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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 19 – MARCH 2, 2014

Go to 2014 Zonal Assignments

Section 100: APPOINTMENTS

101. GBC Officers and Members

RESOLVED:

1. His Grace Anuttama Das is elected GBC Chairman.

2. His Grace Praghosa Das is elected First Vice-Chairman.

3. His Grace Sesa Das is elected Second Vice-Chairman.

4. His Holiness Bhakti Purusottama Swami is elected GBC Secretary.

5. His Grace Candrasekhara Acarya Das continues as Acting GBC member.

6. His Holiness Prahladananda Swami is appointed as Assistant GBC.

7. His Grace Tirtharaj Das continues as GBC Candidate.

8. His Grace Revati Raman Das is appointed as GBC Candidate.

9. The resignation of His Grace Ravindra Svarupa Das as a GBC Member is accepted.

102. Sannyasa Waiting List

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

Akincana Das	3 years
Ambarish Das (GKG)	2 years
Ananda Caitanya Das	1 year
Ananda Vardhana Das	3 years
Asit Krsna Das	3 year
Badrinarayan Das	accepted sannyasa in March
Bhaktipada Das	4 years
Carudesna Das (BTS)	1 year
Dayavan Das	2 years
Deva Deva Das	4 years
Dhirasanta Das	1 year
Ganga Narayan Das	1 year
Gaura Krishna Das	1 year
Halayudha Das	2 years
Hari Vilas Das	2 years
Krsna Ksetra Das	this year
Lilasuka Das	1 Year
Mahadyuti Das	3 years
Mahat Tattva Das	2 years
Mahaprabhu Das	3 years
Nabadvip Dvija Gouranga Das	2 years
Raghava Pandit Das	2 years
Rupa Raghunatha Das	2 years
Sankirtan Das	1 year
Uttamasloka Das	2 years
Vedavyasa Das	accepted sannyasa in March
Vivasvan Das	this year
Vishvavasu Das	3 years
Yamunacarya Das	1 year

103. Reaffirmation of Ministries and Standing Committees

[Action Order]

The following are the Ministry and Standing Committees and their membership assignments for 2014-2015:

Ministry of Communications	Minister – Anuttama Das
Ministry of Health and Welfare	Minister – Prahladananda Swami Other member – Bir Krishna Das Goswami
Congregational Development Ministry	Co-Ministers – Jayapataka Swami, Kaunteya Das
Vaisnavi Ministry	Co-Ministers – Malati Dasi, Dina Sharana Dasi, Prasanta Dasi, Laxmimoni Dasi.
ISKCON Youth Ministry	Minister – Manorama Das

Ministry of Sannyasa Services	Minister – Prahladananda Swami Other members: Hrdaya Caitanya Das, Sivarama Swami, Guru Prasad Swami, Bhaktivaibhava Swami, Bhakti Caitanya Swami
ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry	Minister – Nrsimha Kavaca Das
Ministry of Book Distribution	Minister – Vijaya Das
Ministry of Cow Protection and Agriculture	Minister – Syamasundara Das
Ministry of Padayatra	Minister – Lokanath Swami
Ministry of Education	Minister – Sesa Das
Ministry of Justice	Minister – Sesa Das
Ministry of Fund Development	Minister – Devakinandan Das
Sastric Advisory Council	Members: Urmila Dasi, Drutakarma Das, Mukunda Datta Das, Madana-mohana Das, Narayani Dasi, Adi-purusa Das, Isvara-krsna Das, Caitanya-carana Das, Sarvajna Das, Brijabasi Das, Vinoda-bihari Das, Yadunandana Swami
ISKCON Property Office	Members – Current GBC Executive Committee, Kuladri Das (Convener-Secretary), Bhaktarupa Das
ISKCON Central Office of Child Protection	Director – Champakalata Dasi
GBC Vaisnava Calendar Committee	Members – Bhanu Swami, Gopalapriya Das, Sadasivananda Das, Bhaktarupa Das (Convener)
ISKCON Dispute Resolution Committee (IDRC)	Minister of Justice, a representative of ISKCONResolve, the second Vice-Chairman of the GBC, and the Director of the ISKCON Dispute Resolution Office
BBT Construction Grant Allocation Committee (BBTCG)	Members – Ramai Swami, Bhanu Swami, Devamrita Swami, Current GBC Chairman, Hrdaya Caitanya Das (Convener)
Guru Services Committee	Members – Prahladananda Swami (Chairman), Anuttama Das, Visakha Dasi, Virabahu Das, Ravindra Svarupa Das, Bhakti Caitanya Swami
GBC Appointment Committee	Members – Prahladananda Swami (Chairman), Praghosa Das, Madhu Sevita Das, Bhakti Vijnana Goswami, Bhakti Caitanya Swami, Anuttama Das, Laxmimoni Dasi

World Holy Name Week Committee	Global Coordination Team – Lokanath Swami, Jananda Goswami, Ekalavya Das
Vrindavan Samadhi Standing Committee	Gopal Krsna Goswami, Malati Devi Dasi, Satyanarayana Das, Naresvara Das, and Pancagauda Das (convener)
GBC-BBT Team	Members – Badrinarayan Das Goswami (Coordinator), Gopal Krishna Goswami, Sivarama Swami, Madhu Sevita Das, Hrdaya Caitanya Das, Praghosa Das

Section 200: FINANCES

201. GBC Budget

RESOLVED:

The GBC budget for 2014-15 is (in INR):

Child Protection Office	6,60,000
Dandavats	3,42,000
Emergency Fund	2,40,000
Executive Committee Travel	2,40,000
Finance & Bank Charges	24,000
GBC Annual General Meeting	4,50,000
GBC Community Relations Office	1,80,000
GBC Corresponding Secretary	3,60,000
GBC EC Secretariat	3,60,000
GBC Strategic Planning Team	6,60,000
ISKCON Congregational Development Ministry	90,000
ISKCON Database	1,26,000
ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry	6,00,000
ISKCON Office of Dispute Resolution	1,80,000
ISKCON News	210,000
ISKCON Resolve	4,80,000
ISKCON's 50th Anniversary Committee	2,40,000
Legal Fees – final repayment	85,860
Mayapur GBC Office	3.00.000
Ministry of Cow Protection & Agriculture	1,83,000
Ministry of Education	3,60,000
Ministry of Sannyasa Services	30,000
Vaisnava Calendar Web Site	24,400
Vaisnavi Ministry	36,600
Total:	64,57,860

202. Appointment of Auditor

Sri Ritesh Shah and Associates, F.C.A., Chartered Accountant, of 125 Netaji Subhash Road, Room No. 45, Kolkata 700 001, is appointed as statutory auditor

for the year 2014-2015.

Section 300: INTERNAL ISKCON

301. Midterm Meeting 2014

The Midterm Meeting of the ISKCON GBC Society shall take place from October 13-19, 2014, at ISKCON Tirupati, AP, India.

302. Annual General Meeting 2015

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the ISKCON GBC Society shall take place from February 6-16, 2015, at ISKCON Mayapur, WB, India.

(Note: Resolutions 303-308, originally passed at the October 2013 Midterm Meetings, were reconfirmed as follows:)

303: ISKCON's 50th Anniversary

Whereas the GBC Body has recognized the extraordinary importance of the upcoming 50th Anniversary of ISKCON and the great opportunities it presents

RESOLVED:

Every GBC member shall promptly appoint a 50th Anniversary zonal coordinator for each country in his or her respective zone.

All GBCs, Ministers, and Regional Governing Bodies shall prepare and submit preliminary ideas and plans for 50th Anniversary local events and celebrations.

Both of the above shall be reported to the Global Coordinator, Ajay Kumar (UK), by Aksaya Tritiya (02 May) 2014 at ajay@iskcon50.org, who will then assist as a central resource for the society.

304: Plans for Increasing Book Distribution

Whereas in some parts of the world book distribution is not increasing (and even decreasing);

Whereas in parts of the world where there is some increase, we could do better;

Whereas cooperation and shared planning between the local GBCs and local BBT trustee has proved successful in North America;

Whereas creating goals, timelines, and targeted results works;

Whereas without goals, timelines, and targeted results, the tendency is to drift and to accept the status quo as success or the best that we can do;

Whereas Srila Prabhupada said that the GBC's gathering together in Mayapur is to make annual plans and then measure the results the following year

RESOLVED:

1. The trustee of each BBT division will meet with the local GBCs to develop a plan for how to increase book distribution in their area. The scope of the plan will be from the Mayapur GBC meeting of 2014 to the Mayapur GBC meeting of 2015. The development of such a plan would naturally include the local Temple Presidents and other leaders as well.
2. "Local GBCs" means those GBCs in a distinct region or set of countries who all buy the majority of their books from the same BBT division. For example, such a region or set of countries could be:
    (a) Latin America and the Caribbean—Latin BBT
    (b) Australia and New Zealand—Australian BBT
    (c) Western Europe—NE and Mediterranean BBTs
    (d) Eastern Europe—NE BBT
    (e) Canada and the USA—NA BBT
    (f) Japan and Southeast Asia—Far East/Middle East BBT

The GBCs and BBT trustees for other parts of the world should also meet to decide if they can develop plans for their parts of the world.

There is flexibility and some overlap in how designating these areas or regions would be decided. The local GBCs and BBT division director can work out the details in consultation with each other.

Each group of GBCs will select one GBC member to serve as the chief liaison with the BBT divisional director or trustee. That GBC member will also serve as coordinator of the execution of the plan developed.

A summary of the plans thus developed will be presented by as many temples or regions as possible to the full GBC at the Mayapur 2014 GBC meeting. The individual GBC member selected as the liaison/coordinator will make the presentation for his or her region and local BBT.

The selection of the GBC liaison officer for each group must be completed by the local GBC group by the end of November 2013 at the latest.

While ISKCON, the GBC, and the BBT are independent entities and thus the GBC cannot instruct the BBT trustees, the GBC humbly appeals to the BBT trustees to kindly get involved in pushing this process forward and making sure that the development of these plans actually happens.

The Indian BBT and Indian GBCs are exempted from this resolution as they are already doing such powerful book distribution. Of course, they are welcomed and encouraged to present a plan for the coming year if they wish.

The results of this resolution will be assessed at the 2015 Annual GBC Meeting. At that time the GBC will determine whether to make this resolution permanent.

305: Establishing the Division of Legal, Accounting and Regulatory Compliance

Whereas Srila Prabhupada wanted a high standard of legal, regulatory and accounting compliance in ISKCON with the aim of protecting the properties, preventing lawsuits, maintaining standards, etc.;

Whereas the GBC wishes all leaders to collaborate and communicate timely with the Division of Legal, Accounting, and Regulatory Compliance

RESOLVED:

The GBC Division of Legal, Accounting, and Regulatory Compliance is hereby established; the Division shall report to the Executive Secretariat.

The Compliance Division is authorized to request and receive legal and financial documentation from all over the world and all managers must make every effort to provide any information the Division may request in regard to the National Councils, projects, centers, etc. under their management—subject to the discretion of the GBC Zonal Secretary/ies.

Within their zones, the GBC Zonal Secretaries are responsible to ensure the gathering of the data and documents as required by the Compliance Division. To facilitate this task, they are encouraged to identify and establish, for each country in their zone, a Compliance contact person, who will contact project officers, board of directors' members, etc. to obtain data and documents. The Compliance contact person shall upload information to the Compliance website and provide updates as needed, at least annually.

Twice a year, before the AGM and midterm meetings, the Compliance Division Director shall submit to the GBC reports on national and local performance in regard to:

- Corporate-bylaws
- BoD succession provisions
- Oaths of Allegiance for all project leaders
- Property Trustee System (PTS) and other forms of property protection systems
- Intellectual Property such as trademarks, etc
- Other relevant information

Such reports will be provided also to each GBC zonal secretary for their confirmation of the reports' accuracy.

The Compliance Division shall ensure confidentiality and protection of the data.

306: Zonal Configuration

RESOLVED:

1. North America Area - Idaho is divided along the time zone line; the Northern part remains with the North West zone while the Southern part becomes part of the Pacific/West zone.

2. Europe – instead of being divided into seven zones, Europe shall include the following thirty-seven zones:

1. Great Britain (England, Wales & Scotland)
2. Ireland (including Northern Ireland)
3. Iceland
4. Sweden
5. Denmark & Faroe Islands
6. Norway
7. Finland
8. Estonia
9. Latvia
10. Lithuania
11. Poland
12. Czech Republic
13. Slovakia
14. France & Monaco
15. Belgium & Luxembourg
16. Netherlands
17. Spain & Andorra
18. Portugal
19. Italy, San Marino & Vatican City
20. Malta
21. Greece
22. Cyprus
23. Israel
24. Germany & Austria
25. Switzerland & Liechtenstein
26. Hungary
27. Romania
28. Bulgaria
29. Turkey
30. Slovenia
31. Bosnia & Herzegovina
32. Croatia
33. Serbia
34. Kosovo
35. Montenegro
36. Macedonia
37. Albania

3. Indian Subcontinent Area – the Eastern part shall include nine zones:

1. Odisha (Orissa)
2. Bihar & Jharkhand
3. Nepal
4. West Bengal (except Sridham Mayapur), Sikkim & Bhutan
5. Sridham Mayapur
6. Bangladesh
7. Asom (Assam) (without the Barak Valley), Meghalaya & Arunachal Pradesh
8. Tripura & the Barak Valley (three Bengali-speaking districts of Asom)
9. Manipur, Mizoram & Nagaland

4. Indian Subcontinent Area – South India shall include nine zones:

1. Andhra Pradesh, Coastal Zone (districts: Srikakulam, Vijayanagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam & Nelluru)
2. Andhra Pradesh, Rayalaseema Zone (districts: Chitoor, Ananthapur, Kadapa & Kurnool).
3. Andhra Pradesh, Telangana Zone (districts: Hyderabad, Rangareddy, Medak, Nizamabad, Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam, Nalgonda & Mahabubnagar).
4. Karnataka, Bangalore Zone
5. Karnataka, Southern Districts Zone (all districts up to & including Shimoga, Davangere Chitradurga)
6. Karanataka, Northern Districts Zone
7. Kerala (whole state)
8. Eastern Tamil Nadu (Nilgiris & Coimbatore districts)
9. Rest of Tamil Nadu

5. Indian Subcontinent Area – Maharashtra & Goa shall include five zones :

1. Greater Mumbai (including Thane)
2. Goa & Konkan
3. North West Maharashtra
4. South West Maharashtra
5. Vidarbha (North East Maharashtra)

6. Indian Subcontinent Area:

1. Sri Lanka: one zone
2. Uttar Pradesh: four zones
3. Delhi & National Capital Region: one zone
4. Jammu & Kashmir: one zone
5. Uttarkhand & Himachal Pradesh: one zone
6. Rajasthan: three zones
7. Madhya Pradesh: two zones
8. Punjab: one zone
9. Haryana & Chandigarh: one zone
10. Chhattisgarh: one zone

7. Indian Subcontinent Area – Pakistan shall be a single zone

8. Russian Sphere Area - Russia shall be a single zone

9. Russian Sphere Area - Azerbaijan shall be a single zone

10. Russian Sphere Area:

    1. Mongolia: one zone
    2. Ukraine & Moldova: one zone
    3. Belarus: one zone
    4. Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan, Taijikistan, Uzbekistan & Turkmenistan): one zone
    5. Georgia: one zone
    6. Armenia: one zone

11. Sub-Saharan Africa Area:

    1. Angola, Zambia & Namibia: one zone
    2. South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho & Swaziland: one zone
    3. Mozambique, Zimbabwe & Malawi: one zone
    4. Madagascar & Mauritius: one zone
    5. Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, & Liberia: one zone
    6. Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Burkina Faso & Togo: one zone
    7. Benin & Nigeria: one zone
    8. Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, & Central African Republic: one zone
    9. Kenya, Tanzania & Uganda: one zone
    10. Rwanda & Burundi: one zone
    11. Ethiopia & Eritrea: one zone
    12. South Sudan: one zone

307: Amendment of Property Trustee Law 11.3.3
[ISKCON LAW]

Whereas Srila Prabhupada's will states as follows regarding the removal of a Property Trustee:

> *The executive directors who have herein been designated are appointed for life. In the event of the death or failure to act for any reason of any of the said directors, a successor director or directors may be appointed by the remaining directors, provided the new director is my initiated disciple following strictly all the rules and regulations of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness as detailed in my books, and provided that there are never less than three (3) or more than five (5) executive directors acting at one time.*
>
> [Note: The terms "director" and "executive director" used by Srila Prabhupada here are now referred to in ISKCON parlance as "Property Trustee".]

Whereas it has come to the attention of the GBC that according to the conventions of standard trust law, the term "failure to act" can refer to any failure on the part of a trustee to fulfill his/her assigned duties under the trust. Thus, the above statement from the will is referring not only to inaction by a Property Trustee but also any other failure of the Property Trustee to properly discharge their assigned duty, including acting beyond the scope of their authority;

Whereas ISKCON Law, Section 11.3.3 states, in part, as follows:

> *If the property trustee fails to act within a reasonable time upon a specific proposal related to a property from either the local management, a co-trustee, the ISKCON property office, or the GBC Body, the local management or the co-trustees, may submit a request for removal of the trustee to the ISKCON property office stating the facts of the failure to act. The ISKCON property office may grant the request immediately, if the submitted facts are sufficiently compelling, or it may again formally request the trustee to act on the proposal. If the trustee continues to fail to act, then the trustee shall be removed. Temple management can approach the property office to bypass a non-functioning trustee without replacing him.*

This section requires to be rewritten to take into account the newly-understood intention of Srila Prabhupada as to when a Property Trustee may be replaced or removed.

RESOLVED:

That the final paragraph of Section 11.3.3 of the ISKCON Property Trustee Law shall be amended as follows:

If the property trustee is seen to be failing to properly execute his duties under ISKCON property law or is seen to be acting beyond the scope of his authority, then the local management or the co-trustees may submit a request for removal of the trustee to the ISKCON Property Office, which, after hearing the response of the trustee and considering the matter carefully, may grant the request. In the case of a property trustee that is simply not responding promptly to specific requests for trustee action, the local management responsible for the property in question or the local Zonal Secretary(ies) may, alternatively, approach the ISKCON Property Office for permission to bypass such a non-functioning trustee without removing him.

308: Adding New GBCs

RESOLVED:

Adding new members to the GBC, including all levels of GBC, shall generally be put on hold until the AGM 2016. The GBC requests the Succession Committee, Org Dev and the GBC Appointment Committee to give a priority to

collaboratively strengthen the system of identifying, developing and vetting new GBCs. Potential improvements shall be presented for review at each GBC meeting. Final review shall be ready for the Midterm Meeting 2015.

310: "Srila Prabhupada: The Founder-Acarya of ISKCON" on founderacharya.com
[Guideline]

Whereas the booklet, "Srila Prabhupada: The Founder-Acarya of ISKCON," released by Ravindra Svarupa Das and published by the ISKCON GBC Press, is approved by the GBC body as the foundational document on this topic;

Whereas the booklet is now available for free download on the website www.founderacharya.com;

Whereas making the booklet widely available is important for the future of ISKCON, because establishing Srila Prabhupada's position of Founder-Acarya will benefit devotees generation after generation

RESOLVED:

That every ISKCON project website should have a link to www.founderacharya.com

311: Devotee Healthcare Guidelines
[Guideline]

Whereas at present there are no official guidelines regarding the fiscal responsibility of ISKCON centers and other entities for the healthcare of resident or full-time devotees;

Whereas Srila Prabhupada prioritized the health of devotees as number one, followed by sadhana, then seva;

And whereas serving devotees is very important.

RESOLVED:

1. All ISKCON entities are encouraged to ensure that all essential medical and dental expenses of its resident and fully supported devotees are supplied. The authorities of those ISKCON entities are recommended to investigate options for local insurance plans, government plans, or other reliable options to ensure as far as possible that quality health care is provided.

2. A person choosing to become a resident or fully supported devotee dependent on an ISKCON entity should be informed as to the extent of medical and dental insurance or coverage, or absence thereof, that will be supplied by the entity before they commit to dedicate themselves to the ISKCON entity.

3. All such assurances may be put into writing, with a copy given to the devotee, and the original retained in the permanent files of the ISKCON entity.

312: Should Women be Called “Prabhu”, “Mataji”, or “Devi”?

Whereas in ISKCON men had generally been taught to see all women other than their wives as mother;

Whereas in more recent times a practice has gained momentum that women should not be called "Mataji," but "Prabhu;"

Whereas the word "Prabhu" is traditionally used to address men;

Whereas one section of ISKCON considers addressing women as "Prabhu" to have no cultural or
linguistic backing, or any evidentiary or experiential support from Srila Prabhupada's teachings;

Whereas another section of ISKCON cites conversational or correspondence-based evidence that Srila Prabhupada addressed female disciples as "Prabhu;"

Whereas there is increasing discord among the proponents of these two opinions;

Whereas all initiated women also have the title "Devi" as part of their spiritual name, an address that could also apply to the non-initiated

RESOLVED:

That the Sastric Advisory Committee is requested to research the evidence for women being called "Mataji", "Prabhu" or "Devi" and give a conclusive directive as to which of these terms should and should not be used by members of ISKCON.

313: Sound Systems Guideline

[Guideline]

Whereas the sound pressure levels produced by sound systems, especially during festivals, can produce volumes of sound that can be dangerous;

Whereas when sound systems are pushed into levels of extreme volume and distortion the sound produced is potentially less than pleasant, sweet, and attractive;

Whereas ours is a preaching movement and we want to attract people as opposed to discouraging them from listening to our sound vibrations;

Whereas the volume of sound can be measured by Sound Pressure Level (SPL) meters, that can be purchased professionally, or downloaded as apps for iPhone,

Android, and other devices

RESOLVED:

That the GBC Body hereby encourages ISKCON managers to monitor the levels of the sound systems in use at their centers. The sound system should be adjusted so that it sounds clear, sweet and attractive as opposed to overly loud, distorted or painful.

Whenever possible, the sound pressure levels should regularly be measured using sound pressure level meters to make sure that dangerous sound pressure levels are prevented. Such meters are available on mobile devices. (For example, dB Meter Pro on the App Store.)

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the USA, exposure to a noise level of 85 dBA over an eight hour work day and a 40 year working life is acceptable. For every 3 dBAs over 85dBA, the permissible exposure time before occupational noise-induced hearing loss can occur is cut in half.

314: The Hare Krsna Maha-mantra Should be the Primary Mantra in all ISKCON Kirtans

[ISKCON Law]

Whereas Srila Prabhupada has stressed the preeminent position of the Hare Krishna maha-mantra in ISKCON kirtan:

"In our temple, strictly Hare Krishna chanting should be given more importance. There is no harm in this mantra you have heard, but it is not very important. There are many such common songs composed by common devotees out of sentiment. But our principle is to stick to the authorities, and always remember that Hare Krishna is the prime authorized mantra." (Letter to Malati Dasi, 28 January 1969);

Whereas it has been observed that it is commonplace in ISKCON kirtans that many mantras are chanted. Often the chanting of the maha-mantra occupies only a small percentage of the kirtan.

Whereas the Hare Krishna maha-mantra is the primary mantra to be chanted in the age of Kali as presented by Sri Krishna Caitanya, our previous acaryas and Srila Prabhupada:

hare krsna hare krsna krsna krsna hare hare
hare rama hare rama rama rama hare hare

iti sodasakam namnam kali-kalmasa nasanam
natah parataropayah sarva vedesu drsyate

The sixteen words of the Hare Krsna mantra are especially meant for counteracting the sins of the age of Kali. To save oneself from the contamination of this age there is no alternative but to chant the Hare Krsna mantra. After searching through all the Vedic literatures, one cannot find a method of religion for this age so sublime as the chanting of Hare Krsna. [Kali-Santarana Upanisad 5-6]

RESOLVED:

That in all ISKCON kirtans, the Hare Krsna maha-mantra should be the primary mantra.

Note: This is for kirtans, but does not apply to bhajans such as Jaya Radha Madhava, Nrsimha prayers, etc.

315: Chanting of the Holy Names of Srimati Radharani
[Guideline]

Whereas many devotees have expressed concern that the standard upheld during Srila Prabhupada's presence in regards to the chanting of Srimati Radharani's holy names and related mantras appears to be diminishing;

Whereas there have been conflicts amongst our devotees arising as a result of not having a definitive policy on this topic.

Whereas although it is neither mandatory nor necessary to do so because all personalities are automatically glorified within the maha-mantra, it is understandable that some devotees may want to emphasize the name of Srimati Radharani on Radhastami;

Whereas it is well known that no one could come before Srila Prabhupada and chant "Radhe Radhe" repetitively as he would not allow it. He always told us to chant the Hare Krishna mantra. Srila Prabhupada himself was never heard chanting "Radhe Radhe". There is no evidence to show that Srila Prabhupada chanted or encouraged others to chant Srimati Radharani's names in isolation at any time, including Radhastami. Whenever Srila Prabhupada was greeted with "Jaya Radhe" he always replied by saying "Hare Krishna", even in Vrndavana.

Whereas there is risk of deviation if we do not follow Srila Prabhupada and the acaryas. Srila Prabhupada disapproved of the introduction of mantras which were not given by the previous acaryas or were not found in shastra

RESOLVED:

The following should be avoided in all temple and public programs, as well as in recorded media:

(1) Chanting of the holy name of Srimati Radharani without the holy name of Sri Krishna, i.e. Radhe, Radhe, Radhe, Radhe, Radhe. . . .

(2) Chanting of the holy name of Srimati Radharani within mantras that were not introduced by Srila Prabhupada, previous Gaudiya Vaisnava Acaryas, or in sastra, including but not limited to:

(a) Jaya Radhe, Jaya Radhe. Jaya Radhe Jaya Radhe
(b) Radhe Radhe, Radhe Radhe
(c) Jaya Radhe Jaya Radhe Radhe, Jaya Radhe Jaya Sri Radhe
(d) Radhe Radhe Radhe Radhe Radhe Govinda
(e) Radharani ki jai, Maharani ki jai
(f) Radhe Shyam, Radhe Shyam, Shyam Shyam, Radhe Radhe

On Radhastami, devotees may chant Srimati Radharani's holy name in isolation of Sri Krishna's name to a limited degree, not more than two or three minutes.

If ISKCON devotees want to give some special emphasis or attention to the glorification of Srimati Radharani, beyond chanting of the maha-mantra, they should do so by chanting mantras or bhajans which are authorized by Srila Prabhupada and our disciplic line. An example of this is the chanting of Sri Radhika-stava from the Stava-mala of Srila Rupa Goswami.

316: Gender Kirtan

[Guideline]

Whereas a new practice has emerged in ISKCON kirtan consisting of:

Kirtan Leader Chants	Ladies Only Respond
Kirtan Leader Chants	Men Only Respond
Kirtan Leader Chants	Full Congregation Responds

Whereas there is no description of Srila Prabhupada ever leading kirtan like this, nor of any devotee leading kirtan like this in Srila Prabhupada's presence;

Whereas this new practice emphasizes the bodily conception of life and our false designations as man and woman;

Whereas when such questionable chanting occurs, some devotees are uncomfortable, alienated, disturbed, or may even refuse to participate in such a kirtan, and thus the unity of our movement, even in its most core activity—sankirtan—is jeopardized

RESOLVED:

Kirtan leaders in all temple and public programs, should refrain from separating the congregation into responding sections based on bodily considerations like male, female, young, old, etc.

317: ISKCON Disciple Course Mandate

Whereas there is a need for standardized training of new devotees about the:

a. Preeminent position of Srila Prabhupada
b. Duties of a disciple regarding the guru and other ISKCON authorities
c. Appropriate selection of a *diksa-guru*
d. Importance of initiation vows
e. Service to our parampara and the mission of ISKCON
f. Other relevant matters

Whereas ISKCON does not have a standard training system or course for new members in regards to the specific duties of initiated disciples;

Whereas such a course would promote shared vision, unity, and cooperation among ISKCON devotees around the world;

Whereas an ISKCON Disciple Course was created under the auspices of the GBC Guru Services Committee, the Mayapur Institute, and ISKCON Communications with the input of senior devotees, *diksa-* and *siksa-gurus,* and educators from around the world;

Whereas the Disciple Course was taught and tested for two years in many diverse countries evoking positive results and feedback from new and senior devotees;

Whereas the Disciple Course is translated into major languages including Hindi, Bengali, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Italian, Russian and Chinese, and is also available online in English via the Bhaktivedanta College, Radhadesh;

Whereas the Guru Services Committee is working with ISKCON Desire Tree to create online versions of the Course in several Indian languages;

Whereas ISKCON leaders have requested the Disciple Course be mandatory before initiation and ideally before devotees select a *diksa-guru*

RESOLVED:

That the ISKCON Disciple Course, as developed by the GBC Guru Services Committee, shall be a mandatory pre-requisite for all devotees accepting first or second initiation by an ISKCON guru, effective Janmastami, 2015. After that date, no guru may initiate a disciple who has not first completed the Disciple Course. This is in addition to current requirements of new initiates.

Furthermore, all GBC Members and Temple Presidents shall ensure that within their respective areas of authority, no later than Janmastami, 2015:

1. Devotees shall be advised and encouraged to complete the Disciple Course before selecting a *diksa-guru*
2. Devotees shall have reasonable access to enroll in the Disciple Course
3. A sufficient number of teachers shall be identified and facilitated to teach the Course
4. No devotee shall be allowed to accept initiation before completing the Course (subject to exemptions below)

Teachers/facilitators of the ISKCON Disciple Course must:

a. Beinitiated for at least 5 years
b. Have completed the ISKCON Disciple Course
c. Be recommended by their Disciple Course facilitator
d. Have completed the VTE Teacher Training Course 1 (TTC1)* or have equivalent training or experience
e. Have the approval of their local GBC representative
f. Teach from the official curriculum, manuals and other materials as approved by the GBC Guru Services Committee

Illiterate devotees are welcome to participate in the Course. Upon completion they shall be required to undergo a minimal oral examination at the discretion of the teacher.

In rare cases of the infirmity or terminal illness of a prospective disciple the requirement for completing the Disciple Course may be waived by the local Temple President.

GBC members who find a specific area within their jurisdiction needs more time for implementation due to exceptional circumstances, may request an extension of up to one year by submitting a request no later than July 31, 2015, to the GBC Executive Committee for approval.

*An exemption for the requirement of the TTC1 may be granted by the local GBC Zonal Secretary based upon an assessment of the potential teacher's maturity and teaching skills. The Mayapur Institute shall provide to the GBC a list of criteria by which such evaluations should be made.

318: Regulations for Commencing the Service of Diksa-guru in ISKCON

[ISKCON Law]

PREAMBLE

ISKCON's ethos of multiple *diksa-* and *siksa-gurus* serving under the auspices of a global managerial board is unique in the history of Vaisnavism, and so is the challenge it poses: the institutional management has the obligation of safeguarding devotees in their quest for spiritual guidance while simultaneously not intruding upon the necessary freedom of inspiration that is the very heart of this journey.

There has been an ongoing discussion about how ISKCON Law should be structured to meet this challenge, with proposals ranging from rigid standardization of guruship to full dependence on a policy of *caveat emptor* ("consumer beware") provisions. However, the model that seems optimal is one in which aspiring disciples are empowered through education, the vetting process for guru candidates is delegated as much as possible to local leaders, and the GBC, per Srila Prabhupada's mandate, retains a level of oversight over all individual ISKCON leaders.

Below are the amendments of ISKCON law on the guru topic, which

- facilitate the education of devotees in the principles of guru-disciple relationships
- empower devotees in the acceptance of guru
- provide for a more organic, secure, and sensitive vetting mechanism for *diksa-guru* candidates
- allow for the identifying and vetting of *diksa-guru* candidates more efficiently and in better accordance with other tenets of ISKCON law
- as far as possible, delegates the responsibility of vetting *diksa-guru* candidates to local leaders

PART A

Amendments to ISKCON Law, Part 7 "Discipleship in ISKCON"

Whereas the scriptures and Srila Prabhupada emphasize that ascertaining the qualifications of a prospective guru is the duty of an aspiring disciple:

> *So therefore the process is before accepting a guru, one must hear him at least for one year. And when he's convinced that "Here is actually a guru who can teach me," then you accept him, guru. Don't accept whimsically. This system now should stop that somebody's coming for three days – "Prabhupada, initiate him." Why... This should not be allowed. Therefore, in Hari-bhakti-vilasa by Sanatana Gosvami it is directed that the spiritual master and the disciple must meet together at least for one year so that the disciple may also understand that "Here is a person whom I can accept as my guru," and the guru also can see that "Here is a person who is fit for becoming my disciple." Then the business is nice. (Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.16.25 – Hawaii, January 21, 1974)*

[Note that even though Srila Prabhupada was at that time the only *diksa-guru* in ISKCON, and qualified par excellence, in his eyes this fact did not relieve aspiring disciples from the duty of testing him as a prospective guru.]

Whereas current ISKCON Law states:

> *It is the personal responsibility of candidates for initiation to correctly decide, by the exercise of their own intelligence, to surrender to a particular devotee as spiritual master. Candidates for initiation should accept initiation from a spiritual master only after developing firm and mature faith in that devotee and in his ability to take them back to Godhead. Sadhu, sastra, and guru are the authoritative references to apply in ascertaining the level of advancement of a devotee.*
>
> *Receiving official ISKCON guru approval signifies that the devotee has successfully completed the authorization process set forth in ISKCON Law, and that in the judgment of certain senior devotees the candidate measures up to the standards and guidelines given in ISKCON law. However, such approval is not automatically to be taken as a statement about the degree of God-realization of the approved guru, and it is not intended to replace the intelligent discrimination of the candidate. (ISKCON Law 7.2 "Responsibility of Candidate for Initiation")*

Whereas, according to Vaisnava philosophy as reflected in the existing ISKCON Law, 6.4.2, "Vows of Guru," one's position as a guru derives from and is dependent on one's position as a disciple:

> *A devotee authorized to act as a guru in ISKCON must publicly take the following vows in a ceremony before Srila Prabhupada's vyasasana:*
> . . . .
> *3. I recognize that a bona fide guru is first of all a bona fide disciple.*

Whereas in this regard, the role of the GBC and ISKCON is to educate these prospective disciples, prior to their accepting shelter of a devotee as their guru:

- about genuine symptoms of spiritual advancement in prospective gurus
- about the principles governing guru-disciple relationships
- about ISKCON laws concerning the lines of authority in ISKCON

Whereas the newly developed ISKCON Disciple Course is aimed at preparing prospective disciples for a mature, sastrically sound, and responsible approach to accepting a spiritual master, soon to be a standard educational requirement for prospective disciples before they accept a spiritual master;

Whereas, in addition to such education, the GBC simultaneously has the responsibility of monitoring and regulating ISKCON leaders, including gurus, in order to maintain appropriate standards of Vaisnava behavior and principles of devotional service as taught by Srila Prabhupada within ISKCON.

RESOLVED:

1. Part 7 of ISKCON Law, "Discipleship in ISKCON" becomes Part 6, and Part 6 of ISKCON Law, "ISKCON Spiritual Masters (Diksa- & Siksa-Gurus)" becomes Part 7, with corresponding renumbering of their subsections.
2. The sections of ISKCON Law 6.1, "Right of Devotees to Choose their Guru," and 6.2 "Responsibility of Candidate for Initiation," (not including the subsections) are replaced in their entirety with the following:

   6.1: "The Process for Accepting a Spiritual Master"

   Srila Prabhupada spoke and wrote consistently both on the vital importance of accepting a bona fide guru for one's assured progress in spiritual life as well as on qualifications essential for a devotee to serve as spiritual master, such as:

   tasmad gurum prapadyeta jijnasuh sreya uttamam
   sabde pare ca nisnatam brahmany upasamasrayam

   "Any person who is seriously desirous of achieving real happiness must seek out a bona fide spiritual master and take shelter of him by initiation. The qualification of a spiritual master is that he must have realized the conclusion of the scriptures by deliberation and arguments and thus be able to convince others of these conclusions. Such great personalities, who have taken complete shelter of the Supreme Godhead, leaving aside all material considerations, are to be understood as bona fide spiritual masters." *(SB 11.3.21 quoted in SB 4.29.55 purport)*

   and

   "The expert spiritual master knows well how to engage his disciple's energy in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, and thus he engages a devotee in a specific devotional service according to his special tendency. A devotee must have only one initiating spiritual master because in the scriptures acceptance of more than one is always forbidden. There is no limit, however, to the number of instructing spiritual masters one may accept. Generally a spiritual master who constantly instructs a disciple in

spiritual science becomes his initiating spiritual master later on." *(CC Adi 1.35 purport.)*

Having developed some faith in the process of Krishna consciousness and prior to accepting a devotee as his or her spiritual master, a person should have scrutinized Srila Prabhupada's teachings on this essential topic in the association of ISKCON devotees and, when available, have taken the ISKCON Disciple Course.

According to the instructions of Srila Prabhupada and the previous acaryas, a person who has developed some faith in the process of Krishna consciousness, should further strengthen it by associating with one or more devotees and hearing from them about devotional service. Such devotees of varying levels of realization and maturity in Krishna consciousness give knowledge about devotional service. One or more of these may come to be a source of substantial instruction vital for one's ongoing progress, along with providing an inspiring personal example and a shelter for that person, thereby becoming his or her instructing spiritual master(s).

By regular association with, and service to, such instructing spiritual masters, the spiritual aspirant may develop a particularly strong reciprocal connection with one of the *siksa-gurus,* who demonstrates both willingness and practical ability for the ongoing guidance of the spiritual aspirant. After testing this connection for an extended period of time by further association, inquiries, and service, the candidate may desire to solidify that relationship by taking initiation from this *siksa-guru.*

He or she should then approach the local ISKCON authorities for further guidance as to accepting this devotee as one's *diksa-guru.*

PART B

Amendments to ISKCON Law, Part 7.4 "Regulations"

Whereas in connection with prospective *diksa-gurus,* ISKCON Law 6.4.1.4 states:

"If the Corresponding Secretary receives at least three letters of non-approval, the candidate shall not take up the role of guru, and his candidacy shall be considered by the GBC body at its next Annual General Meeting";

Whereas the GBC, per Srila Prabhupada's mandate, must retain an essential level of oversight over all individual leaders of ISKCON, including *diksa-gurus;*

Whereas a multi-tier vetting process for a *diksa-guru* candidate will further clarify that the GBC does not directly appoint *diksa-guru* candidates;

Whereas the current ISKCON Law terminology of GBC's authorizing or approving *diksa-gurus* adds to the perception that the GBC certifies and appoints *diksa-gurus;*

Whereas with the rising number of *diksa-guru* nominations, the GBC will be increasingly less informed and thereby less equipped to assess a given candidacy and/or to provide a candidate with appropriate guidance in case of non-approval;

Whereas the Local Area Council is generally in the best position to assess eligibility of a particular devotee to serve as a *diksa-guru* and to advocate that devotee's candidacy to the GBC Body, if necessary, as well as to guide the candidate towards improvement as a spiritual guide and preacher;

Whereas it is generally against a Vaisnava's nature to consider oneself qualified to be a guru, what to speak of promoting and advocating one's qualification as a guru to others

RESOLVED:

1. All references in ISKCON law to authorization or approval in relation to being allowed to serve as a *diksa-guru* are changed to appropriate forms of "will/may commence the service of *diksa-guru*."

2. ISKCON Law, part 7.4 "Regulations," be amended as follows:

7.4.1: Procedure for Commencing the Service of *Diksa-guru*

A devotee may serve as *diksa-guru* in ISKCON after the completion of the following procedure:

7.4.1.1: Endorsement by a Local Area Council [AMENDED]
When the Zonal Secretaries for a local area, in consultation with the local leadership, conclude that a particular devotee, through preaching in that area, has been providing substantial guidance and shelter to devotees, they may convene a Local Area Council to consider nominating this devotee for serving as a *diksa-guru.*

In addition to the Local Area Council, Regional Governing Bodies may, at their discretion, have additional oversight for candidates in their area of responsibility.

7.4.1.1.1: Composition of Council [AMENDED]
The Council must consist of the local Zonal Secretaries and at least ten other devotees from the local area who are familiar with the candidate. It must include all Regional Secretaries, Temple Presidents, and resident sannyasis in the area. The Council members should elect a Chairman from among themselves.

7.4.1.1.2: Principles of Evaluation [new]
The Council shall evaluate the candidate by confirming, to the best of their ability, that the candidate:

1. is twice-initiated for at least ten years

2. has been requested to initiate by the candidate's own *diksa-guru,* if physically present
3. is in good standing in ISKCON
4. has good sadhana, including chanting a minimum of sixteen rounds daily and following the four regulative principles
5. has shown consistent adherence to the principles of one's asrama in terms of:
   - acceptable Vaisnava behavior (sadacara)
   - engagement in Srila Prabhupada's mission
6. has substantial knowledge and realization of sastra, including a Bhakti-sastri degree
7. preaches according to Srila Prabhupada's teachings
8. works cooperatively with local authorities
9. recognizes the GBC body as the ultimate managing authority in ISKCON, supports the GBC system, and follows the GBC
10. has no loyalties that compete with or compromise the candidate's loyalty to Srila Prabhupada, to his teachings, and to ISKCON

7.4.1.1.3: Council Integrity Maintained [UNCHANGED]
Once the Council has been formed to evaluate a particular candidate, it cannot be reconstituted except to replace a member who has left his position as a local ISKCON leader, or who has resigned from the Council, or who has become spiritually unfit.

7.4.1.1.4: Communication of Objection [amended]
If the candidate for serving as *diksa-guru* is not supported by the Local Area Council, the Chairman of the Local Area Council shall inform the candidate and aspiring disciples, if any, of this decision in writing.

7.4.1.2: Provision for "No Objection" Letters [AMENDED]

If the candidate for serving as *diksa-guru* has been active for less than five years in the area making the nomination, the nominating Local Area Council shall obtain "no objection" letters from the Zonal Secretaries and Temple President(s) of the other area(s) the candidate was active in during the five years previous to the candidacy.

Additionally, the Local Area Council shall formally consult the leadership of every area outside the jurisdiction of the nominating Local Area Council in which the candidate spends significant time before deciding on the candidacy.

7.4.1.3: Names Sent to All GBC Members

7.4.1.3.1: Letter of Nomination to GBC Corresponding Secretary [AMENDED]
If the candidacy receives support from the Local Area Council, the Chairman of the Council shall send a letter to the GBC

Corresponding Secretary that includes the following:

1. A description of how the candidate conforms to the GBC standards and guidelines for guru
2. A complete history of the devotional service of the candidate, including the dates and places of his engagements
3. A list of the nominating council members along with their service, tenure, vote, and rationale

7.4.1.3.2: Corresponding Secretary Verifies and Distributes [AMENDED]

After verifying that the candidate has been properly nominated, the Corresponding Secretary shall send the candidate's name to all members of the GBC.

7.4.1.4 Three GBC Requests for Further Review [AMENDED]

During the six months from the date of submission of the candidate's application to the GBC, members of the GBC who question the suitability of the candidate as per the qualifications in ISKCON Law 7.4.1.1.2 may file written statements with the GBC Corresponding Secretary requesting further review.

7.4.1.4.1 Absence of Three Requests for Further Review [NEW]

If the GBC Corresponding Secretary has not received at least three requests for further review by the end of the six month period, the GBC Corresponding Secretary shall so inform the Chairman of the recommending Council. Then the candidate, after taking the prescribed vows, may commence the service of a *diksa-guru* in ISKCON.

7.4.1.4.2 Requests for Further Review [NEW]

If the Corresponding Secretary receives at least three requests for further review by the end of the six month period, and if the rationales are deemed legitimate by the GBC Executive Committee per ISKCON Law 7.4.1.1.4, then the GBC Executive Committee will communicate the reasons for the review requests to the Chairman of the Local Area Council that nominated the candidate and ask for the Local Area Council's response.

The same applies if even a single request for further review provides sufficient doubt about the candidate's good standing as a devotee.

If the GBC Executive Committee, in consultation with the GBC members requesting the review, as necessary, is able to resolve the said concerns with the local area council, then the candidate, after

taking the prescribed vows, may commence the service of a *diksa-guru* in ISKCON.

If the GBC Executive Committee, in consultation with the GBC members requesting the review, as necessary, is unable to resolve the said concerns with the Local Area Council, then the candidate shall be reviewed by the GBC Body at its next Annual General Meeting. If the candidacy receives a simple majority vote, then the candidate, after taking the prescribed vows, may commence the service of a *diksa-guru* in ISKCON.

7.4.1.4.3 Local Area Council Presenting at the Annual General Meeting [NEW]

The Local Area Council has the option of making a presentation to the GBC Body before its final vote on the candidacy, preferably by sending a delegation of one or two members to address the Body. The candidate may also make a presentation to the Body, preferably by personal appearance.

7.4.1.4.4 Further Direction to Candidate [NEW]
If the GBC chooses to not approve the candidacy, then the Guru Services Committee shall provide direction to the candidate, which might include recommendations on how the candidate can come to the standard to serve as a *diksa-guru* in the future.

7.4.1.4.5 Corresponding Secretary Monitors and Informs [UNCHANGED]
The Corresponding Secretary shall monitor this procedure and keep all the concerned parties informed as needed.

7.4.2 Appeal of the Local Area Council Decision [AMENDED]

If a Local Area Council does not support a *diksa-guru* candidate, the case may be appealed by any interested party to the relevant Regional Governing Body, if existing in the area. If the Regional Governing Body decides that the candidate has met the mandatory qualifications and eligibility requirements for serving as *diksa-guru* per ISKCON Law 7.4.1.1.4, then the Regional Governing Body may, at their discretion, decide to support the candidate. After notifying the Local Area Council, the Chairman of the Regional Governing Body shall then send a letter of nomination to the GBC Corresponding Secretary accompanied by the decision of the Local Area Council so the process may continue with the Regional Governing Body acting as the nominating body instead of the Local Area Council.

If there is no Regional Governing Body, the case can be appealed directly to the GBC Body. (Any proposal to the GBC Body must be sponsored by a GBC member.)

NOTE: To be compliant with this Resolution, the wording of some current GBC Laws requires editing and updating. The GBC Executive

Committee has requested
the GBC Deputies to take up this task. These adjustments will be reviewed at the next GBC meeting.

319: Extension of the Sastric Advisory Council's Number of Members

Whereas the Sastric Advisory Council has proved to be a valuable resource in many GBC decisions on philosophical and practical matters;

Whereas the GBC Resolution 604 of 2002 establishing the Sastric Advisory Council (SAC) sets the upper limit of the number of its members at 12:

> *Procedure for Selecting and Endorsing SAC Members:*
> *a. SAC core members will number between six and twelve.*
> *b. The SAC core members should be mutually acceptable to both the GBC Body and SAC.*

Whereas both the SAC and some GBC members feel that the SAC service can benefit from adding a few more members;

Whereas there should ideally be an odd number of SAC members to avoid split votes

RESOLVED:

GBC Resolution 604 of 2002 is hereby amended as follows:

> Procedure for Selecting and Endorsing SAC Members:
> a. There will be an odd number of SAC core members between seven and fifteen.
> b. The SAC core members should be mutually acceptable to both the GBC Body and SAC. [unchanged]

320: General Membership

Whereas there is a need to recognize as general members those who wish to identify with the spiritual family of ISKCON,

Whereas such recognition should include some basic parameters,

Whereas such recognition should not involve any legal rights for the general members,

RESOLVED:

Whoever, regardless of gender, race, nationality, religion, etc., subscribes to the following statement, shall be considered a general member of ISKCON:

"I wish to be counted as part of the spiritual family of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), and I will practically support its mission. I accept the teachings of Lord Krishna as presented by His

Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder-Acarya of ISKCON.

"While I understand that this general membership does not confer upon me any rights in ISKCON organizations, I am grateful to participate in this spiritual movement intended for the upliftment of the entire human society."

321. Female Diksa Gurus

The subject of Vaisnavis initiating in ISKCON is further tabled until additional discussion at the 2014 GBC Midterm Meeting. In the meantime the GBC Eexecutive Committee will work on the following process:

1. Creating a committee of devotees who have no pre-determined view on this topic who will gather documents from all sources on the subject of female *diksa-gurus*.

2. The committee will sort, summarize, and categorize all documentation. Categories could include Srila Prabhupada's quotations, *varnasrama-dharma,* history within our *sampradaya* and other Vaisnava *sampradayas,* etc.

3. As far as possible all documentation will be verified for accuracy, authenticity, etc.

4. As far as possible this committee will do whatever other research may be required.

5. The committee will then provide all those documents to the GBC members prior to the Midterm meeting. Thus all GBC members will come to the Midterm Meeting well aware of all the arguments, information, and evidences available. This will then enable the GBC to make either informed progress or an informed decision on this matter.

322: Guru Paper

GBC Resolution 307 of 2012 commissioned the Guru Services Committee to produce a paper explaining the commencement of the service of *diksa-guru*. The second draft of this paper is currently under review.

323: Letter of Appreciation to Ravindra Svarupa Das

March 2, 2014

Dear Ravindra Svarupa Prabhu,

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

The entire Governing Body Commission of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness wishes to extend its heartfelt gratitude to you for your many years of service to the GBC.

You have served as a member of the GBC with the highest standard of integrity, loyalty and dedication. This is a great credit to both yourself and our spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada. For almost three decades, your thoughtful comments, academic and sastric insights, bold analysis and devotional perspectives have helped to inform and form GBC opinion and resolutions.

You came onto the GBC Body in 1987 during a period of great challenges. At that time, there was a need for calm consideration, intelligence and renewal. Your voice and presence on the GBC provided all three. Thus, you helped to steady the "ship" of ISKCON through those turbulent waters and into a bright and new beginning.

Your next twenty-seven years on the GBC--including your two terms as our Chairman--tested your patience and determination, but you did not waiver in your commitment to making ISKCON spiritually sound.

Among your many unique contributions, you guided us through the difficult years of bringing the New Vrindavana community back into ISKCON. You contributed to the development of the Bhaktivedanta Institute and its pioneering scientific and cultural outreach and preaching. You have written prolifically for Back to Godhead magazine. And, you continue to lead the research developing key elements of Srila Prabhupada's Temple of Vedic Planetarium.

As our Chair in 2000, you completed a vow to chant 64 rounds a day for a month at the foot of the sacred Govardhan Hill, thus praying for ISKCON and personifying the need for sincere personal austerity and purification to advance us in service.

During the last two years, your leadership and academic skills again were fully manifest as you researched, consulted with GBC members and leaders world-wide, and then wrote "Srila Prabhupada: The Founder-Acarya of ISKCON." It is an historic text for ISKCON, and your pivotal role in its creation will not be forgotten.

While acknowledging your significant contributions, we must also recognize your able and highly qualified wife, Saudamini Devi Dasi. She too has made great sacrifices and contributions in the service of Srila Prabhupada, and she has stood by your side throughout your entire career of service to ISKCON.

Ravindra Svarupa Prabhu, you have chosen to retire this year from active full-time GBC service, and we reluctantly accept your resignation. We will deeply miss your regular association at GBC meetings.

As a token of our respect, love, and appreciation, we hereby bestow upon you the position of GBC Emeritus.

We are grateful that we will still be able to call upon you for special projects and writing assignments in service to Srila Prabhupada and his ISKCON--that great cause for which you have so honorably, and lovingly, given your life.

We pray that the eternal blessings of your beloved Sri Sri Radha-Sharadbihari, Sri Jagannath, Sri Baladeva, Srimati Subhadra Devi, and Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai may be upon you, and for your continued empowerment in Their service for the rest of this life and beyond.

On behalf of the Governing Body Commission, and with the unanimous approval of the GBC,

Your servants,

Tamohara dasa, Chairman

Anuttama Das, First Vice-Chairman

Praghosa Das, Second Vice-Chairman