



This is a commentary on the recent events surrounding Prabhavisnu Swami's fall from grace. I concur with the analysis and conclusions of several Sun contributors who have commented over the last few days on the letter Prabhavisnu wrote, so I'm not going to focus on that aspect of the drama today. I would like to comment on what hasn't yet been addressed, and that is, how Prabhavisnu's situation can be seen in the context of diksa initiation in ISKCON. This siddhantic issue is one of the highest principles at play here.

Individuals who are involved in falldowns like Prabhavisnu's are the personification of a flawed siddhantic understanding of the process of initiation. We have been exposed to many quotes in sastra and instructions directly from Srila Prabhupada in regards to the necessity of accepting a Spiritual Master and the importance of being connected to the sampradaya. However, due to the very strong tendencies produced by our conditioning, there is a phenomenon that takes place after the departure of great Acaryas - the pure devotees in our disciplic succession. After they depart, the inevitable evolution towards religiosity takes place. I have already written extensively on this subject, but it is again directly relevant to the current situation.

This phenomenon is especially evident in the case of the three previous Sampradaya Acaryas, who have been sent in order to fulfill Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's prediction of Krsna consciousness being spread throughout the world. In order to accomplish that mission, by their divine wisdom they concluded that the facility they required was that of forming an institution. This is understandable, given that spreading Krsna consciousness 'throughout the world' meant primarily taking it to the West, out of India, and in the West, institutional organization is the norm. During their lila periods, these institutions served the Sampradaya Acaryas well in terms of organizing their mission. But as we know, they also warned us that particularly during the periods between the personal presence of a great Acarya, the trend is towards transforming a spiritual mission into a vehicle for religiosity. And that trend is escalated on account of being in the context of an institution. At present, this phenomenon is unfolding in the institution established by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada -- the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Religiosity, especially in this context, comes about partly as a result of the fact that some of those holding power within the institution are granted power and position on an institutional basis rather than on the basis of spiritual qualification. This is true in the case of ISKCON's GBC and their various ministers and underlings. On the other side of the equation are the sannyasis and gurus. Sometimes one personality manages to secure several of these positions at once. But if their spiritual potency doesn't qualify them to hold these positions, if they attempt to maintain these positions without the potency to come up to the standards by which the positions are defined, then they fall back. So in order to keep the power they've become addicted to and have come to identify with as part of their false ego, they are naturally inclined to conclude that forming a religion is the easiest way to hold power.

ISKCON itself has done this as an institution. There are no sastric references or standards reinforcing institutions, so ISKCON has essentially invented their own concept of how the GBC functions as the Absolute Managing Authority. Of course, their definition of management is both spiritual and material, meaning that they control everything. But this is not what Srila Prabhupada meant when he referred to them as the 'ultimate managing authority'. Nonetheless, they take one or two statements made by Srila Prabhupada, out of context, and use them as the basis for the position they now trumpet, as the absolute power within the institution.

On the other side of the equation, the guru and sannyasi positions are backed-up by sastra, and there are qualifications, definitions and pre-requisites set down for these positions. The problem lies with the ability of the average person, especially neophytes or newcomers, to analyze or appraise some personality and determine whether or not they come up to the pre-requisite spiritual qualifications in order to hold these positions. Krsna consciousness is a science, and one of the huge advantages of being part of our Sampradaya is having access to the pure siddhanta presented by the Sampradaya Acaryas. So we do have the knowledge, we do know the specific symptoms and qualifications and the scientific analysis with which we can properly discern. If we're honest and take the time to apply our intelligence to appraising the circumstance, we can tell if someone is properly acting like a guru or a swami.

It appears that in Kaliyuga, and especially when reinforced by an institutional paradigm, the average person and the less intelligent prefer to just acquiesce to the circumstances created by the leaders of the institution. They are happy to be told that, "We as the leaders, as the Ultimate Managing Authority, have determined that this person is a qualified guru, a qualified sannyasi, and they need permission from the GBC in order to hold these positions. We have a Ministry of Sannyasa, we are the ones who have intimate association with these persons, and we have pre-qualified them. We monitor their activities in order to give the rank and file, our membership, the reassurance that these persons are living up to sastric qualifications and the Founder-Acarya's expectations."

Of course, that is not at all what's happening. Not in the case of Prabhavisnu, or in so many other cases. Prabhavisnu is just the latest person to come to the surface and be exposed. But every reader, depending on what region they're from, has most likely had personal experience with a similar circumstance. Here in the Pacific Northwest we had Jagadisa, who could have written the very same letter as Prabhavisnu. It's a cookie-cutter mentality. Then we had Vipramukhya Swami, who did the very same thing. Each circumstance is individualized, of course, but one thing is always the same – these individuals are suffering, and so are their disappointed followers. With some of the fallen leaders, the suffering may be less obvious than with others. In the case of Jagadisa, it's not hard to see that he's seriously suffering reactions from the many offensive activities that caused him to be put in the circumstance he's in.

There are many more high profile falldowns we could mention, but I don't want to dwell on that. What I want to bring to the reader's attention is that in most cases, these falldowns are easily detectable well in advance if one is a serious follower of Krsna consciousness as it is presented by the most recent manifestation of our Sampradaya, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Our Sampradaya is continuing on since the time of Lord Brahma, and remains active on account of the presence of our Sampradaya Acaryas. Srila Prabhupada, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati and his predecessor Acaryas have handed down a list of the great personalities considered to be on the highest echelons of our sampradaya. They are actually the personalities who have maintained our sampradaya. Our Srila Prabhupada is now 32nd on that list – the most recent name to be added to the List of 32.

Now, the question of initiation or accepting a Spiritual Master hinges on our appreciation and understanding, and our commitment to following in the footsteps of these exalted Acaryas, namely the Sampradaya Acaryas. None of these great Acaryas in our Sampradaya, including Srila Prabhupada, advocated stopping the traditional process of diksa initiation, like the Rtviks suggest. They presented definitions not only for diksa gurus, but for siksa gurus, vartma-pradarsika gurus, etc., and they focused on the importance of understanding sastra as presented by the great Acaryas, and following the process that has been produced by the Acaryas for sadhana. So our sampradaya, like all bona fide sampradayas, is running on two rails: siddhanta and sadhana. And religiosity is de-railing the spiritual mission -- the true process of making advancement in Krsna consciousness. In ISKCON, religiosity has crept into both the philosophy and the sadhana process, and thus the Founder-Acarya's mission is devolving.

Srila Prabhupada was fully aware, just as Srila Bhaktisiddhanta was, of [the inevitable transformation of their transcendental mission into a religion](#)

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even before their physical departure. They tried to stop this inevitable force transforming the Krsna consciousness movement into the Hare Krishna Religion. One of the ways in which Srila Prabhupada tried to do so was by decentralization. On a number of occasions he had to restrain the GBC from trying to centralize, becoming what they are today – a bureaucracy, a governmental body which, in its illusion, thinks it can control everything and is qualified to do so. Of course, the restraint that Srila Prabhupada introduced is now being ignored, and although the GBC do their best to give everyone the impression that ISKCON is not devolving into a religion, that is exactly what's happening.

On the other side of the equation is the fact that in India, even with its multitude of various religions and cults of different philosophical bent, the religions for the most part are based on the leader/guru having their asrama and followers. And of course, that's the way the Gaudiya Math devolved into what Srila Prabhupada was very critical of. Each guru had their little math, and they were not cooperating together to push on Krsna consciousness, for obvious reasons. So the whole guru/disciple aspect is also a form of religion. It's not some great solution for avoiding the devolution into religiosity.

Within ISKCON today we find two major camps. One camp wants ISKCON to evolve into a religion that's more western oriented, while the other wants to devolve into a religion that's eastern oriented. We have some maha-gurus who, only for external show, give the impression to their followers that they're part of ISKCON, part of the GBC, but in reality they have their own separate organizations and are loyal to none but themselves.

Some of the less prominent ISKCON gurus tend to be institutionally oriented. They tell their followers they're just being initiated into the institution, and they put the emphasis on the GBC. They're basically just performing a ceremonial function on behalf of the institution, although they pontificate that it's all on behalf of Srila Prabhupada. But of course, the GBC is standing between the guru and Srila Prabhupada, and it is the GBC who is collectively determining what

aspect of Prabhupada's teachings the guru can or must follow.

So this is the circumstance. The fact is that initiation, on the highest and purest platform, means connecting the individual follower to the sampradaya. You are being initiated into the sampradaya, not into ISKCON, not into some particular unqualified swami/guru's interpretation of sastra. The Sampradaya Acaryas are being sent by Krsna, by Sri Krsna Caitanya in our case, and they come to help the practitioners navigate their way through the incredible confusion of Kaliyuga and make advancement in Krsna consciousness. In our case, we are incredibly fortunate to have available to us the teachings of the most recent Sampradaya Acarya. Even though the institution that he originally set-up has made unnecessary changes to his literatures, still, the original books are there. The message itself hasn't been altered to such a degree that it's not possible to understand the meaning. Srila Prabhupada's audio is also available – or at least some of it. There is the serious problem of original audio tapes that have never been released, because the GBC hasn't put any emphasis or resources into making available all of Srila Prabhupada's audio.

But regardless of their attempts to change and cover over and smother the true message, it's still available. Srila Prabhupada's mission and mood can be understood and can be appreciated and realized by anyone who applies themselves sincerely to understanding who is Srila Prabhupada, who is the Sampradaya Acarya, distinguishing him from all the others who, although they may be honest representatives, must admit their very much lower status of spiritual advancement. As long as they are sincerely trying themselves to understand the Sampradaya Acaryas, and are willing to help others do so, they set an example to be followed.

Then there are the others, the most dangerous actors in this circumstance -- the ones who are pretending to be on a much higher level than they actually are. Those who are presenting themselves as pure representatives of the Sampradaya Acarya, when they're not. Like Prabhavisnu, the latest example, they are all eventually exposed. And this raises the question:

at what point in time did Prabhavisnu become unqualified, or disqualified? He's not honest enough to admit this, and disclose the details about the point at which he ceased following Srila Prabhupada's directions and started deviating. It certainly wasn't at the point when his disciple recently saw him walking down the streets of Bangkok with a woman on his arm. The point of deviation obviously took place years and years ago, and there are rumors of Prabhavisnu's earlier Bangkok pastimes which seem to substantiate that.

The real question that arises – and it should arise in the minds of Prabhavisnu's followers and disciples, and in the minds of disciples of other gurus who haven't as yet been exposed – "Am I really part of the Sampradaya? Have I really been initiated into, and have I been admitted by the true Acaryas, into the Sampradaya?" This is the question that everyone has to come to grips with.

If you as a follower or a potential follower are sincerely interested in making spiritual advancement in Krsna consciousness, but you haven't taken the time or dedicated yourself to understanding the teachings of the Sampradaya Acarya, trying to pick-up the mood of the Sampradaya Acarya, then that's the reason you ended up getting initiated by one of these gurus in the first place. If you had known, if you had pre-qualified yourself to be a disciple by understanding who the Sampradaya Acaryas are, what is their mood, then you would have been able to determine that this person is a pretender, a cheater, a fool, a rascal.

But instead, the members of the ISKCON society, and the GBC as they stand today, just want to put Srila Prabhupada on a big pedestal. They want to elevate him to a Jesus-like position, but they don't really want to understand who Srila Prabhupada is. To this day, the GBC still haven't assigned a proper philosophical designation to His Divine Grace. In other words, they aren't able to make a clear philosophical statement about just who this exalted personality, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, is. And of course, they haven't recognized him as a Sampradaya Acarya – as the most recent member of a rarified group of only 32 Sampradaya

Acaryas going back to the time of Lord Brahma.

The reason for this is that in the minds of many of these gurus, they want you to believe that they are themselves pure devotees. The GBC wants you to believe that they're the ultimate spiritual and managing authority. The tendency in Kaliyuga, and the tendency of the mind is to take the path of least resistance. It's a lot easier than taking on and embracing the challenge of understanding Srila Prabhupada... reading his books regularly and praying to Srila Prabhupada to really appreciate and understand who he is. And of course, that goes for the other pure Sampradaya Acaryas, such as Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, and so on.

If we don't look at it from this perspective, in my opinion, there's no hope. Many devotees have challenged me on what is my opinion on guru-tattva, and how do I see the parampara continuing, if not through Rtvik initiations. I think I've made myself clear by way of my Sampradaya Acarya thesis. In the tendency towards religiosity, one of the symptoms or traits is an over-emphasis on diksa as being the only means for entering the sampradaya, but that is a very ceremonial and religious approach. At the same time, many of these challengers de-emphasize siksa and vartma-pradarsika. They only have eyes for diksa, although ours is primarily a siksa line.

During Srila Prabhupada's lila, he basically set-up a siksa network, and he empowered and reinforced that network. It may surprise a lot of readers to know that especially in the beginning, this network was not based on sannyasis, or even the GBC's for that matter, but on the local temple authorities -- the temple presidents. During Srila Prabhupada's lila days, the temple presidents were primarily the siksa gurus. They organized the preaching efforts that recruited people, they maintained the preaching centers, and they trained you up to the point where they pre-qualified you as to whether you should be recommended for initiation by Srila Prabhupada, or not. They engaged you in Krsna's service. If that isn't a siksa guru, what is?

Of course, in the temples there were many siksa gurus, and you got trained up quickly to be a guru. You went out on the street and preached to people, or you trained them in the Bhakta Programs; you trained them how to cook, how to do Deity worship. You became the guru, but it was all overseen by a Sampradaya Acarya. Srila Prabhupada understood the principle of the need for guru, the need for leadership. Now these gurus and authorities were very neophyte, and unqualified in a sense, but they were dedicated to the Sampradaya Acarya. They tried their best, sincerely, to please Srila Prabhupada. And because the disciples or the members in the temple understood Prabhupada through his teachings, they themselves were able to determine whether their leaders were following, or not. There's been many a circumstance where they got rid of their deviating leader, and it wasn't a huge problem like it is today.

There's no question that the Sampradaya Acaryas have spoken very clearly on the fact that a true Spiritual Master has to be a very advanced devotee, that's the ideal scenario. If there aren't a lot of very advanced devotees at any given time who can offer diksa, then we have the Sampradaya Acaryas. And the qualification for any diksa or siksa guru is how closely they're coming to the teachings, the mood and the example of the most recent Sampradaya Acarya. Are they introducing you to the Sampradaya Acarya? Are they qualifying you to be a member of our Sampradaya?

Sri Krsna within everyone's heart has many, many options and opportunities to introduce you to the Sampradaya – not simply through a diksa guru. Ideally yes, the diksa guru should be perfect and pure, but even if by dint of circumstance, all you had was the teachings through Srila Prabhupada's books, then you could still be a member of the Sampradaya, and essentially be initiated. Not diksa initiated, but initiated into the Sampradaya through siksa.

Ideally, the whole program has been set-up by the mercy of Sri Krsna. Through the vehicle of his pure devotee Spiritual Master Sampradaya Acarya, we have temples, and a program arranged to do what it was doing during his lila period. But if you didn't have that -- if you didn't

## Hare Krishna Centre - Leicester, UK - The Latest Victim of Religiosity

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have a totally pure, highly qualified diksa guru and you didn't have all the things that could be there (and would be there in ISKCON today, if the leaders of the institution hadn't devolved it into a religion) -- you can't demand it. You can't insist on having something that simply is not available. You can't demand of Krsna, "I want a diksa guru, and I want him to be an uttama-adhikari. And I want him now." What gives you the right to do that? What qualifies you to get such a person for a Spiritual Master? What kind of karma do you have that qualifies you in this way?

Take what Krsna gives you. He's given you Srila Prabhupada's books, he's given you many opportunities to hear from Srila Prabhupada, through his audio recordings, through his books, and of course, through sincere followers of the Sampradaya Acarya who are willing to help you and share with you. But you have to know what the goal is. You have to know what initiation is. And you cannot take the easy way out, the lazy way out, or you'll never get to the goal.