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GBC Statement on the Health of Giriraja Swami

By GBC Communications | Oct 05, 2024

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Dear ISKCON Devotees,

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

We are deeply saddened to share the difficult news regarding the health of His Holiness Giriraja Swami. Maharaja has been diagnosed with Behavioral Variant Frontotemporal Dementia (bvFTD). This degenerative neurological disorder has been increasingly affecting him over the past three years, with more significant clinical symptoms emerging in the last year.

This cruel disease is characterized by the progressive degeneration of the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain, resulting in severe changes to behavior and personality. These include: impaired judgment, socially inappropriate behavior, apathy, sexual indiscretion, and compulsive tendencies.

Medical evaluations, including MRI scans (May 2024) and neurocognitive testing, have confirmed Maharaja's diagnosis and the further progression of the condition since previous tests.

The GBC has sought and received a second, independent medical opinion that fully confirms the initial diagnosis.

This significant cognitive decline in recent months has rendered Giriraja Maharaja vulnerable to abuse and exploitation of all kinds with limited ability to process, judge, and react to situations that require higher cognitive functioning. A team of medical specialists and dedicated caregivers, under the guidance of senior Vaishnavas, are providing Giriraj Swami with the support and care he needs.

Due to this vulnerability, Giriraja Swami was recently a victim of a financial scam, taking advantage of his impaired judgment. Furthermore, the GBC has learned of highly inappropriate communication that was exchanged between Giriraja Swami and a lady disciple for a brief period in August 2024.

We understand how painful and upsetting this news is, as we all hold Giriraja Swami in the highest regard. His life of many years of devotion and selfless service to Srila Prabhupada has been inspirational. The medical experts have helped us understand that these uncharacteristic behaviors are attributable to Maharaja's condition and should be understood accordingly.

The GBC Body is committed to assisting with the necessary care and support for Giriraja Swami, as well as for his disciples and followers.

We encourage everyone to continue praying for him, his disciples, and all those who love and care for him during this challenging time.

Your servants,

Guru Prasad Swami
Tapana Misra Das
Govardhana Das,
GBC Executive Committee

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