

Prabhupada's ISKCON is Beautiful and Perfect!

I often write to simply sort out my own thoughts and get them off my chest, so to speak. Recently I came across the following letter I wrote a long time ago. Although it is just my own thoughts, maybe others will be inspired by it, so I am presenting it here:

"As it is said by Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, saksad-dharitvena samasta-sastraih: a spiritual master, or the parampara-acarya, should be respected exactly like the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (SB 4.22.4)

Here we see the difference between a conditioned soul (or even an advanced devotee) and Srila Prabhupada. We must respect all devotees even though they are conditioned souls, to one degree or another, but it says here that "the spiritual master, or the parampara-acarya should be respected exactly like the Supreme Personality of Godhead". It is not proper to put a conditioned soul in this position and thus artificially give him (or her) the respect or worship equal to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This will simply cause a disturbance.

Artificial or blind following can and will create havoc in the world.

We must be honest with ourselves and others regarding the actual level of advancement we and others are at. This is simply part of being honest and one of the main qualities of a Vaisnava, sadhu, or brahmana is honesty. As King Prithu has said in the Srimad Bhagavatam 4.15.22, "O gentle suta, magadha and other devotee offering prayers, the qualities of which you have spoken are not distinct in me. Why then should you praise me for all these qualities when I do not shelter these features? I do not wish for these words meant for me to go in vain, but it is better that they be offered to someone else." In the next purport after this verse Srila Prabhupada clearly warns, "If a man who does not factually possess the attributes of a great personality engages his followers in praising him with the expectation that such attributes will develop in the future, that sort of praise is actually an insult."(SB 4.15.23)

Often times I see devotees that are acting in the position of GBC or initiating spiritual master in Prabhupada's ISKCON and do not stop their followers or disciples from offering them very pompous praise and glorifications.

It's none of my business what others do because it is not my position to criticize or correct a devotee that is more "senior" than me. The thing that really does get to me is when I meet devotees that have taken initiation from some ISKCON guru who is a conditioned soul and they emphasize this guru and his mood more than Srila Prabhupada and his mood. This really makes me fried! Unfortunately I see this happening more and more as time goes on.

How can anyone claim to be in ISKCON and change the mood that the Founder-Acharya of ISKCON, Srila Prabhupada, worked so hard to establish, what to speak of allowing the devotees they initiate to take shelter of them more than they do Srila Prabhupada?

Anyone who was in ISKCON before 1977 and even slightly thereafter knows very well that the mood in ISKCON was very different than it is now. The preaching spirit and going out on daily sankirtana for like 8 hours a day was just the way things were. This was what it meant to be in ISKCON as a disciple of Srila Prabhupada. The Spirit of sankirtana was ablaze like a thousand burning suns. Now preaching/sankirtana is something you might do a few times a year if you are living in the temple and don't have a full-time job, and if you get really fired up and if it is a nice day outside.

By the way, sankirtana DOES NOT mean conning people by asking for donations for "food-for-life" (for me and my wife) and in return giving them stickers or hats with slogans like "Party till you puke" or "F_ck you you f_cking f_uck" etc., like I have seen so many "devotees" doing. Cheating people out of their money and using that money to live a very nice and comfortable life for their selves and family and calling that sankirtana is simply a kick in Lord Caitanya's and Srila Prabhupada's face.

Sankirtana means distributing Prabhupada's books and doing public Harinamas! Oh yeah, and Harinama does not mean chanting the demigod's names as we are now seeing many "devotees" doing in public yoga studios and festivals like the so-called "Bhakti" fest. Harinama means chanting Lord Hari's names.

Once a devotee asked Prabhupada, "Srila Prabhupada, when you are not present with us, how is it possible to receive instructions, for example, on questions that may arise? Prabhupada's reply was, "Answers are there in my books." (From a Morning Walk At Cheviot Hills Golf Course on May 13, 1973, in Los Angeles)

So here is the answer, right where Prabhupada said the answers will be - in his books: the solution to this problem that has become like a virus in Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON, is we must actually start distinguishing between a conditioned soul and our divine master and parampara-acarya Srila Prabhupada.

It must be noted that wherever there is an instruction there is also a prohibition. The instruction is that "a spiritual master, or the parampara-acarya, should be respected exactly like the Supreme Personality of Godhead." The obvious prohibition is naturally -- if one is not on this level, simply rubber-stamping, lavishly praising, or following them even when their mood differs from Srila Prabhupada is prohibited. We must be honest and clear about the level of advancement we are at and the level of advancement others are at, whether they have been dubbed to be a GBC, or yes, even an ISKCON initiating guru. If they are a conditioned soul (very conditioned or a little conditioned) then we must call a spade a spade and stay faithful to Srila Prabhupada and follow Srila Prabhupada, not that conditioned soul.

Nowadays it is commonly opined that if one is rubber-stamped by the GBC as an ISKCON guru then he is, as if magically and instantaneously transformed, all of a sudden not a conditioned soul anymore, but is now all of a sudden as good as God.

These erroneous but popular outlooks must be smashed and we must cultivate what Srila Prabhupada wanted -- "Krishna Consciousness Movement is for training men to be **independently thoughtful** and competent" (Bombay 22 December, 1972) not blind sudra flunky followers that simply know how to praise whoever they are told to praise. And if that conditioned soul guru ("conditioned soul guru" - sounds odd doesn't it...) falls down or has difficulties, half his blind followers fall down with him because that's all they were ever trained to be, blind followers, and a society of the blind leading the blind is not ISKCON, it is simply a con!

Those leaders and gurus that are allowing their disciples to insult them by their improper and invalid praise must be **immediately stopped** if they want to claim to be in ISKCON.

So the solution and positive alternative is that if we claim to be in ISKCON then we must follow our parampara-acharya, our ISKCON acharya's mood, no one else's. Srila Prabhupada wanted

us to be a big family with him in the center just like when he was personally present, not to splinter and divide ourselves up into a bunch of small groups based around who performed one's initiation ceremony. One of his last requests was, "Don't make me small." (July 17, 1977, Vrndavana).

So what has changed?

If some devotees want to establish a different mood or change the emphasis or protocols of Prabhupada's ISKCON from how Prabhupada had it, with the emphasis on sankirtana and with Srila Prabhupada in the center, to anything else, then that is fine, it's a free world -- make your own society where you can be the acharya. But don't do it in Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON where he is the parampara-acarya.

NOTE: Prabhupada in the center means Prabhupada is the one glorified, is the one devotees are directed to for their personal realizations -- via his books, audio, personal prayer, etc., Prabhupada is the one we pray to and take shelter of (not a conditioned soul -- not even a conditioned soul that the conditioned souls in the GBC have decided to vote in as an official ISKCON initiating guru (whatever that means)), it is Prabhupada's mood that is the standard. If this is not the case then it is *not* ISKCON, it is not the philosophy that is presented in Prabhupada's books.

I don't care what you write on a sign and stick in the ground in the front of the property or what the legal documents say. Legal jargon, rubber stamps and big big signboards are not what makes one ISKCON, a follower of Prabhupada, or much less a central figure of worship. On the contrary, one only proves oneself to be a Kali-cela, a follower of Kali.

"Bhaktivinoda Thakura therefore says that such a pseudo Vaisnava is not a Vaisnava at all but a disciple of Kali-yuga. A disciple of Kali cannot become an acarya by the decision of some high court. Mundane votes have no jurisdiction to elect a Vaisnava acarya. A Vaisnava acarya is self-effulgent, and there is no need for any court judgment. A false acarya may try to override a Vaisnava by a high-court decision, but Bhaktivinoda Thakura says that he is nothing but a disciple of Kali-yuga." (Madhya 1.220)

If in the whole world, all the leaders in ISKCON but one, and all the ISKCON temples but one, have to leave and start their own society due to not following this standard, then good! Better to have only one real ISKCON temple in the world with only one real devotee following Prabhupada's mood then to have a worldwide organization of who knows what.

Prabhupada said to boil the milk, not water it down.

Hare Krishna Centre - Leicester, UK - Beautiful and Perfect

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All glories to Srila Prabhupada and all glories to those that are actually in Prabhupada's ISKCON because they stick to Srila Prabhupada's mood, recognize their own actual level of advancement, and do not accept praise or position that should be offered to only Srila Prabhupada, and are not concocting or changing anything.

Hare Krishna!

Thanks for taking your time to read this article. May it inspire us all to tighten and deepen our own personal fidelity to Srila Prabhupada.