ISKCON Central Office of Child Protection
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Official Decision on the case of Gauri das

This decision, decided on July 1, 2008 was rendered in accordance with the guidelines established by the ISKCON Child Protection Policies and Procedures Handbook and ratified by the ISKCON Governing Body Commission. This statement is the Official Decision of the ISKCON Central Office of Child Protection (ICOCP).

For purposes of identification, Gauri das is a UK devotee currently serving as President of Bhaktivedanta Manor, England. Gauri das was a teacher in the Vrndavana gurukula from 1991 to 2001, the time of the allegations. He was also known as Gudakesa during that time.

This decision only defines the parameters of the relationship of Gauri das with ISKCON. It holds no legal status outside the ISKCON organization.

Allegations and Evidence

Allegations of excessive corporeal punishment have been made against Gauri das. These concerns centered primarily on the administration of corporeal punishment while a gurukula teacher at the Bhaktivedanta Gurukula in Vrndavana, India from 1991 – 2001.

The ICOCP has received statements from approximately 17 former students, and three adults, alleging inappropriate and excessive corporeal punishment while Gauri das was a teacher at the Vrndavana Gurukula. The ICOCP also received and considered the lengthy evidence, testimonies, and responses presented by Gauri das.

Conclusion

The CPO investigated and received testimony over a period of several months. A panel of three arbitrators carefully considered all evidence in this case, including the responses from Gauri das.

Based upon the evidence presented to the CPO panel, Gauri das is found to be responsible for inappropriate and excessive corporeal punishment, a behavior contrary to ISKCON policy and Vaisnava behavior.

Restrictions:

There are mitigating circumstances in this case, including the acceptance of corporeal punishment within India, and the report of many positive accomplishments while Gauri das was at the gurukula. Further, there is no evidence that Gauri presents any current threat to children. Given the mitigating circumstances in this case and Gauri's genuine desire to serve the mission of Srila Prabhupada, the panel felt that restrictions should be moderate.

The following restrictions will be immediately implemented:

1. Gauri das may not serve in a position of leadership in ISKCON temples or projects for three years from the date of this decision. This includes positions such as temple officer, department head, Director, etc.

2. Gauri shall not give class or lead kirtan in ISKCON temples or projects for a period of three years.

3. The above restrictions will end at the end of the three year period provided that, Gauri das fulfills the requirements listed below.

4. As a lifetime restriction Gauri das shall not have service directly overseeing children in an ISKCON temple or project, such as managing or teaching in an ISKCON school. He is free to assume any other service in ISKCON.

Requirements:

1. Gauri das must write a letter of apology to the former students clearly stating his actions and expressing remorse. The letter should be sent to the Child Protection Office.

2. As restitution, Gauri das should pay the amount of $3000 to one of the following projects benefitting children in ISKCON: Bhaktivedanta Gurukula and International School (Vrndavana), Bhaktivedanta Manor gurukula, or ISKCON Youth Ministry.

Once these requirements are met, at the end of the three year period, restrictions #1 and #2 shall be lifted. Gauri das may resume any appropriate service, and the panel and the CPO wish him well in his continued service to ISKCON and Srila Prabhupada.

Other Standard CPO Policies

Restriction policy: The decision of the judges constitutes the minimum restrictions that an ISKCON organization must enforce. Any specific ISKCON organization may choose to invoke more stringent restrictions. However, it is expected that all ISKCON entities will carefully consider these decisions of the CPO before imposing more stringent limitations, as the constraints prescribed herein are deemed to be sufficient.

Appeals: According to the ISKCON Child Protection Office Policies and Procedures Handbook, Section 5, in cases where allegations are determined to be valid, the Official Decision may be appealed to the Child Protection Office Appeal Review Board within one month of the date of this decision. The Official Decision described in this document is effective immediately, and the individual must abide by its guidelines during the appeal process, should he choose to appeal this decision.

Arbitration Panel and Case Manager: Panel members serving on this case were: Jayasacisuta das, Kaisori dasi, and Praharana dasi. The Director of the ICOCP was Tamohara das, and the Case Manager was Mahavishnupriya dasi.