ISKCON GOVERNING BODY COMMISSION SOCIETY

Registration Number S/74662 under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961
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http://gbc.iskcon.org/

MINUTES OF THE MIDTERM GENERAL MEETING

TIRUPATI, AP, OCTOBER 11-17, 2019

Section 200: Governing Body Commission

204.4: GBC Meetings

Mid-term General Meeting 2020
[Action order]

Resolved:

That the Midterm General Meeting of the ISKCON GBC Society shall take place from October 22-28, 2020, at ISKCON Pune, India:

18 October	Org Dev	
19 October	Org Dev	
20 October	Org Dev	
21 October	Org Dev/EC	
22 October	GBC Plenary on Org Dev Matters	
23 October	GBC Plenary on Org Dev Matters	
24 October	GBC Plenary on Org Dev Matters	
25 October	GBC Plenary on Org Dev Matters	
26 October	Special Topic	(Rama Vijayotsava)
27 October	½ Day Special Topic & ½ Day GBC Plenary	(Ekadasi)
28 October	GBC Plenary (Final Day)	
31 October	Karttika Begins	

205.3 GBC areas & zones, deployment & zonal configuration

Identifying GBC Areas — 2019
[Action order]

Whereas Resolution 306 of the Midterm General Meeting 2018, Identifying GBC Areas, stated that:

> *"The GBC wishes to adopt a more rational, effective approach to the deploying of its Zonal Secretaries, as indicated in the '307: Directional statement on GBC deployment — 2016' resolution;*
>
> *"Whereas the first step requires identifying coherent "GBC Areas" (independently from considerations on who may be assigned there at present);*

“Whereas such GBC Areas should be based on criteria such as geographical contiguity, size and nature of ISKCON presence, size of the local population, potential for expansion, local culture (language, religion, etc.);
“Whereas the following GBC Areas fulfill the above general guidelines and characteristics.”

Resolved:

That the following territories are accepted as “GBC Areas”:

GBC Area One:
Belarus
Russia:

- Arkhangelsk Region
- Belgorod Region
- Bryansk Region
- Chuvash Republic
- Ivanovo Region
- Kaliningrad Region
- Kaluga Region
- Karelia, Republic of
- Komi Republic
- Kostroma Region
- Kursk Region
- Leningrad Region
- Lipetsk Region
- Mari El Republic
- Moscow
- Moscow Region
- Murmansk Region
- Nenets Autonomous District
- Nizhny Novgorod Region
- Novgorod Region
- Oryol Region
- Pskov Region
- Ryazan Region
- Saint Petersburg
- Smolensk Region
- Tambov Region
- Tatarstan, Republic of
- Tula Region
- Tver Region
- Vladimir Region
- Vologda Region
- Voronezh Region
- Yaroslavl Region

GBC Area Two:
Armenia
Azerbaijan
Georgia
Kirghizstan
Kazakhstan
Moldova

Russia:

- Adygea, Republic of
- Astrakhan Region
- Bashkortostan, Republic of (south)
- Chechen Republic
- Crimea, Republic of[d]
- Dagestan, Republic of
- Ingushetia, Republic of
- Kabardino-Balkar Republic
- Kalmykia, Republic of
- Karachay-Cherkess Republic
- Krasnodar Territory
- Mordovia, Republic of
- North Ossetia-Alania, Republic of
- Orenburg Region
- Penza Region
- Rostov Region
- Samara Region
- Saratov Region
- Sevastopol
- Stavropol Territory
- Ulyanovsk Region
- Volgograd Region

Tajikistan
Turkmenistan
Ukraine
Uzbekistan

GBC Area Three:
Russia:

- Altai Territory
- Altai Republic
- Bashkortostan, Republic of (North)
- Chelyabinsk Region
- Kemerovo Region
- Khanty–Mansi Autonomous District – Yugra
- Kirov Region
- Kurgan Region
- Novosibirsk Region
- Omsk Region
- Perm Territory
- Sverdlovsk Region
- Tomsk Region
- Tyumen Region
- Udmurt Republic
- Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District

GBC Area Four:
Mongolia
Russia:

- Amur Region
- Buryatia, Republic of
- Chita region (Zabaykalsky Territory)

- Chukotka Autonomous District
- Evenk Autonomous District
- Irkutsk Region
- Jewish Autonomous Region
- Kamchatka Territory
- Khabarovsk Territory
- Khakassia, Republic of
- Krasnoyarsk Territory
- Magadan Region
- Primorsky Territory
- Sakha (Yakutia) Republic
- Sakhalin Region
- Taimyr Dolgano-Nenets Autonomous
- Tuva Republic

The configuration of a “GBC Area” can be modified by a simple majority vote by the GBC.

Section 400: ISKCON Ministries and Committees

437.1 GBC Organizational Development Committee

Charter Model Statement — 2019
[Statement]

Resolved:

That the GBC approves the general direction of the ‘Charter Model’ approach and authorizes and encourages the GBC Organizational Development Committee to conduct pilot efforts in the fields of:

1. Preliminary communication and consultation with relevant and receptive constituencies
2. Funding for the initial phase

as well as to continue conducting legal feasibility studies.

The committee shall formally report their observations and experiences at the 2020 GBC Midterm General Meeting

Section 700: Gurus and Disciples

701.2 ISKCON Spiritual Masters

Conditions for Second-generation *Diksa-gurus* — 2019
[Governing Law]

Whereas at the 2019 AGM, it was resolved that, under certain conditions, disciples can give initiation in the physical presence of their spiritual masters;

Whereas this resolution called for the Guru Services Committee to develop a more detailed process of implementation;

Resolved:

That the responsibility of ensuring that all conditions for Second-generation *Diksa-gurus* as listed in resolution "701.2, Conditions for Second-generation Diksa-gurus — 2019" of the 2019 Annual General Meeting, rests with the respective Local Area Councils nominating such candidates.

701.6 ISKCON spiritual masters

Vaisnavi Diksa-gurus — 2019

[Governing Law]

Whereas in 2009 the GBC Resolved:

1. *The GBC accepts the philosophical conclusion presented in the SAC's Female Diksa Guru Paper that a mature, qualified, female devotee may accept the role of an initiating spiritual master.*
2. *The GBC Body authorizes local area committees to put forward for approval as initiating guru any devotee in their area, male or female, who is qualified according to existing GBC Law.*

Whereas, since then, the GBC has worked to achieve consensus and implementation of this resolution;

Whereas after much study, dialogue, and research, the GBC has come to the following conclusion.

Resolved:

1. Vaisnavis are eligible to give diksa in ISKCON provided that they:

    a. Meet all the qualifications listed for ISKCON diksa-guru applicants;
    b. Are at least 55 years of age and in a stable family situation, living under the protection of a husband, elder son or son-in-law, qualified householder couple or senior Vaisnava or Vaisnavi sanga;
    c. Receive written permission from the appropriate Regional Body or its equivalent, or National Council, to give diksa in that particular part of the world.

2. After five years the GBC shall review this resolution to determine if the number of Vaisnavis initiating in any region or as a total for the world is in keeping with Srila Prabhupada's indication of "…not so many".

This resolution lifts the abeyance on this matter stated in resolution 310 of 2015.

701.6 ISKCON Spiritual Masters

Statement on the Resolution Allowing Vaisnavis to Serve as *Diksa-gurus* in ISKCON — 2019

[Statement]

> *"Just adhere yourself to the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Then you become spiritual master. That's all. So I hope that all of you, men, women, boys and girls, become spiritual master and follow this principle. Spiritual master — simply, sincerely, follow the principles and speak to the general public. Then Krsna immediately becomes your favorite. Krsna does not become your favorite; you become Krsna's favorite. (...) So if you want to become recognized by Krsna very quickly, you take up this process of becoming spiritual*

master, present the Bhagavad-gita as it is, your life is perfect." (Sri Vyasa-puja Lecture — August 22, 1973, London)

"... as far as Krsna consciousness is concerned, everyone is capable of becoming a spiritual master because knowledge in Krsna consciousness is on the platform of the spirit soul. (…) The word guru is equally applicable to the vartma-pradarsaka-guru, siksa-guru and diksa-guru. Unless we accept the principle enunciated by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, this Krsna consciousness movement cannot spread all over the world". (Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila 8.128 purport)

On October 15, 2019, the Governing Body Commission of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (GBC) at their Mid-term General Meeting passed a resolution allowing, under certain conditions, mature and qualified Vaisnavis to serve as diksa-gurus in ISKCON.

The primary bases for this decision are the expressed desires and instructions on guru qualifications of ISKCON's Founder-Acarya, His Divine Grace Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

This resolution concludes over 15 years of the GBC's thorough research and in-depth discussions of:

- The letter and spirit of Srila Prabhupada's numerous instructions on the subject of the importance and qualifications of various types of spiritual masters for ISKCON as a worldwide movement;
- Srila Prabhupada's expressed desire that all his "sons and daughters" become spiritual masters;
- Srila Prabhupada's well-documented personal dealings with and engagement of his female disciples in various roles of spiritual responsibility;
- Srila Prabhupada's approach to the balance between spiritual and societal roles of Vaisnavas and Vaisnavis in the context of pure devotional service;
- As appropriate, the broader historical and sastic evidence in regards to diksa in Lord Caitanya's Gaudiya-Vaisnava sampradaya

While Srila Prabhupada indicated that Vaisnavi spiritual masters had been historically "not so many", he also taught that the service of diksa-guru required an equally advanced level of Krsna consciousness for both genders that is achievable by strictly following the authorized devotional practices he prescribed.

Srila Prabhupada also taught that the service of diksa-guru naturally stems from fidelity to one's spiritual master and guru-parampara , from one's mature preaching of Krsna consciousness (siksa) empowered by such fidelity, and from the sense of selfless responsibility for those souls who become inspired to serve Lord Krsna by such preaching.
At the same time, Srila Prabhupada severely criticized and warned against bodily and mundane considerations in regard to the role and eligibility of diksa-guru — whether in the form of casteism, selfish motives for profit, adoration or distinction, or as conformity to social, cultural or modern trends and artificial "equality":

"...Generally a spiritual master who constantly instructs a disciple in spiritual science becomes his initiating spiritual master later on. (…) Sri Jiva Gosvami advises that one not accept a spiritual master in terms of hereditary or customary social and ecclesiastical conventions. One should simply try to find a genuinely qualified spiritual master for actual advancement in spiritual understanding". (Caitanya-caritamrta, Adi-lila 1.35 purport)

We, the GBC, are convinced that Srila Prabhupada by his devotional potency and perfect guidance continues to empower many devotees, men and women alike, to properly follow and represent his teachings in the mission of spreading Krsna Consciousness; and that some of them

thus become competent to solidify their siksa by giving diksa as faithful representatives of Srila Prabhupada.

We recognize that some members and friends of ISKCON may object to this resolution based on their own reading of sastra, their own social experiences, or deeply held Vaisnava convictions. At the same time, and on the same basis, others will think this resolution does not go far enough or that the additional requirements are unfair. To assuage these concerns, we will further describe the milestones leading to this decision and the philosophical underpinnings of this resolution in an upcoming document.

In the meantime, we humbly request ISKCON devotees to see this resolution in the light of the inclusiveness of Lord Chaitanya and our previous acaryas, and as facilitating senior, mature and exemplary followers of Srila Prabhupada in their dedicated service to him and his ISKCON. Please bless them in this new important spiritual responsibility.

> *"So one who is spreading krsna-upadesa, simply repeat what is said by Krsna, then you become acarya. (...) Suppose you have got now ten thousand. We shall expand to hundred thousand. That is required. Then hundred thousand to million, and million to ten million. So there will be no scarcity of acarya , and people will understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness very easily". (Lecture on Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, Adi-lila 1.13 – April 6, 1975, Mayapur)*

Section 800: Appointments

802.2 GBC Officers and Members

Resignation of Hridayananda Das Goswami — 2019
[Action order

Resolved:

That the resignation of Hridayananda Das Goswami is accepted.

802.2 GBC officers and members

Romapada Swami's Leave of Absence Extended — 2019
[Action order]

Resolved:

That the Leave of Absence of Romapada Swami is extended for a further year.

803.4 Zonal and Area Assignments

Area GBC appointments — 2019
[Action order]

Resolved:

That the following GBC Members are elected as Area GBCs:

Kavicandra Swami, Area GBC for Western Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

Gopal Krishna Goswami, Area GBC for Central & Eastern Africa: Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda.

Bhakti Caitanya Swami, Area GBC for Southern Africa: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Guru Prasad Swami, Area GBC for Mexico, Central America & the Caribbean: Belize, Cuba, Trinidad & Tobago (and all other Caribbean countries & territories), Costa Rica, El Salvador, French Guyana, Guyana, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Suriname.

Giridhari Swami, Area GBC for China (including Hong Kong, Macau & Taiwan) and Philippines

Virabahu Das, Area GBC for Southern Latin America: Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay

Ramai Swami, Area GBC for Oceania: (Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and the rest of Oceania), Indonesia and East Timor.

810.1 Appointment of Global Duty Officers

Global Duty Officer Reappointments — 2019

[Action order]

Resolved:

That the following Global Duty Officers are hereby reappointed for a further one-year term:

1. Devakinandan Das (MVG)
2. Dhanvantari Swami (ACBSP)
3. Gauranga Das (RNS)
4. Govardhana Das (BCAIS)
5. Hanuman Das (SDG)
6. Kaunteya Das (JPS)
7. Mathuresh Das (JPS)
8. Mukunda Madhava Das (BSDS)
9. Praharana dd (ACBSP)
10. Radha Krsna Das (BBGS)
11. Srivas Das (BTS)
12. Srivas Pandit Das (GGS)
13. Tirtharaj Das (TKG)
14. Tapana Misra Das (BVKS)

810.1 Appointment of Global Duty Officers

Global Duty Officer Appointment — 2019

[Action order]

Resolved:

That Krsnapremarupa Das (BSDS) is appointed as a Global Duty Officer with the following areas of service:

1. Education: developing long-term guru preparation
2. Education: facilitating establishing the GBC College for Leadership Development in Europe
3. Communication: Charter Model-related