

March 9, 2013

To the Leaders of the Bangalore Group of Temples:

With A Hope of Settlement

Dear Prabhus,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is documented that on July 7, 1977, Srila Prabhupada discussed how devotees who had been waiting for initiation could be initiated during his illness. At that time, Srila Prabhupada named specific senior disciples who would initiate on his behalf during his illness.¹ Two days later, the July 9 letter was written to inform devotees about the July 7 conversation and these instructions of Srila Prabhupada.

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

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

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

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

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

On this basis we open the doors of our society and our hearts to you. We believe that the mediation process, which has been conducted in a fair and reasonable manner,

¹ Room conversation, 770707r2.vrn

can lead to a suitable agreement between the Bureau of ISKCON India and the Bangalore Group.

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

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

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

Your servants,

ISKCON GBC and Members of the Bureau of ISKCON India