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ISKCON GOVERNING BODY COMMISSION SOCIETY

Registration Number S/74662 under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961
P.O. Shree Mayapur Dham, Dist. Nadia, West Bengal 741313

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SRI MAYAPUR DHAM, FEBRUARY 9 - 22, 2017

Go to 2017 Zonal Assignments

Section 100: APPOINTMENTS

101. GBC Officers and Members

1. His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami is elected GBC Chairman.

2. His Grace Madhu Sevita Das is elected First Vice-Chairman.

3. His Holiness Bhaktivaibhava Swami is elected Second Vice-Chairman.

4. His Holiness Gopal Krsna Goswami is elected GBC Secretary.

5. His Grace Revati Raman Das is elected as a full GBC member.

6. His Holiness Giridhari Swami is re-appointed as a GBC member.

102. Sannyasa Waiting List

The following are the candidates for sannyasa along with their respective waiting periods:

Adi Purusa Das (Bhubaneswar)	1 year
Adwaitacharya Das (Bhubaneswar)	this year
Akincana Das (Odisha)	this year
Ananda Vardhana Das (Baltics/Finland/Europe)	1 year
Asit Krsna Das (India/Hong Kong/China/Taiwan)	this year
Bhaktipada Das (New Vraja Dhama, Hungary)	1 year
Deva Deva Das (South America)	1 year
Eklavya Das (India/Middle East/North America)	1 year
Gaura Chandra Das (Mayapur)	1 year
Hari Das (Manipur)	this year
Madhu Sevita Das (Italy/France/Benelux)	1 year
Mahadyuti Das (Europe/Russia/South America)	this year
Mahaprabhu Das (Hungary/Romania)	1 year
Markandeya Risi (Malaysia)	this year
Navadvip Dvija Gouranga Das (Bangladesh)	2 years

Priti Vardhana Das (Mayapur)	2 years
Puspashila Shyama Das (Bangladesh)	1 year
Raghava Pandit Das (Delhi/India)	2 years
Rupa Raghunatha Das (Europe/South America/India)	this year
Santa Nrisimha Das (Jaipur)	2 years
Venudhari Das (Mayapur)	3 years
Vishvavasu Das (Germany/Baltics/Russia)	3 years
Added to the list in 2017:	
Adhokshaja Das (Russia)	5 years
Asim Krishna Das (Mumbai)	3 years
Gargamuni Das (Jaipur)	5 years
Gopendra Das (Vrindavan)	5 years
Govindanandana Das (West Bengal)	5 years
Kamalalochan Das (Mumbai)	4 years
Premadata Das (Italy, India)	2 years
Radhashyamsunder Das (Vrindavan)	4 years
Sundarlala Das (Mauritius)	3 years
Sutapa Das (UK)	5 years
Vanamali Das (Mumbai)	4 years
Vrindavanchandra Das (Vrindavan)	2 years

103. Reaffirmation of Ministries and Standing Committees

The following are the Ministry and Standing Committees and their membership assignments for 2017-18:

Congregational Development Ministry	Co-Ministers – Jayapataka Swami, Kaunteya Das
ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry	Minister – Nrsimha Kavaca Das
ISKCON Youth Ministry	Minister – Manorama Das
Ministry of Book Distribution	Minister – Vijaya Das
Ministry of Communications	Minister – Anuttama Das
Ministry of Cow Protection and Agriculture	Minister – Kalakantha Das
Ministry of Education	Minister – Sesa Das
Ministry of Fund Development	Minister – Devakinandan Das
Ministry of Health and Welfare	Minister – Prahladananda Swami Other member – Bir Krishna Das Goswami
Ministry of Justice	Minister – Sesa Das
Ministry of Justice: ISKCON Dispute Resolution Committee (IDRC)	Minister of Justice, a representative of ISKCON Resolve, the second Vice-Chairman of the GBC, and the Director of the ISKCON Dispute Resolution Office

Ministry of Justice: ISKCON Dispute Resolution Office	Director – GBC EC, pending nomination
Ministry of Padayatra	Minister – Lokanath Swami
Ministry of Sannyasa Services	Minister – Prahladananda Swami Other members: Sivarama Swami, Bhakti Gauravani Goswami, Bhaktivaibhava Swami, Bhakti Caitanya Swami, Hrdaya Caitanya Das
Vaisnavi Ministry	Co-Ministers – Malati Dasi, Prasanta Dasi, and Radha Dasi (California)
BBT Construction Grant Allocation Committee (BBTCG)	Members – Ramai Swami, Bhanu Swami, Devamrita Swami, Current GBC Chairman, Hrdaya Caitanya Das (Convener)
GBC Nominations Committee	Members – Tamohara Das (Chairman), Prahladananda Swami, Praghosa Das, Gopal Bhatta Das (Convenor), Bhakti Vijnana Goswami, Bhakti Caitanya Swami, Anuttama Das, Revati Raman Das, Gauranga Das, Aniruddha Das, Laxmimoni Dasi
GBC-BBT Team	Members – Badrinarayan Swami (Coordinator), Gopal Krishna Goswami, Sivarama Swami, Madhu Sevita Das, Hrdaya Caitanya Das, Praghosa Das
GBC Vaisnava Calendar Committee	Members – Bhanu Swami, Gopalapriya Das, Sadasivananda Das, Bhaktarupa Das (Convener)
Guru Services Committee	Members – Anuttama Das (Chairman), Prahladananda Swami, Virabahu Das, Bhakti Caitanya Swami, Atul Krishna Das (Mayapur)
ISKCON Central Office of Child Protection	Director – Kamlesh Krishna Das
ISKCON Property Office	Members – Current GBC Executive Committee, Kuladri Das (Convener-Secretary), Bhaktarupa Das
Sastric Advisory Council	Members: Urmila Dasi (Acting Chair), Drutakarma Das, Gauranga Das, Hari Parsad Das, Harideva Das, Narayani Dasi, Adi-purusa Das, Caitanya-caran Das, Sarvajna Das, Brijabasi Das, Krishna Abhishek Das Associate Members: Giriraja Swami, Krishna Kshetra Swami, Radhika Raman Das, Gopinatha-acarya Das, Madana-mohana Das
World Holy Name Week Committee	Global Coordination Team – Lokanath Swami, Jananda Goswami, Eklavya Das

Section 200: FINANCES

201: Budget

The GBC budget for 2016-17 is (in INR):

Annual General Meetings	552,500
Cow Protection & Agriculture	325,000
Child Protection Office	650,000
Dandavats	389,025
Deity Worship Ministry	910,000
Emergency Fund	260,000
Legal & related expenses	650,000
Executive Committee Travel	195,000
Finance & Bank Charges	32,500
GBC Strategic Planning team	715,000
GBC Corresponding Secretary	429,000
GBC EC Secretary	429,000
ISKCON Office of Dispute Resolution	130,000
ISKCON Congregational Development Ministry	162,500
ISKCON Temple Database	195,000
ISKCON Ethics and Code Department	162,500
ISKCON Lawbook	65,000
ISKCON News website	260,000
ISKCON Resolve	520,000
ISKCON Sannyasa Ministry	65,000
ISKCON Connection	292,500
Mayapur GBC Office	403,000
Ministry of Education	409,500
Swami Productions (Bhaktimarga Swami)	130,000
Vaisnava Calendar Web Site	32,500
Vaisnavi Ministry	65,000
Youth Ministry	97,500
TOTAL	**8,527,025**

202. Appointment of Auditor

Sri Ritesh Shah & Associates, Chartered Accountants, of P-27, Princep Street, Kolkata 700072, is appointed as statutory auditor for the year 2017-18.

Section 300: INTERNAL ISKCON

301. Midterm Meeting 2017

The Midterm Meeting of the ISKCON GBC Society shall take place from October 9-17, 2017, at ISKCON Ujjain, India.

302. Annual General Meeting 2018

The dates of the Annual General Meeting shall be determined by the GBC Body based on the recommendation of a subcommittee consisting of the GBC Executive Committee, Jayapataka Swami, Lokanath Swami, Laxmimoni DD, and Sankarshan Nitai Das.

(Note: Resolutions 303-305 were originally passed at the October 2017 Midterm Meetings)

303: 2016 Child Protection Action

Whereas recent videos, publicity, and discussions have drawn particular attention to on-going problems at the schools in Vrindavan and Mayapur. These locations are both centers of historic Vaisnava worship and places that Srila Prabhupada envisioned to be exemplary centers of Krishna Conscious education, worship and culture. They should therefore be flagships of child and devotee care; not continued sources of concern or harm.

Whereas the ongoing problems in Vrindavan and Mayapur show that despite some genuine efforts, clearly not enough has been done. Local leaders, and perhaps the GBC itself, are not living up to the expectations demanded of them.

Whereas direct intervention is needed by the GBC to assure child protection within our ISKCON Society and Schools, and also satisfy the greater ISKCON community that the GBC is acting decisively,

Therefore, the following measures should be put in place regarding the Mayapur and Vrindavan schools. (We recognize that some of these measures may already be in place. Such progress is appreciated yet we list the full requirements below for proper documentation.)

Vrindavan School (Bhaktivedanta Gurukula & International School – BGIS)

Whereas, several months ago students of the Vrindavan school (BGIS) were sexually abused off site by a local perpetrator who is known to be a danger. The school pushed police authorities to have the alleged perpetrator, Devashish, arrested and a trial is proceeding. To push for the arrest and prosecution in a region where police are usually unwilling to take strong action is commendable.

Whereas, that any abuse could again occur in the vicinity of this school—despite the high priority of child protection we should expect there—is unacceptable. It demonstrates that the school did not have adequate measures in place to ensure the safety of its students.

Whereas, the Director of the ISKCON Child Protection Office has determined that child protection training, policies, and enforcement are inadequate within the BGIS.

RESOLVED:

The Vrindavan school (BGIS) is on notice for a minimum of one year from the date of the passage of this resolution. Within that time, the school must address the following mandates or be subject to a GBC discussion and possible decision to close its boarding school function. It is understood that some of these items may have been recently put into place. The GBC Executive Committee representative will be conducting an inquiry shortly after the conclusion of the midterm meetings to determine the progress and what additional steps are needed on the following mandates:

1. Administration

The Principal of the school must live full time in Vrindavan and work full time at the school.

The Principal must fulfill all qualifications required of such a post as established by the Indian Government, and have the appropriate educational background to oversee such a school.

The Principal must undergo full CPO training, off site if necessary, at the school's expense.

2. Within three months a full time Child Protection Officer must be engaged at the school.
    a. The school will pay the salary of the CP Officer at a level appropriate to attract a qualified, well-trained person.
    b. The Child Protection Officer is charged with ensuring the safety of the children at the school, and that they are protected from all forms of abuse. Any training, policies, or other programs that he or she deems necessary must be implemented by the Principal.
    c. The CP Officer will be hired (or fired) with the advice and concurrence of the international CPO Director.
    d. The CP Officer is accountable to the international CPO Director and school administration.
    e. The CP Officer will file quarterly reports to the local administration, VEB, CPO, GBC EC, India Bureau EC, and the Principal.

3. Within three months, or at the latest one month after the hiring of the Child Protection Officer per above, the Principal must provide a detailed plan for ongoing child protection at the school, in consultation with the CP Officer and the International CPO Director, considering the school's unique features and challenges.

4. The school will facilitate bi-annual inspections by the International Child Protection Director, or his or her representatives, and cover all the costs of such a visit. The first inspection should be conducted by January 2017. The visits shall last as long as needed, as determined by the CPO Director, and during that time the CPO Director shall have unhindered access to the school and to meet with students, administrators, parents, teachers, and other interested parties.

    a. Any recommendations of the CPO must be undertaken by the school administrators within a time frame established by the CPO.
    b. Failure to act on those recommendations will be reported to the GBC EC, and the ISKCON India Bureau, and may be cause for further probation or will subject the school to a vote of the GBC whether its boarding school functions, or the entire school, should be closed.

5. If the above steps are not in place within three months from passage of this resolution then all fund-raising for a new school campus shall be suspended, as determined by the GBC EC with the advice of the International CPO Director.

Mayapur Schools

Whereas, numerous problems and complaints have been directed toward the Mayapur Schools, and several recent CPO investigations and cases have been undertaken.

Whereas, despite sincere attempts of the management to address child protection concerns, these have appeared inadequate to meet the many issues and problems associated with a very large community with multiple schools.

RESOLVED:

1. Within 3 months the Mayapur Management is directed to reconstitute its Child Protection Team (CPT), as the current CPT objectivity may be compromised due to family affiliations. The local CPT should be composed of parents and other concerned adults. It is recommended that teachers and administrators from the several Mayapur schools should participate and act as advisors, but shall not vote nor be the decision makers of the CPT.
2. A full time Child Protection Officer must be engaged at the Mayapur community and schools within 3 months of the date of this resolution.
   a. The local schools will share the costs the salary with the community for the CP Officer (proportionally as determined MAC with approval of the MEB) at a level appropriate to attract a qualified, well-trained person.

   b. The Child Protection Officer is charged with ensuring the safety of the children at the schools and community, and that they are protected from any abuse. Any training, policies, or other programs that he or she deems necessary must be implemented by the respective school's Principal.
   c. The CP Officer will be hired (or fired) with the advice and concurrence of the International CPO Director.
   d. The CP Officer is accountable to the international CPO Director and local administration.
   e. The CP Officer will file quarterly reports to the MAC, CPO, GBC EC, ISKCON Indian Bureau, and the Principals.

3. The International CPO Director or their representative shall visit the Mayapura schools a minimum of twice a year. Costs of the visit will be borne by the schools and community. During that time the CPO Director shall have unhindered access to all the schools located in Mayapura, and to meet with students, administrators, parents, teachers, and other interested parties.
   Recommendations of the CPO must be undertaken by school administrators within the time frame determined by the CPO.
4. Failure to act on those recommendations will be reported to the GBC EC, and the Bureau, and may be cause for further action by the GBC including possibly ending boarding school functions, or closure of certain schools.
5. The previous principal is required to complete the full mandate of the previous CPO decision about him. That is, he shall permanently relocate to a living space off, and away from any school facility. The CPO decision that he must not be engaged in any administration work must also be followed strictly. The CPO and Ministry of Education will ensure prior CPO decisions are being followed.
6. School officials shall do whatever necessary to correct the erroneous conception that the Bhaktivedanta Academy is "Maharaja's school" as he is prohibited from managing the school

by a prior CPO decision.

Additional Recommendations

Due to the above mentioned issues and problems with the schools within India, the ISKCON India Bureau is urged and directed to establish a CPO for India that will work under the direction of the International CPO and report to both the Bureau and the International CPO, as is currently done in other regional CPO offices. Sufficient funds should be provided to ensure a capable Director is hired along with payment for necessary office functions.

The Bureau Chairman is requested to report back to the GBC by the AGM 2017 in regards to progress in this matter.

(Please click here for the CPO Director's report on the above Resolution)

304: Global Duty Officers

Whereas GBC Resolution 305 of 2016 created the position of Global Duty Officers (GDOs) to "assist the GBC in its international functions within special projects, GBC Standing Committees, Strategic Planning Network initiatives, global Ministries, attending and serving during GBC meetings, etc. as required by the GBC;"

RESOLVED:

That the following devotees are hereby appointed as Global Duty Officers. They are listed along with their respective locations and service illustrations:

1.	Bhakti Prabhava Swami	United Kingdom	Sannyasa Ministry
2.	Devakinandan Das	Singapore	GBC Legal Office
3.	Gauranga Das	India	ISKCON Knowledge Exchange Portal and ISKCON Administration
4.	Govardhan Das	South Africa	ISKCON Economy
5.	Hanuman Das	Spain	Sannyasa Ministry
6.	Krsnadas Kaviraja Das	Canada	Sannyasa Ministry
7.	Mathuresa Das	Bolivia	GBC Executive Secretariat & GBC College for Leadership Development Latin America coordination
8.	Mukunda Madhava Das	India	Fundraising
9.	Parabhakti Das	Italy	Service under Definition
10.	Praharana Dasi	Canada	GBC Executive Secretary
11.	Radha Krsna Das	Hungary	GBC vetting process development
12.	Satya Gopinath Das	India	Fundraising
13.	Srivallabha Das	UAE	GBC Support Staffing, SGGS Office
14.	Srivas Das	Ghana	GBC Executive Secretariat Africa Coordination

15.	Srivas Pandit Das	Myanmar	Sannyasa Ministry
16.	Tapana Misra Das	Kuwait/Mayapur	OrgDev-GBC Support Staffing, GDO Coordination, Congregational Development Ministry
17.	Tirtharaj Das	Hong Kong	ISKCON Knowledge Exchange Portal

305: Appointing Zonal Supervisors (Midterm Meeting 2016)

RESOLVED:

That the following graduates from the GBC College are hereby appointed as Zonal Supervisors:

Acyuta Priya Das: Ukraine & Moldova
Paramatma Das: Suriname
Srivas Pandit Das: Myanmar
Trilokatma Das: Slovakia, Albania & Macedonia

306: Appointing Zonal Supervisors (AGM 2017)

RESOLVED:

That the following graduates from the GBC College are hereby appointed as Zonal Supervisors:

Dayananda Swami: Scotland & North England
Devakinandan Das: Botswana
Divya priya DD: Ecuador
Doyal Govinda Das: Germany & Austria
Jai Nitai Das: London & Southeast England
Krsnapremarupa Das: Switzerland & Liechtenstein
Manohara Das: Belgium, the Netherlands, & Luxembourg
Nityananda Pran Das: US Midwest
Sutapa Das: North London (including Bhaktivedanta Manor)
Nrsimha Krsna Das: Turkey

307: China Zonal Configuration

RESOLVED:

China shall include ten zones:

1. Beijing, Hebei, Shanxi, Shandong & Tianjin
2. Liaoning, Jilin & Harbin
3. Inner Mongolia, Gansu, Ningxia & Shaanxi
4. Xinjiang, Xizang & Qinghai
5. Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou & Chongqing
6. Henan, Hubei & Hunan
7. Anhui, Jiangsu, Shanghai, Zhejiang & Jiangxi
8. Guangxi, Guangdong, Hainan & Fujian
9. Hong Kong & Macau
10. Taiwan

308: Forming a Representative Body

Whereas the Sanga of GBCs, Gurus & Sannyasis (SGGS) wishes to see an increase of faith in the leadership and of unity among the leaders;

Whereas the SGGS wishes to see the establishment of a system that provides checks & balances by tapping into the collective wisdom of the senior devotees;

Whereas the SGGS wishes to see an approach that offers broader connection and representation, thus providing increased legitimacy to the decisions of the GBC and some form of course-correction:

RESOLVED:

The GBC Organizational Development Committee (Org Dev) is mandated to work on the details of a formal proposal, to be submitted at the October 2017 GBC midterm meeting, for a representative body that would cooperatively work with the GBC and that would incorporate the following general guidelines:

Functions:

Review GBC legislation & remand to GBC when needed.

Propose new legislation.

Advise on issues of concern for the GBC to consider.

Composition:

- Sannyasis
- Gurus
- At large seniors
- Continental representatives
- Vaisnavis
- Temple Presidents
- Youth
- Legal & Accounting professionals

The body should be composed of around thirty members.
The proposal should include details of the required training & qualifications for membership, the procedure for selection/election of members, their tenure, etc.

309: Leadership Discussions Conference Policies

"Leadership Discussions" shall be a members-only web-based conference meant for the top level of international ISKCON leadership to share and discuss information and issues related to their service. Any issue related to management may be discussed. The moderator of the conference shall be appointed by the GBC Executive Committee (GBC EC).

Conference membership is mandatory for GBC Members, Ministers, Deputies, and Global Duty Officers, Zonal Supervisors and optional for GBC Emeriti.

One is automatically added to the conference when appointed to any of the above roles and upon accepting the rules of participation in the conference. One's membership is revoked upon retirement, resignation, demise or removal from their position.

Code of Conduct:
Courtesy
Members shall be courteous in tone and use respectful Vaishnava language when addressing issues and topics that come before them, especially while referring to specific people or sensitive information.

Gravity

While conducting official ISKCON matters, they shall avoid drawing insufficiently informed conclusions about issues and/or individuals. Facts should be clearly documented with the source of the information (unless where trusted sources deserve anonymity), and conjectures should be clearly presented as such.

Respect
If a member has issues related to the personal conduct, speech, attitude, conference participation etc., of another conference member that require resolution, they shall not express these issues to others but instead, if appropriate, express them directly to the individual concerned, using all the tact and Vaishnava etiquette at their command. Alternatively, or if direct communication fails to bring a resolution, they should seek aid from a responsible third party such as a senior Vaishnava or a representative of ISKCON Resolve.

Relevance
The content of postings to the conference must be within the following categories:
1. It is relevant to a matter of ISKCON policies or procedures.
2. It is relevant to a matter of GBC Body past, current or future action.
3. It is information of importance to the conference membership.

Confidentiality
Members shall maintain strict confidentiality about all issues and topics that are discussed on the conference. Information from conference discussions should not be shared with non-conference members without first taking written permission from the original poster(s).

Enforcement of the Code of Conduct

Any member who feels that the Code of Conduct has been violated may directly and privately convey this, together with the supporting evidence, to the moderator.

If the moderator receives evidence that in his opinion gives a *prima facie* indication that a member has breached confidentiality then he shall immediately place that member on suspension from the conference pending investigation. The moderator or a person(s) appointed by the moderator shall present the received evidence to the member for an explanation and clarification of the circumstances which led to the alleged breach. If required, further investigation may be necessary. On the conclusion of the investigation the GBC EC shall give a written ruling that includes:

- the specific breach and why it was judged so;
- the specific program of rectification, if any;
- the time period of suspension from the conference, if any, which shall be no longer than one year; and
- the specific prerequisites for early restoration of conference privileges, if any.

If there has been a history of previous multiple violations of confidentiality then the GBC EC ruling should include that the GBC Body should consider a proposal that the conference member be removed from his or her positions held under GBC Body authority.

Violations of the aspects of the code of conduct other than confidentiality shall be dealt with similarly, except that immediate suspension from the conference pending investigation shall be at the discretion of the moderator.

Secretaries or other assistants managing a member's participation are subject to the same policies:they must be made aware of these policies by the member they are assisting. Failure to do so resulting in a breach of confidentiality shall result in the disciplining of the member as if the member had been directly participating.

<u>310: Global Observance of Sri Ramanuja Sahasrabdi</u>
[Guideline]

Whereas Sri Ramanujacarya, the great Vaisnava saint who lived between 1017 and 1137, requires no introduction to the saintly, especially the Vaisnavas;

Whereas Sri Ramanujacarya's 1000th anniversary is being celebrated around the world this year, 2017. According to the Sri Vaishnava calendar, his 1000th appearance day is on May 1, 2017;

Whereas although 1000 years have passed since the appearance of Sri Ramanujacarya, the years have not dulled the level of adherence to his teachings and attraction to his exemplary life. Millions of people now base their spiritual practices and religious conceptions on his words in both southern India, and due to emigration, in the western world also. In many parts of the world, ISKCON is associated very strongly with the Sri Vaisnavas;

Whereas our Gaudiya Acaryas including Srila Jiva Goswami, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura have all referenced and commented on the teachings and life of Sri Ramanuja;

Whereas Srila Prabhupada used Sri Ramanuja`s works, amongst others, to give us the "Bhagavad-Gita As It Is";

Whereas ISKCON Sriperumbudur and Kanchipuram are organizing grand celebrations this March in which international devotees, sannyasis, and leaders are participating in the 10 day festival at Sriperumbudur, the birth place of Acarya Sri Ramanuja;

Whereas following in the tradition of our acaryas, it would be a great opportunity for ISKCON to get the mercy of Sri Ramanujacarya, and to enhance our already good relationships with the Sri Vaishnava community globally, by having a "Global Observance" throughout the year, or particularly leading up to May 1, 2017;

RESOLVED:

That ISKCON centers worldwide have a "Global Observance of Sri Ramanuja Sahasrabdi", leading up to May 1, 2017, or anytime through the year 2017, with suitable events and glorification befitting the venerable and worshipable Vaisnava Acarya.

311: Regulation of Installations - Amendment

[ISKCON Law]

Whereas in 2012 the GBC passed the following law:

Any ISKCON center wishing to install any deities for public temple worship or commence the worship of any deity in an ISKCON center must first receive a "Certificate of Readiness for Worship" for the said deities.

Centers may not make any commitments or agreements regarding procuring and/or worshiping deities until the "Certificate of Readiness for Worship" is granted. This "Certificate of Readiness for Worship" applies only to the deities for which it is granted and is not a generic permanent approval.

The readiness for worship will be assessed by a panel consisting of one local representative (either from the temple concerned, the local GBC or a representative from the National Council or RGB, etc.), a GBC appointed by the EC, and an ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry representative.

Whereas this law has proven very effective.

Whereas after 5 years of implementation, it is apparent that refinements need to be made to better accommodate the needs and concerns of all;

Amendment 1
Whereas the following assessment panel has in practice not been implemented fully;

The readiness for worship will be assessed by a panel consisting of one local representative (either from the temple concerned, the local GBC or a representative from the National Council or RGB, etc.), a GBC appointed by the EC, and an ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry representative.

RESOLVED:

That the above be amended to:

The readiness for worship will be assessed by a local representative (from the temple concerned); the local GBC, regional leadership (which may include a representative from the National Council or RGB, etc.); and an ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry (IDWM) representative. The GBC Executive Committee will be informed of the assessment outcome.

Amendment 2
Whereas in some cases temples have delayed planned installation dates, and their capacity to worship deities has changed;

RESOLVED:

That the following clause is added to the above law:

This Certificate of Readiness is valid for up to 180 days beyond the initial scheduled installation date. If the 180 day period has elapsed without the installation being completed, the temple will be reassessed by the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry for a new Certificate of Readiness to be issued.

Amendment 3
Whereas Srila Prabhupada gave the following standard:

You have asked about Balarama Krsna deities. No, Balarama and Krsna are already there as Caitanya and Nitai: Vrajendranandana yei, saci suta hailas sei . . . The best thing is to establish Gaura Nitai deities. In Vrindaban we are establishing Balarama Krsna deities because most of the centers there have Radha Krsna and there is not Balarama-Krsna. That has a different purpose. We should not imitate that. Better to have Gaura-Nitai, Radha-Krsna, and Lord Jagannatha—that system must continue. — Letter to Kirtanananda – 12 January 1974

Whereas there have been several applications for deities outside Srila Prabhupada's preferred deities;

Whereas to assess the validity of the need to install deities outside of the norm given by Srila Prabhupada, ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry needs the support and direction of the GBC Body in this regard:

RESOLVED:

For any applications for deities apart from those given by Srila Prabhupada, i.e. Radha Krsna; Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra; Gaura-Nitai (or Panca Tattva) and śālagrāma silas; the IDWM requires executive input. Therefore, for any application that includes Krsna-Balarama or Sita Rama Lakshman Hanuman, the IDWM will consult with the GBC Executive Committee for approval.

Any deities apart from the aforementioned must be approved by the GBC Body before IDWM can issue a Certificate of Readiness for installing deities.

Amendment 4

Whereas it is apparent that there is a need to modify the law to sufficiently facilitate new centers in the planning, fund-raising, and construction phase;

Whereas there needs to be accommodation in the law to procure deities and begin promoting planned temple opening and installation plan prior to the Certificate of Readiness being granted; while also not giving final approval to actually finalize the date of installation, or install/commence worship of said deities;

Whereas the law currently states:

Centers may not make any commitments or agreements regarding procuring and/or worshiping deities until the "Certificate of Readiness for Worship" is granted. This "Certificate of Readiness for Worship" applies only to the deities for which it is granted and is not a generic permanent approval.

RESOLVED:

That the above paragraph is amended to:

Centers may procure deities and begin promoting planned temple openings or additions to existing worship once they have successfully completed the first stage of the approval process. Centers shall not commit to and/or publicly advertise final dates for commencement of worship until they receive a "Certificate of Readiness for Worship."

This “Certificate of Readiness for Worship” applies only to the deities for which it is granted and is not a generic permanent approval.

The initial contact:
The center wanting to commence the worship of deities makes an application via IDWM’s website. After receiving this application, IDWM contacts local GBC and regional authorities to assess the viability of the application. If this consultation shows the center has made a proper analysis of requirements to worship deities and are moving in the right direction regarding allocation resources, etc. to the worship of the deities, then the first stage approval is given. This then enables the temple to make arrangements to acquire deities and commence fund-raising, etc.

The second and final stage will be assessed based on the findings of a site visit by an IDWM representative, or comprehensive consultation with concerned devotees.

(kindly visit this page on the IDWM website for the full revised law)

312: Principles for Creating a Diksa-guru System for ISKCON

RESOLVED:

The following document as presented by the Guru Services Committee is accepted as an ISKCON position paper:

Principles for Creating a Diksa-guru System for ISKCON

This paper explains the authority of ISKCON’s Governing Body Commission (GBC) to create a system for devotees to take up the service of *diksa-guru* within the society, focusing on the principles behind the system.

Through many written and spoken instructions, Srila Prabhupada made it abundantly clear that after his departure the GBC should serve as ISKCON’s ultimate managerial authority. In his will he states:

> 1. *The Governing Body Commission (GBC) will be the ultimate managing authority of the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness.*
> *[LD 6: Declaration of Will, June 1977]*

Although within the Vedic literature we may not find specific references describing a system of management with Vaisnavas working under a central authority such as the GBC, Srila Prabhupada created one. In doing so he followed the order of his Guru Maharaja, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, who requested his disciples to create a governing body. The significance of this is discussed in *Caitanya-caritamrta, Adi* 12.8, purport:

> *Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, at the time of his departure, requested all his disciples to form a governing body and conduct missionary activities cooperatively. He did not instruct a particular man to become the next acarya. But just after his passing away, his leading secretaries made plans, without authority, to occupy the post of acarya, and they split into two factions over who the next acarya would be.*

Similarly, in the Vedic scriptures we will not find directions for Vaisnava institutions to endorse or authorize spiritual positions like *sannyasa* or *diksa-guru*. Our evidence for the legitimacy of the GBC establishing such processes consists of Srila Prabhupada’s instructions and activities.

Concerning such important functions as approving *sannyasa* candidates, during his time with us Srila Prabhupada gradually turned these over to the GBC. In ISKCON's early years Srila Prabhupada personally awarded *sannyasa* to those he thought qualified. Later he asked the GBC Body to establish systems for assessing potential *sannyasis:*

> *For taking sannyasa you may consult your GBC member as we shall be starting a new policy where the sannyasa candidate must meet certain requirements to be determined by the GBC. [Letter to Danavir, 6 February 1973]*

> *Your program for those who are desiring to take sannyasa is approved by me and I request that you make something concrete and distribute it to all the other GBC members and amongst yourselves you may decide who will take sannyasa. [Letter to Satsvarupa, 10 February 1973]*

Since Srila Prabhupada's disappearance, the GBC Ministry for Sannyasa Services has developed systems for assessing and training candidates for *sannyasa* and recommending them to the GBC for the GBC's final approval.

Just as Srila Prabhupada established that the qualifications of prospective *sannyasis* should be assessed, he similarly indicated that diksa gurus should have certain qualifications.

Srila Prabhupada expected that after his physical departure his disciples would continue the disciplic succession, serving as gurus and accepting disciples into the *parampara*. He stated this as early as 1967:

> *Anyone following the order of Lord Chaitanya under the guidance of His bonafide representative, can become a spiritual master and I wish that in my absence all my disciples become the bonafide spiritual master to spread Krishna consciousness throughout the whole world. I want it. . . . [Letter to Madhusudana, 2 November 1967]*

In 1975 he wrote that after his departure he wanted his disciples to become *diksa-gurus* if they developed the necessary qualifications:

> *Keep trained up very rigidly and then you are bona fide guru, and you can accept disciples on the same principle. But as a matter of etiquette it is the custom that during the lifetime of your spiritual master you bring the prospective disciples to him, and in his absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without any limitation. This is the law of disciplic succession. I want to see my disciples become bona fide spiritual master and spread Krsna consciousness very widely. That will make me and Krsna very happy. [Letter to Tusta Krsna Swami, 2 December 1975]*

Srila Prabhupada wanted his disciples to attain a certain level of spiritual advancement before taking up the service of giving *diksa*. The minimum level he expected is expressed in the following quotes:

> *Generally the spiritual master comes from the group of such eternal associates of the Lord; but anyone who follows the principles of such ever liberated persons is as good as one in the above mentioned group. . . . A person who is liberated acharya and guru cannot commit any mistake, but there are persons who are less qualified or not liberated, but still can act as*

guru and acharya by strictly following the disciplic succession. [Letter to Janardana, 26 April 1968]

Tamal Krsna: *Well, I have studied myself and all of your disciples, and it's a clear fact that we are all conditioned souls, so we cannot be guru. Maybe one day it may be possible . . .*
Prabhupada: *Hmm.*
Tamal Ksna: *. . . but not now.*
Prabhupada: *Yes. I shall choose some guru. I shall say, "Now you become acarya. You become authorized." I am waiting for that. You become all acarya. I retire completely. But the training must be complete.*
Tamal Krsna: *The process of purification must be there.*
Prabhupada: *Oh, yes, must be there. Caitanya Mahaprabhu wants that. amara ajnaya guru hana. "You become guru." [laughs] But be qualified. Little thing, strictly follower . . .*
Tamal Krsna: *Not rubber stamp.*
Prabhupada:*: Then you'll not be effective. You can cheat, but it will not be effective. [Room Conversation, 22 April 1977, Bombay]*

An example of training and assessment for initiating spiritual masters that could be further developed is scriptural training and tests. As early as 1969 Srila Prabhupada explained a future program of sastric training so that his disciples would have the necessary philosophical knowledge to act as initiating spiritual masters:

Next January there will be an examination on this Bhagavad-gita. Papers will be sent by me to all centers, and those securing the minimum passing grade will be given the title as Bhakti-sastri. Similarly, another examination will be held on Lord Caitanya's Appearance Day in February, 1970 and it will be upon Srimad-Bhagavatam and Bhagavad-gita. Those passing will get the title of Bhakti-vaibhava. Another examination will be held sometimes in 1971 on the four books, Bhagavad-gita, Srimad-Bhagavatam, Teachings of Lord Caitanya, and Nectar of Devotion. One who will pass this examination will be awarded with the title of Bhaktivedanta. I want that all of my spiritual sons and daughters will inherit this title of Bhaktivedanta, so that the family transcendental diploma will continue through the generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate disciples. Maybe by 1975, all of my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the numbers of the generations. That is my program. So we should not simply publish these books for reading by outsiders, but our students must be well versed in all of our books so that we can be prepared to defeat all opposing parties in the matter of self-realization.
[Letter to: Hansadutta -- Los Angeles 3 January, 1969]

While neither Srila Prabhupada nor the GBC put the specifics of this idea in place, the principle is clear that devotees who accept disciples are subject to specific training, standards and oversight before they are allowed to initiate disciples.

After creating the GBC in 1970, Srila Prabhupada wrote: *I have formed this GBC for that purpose, to keep the devotional standards at the highest level and at the same time to manage a world-wide organization. [Letter to Rupanuga, 4 Nov 1970]*

Certainly the qualifications of gurus (and the qualifications of disciples) fall within the "devotional standards" mentioned by Srila Prabhupada to be safeguarded, and in some cases clarified, by the GBC.

Srila Prabhupada indicated the need for sastric degrees for many levels of service in ISKCON, and he left the duty to clarify and codify those degrees and levels to the GBC: *As far as the Bhakti-sastri and other examinations are concerned, that we will discuss at the GBC meeting. [Letter to Nitai, 24 Jan 1976]*

The persons best able to ascertain whether a proposed guru has been sufficiently steady in his service and loyal to Srila Prabhupada are the senior devotees who have known and served with the candidate for many years; that is, his peers and seniors in his geographic areas of service. Prospective diksa-gurus are assessed by a group of senior ISKCON leaders from the area where they reside and preach to determine whether they have the minimum qualifications required to accept disciples according to Srila Prabhupada's instructions. A final review is done by the GBC.

The GBC has also provided the "Spiritual Leadership Seminar: Being a guru in ISKCON" to assist diksa gurus in their service of caring for disciples and serving within Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON. There are also regular sangas where the gurus, sannyasis and GBC associate with each other.

The GBC, following Srila Prabhupada's example and instructions, thus understands that one of its duties is to implement systems of assessment and training so that qualified devotees may take up the service of becoming initiating spiritual masters in ISKCON.

313: Global Duties & Responsibilities of the Governing Body Commission
[ISKCON Law]

Whereas the GBC wishes to formalize the understanding of its global services to the International Society for Krishna Consciousness;

Whereas it is important that duties and responsibilities be clarified at all levels of the Society;

Whereas the GBC wishes to produce a legacy document for the instruction and training of future GBC members:

RESOLVED:

That the document "Global Duties & Responsibilities of the Governing Body Commission (GBC)" is accepted as an official statement and shall be part of ISKCON Law.