instructions so kindly given by His Divine Grace and to preserve and spread his teachings to the world in their pure form.

#### 3.1.3 Powers

1. The GBC, as a collective body has been authorized by His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada to make all necessary arrangements for carrying out the responsibilities of management, including but not limited to delegating authority, managing resources, setting objectives, making plans, calling for reports, evaluating results, training others, maintaining spiritual standards and defining the sphere of influence and responsibilities of the various GBC members as well as other devotees.(75)
2. The GBC may, either directly or through a deputed representative, request a report from any ISKCON member, who shall be duty-bound to cooperate with this request.(81)
3. The GBC Body may authorize one of its Commissioners to go to any GBC member to get a report from him on his activities. The GBC member must then co-operate and provide the GBC Body with his report. If a GBC member whose behavior is in question does not co-operate, the GBC Body must immediately be informed.(75)

#### 3.1.4 Duties

##### 3.1.4.1 Appointment of Ministers

A Minister is appointed by the GBC Body for each Statement of Mission. His prime duties are to become expert in his field and to act as a professor by establishing the curriculum of his discipline and disseminating this knowledge throughout ISKCON.

##### 3.1.4.2 Establishing Standards of Conduct

The GBC Body is responsible for establishing the proper standards of conduct for its members and others to whom it delegates authority. If an individual to whom the GBC Body has delegated authority fails to perform his mandated duties or acts in a manner contrary to ISKCON Law or principle, then the GBC Body is responsible to correct or remove the deviant.

If it is demonstrated that the GBC Body did not function in a timely manner to rectify one of its representatives, and as a result, an individual ISKCON temple or project suffers inordinately, then the GBC Body is to consider how to help the local temple or project overcome its difficulties, but the GBC Body cannot be held liable in any way.(93)

##### 3.1.4.3 GBC Annual Donations and Pledges

For the efficient functioning of the GBC Executive Committee and GBC Communications Office, the GBC shall assess what donation amount is proportionally appropriate to meet the annual expenses of the GBC. It is necessary that contributions are promptly given. Those temples which give delayed contributions create an additional burden which they should compensate for, by giving an additional donation equivalent to the rate between 10 to 20 percent per annum for temples that do not contribute within the 30th June due date. In addition, the GBC Body reaffirms its previous resolution that if any pledged amounts remain unpaid by the beginning of the subsequent year's GBC meeting, the responsible GBC member shall be subject to censure by the GBC Body at that meeting.

##### 3.1.4.4 Trademarks

1. The GBC Body is the ultimate authority all over the world for controlling the use of the names "ISKCON", "International Society For Krishna Consciousness", "Hare Krsna Movement" and other names related to the ISKCON Movement. It shall obtain legal authority to withdraw the right to use such names, under appropriate circumstances.(82)
2. The GBC Body is the full and final authority to rescind the right to use or operate the above mentioned names, and anyone using ISKCON names without permission shall be legally stopped from doing so.(82)

##### 3.1.4.5 GBC Press

A publishing house shall be created under the auspices of the ISKCON GBC Body to print books produced by the ISKCON Monitors which are of interest to the management and functioning of ISKCON. This publishing house shall be called ISKCON GBC Press. Its main work will be to print books produced by the GBC Monitors, Ministers, individual GBC members, and special committees, books which are accepted by the GBC Body as useful information for the Society thereby distributing and expanding the knowledge of their various fields. The ISKCON GBC Press will be situated in Sridhama Mayapur, and will be managed under the GBC Body.

The emphasis will be on producing the titles inexpensively to make them accessible to the temples and devotees. All books published by the GBC Press shall contain front matter clearly setting forth the authority the work holds for ISKCON, including standards and practices normative for all devotees or temples, philosophical positions answering pertinent questions for ISKCON members, useful guidelines, Ministerial and other practical training material and other categories of authority and obligations for implementation.

The Executive Committee of the GBC Body shall assign each proposed work to a Ksetra Committee or other GBC subcommittee to establish a system of conducting a final review, editing and approval of the proposed works. This committee shall also write the required front matter mentioned above.(92)

#### **3.1.4.6 Other regulations**

1. Committees may be formed from time to time by the GBC Body as needed for certain purposes and may be disbanded by the GBC Body.(75)
2. At its annual meeting, the GBC Body shall approve goals and objectives for its Zonal Secretaries and Ministers to be accomplished during the upcoming year.(86)
3. The GBC Body shall divide the world into geographic zones, each being assigned to one or more "Zonal Secretaries" such territory, regardless of whether there is an ISKCON center there, falls into a zone.
4. Before changing a GBC Member's zone, the GBC Body must first consult with the local leaders in the zone concerned.(86)  
The procedures given in the GBC Rules of Order are to be followed for changing a GBC member's zone.
5. The GBC Body shall publish philosophical position papers on important topics which require clarification and direction from the GBC Body.(84)
6. A central file shall be kept on all of Srila Prabhupada's initiated devotees for purposes of public relations and for reclaiming devotees who have fallen into *maya* and for engaging devotees in Srila Prabhupada's devotional service. Other disciple records shall be centrally maintained on a zonal basis.
7. Any ISKCON Ministry, organization, individual, or project (including those legally independent of ISKCON) receiving funding from ISKCON or the BBT, including mandatory assessments, taxes, and so forth, from temples and/or zones, is required to provide financial reports clearly delineating assets, liabilities, expenditures, and income. Such reports are to be submitted to the GBC Body through its Corresponding Secretary at least forty-five days prior to the beginning of the Annual Meeting, and shall be distributed to all GBC members and made available to other concerned ISKCON officials upon request. The Corresponding Secretary shall compile a list of ISKCON Ministries, organizations, individuals, or projects to whom this Law applies, and annually notify them of their report deadline at least 60 days in advance. Anyone submitting a request to the GBC Body or ISKCON for funding should, along with their appeal, include their budget and previous financial reports for information. (90)

#### **3.1.5 ISKCON Mission Statements**

##### **3.1.5.1 Delineation and publishing of Statements of Mission**

The GBC shall delineate and publish ISKCON's Statements of Mission (Statements of Aims), supporting objectives, progressive goals and vital tasks as defined below:

##### **3.1.5.1.1 Statement of Mission (ISKCON Statement of Aim)**

A Statement of Mission is the ultimate goal or long-range mission of ISKCON for a specific primary area of devotional service. Statements of Mission are established and modified by the GBC Body. All members of ISKCON and leaders shall cooperate together and work to systematically achieve ISKCON's Statements of Mission.

##### **3.1.5.1.2 Supporting Objective**

In order to realize the broad Statement of Mission there are essential, integral and supporting objectives that must first be achieved. These are called the "Supporting Objectives". They are by definition more specific and detailed than the Statement of Mission. They deal with a sub-topic within a Statement of Mission. Supporting Objectives for ISKCON worldwide are established and modified by the GBC Body and by lower levels of administration for their respective areas of responsibility following the worldwide supporting objectives, but not limited to them.

##### **3.1.5.1.3 Progressive Goals**

In order to work towards progressively realizing ISKCON's Statements of Mission and Supporting Objectives, each zone (or temple) will adopt intermediary stages or goals called Progressive Goals. Unlike both Mission Statements and Supporting Objectives, Progressive Goals are time-bound, quantitative, specific, and localized. The respective authorities for each level of administration within a zone should establish and update their own Progressive Goals based on their areas of responsibility. As a general principle, one-year and five-year goals shall be set. The GBC Body for the world, and a Continental Committee for a continent, may also adopt Progressive Goals if practical.(92)

##### **3.1.5.1.4 Vital Tasks**

In order to achieve a Progressive Goal, there may be many lesser tasks that need to be achieved. These are very specific and limited in nature and are the lowest definable stage towards achieving the Statement of Mission. The respective administrative authorities shall assign tasks for the areas and leaders.

##### **3.1.5.2 Zonal Secretary and Statements of Mission**

A Zonal Secretary's duties in relation to Statements of Mission are to motivate and organize his zone's progress in each Statement of Mission area. He is also to present that progress in an Annual Report for each Statement of Mission. He is to identify one-year and five-year Progressive Goals for his zone and temples in consultation and cooperation with his Zonal Council, Regional Secretaries, and Temple Presidents, and submit the same to the respective Ministers.

##### **3.1.5.2.1 Regional Secretary and Statements of Mission**

A Regional Secretary's duties in relation to Statements of Mission shall be to assist the Zonal Secretary to motivate and organize the region's progress in each Statement of Mission area.

### 3.1.5.2.2. Temple President and Statements of Mission

A Temple President's duties in relation to Statements of Mission shall be to be directly responsible to realize the Statement of Mission and Progressive Goals in his temple. He is to motivate the devotees and organize his temple's progress in each Statement of Mission area. He is also to present the progress in an Annual Report for each Statement of Mission for his temple to his Zonal Secretary.

Temple Presidents shall submit annual reports to the Global Secretariat and to each GBC Member (Zonal Secretary and/or Minister) with the following information:

1. The details requested for each temple.
2. Summary of the zonal progress in relation to the specific Statement of Mission.
3. Proposals related to the Statement of Mission.
4. New or revised continental, zonal or local Progressive Goals for the Statement of Mission; including information on the progress achieved for each Statement of Mission/Aim.
5. The Corresponding Secretary, in conjunction with the concerned Minister, shall standardize the report forms or information so as to facilitate data entry and data reporting of annual progress of the entire ISKCON Movement. The Corresponding Secretary shall be responsible to see that informative progress reports from available data are generated by computer as far as practical.

( 2001 )

6. The Temple Presidents are responsible to see that local Goshala managers send quarterly reports to the Ministry of Cow Protection & Agriculture. The local GBC Deputee/Deputies shall validate these reports by either personally visiting, or appointing an accountable and reliable representative to do so.

## 3.2 Executive Committee of the GBC Body

### 3.2.1 Definitions

The GBC Executive Committee consists of the annually elected officers: Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen, and Secretary.

### 3.2.2. Duties

#### 3.2.2.1. Executive Committee

1. With the Chairman of the GBC and the other Executive Committee members relieved of overseeing any specific area of the world, they can concentrate on global issues.
2. Every year, to meet in Mayapur and, reviewing previous reports, divide the practical workload amongst themselves for a more even distribution. This could include: correspondence, forwarding matters to appropriate persons, personally going to resolve problems which could not be resolved otherwise, follow-up, overseeing the implementation of resolutions, functioning of GBC Office, etc.
3. At the end of the year, to make a review of the previous year's workload and make suggestions for handling the work better, propose new amendments to the system, etc.
4. The yearly index of GBC resolutions and suggestions be published in proper booklet form and distributed yearly to the Society as soon as possible by the annual Secretary.(79)
5. A booklet of the ISKCON Constitution and the "Laws of ISKCON" shall be printed, with amendments added, yearly, at Sri Mayapur BBT, under the GBC Parliamentarians' supervision, and that funds shall be allotted for this. Each GBC and Temple President shall get one copy, extras for a fee.(80)
6. If an ISKCON member hears rumors of fall downs of a senior devotee like a GBC or sannyasi, rather than spread it further, he is to write to the GBC Chairman who, as one of his duties shall provide information.(77)
7. The Executive Committee shall mediate between GBC ministers and zonal secretaries if there is any conflict of interest in executing GBC directions.(86)
8. The Executive Committee is responsible to make sure that the resolutions passed by the GBC Body are carried out by ISKCON members during the year.
9. In addition the Chairman of the Executive Committee shall keep a written log or record of the actions the Executive Committee and its agents take during its year of office. This shall be handed over to the new Executive Committee at an explanatory briefing session so the new officers are up to date with their immediate service requirements.(96)

Delegation to Executive Committee of Power to suspend or Expel: (1999)

10. Whenever it deems necessary, the GBC Body may, by a two-thirds ( 2/3 ) vote, delegate to the Executive committee for a determined period of time, the power to suspend or expel from ISKCON, specifically named members, without convening a further meeting of the entire GBC Body.
11. GBC Body empowers the Executive Committee to re-constitute the GBC Deputies' Body on a regional basis and engage a recognized Body of Deputies in research and the work of restructuring the GBC's operations.
12. The GBC Body directs the GBC Executive Committee to engage its office in organizing and working with the GBC Deputies for the purposes of improving communications, record keeping and administration in ISKCON.
13. The GBC Body empowers the GBC Executive Committee to approve GBC Deputies. Replacing the function of the GBC Deputy Nomination Committee described in ISKCON Law 9.4.10

[Note : Law 9.4.10 is not in the existing Law Book.]

14. To have a deputy approved, the Executive Committee shall consult with a local GBC member who can verify the qualifications of the deputy candidate.

### 3.2.2.2 GBC Executive Committee Term of Office : (1999)

The term for the GBC Executive Committee shall be one year.

#### 3.2.2.2. Executive Committee Continental Representatives

Every Continental Committee will select one GBC member from the continent to serve as "GBC Executive Committee Continental Representative" for the year, commencing from Gaura-purnima. For areas that do not have Continental Committees, the GBC Members from the area will meet at Mayapur and select a Continental Representative for the year.

These Representatives will be chosen for

1. North America
2. South America
3. Europe-CIS-North Africa-West Africa
4. India-Middle East-East Africa-South Africa, and
5. The Pacific Rim.

In addition, a *sannyasi* will be assigned to each area to assist.

1. To directly receive notifications of all problems referred to the Executive Committee from within his continent.
2. To send to the Chairman of the GBC a regular report every three months on all significant issues which were brought to his attention from within his area.
3. To ensure that the normal procedures for resolving a problem have been attempted (going through the Temple President, Zonal Secretary, etc.) or are not applicable.
4. To consult with the GBC Chairman and/or Executive Committee if any issue occurs that he feels he cannot or should not deal with by himself.
5. To serve as a voting member of the Executive Committee on any issues concerning only his area, and to be consulted before any decision affecting his area is taken.
6. To engage the assigned *sannyasi* and/or Candidates for GBC assigned to his continent for the year in assisting him in resolving emergencies as required.

Issues that can be passed on by the Executive Committee Continental Representative are:

- a. Those that have global consequences or consequences reaching beyond his continent;
- b. Is an emergencies on the level that he cannot comfortably deal with;
- c. Issues that intimately deal with a GBC member or ISKCON *Guru*;
- d. Issues that deal with the workings of the GBC Body.

#### 3.2.2.3 GBC Chairman

The Chairman should himself not directly oversee any area of the world, other than his designated area of GBC responsibilities. He should work with his Executive Committee and the Executive Committee Continental Representative in the following ways:

1. Delegate appropriate issues arising from a continent to the concerned Continental Representative. Delegate issues related to a Ministry to the appropriate Minister to reply.
2. Receive, coordinate, and correspond about the regular reports sent to him by his Executive Officers and Continental Representatives, and other correspondence to the GBC Chairman.
3. Consult with a Continental Representative on any issue concerning the continent or as the Continental Representative feels necessary, and to take their vote and input on issues concerning their continent which are being considered by the Executive Committee.
4. Accept and deal with all issues passed up to him from the Continental Chairmen.
5. Follow up, after the initial notification by the past GBC Chairman, on all previously passed GBC resolutions.
6. Directly deal with issues of global consequence, or delegate to another member of the Executive Committee.
7. To discuss with other members of the Executive Committee on major issues of greater consequence, and get their help and input for resolving the problem.
8. Establish practical procedures to ensure that before matters are brought up to the Executive Committee the applicants have gone through the normal avenues for redressing the problems, to forward improperly submitted matters to appropriate persons, and to propose legislation in this regard as necessary.
9. To directly deal with emergencies requiring immediate attention due to their urgency. These shall be discussed with the Executive Committee as appropriate.
10. From time to time see that the other elected members of the Executive Committee are updated about the global issues which have surfaced and important continental issues.
11. To delegate an elected member of the Executive Committee (Vice-Chairman or Secretary) to deal with a problem which cannot be resolved by a Continental Chairman or *sannyasi* and cannot wait until the annual GBC meeting.
12. To coordinate *sannyasis* to resolve problems as required.(93)

### 3.3 GBC Standing Committees

#### 3.3.1 Definition

A Standing Committee is a Sub-committee created by the GBC Body which continues to exist until absolved. A Standing Committee can function as part of the GBC meetings as well as outside of GBC meetings during the year. Some Standing Committees are called Ksetra Committees (see Ksetra Committee Section for details), while other Standing Committees have delegated authority in a specific assigned area.

### **3.3.2 Powers**

Standing committees have specific powers and responsibilities assigned by the GBC. These include the power:

1. to make decisions and recommendations on matters referred to it in a prescribed manner or directly by the GBC.
2. to act on behalf of the GBC in some area(s).

### **3.3.3 Duties**

1. To submit a written report to the GBC before the annual GBC meeting at Mayapur.(79)
2. To fulfill the Duties as prescribed for a Standing Committee under the GBC Rules of Order (See GBC Rules of Order for further information).

### **3.3.4 Individual Standing Committees**

#### **3.3.4.1 Ksetra Committees**

##### **3.3.4.1.1. Definition**

1. The GBC has Standing Committees, known as Ksetra Committees which are comprised of the Ministers of the committee's topics, assigned GBC Members, and any other qualified devotees as the GBC deems necessary. The committees shall have a permanent chairman and permanent members.

2. The following Statements of Mission / ISKCON Statements of Aims are accepted (91-95):

Ksetra Committee 1: Essential Preaching

1. Book Publication and Distribution

To publish and distribute the books and periodicals of Srila Prabhupada and his followers in all languages and distribute them in ever-increasing numbers and with ever-increasing effectiveness, so that an ever-growing collection of Krsna conscious literature is enshrined in every household in the world.

2. Public Chanting and Festivals

To celebrate the congregational chanting of the holy name of Krsna by regularly organizing public chanting and joyous festivals in every city, town and village of the world.

3. Congregational Development

To bring to all homes in the world the continuing association of devotees and the regular practice of devotional activities.

4. Restaurants

To establish Krsna-prasadam restaurants in every city and town and make them famous all over the world so that millions eat in them every day.

5. Food for Life

To establish massive free prasadam distribution programs all over the world so that all human beings are adequately fed and nourished with Krsna-prasadam, reducing hunger as far as possible.

6. Prasadam Distribution

Ksetra Committee 2: Specialized Preaching

1. Vedic Science

To convince all people of the world of the errors of materialistic science and philosophies and to research, elucidate and teach God-centered science, based on bona fide Vedic knowledge.

2. Padayatra

To bring the congregational chanting of the Holy Name to every town and village of the world through organized Padayatra festivals.

3. Cultural Programs

To reveal Vedic culture as the universal and essential culture of all the world's peoples, and to supplant all mundane productions of literature, drama, music, and art with Krsna conscious alternatives.

4. Youth Preaching

5. College Preaching

Ksetra Committee 3: Education and Spiritual Development

1. Gurukula

To provide children with a life-long devotional foundation and to progressively train them according to their natural propensities in occupational duties of devotional service to Krsna.

2. Spiritual Standards

To establish and maintain in ISKCON and its members the high standards of Krsna conscious understanding and practices taught by Srila Prabhupada.

3. Adult Education

To convince receptive people all over the world to commit themselves to rendering devotional service, as taught by Srila Prabhupada, under the direction of a bona fide spiritual master.

4. Training New Recruits

To teach new devotees, through proper Vaisnava association and instruction, the philosophy and basic devotional practices of Krsna Consciousness.

Ksetra Committee 4: Essential ISKCON Infrastructure for Preaching

1. Finance and Accounting

To ensure that every ISKCON organization and program meets standards of excellence in handling fiscal matters.

2. Fund Raising

To establish systems and programs of fund-raising throughout the world to provide ISKCON with adequate funds to realize its goals.

3. Management and Administration

To ensure that the leadership of ISKCON is characterized by devotion to guru and Krsna, spiritual purity, compassion, integrity, commitment, consistency, competency, accountability, and to ensure that the devotees and assets of ISKCON are appropriately engaged, protected and increased.

4. Communications

To win respect for and trust in the ISKCON in all nations and among all people of the world.

Ksetra Committee 5: Holy Places and Communities

1. Deity Worship

To attract all peoples of the world to the personal service of the Lord, to engage them as devotees in that service, and train them in the principles and techniques of that service.

2. Mayapur and Vrndavana

To develop and maintain, for devotees and society, Mayapur and Vrndavana and other such holy places dedicated to the pastimes of Lord Krsna and His devotees.

3. Spiritual Communities

4. Daiva-varnasrama Development

5. Cow-Protection

6. Self-sufficiency

To reform the economic and social structure of all communities in the world by demonstrating the God-centered culture that depends on the land and the cows.

7. Temples as places of pilgrimage [tirthas]

Ksetra Committee 6: International ISKCON

1. Justice Systems

2. Legal Affairs

3. Unity of ISKCON

4. Zonal Affairs

5. Constitutional Issues

3.3.4.1.2. Regulations

1. To submit a written report to the GBC before the annual GBC meeting at Mayapur.(79)

2. To fulfill the duties as prescribed for a Standing Committee under the GBC Rules of Order (See GBC Rules of Order for further information).

**3.3.4.2. Other Standing Committees**

3.3.4.2.1. The Philosophical Committee

1. The Philosophical Committee is a resource available to ISKCON members.

2. Individual devotees and ISKCON entities (e.g., the GBC Body, Continental Committees, or International Temple Presidents) may approach the Philosophical Committee for the settlement of disputes on philosophical matters that arise within ISKCON. The Philosophical Committee will examine the issues and their implications, clarify what the areas of conflict are, and determine what is at stake. The Committee may then propose resolutions to the GBC Body. However, if the Philosophical Committee finds that a dispute simply concerns questions of correct practical application of philosophy, it will refer the matter to the local GBC secretary. ISKCON leaders may also request the Philosophical Committee to review publications which are perceived to be questionable.(96)

3. In addition (to its appointed members), the International GBC Chairman shall be an ex-officio member of the committee and serve as its Chairman.

3.3.4.2.2. Bhaktivedanta Memorial Committee

A Bhaktivedanta Memorial Committee shall determine where and how Prabhupada's rooms and paraphernalia shall be preserved.(78)

3.3.4.2.3. Executors Committee

Executors Committee shall see that Srila Prabhupada's will is being carried out.(78)

3.3.4.2.4. Sannyasa Committee

A standing GBC sub-committee established to deal with sannyasa matters.(96)

3.3.4.2.5. Interfaith Commission

An officially GBC-appointed Interfaith Commission with the specific purpose to present officially authorized ISKCON representatives for interreligious dialogue. These official representatives are authorized to speak on behalf of the ultimate managing authority, the GBC. This commission encourages the devotees in their taking initiative to speak on behalf of ISKCON in less official capacities.

This commission will be empowered to act as ISKCON's official voice and representation to the heads of all world religions and is empowered to engage other devotees in this service. Before publishing or issuing any major position statements, the commission will obtain the approval of the GBC Executive Officers.

The Commission will have different functions. It will act as a consultant for those who meet heads of religions; its members and their representatives will meet heads of religions; its members will appoint, assign and authorize official ISKCON representatives. Before a ISKCON representative is made official, the committee must to vote and approve him or her by majority vote. After each meeting with a major faith or its representative, the ISKCON representative will send a report to each member of the commission. These reports will be kept carefully by the commission. At the end of the year, the commission will make an official report to the GBC Body of its activity throughout the year. Among themselves, the committee members will decide how they will administrate their various functions throughout the year. If they are in doubt at any point about their decision-making, they will consult with the GBC Executive Committee officers for guidance.

The specific purpose of this commission is to present officially authorized ISKCON members to speak on behalf of the entire organization. This is our internal system for that.

#### 3.3.4.2.6 Ritvik Committee ( 2000 )

In order to protect the interests of ISKCON, the GBC Body hereby establishes the Ritvik Committee as a permanent standing committee. This committee can also appoint others at their discretion and is to include one International GBC Body member who does not have zonal responsibilities in India. The purpose of this committee is to address and make decisions regarding Ritvik related lawsuits to protect the interests of ISKCON.

#### 3.3.4.2.6. Others

Other Standing Committees are:

1. ISKCON Board of Examinations (see Adult Education)
2. ISKCON Board of Education (see Primary and Secondary Education)
3. Sri Mayapur Vrndavana Festival Committee (see International Projects)
4. Sri Mayapur Project Development Committee (see Sri Mayapur Project)
5. Justice Committee
6. Facilitators Committee
7. Child Protection Guidelines Committee
8. Funding Committee
9. Nominations Committee
10. Guru Services Committee (2000)

(Amendment 2002)

### 3.4 Geographic Area Committees

#### 3.4.1 ISKCON Regional Governing Bodies

##### 3.4.1.1 Definition

An "ISKCON Regional Governing Body" ("RGB") is a formally constituted body that performs certain managerial functions on behalf of the GBC Body for conduct of the affairs of the ISKCON society within a clearly designated contiguous geographical area, called a "Region," consisting of either a single country or a group of contiguous countries.

##### 3.4.1.2 Functions Delegated by the GBC Body to RGB's

If the GBC Body delegates a particular function to a Regional Governing Body, then any decision of the RGB within the scope of that function is binding within the Region as if the decision had been made by the full GBC Body, but it may be overruled by majority vote of the GBC Body.

There are minimum delegated functions as well as optional delegated functions:

##### 3.4.1.2.1 Minimum Delegated Functions:

The functions that are delegated to an RGB by the GBC Body shall include, as a minimum, the following:

1. To serve as a forum for increasing coordination of the overall preaching strategy in the Region.
2. To serve as a forum for increasing the coordination of the implementation of GBC policies, guidelines and resolutions applicable within the Region.
3. Subdivision of the Region into Divisions for the purpose of organizing Divisional Councils as described below, in consultation with all Zonal Secretaries actively functioning in the Region.
4. Making recommendations to the GBC Body, where appropriate, for GBC legislation.
5. Making recommendations to any Zonal Secretary or other ISKCON official functioning within the Region on matters concerning the affairs of the Region.

6. Appointment of Regional Ministers, Committees, etc., as it deems necessary for the conduct of its delegated functions.
7. Resolution of any conflicts within the Region that are beyond the scope of any Divisional Councils constituted within the Region. This includes handling of complaints on Regional matters referred to it by the GBC Body, the Divisional Councils, any ISKCON official or body, or from individuals.
8. Where necessary and appropriate, undertaking disciplinary action against ISKCON officials and/or other devotees serving within the Region, as allowed under ISKCON law for such a body.

#### 3.4.1.2.2 Optional Delegated Functions

If the GBC Body so chooses it may also delegate additional functions to a particular Regional Governing Body.

#### 3.4.1.3 Formation of an RGB:

An RGB for a particular Region may be created by simple majority vote of the GBC Body, but the effect of such a resolution will be pending the completion of certain formalities as specified below, and eventual notification by the GBC Secretary. Similarly, RGB's may have their geographic areas modified, and they also may be dissolved, by simple majority vote of the GBC Body.

In considering a proposal for creation of an RGB, the GBC Body shall consider the following criteria:

- a. Are the needs of the region in question sufficiently uniform as to make amalgamation into a single region appropriate?
- b. Is the existing leadership within the region sufficiently mature to be able to assume such a delegation of responsibilities?
- c. Does the region have a track record of cooperative management, such as through the proper functioning of a Continental Committee or other informal body as described below?

Note: Bodies known as "National Councils" or "National Governing Bodies" which are managing ISKCON's affairs in a single country may be designated by the GBC Body as RGB's, or if they are not so designated then they may be Divisional Councils or informal bodies as defined in the following sections.

#### 3.4.1.4 Approval of Rules and Regulations:

In order to be recognized as a Regional Governing Body under this law, the regional leaders must submit to the GBC Secretary the proposed Rules and Regulations for how the affairs of the RGB will be conducted. These Rules and Regulations must include, as a minimum, information on:

- a. How membership in the RGB is determined, and that there is allowance for a sufficient number of GBC Members functioning within the area to be members.
- b. How meetings are convened and conducted.
- c. Rules for the election of officers and their duties.
- d. The rights and responsibilities of the members.
- e. Procedures for reporting to the GBC Body on its actual membership and proceedings.
- f. Procedures for maintaining a record of the official proceedings of the RGB.
- g. Procedures for changing the Rules and Regulations by minimum 2/3 vote.

The GBC Secretary may also from time to time promulgate additional standards for what is to be included in the Rules and Regulations, as directed by the Executive Committee.

When the GBC Secretary is satisfied that the Rules and Regulations for the conduct of the affairs of the RGB are well formed then he or she shall issue notification to such effect and the RGB shall be considered created.

Any changes that the RGB proposes to make to its Rules and Regulations shall be submitted to the GBC Secretary for approval before they take effect.

In the functioning of an RGB, if any dispute arises among the members as to whether the Rules and Regulations are being properly followed, the GBC Secretary shall make a final determination.

### 3.4.2 ISKCON Continental Committees and Other Informal Bodies

#### 3.4.2.1 Regulation

In addition to Regional Governing Bodies, which have functions clearly delegated by the GBC Body, there may continue to exist in certain regions, as required, informally constituted bodies with the function of expanding cooperative management within a geographical area. They may be called Continental Committees or other names as appropriate. They may function to resolve issues of

importance to the region on a cooperative or advisory basis, to give vision and prepare strategies for advancing the objectives of Krishna consciousness, and/or to make recommendations and proposals to the GBC Body. Decisions of such Continental Committees or other such bodies should be followed in a cooperative spirit. However, for the Continental Committee's resolutions to be obligatory they must either be ratified by the GBC Annual General Meeting at Mayapur or have been specifically previously empowered in that regard by the GBC Body.

### 3.4.3 ISKCON Divisional Councils

#### 3.4.3.1 Definition

An ISKCON Divisional Council is a body that performs certain managerial functions on behalf of an individual Zonal Secretary, on behalf of a group of Zonal Secretaries serving in the same general area or on behalf of a Regional Governing Body for conduct of the affairs of the ISKCON society within a clearly designated contiguous geographical area, called a "Division." The geographical area in question could be a group of small countries, a single country or a section of a single country, but it should be small enough such that all temple leaders within the area would be generally familiar with ISKCON's activities throughout the geographical area, and such that the members would be able to meet together several times per year.

#### 3.4.3.2 Formation of Divisional Councils

Wherever there are functioning Regional Governing Bodies, these Bodies shall designate the Divisions for formation of the Divisional Councils within the Region, in consultation with the Zonal Secretaries actively functioning within the Region.

Where there is no functioning RGB, the appointed GBC Zonal Secretaries may designate specific areas as Divisions and may form Divisional Councils for these Divisions. Such designation must be done in writing, addressed to the GBC Secretary and signed by all GBC Zonal Secretaries assigned to the area in question. The GBC Secretary shall acknowledge such designations. If no such written designation has been made then any bodies constituted shall be considered as informal bodies as described under Section 3.4.2.

#### 3.4.3.3 Divisional Council Membership

A Divisional Council shall be constituted of all Temple Presidents, all Preaching Center managers, all Regional Secretaries and all Zonal Secretaries (that wish to attend) within the region as well as resident sannyasis or other leading devotees as the council desires or as the local Zonal Secretaries recommend.

#### 3.4.3.4 Divisional Council Functions

1. Serve as a forum for coordination of the overall preaching strategy in the Division.
2. Serve as a forum for coordination of the implementation of GBC policies, guidelines and resolutions applicable within the Division.
3. Serve as a forum for resolution of any conflicts within the Division. This includes handling of complaints on local matters referred to it by the GBC Body, the RGB, any ISKCON official or body or from individuals.
4. Making recommendations to the RGB, where appropriate, for RGB or GBC legislation.
5. Making recommendations to any Zonal Secretary or other ISKCON official functioning within the Division on matters concerning local affairs.
6. Where necessary and appropriate, undertaking disciplinary action against ISKCON officials and/or other devotees serving within the Division, as allowed under ISKCON law for such a body.

A Divisional Council may also perform other functions within the Division as specifically assigned to it by a Zonal Secretary, the RGB or the GBC Body, such as approving the opening or closing of ISKCON centers, appointing Temple officers, taking final decisions on matters of dispute, deciding on territorial matters among the various temples, making recommendations on sannyasa candidates, formally considering the nomination of candidates who reside within their area of responsibility for serving as new initiating gurus, checking into the management of the local ISKCON centers, overseeing spiritual standards, etc.

[ACTION ORDER] It is further resolved, That India is hereby approved as a Region as per the above law. GBC Members serving in India shall submit proposed Rules and Regulations for an RGB for India as per Section 3.4.1.4.

## **GBC Members**

### **3.5.1 Definition**

The following shall be considered to be GBC Members: GBC Zonal Secretaries, GBC Ministers, Assistant GBC Members, and Candidates for GBC, GBC Deputies and GBC Emeritii.

### **3.5.2. Principles**

1. A GBC Member shall practically accept as one's life and soul the mission, purpose, special projects, and will of Srila Prabhupada and accept the GBC, which is Srila Prabhupada's representative. (81)

2. The individual members of the GBC Body do not have any inherent authority but rather derive their authority from the Governing Body Commission itself and ultimately from His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada. Their authority may be over a particular geographic area or over a particular function. Whichever area of responsibility be given to the various members, their primary responsibility is to the Society as a whole. Therefore a GBC member should not consider himself as the whole GBC, but as a member or commissioner, commissioned by the whole Governing Board.(75)
3. A GBC Member shall represent the GBC by performing the assignments allotted in accordance with GBC policy.(81)

### **3.5.3 Standards**

#### **3.5.3.1 Standard for Sadhana and Spiritual Practices**

That a GBC Member must be an exemplary practicing devotee who follows daily *sadhana* and full morning program, demonstrably chants sixteen rounds, follows strictly the four regulative principles, regularly gives classes, and participates in temple festivals and *harinama* parties.(92)

A GBC Member must live in or near a Krsna conscious temple community so as to regularly, on a daily basis, participate in devotional activities and associate with devotees.(92)

#### **3.5.3.2 Standard of Personal Behavior and Character**

A GBC should be exemplary in all respects in his behavior and character.(92)

1. A GBC member be an "*acarya*" by teaching by personal example the path of Krsna consciousness in its purity.(81)
2. No GBC can knowingly or unknowingly permit his men or himself to engage in illicit, illegal activities.(78)
3. GBC members should not speak in a derogatory way of other GBC members in public.(86)

#### **3.5.3.3 Disqualifications**

No devotee who has remarried after having divorced a devotee-spouse shall serve as a member of the GBC.

Exempt from this law are devotees who become divorced against their desire by the action of their spouses, or as a consequence of their spouses' becoming committed non-devotees.

Provisionally exempt are devotees who became divorced prior to the effective date of this resolution, March 2, 1990.

### **3.5.4 General Duties**

1. A GBC member must accept and carry out diligently and responsibly all GBC duties, including those specifically assigned.
2. No GBC member shall engage in illegal activities or allow those under his direction to do so, except under conditions where Krsna consciousness itself is locally considered an illegal activity.(78)

#### **3.5.4.1 In Relation to the GBC Body**

1. To participate in the annual GBC meeting at Sridhama Mayapur before Gaura-purnima.(81)
2. To maintain at all times the confidentiality, integrity, and sanctity of the GBC proceedings and policy.(81)
3. To serve as an officer of the GBC and as a member of the GBC Committees and to participate in GBC *ista-gosthis*, special meetings, etc., when duly called upon.(81)
4. To offer one's realized viewpoint to the assembly of the GBC.(81)
5. Every GBC member should support the decisions of the GBC Body. He is free to express his opinion after first clearly presenting the will of GBC Body.(86)
6. GBC member shouldn't indulge with non-GBC men in criticizing the GBC Body.

Every GBC member shall be required to submit annual reports in time to the GBC Body. A report shall be submitted in accordance with the format prescribed by the Corresponding Secretary and the Executive Committee. A member failing to submit an annual report in a timely manner shall be subject to censure by the GBC Body. Members should insure that their annual reports are submitted in time, even though they may possess an excused absence or tardiness for the annual meeting.(90)

#### **3.5.4.2 In Relation to International Projects**

If an aspect of the Sri Mayapur Development Project or any other International Project be assigned the individual GBC representative, he shall adopt those particular assignments as his personal responsibilities, no less than if they were an extension of his Zone or Ministry.

The constitution of the GBC includes, in defining the duties of the GBC members, their obligation to support Srila Prabhupada's International Priority Projects such as Sridhama Mayapur etc.(80)

#### **3.5.4.3 In Relation to Other GBC Zonal Secretaries**

No GBC member should enter into the zone of another GBC member on the plea of protecting or helping someone within that zone, without the approval of local GBC.(86)

### **3.5.5 Categories of GBC Members**

#### **3.5.5.1 GBC Zonal Secretaries**

##### **3.5.5.1.1 Definition**

A Zonal Secretary is a member of the GBC Body appointed by the GBC Body to oversee ISKCON Temples and other ISKCON projects in a specific geographical area designated as a "zone". He is overall responsible for the management and administration of a zone and is ultimately fully accountable to the GBC Body.(86)

### 3.5.5.1.1. Definition of Zonal Secretary[2002]

**A Zonal Secretary is an ISKCON member appointed by the GBC Body to oversee ISKCON Temples and other ISKCON projects in a specific geographical area designated as a "zone." A Zonal Secretary has overall responsibility for the management and administration of the zone.**

#### 3.5.5.1.2. Powers

1. The GBC Zonal Secretary, whether initiating or not, is the ultimate managerial authority within his zone, as the official representative of the GBC Body.
2. A GBC member can go to a center in his zone and inspect the accounts and if any unauthorized expenditures are being made he may take appropriate action to correct it.(75)
3. The GBC recognizes that as per Srila Prabhupada's instructions, GBC men may have even "thousands of secretaries"; individual GBC men may see the need for appointing assistants who will have greater responsibility than Temple Presidents, and who may be known as Regional Secretaries, etc.(79)

#### 3.5.5.1.3. Duties

##### 3.5.5.1.3.1 *Sadhana and Temple Programs*

All GBC Zonal Secretaries are responsible to see that all devotees in their zones attend the morning and evening programs, except when they have an alternative bona fide preaching engagement in the evening.(77)

##### 3.5.5.1.3.2 *Book Distribution and Preaching*

1. GBC Zonal Secretaries and all Temple Presidents shall ensure that their respective zones and temples will distribute books on *sankirtana* on a regular basis, making a sincere attempt to implement Srila Prabhupada's formula that fifty percent (50%) of our income be used for book distribution and fifty percent (50%) be used for the temple expenses. The Temple Presidents should give a minimum of twenty five percent (25 %) of income for book distribution.
2. To inspire the leaders and help to organize college preaching programs and other forms of congregational preaching and to involve the Temple Presidents and devotees in that preaching work.
3. To go out in the preaching field in each of his temples to insure proper preaching techniques are being utilized.(77)

##### 3.5.5.1.3.3 *Congregational Preaching*

1. Each GBC Zonal Secretary shall allocate the responsibility for preaching to the congregation in the different geographic areas of his zone to temples or Congregational Preaching Directorates to insure maximum effectiveness in congregational preaching and development.
2. If a *nama-hatta* center upgrades to become an ISKCON temple or otherwise a temple is established in a Congregational Preaching Directorate area, then naturally the Zonal Secretary will make new arrangements to re-allocate the respective geographic responsibilities for preaching to the congregation in the affected areas.(93)

For those geographic areas which fall beyond the capacity or desire of ISKCON temples to supervise, promote, and expand the congregational preaching, the local GBC Zonal Secretary(s) and the Zonal Council (if any) can appoint a responsible devotee in good standing to be a "Director" of a "Congregational Preaching Directorate" or "Branch" of ISKCON who can lead a team of preachers to systematically cultivate, preach to, and expand the congregational preaching in a specified area.

3. To oversee that every temple maintains a program of sending a monthly letter from a devotee to his parents, if his parents are at least approachable.(77)

##### 3.5.5.1.3.4 *Recovering "Blooped" Devotees*

1. Each GBC member is responsible to try to recover the devotees living in his zone who are not fully active in devotional service.(94)
2. Each GBC member shall maintain a master record of the devotees in his zone.

##### 3.5.5.1.3.5 *Oath of Loyalty by Temple Presidents*

To administer and insure that their Temple Presidents sign and take the oaths as requested by Srila Prabhupada.(77)

##### 3.5.5.1.3.6 *Cooperation with the Local Leader in Preaching*

To take permission from the local GBC Zonal Secretary or Temple President of another zone before sending a traveling party into their area.(77)

##### 3.5.5.1.3.7 *In Relation to Temple Presidents*

To collect from each Temple President in his zone, if any, their monthly report, and verify that it contains an itemized account of income and expenditure, the preaching highlights including the number of books sold, and inventory of books.(75)

##### 3.5.5.1.3.8 *In Relation to Initiating Gurus*

To submit a form annually to the Executive Committee indicating briefly the status of all approved ISKCON gurus normally residing, regularly preaching, or initiating in his zone. (The Executive Committee will assign each *guru* to a GBC member(s) for monitoring.) If any approved *guru* has: (a) taken reinitiation/shelter of a non-ISKCON *guru* or institution, (b) rejected ISKCON or Srila Prabhupada; or, (c) undergone a change of service, of *asrama*, or of living situation, which the local GBC member feels threatens to hamper the approved *guru's* ability to give guidance to or set a proper standard of conduct for disciples, then the GBC member's report shall, if possible, include a written statement from the approved *Guru* as to his intentions in regard to his disciples and his devotional service. If not possible, then it shall at least include a description of the approved *Guru's* intentions as best they can be discerned through the investigation of the GBC member. The report shall also contain any other information which would

be of value to the GBC Body in determining the *guru's* status, as well as the recommendations of the local Temple Presidents, zonal councils, etc. The Executive Committee shall review the reports and take any necessary action.

#### 3.5.5.1.3.9 *Child Protection Concerns*

Persons, who after an ISKCON investigation, are confirmed to be guilty of child abuse must report their status to the local Temple President upon their arrival in an ISKCON community. Also, it is the obligation of a Temple President to determine for every member joining his community, if the newcomer is a confirmed child abuser. The Temple President is then obliged to notify the local householders and GBC of the offender's presence.

The local GBC should be advised if a Temple President knowingly arranges for a confirmed child abuser to be supported by a temple, or live on temple property without first notifying the householder community as per ISKCON laws. The local GBC is to supervise the situation to be sure the Temple President follows the following GBC guidelines:

1. "In no case should a confirmed perpetrator remain in the local community unless the local ISKCON authorities obtain the written authorization of no less than three-quarter of the parents of children at the project or in the community.
2. The local government authorities and/or the ISKCON Board of Education will make the final determination of the appropriate degree of segregation. (1990-119.4)"
3. Every GBC make sure the temples presidents in his zone are made aware of this resolution and GBC guidelines.

#### 3.5.5.1.4. Guidelines for evaluating GBC Zonal Secretary

That if a Temple President or local Temple Council thinks that an assigned GBC Zonal Secretary is not fulfilling the responsibilities of that position, he should communicate with the GBC Executive Committee.

### 3.5.5.2 *ISKCON Administrative Regions (2001)*

The GBC Secretariat, in cooperation with the GBC Zonal Secretaries and ISKCON Continental Committees shall organize "ISKCON Regions" each consisting of approximately ten to twenty geographically contiguous ISKCON branches.

Each region shall have one GBC Deputee assigned to it who resides in the region and interfaces with the GBC Secretariat on ISKCON administrative issues. This assignment implies no administrative authority for the GBC Deputee, whose sole responsibility in this role is to communicate effectively with the Regional Temple Presidents and the GBC Secretariat.

The GBC Secretariat has drafted a list of such regions summarised below. The GBC Body provisionally accepts this list, with the understanding that their exact composition may be changed at any time by consensus of the local GBC Zonal Secretaries and the GBC Secretariat or by direction of the GBC Executive Committee.

Draft summary of ISKCON Regions: Africa (two regions), Australia (two regions), India (four regions), CIS (six regions), Europe (six regions), South America (two regions), North America (four regions).

#### 3.5.5.2 *Candidates for GBC*

##### 3.5.5.2.1. Definition

A Candidate for GBC is an official status which is preliminary to Assistant GBC. A candidate for GBC is given the opportunity to demonstrate that he does well in his assigned area for a specified length of time, in which case the GBC would consider him as Assistant GBC for that area.(92)

##### 3.5.5.2.2. Regulations

###### 3.5.5.2.2.1 *Appointment*

1. The Governing Body Commission may, at its discretion, appoint a senior ISKCON member in good standing to be a "Candidate for GBC" to fulfill a need for additional GBC presence for a specified geographical area or Ministry. Upon successful completion of the terms of appointment, the Candidate for GBC shall be considered at the plenary GBC meeting for the post of Assistant GBC.
2. Official Candidates for GBC shall be appointed by the Governing Body Commission by a simple majority vote.
3. It shall be required that a Candidate for GBC be under the supervision of a GBC member, group of members, or committee. They shall assist the Candidate for GBC as needed, and make reports on his progress and activities to the GBC Body or a committee assigned for this purpose.

##### 3.5.5.2.3. Duties

There shall be specific duties given to the Candidate along with the appointment, which will vary according to individual circumstances, such as the following:

1. To establish permanent ISKCON centers or develop an undeveloped or underdeveloped part of the world as an active Krsna conscious missionary.
2. To reside or remain in a particular area for a minimum total period of time or time per year.
3. To dedicate himself to preaching in a particular area or field.
4. To demonstrate his abilities and capacities successfully for a specified minimum period of time.
5. To provide an annual report to the GBC in approved format.
6. To improve deficiencies in some aspects of the person's character, attitude, knowledge, abilities, skills or behavior.

##### 3.5.5.2.4 Powers

A Candidate for GBC is empowered by the GBC Body as deemed necessary to enable him to fulfill his duties. These powers may include:

1. Acting as an official representative of the GBC Body for the assigned area.
2. Having any or all of the general powers of a Zonal Secretary or Minister, as qualified under the "Supervision" section below.
3. Other special powers for fulfilling some special assignment or service as the GBC Body may deem appropriate.
4. Attendance at GBC plenary or committee meetings.

#### 3.5.5.2.5 GBC Supervision

It shall be required that a Candidate for GBC be under the supervision of a GBC member, group of members, or committee. They shall assist the Candidate for GBC as needed, and make reports on his progress and activities to the GBC body or a committee assigned for this purpose.

#### 3.5.5.3 ***Emeritus GBC***

##### 3.5.5.3.1 Definition

The GBC Body may award the title "Emeritus GBC" to retired GBC Members who have rendered distinguished service.

##### 3.5.5.3.2 Role

The role of an Emeritus GBC is to:

- a. make himself available to all GBC members as a storehouse of knowledge and experience,
- b. be respected in ISKCON society as were the great sages in Vedic society,
- c. when requested, act in a non-managerial role by giving advice to the GBC member or members or GBC Deputies who have taken over his GBC responsibilities,
- d. participate in GBC meetings as a non-voting member if he should so choose,
- e. as a participant in GBC meetings, be afforded all privileges offered to an ordinary GBC Member.

#### 3.5.5.4 ***GBC Deputies***

##### 3.5.5.4.1 Definition

In order to recruit some of the best non-GBC ISKCON members into the GBC decision making process that will help make the GBC more relevant to the needs of the Society while creating valuable training opportunities for these members, there shall be "GBC Deputies" appointed from ISKCON Leaders (Temple Presidents, Regional Secretaries, etc.) to assist the GBC Body in its global management of ISKCON in addition to their normal duties.

(2000)

Further membership in this Body shall be for 3 years and may be renewed. Members must attend the Annual Mayapur GBC Meetings.

##### 3.5.5.4.2 Duties

1. To attend the annual GBC meetings in Sridhama Mayapur,
2. To be appointed for a term of 3 years, reappointment is permitted,
3. To be assigned to the Ksetra Committees, standing or other committees and to serve as regular voting members of the same,
4. To stay in communication during the year and continue to serve as committee members,
5. To do other things as requested by the GBC Body,
6. To review the previous year's GBC meeting minutes and report to the GBC Body on what has been achieved and is still requiring action,
7. To preview and refine proposals and cast a preliminary vote to expedite GBC voting and
8. To assist the collection of data for evaluating ISKCON performance.(97-404.1)

##### 3.5.5.4.3 Functions

The GBC Rules of Order give details on GBC Deputy functioning.

## 4

### ISKCON Ministries

#### 4.1 Definition

A Minister is appointed by the GBC Body for each Statement of Mission. He is an expert in the educational, regulatory, developmental, and planning aspects of his field. He acts as a professor and establishes the curriculum of his discipline and disseminates this knowledge throughout ISKCON. A Ministry is usually headed by a Minister.

A Minister shall be appointed by the GBC Body for each Statement of Mission.

#### 4.2 General Duties

1. To oversee a Statement of Mission or specific area as assigned by the GBC Body.
2. To educate Zonal Secretaries and ISKCON Leaders how to take practical steps towards achieving the Statement of Mission and Progressive Goals.
3. To advise, assist, and promote the realization of the Statement of Mission or coordinate others to do so.
4. To monitor ISKCON's progress in relation to his Ministerial area including the progress towards the stated Mission, its Supporting Objectives, and the Progressive Goals for the world.
5. To work through the regular ISKCON administrators, and to try to further motivate them to achieve the Statement of Mission.
6. To make annual and other progress reports as necessary on the respective Statement of Mission.
7. To make observations on each Zonal Secretary's progress reports, and otherwise make special progress reports or studies in regard to a zone or other area, as required.

8. To appoint staff members, assistants, and advisers (who are experts in the field), as needed.
9. To liaise in the appointment of Continental or National coordinators with the local bodies.
10. To become expert in his field, and to act as a professor.
11. To establish the curriculum of his discipline and disseminate this knowledge throughout ISKCON.
12. To provide the GBC Body with reports on their assigned activities which shall include financial details such as assets, liabilities, expenditures, and income. Such reports are to be submitted to the GBC Corresponding Secretary at least forty-five days prior to the beginning of the annual meeting, and shall be distributed to all GBC members and made available to other concerned ISKCON officials upon request.

### **4.3 Guidelines**

#### **4.3.1 Preaching Vision and Goals for ISKCON in Relation to ISKCON Ministries**

The following is accepted by the GBC Body as the preaching vision and goals for ISKCON.

##### **4.3.1.1 Goal and Strategy for Qualified Teachers**

###### 1. Background

In order to maintain our devotees in the preaching spirit, they need to continually be utilizing their brain to its capacity and providing them with a challenging and meaningful learning experience within Krsna consciousness.

###### 2. Goal

All ISKCON personnel who are teaching other devotees on any subject should obtain the ability and technique required to educate the students effectively.

###### 3. Strategy

All ISKCON personnel who are teaching or intend to teach others on any subject should attend and pass the Teachers Training Course as soon as possible.

###### 4. Action to be taken by

- a. All desirous of teaching.
- b. Teachers Training course organizers.

##### **4.3.1.2 Goal and Strategy for Education Oriented Ministries**

###### 1. Background

The Book Distribution Minister reported great gains from his Book Distribution courses and trainers courses. It became evident that this should be the standard for all or most Ministries in ISKCON and that some more curriculums were urgently needed.

###### 2. Goal

That every Ministry will have nicely developed curriculum and courses for imparting knowledge in their area of activity.

###### 3. Strategy

Every Ministry shall submit the topics for which they need training courses to the Adult Education Minister who shall utilize his resources and work cooperatively to insure that high quality training manuals and courses are prepared for each Ministry. The Congregational Preaching Ministry is a top priority.

###### 4. Action to be taken by each Minister, Ksetra Committee, Adult Education Minister and VTE.

##### **4.3.1.3 Goal and Strategy for Seva-Oriented Ista-gosthi**

###### 1. Background

Devotees need to discuss their services amongst others doing the same or similar services in order to share their experiences and realizations. This has proved very effective in book distribution and congregational preaching.

###### 2. Goal

To enliven devotees and provide them positive inputs about how to improve their services and to improve the spiritual bonding amongst them with Lord Krsna and devotional service in the center.

###### 3. Strategy

The devotees engaged in the same activity in all fields should meet together and discuss their common service on a weekly basis (if not possible fortnightly or monthly). They should share their experiences, realizations, challenges and get input from others on how to overcome the difficulties. They encounter in this way, and they should improve their quality of service.

###### 4. Action to be taken by GBC Zonal Secretaries, Temple Presidents, Department Heads, and general devotees.

##### **4.3.1.4 Goal and Strategy for Training All Committed Devotees**

###### 1. Background

Many courses are and will increasingly be available in ISKCON.

To improve the quality, life and ability of the Temple Devotees and initiated or committed congregational devotees, training courses have proven to be highly successful.

###### 2. Goal

That every committed devotee shall participate annually in some formal training program and obtain diplomas or certificates based on their performance.

###### 3. Strategy

That every committed devotee should go through at least one course per year on a scheduled systematic basis.

###### 4. Action to be taken by Temple Presidents, Congregational Preaching Directors and general devotees.

##### **4.3.1.5 Goal and Strategy for Bhakti-sastri Implementation**

###### 1. Background

Utilizing the courses that Srila Prabhupada has given us would enliven devotees and improve their self-esteem and ability to preach Krsna consciousness. These courses should be administered from all temples, but somehow they are not easily available.

## 2. Goal

That temple devotees, initiated congregations, and other congregational members who desire, should become *bhakti-sastri* degree holders.

## 3. Strategy

To have the Education Ministry (or appropriate body) make available to all temples and GBC's, the standard materials necessary to administer *bhakti-sastri* courses and exams.

4. Action to be taken by Education Ministry and Temple Presidents.

### 4.3.1.6 **Goal and Strategy for ISKCON Temples as Centers of Learning**

#### 1. Background

Now that the gradual orientation of the temples is changing, it is important to maintain the relevance of the temple through educating its adherents.

#### 2. Goal

Every ISKCON temple will become a center of transcendental learning for both the residents, congregational devotees and members of the public. The temples shall provide training, degrees or diplomas, and titles for each major department of applied Krsna conscious activity.

#### 3. Strategy # 1

The various Ministries shall identify the areas for training (as mentioned earlier) to include all applied and practical areas of training and with the Adult Education Ministry, develop course materials.

#### 4. Strategy # 2

In addition, the great wealth of already trained personnel within ISKCON, or ISKCON alumni's who are available as resources, shall be identified. The Ministry of Education shall create a massive database of all skilled devotees in the world and identify who can become teachers in the following areas:

- a. Deity worship
- b. Cooking
- c. Congregational preaching
- d. Cow Protection
- e. Book distribution
- f. Preaching
- g. *asramas*
- h. Farming
- i. *Sastric* knowledge
- j. Fund development
- k. Temple management

#### 5. Strategy # 3

"Baby step" courses should be established to make it more interesting and accessible for children and new congregational members.

6. Action to be taken by ISKCON temples, all Ministries and centers of learning. (97-105)

## 4.4 **Individual ISKCON Ministries**

### 4.4.1 **Ministry of Emergencies**

The Ministry of Emergencies is created to assist the Executive Committee to handle emergencies throughout the year which require personal resolution. (see GBC Rules of Order give details)

### 4.4.2 **Ministry of Justice**

#### 4.4.2.1 **Definition**

The Ministry of Justice is recognized as fully authorized by the GBC to carry out the mandate described herein, given assurance of the participatory support of each GBC member which will be necessary to successfully execute the mandate described herein, and given sufficient resources to efficiently and effectively deal with grievances and complaints which arise within ISKCON.

#### 4.4.2.2 **Duties of the Minister of Justice**

The Minister of Justice shall oversee the development, implementation and ongoing operation of complaint and dispute resolution mechanisms for the ISKCON community. The Minister of Justice shall be responsible for the creation of procedures and guidelines for resolution of disputes and the investigation of complaints.

#### 4.4.2.3 **Procedures for Resolution of Disputes**

##### 4.4.2.3.1. Investigation of Complaints

Devotee ombudspersons will be engaged to receive and investigate complaints. The ombudsperson will then work to achieve a satisfactory resolution of complaints through neutral analysis of the complaint presented; analysis of relevant instructions of Srila Prabhupada and the *sastras*, research of existing GBC resolutions, comparisons with procedures in other traditions (religious and secular), and the recommendation of changes in ISKCON procedures.

##### 4.4.2.3.2 Mediation Services

Mediation involves an independent (neutral) third party who acts as a facilitator, hears both sides of the problem and helps devotees achieve a satisfactory resolution about the issues at hand. The mediator's primary function is to provide a forum where

disputants can construct their own mutual agreement. Mediators work directly and in-depth with the parties in dispute and encourage discussion. No decisions are imposed by mediators but mediators do help devotees make their own decisions about what solutions will work for them.

#### 4.4.2.3.3 Arbitration Services

Arbitration is more formal than mediation. In arbitration, the parties to a dispute select one or more neutral persons to serve as arbitrators for the dispute. As part of the arbitration, the parties usually agree in advance to accept the decision of the arbitrators as binding, although the decision may be merely a recommendation. Parties to the dispute present their case to the arbitrators in a common meeting. The arbitration proceeding may be informal or almost as formal as a legal trial, depending on the agreement of the parties.

#### 4.4.2.3.4 Conflict Resolution (2001)

1. The GBC create a division under the Ministry of Justice for conflict resolution with responsibility to :

- a) Be well informed about the process of conflict resolution;
- b) Acquire and, if necessary, adapt resources on conflict resolution;
- c) Disseminate information and guidelines on conflict resolution within ISKCON;
- d) Provide education and training on conflict resolution;
- e) Make their services available, when possible, to ISKCON centers and individuals;
- f) Frame a network of devotees as conflict resolution consultants who may be able to assist, when requested, in different areas of ISKCON.

2. The mandate of the division is strictly to serve ISKCON centers and members when requested. Its primary function is educational with no executive mandate whatsoever.

#### 4.4.2.4 Prevention of Development of Complaints and Disputes

##### 4.4.2.4.1 Complaint Registry Services

The Ministry of Justice shall maintain a registry of complaints against devotees, quasi-devotees, and devotee organizations which either refuse to participate in the dispute resolution mechanisms above or who fail to abide by agreements reached. Thus the ISKCON community will have one place it can go to find out information of previous complaints against individuals or organizations. Essentially this shall serve like a Better Business Bureau.

##### 4.4.2.4.2 Prevention Registry

Another aspect of this service shall be to maintain a registry of questionable characters who travel the ISKCON world. Such individuals may be listed with the Complaint Registry and information would be available upon request. As this service has the potential of being misused, listing and reporting will be subject to the discretion of the Minister of Justice.

##### 4.4.2.4.3 Publishing Services

1. The Ministry of Justice will compile and disseminate information conducive to the education of the ISKCON community in respect to the above services.
2. In all instances the GBC Body will remain the ultimate authority for resolution of complaints and disputes in ISKCON, and as such shall, at its discretion, accept appeals from the processes described above.

##### 4.4.2.4.4 Other provisions

1. The Ministry will develop Continental Committees.
2. The above replaces the current Justice Committee in the GBC resolutions. As sections of the Ministry and procedures are developed, they shall be subject to revision by the GBC Body.
3. The Minister of Justice is to be fully acquainted with all the provisions in the Society's Memorandum of Association, Regulations and Rules of Order. He is to check all resolutions passed as being in line with these documents before they are made final. There should be legal review of all ISKCON resolutions before they are published.

#### 4.4.3 Ministry of Communications

The ISKCON Ministry of Communications will be governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the GBC Body as its final authority.

1. Wherever the name "ISKCON Ministry of Public Affairs" exists in ISKCON legislation it shall be changed to "ISKCON Ministry of Communications" which is the current official name. The Minister of Public Affairs shall now be referred to as the Minister of Communications
2. The purposes and goals of the Ministry shall be as per the document "ISKCON Communications Charter", dated February 13, 1991 and filed with the Corresponding Secretary, or as they may be modified by the Board of Directors in the future and reported in writing to the GBC Body. (91)
3. The Board of Directors of the Ministry of Communications will meet annually in Mayapur, and additionally as necessary, to review and set policies and goals for the Ministry. (91)

#### 4.4.4 Ministry of Finance and Management

##### 4.4.4.1 Duties

1. To provide the Society with a description of the Ministry's present available services
2. To recruit staff for the office of the Ministry to help in:
  - a. Correspondence
  - b. Data collection and consolidation
  - c. Investigation

- d. Treasurer function
3. To recruit assistance to provide the following services for the society at large:
  - a. Business consultancy
  - b. Real estate advisory
  - c. Investment advisory
  - d. Advit and investigation advisory
  - e. Fund raising advisory
  - f. Financial systems and EDP advisory
  - g. Research department and manual development
4. To correspond with all BBT directors as well as all other international projects to ensure proper systems, propriety with objectives and policies, efficiency, reporting to all donors and directors, and audit if necessary.
5. To collect annual financial statements from each of the zones and consolidate the same for the GBC annual meeting.(86)

#### **4.4.4.2 ISKCON Resource Manual**

That the Minister of Management and Finance shall provide a manual, annually updated, detailing all resources at the disposal of ISKCON Leaders during the year and during their annual meetings.

It shall contain lists detailing

1. GBCs
2. Ministers
3. Standing Committees
4. GBC Deputies
5. Divisional Councils
6. The ISKCON Law Book
7. ISKCON Management Guidelines
8. An ISKCON Directory containing all addresses, e-mail addresses, phone and fax numbers of ISKCON Centers.

#### **4.4.4.3 ISKCON Central Secretariat**

##### **4.4.4.3.1 Definition**

The ISKCON central secretariat shall facilitate the management of ISKCON. The ICS (ISKCON Central Secretariat) is organized and managed by the Finance and Management Minister.

##### **4.4.4.3.2 Duties**

1. Create and maintain a database of information of all temples in the World and Minister's areas of responsibility.
2. Develop and implement a practical system of reporting by consulting Ministers, GBC's and Temple Presidents as to what they require, desire and are capable of providing. As far as possible, implementation shall be done through "regional" Committees (Regional, National, Zonal or Continental as the case may be).
3. Develop a database that may contain statistical information of:
  - a. Temple Finances (assets & liabilities, Annual income & expenses)
  - b. Temples/Managers Contacts (addresses, phone/fax, etc.)
  - c. Details of owned properties
  - d. Complete data on all transactions with Temple buildings.
  - e. Progress towards fulfilling mission statements.
  - f. Annual reports for all Ministries.
  - g. Devotee bio-data.
  - h. And any other information deemed useful
4. Present reports shall in a format useful for the individual Ministers, GBC Zonal Secretaries, Committees, and ISKCON Leaders.
5. Provide global status reports on ISKCON international projects. Areas which are declared as a security risk for reporting purposes may not have to report. This arrangement can be made between the local GBC and the Secretariat.(96)

#### **4.4.4.4 Full-time Secretariat Office ( 2000 )**

1. A full-time Secretariat Office shall be established in Mayapur.
2. The office shall work directly under the Executive Committee which shall take necessary steps towards organizational improvement.

#### **4.4.4.4 ISKCON Foundation Training Centers**

The ISKCON Foundation is blessed and encouraged to establish ISKCON Training Centers in different continents and shall be responsible for their direction and proper management under the guidance of the Management and Finance Ministry. They shall also arrange the required operating expenses by setting up ISKCON Foundation chapters in the local areas and engaging interested congregational members, who will be nominated by the local Temple Presidents and Zonal GBCs and will serve under their direction.

They shall work in close continuous cooperation with the respective local temples to assist the GBC Ministers and GBC Zonal Secretaries in their work of training ISKCON temple and congregational devotees by:

1. organizing seminars and courses in all Ministry areas
2. providing materials and resources for training
3. providing ongoing consultation and advice
4. employing/engaging full/part-time or volunteer staff trained by GBC Ministers and Zonal Secretaries to do the above
5. gather data and information and communicate such with the appropriate entities.

#### **4.4.5 Ministry of Fund Development and Life Patron Membership**

##### **4.4.5.1 Duties and Purposes**

1. To develop a worldwide congregation of devotees from the Indian community.
2. To inspire those devotees to regularly engage their body, mind, and wealth in the service of Lord Krsna.
3. To educate the leaders and other devotees of ISKCON to see the Indian community as our best ally and to develop training programs in how the community should be cultivated.
4. To create facilities for Indian community members to take on major responsibilities within ISKCON.
5. To provide programs to inspire the youth of the Indian community to become Krsna Conscious.
6. To encourage within ISKCON the development of purely vaisnava cultural presentations which will attract non-resident Indians by filling the cultural vacuum they experience.
7. To inspire those born in India to take up the order of Lord Caitanya to preach the message of Lord Krsna all over the world.
8. To establish and supervise administrative offices all over the world for the coordination of services for ISKCON Life Members.
9. To establish and implement international standards for ISKCON Life Membership.
10. To re-establish the International Life Membership Newsletter. (91)

#### **4.4.6 Ministry of Health and Welfare**

##### **4.4.6.1 Duties**

The Health and Welfare Ministry should produce a booklet about what AIDS is, how it is communicated, how to prevent it. This booklet should be practical and not alarmist.

#### **4.4.7 ISKCON Youth Ministry**

##### **4.4.7.1 Duties**

1. To establish and maintain a Youth Ministry Office.
2. To develop a world-wide database of second generation devotee youth.
3. To develop a world-wide database of training and occupational opportunities for the second generation youth.
4. To facilitate the connection of devotees from the above two subsets.
5. To produce a bimonthly newsletter describing this ongoing training and placement.
6. To attend the Mayapur GBC meetings, and that he/she may elect one other second generation young adult to attend the meetings with him/her in his/her place with the approval of the GBC Executive Committee.(96)

##### **4.4.7.2 Powers**

The Youth Ministry can internationally

- a. access ISKCON mailing lists and audiences.
- b. establish reps. in various parts of the world [North European rep., etc.]

A period of 15-30 minutes be designated annually at a GBC Plenary Session for a report from the Youth Minister.

##### **4.4.7.3 Youth Members**

1. *Gurukula* graduates and youth who have been raised in our ISKCON family are to receive a special ISKCON Youth Membership status offering them free *prasadam* and accommodation at any ISKCON temple for one week per year per temple (provided they are respectful and follow temple rules.) Membership certificates shall be issued by the ISKCON Youth Ministry on renewable five year terms to individuals in good standing.
2. All ISKCON departments, projects, businesses, and other enterprises controlled by ISKCON members are strongly encouraged to seek out, train and employ ISKCON *Gurukula* graduates and other youth raised in ISKCON. Wherever feasible, such youth shall be given priority over others.
3. ISKCON temple *asramas* have an obligation to provide room and board to *Gurukula* graduates and other youth raised in ISKCON while they are pursuing further education and training at colleges, universities, or from our own skilled devotees. Such youth living in ISKCON *asramas* must be of good character and are expected to be respectful, follow the temple rules, and attend the morning program. Whenever possible (for example, when there is an income from parents, financial aid, etc.), they should make regular donations to the temple. ISKCON Temple Presidents shall do everything feasible to fulfill this obligation to any youth certified and approved by ISKCON Youth Ministry.(97-302)

#### **4.4.8 Women's Ministry**

##### **4.4.8.1 Duties**

The Ministry is to address the following concerns in a clear, mature, and deliberate manner:

1. Appreciating the contribution of ISKCON's female devotees.
2. Increasing understanding of the serious concerns of women in ISKCON.
3. Providing facility, communication and support for all female members of ISKCON.

4. Addressing issues of abuse and sexual impropriety in ISKCON.
5. Defining the different female devotee situations (e.g. *grhastha* women, older, renounced women, and *brahmacarinis*).
6. Working with temple authorities and GBCs to identify role models and encourage them to inspire and train junior Vaisnavis.

(96)

(1998)

#### 4.4.9 Grhastha & Community Development Ministry

Grahastha Ministry is renamed as "The Grhastha & Community Development Ministry" vide IGBCS AGM 1998 resolution.

The purpose of this Ministry is to:

- a) Develop Grhastha Education Program and encourage establishment of guilds and chambers of commerce;
- b) Offer and help to develop varnasrama colleges in co-ordination with the Ministry for Social Development Information.
- c) Be a catalyst for the development of social structure of ISKCON according to Srila Parbhupada, vsvion.

#### 4.4.9 Other Ministries

Ministry of Education: See Chapter 13 "Education" (page. 125) (Dissolved and Ministry for Social Development Information established (1998)

Ministry of Records

Ministry of Congregational Development:

See Chapter 15 "Congregational Development" (page. 131)

Ministry of *Sannyasa* Services: See section on *Sannyasa*

Ministry of Vaisnava Cultural History

Ministry of Book Distribution: See Chapter 14 "Sankirtana - Book Distribution" (page. 127)

**Ministry of Cow Protection and Agriculture ( Chapter 14) (1998)**

## 5

### ISKCON Spiritual Leadership

#### 5.1 Definition

The following shall be considered to be ISKCON Leaders: All members of the GBC, initiating gurus, Ministers, *Sannyasis*, Regional Secretaries, Temple Presidents, Temple Vice-presidents, Members of a Temple's Board of Directors, Project Leaders (for Projects such as ISCOWP, BI, etc.), and other ISKCON Leaders.

#### 5.2 Standards of Behavior

##### 5.2.1 Spiritual Practices

All ISKCON Leaders must visibly chant sixteen rounds a day, follow the four regulative principles, and religiously attend the daily morning program in the temple, as prescribed by Srila Prabhupada.

##### 5.2.2 Active Assistance to the GBC Body

ISKCON Leaders, and other senior members of the Society, shall be responsible to actively assist the GBC in maintaining and enhancing the spiritual standard of ISKCON, expanding the dynamic preaching of ISKCON, and preserving Srila Prabhupada's mood and instructions.(82)

##### 5.2.3 Leadership Positions

1. If a devotee occupying an important position in ISKCON leaves the Society, returns, leaves again, etc., he is always welcome to return, but he cannot immediately take up the same position (such as *sannyasa*). (78)
2. All leaders in ISKCON should clearly present the letter and spirit of the Society's rules and policies to those under their authority, and must clearly qualify any differing viewpoint as their own personal opinion.

##### 5.2.4 Financial Dealings

That ISKCON has a moral obligation to Srila Prabhupada, as well as a legal right to pursue deviant managers who encumber ISKCON entities with liabilities stemming from unauthorized acts. If ISKCON representatives cannot convince deviant managers to accept personal liability through reason and argument, or through the ISKCON Judicial System, they have the right to pursue them through the competent courts.

##### 5.2.5 Disqualifications

No devotee who has remarried after having divorced a devotee-spouse shall serve as a member of the Governing Body Commission or as a Temple President.

Exempt from this law are devotees who become divorced against their desire by the action of their spouses, or as a consequence of their spouses' becoming committed non-devotees. Provisionally exempt are devotees who divorced prior to March 2, 1990.(92)

#### 5.3 Duties

##### 5.3.1 Regarding Preaching

1. Wherever we have powerful leaders-whether GBC members, *gurus*, *sannyasis*, or Temple Presidents-they ought to impress upon their followers that book distribution and making new devotees to go out on book distribution are ISKCON's main work. (See p. 147 for more information.)
2. That the leaders of ISKCON, as followers of Srila Prabhupada, ought to see and promote book distribution as our most effective means of preaching. (See p. 147 for more information.)
3. That the leaders of ISKCON, as followers of Srila Prabhupada, ought to see the duty of training and facilitating congregational members as their primary function, in order to fulfill the order of Lord Caitanya: "Therefore I order every man within this universe to accept this Krsna consciousness movement and distribute it everywhere."(96) (See p. 151 for more information.)
4. Wherever we have powerful leaders-whether GBC members, *gurus*, *sannyasis*, or Temple Presidents-they ought to impress upon their followers that everyone must be brought into the congregation and empowered to preach Krsna consciousness purely.(96) (See p. 151 for more information.)

### **5.3.2 Correcting Spiritual Deficiencies in Temples**

It is the responsibility of the President, Regional Secretary, or GBC to correct any spiritual deficiencies in the temple program. Any alleged deficiency in a temple's program is not in itself sufficient grounds to justify or order a devotee to abandon one's prescribed duty.

## **5.4 Regulations**

### **5.4.1 Legal Affairs**

The GBC directs the officers and managers of all ISKCON corporations to make all necessary and prudent arrangements to defend the corporations and their properties from legal liabilities. Failure to make such arrangements shall be sufficient ground for removal of the officers, Regional Secretaries or GBC Zonal Secretaries.

### **5.4.2 Oath of Loyalty**

An annual oath of allegiance shall be made and signed by each ISKCON Leader in the prescribed manner.(75)

#### **5.4.2.1 Statement of Oath**

The oath shall be as follows:

1. To accept His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada as the Founder-Acarya and Supreme Authority of ISKCON. To follow his teachings, instructions and directions.
2. To accept the Governing Body Commission of ISKCON as the ultimate managing authority of ISKCON as directed in Srila Prabhupada's last will and testament.
3. To abide by the Society's spiritual rules, namely no illicit sex, no intoxication, no gambling, no meat-eating and chant a minimum of sixteen rounds of *maha-mantra japa* every day. To follow the principles set forth in Srila Prabhupada's books.
4. To accept that all ISKCON's funds, assets and properties under my control or direction, including anything ISKCON may have acquired under my direction, is the sole property of ISKCON and in the event of my death, resignation or other relinquishment of all ISKCON responsibilities, all these shall accrue solely to ISKCON and at all times I shall have no claim on them whatsoever.
5. To be guided by the spiritual directions of ISKCON's management, to cooperate with the local GBC representative, and to fulfill my duties in a serving spirit never intentionally acting against ISKCON's interests.
6. I will maintain the spiritual programs, standards, and teachings established by Srila Prabhupada in the projects and with the devotees placed in my care. I further agree not to involve the Society or those devotees placed under my care in any activities contrary to the above mentioned principles.(96)

#### **5.4.2.2 Procedure for Taking Oaths**

All ISKCON Leaders shall complete the approved ISKCON Oath of Loyalty in the following manner:

1. A signed oath certified by the appropriate legal authority prescribed for giving testimony of a declaration (Notary Public, Judicial Magistrate, Commissioner of Oaths, etc.) in the location shall be deposited with the GBC Society Secretary. This written oath shall be renewed once in five years or whenever there is a change in their position of responsibilities.
2. The GBC's shall make the above oath orally, in a group, before the Deities in Sridhama Mayapur during the course of their annual meetings.
3. Every Temple President, Regional Secretary, Temple Officer, etc. shall take the oath orally before the Deities of the Temple every year. The oath shall be administered by a local GBC Zonal Secretary. (Optionally the oath may be taken at ISKCON Sridhama Mayapur during the Gaura-purnima Festival period).
4. Other leaders not covered above shall also make an annual oral declaration of the oath before an ISKCON Deity administered by the GBC authority or liaison assigned.

This resolution shall override and replace all previous legislation on oaths for ISKCON leaders. This doesn't replace the additional oath that ISKCON gurus must also take.(95)

( 1998)

The existing Oath of Loyalty Law is amended to read as follows :

1. The GBC Secretary shall review annually the listing of all GBCs, Temple Managers, Gurus, and Property Trustees and insure that a notarized, signed, ISKCON Oath of Allegiance is on file for that devotee.
2. The Oath of Allegiance and a list of names of those devotees who have not submitted a notarized, signed Oath of Allegiance shall be sent to the GBC and other com.conferences and addresses. They are to return the Oath duly signed and notarized, to the GBC Office in Mayapur prior to ISKCON's registration date.
3. Failure of ISKCON Leaders to submit a notarized oath in the required time shall earn an automatic censure. Continued failure to comply by the following GBC Meeting shall put the devotee on automatic probation and possible suspension.
4. All ISKCON Leaders and any members present shall orally take the Oath of Allegiance on the IKSCON Registration day before Srila Prabhupada and the Deities as a loving offering to His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada.

#### **5.4.2.3 Oath Required for Leadership Eligibility**

1. No member of the GBC or any Regional Secretary or Temple President shall be eligible to vote in the GBC meeting or Temple President's meeting respectively unless their oath of allegiance to ISKCON has been duly submitted to the proper GBC authority. Once done, this needs to be renewed as provided for above.(81)
2. The archive and record of all oaths submitted to the GBC shall be maintained by the GBC Society Secretary who shall also annually provide a list to the Executive Committee of ISKCON Leaders for whom Oaths of Loyalty have been received and the list of delinquent Leaders for enforcement.(80)

### **5.5 Discipline and Conduct of ISKCON Leaders**

#### **Definition of Local ISKCON Official (Replacement 2007)**

The specific titles borne by ISKCON officials may possibly include "President", "Vice-President", "Treasurer", "Temple Management Council Member", "Project Director", "Congregational Preaching Director", etc. (Sections concerning tenure and discipline of Regional Secretaries, Gurus and GBC members are to be included in different sections.)

#### **Leave of Absence**

An ISKCON Official may be granted a leave of absence at his/her request for any of the following reasons;

1. Acute and unremitting health problem(s).
2. Compelling personal reasons.

The official seeking a leave of absence shall clearly explain in writing to his/her GBC Zonal Secretary(s) or Divisional Council the specific reasons for his/her request. A leave of absence shall not be granted for a period in excess of one year, although it may be extended.

#### **Resignation**

An ISKCON Official may tender his/her resignation to their GBC Zonal Secretary(s) or Divisional Council at any time. A resignation should be submitted in writing with reasons and an effective date from which the resignation shall stand. Resignations may be partial in nature, wherein only a portion of the responsibilities held is relinquished, such as when an official agrees to the appointment of a co-official to share the duties of office.

#### **Disciplining Authority**

There should ideally be no change of Presidents or ISKCON Leaders. If there are any difficulties there should first be an attempt to resolve it by careful mediation.

An ISKCON Official may be disciplined by any of the following;

- A two-thirds majority of a Regional Governing Body or Divisional or National Council.
- Three GBCs, which must include the GBC(s) of that area, or
- A majority vote of the GBC Body

Depending on the severity of any improper activity, corrective steps may consist of informal discussions, written warnings or censures, or formal disciplinary measures such as placing the offending official on probation, suspension of the official's authority, or removal of the official from the position.

The reason(s) for and the process and standards of rectification, if any, must be given in writing to the official under discipline. The disciplining body or persons must ensure that the details are entered into the relevant resolutions of the disciplining body. In the case of three GBC's, the details shall be recorded by the GBC Secretariat.

## Reasons for Discipline

An ISKCON Official may be disciplined for the following indiscretions;

### *Misconduct and Indiscipline*

1. Willful violation of GBC resolutions.
2. Vilification of ISKCON or the GBC Body.
3. Misconduct in office (physical assault except in self-defense, improper relationships with opposite sex, improper sexual behavior, abusive behavior to devotees, improper dealings with external society, and so on.)
4. Habitually or knowingly making false charges and accusations or other consistent *vaisnava-aparadhas*.
5. Serious interference in the *guru* and disciple relationship.
6. Duplicitous or untruthful dealings (giving false promises to devotees, lying to spiritual authorities, and other serious prevarication).

### *Improper Discharge and Neglect of Duty,*

Misuse of Funds and Gross Mismanagement.

1. Consistent unexcused absences at Divisional Council meetings.
2. Consistent failure to submit prescribed monthly reports.
3. Consistent interference in the guru-disciple relationship or consistent disregard of the devotees' requirement to accept a spiritual master and serve him.
4. Consistent or serious economic mismanagement of such a nature that it endangers the temple or preaching mission.
5. Serious degradation of temple standards (deity worship, cleanliness and kitchen standards, devotee morale, preaching, temple economy, etc.)
6. Failing to make all necessary and prudent arrangements to defend their corporations and properties from legal liabilities.

### Spiritual Discrepancy

1. Failure to follow strictly the rules and regulations as described in Srila Prabhupada's books.
2. Philosophical deviation.
3. Consistently irregular attendance at the temple morning program without bona fide cause.
4. Failure to follow any of the four regulative principles or to regularly chant sixteen rounds of *japa*.

## Censure

Censure is to be understood as a reprimand aimed at reformation of an official and prevention of further offending acts. It is the warning voice of pending probation or removal.

When ordering the censure, the disciplining authority must clearly spell out in writing to the disciplined official the specific actions that were irresponsible, inappropriate, or in violation of ISKCON law and why they were judged so.

## Probation

Probation is an opportunity for disciplined officials to redress themselves and regain their status as ISKCON Officials in good standing.

When ordering the probation, the disciplining authority must clearly spell out in writing to the disciplined official:

- the specific actions that were irresponsible, inappropriate, or in violation of ISKCON law and why they were judged so
- the specific program of rectification
- the specific curtailment of powers, if any
- the specific prerequisites for restoration, if any
- the time period of the probation, which shall be no longer than six months.

After the period of probation, the disciplining authority must decide as per one of the following:

- that the official is rectified and that any restrictions imposed for the term of probation are rescinded; or
- that further probation under the same or modified conditions is required to complete the rectification process; or
- that the official has not been rectified and that the official be removed from the position.

## Suspension

In the case where there is substantial reason to believe that an ISKCON official has acted irresponsibly, inappropriately, or in violation of ISKCON law to the extent that continuation of the official in the particular position will be injurious to the properties, good name, physical assets or other resources of the society, then an official should be suspended from that position.

Suspension is to separate the official from their office so that a thorough investigation of allegations may be conducted and the suitability of the official to continue in their position is determined.

The disciplining body must conduct an immediate investigation so as to minimize disruption at the respective ISKCON centre or project. After completion of the investigation, the body shall make a determination as to the truth of the allegations and the future course of action. They may order as per one of the following:

- the suspension shall be revoked and the official shall be restored to the original position; or
- there shall be a probationary period with a program of rectification as described under probation above, with or without restoration of authority during the period of probation; or
- it is not expected that the official can be rectified within a reasonable period of time and he or she shall be permanently removed from the position.

If an ISKCON official is under suspension he may not vote as a member of any ISKCON management body.

## **Removal**

Under normal circumstances, an ISKCON Official will be removed from his/her position only after being put on probation and consequently unable to rectify his/her situation.

However, in urgent situations, an ISKCON Official may be removed in case of the following;

- Any violation of either ISKCON, local or national laws which endangers ISKCON's stability and security locally, nationally or internationally and which cannot wait for the usual process of probation and removal.
- Severe spiritual, philosophical or moral deviation.
- Rebellion against the authority of Srila Prabhupada, the GBC Body or other regional, national or local ISKCON authorities.
- Incompetent management over an extended period of time, giving rise to an emergency situation.

## **Appeals**

If an ISKCON Official is disciplined by three GBCs or a National or Divisional Council, he/she shall have the right of appeal to the Regional Governing Body (if one exists in the area) or the GBC Body (if there is no Regional Governing Body in the area). If he/she is disciplined by a Regional Governing Body, he/she shall have the right of appeal to the GBC Body. Any disciplinary action taken against an ISKCON Official by any of the above-mentioned entities shall stand unless and until it is overruled by a higher body.

### **5.5.6 Removal (Amendment 2006)**

Under normal circumstances, an ISKCON Leader will be removed from his position only after being suspended and unable to rectify his situation.

There should ideally be no change of Presidents or ISKCON Leaders. If there are any difficulties they should be resolved by careful mediation.

However, in urgent situations, an ISKCON Leader may be removed by

1. Three GBC's, which must include the GBC(s) of that area, or
2. A two-thirds majority of a Regional Governing Body or Divisional or National Council.

The reasons for any disciplinary action must be given in writing to the disciplined leader by the disciplining body or persons, who may define a situation as urgent when it involves any of the following:

1. Any violation of either ISKCON, local or national laws which endangers ISKCON's stability and security locally, nationally or internationally and which cannot wait for the usual process of suspension and removal.
2. Severe spiritual, philosophical or moral deviation.
3. Rebellion against the authority of Srila Prabhupada, the GBC Body or other regional, national or local ISKCON authorities.
4. Incompetent management over an extended period of time, giving rise to an emergency situation.

### **5.5.7 Appeal**

If an ISKCON Leader is disciplined by a National or Divisional Council, he shall have the right of appeal to the Regional Governing Body (if one exists in the area) or the GBC Body (if there is no Regional Governing Body in the area). If he is disciplined by three GBC's or a Regional Governing Body he shall have the right of appeal to the GBC Body. Any disciplinary action taken against an ISKCON Leader by any of the above-mentioned entities shall stand unless and until it is overruled by a higher body.

## 5.6 Standards and Duties of Spiritual Leaders

### 5.6.1 Regional Secretaries

#### 5.6.1.1 Definition

The GBC recognizes that as per Srila Prabhupada's instructions, GBC members may have even "thousands of secretaries"; individual GBC members may see the need for appointing assistants who will have greater responsibility than Temple Presidents, and who may be known as Regional Secretaries. (79)

#### 5.6.1.2 Regional Secretary's Duties

##### 5.6.1.2.1 In relation to Zonal Secretary

A Regional Secretary's duties in relation to Statements of Mission shall be to assist the Zonal Secretary to motivate and organize the region's progress in each Statement of Mission area.

##### 5.6.1.2.2 In relation to Sri Mayapur-Vrndavana Festival

That all Regional Secretaries and Temple Presidents will be responsible for setting up their zonal exhibition booths at the annual Mayapur festival. This will be followed up by the Secretary of the Sri Mayapur-Vrndavana Festival Committee. (82)

### 5.6.2 Presidents of Temples and Preaching Centers

#### 5.6.2.1 Appointment of Temple President

The GBC Zonal Secretary/s shall be the authority to appoint or approve a new Temple President to fill in a vacancy of the post in an existing temple or in a newly established temple. If the candidate is holding such a position for the first time then he shall be appointed only as an acting Temple President for a trial period of one year. A preaching center shall not have the post of a President but shall have the post of a Manager. In all such appointments the Zonal Secretary shall give due considerations to the recommendations of the Divisional Council.

#### 5.6.2.2 Standards of Personal Behavior

##### 5.6.2.2.1 Spiritual Standards

1. A Temple President must be an initiated devotee who follows daily sadhana and full morning program, demonstrably chants sixteen rounds, follows strictly the four regulative principles, studies Srila Prabhupada's books, regularly gives classes, and participates in temple festivals and harinama parties.
2. A Temple President must live in or near enough to a Krsna conscious temple community to regularly, on a daily basis, participate in devotional activities and associate with devotees.
3. A Temple President should be exemplary in all respects in his behavior and character.
4. A Temple President must accept the authority of the GBC Body and the GBC Zonal Secretary and maintain the proper service attitude to senior devotees especially GBC members, initiating spiritual masters and sannyasis.
5. The Temple President should avoid intimate dealings with the opposite sex.

##### 5.6.2.2.2 Standards of Service

A Temple President must fit into one of the following categories:

1. *Sannyasis, brahmachari(ni)s, vanaprasthas,* and brahminical *grhasthas* (living in facilities provided by ISKCON) who are fully maintained by ISKCON who are to be fully engaged in devotional service with all their time and energy.
2. *Grhasthas* who dedicate the major part of their time and energies to their ISKCON duties. They need, however, to earn a minimum amount of income for family obligations that are not defrayed by ISKCON. They are exempted from the fifty percent(50%) donation rule.
3. *Grhasthas* who choose to engage in full-time occupation outside of ISKCON must follow the fifty percent(50%) donation rule, and all of their non-occupational time should also be engaged in devotional service, sacrificing a major portion given in voluntary service to ISKCON.

There is nothing wrong with a householder managing a temple so long as he does not utilize the facilities of the temple for his own personal sense gratification. Certainly the president may get his basic requirements for living and eating fulfilled through the temple, and he may also have his own place to live outside. However, he should not exploit the temple for his own sense gratification. A Temple President must be careful not to take more than what would be allotted to any other householder who is working full time for the temple. For example, he should not have specially prepared opulent meals when the temple devotees are eating austere. In fact, he should eat with the devotees.

#### 5.6.2.3 Principles

##### 5.6.2.3.1 Desirable Qualities of an Ideal Temple President

1. Must be a competent and committed manager who is honest, and trustworthy. Can manage, organize, and conduct meetings.
2. Has a service attitude, respects all devotees and is able to work with others.
3. Can communicate well and is able to motivate and inspire people.
4. Cares for people.
5. Must be expert in his or her area of service or possess a willingness to learn.

A Temple President must be diligent in assuring spiritual standards are maintained within the Temple and its *asramas*.

#### 5.6.2.4 Powers

In the case of some disagreement regarding practical policy or practical philosophy, a traveling party leader, *sannyasi* or non-local GBC member must respect the integrity of the president's authority over his temple. He must defer to the president's position and can initiate change only via the local GBC member.

#### 5.6.2.5 Duties to

- 5.6.2.5.1 The Temple Deities, Srila Prabhupada, the GBC Body and the Initiating Spiritual Masters

1. Ensure that nobody preaches a philosophy contradictory to the teachings of Srila Prabhupada.
2. Maintain the worship of the temple Deities.
3. Conduct an active and effective missionary campaign to spread Krsna consciousness in the temple's geographical jurisdiction.
4. Oversee and supervise spiritual standards for practicing members and temple programs.

#### 5.6.2.5.2 The GBC Body

1. Implement policies and directions set by Divisional Council and the GBC Body.
2. The Temple President is duty bound to follow all ISKCON Laws and directives without exception.
3. The Temple President's responsibility is to see that the spiritual and administrative standards of ISKCON are maintained.
4. A Temple President's duties in relation to Statements of Mission shall be to be directly responsible to realize the Statement of Mission and Progressive Goals in his temple. He is to motivate the devotees and organize his temple's progress in each Statement of Mission area. He is also to present the progress in an Annual Report for each Statement of Mission for his temple to his Zonal Secretary.

#### 5.6.2.5.3 Administrative Bodies under the GBC

1. Consult with the GBC representative or Divisional Council for all significant matters.
2. Attend all Divisional Council meetings.
3. Attend continental training seminars and Continental Committee meetings.
4. Attend annual International Managers' Meeting in Mayapur. If they desire to do so, Temple Presidents may come early to the annual Mayapur meeting, for their own meetings and association.(77)
5. Establish a communication link with the appropriate GBC Ministries.
6. Temple Presidents shall submit annual reports to the Global Secretariat.

#### 5.6.2.5.4 The Local GBC Member

1. The Temple President should cooperate with the GBC representative(s) assigned to his Temple, consult them on important issues and consider their advice. The GBC representatives are not meant to involve themselves in the day to day management of a temple. However they are responsible for seeing that the ISKCON standards are maintained within all aspects of the Society's activities. When the President is given advice or instructions as to how to maintain or improve these standards, then such instructions are to be followed by the Temple Presidents.
2. The Temple President shall provide monthly financial report and other prescribed reports to the GBC representative and other ISKCON bodies as required. The financial report should contain an itemized account of income and expenditure, the number of books sold, and an inventory of books. A GBC member can go to the center and see and correct any unbonafide expenditure. (75)
3. That if an individual GBC member acts blatantly against the policy of the GBC, the Chairman and Secretary of the GBC Body must be informed immediately of the discrepancy by a temple officer.(81)

#### 5.6.2.5.5 Initiating Spiritual Masters

The Temple President shall take into account any specific suggestions offered by the spiritual masters in regard to guiding their disciples and assigning services. The Temple President shall make the final decision on the services of the devotees based on considerations of effective management of the community.

#### 5.6.2.5.6 Temple Resident Devotees

##### 5.6.2.5.6.1 *Sadhana and Temple Programs*

Presidents of temples and preaching centers shall see that all devotees in their zones attend the morning and evening programs, except when they have an alternative bona fide preaching engagement in the evening.(77)

##### 5.6.2.5.6.2 *Engagement*

1. The Temple President shall engage devotees according to their qualifications, propensities and capabilities with a goal to provide a satisfying service which encourages a loving sacrifice to Krsna.
2. Assign each devotee with satisfactory and well-planned service.
3. Provide opportunities for devotees to expand responsibilities, initiate activities, attend to personal matters, and voice suggestions or grievances.
4. The Temple President and Department Heads shall provide adequate training for each devotee assigned to a temple service and strive to maximize the devotee's potential through further training and personal development. They shall maintain an open and supportive climate among the temple staff, inviting suggestions and explaining grievance channels.

##### 5.6.2.5.6.3 *Care*

1. He should inspire, nurture and guide the devotees of the community in their devotional service.
2. The Temple President shall give due consideration to the potentials, strengths and weaknesses (both material and spiritual) and overall maturity of the devotees. His mood is as servant of the community members.
3. The Temple President shall meet with each resident member when they join the temple and at least quarterly to ensure they are effectively engaged in their service and are progressing in their spiritual life. Thus the personal and spiritual career needs of the devotee can be monitored.
4. Provide all residents space and facilities to rest, to store and secure belongings, to maintain the body, and to study. They shall also provide sufficient quantity of good quality prasadam.
5. To ensure all dependent devotees are provided with adequate health care and health insurance except in those countries where health insurance is provided by state authorities.

##### 5.6.2.5.6.4 *Guru-Disciple Relationships*

1. Must encourage all devotees to establish a relationship with an ISKCON guru.

2. Must not canvas for a particular guru.
3. Must not undermine or interfere with the relationship of any bona fide ISKCON guru and his disciple.
4. Must preach to temple devotees who are disciples of various gurus to cooperate together in Srila Prabhupada's family.
5. If conflicts arise with a particular guru then the GBC Zonal Secretary(s) should be immediately informed so that he may rectify the situation on his level.
6. Since in ISKCON it is not always possible for the gurus to directly manage and engage their disciples in devotional service, the Temple President engages all the disciples of all spiritual masters in their day to day devotional service to guru and Krsna by allocating appropriate services to the devotees for the pleasure of their respective spiritual masters and Srila Prabhupada.

#### 5.6.2.5.6.5 *Evaluation of all Initiated Devotees*

It is recommended the Temple President and Department Heads perform a quarterly appraisal of all initiated devotees in their community which can then be used to measure performance and build strategies for improvement. This document can then be shared with the spiritual masters who can also offer their guidance and insights.

#### 5.6.2.5.6.6 *Following Local Laws*

The Temple President should ensure that all local, state and national laws are abided by all temple and community members. He should also ensure that the devotees are following ISKCON diligently. Update 2009: For disciplinary measures, please go to Section 8.4

#### 5.6.2.5.7 *Congregational Devotees*

##### 5.6.2.5.7.1 *Facilitating the Preaching of the Congregational Devotees*

Temple Presidents and ISKCON Leaders shall encourage and facilitate the important preaching role of non-resident devotees as they introduce Krsna consciousness to their neighbors and business or work associates. The non-resident devotees should get respectful treatment, encouragement and *prasadam*.

#### 5.6.2.5.8 *Guests and Life Patron Members*

ISKCON Leaders shall provide approved guests with adequate room and *prasadam* arrangements as well as attentive training in Krsna consciousness.

Registered ISKCON Life Patron Members and their immediate family members may stay for up to three days in ISKCON *asramas* free of charge. Life Patron Members must show a current ISKCON membership card or passport. The Temple President or Temple Secretary shall record Life Patron Members' names, addresses, and membership numbers upon the members' arrival.

In the event that the temple cannot provide acceptable *asrama* space, the Temple President shall attempt to accommodate the Life Patron Members in alternative facilities, such as a *grhastha's* residence.

#### 5.6.2.5.9 *The Opposite Gender*

It is impossible for a Temple President to avoid some dealings with the opposite gender. In so doing the following guidelines should be adhered to in order to avoid compromising spiritual standards.

A Male Temple President should:

1. Always see all women as mother except one's wife.
2. Never be alone with a woman except one's wife.
3. Avoid intimate dealings with women.
4. Appoint a senior woman to deal with all women's affairs

A female Temple President should:

1. See all men as son except her husband.
2. Never be alone with a man except one's husband.
3. Avoid intimate dealings with men.
4. As far as possible appoint a senior man to deal with men's affairs.
5. In certain conditions it may be prudent for a female president to have her husband deal with the men, or for a male president to have his wife deal with the women.

#### 5.6.2.5.10 *Dealings With His Own Family Affairs (If Grihastha).*

There is nothing wrong with a householder managing a temple so long as he does not utilize the facilities of the temple for his own personal sense gratification. Certainly the president may get his basic requirements for living and eating fulfilled through the temple, and he may also have his own place to live outside. However, he should not exploit the temple for his own sense gratification. A temple president must be careful not to take more than what would be allotted to any other householder who is working full time for the temple. For example, he should not have specially prepared opulent meals when the temple devotees are eating austerely. In fact he should eat with the devotees. Neither should he use temple funds to buy himself a nice vehicle while the other devotees are walking or taking the bus. He should take what is needed to expand his service, but not for expanding his sense gratification.

#### 5.6.2.5.11 *The Local Community*

Develop and uphold ISKCON's good reputation in the local community.

#### 5.6.2.5.12 *"Blooped" Devotees*

1. A complete central file be kept on all devotees for purpose of public relations and/or reclaiming "blooped" devotees and the presidents of the temples be allowed to contact the parents of a devotee in his area.(77)

2. The names of the devotees who have left the movement shall be recorded in the local temple's official Society minutes, and duly notarized.(80)

#### 5.6.2.5.13 Sri Mayapur-Vrndavana Festival

That all Regional Secretaries and Temple Presidents will be responsible for setting up their zonal exhibition booths at the annual Mayapur festival. This will be followed up by the Secretary of the Sri Mayapur-Vrndavana Festival Committee.(82)

#### 5.6.2.6 Regulations

##### 5.6.2.6.1 Financial Management

In financial management the Temple President should always keep in mind that money should be spent cautiously and not be wasted and the temple should always be kept out of debt. The temple's funds should always be seen as belonging to Lord Krsna and Srila Prabhupada. Certainly, they should never be thought of as being one's own.

The Following Principles Should always be Adhered to:

1. Financial records should be properly maintained.
2. Accurate and meaningful financial statements should be prepared.
3. Budgets should be prepared to avoid and anticipate financial problems.
4. Funds should be properly banked and where not possible very securely kept.
5. As a principle a minimum of two signatories should sign on all temple bank accounts.(77)
6. Government statutes, income tax regulations for recognized non-profit organizations, and all regulations for book keeping shall be complied with.
7. Temple funds shall be invested in book distribution, *prasadam* distribution and other preaching activities as well as property purchases and recurring expenditures which support temple programs. They shall not be advanced, loaned or invested in speculative enterprises or personal projects. A ceiling should be set for discretionary funds.
8. Neither should the Temple President use temple funds to buy himself a nice vehicle while the other devotees are walking or taking the bus. He should take what is needed to expand his service, but not for expanding his sense gratification.
9. Investments of large sums of money (as determined by the local Zonal Secretary or GBC Divisional Council) should be approved by the local GBC Zonal Secretary, GBC Divisional Council and local Temple Board. If investments are made in fixed deposits such accounts should as far as possible have multiple signatories at least two of which can sign.
10. The Temple President should direct the Treasurer, and as far as possible have little to do with the direct handling of temple funds. The Temple President and the Treasurer, and if desired other officers, shall create the temple budget. The Treasurer should carefully handle the finances according to the approved budget under the directions of the Temple President and see to the proper maintenance of the accounts. The Temple President shall sign on accounts. Srila Prabhupada wanted the character and behavior of the Temple Presidents to be above suspicion.
11. Except in unavoidable cases, the Temple President or his/her spouse should not be the Treasurer.
12. The Temple President has to ensure compliance to fiscal and legal requirements.(96)
13. The Temple President shall ensure that his temple shall distribute books on sankirtana on a regular basis, making a sincere attempt to implement Srila Prabhupada's formula that fifty percent(50%) of the temple's income be used for book distribution and fifty percent(50%) be used for the temple expenses. The Temple Presidents should give a minimum of twenty five(25%) of income for book distribution.
14. There was a discussion in Srila Prabhupada's presence of temple accounting. He said accounting is a simple matter of accurate record of income and expenditure. He said temple books should not be private or confidential in the sense that any sums of money should go unrecorded. He stressed we should not keep large sums of money in bank accounts but should collect and spend.(75)

##### 5.6.2.6.1.1 Receiving Restricted Donations

That as far as possible, donations to ISKCON should be accepted without any conditions. However, donations ("Restricted Donations") may also be accepted with limited conditions. ISKCON Leaders must use donations with conditions in accordance with the agreed terms.(93)

###### 5.6.2.6.1.1.1 Acceptable Conditions

Acceptable Conditions are those which:

1. define a general category or use, such as deity worship, education, construction, etc.
2. define a specific geographic location or project, or
3. give the donor a modest amount of recognition.

###### 5.6.2.6.1.1.2 Unacceptable Conditions

Unacceptable conditions are those which:

1. give some right to the donor to reclaim part or all of the donation in the future. All donations become ISKCON's inviolable property without any possibility of alienation,
2. are vague or ambiguous, and thus risk future disputes over interpretation,
3. in other ways risk future litigation or disputes, or which could harm ISKCON's reputation, or
4. compromise ISKCON's right or ability to manage its assets in accordance with Srila Prabhupada's instructions and ISKCON law.

##### 5.6.2.6.2 Management and Administration

By careful planning, the Temple Presidents are to

1. learn to invest most of their time in activities that are developmental such as teaching, preaching, studying, and planning, rather than reactive engagements of crisis management, emergency counseling, creating patchwork solutions, etc.,

2. participate in the organization's strategic planning to develop and carry out Temple policies and to provide an annual budget and current written strategic action plan for the temple,
3. regularly review and improve the strategic plan as required to ensure the strategies are current, effective and efficient,
4. motivate the devotees and organize the temple's progress in each area of the strategic plan,
5. conduct temple community *ista-gosthis* regularly to communicate temple policies, progress and strategies and thereby foster cooperation and participation amongst the devotees,
6. facilitate and organize Department Heads into an effective management team,
7. ensure quality of service and behavior of Department Heads, and
8. train assistant(s) to work with quality and continue without interruption.

#### 5.6.2.6.3 Book Distribution

All Temple Presidents should pledge to participate more directly in any *sankirtana* and book distribution activities, either by going out themselves once a week or by organising marathons or *maha*-book distribution efforts or by any other means they are capable of. (78)

## 6

### ISKCON Spiritual Masters (Diksa & Siksa-Gurus)

#### 6.1 Principles

##### 6.1.1 Srila Prabhupada's Desire for Continuing the Disciplic Succession

The GBC approves of the paper entitled "On My Order Understood" which establishes as ISKCON law the final *siddhanta* on Srila Prabhupada's desire for continuing the disciplic succession after the departure of His Divine Grace.

##### 6.1.2 Srila Prabhupada's Siksa Position (2000)

A duly initiated disciple in ISKCON can accept Srila Prabhupada, the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON, as his principle Siksa-guru. During his devotional life, he may experience that he derives more spiritual inspiration from Srila Prabhupada's books and vani, than from his own diksa-guru.

##### 6.1.3 Srila Prabhupada's Absolute Position (2000)

1. The GBC Body wishes to emphasize that any attempt to minimize the position or teachings of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder-Acarya of the International Society for Krsna Consciousness, will not be tolerated in any way by the leadership of ISKCON. This is an absolute and inviolable principle.
2. Any member of ISKCON involved in such criticism shall be immediately dealt with by the appropriate measures according to ISKCON LAW 1996/607.4.A.1 "Offenses against Founder-Acarya and Guru Parampara" which states; "A person guilty of denouncing, openly blaspheming, or publicly abandoning loyalty to the Acarya, the previous acaryas in the disciplic succession, or Lord Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, incurs automatic dissociation from ISKCON, the right to revoke being reserved to the local Governing Body Commissioner. If the offending person holds a position of spiritual authority, the right to revoke the dissociation is reserved to the Governing Body Commission. If the seriousness of the offence warrants a more severe reaction, other measures may be brought to bear, including dismissal from authority, disqualification for initiating and ex-communication."
3. The GBC Zonal Secretaries and / or the local leaders must implement ISKCON Law when they perceive a transgression of this principle. If they fail to do so, the GBC Executive Committee shall directly take measures to rectify the situation and may censure or suspend (probate or remove) local leaders for not taking appropriate measures.

#### 6.2 Qualifications of Gurus in ISKCON

##### 6.2.1 Mandatory Qualifications

The following are the minimum qualifications necessary to be approved as a *diksa* or *siksa-guru* in ISKCON.

1. Must have been an initiated disciple for at least ten years.
2. Must be strictly following the four regulative principles, regularly attending the morning program, and chanting sixteen rounds daily.
3. Must not have had a fall-down within five years.
4. Must evince no tendency toward moral turpitude in his present or past activities.
5. Must be free from the following undesirable qualities:
  - (a) attachment to *kamini-kañcana*, "the devil" in the form of sex objects and wealth;
  - (b) *pratistha*, false prestige and personal ambition;
  - (c) *nisiddhacara*, behavior contrary to Vaisnava principles;
  - (d) *kuti-nati*, diplomatic or duplicitous behavior;
  - (e) *puja*, the desire for personal worship;

- (f) *labha*, mundane profiteering.
6. Must have excelled in preaching activities.
  7. Must exhibit proficiency in knowledge and understanding of sastra.
  8. Must preach without concoction and strictly according to the parampara, with sastric knowledge grounded firmly in siddhanta, or conclusive truth.
  9. Must be effective in practical preaching and counseling.
  10. Must have no loyalties that compete with or compromise his loyalty to Srila Prabhupada, to his teachings, and to ISKCON.
  11. Must show understanding of and dedication to Srila Prabhupada's mission with a strong commitment to maintaining and increasing book distribution and other ISKCON projects.
  12. Must recognize the GBC as the ultimate managing authority in ISKCON, support the GBC system, and follow the GBC.
  13. Should be engaged full-time in devotional service in an ISKCON center or other ISKCON-approved preaching program.

### **Update from 2008, GBC Resoultion 317: Guru Seminar**

[Statement]

Whereas there is a need for devotees who serve as initiating spiritual masters to understand clearly their role within the International Society for Krishna Consciousness as well as the need to work cooperatively within the society and the GBC leadership;

Whereas there is a need to build stronger bonds of association among the spiritual masters of ISKCON for their mutual benefit and the benefit of the society;

**RESOLVED:** That all devotees of ISKCON who, in the future take up service to the society as initiating spiritual masters, must first attend the ISKCON Guru Seminar, prior to initiating disciples.

That seminar shall be offered at least once per year, in Ujjain, India, or another location as determined by the GBC Guru Services Committee.

All devotees currently serving as initiating spiritual masters in ISKCON are strongly recommended to attend this Guru Seminar.

In addition, all initiating spiritual masters, now and in the future, are strongly recommended to attend the four-day Guru Retreat on an annual basis, or at least bi-annually. The Guru Retreat shall be organized by the Guru Services Committee and held in Ujjain, India, or other locations as determined by the committee.

#### **6.2.2 Discretionary Qualifications**

These qualifications should be applied when appropriate and as far as possible.

1. Spiritual degrees--Bhakti Sastri, Bhakti Vaibhava, and Bhaktivedanta (when available)--are a mandatory qualification for being granted "no objection" status to serve as a guru in ISKCON.
2. Should be nothing in his character, conduct, or circumstances to give rise to doubt about his ability to follow the code of conduct for gurus.
3. Should not be involved in any abnormal personal situation. An example of such a situation would be a disrupted or anomalous family life which could distract a *guru* from his *guru* duties or otherwise prove a disturbance to him or his followers.
4. Should always be responsible, conscientious, and honorable in ordinary dealings.

#### **6.3 Eligibility of Devotee to Be Guru in ISKCON**

##### **6.3.1 All Devotee's Initiations From ISKCON Gurus**

1. No devotee shall be eligible to become a *diksa* or *siksa-guru* in ISKCON unless he has received all of his initiations from ISKCON-approved *gurus* in good standing.
2. A devotee initiated by a bona fide Gaudiya Vaisnava *guru* before joining ISKCON may be considered as a special case by the GBC body.

##### **6.3.2 No One Can Give Diksa While Guru is Present (Amendment 2002)**

As taught by Srila Prabhupada, the etiquette of not initiating in the presence of one's *diksa-guru* will be upheld in ISKCON. However, Srila Prabhupada and historical precedents also teach us that disciples may sometimes initiate in the physical presence of their *diksa guru*. If a *diksa guru* desires for this to happen, he can direct his disciple to go through the normal GBC procedure for initiating.

##### **6.3.3 Requirement for Consent of Mantra Guru**

Devotees who have received first initiation from Srila Prabhupada and second initiation from one of Srila Prabhupada's disciples may, with the written consent of the *mantra guru*, be accepted as candidates for initiating spiritual master like any of Srila Prabhupada's other disciples.

## 6.4 Regulations

### 6.4.1 Procedure for Authorizing Diksa and Siksa-Gurus

A devotee may serve as *diksa* in ISKCON after completing the following authorization procedure:

#### 6.4.1.1 Endorsement by an Area Council

(Amendment 2004)

A candidate for guru in ISKCON must first receive a three-fourths majority vote of approval in a council composed of all the GBC zonal secretaries of his current preaching area and at least ten other senior devotees residing in his area of activity. The council will be organized and convened by the GBC Secretary(s).

(2000)

Appeal of the Decision of the Area Council in Guru Approval Procedures:

If an area council ( as outlined in the paper entitled “Gurus and Initiation” and approved by the GBC Body in Resolution 1995/No. 58 and stated in ISKCON Law Section 6.4) does not endorse a guru candidate, the candidate has the right to appeal the case to the relevant Regional Governing Body for review. If the Regional Governing Body decides that inspite of having met the mandatory qualifications for a spiritual master and the eligibility requirements, ( in 1.2.1 “Mandatory Qualifications” and 1.3 “ Eligibility of devotee to become a Guru in ISKCON” from the paper “Guru and Initiation” and stated in ISKCON Law Book 6.2.1 and 6.3 respectively), the candidate has not been endorsed by the area council, then the Regional Governing Body is empowered to overrule the decision of the area council by endorsing the candidate. The Chairman of the Regional Governing Body shall then send a letter of nomination to the GBC Secretary so that the normal process may continue with the Regional Governing Body acting as the Nominating Body instead of the area council.

#### 6.4.1.1.1 Composition of Council

The council must include all Regional Secretaries, Temple Presidents, and resident *sannyasis* in the candidate's current preaching area. In addition to the ten (or more) local area members, spiritual authorities and senior devotees in good standing from neighboring areas may also be included in the council.

#### 6.4.1.1.2 Principles of Evaluation

(Amendment 2004)

The council shall evaluate the candidate according to the qualifications for guru given by Srila Prabhupada in his oral and written teachings and by the GBC Body in its standards and guidelines. Each member of the Area Council shall fill out the Guru Qualifications Checklist and return it to be compiled by the Area Council chairman.

#### 6.4.1.1.3 Council Integrity Maintained

Once the council has been formed to evaluate a particular candidate, it cannot be reconstituted except to replace a member who has left his position as a local ISKCON Leader, or who has resigned from the council, or who has become spiritually unfit.

#### 6.4.1.2 Provision for "No Objection" Letters

If the candidate has resided for less than five years in the area making the nomination, the recommending council shall obtain "no objection" letters from the GBC and Temple President(s) of the other area(s) the candidate resided in during the five years previous to his recommendation.

#### 6.4.1.3 Names Sent to All GBC Members

##### 6.4.1.3.1 Letter of Nomination to GBC Corresponding Secretary

The Chairman of the area council shall send a letter of nomination for the *guru* candidate endorsed by the council to the GBC Corresponding Secretary. The letter of endorsement must include the following items:

1. A thorough description of the qualifications of the candidate, showing point by point how he conforms to the GBC standards and guidelines for *guru*.
2. A complete history of the devotional service of the candidate, including the dates and places of his engagements.
3. A list of the names of the members of the nominating council, giving for each member the service, the seniority, his vote, and an explanation for his vote.

##### 6.4.1.3.2 Corresponding Secretary Verifies and Distributes

(Amendment 2004)

After verifying that the candidate has been properly endorsed, the GBC Corresponding Secretary shall send the candidate's name with the full letter of endorsement and the compilation of responses by the local nominating committee to all members of the GBC.

#### 6.4.1.4 Three GBC Objections Veto Candidate

Any member of the GBC who has a misgiving concerning the suitability of a candidate, or who would prefer the matter to be discussed and decided by the GBC body, has six months from his date of notification to file a written statement of non-approval with the GBC Corresponding Secretary. If the Corresponding Secretary receives at least three letters of non-approval, the

candidate shall not take up the role of *guru*, and his candidacy shall be considered by the GBC body at its next annual general meeting.

#### **6.4.1.5 Completion of Authorizing Procedure**

##### **6.4.1.5.1 Absence of Three Letters of Non-approval**

If the GBC Corresponding Secretary has not received at least three letters of non-approval by the end of the six-month period, the GBC Corresponding Secretary shall so inform the Chairman of the recommending council, upon which the candidate, after taking the prescribed vows, shall be authorized to be a *guru* in ISKCON and perform the duties thereof.

##### **6.4.1.5.2 Presence of Three Letters of Non-approval**

If there are three letters of non-approval within the six-month period, but subsequently sufficient GBC members withdrew their objections to lower the number of objectors to fewer than three, the Corresponding Secretary shall so inform the Chairman of the recommending council, upon which the candidate, after taking the prescribed vows, shall be authorized to be a *guru* in ISKCON and perform the duties thereof.

##### **6.4.1.5.3 Corresponding Secretary Monitors and Informs**

The Corresponding Secretary shall monitor this procedure and keep all the concerned parties informed as needed.

#### **6.4.3 Standards of Conduct for Gurus in ISKCON**

##### **6.4.3.1 General Standards**

1. Must always set the highest example for all devotees.
2. Must guide his disciples to follow Srila Prabhupada's instructions.
3. Must protect and nourish the faith of all ISKCON devotees in their *guru*, in Srila Prabhupada, and in Sri Krsna.
4. Must encourage newcomers' faith in ISKCON and protect the faith of existing members.
5. Must not give initiation until the approval process has been fully completed.
6. Must not canvass for disciples.
7. Must allow all uninitiated devotees full freedom to exercise their right to accept initiation from the *guru* of their choice.
8. Must allow uninitiated devotees who have preliminarily taken shelter of him the full freedom to change their minds on their choice of initiating *guru*.
9. Since the *guru-daksina* received by an ISKCON *guru* is the property of ISKCON, it must be used for the benefit of the Krsna consciousness movement. All *guru-daksina* must be kept in a special account, preferably an ISKCON account, with at least two signatures, and accurate account records must be kept.

##### **6.4.2 Vows of Guru**

A devotee authorized to act as a *guru* in ISKCON must publicly take the following vows in a ceremony before Srila Prabhupada's *vyasana*. A signed copy of the vows must be filed with the GBC Corresponding Secretary:

1. My personal mission as *guru* in ISKCON shall be the same as the mission of Srila Prabhupada: to flood the world with transcendental literature like *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and, as Srila Prabhupada said, to "do as I am doing" in establishing ISKCON all over the world.
2. I recognize the GBC as the ultimate managing authority in ISKCON. I support the GBC system and will follow the GBC as Srila Prabhupada desired.
3. I recognize that a bona fide *guru* is first of all a bona fide disciple, and that in all my actions I shall remain surrendered to Srila Prabhupada's orders and the orders of his authorized representatives.
4. As Srila Prabhupada ordered his followers to serve within ISKCON under the GBC, I acknowledge that for me to represent Srila Prabhupada in my service as a *guru* in *parampara* "under his order," I can do so only as a member of ISKCON. If I leave ISKCON I shall no longer act as *guru*.
5. As a spiritual master, I shall always set a Krsna conscious standard for all devotees by my behavior, which shall be strictly regulated and exemplary at all times. As a public representative of ISKCON, I must always conform with ISKCON policies and never act in any way to weaken or jeopardize ISKCON's world-wide mission. I shall not act in a way to diminish any person's faith in Krsna consciousness.
6. I shall scrupulously study and review all aspiring disciples, and grant initiation only to qualified devotees so as to preserve the seriousness and sanctity of initiation. I shall only accept as disciples candidates who are qualified according to the standards and procedures established by ISKCON law.
7. I shall give my disciples directions and examples in strict conformity with those of Srila Prabhupada. I shall teach all my disciples that they are part of ISKCON.

#### **6.4.3 Standards of Conduct for Gurus in ISKCON**

##### **6.4.3.1 General Standards**

1. Must always set the highest example for all devotees.
2. Must guide his disciples to follow Srila Prabhupada's instructions.
3. Must protect and nourish the faith of all ISKCON devotees in their *guru*, in Srila Prabhupada, and in Sri Krsna.
4. Must encourage newcomers' faith in ISKCON and protect the faith of existing members.
5. Must not give initiation until the approval process has been fully completed.
6. Must not canvass for disciples.
7. Must allow all uninitiated devotees full freedom to exercise their right to accept initiation from the *guru* of their choice.
8. Must allow uninitiated devotees who have preliminarily taken shelter of him the full freedom to change their minds on their choice of initiating *guru*.

9. Since the *guru-daksina* received by an ISKCON *guru* is the property of ISKCON, it must be used for the benefit of the Krsna consciousness movement. All *guru-daksina* must be kept in a special account, preferably an ISKCON account, with at least two signatures, and accurate account records must be kept.

#### **6.4.3.2 Standards in Relation to the GBC Body**

1. Must respect the GBC as Srila Prabhupada's chosen successor as the ultimate managing authority of ISKCON and maintain a respectful serving attitude towards the GBC.
2. As a *guru* in *parampara* from Srila Prabhupada, he must follow Srila Prabhupada in order to work in ISKCON. Therefore, he must accept the GBC Body as his authority and follow the directives of the GBC.
3. Must submit to any disciplinary sanctions imposed by the GBC Body, including not initiating new disciples.

#### **6.4.3.3 Standards in Relation to GBC Zonal Secretaries**

1. Must act under the supervision of and in coordination with GBC Zonal Secretaries.
2. Must not change his residence without consulting the local GBC Zonal Secretary beforehand, since such a move may affect the temples and devotees.
3. Must disclose financial records to the GBC Zonal Secretary if the need arises.

#### **6.4.3.4 Standards in Relation to ISKCON Spiritual Authorities**

"ISKCON spiritual authority" refers to Temple Presidents, Regional Secretaries, local GBC Zonal Secretaries, and those of similar stature.

1. Must be accountable to the local ISKCON authorities for his actions.
2. Must cooperate with local ISKCON authorities.
3. Must not initiate any devotee who has not received proper recommendation from the appropriate ISKCON spiritual authority.
4. Must instruct disciples and other devotees to cooperate with ISKCON authorities.
5. Must avoid confrontation with ISKCON authorities and settle any misunderstandings amicably.
6. Must not undermine ISKCON authorities in any way.
7. Must not direct disciples to make changes in service or *asrama* without first securing the consent of the disciple's local authority.
8. Must act according to his position of service in ISKCON and not merely his position as *guru*.

#### **6.4.3.5 Standards in Relation to a Temple**

1. Must work and preach for the interest of the temple.
2. Must coordinate any ceremonies or special programs with the temple schedule.
3. Must surrender the engagement in devotional service of his disciples who live in an ISKCON temple to the temple management.
4. Must not transfer disciples from a temple without permission of the Temple President. A *guru* may, however, request a disciple to leave a particular temple, without obtaining the president's consent, when the *guru* considers it a matter of "spiritual life and death" for the disciple, as for example, being regularly exposed to direct blasphemy of his *guru*, or being unable to follow the four regulative principles. In this case the *guru* must consult with the local GBC Zonal Secretary.

### **6.4.4 Monitoring of Gurus by the GBC**

#### **6.4.4.1 Annual Reports**

Each GBC member must submit a form annually to the Executive Committee indicating briefly the status of all approved ISKCON *gurus* normally residing, regularly preaching, or initiating in his zone. (The Executive Committee will assign a GBC member(s) for monitoring each *guru*.)

#### **6.4.4.2 Emergency Reports**

If any approved *guru* has:

1. taken reinitiation/shelter of a non-ISKCON *guru* or institution;
2. rejected ISKCON or Srila Prabhupada; or
3. undergone a change of service, of *asrama*, or of living situation, which the local GBC member feels threatens to hamper the approved *guru's* ability to give guidance or to set a proper standard of conduct for disciples, then the GBC member shall submit an emergency report to the Executive Committee. If possible, this report shall include a written statement from the *guru* in question as to his intentions in regard to his disciples and his devotional service.

If not possible, then the report shall at least include a description of the approved *guru's* intentions as best they can be discerned through the investigation of the GBC member.

The report shall also contain any other information which would be of value to the GBC Body in determining the *guru's* status, as well as the recommendations of the local Temple Presidents, zonal councils, etc.

The Executive Committee shall review the emergency reports and take any necessary action.

### **6.4.5 Discipline of Devotees Approved to act as Initiating Gurus**

#### **Resignation**

If a devotee previously approved to act as an initiating *guru* in ISKCON is no longer able to provide spiritual guidance to his/her existing disciples and therefore resigns, he/she is required to notify the GBC Executive Committee. If the resignation is accepted, the initiating *guru* is required to notify his/her disciples in writing. The GBC Executive Committee or GBC Body shall then give direction to the disciples and ISKCON members in general, as deemed appropriate.

The former initiating *guru's* name shall then be removed from the list of approved initiating *gurus*.

#### **Reasons for Discipline**

If it is deemed that continued approval of a particular devotee's privilege to act as an initiating guru in ISKCON is likely to disturb the peaceful conduct of the affairs of ISKCON, such approval may be restricted or rescinded. Activities creating such a disturbance are to be defined and determined at the ecclesiastical discretion of the GBC and may include, but are not limited to:

***Misconduct and Failure to Follow Religious Principles or Higher Spiritual Authority***

1. Wilful violation of GBC resolutions, in particular, but not limited to, deviating from ISKCON's procedural requirements, such as canvassing for disciples, or not obtaining permission from local authorities before initiating someone, or being neglectful in the standard spiritual practices.
2. Vilification of ISKCON or the GBC Body.
3. Misconduct, such as physical assault, except in self-defence, improper relationships with the opposite sex, improper sexual behavior, abusive behavior to devotees, improper dealings with external society, etc.
4. Habitually or knowingly making false charges and accusations or other vaisnava-aparadhas.
5. Disregard of the devotees' need to accept and receive guidance and shelter from spiritual guides of their choice.
6. Duplicitous or untruthful dealings, such as giving false promises to devotees, lying, or other serious prevarications.
7. Having taken re-initiation/shelter of a non-ISKCON guru or institution.
8. Having rejected ISKCON or Srila Prabhupada.
9. Having undergone a change of service, of asrama, or of living situation, which threatens the approved initiating guru's ability to give guidance or set a proper standard of personal conduct.

***Improper Discharge and Neglect of Duty***

1. Misuse of Funds.
2. Consistent failure to submit required reports.

***Spiritual Discrepancy***

1. Failure to follow strictly the rules and regulations as described in Srila Prabhupada's books.
2. Philosophical deviation.
3. Failure to regularly attend the temple morning program without a bona fide or good cause.
4. Failure to follow any of the four regulative principles or to regularly chant sixteen rounds of japa.

Depending on the severity of any activity deemed improper, corrective steps may consist of informal discussions, written warnings or censures, or measures such as placing the devotee on probation, suspension of the devotee's approval to conduct initiations, or rescinding of that approval, or any other measures deemed appropriate to the situation by the GBC.

***Disciplining Authority***

A devotee approved to act as an initiating guru in ISKCON may be censured by any of the following:

- A simple majority vote of the GBC Body.
- The GBC Executive Committee.
- A simple majority vote of a Regional Governing Body.
- A simple majority vote of a Divisional or National Council.
- Where there is no Regional Governing Body or Divisional or National Council, three GBC's, which must include the GBC(s) of that area.

In the case of probation, suspension or rescinding of approval, a devotee approved to act as an initiating guru in ISKCON may be disciplined by the following:

- A simple majority vote of the GBC Body. The GBC Body shall then delegate a committee to perform the necessary follow-up actions.
- The GBC Executive Committee.

The disciplining body or officials must ensure that all details of the disciplinary action are placed on record with the GBC Secretary and, if applicable, entered into the relevant resolutions of the disciplining body.

Nothing in this law section shall be deemed to limit the ability of any Regional Governing Body, Divisional Council, National Council, or other local authority to withhold permission for a devotee approved to initiate in ISKCON from conducting initiation ceremonies within their jurisdiction.

***Censure***

Censure is a reprimand aimed at reformation of the devotee and prevention of further offending acts. It is preliminary step that may lead to probation or rescinding of approval. Censure may serve as a precedent to other forms of religious discipline.

When imposing censure, the disciplining authority must clearly set forth in writing to the disciplined person the specific basis of the censure, including the actions that were irresponsible, inappropriate, or in violation of ISKCON Law and the grounds thereof.

***Probation***

Probation is an opportunity for a devotee to rectify and regain his or her status as an ISKCON-approved initiating guru in good standing. Probation does not mean that the privilege to initiate has been withdrawn, but it may include a partial curtailment of such approval.

When ordering the probation, the disciplining authority must clearly set forth in writing to the disciplined person:

- the specific actions that were irresponsible, inappropriate, or in violation of ISKCON Law and the basis thereof.
- the specific program of rectification.
- the specific partial curtailment of the privilege to initiate, if any.
- the specific prerequisites for restoration, if any.
- the time period of the probation, which shall be no longer than one year.

After the period of probation, the disciplining authority must decide one of the following:

- The devotee is rectified and is no longer on probation.
- A determination of further probation under the same or modified conditions is required to complete the rectification process.
- The devotee has not been rectified and the privilege to initiate should be suspended or rescinded.

#### ***Suspension Pending Investigation***

Where there is substantial reason to believe that a devotee approved to initiate in ISKCON has acted irresponsibly, inappropriately, or in violation of ISKCON Law such that continuation of the privilege to initiate is likely to damage the good name, reputation, or other resources of Srila Prabhupada or the society, or if there are serious allegations of impropriety requiring investigation, then the devotee's privilege to initiate should be suspended pending investigation.

Suspension pending investigation is to separate the devotee from his or her role as initiating guru so that a thorough investigation of allegations may be conducted and the advisability of continuing the approval is determined.

The disciplining body must conduct an immediate investigation so as to minimize any disruptions. After completion of the investigation, the body shall make a determination and decide the future course of action. They may order one of the following:

- The suspension shall be revoked and the privilege to initiate restored.
- There shall be a probationary period with a program of rectification as described under probation above.
- It is not expected that the devotee can be rectified within a reasonable period of time and the privilege to initiate shall be suspended or rescinded as per the terms given below.

There shall be no public worship of a devotee whose privilege to initiate is under suspension pending investigation by the ecclesiastical action of the GBC.

#### ***Suspension***

When there has been a determination that a devotee approved to initiate in ISKCON has acted irresponsibly, inappropriately, or in violation of ISKCON Law such that the privilege to initiate is likely to damage the good name, reputation, or other resources of Srila Prabhupada and the society, but there is possibility that eventually the devotee may be rectified, then the devotee's privilege to initiate should be suspended.

When suspension is imposed, the disciplining authority must clearly set forth in writing to the disciplined person:

- the specific transgression or misconduct causing the suspension and the grounds thereof.
- the specific requirements for reinstatement.

Such suspension of the privilege to initiate is not limited by a period of time and shall remain in effect until specifically withdrawn by the disciplining or any higher authority.

There shall be no public worship of a devotee whose privilege to initiate has been suspended by the ecclesiastical action of the GBC.

#### ***Rescinding of Approval***

When there has been a determination that a devotee approved to initiate in ISKCON has acted irresponsibly, inappropriately, or in violation of ISKCON Law such that the privilege to initiate is likely to damage the good name, reputation, or other resources of Srila Prabhupada and the society, and there is little or no possibility that the devotee may eventually be rectified, then the devotee's privilege to initiate shall be rescinded.

When the privilege to initiate has been rescinded, the disciplining authority must clearly set forth in writing to the disciplined person the grounds or reasons thereof.

There shall be no public worship of a devotee whose privilege to initiate has been rescinded by the ecclesiastical action of the GBC.

#### ***Appeals***

If an ISKCON initiating guru is disciplined by a National or Divisional Council, he/she shall have the right of appeal to the Regional Governing Body (if one exists in the area) or the GBC Body (if there is no Regional Governing Body in the area).

If he/she is disciplined by three GBC members he/she shall have the right of appeal to the GBC Executive Committee or the GBC Body.

If he/she is disciplined by a Regional Governing Body he/she shall have the right of appeal to the GBC Body.

If he/she is disciplined by the GBC Executive Committee he/she shall have the right of appeal to the GBC Body.

Any disciplinary action taken against an ISKCON initiating guru by any of the abovementioned entities shall stand unless and until it

is overruled by a higher ecclesiastical body, up to and including the GBC.

#### **6.4.7 Specifically Outlawed Doctrines and Practices**

##### **6.4.7.1 "Zonal-Acarya" System**

No *guru* should declare himself or allow himself to be declared an "*acarya*" or "present *acarya*" for ISKCON or for a geographical area of ISKCON. There should be no use of the word "*acarya*" as a title of office.

##### **6.4.7.2 "Posthumous *-tvik*" Doctrine**

The doctrine that Srila Prabhupada continues to initiate direct *diksa* disciples after his departure from this world through officiating priests (*rtviks*) is a dangerous philosophical deviation. It is totally prohibited in ISKCON. No devotee shall participate in such posthumous *rtvik* initiation ceremonies in any capacity including acting as *rtvik*, initiate, assistant, organizer, or financier. No ISKCON devotee shall advocate or support its practice.

6.4.7.2 is hereby amended to read as follows : ( 1999 )

“6.4.7.2. Ritvikism aka” posthumous ritvik theory, post-samadhi ritvik theory, proxy initiation theory, no change theory, etc.

“The doctrine that Srila Prabhupada desired to continue to act as *diksa-guru* after his departure from this world and did not desire any of his disciples to give *diksa* in succession after him is a dangerous philosophical deviation. Ritvikism directly goes against the principle of *parampara* itself ( of successive *diksa* and *siksa-gurus*), which sustains the pure teachings and practices of Krsna consciousness. This principle has been established by Krisna and is upheld by all *acaryas*. Indeed, it is accepted by all followers of Vedic culture. Ritvikism is thus an extreme deviation. It is utterly erroneous to espouse it, deluding and misguiding to teach it, and blasphemous to attribute it to Srila Prabhupada. No one, who espouses, teaches, supports in any way, or practices ritvikism can be a member in good standing of ISKCON.

##### **6.4.7.3 Enforcement of ISKCON Law regarding Ritvikism**

1. The GBC Body unequivocally rejects in principle any proposals that Ritvikism be in some manner or another accommodated or tolerated within ISKCON.
2. The GBC Body hereby makes known its strong determination to enforce ISKCON Law in the matter of Ritvikism and it enjoins upon all its members and other official bodies, officers, and other authorities in ISKCON such as Regional Governing Boards, Regional Secretaries, GBC Ministers, Sannyasis, Initiating Gurus, Temple presidents, and Temple Officers, the responsibility to take every appropriate action, according to ISKCON Law to enforce the prohibition against Ritvikism in ISKCON.
3. A.The GBC Body declares that to espouse or preach Ritvikism includes the following censurable offenses under the provisions of ISKCON Law : ( 8.4.1.3)

1. Conscious and serious philosophical deviation from Srila Prabhupada’s preachings and
2. Wilful violation of GBC Body resolutions.

B. Further the GBC Body hereby rules that in relation to the espousal of Ritvikism these offenses are of a sufficiently serious nature as to warrant immediate imposition of the penalty of probation, including, its attendant program for rectification.

C. Further, the GBC Body hereby empowers the Executive Committee for the year 1999-2000 to place any ISKCON member who espouses Ritvikism on probation, and in consultation with that member’s immediate local authority, or local GBC Member, to establish a specific program of rectification as provided in ISKCON Law 8.4.2.2 which can include

Disciplinary or remedial transfer to another location;  
Reformatory change of service,  
Prohibited for visiting or living in a specified temple or community,  
Specific spiritual remedial programs  
A divestiture of certain actions for the period of probation,  
Reasonable and just reformatory programs.

#### **6.4.8 Worship and Etiquette**

##### **6.4.8.1 Ceremonies**

###### **6.4.8.1.1 *Guru-puja***

The disciples of ISKCON *gurus* other than Srila Prabhupada may offer *guru-puja* to their *gurus* outside the temple room. The temple should provide facility for these disciples' worship.

“Guru Puja” shall be amended to read as follows : ( 1999 )

## “Worship of Founder-Acarya and other Gurus in ISKCON”

“ As it is enjoined in scripture that a devotee must honour his spiritual master, ISKCON members shall be trained to place their faith, trust, allegiance first and foremost in the Founder-acarya who is the pre-eminent siksa guru for every member of ISKCON. Srila Prabhupada is to be worshipped through his words, his murti, his picture, and his devotees. Disciples of ISKCON diksa-gurus, other than Srila Prabhupada, may worship their gurus according to the guidelines of ISKCON Laws and in keeping with the spirit of the abovementioned standards for guruworship in ISKCON.

### 6.4.8.1.2 *Vyasa-puja*

*Vyasa-puja* for ISKCON *gurus* other than Srila Prabhupada should only be observed on one day a year coinciding with the birthday of the *guru*. This celebration may be held in the temple room.

### 6.4.8.1.2 *Vyasa-puja shall be amended to read as follows: ( 1999 )*

“ ISKCON members shall celebrate Srila Prabhupada’s vyasa-puja ceremony as the pre-eminent vyasa puja ceremony in ISKCON. All ISKCON members are requested to write an annual vyasa-puja offering to Srila Prabhupada. Vyasa-puja for ISKCON gurus other than Srila Prabhupada. Should only be observed on one day a year. His celebration may be held in the temple room. ISKCON members conducting vyasa-puja ceremonies for ISKCON siksa and diksa gurus shall observe them in a modest way, significantly less elaborate in duration and cost, than Srila Prabhupada’s vyasa-puja. In general, devotees shall observe these vyasa-pujacelebrations in their own locales. In ISKCON, only Srila Prabhupada’s vyasa-puja books shall be published.

### 6.4.8.1.3 *Standards of Guru Worship in ISKCON ( 1999 )*

- a) *ISKCON* devotees shall instruct new members to take shelter of Srila Prabhupada and receive guidance, training and assistance from those who are practically and directly instructing them in Krsna consciousness. *ISKCON* members shall not compel or coerce new members to accept any particular siksa or diksa-guru or to take diksa initiation at any particular point in time. New members shall choose when and from whom they wish to request initiation, however, for a minimum of six months of strict sadhana, they must focus their attention on Srila Prabhupada as founder-acarya and their siksa-guru. After having established a solid relationship with His Divine Graces’ vani, they may accept an *ISKCON* guru and after a subsequent minimum of six months, accept Vaisnava-diksa.
- b) After chanting the pranama-mantra of their diksa ( or siksa ) guru, all grand disciples and future generations should chant at least the first of Srila Prabhupada’s pranama-mantra while offering obeisances as a means of respecting the Founder-acarya.
- c) In order to offer appropriate respect to Srila Prabhupada as Founder-acarya and pre-eminent spiritual master of *ISKCON*, it is considered an essential devotional practice for all *ISKCON* devotees, to observe or perform Srila Prabhupada’s guru-puja daily, either in an *ISKCON* temple, or if not possible, in one’s home.
- d) With an aim to focus more fully on Srila Prabhupada and every devotee’s special relationship with him, and to correct any imbalance in application between the respect offered to siksa-gurus, diksa-gurus and other senior vaisnavas, contributing to a devotee’s spiritual progress, an *ISKCON* siksa or diksa guru may accept public guru-puja ( arati and / or foot-bathing ) in person once a year on *ISKCON* property as Vyasa-puja.
- e) Events welcoming Vaisnavas, including siksa and diksa gurus to *ISKCON* temples should be modest (for example, limited to presentation of garland(s) and accompanying kirtana. )
- f) *ISKCON* Leaders shall teach that Srila Prabhupada’s books and teachings are the foundation of the spiritual lives of all *ISKCON* members. Therefore, all *ISKCON* members shall consider it their compulsory duty to study Srila Prabhupada’s books. Hearing from other devotee’s books and teachings is secondary and supplemental and should not be done at the expense of hearing regularly from Srila Prabhupada.
- g) Temple Presidents and Project Leaders are fully responsible for engaging the devotees in their charge. Gurus must first consult with a Temple President before talking to his disciples about changing their service.
- h) Gurus shall minimize the number of devotees engaged in their personal service and in their travelling entourage. Gurus shall not personally engage single members of the opposite sex or married members of the opposite sex without their spouse, in direct personal service and should never be alone or in a solitary place with them as ordained by sastra.

- i) Guru-daksina and other donations offered to siksa and diksa gurus are the property of ISKCON.
- j) At the time of diksa initiation, all disciples will be further instructed by their initiating guru that Srila Prabhupada is their pre-eminent siksa guru as ISKCON's Founder-acaraya, ever present in his books and teachings. Thus they have a recognized siksa link to Srila Prabhupada.

#### 6.4.8.1.4 .Times for Guru Worship ( 2000 )

All festivals, events, commemorative occasions, etc. that are in honour of present ISKCON gurus and that are observed in the main worship area of ISKCON institutions, are to be held at times other than those normally set aside for regular worship, such as the morning program and the Sunday feast.

#### 6.4.8.2 **Restricted Titles**

A *guru* cannot not use or allow his disciples to apply to him the honorific title "His Divine Grace" or the honorifics ending in "-pada" in written public documents or in open public forum. However, such titles may be used in communications among disciples or from disciples to their *guru*.

#### 6.4.8.2 **"Restricted Titles" shall be amended to read as follows : (1999)**

"No one in ISKCON will be addressed published with honorific title " His Divine Grace ", nor be addressed either publicly or privately, the honorifics ending in " pada " or "deva". Disciples may address their ISKCON diksa or siksa gurus as "gurudev" or "gurumaharaj"

#### 6.4.8.3 **Photograph on Altar**

A *pujari* who is not initiated by Srila Prabhupada shall keep the picture of his *guru* on the altar while offering *arati*. The picture must be substantially smaller than those of the predecessor *acaryas* in disciple succession, or, if not substantially smaller, be placed on a lower level. After the *arati*, the picture should be removed from the altar.

#### 6.4.8.3 **Photograph on Altar shall be amended to read as follows : (1999)**

**"ISKCON devotees shall offer arati and bhoga to Lord Krsna through both their diksa or siksa guru and Srila Prabhupada as their pre-eminent siksa-guru. A Temple Pujari shall keep a smaller picture of his diksa guru on the arati tray or table instead of on the altar and remove it after the arati. Subsequent generations of devotees shall continue in the same manner of respecting both their own diksa or siksa guru and Srila Prabhupada.**

ISKCON Temple resident Members may keep the photographs of ISKCON diksa or siksa gurus privately in their asrama quarters but are not to display them publicly on ISKCON premises. Promoting occasional special preaching events may be an exception. Disciples of ISKCON diksa and siksa gurus should not wear or publicly display guru t-shirts, posters, bead bag buttons, athletic caps etc. (other than Srila Prabhupada.).

#### 6.4.8.4 **Seat in Temple Room**

There should be one seat reserved for ISKCON *gurus* and their Godbrothers/sisters for giving *sastra* classes in the temple room. Disciples of ISKCON *gurus* should sit on a lower *asana* or cushion, since it is improper to sit on the same *asana* used by one's *diksa-guru*.

#### 6.4.8.4 **Seat in Temple Room shall be amended to read : ( 1999 )**

**"Sastra enjoins that the disciple may not sit on the seat of the guru. The seat for speaking Srimad-bhagavatam, however, is not the property of any one guru, there is no harm in any Vaisnava sitting in that place while giving class. Thus, anyone giving sastra classes in ISKCON temple rooms shall use a single seat reserved for the purpose.**

#### 6.4.8.5 **Guru Under Suspension**

##### 6.4.8.5.1 **No Public Worship**

There should be no public worship of a *guru* who is under suspension by the GBC.

##### 6.4.8.5.2 **Disciples Offering Arati**

While performing *arati* to the Deities a disciple of a suspended *guru* should offer the various articles through Srila Prabhupada to the disciple succession.

##### 6.4.8.5.3 **Disciples Offering Bhoga**

When offering *bhoga* to the Deities in the temple or outside the temple in ISKCON establishments like restaurants, a disciple of a suspended *guru* must offer through Srila Prabhupada to the disciplic succession.

#### 6.4.8.5.4 Disciples Offering Obeisances

While offering obeisances in a public place a disciple of a suspended *guru* should recite Srila Prabhupada's *pranama-mantra* aloud and should chant the *mantras* to the suspended *guru* silently or not at all.

#### 6.4.8.6 *Murtis of Gurus Inside the Temple Room*

There shall be no establishment of *murtis* in any ISKCON temple room of ISKCON *gurus* subsequent to Srila Prabhupada in succession.(97-617)

### 6.5 Guidelines

#### 6.5.1 Rejection of a Fallen "Guru"

N.B.: The following laws are based on *Sri Krsna-bhajanamrta* by Sri Narahari Sarkara (an associate of Sri Caitanya), *Bhakti-sandharbha* by Srila Jiva Gosvami, and *Jaiva-dharma* by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, in addition to the writings of Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

##### 6.5.1.1 *When a Fallen Guru May Be Rejected*

If it is ascertained either by the admission of the *guru*, or by the testimony of irrefutably reliable witness(es) that the *guru* was fallen at the time of initiation, then the disciple has a legitimate reason to reject him and take re-initiation from a bona fide spiritual master.

##### 6.5.1.2 *When a Fallen Guru Must Be Rejected*

###### 6.5.1.2.1 Hopelessly Entangled in Sense Gratification

If a *guru* has become hopelessly entangled in sense gratification, and it has been established by reliable testimony or by his own admissions that he has been regularly violating the regulative principles of Krsna consciousness, and if there is virtually no hope for his rectification, then the disciple should reject him and may accept re-initiation.

###### 6.5.1.2.2 Takes on Demonic Qualities

If the spiritual master takes on demonic qualities and becomes inimical to ISKCON, he should be rejected and the disciple may take re-initiation.

##### 6.5.1.3 *When Not to Reject a Fallen Guru*

If a *guru* is engaged in sense gratification, violating one or more of the regulative principles, but there is hope that he can be rectified, then his disciples should not reject him but should allow time for such rectification to take place, and they should take shelter of Srila Prabhupada and senior Vaisnavas as *siksa-gurus*.

##### 6.5.1.4 *When a Suspended Guru May Be Rejected*

A disciple of a suspended *guru* who has severely lost his faith in his spiritual master, or who has developed an offensive mentality towards him, and who is unable to regain his faith, even after hearing many instructions in the matter, may take permission from the spiritual master for release to accept a different initiating *guru*. The devotee should act in consultation with his local GBC representative. If the suspended *guru* withholds his permission, then the disciple may seek permission from the GBC Body.

##### 6.5.1.5 *"Guru Asraya" for Guidance*

Devotees whose initiating spiritual master has fallen down should take guidance from the GBC papers entitled "*Guru Asraya*" and "Questions and Answers About Reinitiation." These papers also present ISKCON's guidelines on the importance of taking shelter of a spiritual master and the role of *siksa-guru*.

### 6.6 The Siksa-Guru

#### 6.6.1 Definition

In accordance with the instructions of Srila Prabhupada in the Caitanya Caritamrita,

"A devotee must have only one initiating spiritual master because in the scriptures acceptance of more than one is always forbidden.

There is no limit, however, to the number of instructing spiritual masters one may accept." (CC Adi 1.35 Purport)

"Srila Krsna dasa Kaviraja Gosvami states that the instructing spiritual master is a bona fide representative of Sri Krsna. The initiating spiritual master is a personal manifestation of Srila Madana-mohana vigraha, whereas the instructing spiritual master is a personal representative of Srila Govindadeva vigraha." (CC Adi 1.47 Purport),

Devotees may accept a devotee as his/her *siksa-guru* and serve him as a representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If they are under shelter or initiated by a spiritual master in good standing, they are to first acquire the blessings of their *diksa-guru* in order to accept a *siksa-guru*.

#### 6.6.2 Procedure to be Followed to be Recognized as a Formal Siksa-Guru

A devotee may serve as *diksa* or *siksa-guru* in ISKCON after completing the authorization procedure as given in Section 7.4 "Procedure for Authorizing *Diksa* and *Siksa Gurus*."

### 6.7 Guru Services Committee ( 2000 )

A Guru Services Committee is hereby established with the purpose to resolve present and prospective guru topics. This Committee is to:

A. Ascertain whether each guru is following the standard practice of Krsna Consciousness, including;

a) Chanting a minimum of sixteen rounds per day and having a visible sadhana;

- b) Has proper relationships with others according to his asrama, especially with the opposite sex;
  - c) Is responsibly engaged in his service within the Society;
  - d) Has an appropriate understanding of the siddhanta of Krsna Consciousness as given by Srila Prabhupada;
  - e) Is cooperating with the other devotees within ISKCON and,
  - f) Is financially accountable.
- B. Establish committees to research and deal with the philosophy and practical issues concerning gurus within ISKCON.
- C. Review existing procedures and recommend modifications of the existing procedures by which gurus in ISKCON can be approved.
- D. Review prospective gurus when called upon to do so.
- E. This committee has the power to educate the guru or to recommend to the GBC Body Executive Committee to sanction him / her, according to ISKCON Law. Any sanctions must be reviewed by the GBC Body at the Annual General Meeting in Mayapur.

## 7

### Discipleship in ISKCON

#### 7.1 Right of Devotees to Choose their *Guru*

##### 7.1.1 Rights of ISKCON Members to Worship their *Gurus*

As it is enjoined in scripture that a devotee must honor his spiritual master as much as he honors the Lord, every devotee in ISKCON accordingly has the right to worship, glorify, and serve his *guru*. So long as the *guru* is in good standing, no ISKCON Leader shall curtail or abrogate that right. Temple Presidents must provide devotees the necessary time and facility for them to worship their *gurus*. The disciples, however, must carry out their devotions to *guru* in harmony with the orderly running of temple affairs and without imposing their own *guru-seva* upon disciples of other *gurus*.

##### 7.1.2 Right to Accept Instruction and Initiation

All members of ISKCON have the right to accept *diksa* or *siksa* from the *guru* of their choice, provided that the *guru* is qualified and approved to initiate, the candidate is eligible to accept initiation, and that all the relevant procedures set forth in ISKCON laws have been strictly observed.

##### 7.1.3 Right to Take Association from Any Approved *Guru*

Any uninitiated devotee in ISKCON has the right to read the publications, hear the recorded talks and *bhajan*s, take *darsana* of, correspond with, or associate in other various feasible ways with any authorized ISKCON *guru*.

##### 7.1.4 Right to Become an "Aspirant for Shelter and Initiation"

1. Someone who has been connected with the Krsna consciousness movement for more than one year, either as a congregational member or as a mature child brought up in a Krsna conscious devotee's household, shall be allowed to accept an ISKCON *guru* as a *siksa-guru* and be accepted by that *guru* as an aspirant for shelter and initiation in the future, provided the Temple President or *gurukula* principal (for *gurukula* students) gives his approval, and, in the case of a minor child, a parent gives approval.
2. Someone who has accepted an ISKCON *guru* as *siksa-guru* and is an "aspirant for shelter and initiation" may cultivate a personal spiritual relationship with the spiritual master and, by taking personal guidance, try to progress further in Krsna consciousness.
3. Someone who has accepted an ISKCON *guru* as *siksa-guru* and is an "aspirant for shelter and initiation" and who wants to subsequently accept another ISKCON *guru* as *siksa-guru*, etc., should inform both *gurus* and follow the procedure as provided for in above (1).

#### 7.2 Responsibility of Candidate for Initiation

It is the personal responsibility of candidates for initiation to correctly decide, by the exercise of their own intelligence, to surrender to a particular devotee as spiritual master. Candidates for initiation should accept initiation from a spiritual master only after developing firm and mature faith in that devotee and in his ability to take them back to Godhead. *Sadhu*, *sastra*, and *guru* are the authoritative references to apply in ascertaining the level of advancement of a devotee.

Receiving official ISKCON *guru* approval signifies that the devotee has successfully completed the authorization process set forth in ISKCON law, and that in the judgment of certain senior devotees the candidate measures up to the standards and guidelines given in ISKCON law. However, such approval is not automatically to be taken as a statement about the degree of God-realization of the approved *guru*, and it is not intended to replace the intelligent discrimination of the candidate.

##### 7.2.1 First (Harinama) Initiation

###### 7.2.1.1 Qualifications for First Initiation

###### 7.2.1.1.1 One Year Preparatory Period

In order to receive first initiation one must have been engaged favorably in devotional service, strictly following the four regulative principles and chanting sixteen rounds a day, for at least one year without interruption.

###### 7.2.1.1.2 First Six-month Period

During the first six months of following the four regulative principles and chanting sixteen rounds daily, a new devotee who is aspiring for initiation should not commit himself to a particular initiating *guru*. Rather, he should chant Srila Prabhupada's *pranama-mantra* and worship him as Founder-Acarya of ISKCON and as his *siksa-guru*.

###### 7.2.1.1.3 Second Six-month Period

After successfully completing the first six-month preparatory period, and after passing the required examination, the candidate may choose his future *diksa-guru*. Receiving permission from that *guru*, and notifying the local Temple President, the candidate should take shelter and begin to worship that *guru* as his own spiritual master and chant his *pranama-mantra*. Actual initiation may take place only after a minimum six-month period from the date shelter was taken and the local Temple President notified.

#### 7.2.1.1.4 Devotees Residing Within Temple Communities

In addition to satisfying the above requirements, devotees residing in temple communities must, during the one-year preparatory period, regularly attend the full morning program.

#### 7.2.1.1.5 Devotees Residing Outside of Temple Communities

Devotees who do not live in a temple community and who cannot come daily to the temple programs may be initiated provided they have regular morning programs at home or attend regular morning programs at the *nama-hatta* center.

#### 7.2.1.1.6 Pass Examination

Before a devotee can be permitted to formally take shelter of a particular ISKCON spiritual master and be subsequently recommended for initiation, he or she must demonstrate a basic understanding of Srila Prabhupada's teachings by answering an oral or written test administered by the Temple President or other recommending authority. The questions to be answered are:

1. What are the qualifications of a bona fide spiritual master?
2. Why are you convinced to follow the orders of the spiritual master in this life, and even life after life?
3. Why does one worship the spiritual master like God?
4. Do you believe the spiritual master speaks the Absolute Truth? If so, why?
5. Under what circumstances should the spiritual master be rejected?
6. What are the qualifications and responsibilities of a disciple?
7. What is the unique position of Srila Prabhupada in ISKCON?
8. Why do you accept Lord Krsna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead?
9. Why do we follow the four regulative principles?
10. Why do we chant Hare Krsna?
11. What is the position of the GBC Body?
12. Explain the difference between the body and the self.
13. What is ISKCON, and why should one remain in ISKCON?

#### 7.2.1.2 **Change of Prospective Guru**

Sometimes a candidate for initiation who had formally accepted shelter from one spiritual master as a prospective initiating *guru* may subsequently decide to change to another. Such a candidate must communicate this change to the former prospective spiritual master, new prospective spiritual master, and local Temple President. The candidate must also remain fixed under the shelter of the newly proposed initiating *guru* for six continuous months prior to receiving initiation, starting from the time of newly accepting formal shelter.

#### 7.2.1.3 **Procedure of Formal Recommendation**

This formal recommendation process is not intended to replace or overshadow the (more important) need for other regular contact among the various ISKCON devotees guiding the candidate and his prospective spiritual master regarding the spiritual progress of the candidate. Furthermore, the prospective spiritual master is under no obligation to initiate a devotee because a proper recommendation has been given.

#### 7.2.1.3.1 *Guru* Receives Recommendation in Writing

Before a candidate can receive first initiation, his prospective *guru* must receive a formal written recommendation from the appropriate ISKCON spiritual authority, as determined by the candidate's situation.

#### 7.2.1.3.2 Contents of Recommendation

The recommendation of the recommending ISKCON authority must certify that the candidate has fulfilled the qualifications for initiation to the best of his understanding. The recommending authority must specifically attest that the candidate has been engaged in favorable devotional service, has chanted sixteen rounds of *japa* daily, has adhered to the four regulative principles, and has regularly attended a morning program, all for the previous twelve months.

The recommender must also attest that the candidate is sufficiently knowledgeable in the philosophy of Krsna consciousness and in the structure and purpose of ISKCON to have passed the prescribed examination, and that he has accepted shelter of the *guru* for at least six months.

#### 7.2.1.3.3 Recommender Contacts Previous Authorities

If the candidate has not been serving continuously within the jurisdiction of the recommending ISKCON authority for the previous twelve months, then the recommender must still satisfy himself with the activities of the candidate for the full twelve-month period by contacting other ISKCON authorities with knowledge of the candidate's activities during the balance time.

#### 7.2.1.3.4 Devotees Residing In Temple Communities

Before a candidate can receive first initiation, the *guru* must receive a written recommendation from the Temple President under whom the candidate is currently serving.

If the Temple President is also the prospective initiating *guru*, then the following special procedures must be observed: Either the local GBC shall write the recommendation himself, or he shall establish a local Board of Initiations, which does not include the prospective *guru* as a member, to review the qualifications of the candidates. The chairman of this Board of Initiations may then prepare the necessary written recommendations. In the extreme case that the local GBC, Temple President, and prospective *guru* are all the same person, the GBC Executive Committee shall establish the appropriate procedures to be followed.

#### 7.2.1.3.5 Devotees Residing Away from Temple Communities

Qualified candidates for initiation who reside away from temple communities may be recommended for initiation (in the manner prescribed above) by one of the following spiritual authorities (excluding the prospective initiating *guru*) who knows them well: a local GBC, the nearest Temple President, the local Regional Secretary, the concerned congregational preaching director, or an ISKCON *sannyasi* who is regularly preaching in that area.

(2008) Update from GBC Resolution 321:

That in a case when a prospective disciple who lives in such an isolated place that none of the spiritual authorities listed in ISKCON Law 7.2.1.3.5 can recommend him/her for initiation, requests initiation from an ISKCON initiating *guru*, then the *guru* is required to inform the National Council or the RGB body of the situation and receive their permission to go through all the applicable rules for initiation as the recommending authority. In the absence of such a national/regional body, such permission should be received from the Chairperson of the GBC Guru Services Committee who will then monitor that all applicable rules regarding initiation are followed.

A spiritual master who fails to follow this resolution will be reprimanded as per GBC rules.

#### 7.2.1.4 *Vows of Disciple*

All new initiates must take the following vows at the time of initiation:

1. To chant a minimum of sixteen rounds daily without fail.
2. To strictly follow the four regulative principles of no meat eating, no illicit sex, no intoxication, no gambling.
3. To accept the order of the spiritual master as one's life and soul.
4. To accept discipleship into the Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya-sampradaya through the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON and to remain faithful to their order and teachings.
5. To remain faithful to Srila Prabhupada's order by maintaining loyalty to ISKCON and its ultimate managing authority, the GBC.

#### 7.2.2 **Second, or Brahminical, Initiation**

##### 7.2.2.1 *Qualification for Second Initiation*

###### 7.2.2.1.1 One-year Wait Between First and Second Initiation

To be qualified to receive second initiation, a first-initiated devotee must have been steadily engaged in favorable devotional service, chanting sixteen rounds a day without fail, and strictly following the four regulative principles for a period of at least one year from the time of receiving first initiation. In addition, the candidate must have regularly attended a morning program, whether in a temple, preaching center, *nama-hatta* center, or at home.

###### 7.2.2.1.2 Two-year Wait for Those Who Fall Severely

A devotee who, after receiving first initiation, falls severely from the spiritual standard by neglecting or forsaking his initiation vows in a serious way or by rejecting the association of ISKCON devotees for a prolonged time, shall, after he returns to normal practice, be required to wait for at least two years before being given second initiation.

###### 7.2.2.1.3 Examination Option of Initiating *Guru*

It is the responsibility of the initiating *guru* to determine the fitness of his disciple for brahminical initiation. To help do this, he may require his disciple to pass a suitable examination.

##### 7.2.2.2 *Procedure for Formal Recommendation*

###### 7.2.2.2.1 *Guru* Receives Recommendation in Writing

The *guru* of a candidate for second initiation must receive a written recommendation from the appropriate ISKCON authority. The appropriate authority is determined in the same manner as described above for first initiation.

###### 7.2.2.2.2 Contents of Letter of Recommendation

The recommending authority must certify that the candidate has fulfilled the qualifications for second initiation to the best of his understanding. The recommending authority must specifically attest that:

1. the candidate has been steadily engaged in favorable devotional service, has chanted sixteen rounds of *japa* daily, adhered to the four regulative principles, and regularly attended a morning program, all for the previous twelve months (having received first initiation more than twelve months before) and
2. the candidate has either not fallen severely since first initiation or has been in good standing for at least two years since returning to normal practice.

###### 7.2.2.2.3 Recommender Contacts Previous Authorities

As in the case of a recommendation for first initiation, if the candidate has not been serving continuously within the jurisdiction of the recommending ISKCON authority for the previous twelve months, then the recommender must still satisfy himself with the activities of the candidate for the full twelve-month period by contacting other ISKCON authorities who have knowledge of the candidate's activities during the balance time.

### 7.2.2.3 **Restoration of Brahminical Status**

If an initiated *brahmana* falls severely from the spiritual standard by neglecting or forsaking his initiation vows in a serious way or by rejecting the regular association of devotees for a prolonged time, and then later returns to the spiritual standard, the following procedure is to be observed:

1. The devotee should not wear a sacred thread, chant *gayatri-mantra*, or serve the Deity until he has strictly followed and practiced devotional service for a period of no less than six months.
2. He may put on the sacred thread, resume chanting *gayatri*, and serve the Deity only after he proves himself fit in the judgment of his spiritual master and local spiritual authority.
3. If, in the judgment of his spiritual master, the deviation was exceptionally severe or prolonged, the spiritual master may again give the disciple *gayatri- mantra*. If the spiritual master is beyond mortal vision, the local GBC representative shall decide the proper course of action.

### 7.2.4 **Initiation Only from Approved Gurus**

Devotees who live or serve in ISKCON may take initiation only from ISKCON approved *gurus*.

#### 7.2.4.1 **Violators**

##### 7.2.4.1.1 **First Initiation Outside**

ISKCON members who in violation of ISKCON law take initiation from *gurus* who have not been approved to initiate in ISKCON shall not be permitted to serve within ISKCON. If the non-approved *guru* has an institution or *asrama* outside ISKCON, then according to standard etiquette, his disciples should serve within the institution of their *guru* and should not serve within ISKCON. (This rule does not apply to persons who were already initiated before they became ISKCON members.)

##### 7.2.4.1.2 **Other Initiations Outside**

Anyone initiated in ISKCON who has taken any further initiation, or reinitiation, from a non-approved *guru* must renounce their initiation from the non-approved *guru* in order to work within ISKCON. Their ISKCON spiritual master (or if their spiritual master is beyond mortal vision, the local GBC) shall decide the proper procedure for reinstating them in ISKCON, including the need for taking any further initiation.

#### 7.2.4.2 **Prior Initiation by Non-Bona Fide Gurus**

Persons who have taken initiation from non-bona fide *gurus* before becoming members of ISKCON should follow the injunction of Srila Jiva Goswami that such a useless *guru*, a family priest acting as *guru*, should be given up, and that the proper, bona fide *guru* should be accepted.

### 7.2.5 **Srila Prabhupada's Disciple by First Initiation**

A devotee who has received first initiation from Srila Prabhupada has become Srila Prabhupada's disciple. By accepting second initiation from a Godbrother after Srila Prabhupada's disappearance, the disciple further confirms his relationship with Srila Prabhupada and also becomes a disciple of that initiating Godbrother. The second initiation strengthens, not diminishes, one's standing as Srila Prabhupada's disciple. A disciple should always respect a worthy Godbrother from whom he has received second initiation. What such a devotee and the second-initiating *guru* expect from one another in their relationship shall arise from their own mutual understanding.

### 7.2.6 **Reinitiation**

A devotee whose *guru* has fallen and who seeks re-initiation from an approved *guru* must observe the following requirements:

1. a six-month period of formally taking shelter,
2. a formal letter of recommendation from the appropriate local authority, and
3. acceptance by the initiating *guru*.

## 7.3 **Guidelines**

### 7.3.1 **Unauthorized "Initiation" Ceremonies**

In cases where the formal *guru*-disciple relationship has not been properly sanctioned by procedures given in ISKCON Law, no ISKCON member shall engage in giving any of the elements of the initiation ceremony-such as: giving a devotional name, giving sanctified chanting beads, or neck beads, or participating in some ceremony or ritual of commitment-in any number or combination, to other devotees in ISKCON or its congregations, with the stated or unstated purpose or effect of creating the resemblance of a formal *guru*-disciple relationship.

When such unauthorized activities have already taken place:

- a. all participants should be informed that no initiation has taken place, nor any binding pledge leading towards initiation.
- b. The junior devotee in the transaction should seek to establish a relationship with an authorized initiating *guru* in whom he can place full faith.
- c. All devotees must cease using any names given, if any. (96)

## 8

### ISKCON Members

## 8.1 **Principles**

### 8.1.1 **Faith in ISKCON's GBC Body**

Faith in the GBC as the ultimate managing authority in ISKCON, shall be preserved, protected and enhanced by all ISKCON members.

### 8.1.2 **Regarding Local Laws**

ISKCON members are law abiding citizens. However, where demonic laws interfere with the execution of bona fide preaching duties then one can resist such orders. In such cases Srila Prabhupada recommended to do the needful taking into consideration the

circumstances of the laws of the country, the customs of the local people, the reputation of our society and the example which will be set for the future devotees to follow.

### **8.1.3 Preaching Krishna Consciousness As It Is**

It is the duty of the Society's preachers to present the Krsna consciousness philosophy as it is presented in Srila Prabhupada's books.

(76)

### **8.1.4 Standing of Members**

#### **8.1.4.1 Standards for Devotees In Good Standing**

A devotee in good standing may enjoy all the privileges which are normally offered to all the members of the Society, in accordance to their situation, as per ISKCON Law, the ISKCON constitution and the GBC resolutions.

#### **8.1.4.2 Principles for Determining Who Is "In Good Standing"**

1. An ISKCON devotee (temple resident/ congregational) who follows the rules and regulations appropriate to his situation, who is not acting inimically to ISKCON or its interests, who is not put under any disciplinary mandate, and;
2. Anyone serving in ISKCON who is a disciple of a bona fide *guru*, who is faithfully following his vows and obligations to his *guru*, and;
3. A person who is appropriately adhering to the rules and regulations in his *asrama* and
4. A spiritual authority who is not on probation or suspension-is in good standing.

This list is not exhaustive, the GBC or its delegated authorities may add standards for determining devotees in good standing as required.

### **8.2. Duties**

#### **8.2.1 Loyalty to ISKCON and Srila Prabhupada**

##### **8.2.1.1 Seeking Instruction Outside ISKCON Improperly**

Since all the spiritual knowledge and instruction required is available in Srila Prabhupada's books and from ISKCON, no ISKCON member shall be allowed to seek spiritual instruction from any other person or institution outside of ISKCON without approval of the GBC Body. Any member of ISKCON who willfully disobeys the above order will thereby sever his connection with ISKCON.(82)

1. Although all respects should be shown to senior Vaisnavas of the Gaudiya-math or other non-ISKCON Vaisnavas, no one should independently approach these respected personalities with the intention of begging advice or opinions regarding management or any controversial matters pertaining to ISKCON. The GBC is the ultimate authority for resolving such matters, and its decisions should be accepted.(79)

##### **8.2.1.2 Prohibition to Lead Anyone Away from ISKCON**

As ISKCON is spiritually non-different from His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, no one has the right to lead anyone away from ISKCON.(82)

##### **8.2.1.3 Initiation Regulation**

Devotees who live and work within ISKCON must be initiated in ISKCON, except one previously initiated by a recognized *sampradaya* who later wants to join and serve in ISKCON under the approval and direction of the local GBC.(82)

##### **8.2.1.4 Initiated ISKCON Members Taking Further Initiation Outside of ISKCON**

1. Any ISKCON Leader, *sannyasi*, or senior devotee who was initiated in ISKCON from a bona fide spiritual master who has taken further initiation outside of it, without appropriate permission, must renounce their non-ISKCON initiation, receive a clearance and be re-assigned a preaching field in order to work again within ISKCON. (82)
2. Such reformed devotees shall be reassigned a preaching field by the GBC Executive Committee, or a Divisional Council and in cases not involving a very senior devotee the local GBC Zonal Secretary, for a one year probation.(82)
3. Such reformed devotees will be reassigned a preaching field by the GBC officers committee for a one year probation.(82)
4. To avoid offenses to Srila Prabhupada and to avoid offenses to his godbrothers, the GBC reminds all ISKCON devotees of Srila Prabhupada's instruction that in general we should avoid the association of His godbrothers and members of other spiritual groups unless one has permission from a GBC member for some specific purpose. Intimate *siksa* association is prohibited from non-ISKCON spiritual masters.(87)

##### **8.2.1.5 Resident Devotees Normally Initiated in ISKCON**

Devotees who live and work within ISKCON must be initiated in ISKCON except if someone was previously initiated by a recognized *sampradaya* who afterwards wants to join and serve in ISKCON under the approval and direction of the local GBC.(82)

##### **8.2.1.6 Reasonable Warnings of a Spiritual Authority's Deviation**

That, when reasonable warning is given by the GBC Body that a particular authority is deviating, followers who continue to accept instructions from such deviants cannot claim to be exonerated from personal responsibility by virtue of obediently or blindly following that authority.(93)

##### **8.2.1.7 Association with Non-ISKCON Vaisnavas and Sadhus**

1. In obedience to the instruction of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the GBC directs that the members of ISKCON should respect all senior Gaudiya Vaisnavas outside ISKCON, but should not intimately associate with them, personally or through printed or recorded media, for guidance, teaching, instruction, or initiation as their presentation of Krsna consciousness often differs from that of Srila Prabhupada in emphasis, balance and other aspects of both teaching and practice.

2. This resolution is intended to apply categorically to all ISKCON members. ISKCON Leaders' first responsibility is to give considerate direction, guidance, and counseling to any ISKCON devotees personally affected by this resolution so as to bring them back to the path set by Srila Prabhupada.

In any case, those who continue to act in violation of this resolution are subject to sanctions by Temple Presidents and GBC Zonal Secretaries, who may exercise their discretion to prohibit any such devotees from living on ISKCON properties or participating in ISKCON functions.

Those who persist in violating this resolution are cautioned they may be reported to the GBC Executive Committee for immediate action or action at the following year's annual GBC meeting. The Executive Committee is hereby given authority to undertake any action up to and including suspension from ISKCON of any violator at any time between the GBC annual general meetings at Mayapur.

3. ISKCON devotees should carefully avoid hearing or speaking personal criticism of the Godbrothers of Srila Prabhupada.(87)

#### **8.2.1.8 Avoiding Rasika Literature**

The members of ISKCON should regularly study *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, *Caitanya-caritamrta*, and the other books given by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. The recent proliferation in ISKCON of literature focusing on "*rasika-bhakti*," intimate Radha-Krsna *lila*, and other subject matters suitable only for highly advanced souls, represents a departure from Srila Prabhupada's orders and obstructs the smooth spiritual progress of ISKCON devotees. ISKCON members should therefore avoid collecting, reading, discussing, or distributing such literature.(95)

#### **8.2.2 Support and Adjust to GBC Decisions**

The authorized forum for GBC policy is the annual GBC meeting, annual ISKCON Leaders meeting, annual *sannyasis* assembly, and similar official meetings held after the Gaura-purnima festival at Sri Mayapur. Outside of these meetings it is the duty of all ISKCON members and leaders to support and adjust to GBC decisions. Srila Prabhupada's principle was to meet once a year, make decisions, and follow them during the year. Activities contrary to this, shall be considered as a serious breach of etiquette and discipline.(86)

When there are significant difficulties with a GBC member one should state his problem in writing and forward to the GBC Executive Committee for necessary consideration.(82)

#### **8.3. Categories of ISKCON Members**

##### **8.3.1 Temple-dependent Resident Members**

###### **8.3.1.1 Definition**

A Temple-dependent Resident Member is defined as a devotee who is dependent upon ISKCON for residential facilities, food, clothing, and basic health care.

Temple-dependent Resident Members have voluntarily taken a more renounced, less materialistic, plainer form of life for the purpose of dedicating maximum energy toward spiritual advancement and devotional service to Lord Krsna.

Such devotees are free to leave the *asrama* at any time and continue their residence on their own free will for the purpose of engaging in Krsna consciousness.

###### **8.3.1.2 Duties**

Temple-dependent Resident Members shall have the following obligations and responsibilities

1. To maintain the Krsna conscious standards of behavior, including following the four regulative principles and chanting a minimum of sixteen rounds of *japa* per day.
2. To attend the spiritual programs in the temple regularly.
3. To adhere to ISKCON Law and the regulations of the temple or *asrama*.
4. To be honest and straightforward in all dealings.
5. To be loyal to ISKCON and report any deviations from ISKCON standards to higher authorities.
6. To make no claim of ownership over ISKCON property which has been allocated for use in one's service, and to return such property when requested or when one has decided to leave the *asrama* or community of residence.
7. To agree to be transferred from one temple to another as may be needed from time to time. Such circumstances require mutual consideration. (Special consideration and sensitivity should be given when asking families with children to transfer to another temple.)
8. To take any regular health test according to local temple policy.
9. To settle disputes through the ISKCON Judicial System or through ISKCON approved arbitration, and not to take recourse in a court of law against ISKCON except where expressly allowed under ISKCON Law.

###### **8.3.1.3 Regulations**

###### **8.3.1.3.1 Standards of Service**

1. *Sannyasis*, *brahmacaris*, *vanaprasthas*, and brahminical *grhasthas* (living in facilities provided by ISKCON) are to be fully engaged in devotional service with all their time and energy.(92)
2. There are *grhasthas* who dedicate the major part of their time and energies to render devotional service in ISKCON. They need, however, to earn a minimum amount of income for family obligations that are not borne by ISKCON. They are exempted from the fifty percent(50%) donation rule. (92)

Temple-dependent Resident Members shall engage in devotional service as instructed by the local authority with a minimum of 48 hours of practical service a week.

###### **8.3.1.3.2 Change of Temples for Temple Resident Devotees**

###### **8.3.1.3.2.1 Both Temple Presidents Should Agree**

If a devotee wants to change temples, his present Temple President should agree as well as the new Temple President. The GBC member may be consulted if there is disagreement.

#### 8.3.1.3.2.2 *Permission is Necessary To Serve in India*

Any temple devotee seriously desiring to go and serve ISKCON in India must obtain the permission of his GBC Zonal Secretary and Temple President. The GBC Zonal Secretary should not discourage serious devotees in their zone from serving ISKCON in India if they are having a serious and appropriate service to do in India. However, they shall still require the permission of GBC Zonal Secretary and Temple President.(77)

#### 8.3.1.3.2.3 *Devotees should not be encouraged to Abandon Prescribed Temple Duties*

Even if there is any alleged deficiency in a temple program, that is not sufficient grounds in itself for a *sannyasi*, party leader or anyone else to encourage a devotee to abandon his prescribed duty in the temple. If the Temple President and GBC representative do not correct a deficiency in a period of time agreed upon by the Temple President, the GBC representative and the devotee making a complaint, the GBC, Divisional Council or appropriate authority may transfer the devotee to other duties.(77)

#### 8.3.1.3.3 Child Protection Concerns

Persons who after an ISKCON investigation are confirmed to be guilty of child abuse must report their status to the local Temple President upon their arrival in an ISKCON community. Also, it is the obligation of a Temple President to determine, for every member joining his community, if the newcomer is a confirmed child abuser. The Temple President is then obliged to notify the local householders and GBC of the offender's presence.(94)

#### 8.3.1.3.4 Written Agreement Between the Temple and the Resident

A simple written agreement should exist between the temple and dependent resident members stating conditions under which the residential dependent members will be maintained by the temple.

#### 8.3.1.4 *Facilities*

The facilities ISKCON temples should provide for Temple-dependent Resident Devotees will vary according to local conditions. Generally, though, the minimum should include:

##### 8.3.1.4.1 For All Members

1. Modest but adequate dormitory facility.
2. Adequate *Krsna-prasadam*.
3. Suitable clothing for protection of body.
4. Basic medical care or health insurance as affordable by the temple. (Strong encouragement is given that temple managers see this as a basic requirement and not a luxury.)
5. To not have their privilege of residence revoked without adequate cause.
6. Reasonable allowance for study time.
7. Sufficient time for health programs if required.
8. Regular program for attending India pilgrimage.
9. Reasonable time for cultivation of family members.

##### 8.3.1.4.2 For Married Families, Additionally

1. Adequate residence for family and children.
2. Education for children
3. Life insurance for parents to maintain dependents in case of unexpected death, as affordable by temple.
4. Reasonable arrangements for family needs to be met with dignity.

#### 8.3.1.5 *Financial Standards*

1. That, since preaching Krsna consciousness is the principle business of ISKCON, the GBC recommends that, as far as possible, devotees living in the *asramas* of ISKCON temples should collect money through preaching activities such as book distribution, membership, cultivation of the congregation, restaurants, temple stores, etc. Since Srila Prabhupada stated that "business means to help the preaching", it may also be necessary for ISKCON Leaders to organize businesses which utilize devotee resources in generating income for the support of the temple. However, ISKCON Leaders involved in such activities should insure that the main focus of the temple remains on preaching and not on business.

Business activities other than as described above are permissible, provided they are not in contradiction to the regulative principles. As far as possible, ISKCON Leaders should encourage devotees for preaching work, while also engaging devotees according to their nature and *asrama*, and the temple needs.

Recognizing that there are varied economic and social conditions in different parts of the world, as well as the fact that sometimes special collection drives have to be organized for particular projects, the GBC accepts that the sale of paraphernalia may be necessary as a means of generating income. These programs of paraphernalia sales, however, fall within the realm of "business", or "collection" activities and should therefore not be termed as "*sankirtana*".

2. That transactions between ISKCON entities and devotees involving the transfer of funds over US \$1,000 or equivalent, should be substantiated by written contracts, purchase orders, invoices and/or other appropriate documentation. This principle should also be followed in dealings between devotees and non-devotees.(92)

#### 8.3.2 **Non-dependent Temple Resident Members**

Those *grhasthas* who choose to engage in full-time occupation outside of ISKCON must follow the fifty percent(50%) donation rule, and all of their non-occupational time should also be engaged in devotional service, sacrificing a major portion given in voluntary service to ISKCON.(92)

#### 8.4 **Restriction of Participation in ISKCON**

## **Reasons for Discipline**

Persons participating in ISKCON's activities, regardless of ashram, occupation, initiation status or previous history, may have their participation restricted when their continued association is likely to disturb the peaceful conduct of the affairs of ISKCON. Activities creating such a disturbance are to be defined and determined at the ecclesiastical discretion of the GBC, and may include, but are not limited to:

### **Misconduct and Failure to Follow Authority**

1. Wilful violation of GBC resolutions.
2. Vilification of ISKCON, the GBC Body, or other ISKCON authorities.
3. Misconduct (breaking of service agreements, physical assault except in self-defense, improper relationships with the opposite sex, improper sexual behavior, abusive behavior and quarrelling with devotees, improper dealings with the external society, and so on.)
4. Habitually or knowingly making false charges and accusations or other vaisnava-aparadhas.
5. Serious interference in the guru and disciple relationship.
6. Duplicitous or untruthful dealings (giving false promises to devotees, lying to spiritual authorities, and other serious prevarications).
7. Acts that endanger ISKCON assets and the preaching mission.

Depending on the severity of any improper activity, corrective steps may consist of informal discussions, written warnings or censures, disciplinary measures such as placing the offending participant on probation or suspension, or permanent prohibitions against future participation, or any other measures deemed appropriate to the situation by the GBC.

### **Disciplining Authority**

The GBC Body, the GBC Executive Committee, any Regional Governing Body, Divisional Council, National Council, Zonal Secretary, or local affiliate authority which includes the local temple executive or board or other authorized persons may decide to restrict anyone from participating in ISKCON activities under their jurisdiction.

### **Censure**

Censure is a reprimand aimed at reformation of a person participating in ISKCON's activities and prevention of further offending acts. It is a preliminary step that may lead to probation or suspension. Censure may serve as a condition precedent to other forms of religious discipline.

When ordering the censure, the disciplining authority must clearly set forth in writing to the disciplined person the specific actions that were irresponsible, inappropriate, or in violation of ISKCON Law and why they were judged so.

### **Probation**

Probation applies when the disciplining authority has determined there have been serious or repetitive breaches. It is an opportunity for a person facing disciplinary action to rectify his or her situation and regain their status as a participant in good standing. When ordering the probation, the disciplining authority must clearly set forth in writing to the disciplined person:

- the specific breaches and why they were judged so.
- the specific program of rectification.
- the specific prerequisites for restoration, if any.
- the time period of the probation, which shall be no longer than one year.

At the end of the period of probation, the disciplining authority must decide one of the following:

- The participant is rectified and is no longer on probation.
- A determination of further probation under the same or modified conditions is required to complete the rectification process.
- The person cannot be rectified within a reasonable period of time and must be suspended from participating in or permanently disassociated from the society's activities under the jurisdiction of the disciplining authority, as per the terms given below.

### **Suspension Pending Investigation**

When there is substantial reason to believe that a person participating in ISKCON's activities has acted irresponsibly, inappropriately, or in violation of ISKCON Law and the person's continued participation will be injurious to the properties, good name, physical assets, or other resources of the society, or if there are serious allegations of impropriety requiring investigation, then a participant shall be suspended pending investigation.

Suspension pending investigation is to separate a person from ISKCON activities so that a thorough investigation of allegations may be conducted and the suitability of the person to participate is determined.

The disciplining body must conduct an immediate investigation so as to minimize disruption. After completion of the investigation, the body shall make a determination as to the truth of the allegations and the future course of action as per one of the following:

- The suspension shall be revoked with no further restriction on participation.
- There shall be a probationary period with a program of rectification as described under probation above.
- He or she shall be suspended from participating in or permanently banished from the society's activities under the jurisdiction of the disciplining authority as per the terms given below.

### **Suspension**

When there has been a determination that a person has acted irresponsibly, inappropriately, or in violation of ISKCON Law such that the person's continued participation in the activities of ISKCON is likely to damage the good name, reputation, or other resources of the society, or significantly violates the teachings and precepts of Srila Prabhupada and Krishna consciousness, as determined by the GBC, but there is the possibility that the person may eventually be rectified, then the person may be suspended from participating in all activities of the society under the jurisdiction of the disciplining authority.

When ordering the suspension, the disciplining authority must clearly set forth in writing to the disciplined person:

- the specific breaches and the grounds or bases thereof
- the specific prerequisites for restoration

Suspension of the right to participate is not limited by time, but shall remain in effect until specifically withdrawn by the disciplining or any higher authority.

### **Excommunication**

When there has been a determination that a person has acted irresponsibly, inappropriately, or in violation of ISKCON Law such that the person's continued participation in the activities of ISKCON is likely to damage the good name, reputation, or other resources of the society, or significantly violates the teachings of Srila Prabhupada and Krishna consciousness, as determined by the GBC, and there is little possibility that the person may eventually be rectified, then the person may be permanently prohibited from participating in the activities of the society under the jurisdiction of the disciplining authority. When ordering the excommunication, the disciplining authority must clearly set forth in writing to the disciplined person the specific breaches and the grounds or reasons thereof.

If the GBC Body determines that a person shall be excommunicated from the activities of the entire society then the GBC Secretary shall issue a "Notice of Non-participation" barring the former participant from participation in all ISKCON activities.

### **Appeals**

If an ISKCON participant has his/her participation restricted by the action of a local affiliate's executive or board then he/she may appeal to the local Divisional or National Council, or, if one does not exist, to the local Zonal Secretary.

If an ISKCON participant has his/her participation restricted by the action of a Zonal Secretary or Divisional or National Council, he/she shall have the right of appeal to the Regional Governing Body (if one exists in the area) or the GBC Body (if there is no Regional Governing Body in the area).

If he or she has his/her participation restricted by the action of a Regional Governing Body, he/she shall have the right of appeal to the GBC Body.

If he or she has his/her participation restricted by the action of the GBC Executive Committee, he/she shall have the right of appeal to the GBC Body.

Any disciplinary action taken against an ISKCON participant by any of the above-mentioned entities shall stand unless and until it is overruled by a higher body.

#### **8.4.5 Expulsion (Excommunication)**

1. Some members of the Society who have previously been in good standing have subsequently deviated from the ISKCON standard and whereas such members by their bad conduct and character may damage the good name of the Society. In such cases, the GBC Body may, by a two third(2/3) vote of the members present expel any member of the ISKCON provided that:
  - a. The member is openly deviating from the fundamental tenants of the Society's teaching.
  - b. The member is openly and flagrantly antagonistic to the GBC or other ISKCON authority.
  - c. The member is engaged in illegal activities.

#### **8.4.9 Grievances Regarding Management**

If a *sannyasi* or party leader has a grievance regarding the management of a temple, particularly in regard to the *brahmachari* program, his complaint should be properly aired to the Temple President and the local GBC representative. The matter should not be brought before the devotees in general.

When a person becomes a member of ISKCON or assumes an office within ISKCON, he does so on the condition of submission to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of ISKCON, and however much he may be dissatisfied with the exercise of that jurisdiction, he shall refrain

from invoking the supervisory power of the civil court, but shall seek redress of any grievance(s) through the ISKCON judicial process. Otherwise, he may be removed from office and/or his membership in ISKCON terminated.(88)

## **8.5 General Guidelines**

### **8.5.1 Prohibition of Chocolate**

As it contains various stimulants like caffeine (contained in coffee), theine (contained in black tea) and theobromine (contained in cocoa), chocolate should not be eaten by ISKCON devotees.(93)

### **8.5.2 AIDS Test**

1. The GBC Body requires that all devotees living and/or serving in our temples should take an AIDS test, local laws permitting. All new devotees, as they join, should also take an AIDS test.

2. The GBC Health and Welfare Committee advises that temples should not allow persons who are HIV positive to engage in services within our temples which involve the preparation or serving of bhoga or *prasadam*.

### **8.5.3 Holding ISKCON Assets In One's Private Name**

Anyone holding ISKCON assets in his private name, in the name of another, or in the name of a corporate entity and controlled by himself or another, shall provide an annual detailed confidential declaration of such assets and the reasons for the holding arrangements to his GBC representative. When the GBC representative holds such assets, he shall disclose the same information to the GBC Body in the manner provided by it.(88)

## **9**

### **Asramas (Spiritual Orders) in ISKCON**

#### **9.1 Sannyasa-Asrama**

##### **9.1.1 Principles**

ISKCON *sannyasis* are individually and collectively responsible for maintaining the purity and high spiritual standard of ISKCON by their personal example and in their preaching according to the instructions of Srila Prabhupada.

##### **9.1.2 Regulations**

###### **9.1.2.1 Application for Sannyasa Initiation**

1. Any GBC member can nominate a man from his zone for *sannyasa* each year at the GBC annual meeting. The man must be a preacher and not sexually inclined. He must be an initiated *brahmana*. A GBC should avoid recommending a *sannyasi* whimsically.(75)
2. Any GBC member can place a devotee on a two-year trial period for *sannyasa*. After one year, the GBC Body will discuss the qualifications of the candidate and pending their approval, the candidate will enter into the final one-year trial period. At the end of the final year, the GBC will vote for the appointment of the *sannyasi*.
3. *Sannyasa* candidates must meet personally with the *Sannyasa* Committee in Mayapur before receiving final approval for taking *sannyasa*, unless exempted by the *Sannyasa* Minister.(95)
4. Candidates for *Sannyasa* must submit their applications in accordance with the Society's Rules of Order and include a statement by a GBC member listing the candidate's qualifications to take *sannyasa* and a letter written by the candidate explaining his reasons for wanting to accept *sannyasa*.
5. When the GBC Body approves a candidate for *sannyasa*, they reserve the right to assign the candidate a mission of their choice which may take him far from his previous area of service. Before making such an assignment, the GBC Body shall discuss the suitability of the candidate for the assigned mission with the local GBC, the *Sannyasa* Committee, the candidate's *sannyasa-guru* and the candidate.(97-102)
6. A devotee must pass the *Bhakti-sastri* test before being placed on the *sannyasa* waiting list. Those who are currently on the list must pass the *Bhakti-sastri* test before taking *sannyasa*. Exceptions to this require a two thirds(2/3) vote of the GBC Body.(97-301)

###### **9.1.2.2 Sannyasa Recommendations**

1. If a GBC member or initiating *guru* who has recommended someone for *sannyasa* withdraws his recommendation, the candidacy is canceled.
2. The GBC Body can waive the preliminary one year of the two years suggested in the previous proposal by its own decision at the time of discussion of the candidates. (At this time the *sannyasa-guru* of the candidates should be specified).
3. All *sannyasa* candidates are to be examined on the basis of the following qualifications before their names are accepted on the list of candidates for *sannyasa*:
  - a. How free is he from sex desire?
    - i. How long has he been a *brahmacari*?
    - ii. How long has he been living away from his wife?
  - b. What is his preaching record? Is it demonstrated by his ability to preach strongly? Is he a preaching leader? Has he been doing this for a good amount of time?
  - c. Is he strict in his personal conduct? Is he beyond suspicion?
  - d. Is he philosophically strong? Is this demonstrated through his lectures?
  - e. Is he willing to accept fully the authority of the GBC and work under the auspices of the GBC?
  - f. Does he have the proper quality of leadership to train and lead *brahmacaris* who are under his direction?
  - g. Is he self-reliant?. Does he have the ability to keep himself continuously engaged in some way which contributes positively to our preaching work?
  - h. Is the field of his preaching after taking *sannyasa* clear and acceptable to the GBC or other authorities?

4. Applications for *sannyasa* candidacy should include written endorsements from the local GBC(s) and the local managerial body or bodies where the candidate serves. In addition, it should include a resume detailing the candidate's devotional career.(96)

The sponsor of a proposal for a candidate for *sannyasa* should each year give a report of the candidate's qualifications according to the GBC Rules of Order, "The Qualification for *Sannyasa*." To be put on the list, an initial report is required. Thereafter an annual report is also necessary.(93)

### 9.1.2.3 Complaints about Sannyasis (1999)

The GBC Sannyasa Sub-committee shall deal with any complaints against sannyasis. An investigation will be initiated if a majority of members judges a complaint to merit investigation. Decisions will be made by majority vote. The GBC Executive Committee shall present the decision to the GBC Body either by correspondence or at the next Annual General Meeting. A decision of the Sannyasa Sub-committee will be overturned by a majority vote of the GBC Body, otherwise the sub-committee's decision remains in effect. A sannyasi who does not abide by the decision shall be subjected to penalties according to ISKCON Law; If there are complaints against sannyasis who are also GBC members or gurus, the GBC Executive Committee may decide to deal with them itself; however, in that case, the Sannyasa Minister should also participate in the decision making process.

#### 9.1.2.3 Reinstatement Procedures for a Devotee Who Has Fallen From His Sannyasa Vows

Update 2009:

If an ISKCON sannyasi is unable to maintain his lifelong commitment to renunciation he should communicate, in writing, his decision to leave the sannyasa-asrama to the Sannyasa Minister or to the GBC Executive Committee.

Anyone who has abandoned the vows of the sannyasa-asrama, whether as per the procedure described above or otherwise, is required to also immediately relinquish the sannyasa dress and sannyasa name and title and resume the name accepted at first initiation. He should not again accept sannyasa dress or refer to himself by his sannyasa name and title without following the proper procedures for approval of sannyasa.

### 9.1.3 Duties

1. Each ISKCON *sannyasi* should allocate some time for traveling and preaching in various ISKCON temples in addition to his existing administrative and other responsibilities.
2. ISKCON *sannyasis* shall always endeavor to increase their active assistance to the GBC in maintaining the spiritual standard of ISKCON, expanding the dynamic preaching of ISKCON, and preserving Srila Prabhupada's mood and instructions.

### 9.1.4 Sannyasi Annual Commitment (1999)

**That all sannyasis shall annually submit in writing, to the GBC Body, a "service program" report they are committing themselves to, for the following year. This report shall include the following:**

- a) What devotional services they intend to do.
- b) Where they intend to perform their services.
- c) When they intend to be in different places, if not always in the same zone, and
- d) Anything else they would like the GBC Body to know.

### 9.1.4 Guidelines

#### 9.1.4.1 Sannyasa Reinitiation

1. Those who have taken *sannyasa* from a *sannyasi* in ISKCON who was in good standing but later fell from *sannyasa* are recommended to take *sannyasa* re-initiation by an authorized ISKCON *sannyasi*.
2. Anyone who took *sannyasa* outside of ISKCON and whose *sannyasa-guru* has fallen, but wants to serve as an ISKCON *sannyasi* must take *sannyasa* re-initiation from an ISKCON *sannyasi*.

### 9.2 Vanaprastha-Asrama

#### 9.2.1 Eligibility

*Vanaprastha* is generally recommended for 50 years of age and has to be taken with the permission of the local GBC after the recommendation of the local Temple President. *vanaprastha* cloths are received from the Spiritual Master whose blessing is also required. There should be no whimsical taking of *vanaprastha*.(76)

### 9.3 Grhastha-Asrama (Householder)

#### 9.3.1 Giving Fifty Percent (50%) of One's Income to ISKCON

##### 9.3.1.1 Definition

1. The following is established as the official definition of "giving fifty percent (50%) of one's income to ISKCON", according to the scriptural reference cited. For the present, this definition shall only be applied in the statement of the qualification of a [*grhastha*] GBC member given in the following resolution:

2. "A *grhastha* should calculate his donation of fifty percent (50%) of income to ISKCON as follows: calculate gross personal income, deduct the required income tax remittance, then deduct fifty percent (50%) of the remaining net personal income and donate it to ISKCON. Supporting evidences: *Bg.* 16.1-3, *SB.* 1.5.36; 1.17.24; 1.17.38; 3.21.31; 5.19.7; 8.19.37.
3. *Grhasthas* should not be discouraged to work at jobs or develop their own business with their own means.(77)

### 9.3.2 Polygamy

No polygamy is allowed in ISKCON

### 9.3.3 Grhastha Coordinator

#### 9.3.3.1 Duties

To function under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

1. To report to the Health and Welfare Committee Chairman, who will report on the Coordinator's progress to the GBC Body.
2. To assemble materials for a *grhastha-asrama* handbook.
3. To gather information on how marriage matches occur in different parts of the world.
4. To work out guidelines in consultation with senior *grhasthas* in good standing about child raising, economic security, etc. (theoretical and practical).
5. To correspond with *grhasthas* and managers worldwide about householder questions.
6. To tabulate the successes and failures of grassroots efforts to deal with *grhastha* problems now underway in different regions of the ISKCON world and make the information available to all ISKCON devotees.
7. To insure adequate information is available on *grhastha* life.
8. To establish a system to counsel *grhastha* couples according to Srila Prabhupada's instructions.
9. To establish and support continental representatives.
10. To work out guidelines, in consultation with senior *grhasthas* in good standing about child raising, economic security, etc.
11. To organize seminars, presentations and/or conferences on *grhastha* life.(96)

### 9.4 Brahmachari-Asrama

*Brahmachari* life in a temple is a bona-fide process for cultivating the highest grade of Krsna consciousness and that it is not intrinsically inferior to *brahmachari* life in a traveling context.

### 9.5 Asrama Considerations For Vaisnavis

1. The devotional service of the women is considered equal by Lord Krsna and the spiritual master.
2. ISKCON does not support an independent all-women's *asrama*, because in every case a woman should be protected by a man.(76)
5. It is against Vedic and Vaisnava principles for women to take *sannyasa*, and whereas it is not authorized by Srila Prabhupada, it is resolved that those women rejoining ISKCON after taking *sannyasa* are free to rejoin their families. If any woman devotee is internally committed to celibacy they are welcome to follow that decision in ISKCON in white cloth and to render devotional service up to their full capacity and dedicate themselves to the *sankirtana* movement of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. They are to be encouraged and respected as preachers. (94)

## 10

### ISKCON Temples and Affiliates

#### 10.1 Standards for ISKCON Temples

1. At least one day a week there must be public chanting and food distribution in public performed by each temple, wherever possible.(77)
2. Each temple should observe one major festival a year.
3. All ISKCON centers should have extra classes for new devotees in addition to the regular morning and evening classes.(84)
4. All ISKCON centers shall always offer hospitality of at least prasadam to any Life Patron Members who visit. Life Patron Members should be offered to stay overnight regardless of how meager the facilities are and of it is not possible to afford accommodations then it is the responsibility of the temple to give assistance in finding accommodations.(82)

#### 10.2 Regulations for ISKCON Temples

##### 10.2.1 Unrelated Businesses

When an ISKCON entity is registered as a religious, charitable, or non-profit organization under the laws of its particular state or country, if those laws prohibit such an entity from engaging in activities of a commercial nature, then, of course, the ISKCON entity must comply. Such businesses, though, cannot be contained as part of the ISKCON entity's activities when the ISKCON entity is constituted as a non-profit corporation. The managers of such businesses may decide to donate funds from their business activities to ISKCON. Such donations cannot encumber ISKCON with any obligations toward the donor or the business.

##### 10.2.2 Priority in Preaching

It may be seen that certain activities like *prasadam* distribution, restaurants, temple stores, book distribution, Life Patron Membership, or soliciting of donations with devotional paraphernalia, are carried out by ISKCON non-profit organizations as part of their missionary activities. As long as these activities are not of a primarily commercial nature, are not for the benefit of individuals, are not in violation of local law, and do not endanger the ISKCON entity with unnecessary liability, they may be conducted by the ISKCON entity directly. If the activities develop such that the primary focus is profit rather than preaching, such that local laws would be violated by the non-profit ISKCON entity, or such that unnecessary liability is risked, then they must be legally separated.(93)

##### 10.2.3 Financial Contract Parameters

Transactions between ISKCON entities and devotees involving the transfer of funds over US \$1,000 or the equivalent should be substantiated by written contracts, purchase orders, invoices and/or other appropriate documentation. This principle should also be followed in dealings between devotees and non-devotees.(93)

#### **10.2.4 Bank Account Signers**

There be at least two joint signers on all temple bank accounts.(77)

#### **10.2.5 Temple Residents' Cultivation of Parents**

To insure that every temple resident with living parents maintains a program of sending a monthly letter to the parents, if the parents are at least approachable.(77)

#### **10.2.6 Sastra Degrees**

The ISKCON Board of Examinations shall have power to review and approve proposed examinations for the awarding of the degrees *bhakti-sastri*, *bhakti-vaibhava*, *bhakti-vedanta*, and *bhakti-sarvabhauma*. The basis for review and approval shall be the guidelines given by Srila Prabhupada for the awarding of these degrees. No ISKCON center may award these degrees without seeking the approval of the ISKCON Board of Examinations.

#### **10.2.7 Firearms**

No firearms which are in violation of local laws shall be kept in any temple.(76)

#### **10.2.8 Debts to the BBT**

Whenever there is a change of management in a temple (or zone), the new management shall accept all existing debts to the BBT.(79)

#### **10.2.9 Calender**

The calendar generated by the program written by the Calendar Research Committee shall be the standard calendar to be followed by all ISKCON centers.(90)

### **10.3 Guidelines for ISKCON Temples**

#### **10.3.1 Foreign Visa Sponsorship**

##### **10.3.1.1 Explanation**

This is a guideline to be followed in regard to those devotees who live in a less developed country and desire to perform devotional service in a more developed country.

##### **10.3.1.2 General Guidelines**

That permanent residency visas (called "green cards" in USA) for a developed country should not be given quickly or indiscriminately to nationals coming to serve from a less developed country.

No developed country (includes North America) temple shall sponsor a foreign devotee for a visa to render service in their temple unless the devotee has:

1. written permission from the GBC representative in his country of origin, and
2. a character reference as a devotee in good standing and written permission from his spiritual master and local temple authority.(93)

##### **10.3.1.3 Guideline in Relation to Going to the USA**

Devotees coming from a less developed nation should be first given only temporary religious worker or temporary religious minister visas. Three to five year visas should be given prior to green card issue.

#### **10.3.2 Orienting Income-Generating Activities towards Preaching**

The GBC recommends that all ISKCON Leaders endeavor to gradually orient the income-generating activities of the temple devotees in the *asramas* primarily towards preaching-related sources. The pace of such a shift is to be determined by the local leadership. ISKCON Leaders and traveling preachers should respect and cooperate with the policies being instituted in the various zones. This guideline is not in any way intended to contradict or create an exception to any ISKCON Law restricting the commercial activities of legal entities which are ISKCON Affiliates. ISKCON Leaders and/or members encouraging the conduct of or engaging in activities prohibited for ISKCON affiliates under such laws should take care to see that such activities are conducted by other entities.(93)

(Amendment 2002)

#### 10.4 Affiliates of ISKCON

#### 10.4 ISKCON-affiliated Organizations

[Please note that the ISKCON Law Book has a slightly different name for this Section, and that the numbering given here is not consistent with the numbering therein. Either the remaining subsections of Section 10.4 will need to be renumbered to accommodate this revision, or (preferred) the balance of the section should be revised as well. However, only the existing 10.4.1 is being specifically repealed at this point.]

##### 10.4.1 Prologue

The GBC Body shall recognize certain associations of devotees located anywhere in the world, which may be registered or unregistered, incorporated or unincorporated, as being affiliated with ISKCON, provided they meet the requirements spelled out in this law section. Such affiliated organizations may be known as "Centers" (or "Independent Centers" if they are also financially autonomous). Types of Centers are "Temples," "Rural Communities," "Preaching Centers," "Institutes," "Congregational Preaching Directorates" and "Special Projects," as defined below.

##### 10.4.2 General Requirements of Affiliation

For an association of devotees to be considered in any way affiliated with ISKCON and to receive the benefits of such affiliation, it must meet the following requirements:

1. It must be organized on not-for-profit basis.
2. It must be managed by ISKCON devotees in good standing.
3. It must be conducting its affairs according to the policies, guidelines and standards as set down by the GBC Body.
4. It must be recognized as affiliated with ISKCON as per Subsection 10.4.4 below.

#### 10.4.3 Types of Affiliated Organizations

##### 10.4.3.1 Temples

"Temples" are Centers characterized by having one primary location which is either stable or semi-stable, and at which daily functions of community or public worship are performed, plus financial autonomy (not being financially controlled by any other affiliate), plus at least one of the following four additional characteristics:

1. There are Deities installed as the presiding Deities of that location for which the worship is being conducted by ISKCON;
2. There is real property at the primary location which is either owned by the association directly, or owned by another not-for-profit entity controlled by ISKCON devotees in good standing, or in any other way the ownership of the property fits the definition of an ISKCON Property as described under ISKCON Law;
3. There is a separate legal registration for the local association; or,
4. There is a congregation of at least 75 members who regularly attend the center's functions.

##### 10.4.3.2 Rural Communities

"Rural Communities" are Centers that fit the same characterization as do Temples, but in addition they are situated in a rural area.

##### 10.4.3.3 Institutes

"Institutes" are characterized by having at least one primary location, which is either owned by the association directly, or owned by another not-for-profit entity controlled by ISKCON devotees in good standing, plus financial autonomy (not being financially controlled by any other affiliate), plus by having activities centered around education, research and/or publication. There may or may not be regular activities of public worship.

#### 10.4.3.4 Congregational Preaching Directorates

(Amendment 2004)

##### 10.4.3.4 Congregational Preaching Directorates

"Congregational Preaching Directorates" are characterized by having at least one primary location that is either stable or semi-stable, by having financial autonomy (not being financially controlled by any other affiliate), and by having activities centered on development of congregational preaching over a significantly large area. There may or may not be regular activities of public worship.

##### 10.4.3.5 Special Projects

"Special Projects" are characterized by having functions and activities as needed for special circumstances to fulfill the overall purposes of ISKCON, plus financial autonomy (not being financially controlled by any other affiliate). They may or may not have primary locations or activities of public worship, but they must meet the General Requirements of Affiliation as described in Section 10.4.2 above.

##### 10.4.3.6 Preaching Centers

"Preaching Centers" are characterized by having at least one primary location which may not be permanent but at which regular functions of community or public worship are performed. A Preaching Center may be financially controlled by another ISKCON center; or it may not have a sufficiently permanent location or sufficiently mature management structure to be recognized as a full Temple; or it may have neither installed Deities, nor owned property, nor a separate legal registration, nor a sufficiently large congregation, as described to be qualified as a Temple under Section 10.4.3.1 above.

##### 10.4.3.7 Subsidiaries and Branches of Affiliated Organizations

Any of the above-defined affiliated centers which are financially autonomous may have subsidiaries or branches in additional locations, provided they are authorized to have them by the local Zonal Secretaries or Divisional Council. These subsidiaries or branches may be known as "Extension Centers," "Nama Hatta Centers," etc.

A Preaching Center may also be a subsidiary or branch of a large independent Temple, or it may be semi-autonomous and report directly to a Zonal Secretary or Divisional Council.

Subsidiaries and branches of affiliated centers shall be considered as constituent parts of those centers for all purposes of ISKCON Law except where specifically noted.

ISKCON Centers may encourage and endorse the preaching activities of independent ventures, such as privately owned devotee restaurants and independent householders who regularly preach from their homes, and the Centers may advertise such preaching activities as ISKCON activities to the extent that such advertising does not compromise its non-profit status. While such independent activities are not to be considered as subsidiary or branch activities of the Center for the purpose of this Law, the Center is responsible for any use of ISKCON's good name in such activities. Care must be taken not to place the name of ISKCON at risk. The Center must be prepared to withdraw its endorsement of these activities whenever the need arises.

#### 10.4.4 Recognition of Affiliates, Preaching Centers

The Zonal Secretaries are normally the competent ISKCON authorities to certify to the GBC Body that an organization functioning in a particular zone is to be recognized or de-recognized as an official ISKCON Center, and to determine the corresponding type of affiliation as per Subsection 10.4.3 above. However, this function may have been delegated to a constituted local Divisional Council. Whichever the case in a particular zone, the competent authority is obliged to report annually to the GBC Secretariat prior to the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting of the GBC as to the existence and status of all ISKCON Centers functioning in the zone. They are also obliged to report promptly during the year if any new Center has been opened in the zone or if there has been any change in the official status of any center.

## 11

### ISKCON Immovable Properties

#### 11.1 General Provisions

That all existing GBC resolutions concerning property management and Deity relocation matters are hereby superseded by the following section:

##### 11.1.1 Definition of an ISKCON Property

An ISKCON Real Property is a real property owned by an ISKCON affiliate, or held for the exclusive and perpetual benefit of one or more ISKCON affiliates; or buildings owned on land which is contractually under the exclusive control of an ISKCON affiliate for a total period of minimum fifty (50) years.

##### 11.1.2 Definition of an ISKCON Property with Deities

For the purpose of property related laws, an ISKCON property with Deities is a property on which there is a Deity which has been either formally installed, or publicly worshipped according to the ISKCON standard for formally installed Deities.

##### 11.1.3 Property Trustees Definition

A Property Trustee is an ISKCON official with certain duties for the protection of ISKCON's interests for properties assigned to him.

##### 11.1.4 Executors Committee Definition

The Executors Committee is a permanent GBC Committee assigned to assist the GBC for executing the details of Srila Prabhupada's will, overseeing and coordinating the activities of Property Trustees, and additional duties relating to ISKCON Properties.

##### 11.1.5 Definition of "Property Trustee Principle"

(The following section is from Srila Prabhupada's will, consisting of part of paragraph 4 and all of Paragraph 5.)

None of the immovable properties standing in the name of ISKCON in India shall ever be mortgaged, borrowed against, sold, transferred, or in any way encumbered, disposed of, or alienated. This direction is irrevocable. Properties outside of India in principle should never be mortgaged, borrowed against, sold, transferred, or in any way encumbered, disposed of, or alienated, but if the need arises, they may be mortgaged, borrowed against, sold, etc. with the unanimous consent of the Property Trustees.

##### 11.1.6 ISKCON Property Office (2001)

An ISKCON property office be established under the GBC Executive Committee Governing Body. The ISKCON property office shall consist of the GBC Executive Committee (Ex-Officio) plus Nareshwara Dasa and Bhaktarupa Dasa. All the functions assigned to the Executors' Committee in the GBC Laws related to ISKCON properties are hereby transferred to this office and are no longer under the Executors' Committee. The Executors committee shall now exclusively concern itself with the various terms of Srila Prabhupada's Will which do not deal with the protection of ISKCON Properties.

#### 11.2 Regulations

##### 11.2.1 Registering Real Properties

1. No funds of an ISKCON affiliate or of the BBT may be used for or pledged against the purchase or major development of any real property that is not held or will not be held as an ISKCON property.
2. All ISKCON properties shall be registered in such a way that the Property Trustees shall have, to the maximum degree possible under local law, the actual authority to perform the functions required of them under ISKCON Law.
3. The copies of the registration deed and corporate papers shall be submitted to the Secretary of the GBC Executors Committee, who shall hold them.

#### **11.2.2 Encumbering or Alienating ISKCON Properties**

1. No ISKCON property outside of India shall be sold, mortgaged, borrowed against, transferred or in any way encumbered, disposed of, or alienated without the prior unanimous written permission of the Property Trustees assigned to that property. Property Trustees, in granting permission, should consider that, in principle, Srila Prabhupada did not want ISKCON Properties to be sold, mortgaged, etc., except "when the need arises". (see Property Trustee Principle definition)
2. It is not allowed for any private individual or non-ISKCON entity to hold equity in any structure built on ISKCON property if that equity constitutes a legal encumbrance on that property.
3. No ISKCON property in India shall ever be mortgaged, borrowed against, sold, transferred, or in any way encumbered, disposed of or alienated. This direction is irrevocable.

#### **11.2.3 Mortgaging Properties with Installed Deities**

An initial purchase mortgage may be taken against a real property in which a Deity will be installed, but no additional mortgages shall be permitted without the permission of the GBC Body.

#### **11.2.4 Regulations for Alienating Properties with Deities**

1. No property in which the Deity of the Lord is installed can be sold without approval of the GBC Body.
2. A proposal to the GBC for sale of an ISKCON Property and relocation of installed Deities must be accompanied by:
  - a. a written recommendation with explanation by the local Temple President and management council,
  - b. The written request of the local GBC Zonal Secretaries,
  - c. the written approval of the Property Trustees, and
  - d. a report by the Trustees giving their reasons for the approval.
3. In the event the local GBC, temple management and Property Trustees are not all unanimous in recommending that an ISKCON property with installed Deities be sold, and/or the Deities be moved, and a majority wants to sell or relocate, or if there is an imminent risk of losing the property, the GBC Executive Committee shall appoint an impartial three-man committee to investigate the situation and prepare a comprehensive report with their recommendation for or against the proposal. If the three-man committee finds that the proposal is acceptable, then the entire GBC body may be approached either at its annual meeting or by correspondence proposal, for approval of the plan.
4. If a local GBC Zonal Secretary finds himself unable to maintain an ISKCON property in which installed Deities reside, and also is unable to obtain the consent of the Property Trustees to sell the property, then he may approach the Executive Committee, which is empowered to take whatever steps are necessary in collaboration with the Property Trustees to save the property, including the appointing of an ad-hoc co-GBC.
5. If installed ISKCON Deities are being relocated to a new property, the trustees of the Deities' original property are responsible to oversee the relocation, according to GBC directives, to ensure that:
  - a. any funds realized from the sale of ISKCON property are not mismanaged or in anyway diverted so as to decrease the Deity's equity, and
  - b. the new property is adequate to the needs of the Deities and the community.

#### **11.2.5 Regulations for Maintaining Records of Real Properties**

1. The copies of the registration deed and corporate papers shall be held by the Secretary of the Executors Committee. The ISKCON affiliate having purchased or acquired a real property shall be responsible to submit these documents within six months from the date of purchase.
2. A record of all ISKCON properties shall be maintained by the Secretary of the Executors Committee, including current value, purchase price, address of property, owner's name, and other information as specified by the Executors Committee. The Secretary of the Executors Committee shall provide the above information to the GBC Executive Officers and members as required.

#### **11.2.6 Non-Adherence to Property Registration Regulations**

That unless the Executors Committee grants a special temporary exemption, those temples who do not adhere to the Property Trustee Principle may not be considered as authorized ISKCON affiliates.

#### **11.2.7 Registering Properties in a Non-ISKCON Affiliate's Name**

If an ISKCON Property cannot be registered according to these regulations, the property registration must have the prior consent of the GBC Executors Committee.

#### **11.2.8 Exemptions and Additions to ISKCON Property Law**

1. Before making any improvements on an ISKCON property, the local management shall comply (where applicable) with building, health and fire codes. Building permits shall be obtained as required by local law before commencing the work. The local GBC Zonal Secretary shall oversee that this guideline is being adhered to. (95)
2. To have a "private" residence on an ISKCON property, someone must have a written legal agreement signed with the proprietary ISKCON entity.
 

The agreement shall include the following:

  - a. The property shall remain legally unencumbered.
  - b. In case any improvements are ever to be made on the residence, they shall comply with these guidelines:

- i. That they comply with the ISKCON Law on making "property improvements".
  - ii. That it shall state whether the improvement is a donation, or a claimed asset of the resident. In the case of a claimed asset, the limit and nature of any compensation shall be detailed so as to avoid any legal complication in the future.
  - iii. That the written permission of the competent local authorities shall be taken prior to making any improvements.
  - c. The resident shall maintain the spiritual standards of ISKCON.
  - d. Reasonable clauses for vacating the resident if required.
  - e. Any other clauses needed for maintaining good relations and avoiding legal or practical problems between the occupant and ISKCON.
3. If needed or desired, an ISKCON rural community outside India may be permitted to alienate or encumber a portion of its properties subject to one or more of the following conditions:
- a. The temple project has excess land which ISKCON cannot fully develop in the foreseeable future.
  - b. ISKCON property is endangered by a large mortgage, inability to conform to government regulations, or any other cause.
  - c. The community needs to facilitate householders in order to build up the project in a manner which will not be detrimental to the Deity's interests.
4. If any of the above conditions exists, approval to alienate or encumber may be sought as follows:
- a. The local administration and GBC Zonal Secretary must explain to the property trustees how the rural community's property fits under one or more of the above mentioned conditions.
  - b. In their application, the local administration and GBC Zonal Secretary must also explain how they plan to protect the Deity's and ISKCON's interests providing the following information:
    - i. Which properties will remain ISKCON's and the Deities' possessions, including lands for temple, Deity gardens, *asrama*, brahminical and other temple devotees' lodging, non-encumbered rental or income-earning assigned homesteads, temple's cows, temple's agricultural lands, temple-owned *Gurukula*, temple administration, preaching facilities, utilities, roads, and any other similar areas.  
These lands and properties will be designated "Deity property".
    - ii. Which properties are to be alienated from ISKCON and how they will be used. Such uses could include sale, rental or any encumbered allotment of land for homesteads, privately owned cottage industries, private agriculture and dairy, community government, and any other use not against Krsna conscious principles. These lands and properties will be designated "Non-Deity property".
    - iii. How income earned from the alienation shall only be utilized for removing danger to the property by paying off pending mortgages or BBT capital loans, fulfilling government regulations, constructing temple buildings, etc., to ISKCON's and the Deities' capital benefit.
    - iv. Evidence that there are devotees ready and able to invest in buying or renting alienated land.
    - v. A proposed scheme or covenant on land sale to prohibit use of land for purposes against the principles of Krsna consciousness (as legally as possible).
    - vi. Statement that the land price is equal to or greater than the local fair market value for such property.
    - vii. A land use sketch showing where the lands designated in (1) and (2) above will be situated.
    - viii. Any other supporting information.
  - c. If the Property Trustees unanimously approve of the proposal and the Deity is situated anywhere on the ISKCON property, the proposal in the above format must be forwarded with the trustees' recommendation to the Executors Committee. The Executors Committee may then approve the proposal demarcating "Deity property" [non-alienable], and "Non-Deity property" [alienable], by two third (2/3) majority. If a simple majority approves, but less than two thirds (2/3), the Executors Committee may forward the proposal to the GBC Body for resolution.
  - d. After the proposal is approved, the project may be designated as an ISKCON Village Community and the Property Trustees alone can approve proposals from the local management to alienate or encumber land not designated as the Deity's. The Property Trustees shall insure that proceeds from the alienation are invested according to the approved plan.
  - e. In their order, the Executors Committee shall give specific instructions to insure proper execution and provide safeguards to protect the capital assets as per the approved scheme.
5. In the case of donations of real property or other donations specifically for real estate purchases or improvements, any conditions relating to the property imposed by a donor must be clearly spelled out in writing. The Property Trustees associated with the property must consider the conditions in light of the ISKCON Guidelines for Donations With Conditions, and if they agree in writing that the conditions are within the specified guidelines, then the donation may be accepted.(93)

### 11.3 Property Trustees

#### 11.3.1 Duties

1. To have their names included on ISKCON property titles or on holding corporations for properties assigned to them.
2. To see that assigned properties are properly registered according to ISKCON Law and to advise local managers in this regard.
3. To report transgressions of ISKCON property law in assigned properties.
4. To consider proposals of local managers for acquiring new properties in areas under their jurisdiction, and to grant or withhold approval of the proposals.
5. To oversee the tax and legal status of entities owning assigned properties in order to certify that the properties are adequately safeguarded.

6. To give or withhold permission on merit to allow any ISKCON property without an installed Deity to be mortgaged, borrowed against, sold, transferred, or in any way encumbered, disposed of, or alienated.
7. To give or withhold recommendation on merit to allow any ISKCON property with an installed Deity to be mortgaged, borrowed against, sold, transferred, or in any way encumbered, disposed of or alienated.
8. To give written reports to the GBC Body, or the Executors Committee, regarding proposals to move an installed Deity or alienate the property of the Deity.
9. To assist the GBC Executive Committee in saving an endangered property on which installed Deities reside.
10. To be responsible to oversee the relocation of installed ISKCON Deities to a new property ensuring that property sale proceeds are not mismanaged or in anyway diverted so as to decrease the Deity's equity, and that the new property is adequate for the Deities.
11. When assigned by the GBC, to approve purchase of property or perform special assignments regarding property safeguards.
12. Whereas the position of property trustee is of grave importance within ISKCON because the trustee is entrusted with the responsibility of preserving Srila Prabhupada's will, every devotee holding the position of property trustee must therefore:
  - a. routinely participate in ISKCON activities (temple programs, festival gathering, etc.) or, in the event that trustee doesn't reside within close proximity to an ISKCON temple, maintain a standard ISKCON *sadhana* program at home and regularly attend major temple festivals such as Janmastami, Vyasa-puja, Gaura-purnima, etc.,
  - b. regularly associate with ISKCON devotees.,
  - c. visibly adhere to the spiritual standards expected of any full-time member of ISKCON, and
  - d. sign the Oath of Allegiance.(96)

### **11.3.2 Powers**

1. To grant or withhold approval to sell, mortgage, borrow against, transfer, or in any way encumber, dispose of, or alienate an ISKCON property under their jurisdiction that does not have an installed Deity.
2. To grant or withhold recommendation to sell, mortgage, borrow against, transfer, or in any way encumber, dispose of, or alienate an ISKCON property under their jurisdiction that does have an installed Deity.
3. To inspect and review on demand an ISKCON affiliate's institutional or corporate records, financial accounts, tax records, or property records in order to safeguard assigned real properties held in the name of the affiliate from being alienated or encumbered due to negligence, error, mismanagement, or other improper acts, or in order to determine if all ISKCON property laws are being followed by the affiliate.
4. To act as required signatories on all real estate transactions involving assigned properties.
5. To act as trustees for any funds held in trust from sale proceeds of the Deity's property until new property is purchased and the Deity permanently and properly settled.

### **11.3.3 Procedures of Appointment**

1. The Property Trustees who have been designated in Srila Prabhupada's will have been appointed for life, except as mentioned below.
2. In the event of the death, or failure to act for any reason, of any of the Property Trustees, there shall be a successor initiated disciple of ISKCON who is following strictly all the rules and regulations of ISKCON as detailed in Srila Prabhupada's books provided that there are never less than three or more than five trustees acting at one time. "No objections" to the appointment must be obtained in writing from the local GBC's, and the Monitoring Executor for the property in question must certify in writing that the change is in accordance with ISKCON Law and Executors Committee policies. The trustees shall be responsible to notify the Executor Committee of any changes so effected by sending copies of all relevant documents to the Secretary of the Executor Committee.
3. Any changes, filling of vacancies, or additional appointments of Property Trustees that cannot practically be done by the Property Trustees as above shall be done by GBC Body, or on behalf of the GBC Body by the Executors Committee, which shall take into consideration the local GBC Zonal Secretary's recommendations. Property Trustees shall be selected primarily from among the GBC members, or alternatively from among senior responsible devotees. At least one Property Trustee shall not be involved in the local management.

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4. In general, property trustees are appointed for life. However, the property trustee appointment may be terminated under the following conditions:
  - a) On the submission of a letter of resignation to the GBC Body via the ISKCON property office. For the resignation to take effect, it must be either unanimously accepted by the remaining trustees (if 2 or more exist), or, by a decision of the ISKCON property office.
  - b) Upon the death of the trustee or upon the trustee becoming permanently disabled so as not be able to carry out the duties of trusteeship.
  - c) If the property trustee fails to act within a reasonable time upon a specific proposal related to a property from either the local management, a co-trustee, the ISKCON property office, or the GBC Body, the local management or the co-trustees, may submit a request for removal of the trustee to the ISKCON property office stating the facts of the failure to act. The ISKCON property office may grant the request immediately, if the submitted facts are sufficiently compelling, or it may again formally request the trustee to act on the proposal. If the trustee continues to fail to act, then the trustee shall be removed.

d) Temple management can approach the property office to bypass a non-functioning trustee without replacing him.

#### **11.3.4 Regulations**

Wherever legally possible, the names of the Property Trustees shall be included on all new and existing titles to ISKCON properties or where applicable as directors or trustees of the controlling Board of Directors or Trustees of the "holding trust" of the property.

#### **11.4 The Executors Committee**

##### **11.4.1 Duties**

1. To implement the specific legal and familial provisions of Srila Prabhupada's will; and to take appropriate steps to insure that ISKCON members duly fulfill their specific responsibilities in relation to Srila Prabhupada's will.
2. To oversee the performance of all Property Trustees in seeing that all ISKCON properties are properly registered according to ISKCON Law.
3. To delegate authority to its individual members for implementing the Property Trustee Principle.
4. To submit an annual report to the GBC.

##### **11.4.2 Powers**

1. To delegate authority to individual members to guide and monitor the Property Trustees.
2. To make rules for ISKCON regarding property related standards and execution of legislation and Srila Prabhupada's will. These rulings may be amended or rescinded by the GBC Body at their discretion.
3. To nominate and appoint Property Trustees where none exist or to replace vacancies according to approved procedures.
4. To make recommendations and to propose legislation to the GBC in regards to property matters and Srila Prabhupada's will.
5. To grant special temporary exemptions from placing their properties in the name of ISKCON or having Property Trustees as trustees of the property.

##### **11.4.3 Agenda of Annual Meeting of the Executors Committee**

1. To elect Officers of the committee.
2. To review old business and to review the activities of its members and of the Property Trustees.
3. To deal with matters referred by the GBC Body.
4. To deal with other agenda topics as may be proposed by the members.

#### **11.5 Guidelines**

##### **11.5.1 Debts**

1. Since temples are places of worship and ISKCON's funds and assets are considered to be the personal property of the Supreme Lord, it was Srila Prabhupada's desire that as a general principle of management that Temple Presidents and temple administrations shall keep ISKCON temples free from debts. No external debts should be created by any temple administration. The approved guideline for implementing this is:
  - a. Except for BBT book consignment purchases and deferred payment short-term purchases which can be timely met by the temple from its normal cash flow, all other purchases and expenses should be made on cash basis. Temple Presidents should involve their Temple Board if this is deemed not possible before incurring a significant debt and the advice of the local GBC Zonal Secretary should be sought.
  - b. Immovable property purchases on mortgage or time payment done with concerned property as only collateral and after taking requisite permission as per ISKCON Laws on property are exempt.
  - c. Purchases of vehicles or other movable assets such as equipment of machinery should only be done with the concerned vehicle or other movable assets as collateral and not endangering other assets of default. If purchasing a vehicle or other movable assets will compromise a major portion of the temple cash flow, or there is danger of defaulting, then this should be avoided.
  - d. Any debt which could endanger the immovable properties in case of default shall require the permission of the Property Trustees in writing prior to creating the debt, and if the property has installed Deities, then the permission of the GBC Body shall be required.
2. GBC Zonal Secretaries shall insure that their Temple Presidents and administrations learn to follow the principle of keeping the temple free of debts, and are following this principle.
3. The GBC Zonal Secretary to the GBC Body shall include in his annual report:
  - a. Any deviation from following this principle and what steps have been taken to correct it.
  - b. Any debts which with just cause could not be avoided and the current status of the debt.
4. In urgent cases during the year, the GBC Zonal Secretary shall inform the GBC Executive Committee of any blatant disregard of this principle or action which is placing the temple entity into significant debt risk, for which the GBC Zonal Secretary is not able to prevent or correct.
5. Temple Presidents and administrations which chronically endanger the Lord's properties by deviating from this principle shall be liable for remedial or disciplinary action including:
  - a. Attendance of an approved course on proper financial management procedures.
  - b. Censure.
  - c. Probation and/or reducing to an acting status.
  - d. Removal, in extreme or chronic cases.

#### **12.1 Deity Worship and Altar Regulations**

##### **12.1.1 Standards of Deity Worship**

1. The book, "The Method of Deity Worship for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness," is approved by the GBC Body. All devotees engaged in Deity worship in ISKCON temples with installed Deities should study and take guidance from this book.
2. There should be no change in the system of Deity worship as established by Srila Prabhupada. In all matters of new Deity worship which Srila Prabhupada has not established or about which he has not given specific instructions, the GBC must be consulted.(83)

### 12.1.2 Protection of Deities

All temples must make arrangements for the protection of installed Deities immediately. This is to include adequate protection during *darsana* times when the curtain and doors are open. Locking iron gates are recommended. All GBC members must include details on how the Deities in each temple in their zone are being protected in their annual report.

### 12.1.3 Pictures of the Spiritual Master and Parampara Acaryas'

2. The pictures of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Prabhupada, Srila Gaurakisora dasa Babaji, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, and preferably Jagannatha dasa Babaji should always remain on all ISKCON temple altars.
3. A *pujari* who is not initiated by Srila Prabhupada shall keep the picture of his *guru* on the altar while offering *arati*. The picture must be substantially smaller than those of the predecessor *acaryas* in disciplic succession, or, if not substantially smaller, be placed on a lower level. After the *arati*, the picture should be removed from the altar.(87)
4. Disciples of a suspended *guru* when offering *bhoga* to the Deities in the temple or in any ISKCON establishment, (like restaurants, etc.) outside the temple must offer through Srila Prabhupada to the disciplic succession.(87)

### 12.1.4 Vaisnava Marriage Ceremonies Before the Deities

Only initiated devotees of Krsna who are strictly maintaining their vows of initiation may be married before the Deities in a *vaisnava* ceremony. An ISKCON devotee priest can perform a ceremony for uninitiated devotees that may include the lighting of the sacred fire, but not before Deities, if he is reasonably certain that the devotees to be married are not engaged in regular and/or serious deviation from the four regulative principles. It is preferred that this ceremony not be held in the temple room if other facilities are available. An ISKCON devotee who is qualified under local law to perform religious ceremonies may marry other uninitiated devotees at his own risk. (93)

### 12.1.5 Prema-dhvani Prayers

1. The proposal 4 of "rules of conduct" of the laws of ISKCON regarding the specific method of chanting the *prema-dhvani* prayers shall be deleted, except the "ISKCON Founder-Acarya A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada *ki jaya*" that shall be retained, chanted before chanting "*Namacarya Srila Haridasa Thakura ki jaya*".(81)
2. That in the temple room *kirtana*, only the name of Prabhupada and his predecessors can be chanted. The words ISKCON *guru vrnda ki jaya* is to be used in the *prema-dhvani* prayers in place of the existing prayers.

### 12.1.6 Regulations for Worship of Srila Prabhupada

1. There shall be a separate daily *guru-puja* for Srila Prabhupada in the temple.
2. The only *guru-puja* inside the temple room will be for Srila Prabhupada.(81)

## 12.2 Guidelines

### 12.2.1 Worship of Demigods as Vaisnavas

1. Worship of demigods as independent gods is not permitted in Krsna consciousness. However, the Nectar of Devotion says that demigods should be respected. Worshipping demigods as Vaisnavas is authorized for preaching, in order to teach people the right position of the demigods as great Vaisnavas.
  - a. The worship is only as a *vaisnava* (This means that the *deva/devi* shall be offered: the *prasadam arati* items immediately after they are offered to Lord Krsna, *krsna-prasadam* flower garlands, and *krsna-prasadam* foodstuffs. No independent worship is offered. Only the chanting of Hare Krsna and VisAu's names is done, as Lord Caitanya did in South India.)
  - b. Their status as servants of Krsna is made as clear as possible through signs, symbols, and iconography, and
  - c. Offerings are of *krsna-prasadam*.
2. Deities of demigods (incl. Laksmi where no VisAu is established), shall not be established without permission of the GBC. Where they are permitted or where ISKCON acquires a temple with already established murtis of demigods, they may remain, provided they are worshipped as *vaisnavas*, as provided above.
3. ISKCON temples may hold, on special occasions, ceremonies or *pujas* respecting and worshipping demigods as great *vaisnavas*, provided they shall be designed as an introduction, precisely to draw people into that culture, and not as a substitute for it, thereby not falling under Srila Prabhupada's structure. Properly conducted, they are favorable to Krsna consciousness and should not be rejected.

### 12.2.2 Renting Space for other Groups' Religious Functions

It is permitted for other groups, at the discretion of the local ISKCON authorities, to rent space in ISKCON premises, outside the temple room, for their own ceremonies and functions, even for functions listed below (a-e), provided that the public understand clearly that the function is not being sponsored or conducted by ISKCON. However, no function on ISKCON property shall include any activity contrary to the four regulative principles. The GBC recommends that temples provide outside groups rental contracts clearly stipulating the above restrictions.(96)

The following activities are not allowed as part of ISKCON functions, whether conducted on ISKCON property or elsewhere:

- a. Satya Narayana *katha*. (This is a concocted form of worship).
- b. *Garbha* dance, when it is conducted in association with the worship of Durga. (*Garbha* dance is usually performed as part of *Nava-ratri*, a Durga festival. However, there are also *Garbha* dances in glorification of Krsna. Temple authorities permitting a *Garbha* dance must be confident that the performance is entirely Krsna-centered.)

- c. The reading of Tulasidasa's *Rama-carita-manasa*. (*Ramayana* readings should be from Valmiki *Ramayana*, as Tulasidasa's work is tinged with impersonalism.)
- d. Lectures advocating *Mayavada* or other offensive philosophies.
- e. The singing of the Hindi *arati* song "*om jaya jagadisa hare*". (This is a prayer for material benedictions).

### 12.2.3 Sponsoring Professional *Bhagavata-katha* Reciters

The following guidelines should be followed:

- i. If the speaker is not an ISKCON devotee, he should be a practicing *vaisnava* who can speak in public with enthusiasm about Lord Caitanya, ISKCON, and Srila Prabhupada.
- ii. ISKCON should systematically cultivate such speakers as potential initiated devotees, so that at least their own standard of *sadhana* is enhanced. ISKCON will try to engage a few favorable outside reciters, rather than many, so that those few may become more immersed in ISKCON's mood.
- iii. All *kathas* should showcase devotees in *kirtana*, *prasadam* distribution, as well as photos, paintings, and Deities from ISKCON temples or homes.
- iv. The temples sponsoring such *kathas* shall be pledged to pursue vigorous follow-up programs among those who attended the *kathas* in order to cultivate them as temple members and practitioners of Krsna consciousness.
- v. Distribution of full sets of Srila Prabhupada's *Bhagavatam*, in both Indian languages and in English, should be the main feature of these *kathas*.
- vi. We should be confident that the speaker will not express any *mayavada* or *sahajiya* philosophy or sentiments.
- vii. The speakers should represent the full *Bhagavatam*, and not just the Tenth Canto.
- viii. The speakers should speak as a benefit for ISKCON, receiving only minimal compensation.
- ix. The ISKCON speakers should always speak last in order to correct any errors in the other presentations.
- x. If the speaker is not an ISKCON devotee, the event should be held in another name.

### 12.2.4 *Sthapaka-sastra*

It is advised as a guideline that all ISKCON temples with installed Deities may immediately begin and maintain a *sthapaka-sastra* using a long-lasting hard-bound book suitable for establishing a legacy. Each temple's historical events should be recorded in the *sthapaka-sastra* by the Temple President and Head *pujari* after due consideration and mutual agreement. The *sthapaka-sastra* should be maintained on the altar as the Deities' personal paraphernalia. Suggestions for entries are:

1. Formation of the temple.
2. Special *lilas* and instructions given by the Founder-Acarya, Srila Prabhupada.
3. Special history of the Deities e.g.: how They were named, how They came, Their standard of service, Their extraordinary *lilas*, etc.
4. Accomplishments of the devotees and temple e.g.: winners of Christmas marathons.
5. Temple's annual history.
6. The last words of retiring Temple Presidents.(95)

### 12.2.5 Regulations Regarding *Vaisnava* Calendar

1. ISKCON temples throughout the world shall follow the official calendar calculated according to the conclusions of this report, which are:
  - a. The calculations should be made based upon the local time of sunrise.
  - b. A computerized method of calculations is acceptable.
  - c. The length of a *muhurta* shall be calculated as a 15th part of the daytime and a 15th part of the nighttime.
  - d. Sunrise shall be defined as the time of calculated visibility of the upper limb of the sun at the horizon, and the time of sunset as the time of calculated disappearance of the upper limb of the sun at the horizon.
  - e. The calculations shall be based upon the positions of the heavenly bodies as determined according to modern scientific astronomical observations.(90)
2. The calendar generated by the program written by the Calendar Research Committee shall be the standard calendar to be followed by all ISKCON centers.(90)
3. Srila Prabhupada's Appearance Day be fixed as the calendar day after the observance of Janmastami, and the calendar program changed accordingly.
4. The official ISKCON calendar should include the significant dates in Srila Prabhupada's life, such as the day he took *sannyasa*, departed for America, arrived in America, founded ISKCON, etc.(92)
5. The disappearance day of H.H. Gaura Govinda Maharaja be observed on the ISKCON GBC and BBT calendar every year.(96)

□The Ministry of Education is dissolved vide 1998 IGBCS Resolution. Hence, this Chapter has become redundant or non-operative. (1998)

## 13.1 Board Of Education

### 13.1.1 Definition

The ISKCON Board of Education is a GBC standing committee dealing with primary and secondary education in ISKCON, composed of GBC and non-GBC members. The Board will formulate and execute concrete plans which shall enable it to effectively insure the

quality of Krsna conscious primary and secondary education throughout ISKCON. Each member of the ISKCON Board of Education shall have responsibility for specific duties and shall make specific commitments for which he shall be held accountable.

### **13.1.2 Powers**

1. That all Board of Education resolutions are binding on ISKCON Educational Institutions, subject to review each year in Mayapur by the GBC.(89)

### **13.1.3 Duties**

The ISKCON Board of Education shall continue to maintain the activities of the former Ministry of Education.

1. To establish and maintain a central administrative office.
2. To meet annually in Mayapur.
3. To plan international policies and strategies.
4. To interface with the GBC Body.
5. To resolve problems brought to it.(94)
6. To give Gurukula schools permission and guidance.(81)
7. To formulate and execute concrete plans which shall enable it to effectively improve and insure the quality of Krsna Conscious primary and secondary education throughout ISKCON.
8. To develop and print curriculums.
9. To establish standards for voluntary accreditation of *gurukulas* worldwide and manage the accreditation process.
10. To act as an advisory service for ISKCON leaders and devotees worldwide in all matters concerning elementary and secondary education and child protection. It is reaffirmed herein that the ultimate responsibility for education and child protection rests with the local GBC and temple authorities.
11. To maintain official ISKCON child abuse records.
12. To report to the ISKCON Education Office Liaison (described below) of any known discrepancies in local follow up of reports.
13. To maintain other records, files, mailing lists as appropriate.
14. To organize the Education Conference on COM.

### **13.1.4 Regulations**

#### **13.1.4.1 Membership**

Its membership, to be appointed by the GBC Body upon the Board's recommendation, shall be:

1. A Chairman / Secretary.
2. GBC members as Regional Representatives.
3. At-Large members who, while not representing a particular area, are experienced in education or have a specific contribution which enhances the composition of the Board.

The yearly GBC Chairman shall also serve as a member of the ISKCON Board of Education.

Duties of the different categories of members shall be initially as per the document entitled "Proposal to the GBC for Reorganizing the International Board of Education", dated February 14, 1991 and filed with the Corresponding Secretary, or as they may be modified by the Board of Education in the future and reported in writing to the GBC Body.

#### **13.1.4.2 Duties of the Chairman of the Board**

1. To supervise and review the activities of the Office.
2. To be referred any matters which come to the Education Office which are beyond its scope.
3. To refer them further to the Board of Education or to the GBC Body.

#### **13.1.4.3 Gurukula Education**

That within ISKCON, *gurukula* schools shall open only with the permission of the Board of Education, and operate under the guidance of the Board of Education and the local GBC.(81)

#### **13.1.4.4 Children's Books**

All children's books, including coloring books, for use by Krsna conscious schools should have approval of the Board of Education.(79)

## **13 (1998)**

### **Social Development Information**

**13.1** The purpose of this Ministry is to :

- a) Help with the development of other ministries in the social circle ( cow protection and agriculture, grhastha and community development, and health and welfare.);
- b) Actively pursue improved communications between ISKCON and its members;
- c) Facilitate communications among ministries on matters of social development;
- d) Propagate understanding of social principles among devotees by publications, seminars and visiting devotee communities;
- e) Identify competent devotees to head various projects for social development;

- f) Engage in fund raising for it and the ministries it represents, in addition to any funds that the individual ministries are able to generate for themselves. (Funds are to be allocated by a committee representative of the four ministries.)

## 14 ( 1999 )

### Ministry of Cow Protection & Agriculture ( 1998 )

“Minimum Cow Protection Standards” prepared by the Ministry of Cow Protection and Agriculture is hereby ratified by the GBC Body and it thereby becomes part of ISKCON Law. (1999)

Note : Details of Standards required to be mentioned to become part of Law.

## 14

### Sankirtana - Book Distribution

#### 14.1 Significance

That the leaders of ISKCON, as followers of Srila Prabhupada, ought to see book distribution as our most effective means of preaching. "Know it for certain that there is no better way to preach Krsna consciousness than through the distribution of my books." We can make a worldwide revolution in the hearts of the people of this world and save these people from material existence through the distribution of Srila Prabhupada's books. But book distribution strongly increases only when we have a constant influx of new ISKCON devotees. So to increase book distribution, we must make new devotees. Therefore, wherever we have powerful leaders-whether GBC members, *gurus*, *sannyasis*, or Temple Presidents-they ought to impress upon their followers that book distribution and making new devotees to go out on book distribution are ISKCON's main work. The *guru*, whether *siksa* or *diksa*, has great power to increase ISKCON's preaching. Therefore, in cooperation with the GBC Body and the individual GBC members, the *guru* should use that power to encourage and inspire his disciples to make new devotees and increase the distribution of books. *gurus* can impress upon their disciples the importance of the Mayapur Project, remind them of its dependence on the BBT's income from book distribution, and encourage them to dedicate themselves to the mission of distributing books and building the Mayapur City. Srila Prabhupada himself did this, and so can the leaders who follow him. We all understand that we must build the temple and city in Mayapur. And the way to do this is through book distribution. Therefore the leaders of ISKCON-GBC members, *gurus*, *sannyasis*, Temple Presidents, and senior devotees should bring the Mayapur City, and the book distribution that supports it, to the forefront of ISKCON's consciousness. All ISKCON leaders are urged to strive vigorously to instill within their followers a consciousness of the crucial importance of the Mayapur City and book distribution to the success of ISKCON's mission.

#### 14.2 Regulations

1. GBC Zonal Secretaries and Temple Presidents shall be responsible to ensure that Srila Prabhupada's books are distributed on *sankirtana* on a regular basis.(81)
2. Regarding temple's BBT debts, Srila Prabhupada said a temple can order with thirty days credit, and after that time they must pay in full for the books received, even if they were not all sold.(75)
3. If the establishment of a project within a particular zone will cause that zone or the temples within that zone to stop or greatly diminish their BBT remittances (i.e. the GBC mandate of 25%-50%), the GBC Zonal Secretary must receive approval from the GBC Body at the annual GBC meeting.(86)

#### 14.2.1 Regarding Awards and Recognition

1. A monthly newsletter shall be sent out to all temples listing all zones and temples in order, giving details of all book sales and including interesting articles concerning developments of preaching fields in various zones.
2. Annual awards shall be presented during Mayapur *Gaura-purnima* annual festival for outstanding services in the field of *sankirtana* in the following areas:
  - a. Most successful country
  - b. Most improved country
  - c. Most successful temples (*maha*-large, large, medium, and small)
  - d. Most improved temples (*maha*-large, large, medium, small and *maha*-small)
  - e. Top individual *sankirtana* devotees.
3. Award winners shall be determined each year by the *Sankirtana Newsletter* staff.
4. A BBT Newsletter may provide financial information.(80)
5. The scoring system for the *Sankirtana Newsletter* is changed to include the following:
  - a. For the "Regular" category:
    - i. To count only literature which is actually sold and given into the hands of the receivers personally, and
    - ii. Literature distributed by accepting post dated checks shall only be counted when the minimum BBT price has been received.
  - b. A new category named "Subsidized" for the following methods of distribution:
    - i. Devotees working in teams of two or more and recording their total group effort as one score,

- ii. Subsidized books which are sold at BBT price or less, and
- iii. Sponsored books given to people who can value them (i.e.: VIPs, libraries, schools, prisons, etc.).

The above methods of book distribution must be specified when reporting scores to the newsletter.

- c. Distribution by individuals and temples who give out literature free of cost shall not be counted in the newsletter.(97-103)

#### **14.2.2 Regarding Book Distribution Techniques**

1. Illegal techniques shall not be used on book distribution. Such illegal methods include: misrepresenting one's physical health, claiming falsely that contributions go for welfare projects and claiming falsely to be affiliated with a charity.(77)
2. "If costumes are used on *sankirtana* it must be done legally with permits from local authority".(77)
3. Each GBC Zonal Secretary man will go out in the field in each of his temples during the year to observe the same [to know how his devotees are implementing the resolution, "no illegal techniques".](77)

#### **14.2.3 Regarding Traveling Sankirtana**

No GBC member shall allow the *sankirtana* parties of his zone to carry out *sankirtana* activities outside of his zone without having received the express written permission of the host GBC Zonal Secretary or the Temple President concerned.(80)

#### **14.2.4 Regarding Srila Prabhupada Marathon**

1. The Christmas marathon shall be officially titled the "Srila Prabhupada Marathon".
2. Only legal and ethical techniques shall be used on book distribution and other techniques are not to be used. The standard of approved *sankirtana* techniques can be obtained from the GBC Minister for book distribution.(77)

#### **14.2.5 Seminars Conducted by the Ministry for Book Distribution**

1. The five-day seminar course established by the Global Book Distribution Minister is accepted as the official training course for all ISKCON book distributors. This course is to be taken by all:
  - a. New regular book distributors within the first twelve months of their book distributing career, and
  - b. Regular book distributors by Gaura-purnima 1998, and
  - c. Part time book distributors are encouraged to take this course.
2. The Global Book Distribution Minister is responsible to supervise the standard and content of the Book Distribution Graduate Course, promote it, and ensure that the requirements of this resolution are met.

#### **14.3 Guidelines**

1. The Temple Presidents should give an absolute minimum of twenty five percent(25%) of the Temples income for book distribution.(81)
2. Each temple may give books to ISKCON centers in third-world countries like India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Africa and Latin America for establishing Krsna conscious reading rooms. The temple contributing should receive *sankirtana* points for those books according to the Book Distribution Ministry approved system. In such a case the recipients will not receive points.(79)

## **15**

### **Congregational Development**

#### **15.1 Significance**

That the leaders of ISKCON, as followers of Srila Prabhupada, ought to see the duty of training and facilitating congregational members as their primary function, in order to fulfill the order of Lord Caitanya: "Therefore I order every man within this universe to accept this Krsna consciousness movement and distribute it everywhere." and the numerous instructions that Srila Prabhupada has given in his books, lectures, letters and conversations on how people can practice Krsna consciousness in their home, be initiated, establish a center in their home, preach *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* from their home. Wherever we have powerful leaders-whether GBC members, *gurus*, *sannyasis*, or Temple Presidents-they ought to impress upon their followers that everyone must be brought into the congregation and empowered to preach Krsna consciousness purely. This will directly please Lord Caitanya and Srila Prabhupada. Congregational preaching should be understood to be one of the most essential works of ISKCON (books are the basis; preaching is the essence) following the footsteps of Lord Nityananda and the previous *acaryas*.

#### **15.2 Guidelines**

##### **15.2.1 Encouraging the Congregation\: The Siksa Ceremony**

1. ISKCON Leaders and GBC Members (with the exception of ISKCON initiating spiritual masters who cannot perform this ceremony except when it is for an approved *guru-asraya* (sheltered) or approved aspirant disciple) shall, within their area of authority, be permitted to publicly bestow acceptance and recognition to members of its congregation for devotional achievements and progress in devotional service.
2. Local temples and congregational preaching units should implement programs for aiding the congregational members to enhance their standing, and for training them to qualify for the higher levels. This should include following a recommended study course for the different levels (Adult Education and Congregational Preaching Monitors shall recommend.)
3. Standard certificates shall be issued worldwide. (The proforma certificates shall be created and circulated by the Corresponding Secretary in consultation with the Congregational Preaching Monitor.)
4. The recognition shall be granted in any of the following categories (giving these is optional, as also the bestowal ceremony according to local time, place and circumstance):

##### **15.2.1.1 Accepting the Sacred Order of Lord Caitanya (Sat-sangi, or Sraddhavan)**

Qualifications: Accepting the instructions or sacred order of Lord Caitanya to chant Hare Krsna (minimum one round per day), to worship Lord Krsna (to visit the temple or otherwise cultivate devotional service as far as possible), and to read the teachings of

Lord Krsna (*Bhagavad-gita*, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and other books of Srila Prabhupada). [Note: Since this broadly correlates with *sraddha* or *sat-sanga* stages of devotion, they can generally be called as "*Sat-sangi*" or "*Sraddhavan*".]

#### 15.2.1.2 **Krsna (or Gauranga) Sevaka**

Qualifications: Chanting a minimum of four rounds of Hare Krsna *japa* per day, refraining from meat-eating, believing in Lord Krsna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, possessing a devotional attitude, and avoiding of grossly immoral acts (drugs, prostitution, etc.)

#### 15.2.1.3 **Krsna (or Gauranga) Sadhaka**

Qualifications: Chanting a minimum of eight rounds of Hare Krsna *japa* per day, refraining from intoxication, meat-eating, gambling, and extra-marital sex, offering of *bhoga* to pictures, establishing an altar at home, and generally accepting the process of *sadhana-bhakti*.

#### 15.2.1.4 **Srila Prabhupada Asraya**

Qualifications: Practicing the minimum standard of Krsna consciousness for ISKCON members as given by Srila Prabhupada, namely chanting of minimum sixteen rounds of Hare Krsna *japa* per day, refraining from intoxication, meat-eating, gambling, and illicit sex, and generally showing a strong conviction in Krsna consciousness.

#### 15.2.1.5 **Sri Guru Carana Asraya**

Qualifications: Same as Srila Prabhupada *Asraya*, with additional faith and surrender in an authorized spiritual master coming in the disciplic succession. Must have been practicing Srila Prabhupada *Asraya* standard for a minimum of six months. They should pass the exam provided for in ISKCON Law.

### 5. Women's Participation : (2000 )

- A. All ISKCON temples are to allow all qualified devotees, regardless of gender, to speak on Srimad Bhagavatam, Bhagavad-gita etc. during the regular temple class.
- B. All ISKCON temples designate half of the temple room area divided in the center from the alter for the ladies.
- C. If the management in a particular temple feels it is unable to implement these proposals, the Executive Committee will appoint a small team of senior devotees, including women, to sensitively review the particular local situation.

### 15.2.2 **Annual Doubling of the Congregation**

ISKCON temples should try to annually double their congregation by training and empowering the congregation through small local *nama-hatta Bhakti-vrksa* Branch Groups (known also as Krsna conscious "cell" groups, *bhakti-sangas*, etc.)

### 15.3 **ISKCON Leaders' Duties In Regard to Congregational Preaching**

#### 15.3.1 **GBC Zonal Secretary**

1. Each GBC Zonal Secretary shall allocate the responsibility for preaching to the congregation in the different geographic areas of his zone to temples or Congregational Preaching Directorates to insure maximum effectiveness in congregational preaching and development.
2. If a *nama-hatta* center upgrades to become an ISKCON temple or otherwise a temple is established in a Congregational Preaching Directorate area, then naturally the GBC Zonal Secretary will make new arrangements to re-allocate the respective geographic responsibilities for preaching to the congregation in the affected areas.(93)

For those geographic areas which fall beyond the capacity or desire of ISKCON temples to supervise, promote, and expand the congregational preaching, the local GBC Zonal Secretary(s) and the Zonal Council (if any) can appoint a responsible devotee in good standing to be a "Director" of a "Congregational Preaching Directorate" or "Branch" of ISKCON who can lead a team of preachers to systematically cultivate, preach to, and expand the congregational preaching in a specified area.

3. To oversee that every temple maintains a program of sending a monthly letter from a devotee to his parents, if his parents are at least approachable.(77)

#### 15.3.2 **Responsibility of ISKCON Leaders to Conduct Congregational Preaching**

Local spiritual authorities shall be responsible to establish programs for effectively involving, training and otherwise helping and encouraging congregational devotees to gradually become qualified for initiation.

1. An ISKCON temple shall be responsible for preaching to the congregation in the city, adjacent areas nearby, and any other extended area as may be designated by the local GBC Zonal Secretary(s) and Zonal Council (if any).
2. The congregational preaching program in such cases shall operate as a department of or part of the ISKCON temple, who shall bear the expense and shall provide the other requirements needed for this preaching. (see p. 129)

### 15.4 **Regulations**

#### 15.4.1 **Initiation of Congregational Devotees**

Congregational members shall be subject to the same standards for initiation as stated in ISKCON Law on initiation and for acceptance of Guru. ISKCON Law states that the local Temple or Regional Authorities must recommend the congregational candidate. However this shall be done in the same manner as any other qualified devotee. If a local authority considers a candidate for initiation not qualified, then the candidate should be informed what needs to be done in order to become qualified according to ISKCON Law. It shall be prohibited to require a minimum donation or financial commitment or other requirements not mentioned by Srila Prabhupada or ISKCON Law. As already mentioned in ISKCON Law, an individual *guru* is under no obligation to initiate a devotee because a proper recommendation has been given.(96)

#### **15.4.2 The Congregational Preaching Directorate**

For those geographic areas which fall beyond the capacity or desire of ISKCON temples to supervise, promote, and expand the congregational preaching, the local GBC Zonal Secretary(s) and the Zonal Council (if any) can appoint a responsible devotee in good standing to be a "Director" of a "Congregational Preaching Directorate" or "Branch" of ISKCON who can lead a team of preachers to systematically cultivate, preach to, and expand the congregational preaching in a specified area. For all practical administrative purposes, the Director of such a unit is considered a Temple President.

##### **15.4.2.1 Duties of a Congregational Preaching Branch Director**

A Director of a Congregational Preaching Branch for purposes of ISKCON Law shall have for all effective purposes the position and responsibilities of a Temple President over his team of preachers and establishment.

In addition the Director shall have the following specific duties:

1. To provide leadership and spiritual guidance for the devotees under him.
2. To manage the finances of his program.
3. To recommend qualified candidates for initiation.
4. To encourage persons ready for joining a temple to do so.
5. To concentrate on congregational preaching.
6. To be accountable to the GBC Zonal Secretary.
7. To perform additional duties as assigned by the GBC Zonal Secretary and Zonal Council.

##### **15.4.2.2 Location**

The central office of the "branch" may be based in a temple premises with the permission of the Temple President, or they may have a separate place.

##### **15.4.2.3 Cooperation with the Temple President**

If any ISKCON temples exist nearby or do preaching in the area, then their no-objection shall be required to establish such a branch. Arrangements for *sankirtana* rights and other aspects needed to maintain good relations and cooperation shall be made with the concerned Temple President.

## **16**

### **Prasadam Distribution**

#### **16.1 Hare Krsna Food For Life**

##### **16.1.1 GBC Recognition of Hare Krsna Food For Life Program**

The GBC Body officially recognizes "Hare Krsna Food For Life" as ISKCON's program for widespread distribution of *Krsna - prasadam* and gives the program its blessings.

"Hare Krsna Food for Life" and "ISKCON Food Relief" are officially part of the Ministry of Communications.

##### **16.1.2 Duties**

1. To promote, coordinate and organize *Krsna-prasadam* distribution programs all over the world under appropriate titles.
2. To promote and supervise the ISKCON third world (i.e. India, Asia, Africa, etc.) *prasadam* distribution program known as ISKCON Food for Life or ISKCON Food Relief as established by ISKCON's Founder-Acarya.

##### **16.1.3 Regulations**

That all temples are encouraged to take up the Hare Krsna "Food For Life" program as outlined by the Communications Ministry and Food for Life Ministry. The GBC Body recommends this program as a highly effective means to increase *prasadam* distribution and ultimately book distribution as well and as a way for ISKCON to gain acceptance by the public and government agencies.

1. No person can collect funds using the name Food for Life without the written permission of their local ISKCON authority and the Ministry of Communication.
2. The above parties (the applicant, local ISKCON authorities and Ministry of Communication) are to mutually agree upon a percentage of funds to be collected using the name Food for Life. This must comply with local laws and must be used for the stated purpose either by:
  - a. conducting *prasadam* distribution, or
  - b. sponsoring *prasadam* distribution projects somewhere in the world.(97-106.1, 106.22)

## **17**

### **Justice**

#### **17.1 Appealing a Decision**

##### **17.1.1 The Principle**

In personal dealings between individual devotees and their authorities, appealing the decision of a lower authority to a higher authority for reaching a final solution is a standard principle in ISKCON.(93)

##### **17.1.2 Procedure**

1. If a devotee feels aggrieved by a decision, or the lack of a decision, of his Temple President for something which affects him in his personal spiritual life (initiation, marriage, transfer, removal, permissions, etc.), the devotee may appeal the matter to the local GBC Zonal Secretary or to an assistant of the GBC approved for this purpose.
2. While the appeal is being considered, the concerned devotee must follow the decision of the Temple President unless the GBC has given a stay order for the duration of the appeal.
3. During an appeal, all concerned parties should be heard and the decision in the appeal shall be considered as final.
4. If requested, decisions should be given in writing.

5. If the Temple President wants to appeal a matter relating to a decision of his GBC Zonal Secretary he can do so to the GBC Body, or in emergencies to the GBC Executive Committee, but while the appeal is going on he should follow the decision of the GBC Zonal Secretary unless the GBC Executive Committee gives a stay order from following it.
  6. When the matter being appealed is related with something which will produce an irrevocable consequence or contravene ISKCON Law, the status quo should be maintained until the appeal is decided.(93)
- See also Ministry of Justice.

## 18

### Fund Development and Life Patron Membership

#### 18.1 General Regulations

ISKCON centers shall always offer reasonable hospitality to any life members in good standing who visit the center. The minimum hospitality is to offer at least *prasadam*. Life members should be offered to stay overnight regardless of how meager the facilities are and if it is not possible to offer accommodations, then it is the responsibility of the temple to give reasonable assistance in finding member's accommodations.(82)

Collection of funds in the name of the homeless, the handicapped and the under-privileged is not acceptable method of fund raising, unless the collections are used for genuine purposes.(97-106.3)

#### 18.2 General Guidelines

According to Srila Prabhupada's expressed desire, whenever possible all temples should offer at least a one-year Back to Godhead subscription to every newly enrolled life member. New members who are not residing in primarily English-speaking areas shall have the option to be provided the magazines in another language if available.(90)

See also Ministry of Fund Development and Life Patron Membership (page 37.)

## 19

### Devotee Health and Welfare

#### 19.1 The Principle of Welfare of Each ISKCON Member

The welfare of individual ISKCON members is always of concern to the Society and its leadership. Specifically, devotees who have dedicated themselves to the work of the Society according to their ability and then later come to face some hardship due to old age, illness, lack of a means of livelihood, etc. should be provided the necessities of life. It is the duty of every ISKCON devotee to make whatever arrangements are within their power to provide these necessities wherever there is a need, without seeking compensation.

Trust funds, welfare organizations, and other such entities may be established by individual ISKCON members, temples, the GBC Body, etc. for carrying out these responsibilities, but the overriding principle of such endeavors must always be voluntary charity to the *vaisnavas*. Taxes, assessments, and fees must never be used for such purposes, as such would serve only to decrease the feelings of love and trust upon which our Society is based.(91)

#### 19.2 Protection of Women

##### 19.2.1 Principles

The GBC hereby requests all temple and congregational leaders to practically engage female devotees in areas of temple *sadhana* and preaching, giving careful and mature consideration to devotee ability, local culture, devotee seniority, dedication, service, need for encouragement, and temple environment. ISKCON is a family where everyone should feel welcome. Although temple environments may differ, the underlying principle of facilitating ladies' *sadhana* must remain, based on an attitude of encouragement and respect.

##### 19.2.2 Sannyasa Widows

For those widows in ISKCON whose husbands took *sannyasa* prior to March 1988, any needs that they may have for financial support shall be taken up on a case-by-case basis by the Health and Welfare committee. The Committee should act as a "placement agency" attempting to match widows with temples and service opportunities. The goal should be to find a temple which will provide shelter in exchange for reasonable service. ISKCON's obligation is to offer the same modest standard we offer to all devotees. If the widow is infirm and unable to be "placed", as above, the Health and Welfare Committee shall attempt to arrange general welfare support.

See also Women's Ministry (page 39.)

#### 19.3 Child Protection

1. The local governing authority of each ISKCON school or community is responsible to appoint two or three devotees to investigate and follow-up on all suspected or confirmed cases of child abuse.
2. Suspected or confirmed cases of child abuse must be reported to local government authorities for investigation and/or prosecution. In India, the ISKCON Board of Education may authorize a waiver of this requirement if the perpetrator is willing to sign a statement authorizing the Board of Education to publicize the incident to all ISKCON-related educational projects and other concerned parties.
3. All suspected or confirmed incidents of child abuse must be reported immediately to the local GBC Zonal Secretary, and within thirty days, to the ISKCON Board of Education. The ISKCON Board of Education shall review the investigation and give a finding as to the status of the alleged perpetrator as confirmed, suspect, or innocent/not-suspected.
4. The perpetrator or alleged perpetrator must be immediately segregated so that he has no possible contact with the victim or other children. This segregation may take the form of relocating the perpetrator to another part of the project, away from

children; banishment from the project (and possibly from other ISKCON projects with children); or in severe cases, banishment from all ISKCON projects. The degree of segregation will be determined by the nature and severity of the offense, the attitude of the perpetrator, the feasibility of protecting the children from further abuse or intimidation, and the sentiments of the local devotees, especially the parents. In no case should a confirmed or suspected perpetrator remain in the local community unless the local ISKCON authorities obtain the written authorization of no less than three fourths (3/4) of the parents of children at the project or in the community. The local government authorities and/or the ISKCON Board of Education will make the final determination of the appropriate degree of segregation.

5. Any confirmed child abuser may never again serve in association with children in any ISKCON project. The Board will also make available to all ISKCON educational projects and temples the names of all accused, admitted, confirmed or convicted child abusers.
6. Abused children must get appropriate professional counseling so that the serious ill-effects of the abuse can be minimized.
7. All ISKCON educational projects must have preventative programs which train children how to avoid and report child abuse incidents.
8. The local GBC members are directly responsible to implement the measures outlined above. Should the GBC Body find a GBC member or other ISKCON Leader's responsible for suppressing or covering-up complaints of child abuse, or supporting intimidation of those who might complain, the GBC member shall be open to censure or probation, and the ISKCON Leader shall be open to appropriate disciplinary action.(90)
9. Incidents of child molestation within ISKCON or ISKCON related organizations must be reported by the ISKCON authority to the local governmental agency or agencies for civil or criminal action, as appropriate.(89)
10. In countries such as India, where it is not practical to report child abusers to the police, the local GBC or Continental Committee must establish a mechanism whereby all child molestation incidents are thoroughly investigated, and confirmed abusers are banned from residing in or working in all ISKCON communities. Local resolutions confirming these actions must be forwarded in writing to the ISKCON GBC Board of Education, and all temples where the abusers may be likely to travel. The policy should be regularly explained to the devotees in these countries.(92)

See also Ministry of Health and Welfare (page 38.)

## 20

### Farm Communities

#### 20.1 Regulations

1. Farms can not be opened without prior approval of GBC. It can be done during the year by correspondence and through the GBC Property Committee.
2. No farm community shall be supported by a temple, but should be self sufficient from the beginning. Those farms opening can take a loan but must pay it back.

## 21

### International Projects

#### 21.1 Regulations

##### 21.1.1 Board of Directors

For all international projects, (i.e. built with international funds) there shall be a Board Of Directors of not less than five or more than seven of which the local GBC shall act as the Managing Director. The Board Of Directors shall establish goals and strategies which they will be responsible to follow up on.(86)

##### 21.2 Obligation of GBC Members In Relation to International Projects

The GBC members are obliged to support Srila Prabhupada's international priority projects such as Sridhama Mayapur, etc.(80)

##### 21.3 Special Projects in India

1. Srila Prabhupada's desires and goals for expanding ISKCON activities through special projects in India (construction, development, maintenance, food distribution, etc.) is known to all GBC members. It is resolved that the GBC accepts the final responsibility for these.(79)
2. Regarding all construction projects in India, along with commissioning money for new projects, we must finish and maintain/repair all old projects, especially the international projects like Bombay, Vrndavana, Mayapur and New Delhi Glory of India. We should also seriously consider improving already established projects before constructing new ones.(81)
3. The Mayapur, Vrndavana, Bombay, and New Delhi Glory of India temples be accorded special status as the direct responsibility of the GBC Body as a whole, in addition to being the zonal assignment of individual GBC members. The entire GBC Body must discuss each of them at every annual meeting, must receive three reports per year from the management of each of these projects, and must be consulted on major decisions.(90)

##### 21.3.1 Sri Mayapur Project

###### 21.3.1.1 Construction of the Temple of Vedic Planetarium

###### 21.3.1.1.1 Significance

From the completion of the Srila Prabhupada Centennial year (1997) ISKCON shall make the achievement of Srila Prabhupada's and the previous *acaryas'* dream to build the Mayapur Temple of Vedic Planetarium as the focus of all its activities until its completion (the twenty-year anniversary of Srila Prabhupada's foundation stone laying).

###### 21.3.1.1.2 Guidelines

1. Maximum total cost for all things necessary to build the temple should be approved by the full GBC Body.
2. Total planning and construction time as approved by the GBC Body.
3. The temple must include:
  - a. As main deities, *Pañca-tattva*, *Radha-Madhava* and the eight *gopis*, and the *guru-parampara*.
  - b. Vedic planetarium.
  - c. Four *dhamas* exhibits.
  - d. *Kirtana* hall.
4. The temple shall be constructed for maximum longevity and minimum maintenance and upkeep.
5. Funding for this construction shall come from worldwide book distribution and worldwide fundraising efforts.(89)
6. The SMPDC (Sri Mayapur Project Development Committee) shall make a presentation at each year's festival to the general devotees regarding the Mayapur development plans.(90)
7. Formation of an institute to research the *Vedic* understanding of universal order, under the Bhaktivedanta Institute. The SMPDC will review their work.(78)
8. The entire GBC Body shall be the standing committee for insuring the development of Sri Mayapur Mandir and City, and they shall make an annual presentation to the GBC Body.

### **21.3.1.2 Sri Mayapur Project Development Committee**

#### 21.3.1.2.1 Definition

For implementing the desires of Srila Prabhupada and the previous *acaryas*, the GBC and ISKCON shall begin work on Sri Mayapur Project. To this effect, a development committee called "Sri Mayapur Project Development Committee,"(SMPDC) shall be responsible for planning and constructing the Mayapur project.

#### 21.3.1.2.2 Duties

1. To plan for the Mayapur Project.
2. To construct the Mayapur Project.
3. To delegate responsibilities in order to realize the Mayapur Project.
4. To allocate funds for this project, once they have been contributed by the BBT and other sources.
5. To give an annual report to the GBC Body.

#### 21.3.1.2.3 Powers

1. To expend funds without further sanction for the implementation, planning, etc. of the Sri Mayapur Development Project from any funds received.
2. To decide on proposals regarding the Sri Mayapur project and to sanction the plans, designs, programs and questions which arise.
3. To meet as required for the successful completion of the Temple of Vedic Planetarium construction and implementation, especially during the following stages:
  - a. Project formulation: estimates and cost flow evaluations, planning procedures, appointing engineer architects, etc.
  - b. Approval of preliminary drawings: modifications approximate cost, preliminary selection of materials, etc.
  - c. Approval of final design: last revisions, revision of approximative cost, etc.
  - d. Approval of interior plan: final modification of interior, etc.
  - e. Approval of estimates: hiring contractors, and on any other occasion as may be necessary.
4. To sanction the procurement of necessary and qualified devotees to work under the project, this sanction with the permission of local GBC and Temple President, provided the individual is agreeable.
5. To review the reports made by the various research groups and approve on the recommendation and implementation.
6. To be always in the awareness of the progress of the project, and to stimulate the ideals of the project of ISKCON at large.
7. To do all other things on behalf of the GBC which are required to further the Mayapur Development Project, and to give reports to the GBC at the annual meeting.
8. To appoint personnel on any committee formed for planning, research, etc. of the project.
9. This committee will elect a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Secretary and a Project Director to co-ordinate the working of the committee, and their term shall be one year.
10. On the order of the Chairman (or in his absence, or non-availability, the Vice-Chairman) the Secretary will notify the committee members fifteen days in advance of the venue and of the next meeting, and that the quorum of the meeting thereby officially called shall be a majority of the members in person or by proxy.
11. The Chief Architect and the Head Supervisor shall be entitled to attend the meetings relating to their work, and that the SMPDC shall be entitled to call any one to sit in the meeting, or render a report before the committee, but that such ex-officio invitees, or others present shall have no voting power in the committee.
12. All other conditions in the "standing orders" regarding committee shall be followed.

#### 21.3.1.2.4 Regulations

1. The SMPDC shall appoint a "working sub-committee or team" from any of its members for being immediately available to the planning department and other research groups and for dispensing funds sanctioned and made available by the previous decision of the SMPDC, and for doing all other things related as may be resolved by the committee as its representative.
2. The committee shall appoint a "Mayapur Planning Department," being a team of devotee architects, engineers, draftsmen, construction supervisors, etc., which shall be responsible to make plans, co-ordinate research groups, supervise construction, take quotations and tenders, work with professional architects, engineers and experts, and give regular reports to SMPDC and its working subcommittee.

### 21.3.1.2.5 Mayapur Project Fund Raising Committee

#### 21.3.1.2.5.1 Definition

A committee is formed under the direction of the SMPDC for the specific purpose of fund raising all over the world for the Sri Mayapur project.(82)

#### 21.3.1.2.5.2 Duties

1. To raise funds and co-ordinate the fund-raising for the Sri Mayapur Development Project including forming new parties, donations, and other means. It shall enjoy the co-operation of the rest of the Society in the implementation of their program.
2. The above fund raising committee shall elect its office bearers for one year and meet during the Mayapur festival and subsequently during the year, at least once, and may form sub-committee's reports which shall be submitted by the Fund Raising Committee to the SMDPC for their advice.

#### 21.3.1.2.6 Research institute

1. A research institute styled as "Bhaktivedanta Universal Order Research Institute" (or "Bhaktivedanta Astronomical Research Institute", or BI) shall be established and research the Vedic understanding of the Universal order on a full-time basis for the purpose of erecting an exhibit at Sri Mayapur, and thereafter in other places, for giving public and scientific circles the real picture of the universe.
2. The above mentioned B.I. shall be financed under the auspices of the Sri Mayapur Development Project Committee's Fund.(78)

### 21.3.2 Vrndavana International Project

#### 21.3.2.1 Focus of the Vrndavana Project

The Vrndavana ISKCON project shall be organized with the focus on education, i.e. that all aspects of the project will be seen as parts of a campus that exists to further the educational aims. All persons who come to the campus, for an hour, a week, a year, or any length of time, should find opportunities to be educated in Krsna consciousness.(90)

#### 21.3.2.2 Save Vrndavana Campaign

ISKCON shall spearhead an international "Save Vrndavana" campaign, which could have tremendous preaching potential, both in India and abroad. A committee, the Save Vrndavana Campaign Committee, is hereby formed to take up the work. (90)

### 21.3.3 Jagannatha Puri Bhaktivedanta Asrama

1. That the Bhaktivedanta *asrama* in Jagannatha Puri shall be known as an international project. Funding for this project from the India Fund will await the completion of the Mayapur Temple and Planetarium.
2. That the development oversight of the thirty (30) acre land now in ISKCON's name in Jagannatha Puri will be under a Standing Committee known as the ISKCON Puri Development Committee. (IPDC).(91)

### Annual Personal Financial Reporting ( 2000 )

1. All GBC Body Members, gurus, sannyasis, and international project directors are required to file annual personal financial reports to the Executive Committee of the GBC Body and where requested, their National Executive Body. These reports shall contain a standard income statement and balance-sheet (to be reported in quick books or other standard software format). The report should also include a list of all ISKCON-related bank accounts (including Account Name, Signers, and Balance) for which these individuals are a signer or have some control. All guru-dakina must be included in this report.

Note: THE ABOVE IS AMENDED VIA RESOLUTION 322 OF 2008 TO BE APPLICABLE TO:

“All GBC Body members, gurus, and sannyasis, as well as GBC-appointed Ministers, International Project Directors, and anyone else who receives funds for activities that are directly authorized by the GBC Body, regardless of the source of those funds.”

2. Within the definition of the previous resolution regarding reportable income, all income and non-monetary gifts over US \$ 500/- must be itemized according to source.

(Note: US based preachers are reminded that all gifts over US \$ 10,000/- and income from inheritance or family trusts must be reported to the IRS).

3. All annual reports must be submitted by January 31<sup>st</sup> of each year and be signed with the following statement:

I solemnly swear that this report represents a true and accurate statement of my financial activities and status for the previous year.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

4. The Executive Committee shall provide an annual report for the GBC Body prior to the annual meetings containing information on the number of GBC Body members filing, names of those not filing, and a summary report of the financial data including high, low and median numbers for income, assets and expenses.

**Sri Mayapur-Vrndavana  
Gaura-purnima Festival**

**22.1 Mayapur-Vrndavana Festival Committee**

**22.1.1 Definition**

Srila Prabhupada instructed the worldwide devotees of ISKCON to annually gather together and observe a pilgrimage, *dhama-parikrama* and festival at the ISKCON center in Mayapur-*dhama* on the occasion of Gaura-purnima (the Appearance Day of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu) and around that occasion to also observe a *parikrama* and festival at the ISKCON Temple in Vrndavana-*dhama*. This is known as the Sri Mayapur-Vrndavana Festival.

The Mayapur-Vrndavana Festival Committee shall discuss improvements in the Mayapur- Vrndavana Festival, and set programs.(77)

**22.1.2 Membership of the Festival Committee**

1. The GBCs of Sri Mayapur and Vrndavana are ex-officio permanent members of the committee.
2. The Regional Secretaries and Temple Presidents/Co-Directors/CEO of Sri Mayapur and Vrndavana or their assignees are permanent invitees to the committee.
3. Other committee members shall be elected every three years by the existing committee members by taking a representative from each continent from those volunteers who commit themselves to come and serve during the festival for a fixed period of time. Unexcused or repeated absence from the festival shall terminate committee membership.(83)

**22.1.3 Duties**

**22.1.3.1 General Duties**

1. To schedule the annual ISKCON Sri Mayapur-Vrndavana Festival.
2. To establish detailed programs, including seminars, processions, award ceremonies, classes, etc., during festivals. The purpose shall be to bring the ISKCON world community closer together and to increase the communication of Krsna conscious ideas and understanding among the participants as far as possible.
3. To develop new facilities for the festivals as required.
4. To establish journals, periodicals, pamphlets, manuals, etc., as required to further the objectives of the committee.
5. To confer awards, prizes, certificates, etc., upon deserving parties.
6. To take steps to insure that there are adequate festival facilities i.e., *prasadam*, rooms, *parikramas* in Vrndavana and Mayapur.(82)

**22.1.3.2 Regarding Finances**

1. The Secretary of the Sri Mayapur-Vrndavana Festival Committee will make available to the GBC, on request, a financial report of the income and expenditure of the Mayapur-Vrndavana Festival (shortly after the festival is finished).(82)
2. If there is any balance of funds it shall be invested to improving the festival facilities.(82)
3. To arrange to finance the festival through fixing and collecting individual festival fees, collecting donations, and other methods.
4. To manage the finances making allotments according to budget.
5. The festival income from fees shall not be considered as temple income, but kept in a separate fund. The Sri Mayapur-Vrndavana Festival Committee is authorized to pay/contribute to the local Temple for room rent and facilities or services utilized.

**22.1.3.3 Regarding Management**

1. To directly, or through a delegated authority, manage, coordinate, and organize the annual ISKCON Sri Mayapur-Vrndavana Festival and all *pandals*, *parikramas*, pilgrimages, and programs related thereto.
2. To appoint subcommittees, secretaries, cultural secretaries, coordinating secretaries, and all other officers.
3. To have the local (Mayapur and Vrndavana) temples participating in the festival program act as agents of the committee and follow the directives and standards of the committee during the period of the annual festival.
4. The Sri Mayapur-Vrndavana Festival Committee is authorized to appoint any qualified devotee situated in a foreign country to assist in facilitating, promoting and coordinating the annual Gaura-purnima Festival by interfacing with the devotees and temples outside India in their assigned area. Such a devotee should have adequate time to devote to the annual festival service.(80)

**22.1.4 Guidelines**

The Sri Mayapur-Vrndavana Festival Committee may, at their discretion, organize booths during the Annual festival for temples, regions, zones, countries or continents at Sri Mayapur, in which annually each temple, country or zone should exhibit their Krsna conscious achievements of the year. This will increase the enthusiasm of the devotees in general and inform the public of ISKCON's preaching achievements.(81)

**22.2 General Regulations**

1. The approved schedule for the annual Mayapur-Vrndavana festival shall be that the Vrndavana-*dhama* festival immediately follows the Mayapur-*dhama* festival, and any other festivals may be scheduled thereafter.(83)
2. An annual traveling *padayatra parikrama* of Navadvipa-*dhama*, following the example of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura and Lord Nityananda, be organized with tents, and a full program be held as a part of the annual Gaura-purnima festival. To make this a success a maximum number of senior *Vaisnavas'* presence is requested.(81)
3. That all Regional Secretaries and Temple Presidents will be responsible for setting up their zonal exhibition booths at the annual Mayapur festival. This will be followed up by the Secretary of the Sri Mayapur- Vrndavana Festival Committee.(82)

**22.3 General Guidelines**

1. Zones may provide an audio-visual or video presentation for the festival and time shall be provided for exhibiting that to the GBC's and the devotees in general.(81)
2. All temples should try to at least send one representative along with as many men as possible to the Mayapur festival to resist weakening of ISKCON.(80)

## 23

### ISKCON Related Organizations

#### 23.1 General Regulations

1. Any ISKCON Ministry, organization, individual, or project (including those legally independent from ISKCON) receiving funding from ISKCON or the BBT, including mandatory assessments, taxes, and so forth, from temples and/or zones, be required to provide financial reports clearly delineating assets, liabilities, expenditures, and income. Such reports are to be submitted to the GBC Corresponding Secretary at least forty-five days prior to the beginning of the annual meeting, and shall be distributed to all GBC members and made available to other concerned ISKCON officials upon request.
2. The Corresponding Secretary shall compile a list of ISKCON Ministries, organizations, individuals, or projects to whom this resolution applies, and annually notify them of their report deadline at least sixty days in advance.
3. Anyone who is submitting a request for GBC/ISKCON funding should, along with their appeal, include their budget and previous financial reports for information. This resolution will not take effect until after the 1990 annual meeting.
4. All fund-raising activities performed by an ISKCON non-profit entity that are considered as un-related businesses which could endanger ISKCON should be separately incorporated and should comply with guidelines given by GBC legal advisors.(80)

#### 23.2 The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust

##### 23.2.1 General Regulations

1. Only the BBT has the right to publish any of Srila Prabhupada's books. All books published by the BBT shall be copyrighted by BBT International.
2. The BBT Trustees' eligibility to serve shall be approved by the GBC Body if the GBC Body finds a trustee unacceptable.
3. Only BBT books may be sold on *sankirtana* by ISKCON temples. Anyone who wishes to write a book for mass distribution shall present that book to the BBT trustees for approval.
4. BBT publications shall only be sold to customers (for their book distribution) who are not attacking ISKCON institutions or what ISKCON stands for.
5. Every publication from the BBT shall invite readers to correspond with either the secretary of the BBT or the temple of their choice. If possible, a list of temples shall appear in each publication. All names received requesting free books shall be immediately sent to appropriate temples, provided the temples pay the costs involved.(84)
6. If the establishment of a project within a particular zone will cause that zone or the temples within that zone to stop or greatly diminish their BBT remittance (i.e. the GBC mandate of 25-50%) the GBC Zonal Secretary must receive approval before the GBC Body at the annual Mayapur meeting.(86)
7. There shall be a GBC subcommittee known as the Supervisory Committee for India BBT Funds. This committee shall recommend to the GBC Body how to allocate funds given to ISKCON for India Projects by the BBT. The committee shall also audit and supervise the spending of those funds and make regular reports to the GBC Body and the trustees of the BBT.(89)
8. The GBC accepts the authenticity of the unabridged complete edition of the *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* published by North America BBT.
9. After the BBT Trustees have determined the amount of funds available for ISKCON projects, the GBC shall decide how to divide it.
10. All ISKCON literature published [in quantities over 5000 intended] for the public in mass distribution on *sankirtana*, must be published exclusively by the BBT or a center or publisher specifically authorized by the BBT.(75)
11. No ISKCON temple or other entity shall sell, give away, or otherwise permanently dispose of any original works of art which were created to illustrate Srila Prabhupada's (or other BBT) books. If temples wish to transfer ownership of these artworks, they must do so to another ISKCON temple or to the BBT.(89)
12. When a temple continues illegal means of *sankirtana*, the BBT trustees are authorized to do the needful to rectify.(77)
13. The GBC will decide how the BBT contributions for temple building in India, etc. shall be spent.(75)
14. BBT publications shall only be sold to customers (for their book distribution) who are not attacking ISKCON. Any former member of ISKCON who preaches against ISKCON shall be excommunicated or appropriately disciplined. It shall be prohibited to sell BBT publications to them by ISKCON members. If they are claiming to be officially members of ISKCON, they should be legally disenfranchised.(83)

##### 23.2.2 Srila Prabhupada's Vyasa-puja Book

1. An annual *vyasa-puja* book for Srila Prabhupada shall be published by the BBT for the next ten thousand years.
2. A high-quality, hardbound Srila Prabhupada *vyasa-puja* book for the whole Society shall be published annually. It shall include offerings from all GBC members, ISKCON centers, and *sannyasis* worldwide. Continental *vyasa-puja* books are welcome additions.
3. The author of each temple's offering in the annual world *vyasa-puja* book shall be stated in the book.

##### 23.2.3 Back to Godhead Magazine

There may be various co-editors of non-English BTG magazines but the English edition editor will be responsible to keep the standard. In this he will work in cooperation with the co-editors and BBT trustees of the various foreign language BTGs. As for the editorial policies he should follow, he shall take consultation from the GBC.(77)

### **23.3 Bhaktivedanta Institute**

1. The Bhaktivedanta Institute (BI) is authorized to delegate someone in any zone or country to deal with the scientists more effectively.
2. BI goals shall annually be presented at the GBC meeting with a review report on the progress on the following year to the GBC in Mayapur. Also the BBT trustees are authorized to review and approve the annual budget for the BI each year. (80)
3. The BI will establish centers only after obtaining permission of the local GBC zonal Secretaries.(86)

### **23.4 Mayapur-Vrndavana Trust (MVT)**

The MVT Committee, which controls the funds of the Mayapur-Vrndavana fund, shall submit yearly reports to the GBC on the expenditure from this fund.(77)

### **23.5 ISKCON Television, Inc.**

That the GBC establishes a policy prohibiting "pirating", i.e., unauthorized duplicating of any ISKCON Television (ITV) videotapes, from now in perpetuity as the official policy of ISKCON for the benefit of the preaching effort. This includes any unauthorized duplication of any division of ISKCON engaged in producing video cassette.(81)

## ISKCON Global Excellence Awards

“Global Excellence Awards” be established to recognize outstanding contributions with ISKCON. The purpose of the awards is to recognize excellence in the field of devotional service and to encourage devotion in the various aspects and fields of Krsna conscious activities.

### Appendices

#### 1 Miscellaneous

All ISKCON official mouthpiece publications shall not be permitted to carry advertising for astrological services.

#### 2 Position Papers

##### 2.1 "On My Order" Understood

ISKCON devotees and leaders have repeatedly requested a clear vision from the GBC on Srila Prabhupada's order in 1977 regarding continuing the disciplic succession, but as yet it has not been presented. Many interpretations of the "appointment tapes" have been published by the GBC and outside parties, many inimical to ISKCON, and a clear GBC stand would help ISKCON devotees in their preaching and search for unity in diversity. A clearer concept and a general consensus on many things have been achieved after discussions and philosophical research. The *siddhanta* in regard to *guru-tattva* in ISKCON has been unclear, and there is a need for a statement from the GBC to give direction. Therefore it is resolved that the following conclusions are accepted as the official GBC position in regard to Srila Prabhupada's instructions regarding continuing the disciplic succession:

1. Srila Prabhupada's explicit and consistent desire and program had always been that eventually His Divine Grace's disciples and followers would take up the service of initiating new disciples into the disciplic succession as initiating *gurus* 1. This procedure is supported by all evidence from *sadhu*, *sastra* and *guru* as the bona fide method of continuing the disciplic succession. In fact, this is the only concept of continuing the disciplic succession ever mentioned by Srila Prabhupada.
2. In 1977, Srila Prabhupada repeatedly said he would "select," "choose," "appoint," or "designate" some disciples to take up the service of initiating new disciples. When Srila Prabhupada was asked who would initiate after his physical departure he stated he would "recommend" and give his "order" to some of his disciples who would initiate on his behalf during his lifetime and afterwards as "regular *gurus*," whose disciples would be Srila Prabhupada's grand-disciples. Srila Prabhupada repeatedly cited Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's statement "*amara ajñaya guru hoīya*" and stated that one would be eligible to act as an initiating *guru* based "on my order", i.e. on the "order" of Srila Prabhupada as the representative of Lord Caitanya.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, Srila Prabhupada named some disciples to initiate on his behalf, as he had previously stated.<sup>3</sup> Although Srila Prabhupada did not repeat his earlier statements, it was understood that he expected these disciples to initiate in the future. Srila Prabhupada stated that being a spiritual master is "not difficult," that the primary qualification for is to "strictly follow" the previous spiritual masters.<sup>4</sup> Srila Prabhupada's repeated use of the phrase "on my order" makes it abundantly clear that those who would be "selected" were simply to strictly carry out His Divine Grace's "order", and as long as they did so they would be bona fide spiritual masters. It is up to Srila Prabhupada's followers to be and remain qualified by strictly following his instructions.
3. In ISKCON, the basis of anyone's acting as an ISKCON spiritual master is the transcendental "order" of Srila Prabhupada, which conveys in succession the divine order of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. It is therefore clear that Srila Prabhupada's use of words like "appoint," "recommend" or "select" was not in the mundane sense of appointing someone to a post or position, and certainly not to some state of "realization," nor as a full endorsement of qualification, as has been commonly misunderstood, but is rather a conditional mandate dependent on the follower's "strictly following" the "order" of the spiritual master. In fact, the Sanskrit word "*ajña*" means to be the order-carrier or to represent a higher authority. Failing to "follow strictly" the "order" of the previous *acaryas* would disenfranchise the putative *guru*.<sup>5</sup> Although Srila Prabhupada was a pure devotee of Lord Krsna and a liberated soul, he humbly presented as his only qualification that he was a humble "servant of the servant," that he was simply carrying out the "order" and strictly following the instructions of his spiritual master, Om VisAupada Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, who was a liberated soul. Srila Prabhupada taught by example. Therefore, His Divine Grace's "selecting" someone would be to do what Srila Prabhupada stated he was doing, i.e. simply to "carry out the order" of the previous *acaryas*.<sup>6</sup> Reinforcing that truth is Srila Prabhupada's well-known instruction that a spiritual master must always consider himself a disciple and servitor of his own *guru*.
4. After Srila Prabhupada named some disciples to initiate, his personal secretary suggested some others for also starting to initiate, but Srila Prabhupada, after considering the matter, said they were not yet ready. His Divine Grace said the GBC could consider and later add others when needed. Thus, by delegating that duty to the GBC, Srila Prabhupada personally detailed the procedure for increasing the number of initiating *gurus*. Earlier, His Divine Grace had taught Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's instruction that his GBC would be responsible to "elect" qualified devotees to be initiating *gurus*. When asked who would succeed him, His Divine Grace said that he "gave the legacy" to all his disciples and whoever strictly follows him is qualified to succeed him.<sup>7</sup>
5. When a devotee is allowed to carry out the "order" of Srila Prabhupada to expand the disciplic succession by initiating new disciples, it is not to be taken as a certification or endorsement of his being an "*uttama-adhikari*," "pure devotee," or to having achieved any specific state of realization. It is simply a statement that the devotee has been given permission to execute the "order" to serve as a *guru* because it was considered that he was "strictly following" Srila Prabhupada's instructions and had maintained an

adequately exemplary *sadhana* and behavior up to the standard approved for serving as a *guru*. Moreover, Srila Prabhupada never stated that he was appointing an "*acarya*" or an independent or "absolute authority" for the *sampradaya*. To the contrary, His Divine Grace established the GBC and said that the GBC would be the "ultimate managing authority" for all affairs (material and spiritual) of the society in accordance to *sadhu, sastra* and *guru*.<sup>8</sup> *Gurus* and disciples are expected to cooperate and follow the decisions of the GBC as desired of Srila Prabhupada.

6. It may be that in the future a devotee may achieve great realization and advancement in Krsna consciousness and become a "self-effulgent *acarya*," a renowned "*acarya*" for the *sampradaya*, but Srila Prabhupada stated such things are not to be confirmed by administrative decrees or actions. If an advanced devotee's spiritual qualities are "self-effulgent," devotees may naturally accept him as an "*acarya*" or advanced or realized spiritual master and his association and guidance will be sought, but the GBC cannot "rubber stamp" him nor change ISKCON's system of management consequently. ISKCON will continue to be managed as Srila Prabhupada provided without "change" by the GBC. That is Srila Prabhupada's instruction.<sup>9</sup>
7. Uninitiated ISKCON devotees should seek out a spiritual master who is strictly following Srila Prabhupada's instructions and representing Srila Prabhupada, with full faith that by following such a spiritual master who is strictly following a liberated soul; they will achieve the same results obtainable by serving Srila Prabhupada directly. (Other instructions in this regard may be separately published.)
8. Disciples are to respect their spiritual masters as direct representatives of Krsna, i.e. as "*saksad dharitvena*," in accordance with *sastras*. Disciples should worship their spiritual master according to their faith and according to the standard *Vaisnava* etiquette approved by ISKCON. All ISKCON devotees should encourage disciples in developing faith in their spiritual masters.

### 2.1.1 Notes

1. As early as 1967 Srila Prabhupada wrote:

"Anyone following the order of Lord Caitanya under the guidance of His bonafide representative, can become a spiritual master and I wish that in my absence all my disciples become bonafide spiritual masters to spread Krsna Consciousness throughout the whole world." (Letter to Madhusudana 02-11-1967)

and in 1968 he wrote to Hamsaduta:

"Maybe by 1975 all of my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the number of the generations. That is my program." (Letter to Hamsaduta Swami)

Also,

"Therefore if anyone is anxious to be initiated, he should first of all hear our philosophy and join chanting at least for three months, and then if required, I shall send chanted beads for him if you recommend. As we are doing here. Don't be allured by such *maya*. I am training you all to become future spiritual masters, but do not be in a hurry. (08-21-1968, Letter to Acyutananda and Jaya Govinda)

"I am just trying to disseminate this message of my spiritual master and if there's any credit for this service, everything goes to Him. This message of Krsna Consciousness is coming down from Krsna Himself, and we are all servants of the Supreme Lord working under the consecutive disciplic succession. Please try to understand our philosophy through various books that I have already published and sometimes after you will have to carry out this order of disciplic succession." (03-14-1969, Letter to Prahladananda)

"Some time ago you asked my permission for accepting some disciples, now the time is approaching very soon when you will have many disciples by your strong preaching work. Stick to the line of our strong preaching method and many misguided persons will be blessed by your proper guiding." (05-16-1972, Letter to Acyutananda)

"I have heard that there is some worship of yourself by the other devotees. Of course it is proper to offer obeisances to a Vaisnava, but not in the presence of the spiritual master. After the departure of the spiritual master, it will come to that stage, but now wait. Otherwise it will create factions." (10-01-1974, Letter to Hamsaduta Dasa)

"Now has the GBC become more than *guru* Maharaja? As if simply GBC is meant for looking after pounds, shilling, pence. The GBC does not look after spiritual life. That is a defect. All of our students will have to become *guru*, but they are not qualified. This is the difficulty." (11-10-1975, Letter to Alalanatha Dasa)

"Keep trained up very rigidly and then you are bonafide *guru*, and you can accept disciples on the same principle. But as a matter of etiquette it is the custom that during the lifetime of your spiritual master you bring the prospective disciples to him, and in his absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without any limitation. This is the law of disciplic succession. I want to see my disciples become bonafide spiritual master and spread Krsna consciousness very widely, that will make me and Krsna very happy." (12-02-1975, Letter to Tusta Krsna Swami)

2. Vrndavana, May 28, 1977

Satsvarupa: By the votes of the present GBC. Then our next question concerns initiations in the future, particularly at that time when you're no longer with us. We want to know how first and second initiation would be conducted.

Prabhupada: Yes. I shall recommend some of you. After this is settled up, I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating *acaryas*.

Tamala Krsna: Is that called *rtvik-acarya*?

Prabhupada:  $\neg$ *rtvik*, yes.

Satsvarupa: Then what is the relationship of that person who gives the initiation and the...

Prabhupada: He's *guru*. He's *guru*.

Satsvarupa: But he does it on your behalf.

Prabhupada: Yes. That is formality. Because in my presence one should not become *guru*, so on my behalf, on my order... *Amara ajñaya guru hañā*. Be actually *guru*, but by my order.

Satsvarupa: So they may also be considered your disciples.

Prabhupada: Yes, they are disciples. Why consider? Who?

Tamala Krsna: No, he's asking that these *rvik-acaryas*, they're officiating, giving *diksa*. Their... The people who they give *diksa* to, whose disciples are they?

Prabhupada: They're his disciples.

Tamala Krsna: They're his disciples.

Prabhupada: Who is initiating. He is granddisciple.

Satsvarupa: Yes.

Tamala Krsna: That's clear.

Satsvarupa: Then we have a question concer...

Prabhupada: When I order, "You become *guru*," he becomes regular *guru*. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple. That's it...

Prabhupada: And Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, *amara ajñaya guru hañā*. One can understand the order of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, he can become *guru*. Or one who understands his *guru's* order, the same *parampara*, he can become *guru*. And therefore I shall select some of you. (hums)

It should also be noted that in most cases when Srila Prabhupada spoke about his disciples becoming *gurus* he cited the *amara ajñaya* verse.

### 3. July 7, 1977, Vrndavana

Tamala Krsna: Those are their favorite words. Srila Prabhupada? We're receiving a number of letters now, and these are people who want to get initiated. So up until now, since your becoming ill, we asked them to wait.

Prabhupada: The local, mean, senior *sannyasis* can do that.

Tamala Krsna: That's what we were doing... I mean, formerly we were... The local GBC, *sannyasis*, were chanting on their beads, and they were writing to Your Divine Grace, and you were giving a spiritual name. So should that process be resumed, or should we...? I mean one thing is that it's said that the spiritual master takes on the... You know, he takes on the... He has to cleanse the disciple by... So we don't want that you should have to... Your health is not so good, so that should not be... That's why we've been asking everybody to wait. I just want to know if we should continue to wait some more time.

Prabhupada: No, the senior *sannyasis*...

Tamala Krsna: So they should continue to...

Prabhupada: You can give me a list of *sannyasis*. I will mark who will...

Tamala Krsna: Okay.

Prabhupada: You can do. Kirtanananda can do. And our Satsvarupa can do. So these three, you can give, begin.

Tamala Krsna: So supposing someone is in America, should they simply write directly to Kirtanananda or Satsvarupa?

Prabhupada: Nearby. Jayatirtha can give.

Tamala Krsna: Jayatirtha.

Prabhupada: Bhavanan..., er, Bhagavan. And he can do also. Harikesa.

Tamala Krsna: Harikesa Maharaja.

Prabhupada: And... Five, six men, you divide who is nearest.

Tamala Krsna: Who is nearest. So persons wouldn't have to write to Your Divine Grace. They could write directly to that person?

Prabhupada: Hm.

Tamala Krsna: Actually they are initiating the person on Your Divine Grace's behalf. Those persons who are initiated are still your...

Prabhupada: Second initiation we shall think over, second initiation.

Tamala Krsna: This is for first initiation, okay. And for second initiation, for the time being they should...

Prabhupada: No, they have to wait. Second initiation, that should be given...

Tamala Krsna: Should... Some devotees are writing you now for second initiation, and I'm writing them to wait a while because you're not well. So can I continue to tell them that?

Prabhupada: They can do second initiation.

Tamala Krsna: By writing you.

Prabhupada: No. These men.

Tamala Krsna: These men, they can also do second initiation. So there's no need for devotees to write to you for first and second initiation. They can write to the man nearest them. But all these persons are still your disciples. Anybody who gives initiation is doing so on your behalf.

Prabhupada: Yes.

Tamala Krsna: You know that book I'm maintaining of all of your disciples' names? Should I continue that?

Prabhupada: Hm.

Tamala Krsna: So if someone gives initiation, like Harikesa Maharaja, he should send the person's name to us here and I'll enter it in the book. Okay. Is there someone else in India that you want to do this?

Prabhupada: India, I am here. We shall see. In India, Jayapataka.

Tamala Krsna: Jayapataka Maharaja.

Prabhupada: You are also in India.

Tamala Krsna: Yes.

Prabhupada: You can note down these names.

Tamala Krsna: Yes, I have them.

Prabhupada: Who are they?

Tamala Krsna: Kirtanananda Maharaja, Satsvarupa Maharaja, Jayatirtha Prabhu, Bhagavan Prabhu, Harikesa Maharaja, Jayapataka Maharaja and Tamala Krsna Maharaja.

Prabhupada: That's nice. Now you distribute.

Tamala Krsna: Seven. There's seven names.

Prabhupada: For the time being, seven names, sufficient. You can make Ramesvara.

Tamala Krsna: Ramesvara Maharaja.

Prabhupada: And Hridayananda.

Tamala Krsna: Oh, yeah. South America.

Prabhupada: So without waiting for me, wherever you consider it is right... That will depend on discretion.

Tamala Krsna: On discretion.

Prabhupada: Yes.

Tamala Krsna: That's for first and second initiations.

Prabhupada: Hm.

4. Make sure that they are well aware of the four rules and regulations and that they are fixed in chanting the prescribed number of sixteen rounds daily on the beads. Without these two principles no one can make advancement on the path of regulated *bhakti*. Teach them the science of the *Bhagavad-gita* and train them to be first class representatives of Krsna. It is not very difficult, simply one has to hear from the perfect authority who is in disciplic succession from Krsna Himself, and then repeat the same message without any change. If one does this then he is qualified to become *guru*. (Letter to Jayadharma 08-20-1976)
- Guru* is only one. *guru* means, as you explained, *ajñana-timirandhasya jñanañjana-salakaya, caksur unmilitam yena tasmai sri-gurave namaḥ*. One who eradicates the *ajñana, andhakara*, darkness. In the darkness, if somebody brings lamp, *ajñana-timirandhasya jñanañjana-salakaya...* The *jñana-rupa*, torchlight, he's *guru*. So maybe of different degrees, but anyone who opens the spiritual eyes, he's *guru*.
- But it doesn't matter that degree. Actually, if the *guru* teaches Krsna consciousness, then he may be in lesser degree, but he's accepted as *guru*. There is no question of rejection. Because Krsna is actually *jñana*. One who teaches Krsna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, "One has to know Krsna, one has to surrender to Krsna," this kind of teaching is required.
- So the real test is whether the *guru* is a Vaisnava, whether he knows the science of Krsna. That is also confirmed by Caitanya Mahaprabhu: *kiba vipra kiba sudra nyasi kene naya, yei krsna-tattva vetta sei guru haya*. A... It doesn't matter what he is, whether he's a *sannyasi* or a *grhastha* or a *brahmana* or a *su...*, born in *brahmana* family or... It doesn't matter. *Yei krsna-tattva*. Anyone who knows Krsna, he can become *guru*, not others. So that is the statement of the *sastras*. Avaisnava cannot become *guru*. (Lecture, Ahmedabad 12-13-1972)
- Just like post peon give you five thousand rupees, delivers. He does not deliver. Somebody else is delivering. He's simply carrying. That's all. Similarly, if we simply carry the message of Krsna as it is, we become perfect. It is not very difficult. If I simply carry the message of Krsna, where is the difficulty? Everything is there. Krsna has said everything. Krsna says, *man-mana bhava mad-bhaktō mad-yajī mam namaskuru*. We carry this message. Just always think of Krsna, always offer obeisances to Krsna, become a devotee of Krsna. *Man-manaf*, think of Krsna always. We have to carry this message. Where is the difficulty? So to become a bona fide spiritual master, there is no difficulty. If you, simply, if we carry the message of Krsna as it is without any adulteration. So we must find out a person who is actually bona fide spiritual master by this test: that he's not-I mean to say-adulterating Krsna's message. He's not playing havoc with the message of Krsna in order to introduce himself, his person. He's simply presenting the message of Krsna as it is. Then he's spiritual master. Nobody else. Thank you very much. (NOD Lecture, Vrindavana 10-31-1972)
- So Caitanya Mahaprabhu says *amara ajñaya guru hañā tara ei desa yare dekha tare kaha krsna-upadesa*. He says, *amara ajñaya*. by My order, you become a spiritual master.
- So one may be very illiterate, no education, (and) or no scholarship, may not be born in *brahmana* family, or may not be a *sannyasi*. There are so many qualifications. But one may not have all these qualifications. He may be rascal number one, but still, he can become spiritual master. How? *Amara ajñaya*. As Krsna says, as Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, if you follow, then you become spiritual master. One may be rascal number one from material estimation, but if he simply strictly follows whatever is said by Caitanya Mahaprabhu or His representative spiritual master, then he becomes a *guru*. (Vyasa-puja address, London 08-21-1973)
- It is Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's wish that everyone should become a Vaisnava and *guru*. Following the instructions of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His disciplic succession, one can become a spiritual master, for the process is very easy. One can go everywhere and anywhere to preach the instructions of Krsna.
- ... the duty of every Vaisnava is to travel and preach *Bhagavad-gita*, either in his country or a foreign country. (Cc.M. 24.277)
- "We do not have to manufacture anything new. We are getting perfect knowledge from Krsna through the disciplic succession, so our position is very firm. Whatever we hear from the bonafide spiritual master should be practiced in life and the same message delivered to whomever we meet. In this way you become spiritual master. (Letter to Kirtiraja 12-31-1975)
5. This time I have requested all Nairobi important friends that: "Now you take *sannyasa* and become *guru*. Krsna Caitanya Mahaprabhu asked everyone to become *guru*. *Amara ajñaya guru hañā tara ei desa*. You have come to Africa. Now become their *guru* and deliver them." "Now, how shall I do it?" *Yare dekha tare kaha krsna-upadesa*: "Simply speak. Don't become very big upstart. Simply speak what Krsna has done. That's all. You become *guru*." (Conversation, Bombay 03-11-1975)
- Bambarambhe laghu-kriya*, in the Sanskrit word, that you can make a very high-grade arrangement, but the result is zero. So that hierarchical arrangement is exactly not in Krsna consciousness. But our method is very simple. If one is fortunate enough to meet a

bona fide spiritual master and if he acts strictly under his discipline, he also becomes within a very short time another spiritual master. (Interview, Seattle 09-24-1976)

Because people are in darkness, we require many millions of *gurus* to enlighten them. Therefore Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mission is, He said, that "Everyone of you become *guru*." *Amara ajñaya guru haña tara ei desa*. You haven't got to go foreign countries. Wherever you are, you teach; become *guru*. It doesn't matter. *Ei desa*. He says, *ei desa*. If you have got power, you can go other country but it doesn't require. In whichever village, whichever country or town you are, you become a *guru*. This is Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mission. *Amara ajñaya guru haña tara ei desa*. "This country, this place." So "But I have no qualification. How can I become *guru*?" There is no need of qualification. "Still, I can become *guru*?" Yes. "How?" *Yare dekha tare kaha krsna-upadesa*: "Whomever you meet, you simply instruct what Krsna has said." That's all. You become *guru*. Everyone is very anxious to become *guru*, but rascal does not know how to become *guru*, a simple thing.

So that is our mission. All of you who have come to Krsna consciousness movement, that is our request, that you, all of you, become *guru* but don't speak nonsense. That is request. Simply speak what Krsna has said. Then you become *brahmana*. You'll be *guru*, and everything. Thank you very much. (Lecture, Honolulu 05-21-1976)

Caitanya Mahaprabhu said that "You become a *guru*." *Amara ajñaya guru haña tara ei desa*. "You become a *guru* and deliver them." So "I am a fool. I have no education. How can I become a *guru*?" So answer is "No, no. *Yare dekha tare kaha krsna-upadesa*." "If you simply advise people what Krsna has said, then you become *guru*. But if you manufacture your ideas, then you are not a *guru*." (Conversation Bombay 01-07-1977)

*Amara ajñaya guru haña tara ei desa*. Suppose you are living in that village. Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, "You become a *guru* here." Here. You haven't got to go out. *Ei desa*, "where you are living." Just see how nice it is. *Amara ajñaya*: "By My order, you become a *guru* and deliver the people of this place." This is Caitanya Mahaprabhu's... So "I am not educated, I do not know. How I shall become?" No, you haven't got to bother. *Yare dekha tare kaha krsna-upadesa*: "Simply you repeat what Krsna has said. You become *guru*." That's all. Everyone can do that. *Gita* is there. You sit down in your place and preach *Bhagavad-gita* and try to induce them to take it. You become *guru*. (Conversation, Bombay 04-23-1977)

Our Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mission is that "You become *guru*," as I was telling, "and teach, deliver persons where you are." If you say, "How can I become *guru*?" there is no difficulty. Simply repeat the words of *Bhagavad-gita*. That's all. You become *guru*. So our mission is to create real *guru*, not these jugglers. And real *guru* is he who speaks on behalf of Krsna. And that is wan... It is very simple.

This is our mission. Everything is there. Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, *yare dekha tare kaha krsna-upade*... "You simply make your life successful by understanding *Bhagavad-gita* and preach this. You become *guru*." So where is the difficulty? Why don't you do that? (Conversation, Bombay 04-24-1977)

This is very easy. So I am not a scholar. I am simply... Whatever is said there, I am trying to distribute in a palatable way. That's all. It is not my manufacture. And that is Caitanya Mahaprabhu's... *Amara ajñaya guru haña tara ei desa*. You all become *guru*. "How can I become *guru*? I have no education. I have no knowledge." No, you haven't got to acquire all these things. That is already... *Yare dekha tare kaha*. Finished. So I never tried to become a scholar. But I tried, whatever is spoken by Krsna, deliver. That's all. And that is *guru*. (Conversation, Vrndavana 06-26-1977)

6. "Personally I am humble servant of Krsna as you are also, but I am deputed to accept your service just to transfer it to Krsna as via media. I shall try to do this service to you and Krsna throughout my life, and I am so proud to have such assistants as you are to help me in my mission to push on the Krsna Consciousness Movement." (Letter to Dayananda, 05-01-1969)

"You are all my children and I love my American boys and girls who are sent to me by my spiritual master and I have accepted them as my disciples." (Letter to Satsvarupa and Uddhava, 07-27-1970)

"Practically, I do not have any disciples; I select so many masters to train them in the service of the Lord." (Letter to Jai Mazo, 01-18-1968)

"I have not done anything personally, very wonderful. I am simply serving my spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaja and all the *acaryas* in the disciplic succession." (Letter to Bhima Dasa et al, 05-16-1974)

6. November 2, 1977

Prabhupada: "...after you, who will take the leadership?" And "Everyone will take, all my disciples. If you want, you can take also. (laughter) But if you follow. They are prepared to sacrifice everything, so they'll take the leadership. I may, one, go away, but there will be hundreds, and they'll preach. If you want, you can also become a leader. We have no such thing, that 'Here is leader.' Anyone who follows the previous leadership, he's a leader. 'Indian,' we have no such distinction, 'Indian,' 'European.'"

Brahmananda: They wanted an Indian to be the leader?

Prabhupada: Yes. (laughs) "Everyone, all my disciples, they are leaders. As purely as they follow, they become leader. If you want to follow, you can become a leader. You are Indian. But you don't want." I told them that.

Tamala Krsna: Yes, they probably wanted to propose somebody who would take over our movement.

Prabhupada: Yes. Leaders. All nonsense. Leader means one who has become first-class disciple. He is leader. *Evam paramapara-prapta*... One who is perfectly following... Our instruction is *ara na kariha mane asa*. You know this? What is that? *Guru-mukha-padma-vakya, cittete kariya aikya, ara na kariha mane asa*. Who is leader? A leader, to become leader, is not very difficult, provided one is prepared to follow the instructions of a bona fide *guru*.

7. See Prabhupada's will.

8. "He [Srila Bhaktisiddhanta] never asked anybody to become *acarya*. He asked that 'You form a governing body of twelve men and go on preaching. . . . None, none of them were advised by guru Maharaja to become *acarya*. His idea was 'Let them manage; then whoever will be actually qualified for becoming *acarya*, they will elect. Why I should enforce upon them?' That was his plan. 'Let

them manage by strong governing body, as it is going on. Then *acarya* will come by his qualifications.'" (Conversation, Bombay 09-21-1973)

"His [Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's] idea was *acarya* was not to be nominated amongst the governing body... a self-effulgent *acarya* would be automatically selected." (Letter to Rupanuga, 04-28-1974)

"A *vaisnava acarya* is self-effulgent, and there is no need for any court judgment." (Cc. M 1.220)

"A powerful Vaisnava who has converted others into Vaisnavas is to be worshipped, but because of material contamination, sometimes such an exalted Vaisnava is disrespected by other, minor Vaisnavas."

"... It has actually been seen that even an authorized devotee who is engaged in the service of the Lord by preaching the mission of Krsna consciousness is sometimes criticized by neophyte devotees."

"... Neophytes, unable to appreciate the exalted service of the advanced devotee, try to bring the *maha-bhagavata* to their platform. We experience such difficulty in propagating this Krsna consciousness all over the world. Unfortunately we are surrounded by neophyte Godbrothers who do not appreciate the extraordinary activities of spreading Krsna consciousness all over the world. They simply try to bring us to their platform, and they try to criticize us in every respect. We very much regret their naïve activities and poor fund of knowledge. An empowered person who is actually engaged in the confidential service of the Lord should not be treated as an ordinary human being, for it is stated that unless one is empowered by Krsna, one cannot spread the Krsna consciousness movement all over the world." (NOI, Text 6, pp.64)

## 2.2 Devotees Initiating Before Their Guru's Physical Departure

### 2.2.1 Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's View

Some of Srila Prabhupada's godbrothers were approached to find out what Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's view was on this issue. All of them informed [us] that none of his disciples gave initiation when he was present. His Divine Grace did not instruct anyone to give initiation during his presence nor for that matter did he give any specific instructions about them initiating after his disappearance.

In the Gaudiya Matha, after Srila Om VisAupada Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's disappearance, the etiquette of not initiating in the presence of the spiritual master has continued. In fact, if anyone breaks from this tradition, he is excommunicated from their mission.

#### 2.2.1.1 Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's Instructions

Although apparently Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura did not specifically, in black and white, instruct anything about a disciple not giving initiation when the *guru* is present, it is quite clearly implied in the instructions below. The question of initiating in the presence of one's *guru* is inappropriate for a disciple who naturally is cultivating his service attitude to the *guru*. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura was very emphatic about the disciple's sincere dedication to his *guru*. The following quotes are from a Bengali book called Sri Srila Prabhupader Upadesamrta:

Q: Will I be able to accept disciples?

A: "Give up envy and show mercy to living entities—living entities who become averse to Krsna, make them Krsna conscious. Do not become a *guru* to become envious. Do not become a *guru* in order to drown yourself in sense gratification—do not become a *guru* just for show off. But if you can become a sincere servant of your *guru* and Krsna, if you can receive their mercy—potency, then there is nothing to fear. Otherwise there will be disaster." (p. 235)

"If one is not dedicated to his *guru* he can not be qualified to be a *guru*." (p. 337)

Q: What is the difference between *guru* and me?

A: I am lighter than the lightest; even lighter than that. But one who is serving the greatest constantly, that spiritual master is greater than the greatest; even greater than that. (p. 235)

Q: Is it true that without the mercy of the spiritual master nothing can be achieved?

A: Yes. I am blind, who will show me the way other than the *guru*? Everything is achieved by the mercy of the *guru*. We are *laghu* (light), our only shelter is the *guru*. He who serves the Lord all the time in all respects, he is the *guru*.

Q: Does one invite misfortune when he does not follow the orders of his spiritual master properly?

A: Of course! If one does not follow the orders of his spiritual master who is the personification of all auspiciousness, he will suffer misfortune—his material desires will increase, and after death he will go to hell. He who does not follow the order of his spiritual master, is a resident of hell. He is a materialist or a big sense enjoyer. One who disobeys the order of his spiritual master enters in the womb of a pig. Those who have strong desire for sense enjoyment, even after getting a bona fide spiritual master due to their good fortune, due to the inability to serve the spiritual master with heart and soul, do not derive any spiritual benefit. Due to their inability to appreciate the value of this priceless object, they consider this material nature to be real, and suffer life after life. (p. 506)

From these statements of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, it is clear that only a qualified disciple can become a bona fide spiritual master, and a true disciple simply depends upon the mercy of his spiritual master in order to do anything. The disciple's only desire is to satisfy the spiritual master. Whatever the *guru* orders, the disciple must carry out, including the order to give initiation and accept disciples, with a sense of duty as a service to his spiritual master. But he himself always feels unqualified to execute such a serious responsibility. The more one feels unqualified the more he receives the mercy of the *guru*; and that enables him to become qualified.

### 2.2.2 Vedic View

In the Vedic society a disciple does not usually give initiation when his spiritual master is present. A disciple naturally feels unqualified to take up such a serious responsibility, especially when his *guru* is present; and his natural tendency is to bring the fruits of his preaching to his *guru*. (Since one is not supposed to canvas for his *guru* in ISKCON, it is expected that one should direct the candidates for initiation to Srila Prabhupada and all those who are initiating now.)

There are instances when disciples gave initiation before their *guru's* physical departure:

1. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura mentioned in *Jaiva-dharma* how Paramahansa Premadasa Babaji took his disciple Vaisnava Dasa to his spiritual master, Pradyumna Brahmachari.
2. Ramacandra Kaviraja, a disciple of Srinivasa Acarya, gave initiation when Srinivasa Acarya was present on the planet.

There are many such instances in the scriptures about disciples giving initiation in the presence of *guru*, but that was done only when the disciples were extremely qualified and spiritual masters ordered them to do so. *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* states:

*gurorgurau sannihite guruvad vittimacaret*

"If the spiritual master of the spiritual master is present, then he should be treated as the *guru*." (Hbv. 1.59)

This statement proves that acceptance of disciples in the presence of one's spiritual master has been approved by the scriptures.

In the scriptures there is no specific instruction about a disciple not giving initiation when his *guru* is present. About transgression of etiquette, we found only one verse in the *Hari-bhakti-vilasa*:

*varAottame 'tha ca gurau sati ya visruto 'pa ca  
svadesato 'tha vanyatra nedam karyam subharthina*

"When a superior *guru* (with aforementioned qualities) is present at home or abroad, a person born in a lower caste should not try to bestow his mercy in the form of giving *mantra* if he desires his own good." (Hbv. 1.37)

But this initiation is based on the consideration of *varna*. Regarding this statement, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura mentioned in his *Amrita-pravaha-bhasya* of *Caitanya-caritamrta*:

"Knowledge about Krsna is the ultimate objective of all living entities. Regarding how one can become qualified to give that knowledge it has been concluded that irrespective of one's position as a *brahmana* or *sudra*, householder or *sannyasi*, one can become a *guru* as long as he is well conversant with the knowledge of Krsna. The consideration of *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* is for those Vaisnavas who are concerned about social customs; i.e. for those who want to make a little spiritual progress by following customary social regulations. But those who want to acquire pure devotion after understanding the significance of *vaidhi* and *raganuga-bhakti*, should accept a qualified spiritual master without considering his *varna* and *asrama*." (Cc. Madhya 8.127)

In Srila Prabhupada's teachings also it is clear that the main qualification of a *guru* is his Krsna consciousness. All Vaisnava *acaryas* have been very emphatic about this point.

Although not much has been said about this etiquette, yet it is known to everyone that transgression of etiquette, i.e. to disregard the position of a senior, is deemed to be a great offense. In Vedic culture the position of the spiritual master is considered to be the highest and transgression of etiquette in this relation was always considered to be extremely dangerous.

There are some unusual instances where disciples gave initiation in the presence of *guru* under some special circumstances. We did not research on what those special circumstances were.

### 2.2.3 *Srila Prabhupada's Views*

Srila Prabhupada was very emphatic that a disciple should not initiate in the presence of his *guru*. He told many of his disciples that even though they may be qualified, they should not give initiation as long as the spiritual master is present, because that is the etiquette. He emphatically told that to HH.Jayapataka Maharaja. The day Srila Prabhupada gave *sannyasa* to HH.Bhakti Caru Swami, he told him, "Now that you are a *sannyasi*, you can give initiation. But as long as the spiritual master is alive one doesn't give initiation. That is the etiquette."

He wrote to Tusta Krsna Swami,

"Keep trained up very rigidly and then you are bona fide *guru*, and you can accept disciples on the same principle. But as a matter of etiquette it is the custom that during the lifetime of your spiritual master you bring the prospective disciples to him, and in his absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without any limitation. This is the law of disciplic succession. I want to see my disciples become bona fide Spiritual Master and spread Krsna consciousness very widely, that will make me and Krsna very happy."

In other letters, Srila Prabhupada wrote:

The first thing, I warn Acyutananda, do not try to initiate. You are not in a proper position now to initiate anyone. Besides that, the etiquette is that so long the Spiritual Master is present, all prospective disciples should be brought to him. (Letter to Acyutananda and Jayagovinda, 08-21-1968)

Anyone following the order of Lord Caitanya under the guidance of His bonafide representative, can become a spiritual master and I wish that in my absence all my disciples become the bona fide spiritual master to spread Krsna Consciousness throughout the whole world. (Letter to Madhusudana, 11-02-1967)

So far as your taking initiation from Brahmananda Maharaja, I have no objection, but it is the etiquette that in the presence of one's Spiritual Master, one does not accept disciples. In this connection, Swami Brahmananda may write me and I will instruct him. (Letter to John Milner, 03-24-1971)

Siddhasvarupa does not want to take disciples, neither he should have disciples while I am alive. That is the process. (Letter to Sudevi, 09-15-1972)

From Madhavananda I have heard that there is some worship of yourself by the other devotees. Of course it is proper to offer obeisances to a Vaisnava, but not in the presence of the spiritual master. After the departure of the spiritual master, it will come to that stage, but now wait. Otherwise it will create factions. (Letter to Hamsaduta, 10-01-1974)

Don't become premature *acarya*. First of all follow the orders of *acarya*, and you become mature. Then it is better to become *acarya*. Because we are interested in preparing *acarya*, but the etiquette is, at least for the period the *guru* is present, one should not become *acarya*. Even if he is complete he should not, because the etiquette is, if somebody comes for becoming initiated, it is the duty of such person to bring that prospective candidate to his *acarya*. Not that "Now people are coming to me, so I can become *acarya*." That is *avamanya*. *Navamanyeta karhicit*. Don't transgress this etiquette. *Navamanyeta*. That will be fall down.

Just like during the lifetime of our guru Maharaja, all our Godbrothers now who are acting as *acarya*, they did not do so. That is not etiquette. *Acaryam mam vijaniyat na avaman...* That is insult. So if you insult your *acarya*, then you are finished. *Yasya prasada bhagavat-prasado yasya aprasadat na gatif kuto 'pi*-finished. If you displease your *acarya*, then you are finished. (Cc. 1.13 Lecture, Mayapur, 04-06-1975)

From these quotations it is clear that Srila Prabhupada did not want his disciples to initiate, no matter how qualified they may be, as long as their spiritual master was present. One may question, however, whether these instructions are applicable only to founder-*acaryas* like Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura and Srila Prabhupada. It is a fact that the founder-*acarya* is the *guru* of all members of his institution, and no one gives initiation when he is present, and even after his disappearance the members of the institution become connected to him through *siksa* relationship. But here there is no reason to believe that these instructions of Srila Prabhupada were meant only for a founder-*acarya*. The etiquette he mentioned here is a common Vaisnava etiquette. It is prudent to assume that Srila Prabhupada was speaking as the Founder-*acarya* of ISKCON, and that he is restricting all disciples of all *gurus* in ISKCON from initiating in the presence of their spiritual masters.

Even though in the past spiritual masters have given disciples permission to initiate in their presence, Srila Prabhupada emphatically forbids it as a manner of general etiquette. We see only two places where Srila Prabhupada may have indicated otherwise.<sup>1</sup>

ISKCON is a unique institution in the history of Vaisnavism. We must assume that as Founder-*acarya*, Srila Prabhupada had the vision to set down a law-a law suitable for that unique institution, a law we would transgress at our peril.

A disciple's only duty is to worship and serve his spiritual master. His mind should not be agitated over how he may become a *guru*. A devotee who sincerely wants to make spiritual advancement should try to become a disciple, not a spiritual master.

#### 2.2.4 Notes

By 1975, all of those who have passed all of the above examinations will be specifically empowered to initiate and increase the number of the Krsna Consciousness population. (Letter to Kirtanananda, 01-12-1969)

I want that all of my spiritual sons and daughters will inherit this title of Bhaktivedanta, so that the family transcendental diploma will continue through the generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate disciples.

Maybe by 1975, all of my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the numbers of the generations. That is my program. (Letter to Hamsaduta, 3rd December, 1968)

These quotes raise further questions: In 1968, did Srila Prabhupada expect to leave the planet before 1975? Or was he thinking of creating *rtvik-gurus* who would initiate on his behalf by 1975? Whatever the answer may be, when 1975 arrived, Srila Prabhupada took no steps to give his disciples the responsibility of accepting their own disciples. Indeed, his statements on this issue in 1975 (Letter to Tusta Krsna and lecture in Mayapur) leave no doubt that His Divine Grace gave no authorization for disciples to initiate as long as he remained on the planet. In logic, later statements supersede earlier ones in importance.

#### 2.3 ISKCON's Position Statement on the Environment

Fostering a more simple and natural way of life is one of the founding principles of ISKCON. The members of the Society are therefore committed to helping solve the planet's environmental problems. These include water pollution, air pollution, toxic waste, nuclear and chemical accidents, destruction of wildlife, and desertification.

The environmental crisis is a product of a society that has become overly dependent upon destructive industrial technology. This dependency is rooted in reductionist science, which has removed God and the soul from the forefront of human concern. When people forget that nature is the property of God, they are driven to exploit it unlimitedly for their own material gratification.

#### 2.4 Official Position Statement on ISKCON's Relationship with Hinduism

"The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), also known as the Hare Krsna movement, was founded by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. ISKCON follows the teachings of the Vedas and the Vedic scriptures, including *Bhagavad-gita* and the *Bhagavata Purana*; it teaches and practices Vaisnavism, or devotion to God in the supreme personal aspect of Radha-Krsna. ISKCON receives these teachings through the preceptorial line known as the *Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya sampradaya*. This well-established traditional line descends through the respected teacher Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu (AD 1486-1534), the full incarnation of Sri Krsna, whose philosophy and practices unify the teachings of all four major Vaisnava Acaryas: Sri Madhvacharya, Sri Ramanujacharya, Sri Visnusvami, and Sri Nimbarkacharya.

"ISKCON embraces the chanting of the holy name of Krsna as a primary practice and accepts the concepts of transmigration, *karma*, vegetarianism (*ahimsa*), worship of the Deity (*sri vigraha*), and the preceptor-disciple (*guru-sisya*) relationship. Initiated members vow to refrain from gambling, illicit sex, intoxicants (including coffee, tea, and cigarettes), and non-vegetarian food.

"In this way ISKCON faithfully continues the core traditions of the Hindu faith. ISKCON's teachings are non-sectarian and non-denominational, for they are not limited to any particular historical religion. Vaisnavism inculcates the essential and universal principle of all religion. That principle, called *sanatana-dharma* in Sanskrit, denotes the natural and eternal activity of all living beings-loving devotional service to the one Supreme Personality of Godhead."(91)

### 3 Sample Recommendation Forms for Initiations

#### 3.1 First Initiation

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

Center:

Date:

#### Official Recommendation for First Initiation

To (Name of guru):

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.  
It is my pleasure to recommend (name of candidate)

for first initiation by you. I find that he/she has fulfilled the necessary qualifications for initiation to the best of my understanding. Specifically, for the last twelve months he/she has been engaged in favorable devotional service, has chanted sixteen rounds of *japa* daily, and has adhered to the four regulative principles. He/she is sufficiently knowledgeable in the philosophy of Krsna consciousness and the structure and purpose of ISKCON for initiation, as evidenced by passing an examination as prescribed under ISKCON Law. The candidate has accepted your shelter for at least six months. These qualifications have either been observed by me personally or I have heard of them from sources I know to be reliable.  
Your servant,

Name

Title

### 3.2 Second Initiation

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

Center:

Date:

#### Official Recommendation for Second Initiation

To (Name of guru):

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.  
It is my pleasure to recommend (name of candidate)

for second initiation by you. I find that he/she has fulfilled the necessary qualifications for this initiation to the best of my understanding. Specifically, for the last twelve months he/she has been engaged in favorable devotional service, has chanted sixteen rounds of *japa* daily, and has adhered to the four regulative principles. It has been more than one year since he/she received first initiation. These qualifications have either been observed by me personally or I have heard of them from sources I know to be reliable.  
Your servant,

Name

Title

### 4 Sample Letter of Censure

A letter of Censure may be worded as follows:

"Dear \_\_\_\_\_ Maharaja/Prabhu,

Please understand that an ISKCON devotee is a member of Srila Prabhupada's family and as such has the duty to act in a befitting Krsna conscious manner demonstrating concern for your own and others spiritual welfare and for the well-being of ISKCON. Due to the reasons stated below you have been censured. A censure expresses disapproval of your conduct. A censure is an official note of caution. Please take due notice thereof and rectify the situation.

[insert reasons for censure]

[name and signature(s) of censuring authority]"