Copy of **http://krishna1008.blogspot.com/2022/11/sivaram-swami-defends-child-abuser-bvp.html** as it stood on 2024-03-24. Saved for the record; page furniture (menus, ads, comment forms) removed; names of private persons blacked out.

Thursday, November 10, 2022

Sivaram Swami Defends Child Abuser BVP

The following is a recent letter that Sivaram Swami wrote in support of BVP to the GBC.

Sunday, November 6, 2022

Dear Devotees,

Please accept my humble obeisances all glories to Srila Prabhupada.

[redacted] (SR) and [redacted] (MG) are well known to me, and as you know they are now both serving in Krsna Valley, Hungary. Also well-known to me is XXX dasi (the victim of BVP), and less so her husband XXX das. Since the spring I have been in regular touch with all these devotees, more so the former than the latter.

And I am familiar with the abuse that both XXX dasi and SR have undergone at the hands of BVPS over the years. I haven't judged either lady, or taken sides, I am acting solely as a counsellor and a guide to them and their husbands. They are clearly in very distraught states and have no institutional support. BVPS has been an acquaintance for decades. I can't say he was a close friend, but we were friendly. I haven't been in touch with him since pre-Covid.

That is a little background history.

I have been waiting for the CPO decision on BVPS. I acknowledge the decision on BVPS and wonder what the PLMO will add to that. However, I cannot understand why a CPO decision on BVPS passed incidental judgements and recommendations on SR and even MG, which then become public knowledge upon publication and forever destroys their reputation. It is clear to me that the CPO is biased against those two and I would suggest that the existing CPO officers be replaced. They have done marvellous work over decades but its time that they retire to other services.

I now request the exalted receivers of this post to consider the abuse of BVPS to XXX dasi and SR from another perspective: ISKCON's responsibility both to victims and even their abusers.

Whatever SR, MG, and XXX dasi have gone through as abuse victims and whatever the judgement in the past against SR, and in the present against BVPS, we must ask ourselves, "How will we help these devotees heal?" Our business is not to just punish and leave it at that. SR, MG, xxx dasi and unfortunately many others have been a victim of abuse in ISKCON. It is not enough to punish the abuser. That does not absolve ISKCON of its responsibility to the abused or even the abuser. I ask,

"How much moral, spiritual, and financial support has ISKCON offered the abused?"

"How much has their TP and GBC reached out to them?"

"How much responsibility is Mayapur and its GBCs taking for ensuring emotional counselling and spiritual guidance for them?"

"What does Mayapur's financial package for the above look like?"

"Will the GBC Body publicly censure the Mayapur GBCs for negligence of duty?"

"Will the GBC Body select one of their members to be in regular touch with the abused so that they know our leaders care?"

XXX dasi / SR / MG were born in and grew up in ISKCON. Their lives have been a mess. ISKCON has messed them up. Is this the ISKCON Prabhupada wanted, or that we want to pass on to others? Obviously not. But then we should do more than what we did in the past, which is to pass responsibility off to the CPO and continue to stick our heads in the sand.

Do something different, something personal, such as calling the abused to a GBC meeting and apologising for what happened to them on your watch. On my watch. I was sitting at your table for almost 40 years. I share the responsibility. That's why I have been speaking with them and offering a place of shelter. I am guilty.
I think you follow my train of thought. Here is another observation:

BVPS committed abuse but he is not a born abuser. He is a troubled person and he succumbed to temptation. But he gave 50 years of his life to ISKCON, and his abuse aside, he did valuable service. He tried to establish aspects of our culture in ISKCON. I for one appreciate that. Aside from his punishment, what were ISKCON's failings that he went astray, and now what is ISKCON's duty towards him. Again may I ask,

"Did he, in the last 40 years in Mayapur, hand in regular reports to the Mayapur TP and GBCs?"

"Did the Mayapur TP and GBC regularly visit his schools and check on goings on?"

"Will Mayapur management select someone to keep contact with him so that he doesn't stray again, or further?"

"What will the Mayapur management do to facilitate his new life?"

"Will the Mayapur management advise him and pay for counselling he desperately needs?"

“What does the financial package for the above two items look like.”

For those of you who don’t think an abuser deserves care I cite the following:

“Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is engaged in devotional service he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination?”

I didn’t write that. Krsna said it. How do we incorporate Bhagavad-gita into the way we deal with abusers? I know its not politically correct. Is BVPS strictly engaged in service? From what I hear he has had strict and extensive sadhana the last 10 years. If he is properly situated in his determination—and that’s for Mayapur management to determine—then how do we deal with considering him saintly? How can an abuser also be saintly—good GBC discussion topic. Its there in our main scripture and we can’t ignore it. At least I can’t. Nor should any devotee.

That’s all regarding BVPS.

Additionally, I would request the GBC to also review Laksmimoni dd’s case, a ruling with which I and many other GBC members did not agree. After 50 years of service we throw a 70 year old woman out of ISKCON with nowhere to go, minimal financial resources, and uncared for. How do you do that to someone who by Krsna’s estimation is “saintly?”

In conclusion I emphasise that the GBC body and its members can’t close their eyes to their responsibilities, it cannot allow further abuse of the abused and the abusers to take place. These are my points.

- To close our eyes to the improprieties in the CPO report on BVPS regarding SR and MG is wrong

- There has to be a change in the CPO and that means in the directors

- The GBC Body must hold the Mayapur management—GBCs on down—responsible for dereliction of duty.

- The GBC Body must ensure the Mayapur management take personal, spiritual and financial responsibility for the abused, and in a different and a more limited way for the abuser.

- The Mayapur management must present to the GBC Body its plans to pro-actively deal with abuse of children, teenagers, or adults in their schools, schools on their grounds, or even schools nearby where devotee children attend.

- The GBC Body should invite XXX dasi, MG, and SR to meet with them and speak kind words to them, hear from them, and apologise to them.

- The GBC Body should discuss how api cet su-duracaro works in the Justice Ministry, its system, and in the CPO and its system.

- How do we make decisions in the way that pure devotees do?

Thank you
Your Servant
Sivarama Swami

Like it or not, GBC is doing the work of ksatryas, or supposed to.

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SIVARAMA SWAMI DEFENDS CHILD ABUSER BHAKTIVIDYA PURNA

In October 2022, the ISKCON Child Protection Office (CPO) placed restrictions on child abuser Bhaktividya Purna (BVP), stating, “The support and endorsement that BVPS received from his seniors and peers enabled him to become the child abuser with the longest span of activity in the history of ISKCON.”

One of those “seniors and peers” that “enabled [BVP] to become the child abuser with the longest span of activity in the history of ISKCON” is Sivarama Swami.

On November 6, 2022, Sivarama Swami wrote to the GBC Executive Committee defending Bhaktividya Purna.

Sivarama Swami dismissed BVP’s decades of child abuse saying “But he gave 50 years of his life to ISKCON, and his abuse aside, he did valuable service.”
Sivarama Swami may want to re-read what the CPO said in BVP's case decision:

"ISKCON needs to stop defending known child abusers because of “how much service they have done”. The panel believes that if ISKCON's senior leadership had been more mindful of, and prioritised child protection, BVPS would not have been able to continue abusing children for so many years and the lives of many children would have been spared the unnecessary abuse he perpetrated."

Sivarama Swami went on to ask the GBC what kind of financial package would be set up for BVP (despite the CPO being reduced to 3% of its original annual funding, and the lack of financial compensation for BVP's hundreds of victims).
Sivarama Swami asked, "How can an abuser also be saintly—good GBC discussion topic. Its there in our main scripture and we can’t ignore it. At least I can’t. Nor should any devotee."

Even though the ISKCON Child Protection Office is mandated by the GBC to handle all child abuse cases in ISKCON, they continually face pushback from certain ISKCON leaders. This is not new. When Dhira Govinda served as the first CPO Director from 1998-2004, he wrote in his 2004 Annual Report that there was appallingly little culture of systemic accountability, and that the CPO could go through a whole investigation and adjuration but if it was a friend of someone in an influential position then it could be summarily disregarded.

Let's hold our leaders accountable to holding child abusers accountable.
Bhaktividya Purna's 2022 CPO case decision:

https://drive.google.com/.../1oscLZ5hxDeEq6SV2nmHkYM.../view

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BHD: Siva Rama has a serious defect in his consciousness and it is reflected in his behavior and his speech. It is shameful to use one's power to defend a child abuser. Time is short for the offenders.

PPD: tick tock tick tock ....

PADA: When Kirtanananda was molesting a naked boy in Mayapur, and the boy was screaming, Bhakti Vidya Purna swami was outside the room -- laughing. Is that what we call 50 years of service? ys pd

TL: Maybe we should start asking some of his disciples what they have experienced as well. 9/10 those who defend abuse, ABUSE.

BCT: Always wolves in sheeps clothing vile men.

DP: Abusers of this world, united take over! Different sangas, same stories.... I have been a witness.... iskcon and the different gaudiya maths ... sadly, a chronic problem everywhere!

BH: Yes.

CMD: Too often, in ISKCON (and other related Gaudiya Vaishnava groups), Bhagavad Gita verse 9.30 is misquoted, or at least quoted out of context, and misapplied. In Sanskrit, this is the “api cet su-duracaro” verse.

Here’s the English translation:

“Even if one commits the most abominable actions, if he is engaged in devotional service, he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated.”

In his purport, Srila Prabhupada offers an important caution: “this verse only refers to an accident due to the strong power of material connections.”
There are clear instructions on the difference between what one can do in the event of an accidental fall down and what one must do in the case of Vaishnava-aparadha.

For instance, consider the stories of Hiranyakasipu and Prahlad Maharaj; Saubhari Muni and Garuda; Sacimata and Advaita Acarya; Jagai, Madhai, and Lord Nityananda; as well as Durvasa Muni and Ambarisa Maharaja.

In all of these situations, the Supreme Lord says amnesty is not His to give. That has to come from the offended devotee. It’s important to keep in mind, while the offenders may still be considered Vaishnavas, they will not have properly atoned, or be able to fully revitalize their Krishna consciousness, until they have pleased – and are forgiven by – the offended Vaishnava.

Who says so? Our Scriptures say so. For example, in the purport of Srimad Bhagavatam 4.26.24, Srila Prabhupada writes:

“The conclusion is that if Krsna consciousness is covered by material sins, one can eliminate the sins simply by chanting the Hare Krsna mantra, but if one pollutes his Krsna consciousness by offending a brahmana or Vaishnava, one cannot revive it until one properly atones for the sin by pleasing the offended Vaishnava or brahmana.”

The final sentence of this purport is crystal clear:

“A Vaishnava-aparadha cannot be atoned by any means other than by begging the pardon of the offended Vaishnava.”

https://seekingtheessence.wordpress.com/.../i-beg-your.../

KM: I do think it's more nuanced than the headline suggests and I appreciate that he said he wants a conversation around that verse to better understand it which I think is well needed. The attack on the current CPO is the more worrisome aspect for me. It looks uncalled for and I expect more if it. Just because someone is abused doesn't let them off the hook for abuse.

ML Dasi: "And abuse aside, he did valuable service." A version of "Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how did you enjoy the show?"

SD: Touche!

SK: I resonated with your comment. Wow, jokes from higher echelons of the movement.

ML: Right? Sigh....

SK: I think for all the services he did he should be given a good package of salary while he sits of the bench for 3 years of ban before he can be back in the game. I never understood child abuse means ... just sit out for few days until the issue calms down and you are back on the Vyasasana. What jokes!

AM: Devotional service means always being conscious of Krishna, at all times. one slip and fall is sure. That is how strict is the law of spiritual devotion. That is how the Spiritual world functions. Whoever has not mastered this attention has to repeat the instructions of Krishna.

KP: Key word being “devotional”.

L Dasi: I think it should maybe be criticised that the names were on the leaked document. That was maybe a little bit sloppy. But it's a strange reaction to think anyone's service makes them immune against scrutiny. That is not the best way to protect our ISKCON society, and of course not any way to protect the vulnerable devotees.

[PADA: Same thing I get all the time, why are you leaking all this bad news? I dunno? Why are you guys creating all this bad news, then maybe we would not have to report it?]

PK: Perhaps. But I almost think that the CPO had a good reason to put those names there. To finally put an end to their madness.

VR Devi Dasi: Sivaram Swami just invalidated all the girls that were abused by [redacted] for more than a decade and her husband told one of the victims of BVP when she confided in him to take the secret to the grave.

[PADA: One abuser created another abuser, and another and so forth. OK so that means the whole thing was never uprooted, and the problem simply grows.]

IV Dasi: Just disgusting!

SV: How does one define service? Does it mean a mutually beneficial relationship with a religious institution? Is that Service or Bhakti?

DK Das: Once a devotee was recommended by Sivarama Swami into sannyasa ashrama after his wife left body and the Maharaja couldn't handle it long time. Maharaja in leadership forum said that he knew that he is struggling with controlling sense gratification and he offered resignation. Its not easy for a leader to left aside all emotional bondage and friendships, but this is the duty of a leader shown by Lord Ramachandra.

Once Rohini Suta Prabhu married his disciple BVPS has also issued many strange statements but it's difficult to take the medicine one wants to prescribe to others.

[PADA: Married his disciple? Oh heck no!]

TM Dasa: These people are simply Materialists in the Guise of Religionists, Dharma Dvajis as Srila Bhaktivinode has explained and stated that it’s better to associate with the gross materialists that such Pseudo Vaisnavas.

Why expect them to have Decency, Honesty or Morality? They should be recognised for the Demons they are and left to their own devices. Krsna sanctions their actions and facilitates through the medium of the Material Energy. It’s all just Materialistic and it’s an obstacle to the profession of Srila Prabhupada’s Mission to focus on their nonsense.

Every moment spent criticising and fighting against them is a moment and Opportunity Lost in the Favourable Devotional Service of the Lord and Srila Prabhupada who’s mission is delayed distracted by the Phantasmagoria of interaction of the Material Modes and those caught up in Maya’s Web.

The Demons are to be avoided, they cannot be preached to nor reformed. Our business is with the whole of the world and all it’s inhabitants which is served by the Sankirtana Yajna.

May be an image of 2 people and text that says 'SRILA BHAKTI SIDDHANTA SARASWATI THAKUR Being cheated by those who mislead people in the name of hari- katha has become a sort of religion in this age.

AM: I don’t know you in person and I doubt you care what I have to say, but I find your decision to post only one part of Sivarama Swami’s response to be puzzling. The letter says much more than the part you decided to repost. Even if what he says is evil, not sharing his entire letter but only the part that offends you is never useful to any discussion.

You didn’t even link to his letter. This is bordering on disingenuous. Wouldn’t it be important for people to see what he had to say in full?

SD: Someone else shared the entire letter. I was merely commenting on a portion of it. I shared a link to BVPs case decision which is more important in this context.

AM: But this was posted to your timeline, meaning many people might not have read the letter. Hardly seems conducive to having a discussion if people just see snippets.

SD: I addressed what concerned me in his letter. If you want to do a post on his letter, feel free. He did want to offer a financial package to a child abuser and a psychopath or not? He’s Booted out families wholesale with out any remorse and who have done nothing criminal from the manor.

NNV: OTHERWISE WHY WAIT TO BE RAPED BY DEMON / EXECUTIONERS IN THE COURT OF YAMARAJA?

VR Devi Dasi: It’s very disturbing that he wants to fire the CPO members because they found his child abuser friend guilty.

DK Das: Its not the first time, but first time such letter came out. Also the counseling of the abused will only result in making them to feel pity on their abuser nothing else. The CPO leaders who are an obstacle will be removed and abused will take the case back and the show can go on.

PR Dasi: "He gave 50 years of his life to ISKCON." AND??? Like seriously, I've said this for years, the GBC is a boys club and the rest of us are disposable. Their motto should be "bros before hos". Who cares about OUR years of dedication and sacrifice, we need to accommodate the dude whose been abusing his position for half a century. Give me a break. Makes you wonder what skeletons are hiding in Sivaram Swamis closet.

SV: BROS b4 Hoes - it’s funny if it wasn’t so tragic !!!!

LG: All devotees, seniors and leaders that condone this behaviour of any member of ISKCON are themselves guilty of sinful vices be it physical or mental will have to face the wrath of the Lord when the time comes which is inevitable for perpetrators of Srila Prabhupad's mission.

G Pd: He did a lot of service and should be compensated financial or allowed to continue. That's the catch phrase - and its where everything goes wrong, we have heard that before from the club. Time to put an end to this hypocrasy, and philosophical distortion. The normal plan for abusers is prison time, a free all expenses paid retirement plan behind bars.

SV: I agree a financial package should be made fully available to him lodgings food should all be fully paid for him. IN PRISON.

AL: With special kirtan from his disciples VS and HB LD.

BH: Yes for 25 years

AL: they should put BVP, Lokanatha, Sivaram and Bhaktivikas in the same jail cell... they will then get the physical association they seek.

MMA: Friggin accomplices..... Prabhupada said do not even preach if you are not following. What to speak of sanyassis.... enablers who need therapy or jail.

DE: Your post is like mainstream media..... Slanted according to editorial bias. Disappointing. Jiva Goswami the whole letter has been posted on this forum now .... The "purport" given by S dd should be disregarded. But you can make your own mind up. Maharaja communicates quite clearly, with an emphasis on the welfare of the victims.

JS Devi Dasi: SR herself has severly abused children when she was the principal of the school. Why is their no mention of them. How can SR be put on the same level as the underages girl xxx dasi that sr abused for more than a decade.

[PADA: Abuse for more than a decade, and no one on the GBC notices?]

VR Devi Dasi: And how is it that everyone accepts sr and mg report as truth, it has been no investigation or case. They can just write whatever they like and the whole iskcon world just accepts it. She is known for being a notorious liar, and always putting herself as the victim.

Xxx dasis case about her own abuse has been thoroughly investigated by the CPO. And also the girls that were severly abused by sr has been investigated by the CPO. Did Sivaram Swami read all of the CPO reports of the girls SR abused or is he just believing what Sr is telling him?

[PADA: Numbers of victims have testified to abuse in Mayapur. That is a known fact. How many were abused and how badly is another issue.]