

Research on leadership service in ISKCON

Where does empowerment come from?



*Bhaktivedanta Sadhu Swami
Bhakti Bhagavatamrita Keshava Swami
Govardhan Gopal Dasa*

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[id.com 108@gmail.com](mailto:108@id.com)

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A brief outline of the book

The book consists of an Introduction, 10 chapters and Conclusion. At the end of the book there are also several attachments of official ISKCON documents and letters of Srila Prabhupada we used in the book. Many chapters are divided into several parts in order to facilitate the perception of the book's material.

Introduction formulates the main purpose of the book, and also tells about the reader's qualifications, the method of the topic disclosure and about the results the reader will get from the study and application of the presented material.

The first Chapter talks about the process of Krishna's siksa (which evokes inspiration in the hearts of the society members) transfer and about the reasons that are hindering this process. Since society leaders play a key role in this, therefore, we examine the reasons as to why the leaders may become not qualified to transfer siksa in its pure form.

The second Chapter considers three main ways of managing the organization and explains which of these block the process of siksa transfer and which method contributes to the correct siksa process.

In the third Chapter you can find an analysis of some of the impacts of management styles described in the second chapter. The end of the chapter tells you what to expect in the near future, if we won't make changes in the principles of social management.

Chapter four is dedicated to the analysis of Srila Prabhupada's organizational vision and to the attempt to show unified methodology, which was used by Srila Prabhupada, when we was making a decision while managing his society. And at the end of the chapter there is an analysis of how the collegial style of management can solve the problems identified in the beginning of the book.

In the fifth chapter the authors give suggestions for practical implementation of Srila Prabhupada's managerial vision

and formulate specific "Formula".

The sixth chapter describes rules and principles of sat-sanga that will help leaders to implement collegial principle of society management in their lives and thus to manifest Srila Prabhupada's vision in their service.

The seventh chapter provides an interesting description of the life examples and solutions of various problematic situations in the society of devotees. As you study this chapter you can see the consequences of using different managerial styles in the same situation. Examples described in this chapter are in a gradual progression of issues in building a spiritual society, from the opening of a new center, up to a rigidly organized religious structure. At the end of this chapter we also explain basic errors of the collegial managerial body and show an example of simple, but powerful strategy for the promotion of collective spiritual culture in the community.

Chapter eight describes three main stages of leader's development. It also gives an important conclusion that the leaders of our society should not just be appointed on their position, but first they have to pass these stages of leadership growth, otherwise they will not have sufficient skills to perform their service.

In the ninth chapter we discuss the "Constitution for the society", compiled by Srila Prabhupada immediately before he registered ISKCON. This unique document embodies many years of missionary meditation of our Founder-Acarya.

Chapter ten formulates key theme that usually creates disagreements among the leaders - "Organization or Mission?". The purpose of this chapter is to understand what should be more stressed. That will determine what kind of society we will get as a result.

In Conclusion we once again look at the topic we discuss in the book - why do the society leaders lose or get the empowerment? We formulate four main conclusions that are coming from the book. Further we give advices and warnings on the practical application of the vision we discussed in the book.

Introduction

Because spiritual society is different from its material counterpart on the basis of its foundation upon Krishna's spiritual energy, in this work, establishing ourselves on the legacy of ISKCON founder-acarya A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada, we will make an attempt to understand how society leaders (Temple presidents, Community Leaders, Regional Secretaries, mentors) get empowerment to build spiritual society, and how they lose their empowerment even though they still have a leadership status externally. We are studying this subject matter because the future of our movement depends on the leaders' empowerment.

We should note that this description has been put together for devotees whose level of responsibility is sufficient for understanding these not very simple, but rather contradictory subject matters concerning principles of spiritual leadership. Undoubtedly, this work is not intended for those, who have the tendency to use the problems of our society's growth to reinforce their accusing position in relation to some particular ISKCON members. In other words, the minimal qualification for the study and further discussion of materials (found in this book) is that the reader is connected to the organization of Srila Prabhupada and cannot conceive of his existence separately from it, but desires to make this organization stronger and more pure.

Although, the authors of this book, are members of the Committee of Ideology within the Russian National Board of ISKCON and are related to our society in a very positive way, being actively engaged in very responsible devotional service, nevertheless, we intentionally make strong statements that may be seen as very categorical or one-sided. We do that in order to help the leaders of our society see hidden and unclarified fundamental questions, from which true unity develops in our organization as well as to deeply deliberate upon the obstacles in and the mystery of the service of leadership. Without unity in ideology we can't even speak of organized unity and without substantial and

fundamental discussion on these simple questions we won't be able to reach clarity and unity in ideology.

We are aware that our attempt to present the subject of leader's empowerment is neither complete nor perfect and we are not striving for that. In this book we are not expressing the official position of the Russian National Board of ISKCON about questions of leadership, but we propose you to join our collective attempt to understand Srila Prabhupada's vision of principles in ISKCON leadership. If the leaders of our society (nama-hatta leaders, temple presidents, etc.) will give feedback to the Russian National Board about questions that were touched on in this book, we will be able to gain maturity and dynamics in our service to Srila Prabhupada (please, write your feedback to: id.com108@gmail.com). The authors of this book are not just theoreticians. Having gone through serious mistakes and important personal realizations in the sphere (of our service to the society), and also having refined our vision in discussions with experienced and respected leaders in ISKCON we tried to formulate a complete and consistent concept of the service of leadership in a spiritual organization. And now we are offering it to you for your judgment. The main conclusion we came to is:

A devotee in ISKCON receives from Krishna and Srila Prabhupada all necessary qualifications in leadership service if he takes personal responsibility for building-up and maintaining the sanga of leaders, who, in their collegial service to the society of devotees base themselves on clear ethical principles and rules of loving cooperation and discipline.

Undoubtedly, there are leaders in our society who, in their service, have realized principles of true sat-sanga, which are fundamental for Vaisnava culture. But still, in most of the centers in Russian ISKCON there is no mature understanding of these principles and therefore this treatise is dedicated mainly to theoretical and practical questions of sat-sanga culture.

In the Conclusion of this book we will discuss with the reader some important ethical approaches in application of the

knowledge given here about the sat-sanga principles, especially about the approaches in the touchy sphere of the relationships among seniors and juniors. Without sincere desire to cultivate vaisnava character that includes such qualities as: respect and humility, openness and absence of cowardice, friendliness and forgiveness – any references to the spiritual ideology given here or somewhere else will be just masking and justification of one's own ambitions for leadership. The principles described here have only one application: to aspire to apply them personally following in the footsteps of some of the respected ISKCON leaders. But when they are used for selective quoting with the desire to criticize others, usually it only harms the sanga (society).

We sincerely wish that all of our leaders avoid various mistakes in their service which are hard to correct and gain vision and perspectives in the development of the devotee society which is under their care. We hope that our humble service will bring pleasure to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and will help many responsible devotees in Russian ISKCON to improve the quality of their service.

1. The Process of Siksa Transfer.

The success of our leaders' service in Vaisnava communities depends on their ability to maintain and protect the process of passing down Krishna's siksa which nourishes the devotees' hearts and serves as a source of inspiration for service.

To pass down Krishna's instructions without distortion – that is the main purpose of sampradaya, the chain of disciplic succession. Therefore, as a representative of the Brahma-Madhava-Gaudiya sampradaya, Srila Prabhupada created ISKCON with a goal to give devotees, as well as to all people in general, an ability to enter into sat-sanga or true spiritual association and get Krishna's direct guidance (siksa) allowing them to reach perfection in their lives. In this chapter we will look into the process of siksa transfer in the context of the current situation in ISKCON and also discern obstacles in this process.

1.1.Description of the current situation in Russian ISKCON.

From, approximately, the end of the 90-s we can see a recession of enthusiasm in Russian ISKCON. It is connected with a change of the people's mentality and economic situation, crisis within our society and other factors. This recession was accompanied by “turned-off” ex-brahmacaris who used to distribute books but, after entering the grihastha asram, encountered the necessity to socialize in the surrounding atmosphere. Therefore, they had to fall out of active association with devotees and engagement in the preaching mission. Nowadays, many members of Russian ISKCON feel individual and organizational stagnation. They also lost a sense of understanding how to get out of this situation. Quite frequently, the instructions coming from preachers do not really help to solve problems in various real-life situations. Now, because of that, generally speaking we can see how the traditional structure of education and training in our communities (temple programs, lectures, practical devotional service, etc.) has

less and less influence on the devotees' lifestyle. On the contrary, a negative informational influence from material civilization grows.

Certain programs, which play a role as a source of activity in Russian ISKCON nowadays, are not always considered to be part of the traditional ISKCON culture e.g. programs about ayurveda, psychology, etc. The only exemption is the bhakti-vriksa program which is usually considered to be part of ISKCON's structure. Due to the active preaching of these programs' initiators, many new people come to join our society but these people still do not identify themselves completely with the spiritual organization, do not have experience of temple life, strict sadhana, etc. This is mainly due to an inability of the current traditional ISKCON structure to provide an interesting and inspiring continuation of development for these people in accordance with their natural inclinations. Often, we see very socially active people come to us but after getting in touch with devotees they have a negative experience seeing some manifestation of social apathy in devotees and sometimes even professional, psychological and moral deficiency.

Moreover, there are some more objective reasons for our weak ability to adopt the coming masses of people. First of all, an increased pace of life and the spirit of efficiency in modern society doesn't go together well with formal ritualism because a person either doesn't have an understanding of its meaning (and therefore its importance), or it doesn't touch a person's feelings. A modern person doesn't want to waste his time on something that, according to his understanding, is not very productive. Secondly, a general antipathy to religion as an asocial phenomenon that formalizes relationships among people and separates them (on the basis of religious affiliation) is growing in Russian society. Even traditional religion provokes suspiciousness in the minds of many intelligent people and therefore, they prefer to only have a formal relationship with it or to not have any connection with it at all. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur writes in his article "Organized religion":

«...The church that has the best chance of survival in this damned world is that of atheism under the convenient guise of theism. The churches have always proved the staunchest upholders of the grossest form of worldliness from which even the worst of non-ecclesiastical criminals are found to recoil...

...The idea of an organised church in an intelligible form, indeed, marks the close of the living spiritual movement. The great ecclesiastical establishments are the dikes and dams to retain the current that cannot be held by any such contrivances. They, indeed, indicate a desire on the part of the masses to exploit a spiritual movement for their own purpose. They also unmistakably indicate the end of the absolute and unconventional guidance of the bona-fide spiritual teacher..."

Thus, from one side we are able to find many people who are sincerely striving for spiritual experience but, from the other side, most of these people, being disappointed by mundane religiosity, want to maintain their independence from official religious structure seeing it as something foreign or even selfishly motivated.

So, currently we have a spiritually weakened organization, which doesn't really understand what it can do with the masses of people who are coming to it mainly through so-called indirect preaching. This results in a new generation of devotees who are not inclined to follow high spiritual standards. Seeing this, some of the members of the senior generation of devotees are starting to come forward with orthodox appeals to return to "the good old times" (strict hierarchy, full-time engagement in book distribution, obligatory Vaisnava dress in public, etc.). In general, the leaders of local yatras feel that their influence on the society of devotees is becoming less and less significant. They also feel an inability to involve all the devotees in one uniting service.

In spite of some overall negative opinions in relation to the effectiveness of the traditional programs and current ISKCON structure (which we described earlier on), we would like to also

note another side of the present trend: in the places where devotees perform the traditional practice of Krishna Consciousness in a personal and conscious way in the sphere of real direct association with surrounding people, an immensely deep experience of Krishna's personal presence can be felt. We would like to say that devotees who, in this hard and interesting time, continue going further in their practice receive maturity and special empowerment from Krishna. As a result, they are able to come to a new level of chanting the Holy name and also get an ability to fulfill the mission which has been assigned to them by the previous Acaryas (especially by Srila Prabhupada) – the mission to create full-fledged Vaisnava communities. This book is dedicated specifically to those devotees who are trying to follow this hard path.

An analysis of the current situation by the Russian National Board of ISKCON brought feeling of the necessity to strengthen the siksa principle within the society: the principle of systematic spiritual guidance. Although this intention definitely expresses a keen necessity of our society there is also a danger to pervert this principle. Therefore, in the beginning, we will try to understand what it real siksa and how it is manifested.

1.2. What is siksa and what are its factors?

In his book, “Siksa outside ISKCON”, Sivarama Swami gives the following definition of siksa: “*Siksa is the ever-consistent instructions that guide a devotee to Krishna*”. “*Ever-consistent*” means preachers tell the message: a) authoritatively (on the basis of sastras, books of Srila Prabhupada), b) clearly and logically, and c) taking into account the particular level and character of the public. Then the message will have transforming power. It also means that knowledge is passed in the atmosphere of spiritual relationship, in sanga: the instructions received from different mentors are not contradictory but complement each other in one complete whole.

The sign of the influence of real siksa is firm faith that comes to the devotee's heart: *utsahan niscayad dhairyat* (*Nectar of*

Instruction, 3) and impels him to consciously follow the regulative principles of bhakti and accept more and more responsibility in devotional service to Krishna within the society of devotees. Obviously, true faith and inspiration, which is faith's first sign, can't come as a result of subtle or gross pressure on a person with a goal to inspire him to give his energy in practical service to a religious organization. Rather, it is the opposite. Members of an organization get connection to Krishna due to the ability of the leaders to enter into sat-sanga with the devotees and to follow the spiritual and moral ideals that they preach (sadacar).

A truly spiritual organization develops and is sustained due to the energy of inspiration to serve Krishna conjointly with other devotees. Therefore, the natural consequence of the correct application of the process of siksa transfer is the appearance and dynamic development of Vaisnava communities. Sri Guru-parampara is the wire of this siksa from Krishna and thus it helps people who are entangled in this material world. If properly developed, Vaisnava community will act as a perfect instrument of Mercy coming from the chain of disciplic succession.

1.3. Under what conditions does the siksa process happen?

Sri Krishna says in Bhagavad Gita (4.3):

«That very ancient science of the relationship with the Supreme is today told by Me to you because you are My devotee as well as My friend and can therefore understand the transcendental mystery of this science.»

These words by Krishna show two aspects of spiritual relationships which are necessary to pass down siksa: a) spirit of equality (sakha – friend), which implies an existence of mutual understanding with arising emotional intimacy, and b) discipline, subordination and devotion (bhakta - means devotee). Subordination without friendship is based on power which creates distance and formalizes relationships and friendship without subordination is based on familiarity which leads to disrespect.

Both these extremes impede an ability to transfer siksa. For the process of siksa to happen properly, intimacy and respect (devotion, subordination) are both required.

On the level of kanistha-adhikari a devotee sees Krishna's manifestation only in his Guru (his own diksa-guru). On this level of spiritual development, the perception of siksa is still difficult because the material duality we spoke about earlier is still present: the devotee is respectful towards his diksa-guru but doesn't have close personal relationships with him while at the same time he can have friendly relationships with other devotees but not see them as his gurus. When advancing and reaching the level of madhyama-adhikari, a devotee starts to perceive the manifestation of Sri Krishna in various Vaisnavas whom he accepts as his siksa-gurus. *Srila Prabhupada wanted ISKCON to be a society of madhyama-adhikaris or, in other words, he wanted each and every devotee to get siksa in healthy sat-sanga.* Healthy sat-sanga is based on the intimate and respectful relationships amongst the devotees with Krishna, His name, pastimes, etc. in the center. Srila Prabhupada spoke of the exceptional importance of this sat-sanga many times:

"...Sat-sanga means assembly, discussion. Bodhayantah parasparam, tusyanti ca ramanti ca. If you are not interested in association, discussion, then you are finished...." (Room conversation with Srila Prabhupada, 3-d of November, 1973, New Delhi)

Indeed, in such association *dadami buddhi yogam tam* really happens – siksa (Krishna's instructions) come down. So, *sat-sanga* – is a type of association (*sanga*) between devotees which brings them in touch with *sat*, with Krishna's siksa, and manifests itself in the inspiration to follow received understanding in their collegial practical service (*bhajana-kriya*)

1.4. For what reasons can the siksa process stop?

In the main definition of pure bhakti given by Rupa Goswami in his *Bhakti-Rasamrita-sindhu* (1.1.11) it is said that; *pure bhakti is a favorable service to Krishna in the sanga of His devotees, enacted under their guidance. Such service shouldn't be covered by desires for jnana, karma or yoga.*

It is very important to understand the difference between jnana, karma and yoga – which are basically external aspects of bhakti – and *desires (vrittih)* for jnana, karma and yoga. The sanskrit word *anavrittam* used in this definition points out an absence of dependence on these desires. Rupa Goswami compares desires for jnana and karma with two witches who lie in wait for a person following the bhakti path.

The desire for jnana is an attachment to rightfulness and the significance that this rightfulness gives. A person, in a subtle way, uses the authority of God's message in order to put himself in God's place. Basically, it is the influence of the mayavada philosophy of “merging with God”. Having such a contamination, a devotee doesn't strive for Krishna and the true meaning of the scriptures to appear in devotee sanga because it could change his way of thought and force him to change his life (i.e. become a disciple). He is more interested in a formal acceptance of the guru's and the tradition's authority which allows him to maintain a conception of uniqueness of his understanding and connected with it, a sense of pride.

Desires for karma – absorption in activity for the sake of momentary results - doesn't give a devotee time to discuss the meaning of his activities with others. On this path a person either ingratiates himself with others or neglects them depending on whether they can be useful for him to reach his goals or not.

When the desire for karma combines with the desire for jnana and thus comes in a state of exaltation, desire for yoga (to have mystic powers, to be a superhuman) appears. How does it happen? Activity leads one to suffering. If the soul is on a godly

path, she wants to understand the reason of her suffering, and then she will find out that she is not made of matter, but she is a particle of Krishna. Thus she finds happiness learning to act as free as Krishna does, to be in Krishna consciousness. If the soul is on the asuric path, she wishes to understand not the reason of sufferings, but how to get rid of them, to achieve success in her “pleasure”. Then she goes to the skilled in jnana-vritti asuras and learns from them that the world is a show, and all people in it are just matter, dolls. By means of this “knowledge” the soul becomes “aloof” from the sincere feelings causing different sufferings and impeding her pleasure and starts to practice and art of being a “puppeteer” (yoga-vrittih). In this way the person gradually becomes a full-fledged asura. As one well-known person said: “The biggest obstacle for pleasure is love”. Certainly, on the godly path the soul also sees “dead” programs of illusion (vritti) in herself and in others, but she does get the desire in her heart to identify the person with these programs, to use them. In other words, devotee can enjoy, can have knowledge and mystic powers, but he never “aspires” for those, as he never sees himself separated from Krishna.

Krishna says in Bhagavad Gita (5.29), that He is the only Enjoyer, Well-wisher and Supreme Lord in this creation but the conditioned soul also wants to be the enjoyer (karma-vritti), well-wisher (jnana-vritti) and Supreme Lord (yoga-vritti) – such are three unhealthy symptoms of existence in separation from God. The carriers of this disease, who spread it in the material world from the time immemorial by means of the philosophy, science and culture - we call asuaras – the souls who wish to take God’s place.

1.5. How do the desires for karma, jnana and yoga show themselves in the society and its leaders?

Now we will see how these three types of desires of the conditioned soul become manifested in the society and form within it corresponding forms of leadership and subordination.

Desire for karma: it means everything is for the person, for

his interests and desires. This desire creates a democratic form of management where all the decisions are made on the basis of the balance of everyone's interests. In such a society, namely, Western society no one hides that he is striving for personal comfort and pleasure, whether it is physical or emotional, because it is everyone's mutual value.

The problem is that no matter how hard people try to balance their interests, these interests come into conflict anyway and produce suffering. Therefore people develop a desire for jnana. They start to look for a common ground, ideology, and basis. Here management is based on submission to one common authority who personifies this ideology. We will remind you that we are speaking about vritti, i.e. about subtle addiction. Such an "ideological authority" can't allow anyone to question his authority. Therefore, this type of society always has a very high level of gross and subtle violence in its various manifestations. It causes a "purge of disloyal members" and wars with other movements.

It is interesting to note that ideological leaders and their followers often act very selflessly materially speaking because their addiction on the mental level replaces their gross desires. For example, it is well-known that Stalin almost didn't have any possessions and all his thoughts were devoted to his business. Therefore, even those people who were subjected to oppression would return to their social duties with great enthusiasm after their rehabilitation. That was the common spirit which was born out of their ideology.

The Nazi regime was based on the idea of a perfect nation: they believed that they were carrying out a special mission to clean this world and to create a new and powerful "Aryan" race and order. Of course, it is an extreme example of the violence that ideological authority can cause but it is very demonstrative.

We will call *autocratic* a management that is based on powerful ideology. Democracy creates order in the society through the medium of mutual agreement among interested parties and

autocracy through the medium of submission to an authority. Authority can't exist without some strong idea, therefore, nowadays, Russian society is falling apart: because historically our society belongs to the Eastern, autocratic type, without such a uniting ideology laws do not work very well.

Of course, ideas are important but people want to eat and sleep with comfort (karma-vritti remains), therefore, periodically their devotion to higher authority shifts to the background and the daily routine goes to the forefront. Plus, there is a desire deep in the heart to become enchanted with some miracle and not just to see it but to be part of it (yoga-vritti). Therefore, rulers throughout history have been trying to master tantric powers that give absolute power. In our time tantra is called differently: science. Up-to-date scientific research is classified as secret for warfare purposes but afterwards it is offered to people through high-tech technologies. This is more important: people should be enchanted with an illusion of progress and unlimited opportunities for control thinking that they can also control something, if only their car, computer or bank account. Here we are already speaking not about comforts but about (at least partial) fulfillment of a desire for yoga. This perverted aspiration for divinity leads, unfortunately, to the desire to follow mystically disposed leaders who bring people under their influence using their charm.

Why are we studying the definition of pure devotional service given by Srila Rupa Goswami? In fact, the whole idea of this book is to show how this definition works in real life and in the society. Rupa Goswami contrasts these two concepts against each other: sat-sanga (association with Krishna through His energies) and asat-sanga (or vritti), where there is an attempt to misappropriate Krishna's energies, an attempt to become Krishna.

What is real jnana (as a function of bhakti)? For example; you are associating with a devotee, you ask him some questions about Krishna and service to Him and you in turn answer his questions. As a result you get clear understanding and a natural consequence of that – enthusiasm for service. That is the symptom

of jnana: an energy of conscious service and it is obvious to you that this energy is a result of sat-sanga (or siksa) with a devotee. If not for this conversation about Krishna or for discussion about Srimad Bhagavatam there would not be conscious enthusiasm. Now let's imagine another situation: you associate with a devotee to understand something important, for Krishna to reveal Himself through sat-sanga, but instead this devotee just makes it clear that you should be humble and accept his authority. This is the case when real self-evident authority becomes substituted with an *idea* of authority and that is jnana-vritti.

What is true karma (as a manifestation of bhakti)? While associating with devotees, we become engaged in various social work (*dadati pratigrihnnati...bhunkte bhojayate*) (and a result of this work we get rid of a sense of separated existence and gain a sense of being part of Krishna's big family.)* This karma is a manifestation of bhakti and it pacifies the mind and senses. If there is no spiritual unity (sat-sanga) among devotees, then any activity in their service happens individualistically (under the influence of false ego) and it can be considered as karma-vritti, or just karma.

What is real yoga (bhakti-yoga)? When devotees speak with other devotees about Krishna, chant His Holy Names, etc., we witness how they display some extraordinary qualities and how some imperceptible but auspicious changes happen in their destinies, the destinies of their families, etc. Pure devotees accept these various miracles as something self-evident (how could it be any other way in the presence of God?) – it doesn't distract them from their chanting and service.

For conditioned souls it is important for their guides to have some authority (jnana-vritti) and success (karma-vritti) but that is not enough for them. They also want their leaders to be mystical; divine (yoga-vritti). If a leader allows his followers to see God not in sat-sanga (hari-kirtan) but rather in himself, it means that he himself is haunted with false desires (vritti).

A real leader is actually able to manage in a way similar to

God's: Krishna manages everything in such a way that everything happens through the agency of others almost naturally. Krishna simply plays His flute and talks to His friends and in the meantime, tremendous management happens under his supervision. And it doesn't mean that the Supreme Lord just skillfully shifts his responsibility for this world on someone else's shoulders. He just wants others to also do something amazing and get recognition for it. Because Krishna very responsibly accepts His service to His world and does it in the sanga of His devotees, His devotees aspire to share this service with Him so He can spend more time on association, enjoying various rasas of spiritual relationships. Devotees do not have the smallest desire to be in the position of God, they just want to take part in His dealings and if there is no suitable jiva for some difficult and important service, Krishna does it Himself (for example, by becoming Lord Brahma).

To make an overview of the explanation given by us on how does vritti (desire to be God) manifest itself in the society and in management, creating suffering and loneliness for the soul, we have to get back to the peace formula in Bhagavad-gita (5.29): when people will accept God as the Enjoyer, true Well-wisher and Supreme Controller, only then will society become peaceful.

In this book we will constantly speak about sanga, about society and it is important to remember why we are doing that. It is not at all because we think something depends on sanga. Rather, the opposite is true – *society always depends on a personality*. But any real leader knows only one way to understand whether he is fulfilling his duties properly or not. Which one? By seeing the quality of his sanga. If there are other leaders in his sanga and they cooperate with him and with each other then the leader understands: “Yes, we live in Truth (sat)”. Why? Because without a common and conscious foundation of values and morality (sat) for all the leaders, such cooperation would be impossible to imagine. Any leader is in some way a “little Krishna”, a demigod, but qualified personalities manage mainly through sanga, not directly.

So, we discerned three paradigms of societal management

which create obstacles on the path of siksa transfer (bhakti): autocracy, democracy and the third one (connected with a desire for yoga) could be called charisma. Leaders who have a mystical influence on others, special charisma, are not very common (although people in general dream about such leaders, “avatars”). Therefore, in this book, we will mainly discuss the influence of the first two of these three paradigms.

From the definition of Rupa Goswami it follows that only one paradigm of management relates to bhakti. That is *anukulyena Krishna-anu-silanam*, i.e. positive service to Krishna under the guidance of His devotees. We will symbolically call this paradigm of management *collegial*. The difference between collegiality and autocracy is that the acceptance of the leader’s or the group’s authority does not happen formally, rather, out of association with the authority we understand the meaning of our service and enthusiasm comes (*niscaya, utsaha*). And the difference between collegiality and democracy is that here the devotee rejects his personal comforts and interests for the sake of serving Krishna’s will which manifests itself in sanga (*dharya*). Collegiality (sat-sanga) is, in a way, *alive moral substance* without any violence.

Here, we would like to make one important reservation in relation to the terms we use to label the *paradigms* of management. In fact, these terms do not have direct relation to *forms or styles* of management. Maybe the reader will relate the word “autocracy” to harsh personal leadership and the word “democracy” will relate to collective and soft management but that is not the way we use these terms in this book. For example, further on we will show how a group can also play an autocratic role. Moreover, jnana-vritti, power of an idea, always underlies the strong group (be it either a party, or a state, or religion, etc.). Of course, people also unite for the sake of their personal interests (karma-vrittih), but such unions are weak and temporary (for example, a modern family). And in terms of violence - it can easily apply to both materialistic paradigms of management: let’s say some people, who are motivated by their personal interests in the beginning (democrats), want to come to an agreement but if they fall short in that, they start

a war. The whole European history is an illustration of this. Whether someone is trying to softly convince you or takes something away by force, in any way – it is all violence because the person itself (the soul) is being neglected.

The term “collegiality” is also often associated with something material, either with material collectivism or even with “democracy”. But in this work it has a solely spiritual meaning: it means that you relate to another person or even to another living entity seeing him as your *colleague in service*, i.e. as a soul. And it doesn’t matter whether you speak softly and politely or sometimes harshly because if you perceive another person in such a way, with love, and *help him to awaken his dormant Krishna Consciousness, getting him ready to start performing conjoint devotional service in Krishna’s world* – that is collegiality, sat-sanga. We hope that all these aspects will become clear in the process of getting familiar with the material presented in this book.

Immature devotees often think siksa is just the process of passing down knowledge and instructions *only* from senior to junior. Unfortunately, just such an emphasis can often be heard in lectures in our temples. This understanding means that the person who has a high position in the religious organization automatically “becomes” the Truth medium and that hearing from such a personality replaces association with other devotees (junior and equal). The “Authority of Truth” becomes substituted with the “Rightfulness of authority”. As a result, we get an atmosphere where the process of siksa is substituted with something that only resembles such a process. *Thus, the first reason for the siksa process to stop is autocracy.*

A true preacher will never make everyone dependent on his own personality but, rather, he will teach them how to get realizations in Krishna consciousness and inspiration for service in the association of other devotees. Further on in this book we will show that, when speaking about siksa, Srila Prabhupada actually spoke about full sat-sanga (in relation to seniors, equals and juniors) and on the basis of this principle he built the ISKCON organization.

Devotees usually think that spiritual knowledge just flows from the spiritual master to his disciple but it is important to understand that in the process of sat-sanga knowledge of Krishna is received by both personalities – by the speaker and by the listener. A classical example of this is there in Srimad Bhagavatam; Maharaja Pariksit achieved perfection by hearing Srimad Bhagavatam and Sukadeva Goswami achieved perfection by speaking it to Maharaja Pariksit.

Another reason blocking the process of siksa transfer is disrespect and familiarity which are inherent in the nature of democracy. By respecting seniors (father, mother, spiritual master, one's authority, etc.) as representatives of God even if they are imperfect in their qualities, a person becomes purified and makes advancement in his spiritual development. True disciples can learn from anyone who take upon themselves the business of giving us lessons even if they are sometimes unpleasant. Krishna also gives hard lessons, sometimes even without giving any hint about the subject matter he wants to train us in. To understand these lessons, we ourselves have to ask Him questions and patiently wait for His answers.

A person coming from a “democratic” materialistic background, with its spirit of yearning for comfort and superiority, has to go through the school of submission to develop an ability to stay in complete sanga (*tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya*, Bhagavad-gita 4.34). However, if the seniors, in reply to the sincere desire of the juniors to accept their authority (*pranipatena*), do not offer them the ability to ask questions and receive answers in sanga (*pariprasnena*) but instead offer autocratic or democratic leadership, the relationships between them will deteriorate with time as anything material does. Autocracy leads to estrangement and formalism and democracy leads to apathy and moral degradation when stress is given to personal desires and subjective opinions in relationships or so called “freedom”.

Even though autocratic and democratic cultures create obstacles in the way of the siksa process, it doesn't mean that their absence is some obligatory preliminary requirement for the process

of siksa to happen. This is because bhakti is completely independent from all material conditions (*svatantra*). If Srila Prabhupada had demanded such a thing from his audience he would never have come to preach to the people of liberal (democratic) Western culture. The preaching of Srila Prabhupada itself could find people with proper qualifications as well as to create these qualifications in others, getting them free of a desire to be “free” i.e. living for the sake of personal sense satisfaction.

For the process of siksa transmission to happen successfully, devotees should be taught in the principles of sat-sanga (see sixth chapter of this book). Then they will ponder in their day to day lives on the meaning of instructions they have received. In the place where devotees discuss their service and relationships in an open and sincere dialog, a competition spirit (that is common to democracy) won't ever flourish.

1.6. How did Srila Prabhupada see the role of leaders in his society?

When defining the responsibilities of ISKCON leaders, Srila Prabhupada would first of all emphasize their role as spiritual guides (siksa-guru) whose responsibility is to maintain healthy spiritual sat-sanga:

And as president you are in charge of the whole branch, so kindly try to maintain the present atmosphere, and try to improve it more and more; that is my request.” (SPL to Dayananda, 26th March, 1969)

This is the function of the GBC, to see that one may not be taken away by maya. The GBC should all be the instructor gurus. I am in the initiator guru, and you should be the instructor guru by teaching what I am teaching and doing what I am doing. This is not a title, but you must actually come to this platform. This I want.” (SPL to Madhudvisa Swami, 4th August, 1974)

Our leaders shall be careful not to kill the spirit of enthusiastic service, which is individual and spontaneous and voluntary. They should try always to generate some atmosphere of fresh challenge to the devotees, so that they will agree enthusiastically to rise and meet it. That is the art of management: to draw out spontaneous loving spirit of sacrificing some energy for Krishna. But where are so many expert managers? All of us should become expert managers and preachers. (SPL to Karandhara, 22nd December, 1972, Bombay)

At the same time Srila Prabhupada would insist for various leaders to cooperate with each other in a consistent and coordinated process of siksa transfer:

In regards to your question about how the relationship between a sannyasi and the temple president should be, my hope is that you will all be able to cooperate together. The temple president is in charge and the sannyasi should not contradict the instructions. Although if he does see something wrong or if he sees a fault or defect he should bring it out directly to the temple president. And then work it out in a Krsna conscious way. Not that he will try to over-ride the temple president's authority. I want that you all work together cooperatively. Please continue your programs there with great enthusiasm and try to strictly follow all of my regulations without any deviation. Keep yourself always fixed in Krsna's service. Don't let even a split moment go by being engaged in the service of maya." (SPL to Sukadeva, 28th December, 1974)

From these quotes by Srila Prabhupada we can see that the main responsibility of any ISKCON leader is to maintain a strong spiritual atmosphere of service and cooperation within the society. It is indicative that, in the last quote, Srila Prabhupada directly defines the leader's qualification as a siksa-guru saying that it is his ability to be in sat-sanga with other leaders and together solve all issues that arise. He doesn't say that the temple president should be subordinate to a visiting sannyasi-preacher (or vice versa) but says that they should work together. The fact that a sannyasi has more respect within the society doesn't mean that he can act in any way

he wants, neglecting the local authority who is carrying direct responsibility for the devotees under his care. On the other hand, if a local leader (be that a temple president, regional secretary, etc.) makes all the devotees in his ksetra dependent on his own personality he can easily bring the situation to stagnation or even to abusive practice. In this sense, the role of travelling preachers is very important and therefore, Srila Prabhupada would give such great value to the service of a sannyasi. This is how the maintenance of the process of siksa transfer would naturally happen.

To sum up this chapter we should note once again that, according to our philosophy, the process of siksa transfer (and the process of bhakti-yoga itself) can be hindered by desires for jnana and karma. In this book we will constantly use the terms “autocracy” and “democracy” *specifically in the way meaning that these desires pervert originally pure principles of spiritual leadership*. The subordination of a disciple to his master, who is the bearer of Truth, without proper association, where this Truth reveals itself among them and is being shared by them emotionally, leads to an increasing distance between guru and disciple and indicates that this devotion is merely a formality because it is mixed with a desire for jnana. And, accepting a guru based on his high social status, which naturally brings personal benefits, is a symptom of karma admixture and it leads to neglect of his instructions. Both cases bring devotees into the sphere of spiritual loneliness, depriving them of the ability to reach the pure bhakti platform. Only healthy sat-sanga allows one to feel the sweetness of spiritual relationships and receive Krishna’s guidance in one’s life.

2. Three Main Ways to Manage an Organization

In this chapter we will discuss how three different cultures of management behave in our society: autocracy, democracy and spiritual collegiality (sat-sanga). We will show how autocracy and democracy block the manifestation of Krishna's siksa in a devotee's life and the way in which spiritual collegiality nourishes this siksa.

2.1. What danger does autocratic management and appointment of the leader from above bring?

There is a well-known saying: "Power corrupts a person, and absolute power corrupts him absolutely". When the leader in a religious organization is appointed from above none of the devotees subordinate to him can influence his position or express any criticism (it is seen as an insult to authority, a manifestation of envy to the parampara, etc.). Such a leader remains in his position due to his loyalty to a higher echelon and not due to the trust of those whom he leads. Trust from juniors and equals is certainly not excluded in this case but it comes only because of a personal moral position of the leader and not because of the principles of empowerment that exist in an autocratic organization. Having a desire to create a healthy atmosphere in our organization, we can't rely only on this subjective process which lies in the sphere of personal ethics. The organization itself has to provide the process of empowerment by junior and equal devotees.

Unfortunately, it is an extremely rare opportunity to meet a person with inherent moral principles. But even in such a case, if the leader has a high state of personal ethics, when he comes to a hierarchical structure he has to choose: either formally follow antisocial ethics or simply resign from his leadership position. Many devotees say: "To actually do something dynamic in ISKCON, it is necessary to work outside of ISKCON's organizational structure". For Srila Prabhupada's sake we have to do everything we can so that such an opinion does not arise in our society.

The position of a leader whose authority isn't created in a community of devotees by his service and relationships but is instead entrenched in by formality and hierarchy latently deprives the society's members of conscious responsibility and gives them an unconscious weight which makes them incapable to work in the spirit of the Sankirtan movement of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Enthusiasm in such an organization exists only in the beginners, who are pushed by their unconscious motives. For example, they might want recognition from seniors in order to receive initiation. The bureaucratization of society eventually leads it to become a swamp and the atmosphere in such a society becomes not very attractive even for leaders themselves. Feeling the lack of people's trust, leaders have to use instruments of psychological pressure and manipulation to maintain their organization. But that leads to a further decrease of trust within the society.

The bitter experience of the last twenty years of Russian ISKCON's existence shows that only a few leaders appointed by hierarchical structure could properly interact with other members in the society. But the majority left their service or even stopped their spiritual practice. We can't allow our leaders to be put in such a dangerous situation in their spiritual lives. Therefore we have to change this. Our organization cannot protect its leaders from maya if devotees do not feel trust towards them and even more so if the devotees are offended by them. But, if a leader has close relationships with the devotees within his community (not with everyone of course but with most of them) then the organization does not need to spend its resources on fruitless attempts to resolve conflicts, instill into devotees an idea that they have to be humble despite everything, etc. When the society of devotees consists of healthy communities there is no need for an excessive organizational structure, although the bureaucracy would actually be useful in the expansion of the Organization's office, not in community development.

If a spiritual organization does not evolve from a community and does not exist as part of it, it often becomes a

source of the most awful abuses that happen under the flag of religious idea. Leaders, being protected by hierarchy and alienated from real human relations, run into mad temptations (see quote by Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur on page 10). In particular, that is the reason for our past gurukul tragedies. But the problem is that we still try to solve these arising problems in the sphere of management, creating child protection committees. That is better than nothing, of course, but just the fact that we have to protect our children in ISKCON shows that our organization still has an antisocial character in many respects: i.e. we bring up members in our society who have no feelings of natural care towards weak and dependent people - children, old men and women. There is no such external enemy of ISKCON who has undermined the reputation of our movement in people's opinion as much as antisocial hierarchy within ISKCON itself.

To sum up with a question: "What are the negative and dangerous consequences for a society to have hierarchical empowerment of its leaders (from above)?" The answer is that due to this method of empowerment the leader is subconsciously guided by the principle "the person for the organization", instead of "the organization for the person". This happens because he has obligations only towards the organization, which has appointed him, and the society's members become merely resources for the execution of these obligations. This is how an atmosphere, laden with a possibility of such subtle exploitation covered with words about selfless service to God, develops in the society. Such a state of affairs inevitably destroys trust in local management making people come and leave our society at such an unprecedented rate. And now we will discuss how democracy (autocracy's antipode) is also dangerous for ISKCON.

2.2. What harm can democratic management and democratic empowerment have?

Democracy is a union of leaders who are separated among themselves but who work together for the sake of their own benefit,

always coming up with some settlements and compromise. This style of management usually appears as a counterbalance to autocracy (centralized hierarchical power) and it is interesting to note that quite often democracy is used by a hierarchical system to maintain its power. When the hierarchical system sees some active popular ambitious "democrat" in a community who would like to start or promote his own projects, it calls him under the bureaucracy's flags. The deal is such: you express your loyalty to us and we give you power on behalf of the religion. The dialectic paradox is that an autocracy and democracy, even though opposites, feed off each other. Therefore, when people aspiring for power become part of a hierarchical system they keep their ambitious independence and remain lonely.

Democratic empowerment means that a person who is active, ambitious, knows the teachings, is able to speak well and influence people with his words, he becomes the leader. It is indicative that such "leaders" have no desire to ask each other any inconvenient questions (cover-up) because they do not want to be under the influence of truth, sat-sanga. The direction of truth is replaced with the crowd's recognition and loyalty to higher echelons. The leaders do not want to change in compliance with divine will, however, they create an impression within their followers of their full adherence to higher authority. When such democratic leaders recruit new followers they, referring to higher authority, contrast their understanding with the understanding of other leaders. However, they do not want to start a dialogue with other leaders in order to find truth and become subordinate to it.

When the "democratic" spirit sets in, the society and leaders start to defend their colliding interests and ambitions. People become tired of this chaos and in order to keep their faith they wish to "surrender" to some authority which would be given to them from above. Thus, the absence of cooperation and community spirit is not just people's ignorance in spiritual understanding but is also quite a specific interest of hierarchical bureaucracy which thus enjoys the power. As a matter of fact, an autocracy is carrying out its power through the separation of various people into adversarial

groups and it is done through the agency of its democratic leaders recruiting their individual followers (the “divide and dominate” principle).

If leaders do not train people to manage society conjointly and to solve their disagreements amongst each other instead of appealing to their leaders, most likely it means that such heads are interested in power, not in management.

Certainly, immature members of the society should solve their problems consulting with their authorities but here we are discussing a tendency and the goal of education and training for the society's members. We should not lay the foundation of our educational system on the values of the kanistha-adhikari, for these values are already there in the minds of devotees who just came from material life.

2.3. What is the value of the leader’s empowerment by sat-sanga?

If a leader is empowered by sat-sanga (society of serious and steady devotees) then his leadership has communal character i.e. it promotes development of spiritual connections and relationships among devotees. In other words, if the leader is empowered by sanga of all levels (juniors, peers and seniors), he starts to serve this sanga and appreciates his relationships with all devotees: not only with seniors but also with equal and junior devotees.

The sign of such an empowered leader is that he forms a team among other leaders and together with them shares his responsibility for the mission. When he does not play the role of a community “chief”, the society is being managed by Srila Prabhupada and Krishna directly; that is because leaders in such a team try understand and execute Their will in discussions of important topics.

A very important point is that Srila Rupa Goswami, in the beginning of his Upadesamrita, defines the essence of sat-sanga as *priti laksanam* - loving relationships among devotees that are based on a mutual opening of their hearts, on an exchange of service, etc. Only afterwards does he speak about the three manifestations of sat-sanga: relationships with senior, equal and junior devotees (Nectar of Instruction, texts 4-5).

This means that the concepts "senior", "equal" and "junior" are connected not just with some religious or administrative hierarchy but are generated by spiritual relationships, i.e. they are natural. *Religious hierarchy is perfect when it is based on principles of priti laksanam*. Unfortunately, in the material world, it usually parasitizes on entitling itself as a bearer of God and becomes the "facilitator" between Him and the spirit souls. That is happening in modern orthodox religious organizations. Such religiosity contaminated with desires for jnana feeds its antipode – religiosity mixed with desires for karma (this phenomenon is called Protestantism which rejects any authoritative (be it even transparent) medium between the person and God). However, thanks to spiritual collegiality (sat-sanga) both leaders and other members of society can be protected from the contaminating influence of the surrounding atmosphere in the age of Kali which generates rivalry and leads to the degradation of various religious organizations.

2.4. What are the responsibilities of a leader in collegial management?

In cases where a devotee actually behaves as a siksa-guru (preacher), sat-sanga (collegial spiritual management) arises by itself. The principle of collective leadership does not need to be "spread by force" in the society. Why does siksa create a collective spirit? Siksa means a voluntary and confidential conversation between individuals who communicate with each other with the goal of being able to see some manifestation of Krishna and to serve Him.

In our opinion, there is the "democracy-autocracy" (raga-dvesha, rajas-tamas) duality in the terms "leader" and "head" accepted by this material word. The term "leader" is subconsciously associated with the personal charisma of a leader (democracy), and the term "head" with the formal authority in the organization, the hierarchy chief. But for a leader in the bhakti sphere the epithet "maintainer" is more suitable being a characteristic of Lord Vishnu, the Deity of suddha-satva. Certainly, we do not insist on putting this word into use, rather we are simply discussing how the conditional way of thinking influences the meaning of the terms we use. It is obviously important because terms we use influence our system of values, with their semantic energy, on the unconscious level.

Nowadays religious societies of the protestant type use the term "servant-leader" which is also often used in ISKCON. Certainly, this term is more suitable for the description of spiritual management. However, it doesn't fully reflect its essence: a "servant-leader" can be perceived as one who only cares for people and solves their problems. But that does not necessary include their training in independence and mutual responsibility (principles of sat-sanga). In other words, the term "servant-leader" can generate a consumer approach in the leaders (part of democracy). The Maintainer-leader manages without supervising people and without trying to please them. He organizes an atmosphere where they can study from each other (in sat-sanga), getting inspiration and guidance from this atmosphere. That is "transparency" instead of mediation. Thus a healthy environment for the personal development of all devotees and the society in general is created.

2.5. The principle of collective spiritual leadership doesn't oppose to democracy or autocracy

Just as karma and jnana in their original form are aspects of bhakti, democracy and autocracy are also present in collegiality which includes both - creative will and strict submission to the principles of sat-sanga and to mutual decisions.

In other words, externally it looks like democratic management when devotees make decisions together but internally there is a deep devotion to the final authority of sat-sanga, i.e. in their collegial association there is an aspiration to understand Srila Prabhupada's and Krishna's will. *Just as sat-sanga includes three levels (seniors, peers and juniors), any collegial decisions from community leaders should be based on the decisions of the Russian ISKCON National council, GBC council and also on feedback from all members of the community.*

But when we speak about democracy and autocracy as principles of management, which are separate and opposite to each other, they feed off each other in their fight against the values of bhakti (like two witches blocking the way to pure bhakti).

2.6. Does an organization itself, as an entity, oppose to the principles of sat-sanga?

We should note that the organization itself doesn't only go along with principles of sat-sanga but it is one of its major principles. When devotees agree on some important principle of devotional service and become inspired by it, managerial decisions full of spiritual energy always manifest.

Well, sanga means execution. When you associate with a medical or share brokers' association, simply to attend and sit down is not your business. You have to do something. Sat-sanga means that. Taj-josanad asv apavarga-vartmani [SB 3.25.25]. Sat-sanga means you have to take the knowledge and use it for practical purpose. That is sat-sanga. So our this Krsna consciousness movement is trying to give the sat-sanga, opening centers all over the world. If people take advantage of it they will benefit. But if he is ahankara-vimudhatma, then it is very unfortunate. Mandah sumanda-matayo manda-bhagya hy upadrutah [SB 1.1.10]. This is Kali-yuga. The leaders also do not associate with sat, and they create their own imagination. Sat, om tat sat. Bhagavan is the supreme sat. So they

do not care for Bhagavan, so there is no sat-sanga. Asat-sanga. (Srila Prabhupada on a morning darsan, 9th of January, 1977, Bombay).

The organization which comes from sat-sanga has nothing to do with mundane material management. However, the spirituality of any society collapses when the principles of sat-sanga (process of siksa transmission) are substituted by a material managerial structure. In this regard, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur in his article “Organized religion” notes:

“But no mechanical regulation has any value, even for such a purpose. The bona-fide teacher of religion is neither any product of nor the favourer of, any mechanical system. In his hands no system has likewise, the chance of degenerating into a lifeless arrangement. The mere pursuit of fixed doctrines and fixed liturgies cannot hold a person to the true spirit of doctrine or liturgy. The idea of an organised church in an intelligible form, indeed, marks the close of the living spiritual movement.”

To finish this section, we would like to say that religious bureaucracy sees sat-sanga to be the association of the devotees with a representative of the bureaucratic structure and not the manifestation of *sat* (Krishna) in the *sanga* of devotees. That means that whenever “general devotees” sit and listen to katha from a representative of the religious organization that is *sat-sanga* from the point of view of religious bureaucracy. However, when “general devotees” discuss Srila Prabhupada’s books with each other and chant the Holy name and do all that in the spirit of the catur-sloka of Bhagavad-Gita (*bodhayantah parasparam... dadami buddhi yogam tam, BG 10.9-10*), that is not something valuable. Of course, someone could object that these verses from Bhagavad-gita apply only to advanced devotees: *mac-citta mad-gata-prana* – “those, who are absorbed in thoughts about the Lord with all their life devoted to His service”. However such an understanding is not proper: if devotees are trained up in the principles of sat-sanga which are spoken about in the catur-sloka of Bhagavad-gita, they

also act in the realm of pure devotion. In the purport to this verse Srila Prabhupada notes that it relates not only to the exalted devotees, but also to those, who didn't reach that level yet:

“ In the preliminary stage of devotional service they relish the transcendental pleasure from the service itself, and in the mature stage they are actually situated in love of God.” In the next verse Srila Prabhupada continues: *“... A person may have a bona fide spiritual master and may be attached to a spiritual organization, but if he is still not intelligent enough to make progress, then Krishna from within gives him instructions so that he may ultimately come to Him without difficulty. The qualification is that a person always engage himself in Krishna consciousness and with love and devotion render all kinds of services.”*

Here Srila Prabhupada shows important conditions on which new devotee receives Krishna's direct guidance: acceptance of spiritual authority (initiation), membership in the spiritual organization and sincerity in devotional service. But Krishna's guidance depends not so much on membership in a bona-fide sanga, as on the degree of devotee's awareness in his service to this sanga. Here is how Srila Prabhupada explains it in his purport to a final verse of the catur-sloka from the Bhagavad-Gita (10.11):

“... There are very, very learned scholars who have put forward the philosophy of devotion. But even if a devotee does not take advantage of their literatures or of his spiritual master, if he is sincere in his devotional service he is helped by Krishna Himself within his heart...”

Do we want to have a strong and effective organization? We certainly do. But we do not want this organization to deny something it was created for: the distribution of the spirit of conscious collective service to the Lord within the material world. The external form should not deny the internal contents but should embody it. Otherwise this form is material. The organization becomes spiritual when sat, or sadhus (enthusiastic devotees) act in it. As a matter of fact, the main function of that organization is to

provide sanga, confidential association thanks to which one sadhu can inspire another sadhu. When the organization is a product and at the same time a defender of the spiritual family, – only then it is spiritual. But is that possible? It is not just possible, but it is necessary. In the 5th chapter of this book we will consider, in detail, the hierarchical structure of such an organization and the necessary steps for its formation. People who have a desire for karma and therefore a tendency towards democracy do not like religious hierarchy and discipline. And people with desire for jnana, being autocrats, can't tolerate all the "sentiments" connected with community spirit, relationships and so forth. But it is our duty to overcome the influence of these two witches of illusion that test our sincerity on the path of pure devotion.

Lord Caitanya destroyed the religious caste system prominent in His time by giving the treasure of pure Harinama to all sincere souls. And devotees, followers of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, never become exclusive mediums, only from whom people can receive this gift. Rather, it is opposite - they become "transparent mediums". It seems that the difference between these two concepts is not so obvious to immature devotees who still might find themselves in the position of leaders or mentors.

3. Analysis of Consequences in the “Autocracy-Democracy” Duality, and Analysis of Spiritual Collectivity.

In the previous chapter we showed the influence various paradigms of community management have. In later discussions in this book this subject matter will become even more clear and at the end we will provide descriptions of several practical examples how to solve various problematic situations in our communities on the basis of the collegial ideology that is being described. In this section we will speak about consequences of the administrative “autocracy-democracy” duality within our society. We will also look at the power of influence the spiritual collective spirit has on it.

3.1. Power of diksa and siksa in ISKCON

As diksa-gurus in ISKCON are also leaders of our society, we should try to investigate any questions of specifics in their empowerment and how they empower others. In the well-known work "Siksa guru" by Sivarama Svami, it is explained in detail that diksa is based on the process of siksa transfer. In Srimad Bhagavatam 11.10.12 it is also said that:

“The spiritual master can be compared to the lower kindling stick, the disciple to the upper kindling stick, and the instruction given by the guru to the third stick placed in between. The transcendental knowledge communicated from guru to disciple is compared to the fire arising from the contact of these, which burns the darkness of ignorance to ashes, bringing great happiness both to guru and disciple.”

It means that, in order to transfer siksa, it is necessary for both parties to be qualified. Otherwise, the fire of knowledge will not arise. *In other words knowledge comes not just from the teacher but from sat-sanga ("friction") between the teacher and the disciple.* The “third stick” mentioned in this analogy is the principle of sat-sanga.

Srila Prabhupada organized ISKCON as a society made up of siksa-gurus. From this fact, and also from the quotes we gave earlier, we can conclude that the power of initiation in ISKCON is directly connected with the quality of siksa, i.e. sat-sanga.

Actually the guru initiates the disciple not into “his own personality”. He connects the disciple with the power of the mantra and conducts an initiation ceremony with the spiritual family of the Lord (with the previous acaryas and surrounding Vaisnavas) from whom the disciple receives spiritual association and whose service he dedicates himself to from that time on. Thus, balanced spiritual life means close connection with sadhu, guru and sastra which are inseparably linked with each other.

An exclusive role of the diksa-guru’s personality in the disciple’s life is stressed in our culture because it is the Vaisnava to whom our thoughts are dedicated. Therefore, by his siksa, he can awaken within our minds the understanding of the deeper meaning of sastra, i.e. principles of sat-sanga that enable us to associate with the Lord and His family without committing any offenses. Actually, the service rendered by the diksa-guru to his disciples often consists of creating a connection between the disciple and the sadhus which is made possible through a correct understanding of the sastras. But if the pupil is stubborn in his attempt to replace spiritual life in an atmosphere full of social and emotional communications with having an exclusive relationship only with his diksa-guru and with the Lord it means that he turns his diksa-guru into an idol. This mood is justified to some extent at the initial stages of one’s spiritual development but if it turns into a habit over time it puts both the disciple and his teacher into a dangerous situation.

Association with those who are most dear to us creates strong samskaras in our intelligence. If the diksa-guru has shelter in the sanga of Srila Prabhupada (his society) i.e. he is situated in a firm mindset of being a disciple who receives siksa from various Vaisnavas, such a guru will guide his disciples properly by helping them to find shelter in the society of the devotees. But if the guru doesn’t have close and deep spiritual relationships with other

Vaisnavas his disciples will not develop properly.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur in his work “Sixty Four Principles for Vaisnava Community” formulates this statement as follows (Principle №12, we were unable to find this quote in original language, so we had to provide a translation of it from Russian): *“Pure devotee knows that everyone is his spiritual master. Therefore pure devotee can be jagad-guru”*.

It is necessary to recognize that some distortions in understanding the principles of guru-tattva have taken root in our society. Numerous guru falldowns in ISKCON and disappointments of certain devotees are connected with an inappropriate mystification of the guru’s role. When the sastras and Srila Prabhupada stress key values of accepting guru, they are actually giving instructions to the soul about the imperative need of an acceptance of a disciplic mindset. But the impious souls of Kali-yuga, striving to drop stock of their sinful karma on someone, substitute this instruction with the understanding that you simply have to accept a guru and thus give up all responsibility. We are not going to discuss this subject in detail but we simply want to note that there is a substitution for the need for a disciplic mindset with the need for the formal acceptance of one’s guru. These two needs are very different from each other. This is the root cause why a majority of devotees value only initiating gurus (diksa-gurus) but do not appreciate the other instructing gurus (siksha-gurus).

Some days before Srila Prabhupada left this world, one of his disciples wrote him a very touching letter which was filled with devotion. In it he asked that his own life be taken away in order to prolong Srila Prabhupada's presence in this world. In reply to this letter, which was read aloud in the presence of other devotees, Srila Prabhupada spoke these intimate words:

“You can show your love for me when I’m gone by how you cooperate together to push on the Krishna consciousness movement.”

This well-known instruction from Srila Prabhupada contains the most important truth for ISKCON devotees: connection with Srila Prabhupada will be revealed in one's following of the principles of spiritual collegiality where a devotee perceives the sanga of devotees to be non-different from his main siksa-guru – Srila Prabhupada. Following in the footsteps of Srila Prabhupada, a true diksa-guru in ISKCON will redirect the attachment and service of his disciples from himself onto the community of devotees. That is his main and sole service to Srila Prabhupada.

As to the deviations towards autocracy and democracy discussed earlier, they behave in the sphere of guru-tattva as follows: when the guru makes his disciples dependent on his own personality and establishes “his family” within ISKCON it is a manifestation of autocracy. Disciples of these gurus remain separate from the community of devotees and do not develop deep spiritual relationships with other leaders (with siksa-gurus). The deviation into democracy happens when the guru accepts disciples and then remains aloof from training them to have a conscious personal responsibility for the society. This could be called the “initiate and forget principle”. The guru simply remains in "good relations" with his disciples and sometimes gives them some advice. In the first model, instead of ISKCON we have the Gaudiya-math in disguise (having followers of different gurus instead of a united organization). In the second model, we have ritvik-vada: where a guru simply performed the ceremony of initiation and that's it – the disciple can do whatever he wants and live like everyone else. “Krishna and Prabhupada will take care of him”.

As a matter of fact, the only thing that grants any ISKCON leader the right to initiate devotees is the power and purity of his siksa. The main sign that he has such siksa is that *the followers of that Vaisnava are equally attached to two major aspects of spiritual life: sadhana and relationships with others.*

3.2. Spiritual and managerial lines of power in ISKCON: who is in charge?

There has been a division of power into two branches (spiritual and administrative) for a long time in ISKCON. Devotees would wait for spiritual guidance from their diksa-gurus and wouldn't expect anything from local leaders, except for administrative work. This system certainly led devotees to be devoid of deep spiritual relationships locally and caused their guru's instructions to be more and more disconnected from real life.

Recently, an awareness that such a state of affairs contradicts Srila Prabhupada's will was brought to the GBC which led to a document; "Harmonizing ISKCON's Lines of Authority" (see appendix 1 at the end of this book) which affirms that local leaders should not simply be seen as managers but as siksa-gurus. This is a very important realization for our organization. But still, without discussion on the principles of sat-sanga in the association of devotees, without training local leaders to apply these principles and without rules by the organization to strictly follow them, this understanding simply remains a declaration. Therefore it is necessary to take the following step: to gradually, but consistently, start introducing principles of sat-sanga into our society.

There can not be "two lines of management in ISKCON" just as there can not be two (or more) gurus. In practice this statement means that authoritative teachers (of the disciple) should understand that no one among them can be a real guru if he does not cooperate with the others in Krishna consciousness. We will remind the reader that in the letter to Sukadeva (quoted in section 1.5 of this book) Srila Prabhupada does not support the idea that travelling preachers should say only those things that the Temple president wants them to nor the idea that the Temple president should allow them to preach anything they want without a consideration of temple needs. The Temple president and the preacher are obliged to come to a mutual understanding and only then will they receive empowerment from Krishna and Srila Prabhupada to be siksa-gurus. An attempt to simply assign the role

of siksa-gurus to the administrative heads without trying to include them in a culture of sat-sanga will lead to further devaluation of spiritual authority in our organization.

On one hand, according to the principles of guru-tattva, instructions of all siksa-gurus should be submitted to the diksa-guru's approval and be authorized by him. On the other hand, there is a tendency in our society to strengthen the administrative power of the GBC committee, who is given the status of the main siksa-guru and Srila Prabhupada's representative and all diksa-gurus in ISKCON should be under the direction of the GBC committee and be approved by the GBC in their status.

This state of affairs completely contradicts the "traditional protocol" of guru-tattva: *"Diksa-guru is a center and a source of the disciple's devotion, whenever giving instructions spiritual masters play the role of diksa-guru assistants. These relationships based on mutual cooperation are called 'Traditional protocol'.* (From the book "The Siksa-guru: Implementing Tradition in ISKCON" by Sivarama Svami, quote has been translated from Russian, as we didn't find it in original language)

Without seeing the diksa-guru as the main maintainer of sat-sanga (i.e. one who helps the disciple to harmonize all types of siksa, instructions) and also without ISKCON's administrative heads understanding of their role as sat-sanga "maintainers", this contradiction will continue to destroy the devotees' faith towards either their diksa-guru (which brings our society to the deadlock of ritvik-vada) or towards the leaders of the organization (which brings us to a latent or obvious breakdown of ISKCON into groups of various diksa-guru followers, like what happened in Gaudiya-math) *Only the mutual and close cooperation of mentors and managers in sat-sanga can make ISKCON strong and at the same time make it the wholly spiritual organization that Srila Prabhupada wanted to see.*

3.3 A few words about daiva and asura-varnasrama in the context of the subject matter under study

When we use the terms "autocracy" and "democracy" we (as it was mentioned at the very beginning of this book) do not mean various types of political systems since there are also oligarchy and other types of regimes besides them. We are simply discussing manifestations of the *jnana-karma* duality in the sphere of management. Pure bhakti, according to the definition given by Rupa Gosvami, should be *jnana-karmady anavritam* - free from contamination by this duality and this is directly related with us as leaders.

People inclined to jnana are usually considered to be brahmanas (we are not speaking about Vaisnavas now). Such people are democrats externally and autocrats internally; we will remind you that democracy and autocracy, even though opposites, are always connected with each other. Outwardly, brahmanas are soft. They are ready to accept and include various points of view in their ideological system but internally they do it to subordinate people to the ideological (religious) power which they represent. This, in itself, does not help people to gain a self-sufficient responsibility, (based on spiritual self-realization) i.e. Krishna consciousness. It is very important to understand that autocracy is not a physical power but a power on behalf of an idea. Autocrats can be very renounced and selfless people externally but the truth they represent is not revealed in the association among devotees. Rather, it comes down from them in a formal and authoritative way. The Communist party was based upon this principle and traditional churches and other powerful organizations, who have a big impact on our society, also operate based on this principle.

Ksatriyas are autocrats externally and democrats internally since their internal ideology is not very distinct and they are ready to accept any ideology which is convenient for their purposes. Such are the leaders in the asura-varnasrama system. They simply serve each other's interests. Brahmanas in this system depend on ksatriyas because the ksatriyas managerially support their religion

and the ksatriyas depend on brahmanas because they bring new people into the organization by instilling faith of its rightfulness in them.

In daivi-varnasrama, the brahmanas and ksatriyas are devotees. These brahmanas do not offer a “religious opium” to turn people into citizens “suitable for the leaders”. Rather, they discuss how to apply spiritual principles in everyday life with the people in order to finish their dependent (conditional) existence. In this system ksatriya-vaishnavas meaning in their activities in service to Krishna through the medium of giving support to the spiritual organization which is focused on people’s education. Both types of daiva-varnasrama leaders cooperate with each other because they are united in one mission of service to the Lord and not because their material interests overlap.

Daivi-varnasrama naturally arises from sat-sanga because sat-sanga always has two stages: in the first stage, a vision of collegial service to Krishna is discussed in a community (which generates creative inspiration in devotees); in the second stage the devotees, having found a mutual understanding, make decisions and achieve their accurate execution.

Someone can put forward an objection that in Vedic system the ksatriya leader has full rights to make individual decisions, not in sanga. It is the fact that he has this right, as there can be various situations, when it is necessary to act resolutely and immediately. However, this empowerment is given in sanga and it is not assumed that the person will act on his own whim. Srimad Bhagavatam tells about it(4.21.21):

“The king Prithu said: O gentle members of the assembly, may all good fortune be upon you! May all of you great souls who have come to attend this meeting kindly hear my prayer attentively. A person who is actually inquisitive must present his decision before an assembly of noble souls.

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In this verse the word sadhavaḥ ("all great souls") is very significant. When a person is very great and famous, many unscrupulous persons become his enemies, for envy is the nature of materialists. In any meeting there are different classes of men, and it is to be supposed, therefore, that because Prithu Maharaja was very great, he must have had several enemies present in the assembly, although they could not express themselves. Maharaja Prithu, however, was concerned with persons who were gentle, and therefore he first addressed all the honest persons, not caring for the envious. He did not, however, present himself as a royal authority empowered to command everyone, for he wanted to present his statement in humble submission before the assembly of great sages and saintly persons. As a great king of the entire world, he could have given them orders, but he was so humble, meek and honest that he presented his statement for approval in order to clarify his mature decision..."

Though all Vaisnavas participate in the sat-saṅga irrespective of their nature, the main contribution, in the first stage, is made by those among them who have a brahminical nature and in the second stage by those who have a ksatriya nature. As soon as managers (ksatriyas) start acting, service becomes available for those who are inclined to occupations in the spheres of business and physical labour.

The fundamental difference between the asura and daivi-varṇaśrama is that the primary characteristic of asura varṇaśrama is unconscious subordination of masses and the primary characteristic of daivi varṇaśrama is based on their conscious responsibility. The conditioned soul, because of its envious nature, wants to either dominate or be submissive but to develop its Krishna consciousness is difficult even though it is possible in the atmosphere of sat-saṅga. Therefore in the material world, especially in the age of Kali where asuric propaganda is very strong, society naturally "drifts" towards asura-varṇaśrama.

Coming back to the subject, "Two lines of management in

ISKCON” under discussion in this section, it should be noted that it is important for our society to not only introduce our managers to the sat-sanga culture (so that they can act as siksa-gurus) but to also include our brahmanas (mentors) in solving practical organizational and social problems. Abstract brahmanism occurs when people are inculcated in dependence on religion (so-called faith), but no one discusses with them practical application of spiritual knowledge in social, applied and psychological spheres, is a distinctive feature asura-varnasrama. The religion in modern society to a big extent carries out this function. Srila Prabhupada did not want ISKCON to turn into something like that, and therefore he preached spiritual knowledge in social and applied spirit. And we should follow in his footsteps (see chapter 9, ISKCON Constitution – mission for life).

Actually, when Srila Prabhupada said that he executed only half of his mission (he did not have time to establish daivi-varnasrama culture in our society) he meant, at the time of his passing away, that the culture of sat-sanga was not properly developed in ISKCON.

3.4. Consequences of managerial duality in the social sphere of ISKCON

We noted earlier (speaking about the autocracy – democracy duality in management) that autocracy is exhibited when people submit to the interests of an ideological organization. The socialist model as a social system and also the systems of traditional religions consider a person to be the church’s property on the basis of this principle. In the Middle Ages, the traditional religious organization of society led to the Renaissance which had a completely opposite paradigm: “Everything exists for the person, for his interests and necessities”. This is the so-called humanistic (Western, democratic) model of society. The concept of one’s personality in this paradigm essentially differs from the concept of personality described in the Bhagavad-Gita. A person is considered to just be the body and the mind, i.e. as ksetra, instead of as ksetrajna (consciousness). Actually, democracy is the disguised form of

autocracy because it considers the person to be something unconscious and dependent on his material desires which automatically makes him a subject of exploitation.

In the culture of collegiality, the person's approach towards society is based on the principle of conscious subordination. This means that the person does not simply submit to his own desires (democracy) or to the formal decisions of some leaders (autocracy) but submits only to those decisions where the Truth and Krishna's will are apparent. Of course, if the person does not have a proper qualification in humility and is unable to discuss difficult questions with others i.e. is situated in an unconscious position, for his own sake he should simply be subordinate to the instructions of social authorities just as the child should be obedient to his parents' will. What we mean to say here is that if seniors are actually empowered spiritual leaders, they should not aspire to leave members of their society in an unconscious childlike position. On the contrary, in order to awaken the people's conscious position towards service and life itself the leaders have to train the people's ability to participate in responsible dialogue and decision-making for the purpose of awakening proper understanding of service and life itself.

Because the autocratic type of thought is approved as superior to the ksetra (the field of activity; dependent principle), all people are seen as a resource for the organization's needs. Therefore people "with resources" (sponsors, enthusiastic neophytes, representatives of government, etc.) become objects of respect and special attention and people "without resources" (old men, children, women, and also burnt out devotees) are not of any interest to the organization and are neglected or become objects for humiliation. When people see such an approach from their leaders they develop a subconscious fear of finding themselves in the sphere of "people without resources" and that becomes a false motive for their activities. This religious motivation (fear) belongs to the mode of ignorance and therefore it results in a loss of enthusiasm and personal initiative whereas, a democracy-based organization encourages people to fulfill their desires and ambitions but exploits their aspirations for its own needs. Because democracy

is in the mode of passion it results in rivalry and individualism. In both cases (autocracy and democracy) the resources of people are exploited and the people themselves are of no interest. This state of affairs means internal loneliness for each personality. And that is the root cause of the difficulty to create deep connections within the society.

Why does ISKCON need property and why did Srila Prabhupada give so much attention to the construction of various temples? It could seem that the answer is simple. Siksa gurus should be trained by the organization and for this purpose the organization needs buildings and social infrastructure (education without an experience of communal life does not give one full realization of the principles of sat-sanga). However, the acquisition of land, buildings, cars and so forth, in simply increasing one's property does not necessarily turn us into a strong preaching organization.

Often it works the complete opposite way. Having received some property, the conditioned mind of a person automatically turns it from a means into the goal. One focuses one's efforts on property maintenance which causes one to see all members of the society merely as a means for that. *In this regard it is important to understand that the acquisition of property is proper to the extent that the society is charged to act and expand only with the inspiration generated by sat-sanga. If there is no consolidated principles of cooperation among people the weight of property destroys already existing connections and trust, practically depriving the society of any chance to get out of the mode of material duality.*

An organization burdened with a property needs a strong business manager (Temple president) who values preachers (siksa-gurus) for their ability to help him to support the existing infrastructure and instill faith in people's hearts. Even if the president is a sincere devotee and he perfectly understands the subject matter we are speaking about, he can't do anything with it: being a hostage of a vicious system he has to turn others into

hostages also.

Srila Prabhupada acquired buildings and other property only because his movement was expanding under the influence of the spiritual energy otherwise he would not have done it reflecting on the words of his spiritual master Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura: “... *It is better to remove all the marble in the Temple on the Bag-bazar and use these money to print books...*”. Sometimes we hear from various managers that in order to improve our preaching we need some property. But a real preacher will never fall for the bait of bureaucracy. *Preaching does not need anything at all, but faith* and only if that is there and if there is a team of responsible devotees who have stood the test of time, only then may it be necessary for them to make decisions to acquire some property to expand the mission. If we do not introduce this principle in our organization we will deal with a permanent cycle of societal development turning into stagnation.

3.5. Siksa-sampradaya and managerial duality.

A siksa-sampradaya is not something artificial from the social and moral point of view. “*Do not change anything, just bring Krishna into your life*” was Srila Prabhupada's message to all people in general and it was accepted with enthusiasm by them . In the foundation of mature preaching there is an understanding of where the service of a living being is naturally directed: everyone, even a very small ant, serves his family, society (service is the *sanatana-dharma* of the jiva). Only when we understand how *people's natural objects of service are connected with Krishna* can we teach them the way to remember Krishna and never forget Him in one's daily routine. When the family and the society are not connected with Krishna in a person's consciousness they become *maya*, a source of material bondage and distress even if he is a devotee.

In the autocratic model, we try to replace people's natural objects of service with the religious organization and we think that

in exchange for preaching service to the Lord they must give their resources to our organization. But is it possible to live in this organization if it doesn't have family spirit? Such an asocial concept of service to the Lord has traces of jnana (abstract ideology) which provides only a temporary (basically impersonal) release from karma. In an autocratic model of religious organization, connection with the Lord doesn't mean relationships between members but only connection with one's superiors. Therefore such a model cannot revive the natural and eternal mood of servitude which easily arises in the family atmosphere. Spontaneous spiritual activity arises in the sphere of attachments and not in the sphere of abstract sublime ideas. The key to understanding pure bhakti-yoga lies in this.

In a democratic model, we basically suggest that people accept Vaisnava faith but continue to enjoy their karma and attachments to bodily and social bonds. It is nothing but the "protestant" model: "It does not really matter how you live and think. The main thing is to accept the God of our church and you will be saved".

As a result of the influence of autocracy and democracy we mostly have only two categories of devotees in our society. The first type of devotee works for the sake of money without strictly following the regulative principles of bhakti. Leaders often close their eyes to that because these devotees, immersed in karma, give generous donations. The second type of devotee consists of those who are occupied with active devotional service in ISKCON and have rather strict sadhana but have serious issues in the social sphere (in their family relationships and relationships within the society). It is quite a rare opportunity to meet a devotee, who combines both - honestly carries out his social duties and has serious sadhana based on deep faith. On the basis of true spiritual knowledge they stop opposing karma and jnana and start to perceive people around as members of the Krishna's family. They have loving relationships with their surrounding in terms of the prime purpose of life. Such mature devotees can create Vaisnava communities and preach the message of Srimad Bhagavatam as it is

without deviating into karma and jnana-vritti.

It is important to note that if the preachers' efforts are directed towards awakening an inspiration within people's hearts to use their resources according to the knowledge they have received about serving the Lord by serving within His family (in a broad sense of the word), then people of different religions and cultures will see devotees as their well-wishers and will appreciate or even protect them, thereby receiving *bhakti-ajната-sukriti*. However, if ISKCON, under the influence of an autocratic way of thinking, will be interested mainly in getting more human and material resources (for itself) than other societies and religions, and also the government, will consider us to be competitors in a fight for limited material resources. Thus, we ourselves create our enemies and negative image which makes our preaching ineffective. In a scarcity of consciousness, autocracy recognizes "friends" only among those who bring resources into the organization and refuses to accept those who use their resources in the service of the Lord's Mission at their own discretion and inspiration according to their nature (and in the ksetra allocated to them by the Lord).

It is an interesting fact that the preaching of devotees who received inspiration and understanding for their mission from a siksа-sаmpradaya often becomes very effective (in respect to their own spiritual self-realization as well as to the spiritual progress of those to whom they preach) if the devotees do not act on behalf of ISKCON's managerial religious structure and have a natural social connection with society at large. Therefore, to exclude such people from the missionary list is not a sign of great wisdom in our spiritual organization.

This tendency can turn ISKCON into a narrow-minded sectarian group that cares only about its own welfare and separates itself from other societies as something especially "sublime". When Srila Prabhupada preached to the representatives of other religions, he did not ask them to change the religion. Of course, some devotees are inclined to think that it was just Srila Prabhupada's

preaching tactic (trick). However, we should contemplate on the spiritual principle behind such preaching of our Founder-acarya.

According to our point of view, an open social concept, instead of closed one should be accepted in ISKCON i.e. we should not see the development of our society's social structure concentrating all resources under the roof of our organization but we should give inspiration to the devotees to correctly exchange resources among themselves as well as with other people. This type of social interaction connects ordinary people with devotees at the subconscious level, i.e. gives *bhakti-ajnata-sukriti* to both parties. Some leaders may be disturbed that it connects devotees with the materialistic mentality of other people but if we have a spiritual force generated by sat-sanga and sadhana in our society, we won't have much of a problem with that. Now we use our charity projects mostly to protect our image instead of seeing them as a service to society, forming a proper social mentality among devotees. Autocracy does not see any sense in charity, if that one in return does give resources more important for its expansion – raising capital, good image, etc.

Democracy adds material sentimentality to charities and thus disperses the spiritual energy of the organization on “bodily” service without any formation of the bhakti spirit in the society through Krishna conscious resource exchanges (*dadati pratigrihnati*).

3.6. Reasons for leaders' fall downs in ISKCON

It is well-known that several influential and successful leaders fell from their positions in ISKCON. It always painfully affected both the organization's development and the strength of its members' faith. Definitely, in each case, there were some specific features and weaknesses of the leaders but on the whole we are dealing not with their individual failures but with a certain recurring tendencies within the organization. Therefore it is necessary to see its reason not only as the weaknesses of specific people but also as

a weakness in the sphere of the ideology and organizational structure in ISKCON.

In the society for Krishna consciousness we have an absolutely unique philosophy, with power to convince and inspire people, to open a captivating and sublime image of the Personality of Godhead and with answers to fundamental questions that speculative philosophies, created by mankind, can not give and will not give any answers to even in thousands of years. Many sincere souls come to us who do not want to spend their lives performing activities in the false and empty atmosphere of materialistic society. When we join ISKCON, we feel as though we have regained our consciousness after amnesia. Bearing in our hearts acknowledgement of an irredeemable debt of love for Srila Prabhupada, we join in active service within his society, not sparing ourselves and without having aspirations for our own benefit. Thus, one day, we find ourselves among ISKCON's leaders.

When we were young devotees we were preached to about exalted ideas of service for the sake of which we had to sacrifice feelings for our girlfriend, forget about school friends, forget that we need to earn money to pay for rent etc. The power of bhakti got into our heart even through the prism of religious autocracy and it didn't matter to us what the future would bring. We were satisfied with a sense of our connection to Srila Prabhupada's mission and with an ability to sacrifice our ego for something sublime and we are still grateful for this amazing experience of spiritual freedom.

When the desire for jnana (sublime morality) admixes to bhakti, the danger is that this energy takes the soul onto a level which has not been supported enough emotionally (in the sphere of spiritual relationships). The leader finds himself in a condition full of spiritual loneliness where he doesn't have any close relationships with anyone. To manage devotees, the leader should not leave the idealistic sphere of being a representative of the parampara through which one's service reaches Krishna. However, he is afraid that if he opens his heart to devotees i.e. becomes a normal person with weaknesses (or a friend to them) they will start being overly

familiar with him (neglect his leadership status) and will stop making efforts in their service. Therefore he avoids collegiality thinking it to be democracy.

Because Srila Prabhupada made all ISKCON centers independent in their administrative and financial spheres, ISKCON leaders on all levels, starting from local communities, are actually one's own masters: in other words democracy is applied in connection to the leaders. But when a person is not working under a higher authority, his feelings switch into "self-satisfaction" mode and he gradually degrades and falls down from his position.

There are only three forces to which a person can submit himself: autocracy (the power of authority acting on behalf of the truth), sat-sanga (the power of the Truth's authority) and democracy (the power of personal interests). Although these three types of power can sometimes be in close agreement with each other, madhyama-adhikari devotees are always capable of systematically distinguishing them. To protect leaders from the third power and from the falldown it causes, ISKCON should choose between the other two: either we create an all-around centralized religious hierarchy with accurately prescribed rules and norms or we establish a culture of collegiality with clear ideals and ethical principles. Everyone recognizes that Srila Prabhupada was against the first option but unfortunately not everyone agrees that he wanted to choose the second one. Let's clarify this question before the Kali democracy completely seizes our society depriving its members of the ability to enthusiastically perform selfless devotional service.

When a leader takes the role of an autocrat, he is taken to the sphere of envy. People subconsciously aspire to get into the immediate surrounding of such an authority and for that sake make greater efforts to serve him but, afterwards, having felt the pain of disappointment they switch into dvesa mode – the mode of criticism and offenses from which they lose their taste for devotional service. A leader is compared to fire: if you come too close, you will burn, if you go too far away, you will freeze. When

the leader is not in healthy sat-sanga with devotees, he also gets into this trap of duality which has been skillfully set by maya. Dividing devotees into favourites and disloyal persons, into friends and enemies, he also commits offenses in the bhakti sphere, thus losing Krishna's protection.

By using the words "healthy sangha" we mean that the leader associates with other devotees not only as their authority but also as a devotee with other devotees. Such a community leader always acts in a team with other leaders. He has friends in the community but because common spiritual principles lie at the heart of these relationships he does not encourage emotional dependence in the society, i.e. he does not aspire to please others and does not want others to please his senses. His loving heart accepts devotees altogether, with their merits and shortcomings. And devotees respond to him. These types of relationships create an atmosphere of openness and trust in a community which allows its members to solve their problems amongst each other, turning to the leader (or leaders) only to learn how to do things better. The security of the devotees within sat-sanga and their gratitude to sat-sanga maintainers (leaders of the community) protects the leader from falldowns.

3.7. What can we expect in the near future if we don't make changes in the principles of management?

We live in a dynamic society where formal religious and cultural borders are becoming obliterated and the success of a person and the society as a whole is measured by success in all spheres of life and not by the prevalence of dogmatic faith. Intelligent people won't follow leaders simply on the basis of their affiliation with some "authoritative circles" or affiliation with circles of those who are "authorized by the parampara". In the Internet era there is so much inconsistent and negative information that people will only trust those whom they personally know and in whose spiritual and moral qualities they are sure. Materialistic people are ready to follow anyone if they get paid for it but

obviously that doesn't work in our case. Devotees do not join ISKCON to blindly follow some authority they do not actually trust.

If we do not start to consistently establish spiritual and moral principles of cooperation in our society and train devotees (and first of all our leaders) to follow them, we can surely expect a further demise of authority in ISKCON's traditional structure and a growth of critics on both sides, inside our society and outside, causing sincere leaders to leave this structure. Under these circumstances our society will gradually die out. Or, we might face a different situation where older devotees unite against the existing management causing a serious split within the organization and having unpredictable consequences.

We should immediately start the construction of community. Prior and parallel to that we should agree upon spiritual and moral principles of sat-sanga and start to strictly follow them. Then the leaders of ISKCON, on all levels, will be able to include not only service in the Temple into the concept of "devotional service" but also concern for the welfare of devotees in all spheres of their lives including physical, social and emotional. According to Rupa Gosvami and Srila Prabhupada, devotional service is a loving exchange (*priti laksanam*) and therefore in the case where we, the heads of the society, accept service from people but do not think about their necessities, we eventually become deprived of the right to accept service.

The majority of our leaders are still convinced that the daily necessities of the devotees are something material that we should not be concerned about. They think: "Our business is to give people spiritual knowledge in exchange for their material values and work". However, what is the quality of that knowledge? Anti-communal elitist ethics means one is thinking that "we" are the hierarchies of the organization or temple and we are spiritual people and "they" (the parishioners) are materialists. But there is no place for such a division in a community or in a spiritual family. Of course, there are senior and junior devotees in our family but there

is no place for "us" and "them". In the spiritual family of ISKCON there should be a mutual exchange of both - knowledge and "material" values. At the present moment we have come to the point where, due to weak sat-sanga in our society, experienced devotees are not very inspired to be engaged in selfless devotional service. Generally, the devotees who feel enthusiasm are beginners who have not "burned out" yet. We already have "devotees" who are ready to do something for the Temple if they will get paid. It is not only the corrupting cultural influence of Kali-yuga that leads us to this shameful situation, but even more so our failure to follow principles of *dadati pratigrihnati*.

Externally, social life in material and spiritual societies do not differ very much: in both cases people work and in both cases they need means for their livelihood. The internal differences, however, are radical: a materialist, before doing something will ask how much he will get paid but a Vaisnava will work selflessly due to the inspiration generated by his association with other devotees. However, a devotee who accepts the service of another devotee will surely ask: "How do you maintain your family? You give so much time to this service! How much do you need to meet your basic necessities?" And then the receiving devotee will help him to arrange everything in such a way that he can be engaged in service without having any worries, understanding that Krishna, through his devotees, will not neglect him. Such service can go on eternally and with complete dedication because none of the parties takes the role of a self-interested consumer, neither the one who serves, nor the one who accepts the service. That is the "spiritual communism" that Srila Prabhupada spoke about.

4. Understanding Srila Prabhupada's Managerial Vision

In this chapter we will try to understand Srila Prabhupada's managerial vision to try catch the mood he wanted to impart to his society and the expectations he had of his followers. We realize that many devotees have already made similar attempts, however, here we will try to show how the analysis of the three managerial ideologies we have spoken about in this book allow us to deeper comprehend Srila Prabhupada's organizational vision. This question about management is very tricky but, being Srila Prabhupada's followers, it is necessary for us to aspire to look at it from various angles in order to better understand our Founder-Acarya and to be able to better apply the principles of spiritual management he was using. It is obvious that in the process of our personal and organizational growth, the understanding of Srila Prabhupada's managerial vision will go deeper. Therefore, in this chapter, we do not claim to have some final understanding on this subject matter but we urge ISKCON leaders to look at it once again and to talk about conclusions according to the modern conditions of our Movement's development.

We often hear arguments among different devotees about Srila Prabhupada's vision of what ISKCON should be like: "Srila Prabhupada wanted this, Srila Prabhupada wanted that...". To prove their point of view they always refer to Srila Prabhupada's statements often taking them out of context. We do not want to enter into a similar dispute, rather, we are making an attempt to examine the vision of managerial structure from the viewpoint of Srila Prabhupada's aspiration to found ISKCON on the principles of madhyama-adhikari. Srila Prabhupada was very practical and would always act according to the place, time and circumstances. Therefore, some of his important instructions can seem contradictory, since they were given to devotees of different levels acting under different circumstances. There is no point arguing which one of them is more correct than the others.

To really understand Srila Prabhupada's plan, we suggest avoiding discussion about contradictory statements and points of

view and instead try to see the *uniform methodology* Srila Prabhupada was guided by while making one decision or another. Only those devotees who try to understand the spiritual *principles* that live in the heart of a pure Vaisnava in sat-sanga (in the guru's association) are truly capable to follow the instructions of the spiritual master and can see how these spiritual principles display themselves in various instructions given in certain place, time and circumstances.

Keeping the unchangeable principles of sampradaya at the heart of our society, Srila Prabhupada was not dogmatic and could apply these principles properly for Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's satisfaction. From the viewpoint of traditional culture, Srila Prabhupada would sometimes do very strange things. For example, he opened ashrams for women, gave them second initiation and allowed them to serve on the altar. That was unprecedented in traditional Vedic culture. However, Srila Prabhupada would do it because of more important and higher values. He maintained a natural spirit of inspiration in the devotees, skillfully directing them in their service to Krishna. And we, as Srila Prabhupada's followers, should try to maintain a live energy of inspiration for various creative projects within the members of our society, without imitating him but by adopting his mood.

To understand how Srila Prabhupada saw the managerial system we can simply accept this principle: the purpose of this system is to maintain an energy of creative inspiration among the devotees born out of sat-sanga and guided by it. We should analyze again and again how well the existing managerial structure of our society serves this purpose and if necessary we should carefully but resolutely correct it for the benefit of our Movement. This is the responsibility of the leadership sanga in ISKCON.

4.1. How did Srila Prabhupada see the empowerment of society's leaders? How was it reflected in the structure created by him in ISKCON?

The main document reflecting Srila Prabhupada's managerial vision during a certain period of ISKCON development is the "DIRECTION OF MANAGEMENT" compiled by him in 1970 (see the full text of this document in the Appendix 2). For several of the following years – until approximately 1975 – Srila Prabhupada repeatedly referred to this document and insisted on following the principles stated in it. Below you can see a list of points from this document that establish principles of empowerment and empowerment for the main leaders in ISKCON (GBC Zonal secretaries, Temple Presidents):

1. The GBC oversees all operations and management of ISKCON, as it receives direction from Srila Prabhupada and His Divine Grace has the final approval in all matters.

2. His Divine Grace will select the initial 12 members of the GBC. In the succeeding years the GBC will be elected by a vote of all Temple presidents who will vote for 8 from a ballot of all Temple presidents, which may also include any secretary who is in charge of a Temple. Those 8 with the greatest number of votes will be members for the next term of GBC. Srila Prabhupada will choose to retain four commissioners. In the event of Srila Prabhupada's absence, the retiring members will decide which four will remain.

3. The commissioners will serve for a period of 3 years, and they may be re-elected at the end of this period.

4. The chairman is elected by the GBC for each meeting. He has no veto power, but in event of a vote tie, his vote will decide. The same will apply for votes cast by mail between regular meetings.

5. Throughout the year, each of the commissioners will stay

with His Divine Grace for one month at a time and keep the other commissioners informed of His Divine Grace's instructions.

6. The primary objective of the GBC is to organize the opening of new Temples and to maintain the established Temples.

7. Advice will be given by the GBC in cases of real property purchases, which will be in the name of ISKCON, INC. (Trucks or other vehicles will be purchased in the name of the local president).

8. Removal of a Temple president by the GBC requires support by the local Temple members.

9. The GBC has no jurisdiction in the publication of manuscripts, which will be handled by a separate committee; profits to be returned to Srila Prabhupada.

We can see that originally Srila Prabhupada established the same principle of empowerment and authorization for both the Temple Presidents and the GBC Zonal secretaries: it should be done exclusively in a collegial manner i.e. the Temple president should be chosen by the members of that Temple (and even the GBC Zonal secretary has no power to change their choice) and the GBC Zonal secretary should be chosen by a vote at meetings among the Temple presidents. In other words, the assembly of Temple members would put forward the most worthy person in their circle to be the Temple president, and the assembly of Temple presidents would put forward the most worthy Temple president in the role of the GBC Zonal secretary. Even though the procedure of the Temple president's election is not so clearly described in this document (because this document was produced first of all to create the GBC council) later, in his letters, Srila Prabhupada explained more accurately how it should be done.

In our opinion, it is not the *democratic* system being applied in the DIRECTION OF MANAGEMENT legal document but the deeper *principle of collegial management* discussed in this book. But unfortunately, devotees who are not very well informed

on these questions, and have some problems with ISKCON management, think this document gives reason to doubt the principle of authority, in particular, authority of the GBC. This certainly disturbs senior devotees and, unfortunately, discredits the possibility of objective discussion on the subject of Srila Prabhupada's organizational vision. We do not think that the democratic interpretation of the DIRECTION OF MANAGEMENT legal document, can be applied in our spiritual organization but we refer to it as evidence of Srila Prabhupada's aspiration to establish collegial spiritual culture (sat-sanga) in the Krishna consciousness movement.

4.2. Srila Prabhupada explains how the collegial principle works

Now we will quote a letter written by Srila Prabhupada to Mukunda Prabhu on the 29th of September, 1974 where he explains how to apply, in practice, this principle of empowerment and authorization.

"My Dear Mukunda das:

Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter dated September 22, 1974 and have noted the contents. Regarding the election of President, a president can only be changed by vote. If no vote was taken, then the president cannot be changed. Neither Hamsaduta can change the president whimsically or can anybody else change the president. According to the "Direction of Management" the GBC cannot change the President but only by vote can it be done. The GBC's business is to see that the President and the members are doing nicely, following the regulative principles, and chanting 16 rounds and that other things are going on nicely.

If it was decided by vote that Hamsaduta would select the president then Hamsaduta is right. Without authority Hamsaduta cannot change the election. If the vote was in favor of Madhavananda, then Hamsaduta cannot whimsically change the

vote. But, if by vote he was authorized to select the president, then whomever he selects is right. I was not informed by my secretary that Hamsaduta was authorized by vote to make the selection. But, why was Hamsaduta authorized if the vote was already taken? This I do not know.

On the whole I understand there are so many contradictions, so in the presence of all members you may take the vote again and decide finally."

There are several more similar letters written by Srila Prabhupada to his senior disciples, in which he again mentions the procedure of appointing a Temple President. For example, here is a letter to Rupanuga (7th of November, 1974):

"Regarding replacing Abhirama and Damodara I refer to the "Direction of Management" as follows: "Removal of a Temple President by GBC requires support by the local Temple members." Therefore you should take a vote of the Temple members and do the needful."

From these letters we can understand how Srila Prabhupada saw the principle of leaders' empowerment (in this case, of Temple presidents). If the devotees of a particular temple voted for someone who wasn't suitable according to the higher level representative (GBC) from that sanga, this representative could not cancel the result of the voting simply on the basis of his personal desire. To reach a mutually acceptable solution, the representative from the GBC had to start a dialogue with the local devotees and, with them, come to a collegial decision together. This is what Srila Prabhupada speaks about at the end of his letter to Mukunda.

Thus we see that empowerment by the seniors is not undermined at all; it just comes afterwards, because the blessings of the seniors have a role as the final component in the sat-sanga culture and in establishing an organizational structure in the society. Moreover, if sat-sanga is complete (the senior, peer and junior devotees take part in it) *then the contribution of the seniors is really*

valuable and indispensable because they act as the main maintainers of the Vaisnavas's collegial spiritual culture which, thanks to their indisputable authority, is accepted even by kanistha-adhikaris. Empowerment from above, in this case, belongs to the autocracy principle but it is the most important condition of the authoritative parampara system.

For a spiritual organization to be authoritative both its form and its contents are equally important. The form, without content, is an autocracy and the content without a form is democracy. When religious hierarchy (form) is an embodiment of spiritual relationships (bhakti) it is spiritual collegiality and it manifests itself in the realm of management.

4.3. What is the difference between collective leadership and regular democracy?

Srila Prabhupada considered democracy to be a demoniac form of management and devotees got used to thinking that an authoritative (or Divine) form of empowerment and management should be completely the opposite, i.e. it should be autocratic (appointing leaders from above). But actually, Srila Prabhupada rejected both of these and established principles of spiritual collegiality.

This principle of collegiality (sat-sanga) is characteristic of pure bhakti-yoga because joint service to the Lord or even service to the Lord through his devotees lies at its basis, while autocracy and democracy are deviations from bhakti towards jnana and karma.

This principle is not a type of democracy because voting is done only by devotees who are responsible and united by mutual values and not by people who are guided by their personal interests and subjective opinions. *If there are no such responsible devotees in a certain sphere of service, then the existence of a collegial spiritual organization is out of the question because there is no*

possibility of collectively choosing a proper leader.

In and of itself, any society, as a group of people, is an unconscious phenomenon and is therefore not collegial. But, when the members of the society, who have accepted responsibility for it, (i.e. for people's training and for the project's execution) unite in one team, they become empowered to make authoritative decisions including election of the society's leader (certainly coordinating their decisions with the higher level representatives of their sanga). Many secrets become revealed to the leaders who have close connections with each other. In particular, they know well each other's nature, character and qualities. It is the qualities of a person - Krishna describes these in Bhagavad-gita (13.8-12) as true knowledge - that are the basis for the transmission of siksa (spiritual guidance).

It is extremely important to understand that the principle of collective leadership is applicable only in the case where devotees are guided by accurate and clear principles of sat-sanga while making important decisions. Otherwise, it will be not collegiality and usually it ends up being democracy – where people choose a leader who is convenient for them and who depends on them. This brings us to a major inference as follows: only devotees trained in the principles of sat-sanga can participate in collegial work. Below we will describe these principles in detail (see chapter 6 of this book).

When a leader is empowered in his service by sat-sanga, this is a manifestation of Krishna's actual will. This is how Srila Prabhupada saw it. He writes it in a letter to Jayananda:

"I congratulate you on your being elected as president of ISKCON San Francisco branch. Your election as president is a recognition by Krishna and therefore I have got full support for you. Mukunda and other members have rightly selected you as president."

(Letter to Jayananda, 29th of September, 1967)

4.4. Why did Srila Prabhupada see the main principle of the leader's empowerment specifically in sat-sanga?

Srila Prabhupada wanted to build his society on the principles of *madhyama-adhikari*, i.e. he emphasized the importance of cooperation among devotees and the importance of a mutual acceptance of responsibility for the Mission. It would give Srila Prabhupada a chance to unlimitedly spread his Movement without losing its quality because ISKCON devotees would feel their conscious involvement in the Mission and, being in close association with each other, would quickly grow spiritually.

As for devotees in the mood of *kanistha-adhikari*, they are customers of democracy and autocracy. They are not interested in dealing with questions together with others and are not so interested in truth. Rather, they want to equate truth with some formal authority (their desire for autocracy) or with their own subjective opinion (their desire for democracy). As we already discussed above (see chapters 2 and 3), both these tendencies are dangerous for our Movement. The danger is that devotees, on the one hand, blindly follow their authorities (even if the authorities simply express subjective opinions) and on the other hand, the devotees neglect relationships with peer and junior devotees, not seeing their words as a manifestation of Truth (Krishna) but perceiving them as subjective opinions and imperfections. In this way devotees destroy their spiritual lives by building them on blind faith and by neglecting the sphere of real spiritual relationships.

Srila Prabhupada notes in some of his purports that a *kanistha-adhikari* (devotee-individualist) does not follow the sastras. Such devotees may know the sastras but because they do not discuss its meaning in sanga with other experienced devotees they do not understand how the principles of the sastras should be applied in each situation according to place, time and circumstances. This type of immature understanding of the sastras leads first to dogmatism and fanaticism and then to rejection of the sastra's authority and any other religious authority. When such *kanistha-adhikaris* are appointed to be guides and leaders, they lose

the possibility of spiritual progress due to various offenses they commit in the delicate bhakti sphere.

Certainly, having a society of *madhyama-adhikaris* does not mean that all or even a majority of devotees will be on that level. It is a question of the mood prevailing in the society and the mood is often set by the leaders. In a society headed by *madhyama-adhikaris*, *kanistha-adhikaris* catch the right spirit and act under the influence of the same principles of sat-sanga. Because of that, they also come onto the absolute platform of pure devotion and we express to them our humble respect.

We noted earlier that in ISKCON on the whole there is an idea that mentoring is mainly an individual phenomenon, meaning that the disciple receives bhakti directly from his spiritual master. Even though this is true, nevertheless, the person is not a divine teacher, a representative of Krishna's internal energy in himself. A devotee becomes a true teacher when he reaches maturity in his service and disciplic mindset. Disciples of such teachers receive the most important lessons simply by seeing how their teacher treats others, serves others and studies from them. When mature Vaisnavas associate with each other there is a special atmosphere of *priti*, an atmosphere of mutual loving service which is the actual guru that teaches the *kanistha-adhikari* devotee something he could not learn from his spiritual master as an individual person. This lesson is reminiscent of an excellent story from Srimad Bhagavatam which describes how the son of the maidservant, coming into an atmosphere of pure and devoted sages associating with each other, attained perfection and became Narada Muni. Srila Prabhupada notes in his purport to this story that "*The wonder of an atmosphere surcharged with devotional service to the Lord is briefly described herein by Sri Narada Muni.*" (SB 1.5.23, purport).

Even in personal relationship between the spiritual master and his disciple, the disciple's heart is not influenced simply by the guru's personality but by the atmosphere of spiritual relationships between them. In this sense, in order for siksa transfer to happen both need to be qualified. They have to be able to create an

atmosphere of sat-sanga in association with each other. Among Srila Prabhupada's disciples there were those who afterwards, despite external proximity with this most exalted soul, left their service to their spiritual master. But, there are also those who still feel deep connection with Srila Prabhupada and receive his guidance through these spiritual relationships.

4.5. The danger of hierarchical centralization

Aspiring to keep the principle of siksa transfer alive in ISKCON and the natural inspiration and collective growth of devotees that arises from it, Srila Prabhupada consistently and resolutely opposed the attempts of certain senior disciples to introduce the centralized hierarchical structure in ISKCON:

“Regarding your points about taxation, corporate status, etc., I have heard from Jayatirtha you want to make big plan for centralization of management, taxes, monies, corporate status, bookkeeping, credit, like that. I do not at all approve of such plan. Do not centralize anything. Each temple must remain independent and self-sufficient. That was my plan from the very beginning, why you are thinking otherwise? Once before you wanted to do something centralizing with your GBC meeting, and if I did not interfere the whole thing would have been killed. Do not think in this way of big corporation, big credits, centralization—these are all nonsense proposals. Only thing I wanted was that books printing and distribution should be centralized, therefore I appointed you and Bali Mardan to do it. Otherwise, management, everything, should be done locally by local men. Accounts must be kept, things must be in order and lawfully done, but that should be each temple's concern, not yours.

Krishna Consciousness Movement is for training men to be independently thoughtful and competent in all types of departments of knowledge and action, not for making bureaucracy. Once there is bureaucracy the whole thing will be spoiled. There must be always individual striving and work and responsibility, competitive

spirit, not that one shall dominate and distribute benefits to the others and they do nothing but beg from you and you provide. No.

Never mind there may be botheration to register each centre, take tax certificate each, become separate corporations in each state. That will train men how to do these things, and they shall develop reliability and responsibility, that is the point...

... So the future of this Krishna Consciousness movement is very bright, so long the managers remain vigilant that 16 rounds are being chanted by everyone without fail, that they are all rising before four morning, attending mangal arati—our leaders shall be careful not to kill the spirit of enthusiastic service, which is individual and spontaneous and voluntary. They should try always to generate some atmosphere of fresh challenge to the devotees, so that they will agree enthusiastically to rise and meet it. That is the art of management: to draw out spontaneous loving spirit of sacrificing some energy for Krishna. But where are so many expert managers? All of us should become expert managers and preachers...

*(Letter to Karandhara, 22d of Decamber, 1972, Bombay.
See the full transcript of this letter in Appendix 3).*

In this letter Srila Prabhupada gives many important instructions for ISKCON leaders and clearly explains the way he wanted the spiritual organization. Being worried that attempts at bureaucratization will decrease the natural spiritual of enthusiasm in the devotees, Srila Prabhupada warned in his letter: “*Krishna Consciousness Movement is for training men to be independently thoughtful and competent in all types of departments of knowledge and action, not for making bureaucracy. Once there is bureaucracy the whole thing will be spoiled.*” This letter speaks about an attempt for the centralization of various Temples into one corporation but the danger of hierarchical centralization and the suppression of the devotees' enthusiasm is also very relevant within one single community. Therefore these instructions of Srila Prabhupada apply to leaders of all levels.

It is remarkable that while describing the duties of the GBC Zonal secretaries and Temple Presidents, Srila Prabhupada noted that they should not "control" devotees but: *"remain vigilant that 16 rounds are being chanted by everyone without fail, that they are all rising before four in the morning, attending mangal arati... ...They should try always to generate some atmosphere of fresh challenge to the devotees, so that they will agree enthusiastically to rise and meet it."* It means that Srila Prabhupada, when using the words "managing devotees", meant helping them to display constructive initiative in their service. Without this, the achievement of conscious awareness in spiritual life is impossible. That is the difference between seeing leadership as a material or spiritual phenomenon. In a material sense, leadership means to supervise people as something unconscious or to constantly "inspire" them ("pump them up") supporting their false and temporary enthusiasm. In the understanding of the Vaisnavas, however, to manage people means to help them to awaken the Krishna consciousness which is dormant in their hearts:

"... Pure love for Krishna is eternally established in the hearts of the living entities. It is not something to be gained from another source..." (CC, Madhya, 22.107).

On the practical level it means that the main obligation of any spiritual leader is to maintain principles of sat-sanga which allows devotees to cooperate and thus awaken their own Krishna consciousness. It also means that, being in sanga, the leader does not just aspire to give his association but he also wants to receive it (*guhyam akhyati pricchati* – to reveal one's mind and to listen confidentially). In such association, leaders will receive inspiration, Krishna's empowerment and the understanding of their dharma.

4.6. Why did Srila Prabhupada sometimes cancel GBC decisions? Was he against collective leadership?

Sometimes devotees get confused by Srila Prabhupada's external authoritativeness i.e he would veto supposedly collegial decisions of the GBC. But, if we investigate what Srila Prabhupada was doing in, we will see, in fact, that he would veto only those solutions of the GBC that were against the principle of collegiality: either they tried to centralize ISKCON or made important decisions without consulting with Srila Prabhupada or general devotees. Let's give an example of a case where Srila Prabhupada cancelled the solution of the GBC to create a centralized structure in the USA and he even wrote a letter to all the Temple Presidents where he asked them to ignore all decisions of the GBC council until he would personally confirm them.

"My dear ____

Please accept my blessings. I beg to inform you that recently some of the Governing Body Commission members held a meeting at New York on 25th through 28th March, 1972, and they have sent me a big big minutes, duplicated, for my consideration and approval, but in the meantime they have decided some appointments without consulting me. One of the items which struck me very much is as follows:

"Atreya Rsi das was selected to be the Secretary for GBC and receive all correspondence including monthly reports." I never appointed Atreya Rsi member of the GBC, and I do not know how he can be appointed Secretary to GBC without my sanction. "He was also appointed to be on the Management Committee with Karandhara for the purpose of supervising ISKCON business and implementing the decisions reached by GBC." This has very much disturbed me.

Sriman Atreya Rsi das may be very expert, but without my say he has been given so much power and this has upset my brain.

I also understand that immediate actions are going to take place even prior to my permission, and that, also, "without divulging to the devotees(!)"

I do not follow exactly what is the motive of the so-called GBC meeting, therefore I have sent the telegram which you will find attached herewith, and I have received the replies as well.

Under these circumstances, I AUTHORIZE YOU TO DISREGARD FOR THE TIME BEING ANY DECISION FROM THE GBC MEN UNTIL MY FURTHER INSTRUCTION.

You manage your affairs peacefully and independently, and try to improve the spiritual atmosphere of the centers more carefully..."

(Letter from Srila Prabhupada to all Temple Presidents, 8th of April, 1972)

In this letter, Srila Prabhupada expresses strong concern for two things. First, there was an attempt to create a centralized administrative structure (which is a symptom of bureaucratic hierarchy) and second, nobody ever consulted with Srila Prabhupada nor did they disclose this decision to the devotees. Moreover, not all the GBC members were invited to that important GBC meeting. All this was a rough violation of the principle of collective leadership (ignoring senior, equal and junior devotees). The GBC resolution was democratic (there was voting) but it was not collegial and therefore Srila Prabhupada not only cancelled it but also temporarily deprived the governing body of their power. In this way, Srila Prabhupada again and again taught devotees that the elite form of management is unacceptable for Vaisnavas.

4.7. Why is the collective managerial structure still not present in ISKCON even though it was well-defined by Srila Prabhupada?

Certainly, Srila Prabhupada perfectly understood the difficulties connected with the introduction of collegial spiritual management in ISKCON. We can see that even during his life there were some attempts to establish systems contradictory to his will. And after his departure, the Zonal acarya system was introduced causing serious damage to the Krishna consciousness movement. In fact, our Krishna consciousness movement was saved at that time due to one thing only: the Temple Presidents from the USA gathered together and made a decision to stop the system of Zonal acaryas from existing. Even though many good reforms have been made in ISKCON since then, nevertheless, in our opinion, the spirit of management which Srila Prabhupada wanted to see in our Society has not been manifested.

Some devotees explain the difficulties connected with the practical application of the “*Direction of Management*” document saying that it was compiled not by Srila Prabhupada but by some of his followers who were disposed towards democracy. But here is a history of its creation in the GBC report “Fullfillment of Srila Prabhupada’s instructions” (see the full text in the Appendix 4):

“Prabhupada asked the many temple presidents assembled for the Ratha-yatra to meet and discuss forming a governing body to manage ISKCON. The devotees met and then reported that they thought only one of them should be elected the chief representative. They hadn't understood. Strength should be in a group, Prabhupada said, not in a single individual. Since he was ISKCON's founder-acarya, what need was there for another single leader?” (Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita, volume 4, chapter 31)
In response Srila Prabhupada compiled the legal document called Direction of Management

This report not only affirms that this document was personally made by Srila Prabhupada but also it was some kind of a systematic answer to the misunderstandings of his senior disciples about the

administrative vision of their Spiritual master.

Some senior devotees in ISKCON question Srila Prabhupada's commitment to the principles stated in the "DIRECTION OF MANAGEMENT" document though they are unable to present a document in which Srila Prabhupada cancels these principles. In our opinion, the principles cannot be cancelled because they emanate from the heart of our Acarya. On the practical level, Srila Prabhupada, before his departure, established a system not compatible with certain mechanisms of the "DIRECTION OF MANAGEMENT" document. In our opinion, he did this so that the devotees would not misunderstand these mechanisms to be democratic principles. How to understand our Acarya? Either he rejected the principles he established himself earlier or he simply recognized that our society at that time was not capable to actually follow them (the leaders were not ready; Srila Prabhupada speaks about this in the letter quoted above) and consequently there was a necessity for a system according to the actual level of devotees.

Our understanding is that for devotees who do not want to follow principles of sat-sanga (for *kanistha-adhikaris*), the only appropriate system is autocracy because it protects them from the mode of ignorance. Attempts to introduce principles of collective leadership among unprepared devotees degenerates into democratic chaos. Probably, this is the reason why after 1974, Srila Prabhupada, understanding that he did not have time to train up devotees in collegial managerial culture, started to support the system: "Collegiality among the GBC and autocracy from the GBC towards the society of devotees". In our opinion, canceling the elective system in ISKCON was necessary to save our organization from the destiny of the Gaudiya-math. Thus, Srila Prabhupada's decision not to apply any regulations from the "DIRECTION OF MANAGEMENT" document saved ISKCON from an external breakdown after his departure. The elective system for GBC members would let unripe and ambitious leaders, who were not trained by Srila Prabhupada in the culture of collegial management, get into the supreme governing body. It would inevitably lead to a

split among the GBC and to the disruption of ISKCON as a unified organization (which happened in the case of the Gaudiya-math).

Now we have to choose: either we come to a stop in our organizational development or we develop further returning to Srila Prabhupada's initial plan to introduce collegial culture in management. In our understanding, the current authoritative and democratic organizational structure of ISKCON became outdated a long time ago and is now plunging our society into stagnation. Mostly, our progress is made by the efforts of beginners, whereas the majority of devotees, who have lots of experience, are alienated or even in opposition. To go further and to reach true spiritual and organizational unity we have to realize and put into practice the principles of sat-sanga which allows leaders with different visions to fruitfully cooperate within one organization. Later in the book we will offer a succession of steps for changing the managerial system which would bring our society to a state of dynamic spiritual and organizational development (see Offers for practical realization of collegial principles in the managerial sphere in chapter 5).

Why is it so important to follow principles of sat-sanga? The fundamental feature of the *kanistha-adhikari* devotees' mentality is that they do not wish (or are not capable) to accept the collegial management as their guru, the highest authority. If it is the hierarch who speaks, they respectfully bend their head and submit but if a equal or junior devotees says something, they automatically switch to the democracy mode with its spirit of rivalry and subconsciously think: "Why should I listen to all this? Who is he anyway? I could say it much better... And is all this actually bonafide? Etc". Such devotees are not capable to pick up on manifestations of perfection in something imperfect. It is absolutely impractical to build a spiritual organization together with such people based on the principles of collegial culture because neophytes will not strictly follow mutual decisions that were agreed upon by all of them.

The main problem of the conditioned soul is envy – ally of the inferiority complex and the sense of superiority. Actually, it is

envy which generates the “autocracy-democracy” duality. Autocracy takes advantage of people’s inferiority complex and democracy uses their complex of superiority over others. *To get out of this trap devotees require some sort of collegial sadhana – regular training and also, the following of certain moral rules and principles of relationships and cooperation (see chapter 6). The most important criterion of collegiality is that we actually follow mutual values and principles of sat-sanga and not just externally agree with them to create an illusion of unity.*

A *kanishtha-adhikari devotee* in a position of leadership usually aspires to create an illusion of unity and hide from the need to discuss and clear up differences in values and principles. However, without the practice of mutually revealing one’s heart, among the leaders, it is impossible to achieve this true spiritual unity. The nature of envy is such that if a materialistic leader cannot override some phenomenon (cannot act autocratically), externally he agrees with it (behaves as a democrat) to have the possibility of subduing or destroying it in the future. The subconsciousness of bureaucracy works as follows: “If you can not supervise some process, become the head of it”.

If we really want to satisfy Srila Prabhupada, then the leaders of our Society should discuss and deeply realize the surprisingly powerful principles of methodology in spiritual management which His Divine Grace introduced in ISKCON. The implementation of these principles in practice is not a simple task and the history of our organization testifies to that. Below we will illustrate this.

4.8. Example of a talk where Srila Prabhupada externally refuses the usage of managerial principles which he set up originally.

Room conversation with Srila Prabhupada, 28th of May, 1977:

Satsvarupa: Srila Prabhupada, we were all asked by the rest of the GBC to come to ask some questions. Most... These are the members of the original GBC as you first made it up. So our first question is about the GBC members. We want to know how long should they remain in office?

Prabhupada: They should remain for good.

Tamala Krishna: They should remain for good.

Prabhupada: Selected men are chosen, so they cannot be changed. Rather, if some competent man comes, he should be added. I shall recommend that Vasudeva to become one of the GBC.

Tamala Krishna: Vasudeva is Deoji Punja. He's the founder of our... He's building the temple in Fiji.

Prabhupada: How many GBCs are there already?

Tamala Krishna: Twenty-three.

Prabhupada: So add him. GBC is not to be changed.

Satsvarupa: But then, in the event that some present GBC member leaves, either leaves...

Prabhupada: Another should be elected.

Satsvarupa: By the votes of the present GBC.

...

Prabhupada: So there is no question of changing GBC.

Satsvarupa: No.

Prabhupada: Rather, one who is competent, he can be selected to act by the board of the GBC.

Tamala Krishna: Of course, if someone has a falldown, just like in the past some GBC men have fallen down...

Prabhupada: He should be replaced.

Tamala Krishna: Then he should be replaced. But that's a serious falldown, not some minor discrepancy.

Prabhupada: They must be all ideal acarya-like. In the beginning we have done for working. Now we should be very cautious. Anyone who is deviating, he can be replaced.

On the basis of the analysis we did earlier, we can understand that the autocratic system, which Srila Prabhupada supported for the last two years of his life (it is described in the quoted conversation), was necessary for our society to be managed by the most qualified leaders whom he personally brought together and personally trained in management. There were so few qualified devotees at that time so there was no question of introducing a universal collegial culture.

To execute the second part of Srila Prabhupada's mission - to establish daivi-varnasrama (the communal organization of our society) - it is necessary to cultivate a great number of leaders supporting the principles of sat-sanga. *In our opinion, it is extremely important to understand that those principles of management, which Srila Prabhupada formulated initially (reflected in the DIRECTION OF MANAGEMENT legal document), show us how he really wanted his Society to be. He wanted it to be based on collegial principles of sat-sanga, the principles of madhyama-adhikari. An important point is that by rejecting the democratic procedure of electing ISKCON leaders,*

Srila Prabhupada did not reject principles of a collegial spiritual culture which were stated in the DIRECTION OF MANAGEMENT legal document.

Autocracy can come not only from seniors but also from equals and juniors (for example, when we approach our spiritual master with a presentation already prepared in order for him to simply agree with it). And democracy can come from seniors when there is no clear order from their side. *We can observe this tendency now.* When a person claims to have truth on behalf of the sastras, God or another spiritual authority (autocracy) or when the collective opinion of a group of people who have coordinated their interests is by default considered to be truth (democracy), this is an influence of materialistic ideology. However, when a senior devotee, or even any person in general, speaks truth and everyone without any discussion agrees with it because his words resonate with Truth in their hearts, that is sat-sanga.

From the aforesaid words it becomes clear that it is not so simple to understand principles of a collegial spiritual culture. Therefore we should, not in words but in practice, start “boiling the milk”, training all devotees and especially the leaders of our society in collegial ethics. Ethical principles of cooperation should become a sort of sadhana for *madkhyama-adhikaris* and it will “force” us to conjointly overcome the gravitation field of prakṛta that pulls us back to the level of materialism. In the fifth chapter of this book we will offer the practical arrangements necessary for the establishment of the principles and rules of sat-sanga in our society and in the sixth chapter we will provide a list of these principles and rules with short explanations.

4.9. Are there any other explanations of Srila Prabhupada’s managerial design?

There are devotees in ISKCON who do not see a fundamental distinction between collegiality and democracy and consequently they offer a different explanation of why Srila

Prabhupada rejected to apply the DIRECTION OF MANAGEMENT legal document. In their opinion, this document is based on principles of democracy and was necessary at a certain stage of ISKCON's development due to the immaturity of devotees who were brought up in the spirit of the western liberal culture and therefore were not capable to accept an authority who would be appointed for them from above. But later, when devotees absorbed the values of Vedic culture, it became possible to introduce the so-called "traditional" authoritative model. Sounds quite convincing and many ISKCON devotees agree with it. But was it Srila Prabhupada's plan?

According to our understanding the main reason for Srila Prabhupada to stop insisting on the implementation in the entire ISKCON of managerial principles given in the "DIRECTION OF MANAGEMENT" was this misunderstanding by the young ISKCON leaders of fundamental difference between collegiality and democracy (with its ugly political manifestations). In connection with it we will quote here an interesting dialog between Srila Prabhupada and his senior disciple, one of the ISKCON leaders. We will also give our purports within this conversation.

Hayagriva: According to you... If the president is in charge, then if he says to cut it down, it gets cut down.

Prabhupada: No. The committee. The majority decision will be...

Hayagriva: That's democracy. That's democracy. That's no good.

Prabhupada: Democracy? This is the age of...

Hayagriva: I thought you said we should have enlightened monarchy.

Prabhupada: No. Monarchy is out of date now. When you form a committee... But what can I say? If you disagree in that way, then... If you have to live together, you have to work together; if you disagree in that way, it will be a difficult job.

Here Srila Prabhupada in hearts expresses his concern, as if foreseeing that the unwillingness of the leaders to work together will make service in organization "very difficult". According to Srila Prabhupada's plan the Temple President was responsible for the creation of the Committee, managerial sanga, and he was not supposed to be a "monarch". Further:

Prabhupada: ...Kali-yuga, everything should be managed by society. In Bhagavata also. Yes.

Hayagriva: Oh, democracy. In Kali-yuga, democracy.

Prabhupada: Yes. Society. Body.

Hayagriva: This is not best. This is not best. You mention that in the books, that this is not very good.

Prabhupada: This is not very good in this sense..

You can see that Srila Prabhupada does not want to follow Hayagriva in using the word "democracy". Discussing the subject of collective management, he deliberately replaces it with the words "community, body". Saying "this is not very good in this sense", Srila Prabhupada means that it is not good when collegiality is understood as democracy. Further he continues:

But at that time one man was so advanced that his order was perfect. Actually these kings like Maharaja Pariksit and others, they were consulting learned brahmanas, not that they were actually autocrat. No. They used to consult how the government should be conducted.

(New Vrindavan, 9-th June 1969, meeting with devotees)

Here Srila Prabhupada answers to another important question: "So, collegiality is still surrender to the age of Kali, where no man, if he is not a saint, can provide perfect instructions? I.e. initially the perfect system is still autocracy?" The answer to this question is negative: even the Holy monarchs who had the right to

give individual instructions, because of their high qualification and Imperial powers, sought to manage collegially, in consultation with qualified personalities. They were not autocrats (Srila Prabhupada uses the term autocrat, which we introduced in constant use in this book). So collegial managerial paradigm is sat, eternal, but in Kali-yuga it is necessary to consciously implement it, because people of this age try to avoid cooperation and want some power over each other.

We have already repeatedly noted that democracy and autocracy are two poles of the materialistic model of management which do not have any direct relation to principles of spiritual management, even though they can be applied under certain conditions sometimes. As a pure devotee of the Lord and ISKCON's Founder-Acharya, Srila Prabhupada personified principles of ideal spiritual management which externally can be perceived as authoritative or democratic. This discrepancy is sometimes confusing. However, we should see the essence: *true collegiality is an autocracy in terms of following the Vaisnava principles of sat-sanga and a democracy in terms of the manifestation of people's creative energy*. In our opinion, Srila Prabhupada, by his example, showed what an ideal leader is.

We want to remind you of a key historical fact. At the beginning of Kali-yuga, brahmanas, using their position, started to follow a spirit of authoritarianism and it led to the destruction of all Vedic civilization. The mood of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and our Acaryas was always incompatible with this destructive spirit.

4.10. How does the principle of collective leaders' empowerment strengthen the highest GBC authority as a managerial entity within ISKCON?

Formally, everyone in ISKCON recognizes that the GBC council is the supreme governing body and is also representing Srila Prabhupada. However, in reality, the governing body lost substantial touch with the society of devotees. Recently, there

certainly have been sincere and systematic attempts to organize feedback with various leaders in our society and this deserves respect. Nevertheless, in our opinion, these attempts belong to the sphere of managerial improvement, rather than to a change in the principles of the society's management themselves.

The paradox is that the authority of the GBC Council suffers not because devotees do not recognize it as the highest governing body in ISKCON but because the principle of collegial management is not being broadcast by the representatives of the GBC Council onto all levels of management within our organization, down to the level of local communities. For this reason either authoritative or democratic forms of management are quite prominent in our communities. The authoritative style of management creates tension, offenses and conflicts in the society of devotees and the democratic style, apathy and anarchy. All this leads devotees to have a lack of trust in ISKCON management on all levels including the GBC Council.

If we start to consistently apply a culture of collegial management in communities, this will gradually revitalize and recover the atmosphere in ISKCON all around the world and strengthen the natural trust of devotees towards the management of our society.

The vision we offer is that by establishing the GBC Council as the highest authority, Srila Prabhupada actually established the principle of the highest authority as collegial management (as Krishna's manifestation). Krishna speaks about the principle of spiritual collegiality in the heart of Bhagavad-gita in the catur-sloka (BG 10.9-10): *mat cita* (my devotees), *mad-gata-prana* (their lives devoted to Me), *bodhayantah parasparam* (share their realizations in sat-sanga and preach to each other), *kathayantah ca mam nityam* (talk about Me and about their plans for serving Me), *tusyanti ca* (derive great satisfaction and bliss) *ramanti ca* (and the pleasure of spiritual relationships). In the following verse: *tesam satata yuktanam* (to those who are always occupied with their service in sat-sanga), *bhajanam priti purvakam* (who serves Me in loving

union with Me and My devotees), *dadami buddhi-yogam tam* (I give them spiritual intelligence), *yena mam upayanti te* (by which they can come to Me).

These words spoken by Krishna reflect the essence of pure practice of bhakti and actually explain how the council of senior devotees, performing the service of leadership can become an incarnation of God (*dadami buddhi-yogam tam*), i.e. can become sat-sanga. Thus, the paradigm of collegial management is nothing else but an embodiment of Krishna's will in our organization and is therefore spiritual. Therefore, this principle of authoritative management should be introduced on all levels of management in our society. Then leaders, on all levels, will be ideal assistants to the GBC.

There was a research done by the GBC about the managerial vision of Srila Prabhupada, and we have provided the final document of this research in Appendix 4. It does not explain why Srila Prabhupada stopped the application of rules from "DIRECTION OF MANAGEMENT" but it gives sound reasoning why the GBC Council is the highest authority in ISKCON.

4.11. How does the principle of collective leadership in ISKCON can help to solve issues defined in the beginning of this book?

In the beginning of this work we mentioned that the structure of management existing in ISKCON does not provide new people involvement in and cultivation of their inspiration for service in our society, i.e. does not provide real and practical spiritual education. Based on the explanation we have given about the empowerment of our leaders, it is possible to understand the cause of such a state of affairs in our society. The force that attracts conditioned souls and gives them spiritual education is sat-sanga – the heart of Vaisnava community (of course, not any meeting of devotees is sat-sanga). Srila Prabhupada saw the society of devotees first of all as a platform for spiritual relationships and not simply as

an accurately structured organization. People will surely be attracted to such a society and will maintain enthusiasm because they will feel that they are building an absolutely different social system which is not material and is founded on truth, justice and a devotee's love for God.

“... The International Society for Krishna Consciousness has been established to facilitate these six kinds of loving exchanges between devotees. This Society was started single-handedly, but because people are coming forward and dealing with the give—and—take policy, the Society is now expanding all over the world. ...” (Nectar of Instruction, text 4, purport).

In this statement Srila Prabhupada explains that pure devotion to the Lord is personal and it is directed towards the formation of community with spiritual relationships.

In the beginning we also explained how people in general are not so attracted by the atmosphere we have in ISKCON now because the authority of our teachings (the sastra's authority) is presented separately from the discussions of these teachings in a sanga of mature devotees, i.e. it is separated from our real life. It makes people look for answers to their questions about daily life in the sphere of applied sciences. Actually, where in ISKCON there are communal and social connections based on spiritual knowledge, personal development goes on naturally and harmoniously in people and they stop being tormented by various stagnant conditions, destructive psychological states, etc. Therefore, the fact that a lot of people come to lectures on applied disciplines instead of coming to traditional lectures on the sastras speaks for our substantial loss of touch with the way Srila Prabhupada represented spiritual knowledge as “the spiritual solution for material problems”. Even when Vaisnava-preachers bring people into the society for Krishna consciousness through Ayurveda, psychology and so forth, many of these people leave after coming in contact with traditional ISKCON structure and they leave, not because they are not attracted to Krishna and His teachings, but because they do not want to follow some formal authority without having an actual

experience of spiritual relationships and social connections.

Some devotees think that preachers, who are engaged in preaching to wide masses of people (so-called “indirect preaching”), do not follow Srila Prabhupada. In our opinion, the main reason this opinion exists is the deeply rooted belief that “worldly subject matters” cannot be connected with Krishna in a preacher’s consciousness and, therefore, cannot generate *bhakti-ajnata-sukriti* in their listeners (we will talk about it in more detail in the ninth chapter of this book in the section entitled: “Srila Prabhupada's constitution – Mission for life”). In the society of devotees, the culture of discussing Srimad Bhagavatam in a *yukta-vairagya* style is not very common. Therefore, we create devotees who either become dependent upon something mundane, on *karma* (working for the whole day and neglecting sadhana and sanga), or they turn into asocial devotees who possess only academic sastrical knowledge, considering their understanding to be the most authoritative one and they criticize various healthy social initiatives of other devotees. We should note that the second type of devotee (asocial) usually does not try to really understand the (essence preaching)*? that goes on in the society nor the theological subtleties of *yukta-vairagya*. Such theoretical conclusions covered with the authority of the sastras and our organization are nothing else but contamination by the desire for jnana. As for following Srila Prabhupada, this type of “indirect” preaching in the general society is simply a realization of the first purpose of ISKCON: “*To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all people in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.*”

Coming back to the main subject of this section, we would like to repeat: the first purpose we could accomplish by developing the system of empowerment established by Srila Prabhupada is to recover the enthusiasm and sense of responsibility in the society's devotees, who would see that they can actually be useful to other devotees as well as to non-devotees. This revival will come when spiritual life is understood in its true sense, i.e. as a social

phenomenon. In this way it is possible to make our preaching powerful once again.

And the second (and main) purpose: we could fully establish our connection with Srila Prabhupada and his mission. Expressing this mission every day we repeat: *nirvisesa-sunyavadi pascatyā-deśa tarine* – “Srila Prabhupada releases us from impersonalism and the philosophy of emptiness by which the Western world is infected”. *Sunyavada* or emptiness in our heart comes from the contamination of democracy. In our modern western society, people have so-called "freedom" to satisfy their desires and ambitions but that creates emptiness in their hearts and a feeling that their life is senseless. *Nirvisesa* or impersonalism is an abstract moral ideology where the feelings and desires of people do not get spiritualized but are simply sacrificed for the "party mission".

5. What are our suggestions for practical realization of Srila Prabhupada's vision on management?

In this chapter we will describe practical solutions that follow from the above-stated understanding of leadership in ISKCON. We will also give a formula of actions by which these conclusions could be brought to life. Certainly, there is no sense in describing the practical side in too much detail since ISKCON leaders should realize it themselves in sanga but still we will try to point out the main actions which should be performed in our opinion.

To realize Srila Prabhupada's initial plan for managing his society, the following measures are necessary:

Formula:

1. To deeply comprehend at the level of the Russian National Council of ISKCON and the GBC Council the fact that in the basis of the system of leader's empowerment initially desired by Srila Prabhupada there should be their ability to create and maintain the culture of sat-sanga. Having thought about it we should define duties of Community Leaders, Regional Secretaries and GBC Zonal Secretaries.

2. To define and formulate principles and rules of spiritual collegiality, sat-sanga (ethical, spiritual and applied), and to approve them in the Russian National Council as "regulative principles" for relationships (it will be possible to discuss the principles and rules of sat-sanga when we reach the 6th chapter of this book).

3. To organize universal devotee training at the local level on how to follow these principles and rules so that, in various communities, all the devotees who carry out responsible services (mentors and managers), could be in a qualified leadership sanga. The important point is that the leadership sanga (community council) should not consist of those members who would like to be there but of those who have accepted responsibility for a specific

field of activity (i.e. of mentors and managers). Thus the structure of the leadership sanga is defined by default. Nevertheless, participation (in this sanga) of most senior devotees, who might not be actively engaged in responsible service, but are respected and wise, is also important. And participation of professionals (if required) in the practical fields is also important. These two types of participants act within sanga, but do not take part in voting.

4. Gradually (in the process of training devotees in the principles of collegial culture) stop the practice of appointing leaders from above. Autocracy is appropriate and necessary when devotees, on the local level, are not trained in these principles but even in that case it is necessary to not appoint the one who simply expresses his loyalty to the higher managerial echelon but the one who shares this collegial culture more than the others and is therefore capable to establish it in the society of devotees. The success of such a leader will be that, overtime, not only he but also any other member of the leadership sanga will be capable to act as the leader guardian.

5. Community leaders and Regional secretaries should be elected for a certain period (Srila Prabhupada in his DIRECTION OF MANAGEMENT legal document defined the period of 3 years) and be re-elected after its expiration. The leader can remain in his service perpetually but his qualification should be accepted collegially. Despite the possibility for the leader to remain in this position for another term, it should not be his purpose. On the contrary, the sign of a leader's advanced qualification (described in the previous point) is that, by the time of his re-election, one or several other council members will be trained and ready to execute the service of being a leader. *We want to emphasize a major point once again: the election of leaders in ISKCON should not be done according to the democratic procedure (which causes rivalry within the devotee community) but according to collegial culture which is established by following the principles and rules of sat-sanga (see the following chapter of this book). In our opinion, it is because devotees were not ready to understand the distinction between democracy and collegiality that Srila Prabhupada cancelled the procedure of electing leaders in ISKCON according to the*

“DIRECTION OF MANAGEMENT” document.

6. When the sanga of leaders within the community chooses a head, the higher level sanga (Regional council) should bless this devotee. If there are any objections or doubts in the Regional council, then his representative (the secretary of that region) should discuss it with the members of community sanga and come to a mutual understanding with them. The GBC Zonal secretary and the Regional secretary can also offer the Community council a candidate for the role of the head in a local ISKCON center. Let's remember that in collegial culture the head doesn't accept a decision only himself. His duties consist of four things: 1. Organize training in the principles and skills of collegial service and to protect these principles; 2. Oversee that decisions in Council are accepted collegially and to provide distribution of responsibilities for the execution of these decisions; 3. Oversee that the accepted decisions are being executed; and 4. Create an atmosphere where the listed duties would be executed, not only by him, but also by other members of the sanga. Therefore there should not be any political fuss concerning the head's personality.

Representatives of the GBC Council and the Regional secretary have a right to veto decisions of the Community Council but they can use it only in special cases where some immature decision of the local Council about some important question threatens the safety of the devotees or the organization. Or, if a decision goes against ISKCON siddhanta and the members of the Community Council refuse to have a constructive discussion about the subjects disturbing the higher collegial governing body.

7. The two lines of management in ISKCON should be present at all levels, beginning from the Community Council and up to the GBC Council. This means that in each *developed* community there can be a managerial body (Executive committee) and also a meeting of mentors (leaders of nama-hattas, etc.). The main collegial decisions defining the development of a community - its strategy, budget, main programs – are made by the Community Council where both of these lines of management unite. As for daily questions, they are discussed and get solved in separate

meetings of mentors and managers.

If the community is big and has tens of bhakti-vriksas and a number of various programs and projects, then it is necessary to form a structure of a Working Community Council by having a vote at meetings of mentors and managers. They would elect from among their members a certain amount of members for the Working Community Council (having a quota; for example, six people from each line of management). Then this Council will consist of, let's say, 12 of the most mature leaders within the community. This number is not obligatory but Srila Prabhupada obviously liked it. In any case, the collegial body should not be too numerous. As for the full Community Council, which includes all the mentors and managers, they can gather less often: for example, two times a year. Managers' meeting (Executive committee), mentors' meeting and also the Working Community Council gather as required but at the least, once a month. *We will mention once again that if the community is not too big there is no need for the two-level structure of Council described herein: The Community council just regularly gathers with all the members.* If the community is small (not more than 100 people), there is no need for separate meetings of mentors and managers. All questions of community life are solved on Council.

8. As a whole, the hierarchical structure of organization constructed by sat-sanga principles will look as follows:

A) The Community Council chooses among devotees engaged in educational and organizational service the chairman for the mentor's meetings and the chairman of the Executive committee. Or, if the community is small and there is no need in for separate mentor and manager meetings, then simply two members of the Community Council, who are concentrated on educational and organizational service, should be elected.

B) These heads, being chosen from all the communities in each region (from the two lines of management in each yatra), form the ISKCON Regional council. Members of the Regional council also choose two of its members as heads (The Regional Secretary

and the Chairman of the executive committee). The Executive committee is required in the Regional Council if the region is rather large and developed and it is therefore required to coordinate various joint events and programs (among several ISKCON centers). Also, if there are a lot of centers in the region, it is possible to choose a compact Working Regional Council consisting of 12 members (according to the scheme described earlier) which will gather more regularly than its full version.

C) Two heads from each Regional council (one from both the managerial and mentoring lines) form the structure of the ISKCON National Council. Members of the National Council also choose two (or more) heads who become members of the GBC council. At the level of the National council it is absolutely necessary to elect a more compact version for operative and systematic work in preaching and management. Also, various department committees for the centralized professional support of communities (for the creation of educational materials, informational support and so forth) should be created. *The main function of the National council is to provide local communities with access to educational and organizational resources of the whole organization, helping devotees at the local level to keep and deepen their enthusiasm for spiritual life and to become more organized.*

D) According to the “DIRECTION OF MANAGEMENT” document, before carrying out the following elections for the working council membership from among the 12 members (every three years), its acting members should gather and vote for those who will remain in the new council membership in order to *ensure management succession*. Srila Prabhupada, in this document, established that 4 members out of the 12 should remain and the others should be re-elected. Certainly, it is not obligatory for us to strictly follow the specified numerical parameters but we should follow the principle of succession which Srila Prabhupada put in these norms.

E) Here we will answer a question on a technical aspect in the implementation of collegial management from higher up. How

does it work? In the autocratic management style, everything is clear: the head of the higher governing echelon comes, devotees tell him about their successes and problems, he listens to everything, asks questions for clarification, makes administrative decisions and everyone carries them out. But Srila Prabhupada made all ISKCON centers independent in terms of their administrative and financial spheres. This creates objective obstacles for the implementation of such a managerial paradigm. In the case of a weak collegial culture it puts the society into a democracy deadlock where the Regional secretary (or GBC) can only give advice to the local leaders but cannot participate in management. So the question is as follows: “How is the administration from higher up executed in the culture of sat-sanga?”

In the GBC Council, National council, Regional councils and Community Councils – at all these levels of collegial management an important vision of ISKCON development in accordance with Srila Prabhupada's instructions is formed. Among them, the level of Community Councils is the most fundamental because the main life of society is regulated and directed from there. The efforts and resources of the whole ISKCON (as an organization) should be sent to strengthen this level. At the level of the GBC and the National council the vision of ISKCON's development worldwide and at the national level is discussed and formed. Afterwards, the regional secretaries discuss the strategy of the National Council with representatives of the Community Councils at the Regional Council where this vision becomes more exactly defined and expanded.

Then the Regional Council makes the decision to continue this discussion in the Community Councils in order to create some programs for development in these communities for a certain period (the optimal period is three years). For the following meeting of the Regional Council, these programs of community development are presented and then a simple plan for helping these communities to implement their programs can be made if that is required. But the full extent of this plan is possible to carry out at the level of the National council (as in point C).

It is important for the Regional secretary to participate in the discussions of the Community Councils about their programs of development. First of all, it is necessary in order to help the devotees develop their skills of perspective thinking. Secondly, so that devotees would have direct access to the National Council sanga and vision, and thirdly, so that the Regional secretary would have an understanding of the necessities and abilities of the communities within his region, keeping all this in mind when making decisions at the levels of the Regional and National Councils.

After the approval of programs for developing local communities, the Regional secretary simply oversees how the devotees implement their plans and helps them with that if required. Also, it is important for a collegial culture of management to have an administrative cycle (optimal is 3 years). If devotees, while striving to achieve their goals, do not define temporary landmarks and time frames along the way, the vigor of the community gradually subsides and collegiality drifts towards democracy. Devotees should know that after a certain period of time they will have to give an account to each other and to the seniors of their progress. Therefore, they clearly feel an order to achieve the goals and therefore they make an effort.

Even though the Regional secretary carries out the vision of the National and the GBC Councils in the communities of his region, nevertheless, his real and main role is to act as a representative of the local communities at the National council. A different understanding of his position will produce hierarchical bureaucracy and block the creative energy of sat-sanga.

Managerial sanga has three levels: participation of equals (work of the local leadership council), juniors (participation of all the community members; for example, in the ista-gosthi style) and seniors (the procedure of coordination with the vision of the National and GBC Councils described herein). This is how the process of strict management is carried out in the *siksa-parampara*. Spiritual management means both freedom of creativity on the local level and competent support from above.

The task of a leader on all specified levels of spiritual hierarchy is to serve in establishing and strengthening the spirit of collegial service to Srila Prabhupada and Krishna, so that each member of ISKCON can make progress in his spiritual realization.

An important point concerning the two lines of management is that the leader-mentor can also perform managerial service, and the manager can at the same time be engaged in preaching and act as the bhakti-vriksa leader. Vaisnavas do not divide service into material and spiritual. Any service is equally appreciated. However, for the effective organization of our society in accordance with principles of *daiva-varnasrama*, every Vaisnava should understand in what role he plays and what responsibilities does this role come with.

When Vaisnavas who carry out mentoring and managerial services in ISKCON become united on the basis of mutual principles of sat-sanga, then the collegial management in the Councils on all levels (in the Community Council, Regional Council, National Council and GBC Council) becomes Srila Prabhupada's and Krishna's completely transparent representative, which empowers ISKCON gurus and administrative leaders. Such is the way to construct a truly spiritual organization where the "autocracy-democracy" duality is eliminated.

There are yatras in Russia, where devotees try to follow the spirit of collegiality, and we personally witnessed that phenomena such as politics, rivalry, intrigues, criticism of senior devotees, etc., which destroy love and trust between the devoted, are almost absent in these communities. We hope that these communities will become stronger on this path and that there will be more and more of yatras like this in Russia thanks to the well-directed efforts on the side of our spiritual organization. This book is written to help the continuity of this process.

6. Principles and rules of vaisnava sanga

Below we will give a list of the principles and rules of sat-sanga. This list is based on the experience of the collegial service of leaders in several devotee communities. The principles listed below are universal for the leaders with different levels of responsibility – groups of spiritual association, Community council, Regional council, National council etc. Certainly, our list does not claim for completeness, but it is quite functional is a good basis that gives leaders protection and ability to effectively serve the society of devotees.

These principles are not merely “psychological techniques” used to “inspire devotees” to satisfy their leaders’ needs. Leaders with such a mentality will inevitably end in a complete fiasco. In order for these principles of sat-sanga to start working in our communities, we (leaders) will have to pass through a kind of repentance - to see our unwillingness and inability to follow these principles - and only then, being in a disciple's mindset, try to understand and follow them. Then other devotees will also be able to accept the culture of sat-sanga. Leaders from different levels of management in ISKCON can start discussing them and trying to put them into practice. To help them with this preliminary work we will continue with short explanations of these principles. If the Russian leaders give their feedback to the Russian National council about the subjects discussed, it will allow a quicker approval of this strategy for developing the Krishna consciousness movement in Russia (the e-mail for feedback is: id.com108@gmail.com).

1. *Each of us daily, and in a prayerful mood, participates in spiritual programs (sadhana) and chants japa on his beads according to the vow he took up. Each of us devotes himself to the service of the spiritual Vaisnava family. Each of us meditates on spreading the message of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, putting conscious efforts in this direction.*

Explanation:

Constant meditation by a person is the sign that his Krishna consciousness has awakened. But meditation on what? Of course, everyone will respond: "On God". However, according to the philosophy of the Gaudiya-Vaisnavas it is not a very exact answer. To perceive God in one's meditation is possible only if He wishes to respond to it but it is certain to occur (according to His own words written in *sastra*) when He is not the only object of meditation but also those who are dear to Him and depend on Him. Even Krishna's own Name "Krishna" attracts Krishna (and therefore He is attracted by our repetition of this Name) mainly because His beloved associates (among whom Hara, or Radha, is the dearest one) approach Him with this Name. Therefore we chant Hare Krishna, thereby approaching God, who reveals Himself in His personal aspect only in the society of His devotees. Krishna responds to the chanting of His Name when it is done in an atmosphere of spiritual relationships (nama-ruci). In the article entitled "Real advancement means knowing God" found in "The Science of Self-realization", Srila Prabhupada writes in this connection:

"Actually God has no particular name. By saying He has no name, we mean that no one knows how many names He has... God has many dealings with His many devotees, and according to those dealings, He is called certain names. Since He has innumerable devotees and innumerable relations with them, He also has innumerable names. We cannot hit on any one name. But the name Krishna means "all-attractive."

The point is that we cannot perceive God's Name outside of His family and relationships within it, including the most insignificant member. Srila Prabhupada liked to give the example that, to get closer to an important person is possible by showing natural care for the dependent members of his family, even if it is "just" his dog.

There is a family living with God in the spiritual world.

Our sadhana consists of meditation on the Names of Krishna and His associates and on the fulfillment of their desires. This is nama-ruci. The devotees around us are also the family of the Lord consisting of jivas who have stepped back onto the path of bhakti. Our service to this family (vaisnava-seva) is to connect it to the family in the spiritual world through sat-sanga and bhajana-kriya. There is also a part of Krishna's family who have forgotten about Him. Our service to this family (people in general) is that we associate with them and educate them (jiva-doya). However, without consistent and deep sadhana, without connection with the spiritual reality, we cannot serve the Vaisnavas nor anyone else. Our activities will be done on the material level.

The Lord's whole family is dear to Him and therefore, the true maintainer of sat-sanga will be equally devoted to these three components of bhakti: sadhana, friendship with devotees and preaching to the conditioned jivas.

2. *We will never discuss practical questions without performing kirtana and discussing the sastras. At the same time, we do not discuss the sastras as an abstract philosophy but as a personal and collective experience of how Krishna manifests Himself in our life, spiritualizing its various spheres.*

Explanation:

When devotees who are not trained in the sat-sanga culture come together, usually the duality inherent to collective instinctiveness manifests. People speak about something mundane and after suddenly remembering: "We are devotees!" they start to impose on each other some dry philosophical topics. It is the same karma-jnana (autocracy-democracy) duality. It is not very often that we get a chance to see a sat-sanga of devotees where the living spirit of Srimad Bhagavatam is manifested, making it possible to awaken the mood of pure devotion even in a neophyte.

The meaning of the second point is that, before dealing

with practical questions, devotees should develop a taste for the congregational chanting of the Holy Name and for the discussion of Srimad Bhagavatam. But it should not be that first we have jnana, and then we have karma. No. If everything is done correctly, devotees will feel that the discussion of Srimad Bhagavatam and the discussion of practical questions are qualitatively identical. Congregational discussion of Srimad Bhagavatam is the best way for spiritualizing relationships and getting out of the trap of the external energy of the mind.

3. *We do not make decisions in a democratic way (by the principle of compromise or by the majority of some opinions and interests). In dialogue with each other and in our attempts to collectively find the best decisions, we aspire to understand Srila Prabhupada's will and come to an inspiring consensus for the questions discussed. If we cannot reach it, the decision is postponed till our next meeting. If the question has an urgent or technical character, we make the decision by a vote.*

Explanation:

Collegiality is not compatible with blind consent, the opinion of one person (even if it is the leader) nor with acceptance of the opinion of any group within the Council whose members came to an agreement among themselves (even if this group is a majority). Srila Prabhupada approved a voting procedure but he did not approve democracy in its usual sense. Sat-sanga is the power of Truth (sat), which is manifested in a group of responsible devotees (sanga) who strictly and consciously follow these principles. Spiritual collegiality is intended to unite devotees around mutual service and objective vision, not to make decisions which express someone's subjective (material) interests.

Doesn't the voting procedure in a Council impair "the minority's rights"? Leaders shouldn't think of minority and majority rights. They should worry about fulfilling their duties to the society of devotees. If a decision has to be accepted right away (otherwise

specific people will suffer), we accept it even if there is no consensus on the discussed question.

Another question is how can the Absolute Truth be revealed in a relative format of voting? After all, the truth does not belong to the majority. Answer: For this reason we solve all questions of principles connected with the devotees' faith by consensus. To vote for something is not enough: the fact that we agreed about something (connected our opinions) does not mean at all that we made the right decision. A true consensus means that, as a result of discussion, we discover a vision which not only suits everyone but also inspires and unites us, opening great possibilities for serving and developing our community. A spiritual consensus is nothing but the manifestation of God, Krishna. Those who know what this means will not confuse this atmosphere of consensus with anything else. As for different interpretations and politics, which are inherent in democracy (and in voting), this problem does not arise in a collective where there is a consensus about main issues and also a consensus in the fundamental moral principles of sat-sanga.

4. *In the case of discussing difficult questions or having differences of opinions, we continue to be realistic and do not indulge in disappointment with each other. Moreover, we see various contradictions and even shortcomings (ours and others') as a potential for growth. Each of us accepts collegial management as a supernatural source of power (the parampara principle).*

Explanation:

We can be sure that our sanga is sat (true) when we can argue with each other and, sometimes, even "swear" while discussing difficult issues but still remain colleagues and friends in Krishna consciousness. Reality is inconsistent and the root of all inconsistencies (acintya) is in the spiritual world at the beautiful lotus feet of the Divine Couple.

Religious idealism, which carefully disguises itself in the clothes of humility and submissiveness, is the root of all offenses. Due to misunderstandings, in the case of disagreements with seniors, an idealist expresses "humility" before them, externally showing loyalty but becoming more alienated in the heart. This is the mechanism of all offenses. The situation where a person starts to criticize others and then leaves is a consequence of mistrust, which was already collected and driven into subconsciousness.

An autocratic leader is quite satisfied with the loyalty of his subordinates and thus in lectures he preaches that by no means is it possible to not offend seniors by having a disagreement with them or by doubting them. By this, he creates a program of future mistrust and alienation in neophyte devotees. In the Russian language we have a few related sayings: "It is possible to only lean on something that shows resistance", or: "Excessive devotion is a sign of theft". How can the leader expect to cultivate mature devotees if he does not understand this simple truth known to any sane person?

The presence of truth in relationships forces all human shortcomings to fade. If I cannot talk to a person honestly (because one of us does not consider it possible so we avoid it), then the external energy of duality comes, and instead of seeing the real personality we start seeing our own idea of that person, be it negative or inappropriately high. In the second case, we "submissively" think that the reason for the objective problems is in the subjective sphere, i.e. in our own shortcomings. Thus we put false ego (either our own or the ego of another person) in the center of the relationship.

Religious idealists do not recognize the principles of sat-sanga: they do not believe that Krishna and His parampara become manifested in an open, unprejudiced and sincere dialogue with devotees on essential and problematic questions. Instead they prefer to get into a snail of "humility" and then to go into offensive hostility and alienation.

Of course, under the influence of now "fashionable"

preaching about the importance of sat-sanga, kanistha-adhikari devotees can outwardly stay in a nama-hatta but subconsciously they behave in such a way that nothing good will come out of it. Why? It allows one to cast off all responsibility for sanga, to shift the responsibility of a disciplic mindset onto the guru: “How can neophytes give Krishna to each others? We should just sit and listen to the advanced devotee!” This thought is, of course, correct but when the most advanced devotee, Srila Prabhupada, gives them an instruction to cooperate, they make a helpless gesture saying: “It’s impossible!”

Question: “Why do you constantly speak about sat-sanga? Why not talk about other important things in spiritual life like japa or effective preaching styles?” Answer: “When we speak about sat-sanga, we mean the Absolute Truth, the atmosphere of the spiritual world. Sat is Krishna and sanga is Radha. It is His family. There is no other subject as worthy since only it includes all the others. To be in sat-sanga is the same as to chant Hare Krishna. Actually, there is no point to chant anything else (if you realize and feel that the Hare Krishna mantra is the Absolute Truth). Therefore, all other words you say should just be an extension of chanting Hare Krishna”. When the Goswamis of Vrindavan chanted the mantra in the kunjās and then gathered for sat-sanga, this was a continuation of their chanting. We simply follow in the footsteps of our Acaryas in terms of understanding spiritual life.

Question: “Well, alright. But if it is such an important thing, means we are not ready for it yet. Perhaps, for now we should practice Krishna consciousness separately? When we are purified, we will be able to cooperate with each other and we will become madhyama-adhikaris”.

Answer: “Unfortunately, it does not work like that. Bhakti-yoga is an absolute method in which the goal is not different from the means. If we do not practice in sat-sanga now, we will not go to the sat-sanga in the spiritual world. Bhakti comes only from bhakti. It does not come from karma or jnana. Sankirtan does not mean that several minds or gross bodies of several individualists sit in one

room, philosophize and chant. It is something absolutely different”.

Question: “But is japa not considered to be individual process?”

Answer: “We already gave an example of the Gosvamis. There is no taste in japa because there is no answer*(reciprocation) from Krishna. He does not like our individualism, our desire for jnana and karma. But when you recognize with delight that there is Someone else besides you in japa, it becomes a collective process, an apotheosis of sat-sanga”.

Question: “So what should I do? I already tried to cooperate with the leaders several times but it gave me only problems and disappointment. I do not want to offend devotees any more, therefore I hold a distance.”

Answer: “It is quite easy to understand you and to sympathize with you but there is another thing that is unclear: why did you decide that it is possible to start cooperating right away without training in the principles of sat-sanga and its skills, without this sadhana? Was it only to justify that you did it, even though it was not successful?”

We do not pass the *Anartha-nivritti* stage individually but together with others because it is relationships that really touch our heart. But *anartha-nivritti* does not mean that we create problems for each other on purpose (for example, “checking sincerity”) and thus become liberated. Such an understanding is distorted by jnana. On the contrary, by helping each other to pass through contradictions together we become capable to understand Krishna’s nature and see Him. It is interesting that many devotees understand spiritual authority (parampara) as something devoid of contradictions. Truly spiritual instructions, however, are always inconsistent externally (acintya). This is why they awaken our dormant consciousness.

Without reaching nistha, the spiritual wealth, a devotee will

inevitably feel the superiority and inferiority complexes which are feeding of each other. Krishna is the self-sufficient and inspired Creator of this world and a mature devotee is qualitatively similar to Him. This devotee has a satisfying, interesting and creative life. Therefore, he is not worried about someone's opinion of him, nor is he inclined to assess others: *brahma-bhutaḥ prasannatma na socati na kankṣati samāḥ sarvesu bhūteṣu* (BG 18.54). Certainly, when someone's opinion is useful for improving his service, he takes it into consideration, even if the opinion came out of envy, but he will not take the motive to heart.

The state of *sat*, or *brahma bhuta*, cannot be reached by psychological tricks; it takes root in the heart when the devotee is brought up in the atmosphere of *sat-sanga*, where he learns to distinguish a person's mind from his soul and from the Supersoul, Krishna.

5. *We try to be impartial in our judgment about someone or something. We do not expect a "pleasant feeling" arising in envious persons from the criticism of others. We stop any gossip behind people's backs. We always tell truth but only under certain conditions: a) in the presence of the one to whom it is addressed; b) friendly (without complaints); c) previously having cleared up directly with that person whether our understanding is right; d) aspiring to listen to the other person and understand him.*

Explanation:

An austerity of the mind that forms the basis of a leader's happiness and his qualification is described herein. The majority of people, including the leaders of the society, do not realize how much they are prejudiced in their relationships with others, and that the majority of failures for both them and their subordinates is caused by these prejudices. Usually, if a devotee is disturbed by the behavior of another person, he starts reacting with a duality of action (intervention) and inaction (connivance) which does not

allow him to receive power from Krishna to be a spiritual leader or a mentor.

A qualified leader will first calm down by going outside of the vision he received from someone else (or from his own mind). *Objective reality always differs from what people speak and think about it.* Certainly, it is very important for the leader to understand how the people involved in a problem think and feel because by that he gets an emotional connection with them as their friend and well-wisher. But then he should gather everyone who participated in the conflict and help them go outside the boundaries of the subjective reality in their perception and make the correct decision which would be pleasing Krishna and unite everyone. And then he still needs to periodically show interest by asking how everyone involved is following their mutual decisions and helping them not to deviate from this path.

The spiritual leader is emotional and impartial at the same time. His emotionality directly testifies to his interest, his love and impartiality (detachment) indicates the purity of this love. If the leader is not impartial, his responsibility is no better than irresponsibility because there is no place for Krishna in it even though he acts in the name of Krishna. When the leader sees that it is Krishna who acts in sanga, doing it in a very crafty way, he feels spiritual happiness for being a servant of the Lord (a living instrument in Krishna's hands) and therefore he has no urge or even a chance to get the false idea of being someone's "benefactor". But if the leaders within the society are not objective, offenses, rumors and gossip will surely flourish there, depriving the members of a feeling of moral safety. *The atmosphere of moral safety is an environment which nourishes communal connections, thus making them stronger.* And if the leader does not aspire to reveal the power of Truth in all various critical situations, doing it through an open and honest dialogue, but is inclined to become dependent on someone's or his own opinion, thus accepting the side of one of the conflicting parties, he makes love and trust disappear from his community.

Unfortunately, the majority of devotees (including the leaders) are not capable of giving proper "feedback" when someone's actions disturb their mind. Our philosophy is very simple: we are not masters, we are servants. But if this vision is not realized in emotional and verbal realities, how else then? A master will always be a source of suffering for himself and others: either he becomes offended and closed or he increases his anger and then presents claims or spreads rumors. But how does the servant act? He is the Maintainer of sanga, the family. Therefore he aspires to not judge others and he helps them to deepen their conscious position. "Feedback" is given in a friendly and serious way and usually includes:

1) objective description of a person's actions and their consequences;

2) the description of our own feelings which arose from these actions

3) asking what feelings does another person experience and that does he think about all this;

4) as a part of the previous point: the speaker asks if he does not understand or notice something

5) expression of friendliness and willingness to help: asking whether the person needs any help from us (or someone else)

6) understanding the responsibility of another person: what changes in his behavior could be expected after this conversation.

7) gratitude (better if it is mutual) for open conversation and valuable results.

While going through the last point it is better to express confidence that you did not doubt that everything would happen that way. This confidence will give the other person the feeling of getting positive appreciation from you. That can be important, especially considering that his ego could be hurt in the course of the conversation.

Certainly, in such communication there are always some details considering peculiarities of the person's character, his level (mode of nature), and also characteristics of the discussed subject. For example, if there already was a serious conversation (or several conversations), but nothing changed (i.e. he is in the mode of ignorance), at the following conversation on this subject after the point №6 there should be a description of consequences in case the person does not do something he promised doing. Also if relationships are not very close, before the «business part» described in point №1, it is necessary to express why you decided to have this meeting, to tell how important for you your interlocutor's personality is, speak about importance in maintaining open and respectful relationship. By the way, this should also be periodically discussed with those people, whom you have close and intimate relationships with. Nowadays time "covers" very quickly and aggressively even very sincere interpersonal exchanges. On the whole the most important factor for building up relationships with others is our own readiness to change and grow in these relationships, and also our interest towards other individuals and sincere desire to understand and help them in their development. Any technique can be used for the person's benefit or for his harm. Everything depends on, whether we want to violently change the person according to our will, or we act after receiving empowerment from the Lord and that person himself. Only that leader, who is himself open to feedback and wants to receive it, understands feedback's value and is capable to give it to others.

The main purpose of the "feedback" ethics described here is that the mentorship should lead to increase the level of personal awareness and to the creation of family feelings. And that happens wherever there are Maintainers.

6. *We try to always remain in a disciplic mindset, seriously considering advices and remarks from others, whoever they might come from. Even if sometimes they seem unfair, we still think: “What is my guru and Krishna trying to tell me?”. The disciple does not escape from life challenges and does not give in to provocations from other people (nor is he inclined to prove his innocence).*

Explanation:

A Community leader differs from a usual member for his fixed disciplic mindset. He rejoices to get various challenges in the same way as the brave soldier rejoices to find a strong opponent. Certainly, the leader does not look for problems, but when they come, he calmly and with dependence on Krishna meets them, without shifting his responsibility on others. Leader’s position is masculine, cause he thinks: “If I made an agreement with the person, and he did not fulfill it – that’s my fault. Either I didn’t make a proper agreement or did not look after the person”. He will deal with the question why the arrangement was not done instead of condemning another person.

A Leader can suggest punishment to his subordinate, if that is required, but he will not condemn him at all. Why? Because condemnation accustoms people not to conscious responsibility for their actions, but to the false dependence on the relationships with seniors and their appreciation. Such dependence on the religious management is beneficial for the person at the initial stages, when he has just escaped from the materialistic environment that seduced him to have bad qualities and habits, but is still in psychological dependence to this environment. However, when he becomes fixed in our tradition, this position of false dependence turns into an obstacle in his spiritual progress, which demands cultivation of personal awareness.

If a leader made a mistake, he should without reservations recognize it in the presence of other members of sanga. Not that : “Well, I had reasons to do so...”, or “Well, it is possible to look at

this question from another point of view...”. Such leader won’t be trusted.

If the leader dares to judge aloud other people: “This one is engaged in politics”, or: “This one leads nama-hatta just to show off”, etc., etc., he destroys the relationships. Certainly, negative thoughts and feelings will inevitably arise, but madhyama-adhikari does not let them push him around: *vaco vegam manasah krodha-vegam* (Nectar of Instructions, 1).

Often leaders see the cause of their problems in their subordinates, thinking them to be bad disciples. If Srila Rupa Gosvami had the same understanding, he would address the first verse of the Nectar of Instructions mentioned above not to the mentors, but to their followers. The point is that the teacher should be an actual disciple, while others have a chance to become such. But if he considers that he has bad disciples (who do not accept his authority, are insufficiently diligent, etc.), most likely it means that he is a bad disciple himself. Of course, as it was written above, the mentor can chastise someone in temper, if that is necessary for one’s benefit, but here we speak about his internal disposition. Real leader thinks: “These people are my gurus and I am their servant. I am their assistant, not the master”.

All relationships should be built around objective ethical principles defined in advance and mutually accepted by everyone. If someone breaks them, it is possible to discuss it with him and preach to him. And if some devotee makes violations repeatedly, he should be punished. *But he is never condemned* – that is called love.

Real disciple will progress in spiritual life even under the direction of unqualified teacher. Such unconditional disciplic mindset is extremely rare in this world, because it comes from many lives of experience. To reach this perfection, the majority of us need our teacher to possess it. Therefore each community leader, whose spiritual level others are trying to attain, should try to follow the sixth principle.

7. *We follow the 20-60-20 principle, i.e. about 60% of our association should be done in the spirit of equality, interchange, 20% - in the spirit of seniority (we instruct someone), and in 20% of our association we accept someone's guidance. We attend not only our own lectures, but also lectures of other vaisnavas (not necessarily senior vaisnavas).*

Explanation:

This principle points out that complete sat-sanga (the relationships with seniors, equals and juniors), a leader can get in any environment. It is just a question of his disposition. Even if I am a skilled and knowledgeable person, there are always some seniors in my surrounding, i.e. there are those people, whose guidance I can accept in some spheres of life. There are also peers with whom we have some common work, share our realizations and have friendly relationships. Also there are juniors, or those who need my help and support during their growth. Spiritually and morally a healthy person will by all means have friendship with someone and accept someone's guidance. A perpetual state of disciple's development is a sign of true spiritual health. If the person became a leader in a social sense, but he doesn't have friends colleagues and mentors in his environment, he won't be empowered as a spiritual leader.

Inappropriate mystification of a guru principle inherent in religious idealism is that its follower wants to have an exalted guru, but does not want to be a disciple. Kanistha-adhikari needs some living symbol of God's blessings, a spiritual idol, not a trainer. But for madhyama-adhikari (an actual disciple) to accept a guru means to accept a spiritual trainer. There is only one difference between real material and spiritual teachers: an ordinary teacher gives us tasks, which develop our mind and body, and helps us with instructions on this way (since he already got much further in his material development), but the spiritual teacher awakens us to develop our consciousness, strength of mind and love for God and His creation. To any real trainer we express our humble respect, we ask him questions and then we make conscious efforts in whatever

we've heard and understood. For madhyama-adhikari it is always obvious to identify what he learned (and continues to learn) due to sat-sanga, association with one's guru.

Guru's mercy is that he does not wait for others to come to him for instructions: he just goes to preach. Being a good disciple he simply carries out instructions of his guru. In Kali-yuga necessity for preaching is also connected with the fact that there are practically no actual disciples, who would look for a guru to ask questions of Absolute Truth. So it is necessary to "create" such disciples by showing one's own example: for the benefit of people we go to them with humble disciplic questions: "What is the purpose of our life? What is its Truth?" It is also preaching. We become guru only for the person, who being awakened by our example, starts sincerely asking these questions.

But can't claim for this kind of guru's mercy, thinking it to be our property: only children and spiritual neophytes have the right to get mercy. But when we stop being such, then most likely we won't be preached to so much anymore. And therefore we should ask others where we could improve. Also it is necessary to remember that mercy does not completely cancel free will. One who does not want to respond to the call, stops being called. "It is difficult to wake up the person who only pretends to be sleeping".

Basis of sat-sanga is not the mercy of its members to us, but an individual responsibility of everyone for sanga to act as our guru. This is why it is called leaders' sanga. Everything starts with the formal leader setting an example of disciplic disposition in his sanga. Associating with it as with one's guru, he progresses in his spiritual understanding. He visits not only his own lectures, but also lectures of other vaisnavas (not only senior), expressing thus his sincere desire to learn. And then all other members of sanga, thanks to uniting power of authority (*yat yat acarati sresthas*), get the leader's spirit and gradually awaken in others sense of individual responsibility for leadership.

8. *We do not allow omissions and vagueness in our agreements. And we carry out our obligations. In case of obstacles for their execution (for example, in case of illness), we do arrangements so that our obligations were executed as far as possible: we find someone to replace us, or at least we in advance inform another party of our difficulties.*

Explanation:

“Muddy waters” and unclear agreements are a good nutrients for disappointments, conflicts, offenses and finally – alienations. “I thought that you would do it...”, “I seem to remember telling you that ...” – such is the pitiful babble of losers in the spheres of relationships and management. Everyone who was in India knows, that if you to not make concrete agreement with a riksha driver, he will most likely cheat you: having brought you to the destination he will charge an exorbitant price. We shouldn’t see greed in that. It is simply a lesson on this subject: we should not show naive sentimentality and cowardice in the area of our mutual obligations.

«If you are not going to do something, do not say that will. And if you said you will – then you must do it. And if it is really impossible the responsibility does not get canceled: find yourself a replacement. If you tried to do it, but did not succeed, then at least warn in advance and sincerely apologize” – these are common truths of the moral code. But many devotees for some reason in their subconsciousness think that morality is a material phenomenon. As if they had never read “Bhagavad-gita”, the final instruction (18.78): *“Wherever there is Krishna, the master of all mystics, and wherever there is Arjuna, the supreme archer, there will also certainly be opulence, victory, extraordinary power, and morality. That is my opinion.”* Marginality, weakness, moral blindness – all these are symptoms of Krishna consciousness’ absence.

Krishna consciousness is morality. Not being a God’s devotee is immoral, because He is the main well-wisher of everyone. To not recognize Him as a proprietor of everything we

have is thievery even if we "honestly" distribute His property among our relatives, or even if we are engaged in some charity. Materialists make agreements so their rights would not be impaired during collegial activities and distribution of its fruits. It is not so bad, cause it is mode of passion. But devotees should clear up not their rights, but their mutual responsibilities (dharma). And if it is necessary, they should even write those on paper. When we fulfill our duties in relation to each other, our rights are protected automatically.

Daivi-varnasrama means that there are brahmanas and ksatriyas. Brahmanas explain and inspire, thereby maintaining purity of selfless motivation in the activities. But even in the company of devotees there are people who nod: “Yes-yes, I understood, thank you!”, – and then do whatever they want, acting against any truth and agreements. With regret brahmanas give such people to the ksatriya department: “You do not want to act out of realization and love, then execute the law”. Brahmanas and ksatriyas are equally important in terms of people’s spiritual growth, because divine and animalistic natures are combined in people. Therefore they should cooperate with each other in sat-sanga. If we address only divine nature, but we did not lay up a stick for an animalistic nature, it is hardly possible to consider our actions as spiritual care. It is impossible to build spiritual society on sentimentality.

9. *We have a balanced life and we express interest to various aspects of each other’s lifes. We consider intolerable to make decisions or to offer our service to each other, if these will have long-term destructive impact on other spheres of our responsibility (in a family, at work, studies, health, etc.). We also should not formalize collegial activity to the prejudice of our personal relationships.*

Explanation:

Not only the servant should be selfless, but also the guide

(master, guru). Real guru is the servant of his servant (*dasa anudasah*). If we do not know how the person lives, we are not familiar with his family, we do not know how he maintains himself and his relatives, then how can we help him to understand spiritual practice of Krishna consciousness, which is supposed to bring harmony and progress in his life? Individualistic understanding of Krishna consciousness makes us preach to the person without care for his family. The family is always disposed against it because they feel our disrespect for nature, i.e. contamination with jnana. So we make the person choose between desires for jnana and karma: to break connections with his relatives and friends or to surrender to them and come back to the life of the "enjoying" materialist.

Without creating a culture of sat-sanga, where a devotee can progress in his understanding of how to love relatives and other people in Krishna consciousness and how to spiritualize his emotions, we push him to this deadlock choice. And this choice, in turn, leads to mix desires for karma and jnana: on one hand the person accepts philosophy and tries to chant maha-mantra, but on the other hand he does not really try to follow regulative principles. In fact, this duality deprives devotee's life of any taste, makes him apathetic: he can not really take pleasure in something material, because he already has a devotional worldview, and he can not dive deep in his spiritual practice as it frightens him – he is not ready to refuse his desires for karma (the path of jnana is not suitable for the majority of people). Nobody taught him how to transform his desires in the sphere of spiritual relationships, in the sphere of bhakti, and therefore he becomes like a "riven cloud" mentioned by Arjuna. Taste in life a person receives either from karma, from jnana, or from bhakti. But sitting "on two chairs" of desires for karma and jnana leads to degradation only.

Basically, our society requires real "School of Spiritual Emotions", without which the practice of pure bhakti-yoga is inconceivable. Each group of spiritual association should become a branch of this School.

A Devotee in our society usually receives two types of

instructions. A Democratic leader will let him know that sex not for the purpose of begetting children is quite permitted in family life, and the autocratic leader will resolutely urge him to leave his family if the spouse is not a devotee of Krishna. Recently we heard one senior devotee suggesting it right during the lecture in the Temple. When we asked him for explanations, he gave us an example of Srila Prabhupada giving an instruction to one of his female disciples to leave her husband who had gone away from the path of devotion. We objected: “Father can tell such things to her daughter, because he cares for her happiness and is ready to take her back into his house. Srila Prabhupada could give such instruction to his disciple, cause she had a place to go to: her spiritual master could send her on a farm, give her protection. And are you ready to accept the same responsibility for people you give these instructions to?” In reply we’ve heard: “That is not my business. I should just retell Prabhupada’s words without distortion”. That was his formal idea. It represents nothing else but indifference to devotee’s life, and also adherence to the rules and regulations for the sake of rules and regulations. This example illustrates violation of the ninth principle very well.

What instruction could be offered to the devotee by the leader-maintainer? To leave his family or to enjoy? Unlike the static nature of jnana and karma, bhakti’s nature is dynamic, and therefore the true mentor will regularly discuss and specify the creative program for gradual spiritualization of one’s family life. Sanctity is not so much a reached level as it is a tendency.

Of course, if the devotee cannot cope with a problem of his family’s gradual spiritualization life and risks going back to maya, then divorce is better. The majority of families get divorced due to desires for karma (dissatisfaction with each other and personal ambitions) anyway so let them better get divorced for a more noble reason – for the sake of preserving the spiritual life of one of them. If we are forced to choose between karma and jnana, we will choose jnana. But we did not join this Krishna consciousness movement for the sake of this poor choice. We joined to obtain bhakti, spiritual love.

10. *We aspire for punctuality. We warn the sanga chairman if we can not be present or we are late for a meeting, and we ask each other for forgiveness if we are late. Having missed a meeting, we find out the content of discussions and made decisions, not to appear to be “switched off” from the mutual work. We do not allow ourselves to be absent from the sanga meetings more than once in a row, if that was not agreed with the sanga chairman.*

Explanation:

Discipline is a sign of respect for sanga. If the person was late, and nobody took an interest in the reason of his delay, the members destroy their collective. If it will be only the sanga leader, who is interested in it, then punctuality won't become a mutual value, but will be only some formal organizational requirement. If the person after being late did not sincerely apologize in front of everyone, it means he subconsciously plans to be late in future. And that questions his right to participate in sat-sanga. Punctuality of group members allows them to feel command unity right away and have a good start. And that is very important for achievement of mutual success. Despite simplicity and clarity, we should not underestimate this principle.

To be on time does not mean to arrive for the business part of discussion, but to come for the beginning of kirtan. Main cause of all the problems in the sphere of spiritual management is formal negligence towards congregational chanting and discussion of Srimad Bhagavatam; some devotees with many years of experience in our society even manage to work at the computer or to speak by phone in the presence of the Holy Name. Moreover, sometimes they do it in the presence of junior devotees. Leaders (as a team) will never receive empowerment from Krishna if they have no faith in deep collegial spiritual practice.

11. *We respect each other's time and therefore we try to speak concisely and to the point. As they say: "If the person cannot express his thoughts within three minutes - he does not actually understand what he wants to say".*

Explanation:

This principle expresses another aspect of leader's discipline. Some people consider themselves to be leaders, but at the heart of their activities there is a desire to be in the center, to be heard and recognized. This is quite natural aspiration for a human, but it doesn't come from the conscious nature, which should prevail in the leader. In any sanga we should be indulgent to the person's need to express himself, but not in sat-sanga of leaders.

This, of course, does not mean that there should be only formal relationships among leaders. It is absolutely opposite: leaders obtain their qualification through attentive and sympathetic listening to intimate thoughts of others and through opening their own hearts in response. We are rather speaking about personal disposition of the group members: a responsible person will not exploit the time and emotions of people around to enjoy their attention to his personality. For him to speak confidentially means to speak with others about something that is valuable not only for him, but also for them. And to speak concisely, so they don't get doubts that he cares about their thoughts.

When another person speaks, the devotee-individualist always listens judgmentally, through his own subjective perception. Even if he is silent, it is visible that he already drew his conclusions without any discussion: what is correct and what is wrong ("Well... He again goes into this subject"», etc., etc.). His prejudiced relation is especially noticeable when a question directly related to the sphere of his necessities and interests is raised, he is attentive but if words of another person are not in the sphere of his interests, his negative judgment is expressed in his carelessness and absent-mindedness. When such kanistha-leader speaks in sanga, he does it for a long time, pushing through his own point of view. Usually he uses authoritative quotes or tells senseless things because:

“Everyone should remember that I am a council member and I have my opinion”.

The deeper a conditioned soul is entangled in some activity; the stronger its attachment to the gross and subtle bodies (to one’s understanding and position). And the longer she tries to act “selflessly”, the bigger the “bill” subconsciously given to the people around. We already noted earlier that original selflessness is not an individual’s good intention (not an idea at the level of the mind), but a real experience, it is actually Krishna, who acts. That is an experience of sat-sanga. *Bhajana-kriya* is possible only in the atmosphere of sat-sanga; therefore, if the leader is not taking part in it, he can hardly get rid of the false ego of the doer and the benefactor. On the other hand, if leaders are protected by sanga, then the more they invest themselves in it, the stronger is the akarma nectar they experience.

The main work of sanga maintainers is feeling the “smell” of even the slightest manifestation of the “doer” ego and of rivalry spirit resulting from it in the society of devotees. Therefore Srila Prabhupada compared GBC with “sentry dogs”. A dog starts to bark, if it sees a stranger; moreover, it will bark even if somebody simply goes by the gate (for preventive measures). And sanga maintainer will act in the same way: he will preach its principles not only when they are violated, but even when there is just a *possibility* of their violation.

Competitive spirit, when devotees creatively inspire each other in service, is good and nourishes the atmosphere of sat-sanga, but spirit of rivalry and envy completely destroys it. The difference between competition and rivalry is obvious: in the first case the concept of success has collegial character and in the second – individual or group character, when one group separates itself from others and wants to be better.

12. *During the sanga meeting we do not manifest any cowardice hiding our doubts and disagreements, but at the same time we allow reasonable and disrespectful statements. We care for everyone to participate in a discussion. When the mutual decision is accepted, we accept it as our own and sincerely follow it.*

Explanation:

The problem is not that someone pushes his point of view and someone does not have a view at all or does not definitely express his position, the problem is that these two types of participants are comfortable with each other. It is comfortable for “silent” members, cause they can always say: “This decision was accepted under pressure, from the very beginning I had doubts in its correctness and therefore I am not going to carry it out or be responsible for its consequences”. And autocrats have a different explanation: “You simply do not want to follow an authority, and therefore we have such stagnation”.

We share our success and failures with each other – that is the true spirit of collegiality. All fundamental doubts should be cleared during the discussion, because after we make a final decision, all of us should act as one whole.

13. *We bring up a question or suggest something only if we are ready to participate in its realization. We do not allow empty discussions. We do not accept decisions if are not sure that we will try to execute them. If we can not execute a decision, we always discuss the reasons and draw conclusions.*

Explanation:

Devotees like to talk. But the law of nature is that if we speak about the duties of others or if we do not execute something we spoke about, we degrade. *Sahajiya* is a desire to listen to exalted subjects which we cannot relate to. But *katha* is actually spiritual, if

we discuss with each other how something we've heard could actually be put into practice at our level in such a way that we would make spiritual progress.

Danger of a sahajiya attitude is that it destroys a person's morality and individual responsibility for something he heard or was told. There are four plans of existence: physical, emotional, moral and spiritual. Sahajiya thinks that if it will direct emotions from down up directly on rasa-katha about Krishna, then his emotions will automatically be spiritualized. But instead for some reason it amplifies his sexual desires and greed for money. The correct spiritual development of a devotee should go in an opposite way – descending: In the beginning Krishna consciousness forms in him clear moral principles (it means understanding of Bhagavad-Gita), and then, building a spiritual family on the basis of these principles, devotee obtains an ability to perceive Krishna emotionally (that is the level of rasa-katha, Srimad Bhagavatam).

Rupa Goswami in his Bhakti-Rasamrita-Sindhu speaks about that level by quoting a definition of pure devotion from Narada-Pancaratra: *sarvopadkhi-vinirmuktam tat-paratvena nirmalam hrisikena hrisikesa savanam bhaktir ucyate*: the process of “hrisikena hrisikesa” (immersing one's feelings in Krishna) go on in parallel with “sarvopadhi-vinirmuktam”, i.e. purification from selfish desires of karma, jnana and yoga. We become qualified for sat-sanga as much as we are honest with Krishna and vaisnavas.

14. *We follow the principle: “Either service is done jointly or it doesn't get done”, i.e. we do not allow a corrupting tendency of false service (seeking favor from someone) when one “serves” and others only receive “service”. True service always generates a response in the heart, awakens our desire to participate in it. Also we do not act on a destructive initiative when our actions are not coordinated with others and consequently become a source of anxiety for them.*

Explanation:

Karma is a creative social activity resulting from identifying (*upadha* or *vritty*) oneself with a certain collective (family), and therefore it is actually focused on the satisfaction of one's own feelings. Jnana is a submission of society to a certain idea, so that society (relationships among people) becomes an instrument of realization of this idea. Feelings and relationships should be sacrificed on this path (devotional service to God can also become such idea). And bhakti is an embodiment of God in the sphere of spiritual relationships, emotions. Thus, if to speak concisely: karma is selfish activity, jnana is selfless service, and bhakti is collegial service.

If devotee is occupied with strong and selfless service, but in separation from others, it is very probable that his devotion is mixed with desire for jnana. Such service commands a reverential attitude to itself, but not the feelings of participation. And when the service of some devotee is mixed with a desire for karma (desire for an ego-trip), it creates conflicts.

15. Sign of sat-sanga is that devotees have mutual vision or goal which inspires devotees to serve according to their particular nature in order to achieve this goal. If a devotee has no enthusiasm for devotional service it means that he does not associate properly with other devotees.

Explanation:

A devotee approaches a leader with a question: "What service should I do in our yatra?" This question is great, but how should the leader act on that? The question shows that this devotee is not taking part in sanga: when we have relationships with people, we always have a heap of interesting and important things to do, moreover if the devotee gets some service directly from the leader, he, acting in the name of the leader and using his authority, will perform activities in the community that would disturb others.

Individualistic mindset is a source of anxieties, because it creates various complexes and emotional harshness in one's relationships with others.

Of course, the leader won't give him some individual service, but will bring him into sanga of devotees after giving instructions on why it is so important to be in it perpetually.

If devotees have very good association in sanga, but they do not have some inspiring and obligatory project on which they can work together, that sanga is contaminated by democracy and will gradually turn into a swamp. But when devotional service happens for the sake of a common goal, it quickly takes a natural and inspiring form (according to people's nature).

16. Members of the leader's council aspire to share realizations and decisions that come out of their collegial discussions, with the leader's sanga of the previous level of responsibility, thus achieving mutual understanding and inspiration. Receiving feedback from that level, they bring it back in their sanga of the higher level of responsibility for further discussions. In turn, Members of community leadership sanga aspire to share results of their discussions with all the community, to receive feedback and bring it to their sanga. General community meetings, when all the members of a leadership sanga together with all the community members actively participate in discussions about community life, should be held regularly (at least two times a year).

Explanation:

Collegiality cannot be "for the elite". It cannot be that: "We have already decided everything in the Council and you should do what we tell you (or I tell you on behalf of Council)". *Autocracy can very easily take form of collegiality, thus turning sat-sanga into a symbol of collegial power.* Remember that sat-sanga is the power of *sat* (truth) manifested in the proper association, and not the

power of sanga (group of people) itself. If leaders of the higher level of responsibility simply pass down their decisions to the leaders of the following level, they induce them to act in a similar way in relation to other devotees. In this way the culture of mindless management comes about and leads devotees to lose enthusiasm, be separated, and deteriorates society gradually. Therefore the maintainer-leader spends as much time as it is required for discussion with devotees in order to make the discussed subject (for example the decision of the higher sanga) relevant for them and be their source of inspiration. Or, if the subject is not relevant, he postpones the discussion about it. Such attitude of the leader shows that in a sanga of higher level of responsibility decisions are not accepted formally, and that there is a spirit of service to the devotees on the local level.

The same principle work in the communities themselves. For example, a sign that the head of some community department is in sat-sanga (Community council) is that he will aim at doing everything in his department in such a way, that its members would regularly gather and discuss what they are actually doing and why they are doing it. He won't just pass down the decisions of the Community council for the devotees to execute. In the following, seventh chapter of this book, we will illustrate this principle by giving an example about pujari department.

17. We follow our spiritual tradition (vaisnava clothes, etiquette) and we show healthy conservatism in terms of free association among members of different gender. At the same time we don't do it formally. We do it not to establish estrangement between two genders, but to help having mutual responsibility of men and women and to create strong families. We are accountable for each member in our community to live in a healthy asram.

Explanation:

If there is spiritual energy in the society, its traditions and moral values become very important, and they should be carefully

kept. Arjuna motivated his refusal to fight by saying that as a result of war, tradition in society will be destroyed (senior members of the dynasty will be killed). But Sri Krishna disagreed with him, because siksa-parampara was already broken in that society, and thus principles of sat-sanga we already lost.

Beginners in any society progress *only because they show respect to seniors, trust their words and carry out their instructions*. The person cannot be in sat-sanga (in the presence of Truth) if he is disrespectful to others and is not attached to a social duty in its general sense (i.e. to the principle of sanga). The democratic familiarity spirit reigning in the western society, leads to the situation where people do not show respect to one's seniors (to one's father, mother, teacher, leader) and do not want to receive their guidance. It brings people to spiritual apathy and moral degradation. In this book we explained many important nuances about becoming conscious of sat-sanga. But it is important to also understand that this knowledge is not intended for those who do not respect social foundations. If the senior does not have necessary spiritual qualification, we are not expected to invite him in our heart, but we do not have rights to publicly argue with him, thus destroying faith of beginners. In any normal family you won't find adults criticizing each other in the presence of children. On the other hand, for the children's personal growth, they can and actually should have reasoned and respectful discussions in the children's presence.

Nowadays it becomes common among devotees to come to the Temple and stand in front of the Deities dressed in secular clothes and without tilaka. Ideas that dhoti and kurta are part of Indian culture, not vaisnava culture, become fashionable. People who trust these arguments, do not understand elementary bases of tantra (a science about subconsciousness, about rituals in society). The general standard of clothes (as, for example, the school uniform) helps any society to keep one's self-identity and to be protected from corrupt external influence. When are dressed not in jeans and a T-shirt, but in dhoti and kurta, at the subconscious level we are much more closely connected with Srila Prabhupada and

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur, because such culture in terms of clothes was established in our society by them.

We do not mix men and women because it makes men to be irresponsible and weak, and women – accessible and pretentious. We train men in man's sanga, and women – in female: how to bear responsibility for one's family, which we should see as a part of Lord's family, which He entrusted to us for service. When a real man sees any woman in a community, he perceives not just the body, but sees her either as a daughter, a sister, a mother, or a grandmother, according to her age. Of course, if he is married, he sees her as a wife. Calling all women *mataji* (mother), we emphasize this principle of respect for a woman because nobody can enjoy one's mother. However, there is an important point: absence of pleasure does not mean emotional alienation in a family. On the contrary, it means existence of an emotional exchange with the woman as she gets satisfaction and protection from the man through the sphere of emotions. If a man emotionally rejects a woman, it only strengthens her emotional deficiency (lust), turning her into maya.

A devotee who does not live in an asram leads an anonymous life and gradually degrades, becoming an easy victim of Kali. But, being surrounded by close people, the person has to respond to various life challenges, to have a disciplic mindset. Asram is an antidote against individualism; however the modern person manages to remain lonely even in one's family, because he uses it for enjoyment.

For example, a bhahmacari could remain in his asram for a long time because it allows him to avoid specific men's responsibilities. When a devotee fulfills his daily duties (cleans the Temple, cooks or even goes to preach) simply carrying out expectations of seniors, that type of obedience is female. No doubt, if it is done out of spiritual attachment to seniors and Krishna, it is on the level of *gopis*, the highest perfection. But generally such service is a mundane worldly religiosity. To bring up conscious (man's) type of humility in devotees, we should follow in the

footsteps of Srila Prabhupada, providing some ksetra (field of activity) to devotees and giving them creative freedom of this ksetra's development, but at the same time be demanding in terms of results. Then devotees will progress, becoming the leaders in the Mission. For now we bring up devotees with mainly female type of obedience. It is definitely required for preliminary purification, but it is not enough for liberation.

By the way, to see only the dependent principle in others and, respectively, to bring up female type of humility in people is a characteristic sign of jnana-vritti, an autocracy. The leader is as "Purusa", and his subordinates are his prakriti. When such contamination takes place, we put women in asrams and occupy them there with "service to the Purusa". In this case women subconsciously think that they have a husband and therefore cannot get married for years. The point is not that a woman cannot live in an asram. She can, but temporarily just as a daughter temporarily lives in the house of her father preparing to become a wife and a mother.

The sign of collegial management within the society (instead of autocracy) is that leaders think of devotees' life in healthy ashrams: "This mataji should already get married, she learned much. Are there any ideas whom she could marry? Is there someone she likes? ... And this brahmacari is so creatively absorbed in preaching, without even having any "control" from the outside! It seems that he does not need to take responsibility for a family, he has another Dharma." –such meditation in a community is a sign of its health.

When a leader's intelligence is henpecked by karma-vritti, he sees others as "purusas", rivals, i.e. a man's principle. The policy of making compromises will prosper in that case. Sat-sanga will also be questionable: so-called "masters", each of whom has his family, business, position of the department leader, etc., gather together. In eastern cultures this matter was easily solved on the basis of autocracy principle (Math): you can be "purusa" with your wife and children but when in presence of Acarya you are prakriti,

as well as all the others who are present. No one care whether you are sanniyasi, GBC or someone else: there is a Head of the family and everyone will run under his glance.

And that is our problem: it seems that we still do not fully understand that the Acaryas rejected autocracy as a management paradigm. Neither Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur, nor Srila Prabhupada appointed any successors for they wanted to train leaders in collegial culture in order to create essentially new world spiritual Movement, which would not be limited by any time frames connected with the presence of uttama-adhikari Acarya on Earth. Perhaps we will be able to understand their intentions better if we remember the quote from Parasara-smriti: “During the Kali-yuga in the absence of great devotee, decisions should be accepted collectively by the council of six brahmanas.”

18. Recognizing variegatedness of God's Nature, we respectfully treat different ways of life, representatives of other spiritual paths, other moods within Krishna consciousness, representatives of opposite sex, and also property of others. We do not consider our nature to be surpassing others, but at the same time, we are satisfied with it (i.e. with one's varna, asram and tradition). Being patriots of our sanga, we are ready to glorify achievements of others and to study from them.

Explanation:

Patriotism in relation to one's community, asram, mentor, etc. is great if we are still capable to study from others and glorify different natures (bhava). Unfortunately, there is a lot of devotees who do not see Krishna in their community and in their leaders, and consider that He is present only in some well-known community or at a big vaisnava festival. The festival mood, of course, does gives certain spiritual support, but does not provide a sustainable development of devotees locally.

The asset of each community is its multiplicity – when

groups with different moods can do something together because their leaders do not have sectarian spirit or desire to compete. Unity in variety is one of the most important signs of true spirituality.

When men speak badly about women (or vice-versa), when grihasthas speak badly about brahmacharis (and vice-versa), such community is morally sick. Also it is ruinous to feast one's eyes at another's property. Visiting someone, we mustn't even move anything (we can move something only if the host offered it to us for our convenience), as any invasion into a family space is very sensitive and can offend. What to speak of approaching someone's wife or husband. Someone, who is guilty of that, should be removed from leadership service for sufficient time period. Therefore, if a case of this character does happen, the community (and first of all – the leaders' sanga) should also recognize her fault and draw necessary conclusions. However, in a healthy community filled with threads of relationships and mutual understanding similar cases are very rare.

“Natural sectarianism” can take the most extravagant forms. For example, when some devotees “with experience” do not feel necessity to associate with beginners in Krishna consciousness, and when devotees with a young body do not want to associate with “old dogs”. This desire to “form groups” with others, who have some similarity with us, is natural, but if there is no interest and respect to different natures, or even worse, if there is a hostility to other natures, it testifies to sickness of spirit and to one's conditioning by the lower modes of nature.

How does the jnana-karma duality manifest itself in relation to religion? “Our doctrine is true irrespective of whether you recognize it or not” – is jnana-vritti. Or “Why are you so fanatical: there is no difference what religion to accept, let everyone choose according to his taste!” is already another side of illusion. Conversations within the material world are like that. Vaisnavas appreciate all bona-fide religions, but never consider them to be equal. For example, Buddhism is valuable, because it releases the person from stereotypic perception of this world, thereby clearing

away obstructions on the path of spiritual self-realization. Buddhism though cannot give experience of spiritual relationships with the Truth as Personality, but Christianity does. And Christianity speaks about the Supreme as Personality but does not reveal His attributes, rasa of devoted service. In the Bible it is said: *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them”*. But for a vaisnava this hint on male and female forms of God is not enough. He wants to worship primary Father and Mother of this world as Personalities, and therefore he chants Hare Krishna maha-mantra.

Representatives of various religious movements can also be in sat-sanga as in each doctrine some aspect of Truth is well understood. A Vaisnava will always find something to learn from a Buddhist, a Christian or a Muslim. And to those among them, who are not sectarian, he can also open the treasures of vaisnavism.

19. We do not force our children to follow vaisnava religion, but at the same time we do not leave them alone in the Kali-yuga corrupting informational environment. We create fascinating facilities (involving different adults and first of all - parents) for our children to soak in Krishna consciousness. Having received unforgettable impressions and love in a family and in a community, children, having matured, will make the right choice.

Explanation:

When parents love their children with the unconditional love of Krishna's devotees (i.e. not because their children will surely become devotees), children through these parent's love and service perceive love of Krishna. If children feel that they disturb their parents in their practice of Krishna consciousness, or that parents are disappointed due to their insufficient commitment to their parents' religion, the probability for such children to become devotees in the future is very small.

The community consists of families, and a sign of a mature vaisnava community is whether parents unite to create a setting for their children to associate and develop in spiritual life. In the cities it is not so easy to do, but there should be at least sincere efforts to attain it and Krishna will do the rest. Any communal projects for children (kindergarten, Sunday school, etc.) will be successful if parents actively participate in them. It is impossible to ask parents to “hand over” their children to some project.

The main purpose of family life is well-known. It is to give birth and to raise children in Krishna consciousness. It takes many years of personal saddhana in full sanga for one person in our society to become a pure devotee. And still it’s not always possible to know with certainty that he has overcome the problem of his low origin (piety). But when parents with love and devotion in Krishna consciousness plan their children, such soul can be “received” much easier. This is one of the most important services to our parampara.

20. Following moral principles (Dharma) of vaisnavas we can take part in successful social and economic exchanges, thus reducing our dependence on the infrastructure of Kali-yuga that is based on money and sensual pleasures. The purpose of Dharma and artha for vaisnavas is deepening bhakti, not kama.

Explanation:

As soon as we start relationships, in which our interests (money, children, women, status, etc.) are involved, that’s where we can see how much we are actually devoted. We, thank God, can be by now “Sunday devotees” and “Morning time devotees”, but now we should learn to show devotion in the sphere of our “material” necessities. Daivi-varnasrama is so important that without it, we can’t count that practice of Krishna consciousness will become complete for many of us.

Now in many places in Russia it is possible to see that

devotees buy some piece of land and try to create settlements, vaisnava villages. This tendency is objective, and we can't doubt that over time there will inevitably be a system crisis in the city, places created by carriers of atheistic worldview. If devotees live in the cities, but do not take part in close sanga and are not occupied with some preaching mission, then, unfortunately, they are quite surely doomed to gradual degradation due to sophisticated informational influence of western civilization. So, for many sane grihasthas, who do not take part in active preaching, the need of village life together with other devotees is obvious. But to create this type of projects it is extremely important for devotees to form teams on the basis of the sat-sanga principles given here, and to not accept irreversible decisions like the sale of one's city housing until all details are clear between each other and all receive necessary legal guarantees.

When we make efforts in devotional service in the temple or at the festival knowing that later we will be able to return to our usual material attachments like watching TV and so forth, this kind of service being temporary does not change deeply our heart, even though it might seem to be a very sincere service to us and to people around. But when we live together with devotees, burn "retreat bridges" in association with them and in our responsibility for the community, then the process of our heart's deep purification (anartha-nivritti) starts. The Collective life of devotees is a source of great difficulties and still bigger happiness. And it is possible only on the basis of clear moral principles of Krishna consciousness. The morality as a worldly phenomenon belongs to material mode of goodness, but if morality protect Krishna's family, express His will, then it is a manifestation of bhakti.

21. *Strategy of community development, changes in its spiritual standards, and also election of community leaders – all is carried out by sanga of community leaders and is approved by the representative from the sanga of the higher, Russian National level (The regional secretary and GBC).*

22. *Community members should not be considered by the community leaders to be means for their projects' realization. On the other hand, if members of the community are not engaged in some practical collegial service, then their spiritual growth stops. Leaders of groups of spiritual association (mentors) and managers of the community must cooperate with each other in order to properly engage devotees.*

Explanation:

In this book we already have enough details about managerial principles in ISKCON. The twenty first principle is partially explained in the Algorithm of actions we gave earlier (see chapter 5, Algorithm of actions, point 8d). As to the twentieth second principle, it obliges mentors and managers to find optimal balance in development of community projects, so that on one hand devotees would be occupied in implementation of essential projects (communal and missionary) but, on the other hand, they would not feel formal and administrative pressure. As a matter of fact, management in spiritual society should come out of sat-sanga and not exist separately from it. But, when there is a burdensome property in the organization, then management gravitates to become a separate power. In this case sat-sanga will be seen as means to use energy of people's inspiration to maintain the property. Being hostages of this system, society and its leaders become very distressed. Any material property (real estate, etc.) should be obtained strictly in proportion to a society's quantitative and qualitative development. And the decision to acquire a real estate should be accepted strictly on the grounds of further development of spiritual relationships in a community and to increase Krishna consciousness of its members.

23. *We aspire to notice what people do, instead of noticing what they don't do. When glorifying someone we do not flatter that person, but we help him to see his spiritual progress and thus become more enthusiastic. After that we can also help him to see his imperfections – as tasks he should do or work with.*

Explanation:

Success comes from success. Therefore to continue progress in one's development, it is important for devotees to hear from others in what area they are already successful. Glorification of the person should not be simply some general praise (flattery), but it should be gratitude for some specific efforts he did. Gratitude and glorification is the inspiring force that awakens energy of service in us. Even God Himself becomes inspired and reveals Himself whenever he is glorified. Often leaders being burdened by responsibility assigned to them by the higher authority do not feel sufficient support from devotees and constantly let the community know their insufficient active involvement in service. It is necessary to say that such leaders over time cause people to distance themselves even more. But if people feel that the leader is pleased even with their small contributions and success, they naturally want to go further.

The culture of correcting others is also based on gratitude and recognition of one's efforts. A mature leader usually does not use expressions like: "failure", "problem", etc. In his field of vision there is an apprenticeship; therefore he speaks with the person about successes, and only afterwards about possibilities for improvement and the related tasks. This principle is applicable not only to a certain person, but also to a society, or a community: in the beginning it is necessary to see all the good that is there in a community, to see it as something complete, and then it is possible to carefully and gradually improve something. Years of purposeful and humble efforts will be necessary to create a mature society.

24. *A mentor cannot be in any way materially (emotionally or financially) dependent on his wards. He also does not encourage them to develop this dependence on his own personality. He carries out spiritual guidance and trains his wards to receive management in sat-sanga wherever it becomes manifested. A leader's resources are transparency and trust, not power.*

Explanation:

If a mentor is jealous towards relationships of his ward with other mentors that means he is in subtle or gross dependence on his ward. That is one's disqualification. The ward is no one's property, but when a mentor having some expectations invests in his ward a lot of his time and efforts, he can become inattentive and forget about this fact. No doubts for someone who is just a beginner in Krishna consciousness it is better to be under the direction of one's guru, not several; otherwise he will get confused by external contradictions and can become victimized by temptation to choose those instructions that are most convenient for his mind. Therefore, if diksa-guru sees that his disciple develops unhealthy relationships with one of other mentors, he should interfere and protect the disciple from his ignorance. Nevertheless, a sign that a devotee properly developing in Krishna consciousness is that he has healthy spiritual connections in devotee sanga, in his relationships with different siksa-gurus.

25. *The mentor finds time for personal meetings with members of his sanga. While associating with someone he has deep emotional contact. He learns not to give in to his urge to speak without having a sanction from the Supersoul in his heart. It is possible due to serious prayerful practice of chanting Harinama.*

Explanation:

The success of sanga depends on personal position and

maturity of each its members. Therefore it is very important for devotees to not just work in a group format, but also discuss vital issues in pairs, having personal meetings outside of the general group. A big group cannot always promote awakening of one's conscientious position. Sometimes it does the opposite – it provokes “dissolution”, loss of identity. Therefore meetings in small groups (or pairs) should result in understanding and elimination of various obstacles for service and personal practice of bhakti accumulated in one's heart.

In a pair format of sanga there is an additional possibility to listen to the person and to understand him. That is the main qualification of a mentor – ability to listen to his ward. When an ordinary person listens, he listens with his mind and gives feedback on the basis of his ideas proved by his authority or even by selective quoting of sastras. An ordinary person wants to play role of a teacher, but vaisnava wants to be a disciple. Therefore he knows how to listen. When some qualified mentor listens, he with full trust approaches Krishna in his heart and waits for an answer. Upon receiving this answer he feels inspiration and transmits this answer to his ward. Having received this answer from a mentor, the disciple does not doubt its validity, even if this answer is unexpected or uncomfortable for his mind, because Supersoul testifies this answer to be correct one.

When several members of sanga are in disciplic position, when they aspire to hear Krishna through words of other devotees, this sanga is especially powerful guru, because in association with each other devotees manifest bhakti-rasa, and everyone present can learn.

Often some mentor is “attached” to a neophyte devotee in order to teach him bases of vaisnava etiquette and culture, help to understand philosophy. It is important for devotee to get used to vaisnava tradition, to get trained before initiation. However, when the ward receives certain quantity of knowledge, he can lose touch with the mentor, because he won't know what to speak about with his mentor later. In order for relationships between a mentor and his

ward to be eternal, both of them should develop in sat-sanga of Krishna's devotees, taking the position of being disciples.

26. The leader does not avoid doing simple practical service together with members of his sanga. He is simple, open and friendly in his relationships. He knows the living conditions of his wards, can give good advice about day to day life and he is able to keep personal secrets.

Explanation:

In our society there is a saying once said by a senior devotee: "At first we become devotees, then we become humans, and then we become actual devotees". Bhakti-yoga process is so powerful that to achieve full perfection in one lifetime it is enough to just be a normal person: honest, not indifferent and realistic. When the person follows his dharma, fruits of bhakti appear very quickly, but if the devotee is not pious, progress in bhakti-yoga drags on for an indefinite period of time and it also becomes accompanied by various deviations.

When senior devotee does not only give instructions from vyasasan, but together with others does some simple collective service (cooks prasadam with devotees, distributes it, etc., i.e. he physically works next to devotees), his words obtain deep meaning and connect everyone to Krishna at the level of the heart. Even Krishna in order to bring us back home to the spiritual world comes here and becomes engaged with us in daily affairs, giving them completely different meaning.

27. *We are active in service and in daily life, but we understand well unsteadiness and temporary nature of any external status and fruits of activities. Any sanga and any plans are good as much as Krishna's will is manifested in them. Therefore we are not confused by external achievements and failures.*

For the principles given above to obtain force in sangas of leaders on different levels and to become eventually manifested in communities' formation, leaders should discuss them from the position of personal responsibility: "How do I neglect this or that specific principle and what does it lead to? What does it mean to follow this principle in this or that specific situation?" When a leader starts to work on these questions, other members of leaders' sanga and usual community members will help him to become consolidated in vaisnava ethics and to reach a *madhyama-adhikari* level.

7. A Description of Different Examples Showing How to Solve Various Problematic Situations in the Association of Devotees (According to Ideology of This Book)

Like a living organism, society can also go through various steps in its development and degradation. In this chapter we will try to show examples of how according to the methodology of this book leaders can save society from various stages of organizational stagnation (or degradation) and bring onto the path of systematic development.

7.1. First example: Opening a new center

Situation:

Some traveling preacher (for example, sannyasi) regularly comes to some place where some people become interested with his preaching. Gradually the number of these people increases. And after some time there is a need to organize their association and service.

Common mistake is that the most active devotee is appointed on a role of «official leader» of this young and developing group.

Consequences of this strategy:

Before becoming a leader, this devotee was simply an active devotee among peers, who had good and friendly relationships with others. And consequently his example was a natural source of inspiration. After appointing him on a leadership position other mechanisms both in him and in the members of that group, turn on at the subconscious level. Some people start to perceive activity of that leader as execution of his “duties”, and he

gets into temptation to think that other members of the group are obliged to perform service under his “authorized management”.

Thus duality in initially healthy relationships arises. And from that eventually comes anti-communal model: “we” are the organization and “they” are parishioners. When this model settles in people’s consciousness, it becomes very difficult to manifest a natural spirit of cooperation in this group because there is a set of offenses and complains among devotees. The leader has expectations and pretensions in relation to the group members and vice versa. The situation becomes even more complicated, because the appointed leader is absolutely inexperienced and makes a lot of obvious mistakes. Therefore it is not desirable to apply this strategy to empower a leader.

How should the preacher (being a representative of our organization) have behaved in this situation?

The nature of group dynamics is such that there is always several active people, not just one. Moreover, if to examine this group closely, it is possible to notice that devotees in it become so active because they get inspired by enthusiasm of other members. Therefore to maintain this natural mutual inspiration among devotees, the organization should not appoint one of them to be a formal leader. Rather, it is necessary to invite all active devotees in this group to cooperate in a Council, train them in principles of sat-sanga and inspire them on collegial responsibility in the development of the future community.

It should be noted that at the stage of Community Council formation, the role of the representative from the organization is extremely important, because besides sincerity there is also a spirit of rivalry and individualism in the activity of neophyte devotees. Only when the representative is convinced that devotees have accepted and deeply realized principles of cooperation and learned to tolerate each other’s mistakes and imperfections, it is possible to suggest them to choose one of them for a certain term as the leader-

maintainer in order to make the organization of their collegial service more effective. Periodically they should replace each other in this role, so all of them could get experience of leadership service. Being in the position of the sanga's maintainer, the leader starts to understand deeper how her principles work. He also realizes the mechanisms of her destruction. And all that is very valuable for the whole community. He also helps the leader to form his own qualities.

Result of using this strategy:

This group will gradually grow into a community with advanced collegial spiritual culture, which guarantees devotees to develop in the mood of madhyama-adhikaris. The mood of cooperation between the leaders will be naturally transmitted to all the members in a community (*yad yad acarati sresthas...* BG 3.21) and will create new leaders. That is very important for spreading the sankirtan movement.

7.2. Second example: A senior devotee is sent to be temple president in a new yatra of inexperienced devotees.

Situation:

Difference between this example and the previous one is that here a leader is appointed not from among members of yatra, but is sent from outside in order to organize devotees. The idea is that this devotee appointed to be temple president has much more experience in Krishna consciousness, than others, everyone will naturally accept his authority. And it will create strong organization. In the beginning everything does happen like that. Because devotees have big credibility in ISKCON management, they believe that the appointed temple president is an authoritative representative of parampara. And therefore they start serving under his supervision with great enthusiasm. Various projects start to

develop, life is in full swing...

Common mistake of such strategy:

Because the devotee, who has been appointed to be the president does actually surpass everyone else by experience in Krishna consciousness, he feels that an authoritative style of management is really necessary, because it will allow him to teach devotees to do so many things. Identifying himself with this role of senior devotee, the leader does not notice how some devotees around him grow in their understanding of Krishna consciousness and develop their own vision and opinion. The leader perceives this natural process of devotees' growth as manifestation of «pride» in juniors, and starts to resort to methods of gross and subtle suppression of «dissent and disloyalty», thus gradually exhausting the credibility allocated to him.

Consequences of this strategy:

There is a difficult polarized atmosphere in a yatra which is formed under this scenario. More experienced devotees “burn their fingers” in interaction with the president and without having the possibility for an open discussion with him about arising misunderstandings (because of unwillingness of the leader to recognize culture of sat-sanga), separate themselves from practical service, discussing shortcomings of their leader among themselves. Devotional service continues in that yatra exclusively due to the efforts of neophytes who are still inclined to blindly accept authority. The president aspires to surround himself with devotees, who don't have high intellectual potential, so that other leaders who could become a source of anxiety for him don't grow. As a rule, a need for implicit submission «to the parampara representative» is preached in such yatra, because it is the only working "alternative" to collegial culture.

And even if the leader who happened to be in such a

difficult situation would like to establish more confidential relationships with devotees, it becomes very difficult (almost impossible) for him to do so, for he is trapped in the role that he assigned to himself and has to continue maintaining. Often feelings of loneliness and emotional emptiness, which inevitably come to such leader, pushes him to satisfy his hidden material desires, sometimes even breaking regulating principles (or the softest option - watching karmic movies, eating food prepared by non-devotees, etc.). Gradually it destroys his spiritual taste and leads him to fall down. Certainly, such leader can hold on for some time due to the power of his individual sadhana, absorption in studying sastras and support from seniors. Nevertheless, in the absence of full sat-sanga (he does not allow peers to act in his ksetra), an aura of mistrust and criticism around the leader deprives him of power.

How should higher management (being a representative of our organization) have behaved in this situation?

There is nothing wrong in sending an experienced devotee into some young yatra. But before doing it, the organization should train him in the values of collegial culture. Such trained leader will be interested in bringing up new leaders and together with them share the responsibility for community development and missionary service. He right away tries to create a sanga of potential leaders (such people are noticeable at once), so he could train them on how to unite their individual efforts and initiatives in one line of mutual principles and values. A foremost task of such leader is not development of various external projects, but formation of a healthy administrative kernel.

Result of using this strategy:

Even though externally it might seem that big external projects are not going on in such yatra, nevertheless creation of healthy sat-sanga makes all the projects in a community to be beneficial for strengthening spiritual relationships and each

devotee's growth in Krishna consciousness. When devotees see that their leaders cooperate with each other, it creates in them strong trust to the principle of collegiality. And they become ready to give their energy for development of their community. Solid community not only protects devotees from Kali-yuga influence, but also has a big impact on the surrounding materialistic society.

7.3. Third example: Old yatra; there is no co-operation between various leaders and there are many disappointed devotees.

Situation:

This example is a natural continuation of previous one. After a leader that has been appointed from above, under the influence of various problems and conflicts, relieves himself from responsibility (or someone relieves him from responsibility) of being temple president, there is just a group of leaders united mainly by criticism of the former president, left in this yatra.

Common mistake №1.

A representative from the organization (for example, GBC Zonal secretary) decides to appoint one of the local leaders to be next temple president.

Consequences of this strategy.

This strategy is worse than the one described in the second example, because the leader is chosen from among peers and thus he automatically becomes an aim for envy coming from other leaders. As these leaders already have unhealthy stereotypes about leadership, they critically and attentively watch all the activities of the new president without supporting him. This strategy leads to a

fiasco much faster than the previous one. After that the representative of our organization usually makes a mistake - №2.

Common mistake №2.

As leaders in this yatra have strong mistrust to the position of Temple President, the representative of our organization instead of appointing a new "victim" on this post (though he might still try to do it), decides to create a community council from the available separated leaders without training them in principles of collegiality. I.e. transition from autocracy to democracy happens here.

Consequences of this strategy.

There can be two options. The first option is that council members make a private agreement: «You do not touch me, and I won't touch you». Thus the Council does not make any decisions containing some united strategy for community development or discipline of council members. In this way stagnation and apathy settles in the community. Strangely enough, this situation may be convenient for many devotees in the community as it gives them full ability for carefree and irresponsible life. It can even satisfy an organization representative, since externally there are no serious conflicts among devotees.

The second possible situation is that the council members start fighting among themselves for superiority. That again leads to a conflictive situation in a yatra and discredits the council as a form of management. If the organization representative does not understand and does not trust the principle of collegiality, he will even be glad of such an outcome as it would allow him to convince everyone about the necessity of authoritative management. Such organization representative will authorize a democratic form of management in the form of "council", knowing that it will quickly discredit itself and will inevitably lead to autocracy, which he considers to be the only acceptable form of management. The head

of a bureaucratic organization is not really interested in community conflicts to be solved, because they create certain external dynamics in a community and false dependence on a higher authority.

How should the preacher (or a representative of our organization) have behaved in this situation?

The answer to this question is quite obvious: a representative of the organization authorizes a Council, but not based on democratic ethics. Because the situation in the yatra is already advanced: negative experience and mistrust of each other has accumulated among devotees, the representative of the organization should give a lot of time and effort to “break” this spirit of alienation and to teach devotees how to apply principles of collegiality. When he is convinced that devotees have cleared up with each other all painful misunderstandings of the past, have united in one team and accepted responsibility for community development, he can be sure that there is a strong base for the future of that community.

Result of using a strategy based on sat-sanga principles:

The consequences of authoritative and democratic styles of management in a community of devotees are apathy and mistrust. Therefore at the first stage the community council acting according to sat-sanga principles directs its efforts to restore an atmosphere of cooperation both the council and the community. Members of the council will have to study how to respectfully reveal their minds to each other, to follow mutually accepted decisions, to not dominate each other and other skills. Undoubtedly, it can take some time, but this major stage of improving the community situation cannot be neglected. When the atmosphere in a community starts to become stronger, it becomes attractive both for devotees and for new

people. As a result the community naturally starts growing. It will start and maintain projects that help to preserve and strengthen spirit of cooperation.

7.4. Fourth example: Old yatra; problems with the managerial authority brought some of the members to unite on the basis of collectivity, but the person “in charge” is against this unity.

Situation:

One or several leaders of the community can find out about principles of collegiality and being inspired, start to discuss them with each other. As a result they unite and start to bear joint responsibility for community development. However, the representative of the organization does not support this initiative, which he sees as unauthorized. Why unauthorized? Srila Prabhupada's vision about creating a spiritual organization (which we discussed in this book) is that the organization develops out of a community (i.e. it develops on principles of sat-sanga). Not that the community comes from the organization (by the appointment from above). If the organization does not follow Srila Prabhupada's spirit, it spreads an authoritative style of community management: *“I am a representative of parampara and therefore I speak, and you are disciples, who should listen, accept and execute. Of course, you can give me an advice, but the decision will be done by me”*. In this style of management existence of councils is allowed, but only as President's board of advisors. This attitude towards devotees (as we discussed it earlier) does not bring up conscious responsibility in them and gradually leads to destruction of a community and to establishment of the model: “We” (the organization, the Temple) vs. “You” (parishioners).

Common mistake.

The representative of organization tells council members that they should be under the direction of a President, otherwise their meetings will be mundane democracy, which will not give them chances to develop true humility and build one's connection with Krishna. Then he appoints someone to be the President consequently interrupting any arising culture of collegiality.

Consequences of this strategy:

If after appointment the President does not share values of sat-sanga with teams of other leaders, but simply tries to pass his own decisions, then other leaders stop supporting the President and participating in his projects. The president concentrates on cooperation with young bhaktas, who are inclined to accept his authority. We will mention once again that tendency of ISKCON leaders to cooperate only with those who accept their authority, this strategy leads to a constant change of our members, because to relate with devotees always as neophytes eventually starts to conflict with their internal growth. Furthermore such ISKCON leaders are at risk, because there are no actual peers in their sanga.

There are two possible ways things will go on with this group of leaders. If their faith in principles of sat-sanga is weak, they simply will stop cooperating among themselves and become non-active members. But if this group of leaders understood the collegial spiritual culture established by Srila Prabhupada they can actually create a separate group which will naturally (even though gradually) grow. Then the GBC Zonal secretary will fix their legitimacy as a separate yatra: according to the GBC laws and one of the decisions of Russian National Council, there can be several devotee communities in one city. This scenario is a practical illustration of the not very pleasant saying mentioned earlier: "To actually do something in ISKCON, it is necessary to act outside of ISKCON organizational structure".

How should the preacher have (or a representative of our organization) behaved in this situation?

Recognize the creation of a group of leaders as appropriate and to help them to become stronger on this path, training them in collegial culture (accumulated in our spiritual organization) and leadership service.

Result of using this strategy based on sat-sanga principles:

When a representative of the organization supports newly born leaders in sanga he gives the leaders the possibility to feel connection with all organization and to strengthen faith in the spiritual guidance coming from above. Up to this point values of this group were shared only in association with peers and juniors. But when these values are also shared by seniors, then there is a connection with sat-sanga of all levels. And that provides full connection with Krishna. It is an actual manifestation of siksa-parampara thanks to which the organization becomes truly spiritual and becomes empowered in preaching.

7.5. Fifth example: Organized religion (last stage of the religion's bureaucratization)

Situation:

This example is different from the previous one, because the religious organization does not simply act authoritatively in relation to its community (desire for jnana is mixed with bhakti), but her representatives under the pressure of unresolved society issues and loss of trust from devotees, lose faith in the Mission (preaching spirit). That is already a system deviation from values of bhakti and transition to the sphere of formal (material) religion when the main idea loses its semantic energy and turns simply into a symbol.

Common mistake:

As leaders of the organization cannot inspire devotees on selfless service any more, and do not want to accept principles of collegial ethics, for maintenance of the religious organization they see only one way: to create a class of professional priests and strict religious hierarchy with written rules and guarantee of the priests' material security.

Consequences of this strategy.

This strategy leads to two forms of worldly religiosity: "Traditional religion" and "Protestantism".

Traditional religion. For absolute empowerment of a created structure the hierarchy excludes from the doctrine the basic understanding of theism that God as the Absolute Truth can be manifested in various ways. Priests in this structure have to spread an idea that God exists only in the Temple of their religion, and the authorized priest is an intermediary between the parishioner and God. Such religion becomes a source of sectarian spirit dividing people and sowing hostility among them. "Dividing God" between religions is actually a cause of hidden or obvious atheism in the society. If people don't have an understanding that God is one, but is differently manifested in different religious traditions, they think that the Supreme (as Truth for everyone) does not exist.

Communal connections usually do not develop among parishioners of "traditional religion" as there is no desire for that in the hierarchy. Everyone individually or together with one's family simply visits the Temple: i.e. religion simply turns into a social ritual, and the congregation turns into consumers of religious services. Because this situation is material, it is comfortable for both parties –priesthood and congregation: temple receives donations for the services from parishioners, and parishioners receive professionally done ritualistic services, which satisfy their worldly necessities. There are no spiritual expectations neither from

priests, nor from parishioners.

Protestantism. In any religion there are sincere believers who do not accept materialism of religious hierarchy. Such believers can be both among parishioners and among priests. They try to create living groups for association and service within the religious structure as much as they are allowed. When the hierarchy opposes their initiatives, seeing it as a threat, these groups usually either dissolve in religious structure, or separate from it. Exactly in this way “Protestantism”, a new religious phenomenon, appeared in the past.

As a matter of fact, the appearance of Protestantism was a reaction to a total disappearance of the sanga principle from religion. Since Protestantism is an unhealthy reaction to actions of religious hierarchs claiming the role of “unique representatives of God”, the principle of the guru as representative of God is actually rejected in this religious phenomenon. The role of the priest is reduced to just bringing believers together for a joint prayer and discussion of writings. It is presumed that each believer participating in these meetings becomes connected with God individually, and consequently God is manifested in prevailing public opinion of the congregation (democracy). It is possible to say that the traditional religion is "sat" without "sanga", and Protestantism is "sanga" without "sat". In one case we have subordination to a formal symbol of truth, and in other – to sentiments.

The culture of sat-sanga differs from the Protestant model of religious life by the fact that devotees become connected with God not individually, but by the mercy of the devotees. *At the heart of collegial spiritual culture there is not a “collective unconsciousness”, but spiritual principles (sat) of individual responsibility of every devotee for a state of his sanga. The role of mentors (guru) in this case becomes crucial as they train each devotee in principles of sat-sanga.*

As we said in the beginning of this book, in the nineties

Russian ISKCON had a hierarchical structure (a principle of humble acceptance of organizational authority) with clearly defined goals (book distribution). Then, after the crisis of 1998 when this system lost its influence, the spirit of “democracy” came in - each leader could act according to his own opinion (within general regulations of vaisnavism). Meetings of leaders’ sanga were perceived by leaders as simply an exchange of opinions or experience. Although mutually accepted on these meetings, decisions about development of the whole organization were not actually executed as leaders did not achieve a united vision to follow it with all their heart. Therefore devotees avoided creation of effective mechanisms for execution of accepted decisions.

Existing forms of sanga in our society like temple programs, nama-hattas and bhakti-vriksas, can have either a spirit of traditional religion, Protestant spirit, or sat-sanga spirit. For example, if on some nama-hatta the senior devotee simply gives lecture, answers few questions and “distributes service”, it is a spirit of traditional religiosity. If there is a pleasant association, an exchange of understanding of the scriptures, but devotees perform their service not as a result of personal understanding and inspiration, but due to collective “pump up”, then such meetings carry spirit of Protestantism.

The bhakti-vriksa program historically appeared as an alternative to formal temple programs, and consequently can be classified as Protestantism; however it is not the fact. There can be two options. First option: if in bhakti-vriksa members discuss writings and carry out active service under social pressure for “recognition through the step career”, it is Protestant system. Second option: if bhakti-vriksa does not oppose itself to temple programs, nama-hattas, and at the same time it contains a healthy spirit of mentorship, that awakens personal responsibility in the bhakti-vriksa members, then it is a manifestation of sat-sanga principle.

In connection with the foregoing we can stress one important moment: there is no point to put everything on shelves

and to hang labels: “This is an organized religion, this is Protestantism, and here is pure sat-anga”. In real life it is all mixed, and in a sense it should be mixed, one religion can have people with absolutely different spiritual experience and nature – from saints to complete materialists. We look at different religious phenomena only to facilitate leaders with understanding of tendencies of development in their society. If we are capable to regard sat-sanga culture as very important, then existence of formal or democratic phenomena in our religion will not create a problem. On the contrary, it will allow involvement of people with corresponding desires and natures in collegial service.

How should the preacher have (or a representative of our organization) behaved in this situation?

Instead of jumping aside from organized religion to club religious democracy (and vice versa) due to influence of current problems in our society, we should finally start to consistently establish clear principles of collegial spiritual culture in societies of vaisnavas, especially in sangas of various levels, and make leaders on all levels strictly follow those principles.

Result of using this strategy based on sat-sangas principles.

Let's remember a traditional ISKCON logic of authorized leaders' development. First stage: inspired by the philosophy and practice of Krishna consciousness a devotee is engaged in active service and thus becomes a leader (nama-hatta, bhakti-vriksa, Temple, etc.). Second stage: due to weak spiritual shelter in society (absence of complete sat-sanga) after a while this leader loses missionary passion and continues to carry out his service simply because he is already in a certain system and has expectations from people around. Third stage: devotee becomes tired, feels spiritual bankruptcy and wants to have just some free-style association on the spiritual subjects, not being burdened with any obligations. For many devotees this kind of association does not give much shelter

(and especially guidance) either, and so they simply go to maya.

Unfortunately, the reality is that the majority of experienced ISKCON devotees are at the third stage, some are at the second, and only a few continue maintaining enthusiasm in one's leadership service. If leaders of our organization start to discuss and accept principles of spiritual collegiality, we will be able to bring experienced ISKCON devotees to the first stage from the second and even from third stages. And those who are at the first stage won't have to fall into second and third stages. The second stage, when a devotee serves as a "professional", without missionary enthusiasm, is a symptom of the organized (traditional) religion.

7.6. Main mistake of so-called collective management.

In the examples given above we certainly did not discuss all possible problematic scenarios in vaisnava society. Nevertheless, it is possible to see and understand how the collegial principle can be applied on practice. There are two main possible types of deviations in leaders' sanga. First one happens when leaders become limited to see "collegiality" only within their own circle and consequently cannot extend sat-sanga culture in various departments of service and groups of spiritual association within the yatra. Though externally this sanga of leaders looks as joint governing body, actually such form of management in a community is autocratic, because the community council is in the mood of managing society as something unconscious. Usually the chairman of such sanga is a person with autocratic thinking, and members of the council "submissively" help him to make uniform and obligatory decisions, and then being mentors and department heads they also autocratically manage the community. Such type of management done by a community council will bring the same problems an autocracy will, in a format of "one-man management".

The autocratic deviation of the leaders' sanga at least provides a certain movement in a community: devotees are

familiarly with the words “have to”, there is a spirit of asceticism. The second, democratic deviation does not and is even worse. Here leaders because of subtle rivalry with each other “extinguish” the will of collective body. If one speaks or offers something important, another one will surely say something in a different perspective. The chairman of such sanga usually just manoeuvres aspiring to find a compromise between "opinions". Such sanga cannot reveal Krishna’s will through collective intelligence, because leaders are deprived of humility spirit and attention for each other. Decisions accepted in this kind of group won’t be executed by anyone, everyone will simply continue to be engaged in their own business, and the community will remain in stagnation.

Let's look at the consequences of the Council’ autocratic deviation on the example of one of the most difficult and responsible departments in any community – department of Deity worship. As a rule, participation in this service demands from devotees high punctuality, steadiness in their standards, high level of attentiveness and a lot of time. It naturally results in pressure in devotees’ minds and therefore in relationship issues between them, which brings loss of inspiration. If the community council makes decisions about service in this department, and the department head simply carries out these decisions and watches for observance of the established rules, it won’t be spiritual management and will not manifest an inspirational atmosphere for Deity worship and a successful development of that department.

According to collegial spiritual culture, the yatra council should train the department head to apply sat-sanga principles in the sphere of his responsibility. Such qualified head will regularly bring together devotees from his department for collegial discussions in which they will be able to reveal their minds to each other, speak about their understanding about importance of Deity worship and together make plans on improvement of their service. *Such leader does not give orders to devotees, but helps them to make common decisions and to achieve implementation of these decisions.* With this approach devotees stop perceiving rigid rules and regulations from this service as some austerity hardening their hearts.

7.7. A simple but powerful strategy to spread collegial spiritual culture in the society.

If members of a community council understand principles of sat-sanga, but on a whole do not develop group culture in the community (i.e. yatra still exists in a format of Temple parishioners), then the Council can make the decision to start a general educational program consisting of three stages.

First stage: Members of the council invite all active responsible devotees in a community to participate in the expanded sanga where everyone will be trained to conduct group work on studying Srila Prabhupada's books in order to understand how to practically solve timely problems of human life from the viewpoint of Krishna consciousness. *At this stage there are actually leaders being prepared for groups of spiritual association based on the principles of sat-sanga.* This period can last six months or less.

Second stage: at meetings of the whole community (for example, on Sunday programs) all devotees are divided into groups of no more than 10. Every group is working under the direction of one of the leaders trained at the first stage. At first, group leaders organize the acquaintance of people with each other, then tell them some basic rules of collegial culture (for example: to not interrupt each other, to express one's thoughts briefly and to the point, etc.), and then talk about the purposes of collective education. After completing the discussions the total overview of group work is done. All groups study same sections from Srila Prabhupada's books, thereby forming, in the community, a uniform field of understanding and values. It is important to note that after each group work, group leaders should gather together to discuss results, to plan main questions about material that group members will go through during the next meeting. If necessary, they should also raise a question of switching group members, but keeping the main kernel in each group.

This strategy allows establishing accurate feedback from each community member to its leaders. Because group work will

reveal current hidden and open problems in devotees' lives, it will allow leaders to formulate the vital questions (topics) for the studied material from Srila Prabhupada's books. Answering these questions in collegial discussion devotees will obtain spiritual intelligence (*dadami buddhi yogam tam...* – Bhagavad-Gita, 10.10) by means of which they will be able to put sastric instructions into practice. In Srimad Bhagavatam, 11.3.30, it is said:

“One should learn how to associate with the devotees of the Lord by gathering with them to chant the glories of the Lord. This process is most purifying. As devotees thus develop their loving friendship, they feel mutual happiness and satisfaction. And by thus encouraging one another they are able to give up material sense gratification, which is the cause of all suffering.”

Third Stage:

Steady spiritual relationships form among the group members and turns them into educational groups which can now exist independently. Gradually extending due to the attractive spiritual atmosphere present in the groups and due to their members' preaching, they become a firm basis for preaching Mission in their ISKCON center. Not less important is that the Temple also turns into the true spiritual educational center (as Srila Prabhupada desired). Besides above described main education there will be a demand for education of devotees in various applied areas of vaisnava culture (puja, art of cooking, musical culture, etc.), since all service will be carried out not by the same "professionals", but by groups of spiritual association.

With this kind of management based on siksa (sat-sanga), management ceases to be a material phenomenon, because heads of various departments do not need to use pressure or stimulation methods (autocracy or democracy) to ensure functioning of the community infrastructure. Many of these managers will themselves become leaders of educational groups and consequently will be interested first of all in the spiritual progress of devotees, instead of implementation of some projects.

Thanks to the unity of leaders through common service (development of vaisnava community and Srila Prabhupada's Mission) on the basis of sat-sanga principles, they are able to get rid of rivalry and reach the qualification of madhyama-adhikaris.

8. Stages of Spiritual Leader's Development

In this book we mainly explained principles of collegial culture by which leaders in a spiritual organization should be guided. Probably this description can create an impression that success of the organization depends on group responsibility. But it is not exactly like that. Certainly, the sphere of applying one's efforts in service is one's collective (sanga), but success of this sanga depends on qualification and position of specific individuals whom we call leaders or maintainers of sat-sanga. Below we will describe steps of a devotee's growth in his service as the society leader. If there is no dynamics in the leader's development, we can't count that in our society there will be strong teams based on principles of the collegial spiritual management or strong vaisnava communities.

At the bottom of developing complete relationships in society lies a strong and conscious personal sadhana. Earlier we spoke about collective sadhana or about coeducation and use of sat-sanga principle and rules. But this type of collective sadhana is possible only if every devotee participating in group work personally follows his sadhana. Only this position allows the leader to have conscious responsibility for Srila Prabhupada's society and to get rid of weaknesses of the heart, and also of complexes which disqualify him in his service to sanga.

There are three steps of awakening one's consciousness on the path of a devotee's progress in his disciplic mindset. Let's symbolically designate roles for the leader at these steps with the following terms: *follower, mentor and a head of the mission.*

First step: follower. At the beginning of one's spiritual path

a person attends lectures and seminars given by experienced devotees and being inspired by them begins his personal spiritual practice. At this level the disciplic mindset of the person lies in his acceptance of responsibility to be in association with experienced devotees and to follow their guidance. Purpose of his sadhana at this point is the purification of his mind and gaining personal experience (faith) in practice of bhakti. This stage can last several years depending on the determination of the person and his previous experience. After achieving stability in spiritual life (chanting 16 rounds of maha-mantra daily, following four regulative principles, getting up early, carrying out morning programs, studying books of Srila Prabhupada) this motivation of practicing for the sake of one's own purification can stop being effective, since its main objective is reached.

Second step: mentor. When a devotee reaches stability in his spiritual life, he can lose motivation to strictly follow his sadhana if he won't take responsibility for others. Therefore before reaching certain success in one's personal practice it is important for a devotee to go to the next level – to accept responsibility for a group of spiritual association or for an important project in a community. To seriously practice sadhana devotees should accept a specific order from his guru. In other words, when a devotee has some responsibility, he again feels the need for spiritual force that sadhana gives him. That's where the true discipleship starts, because the devotee now perceives his teacher or mentor not as someone who solves his problems, but as the one whom he helps in service to Srila Prabhupada.

At this level the devotee starts to see his spiritual life as a social phenomenon and worries about the spiritual benefit of his community and his family. As a result he gains an understanding of how natural “mundane” needs of people are connected with spiritual needs.

The described above disciplic mindset of the mentor is not still completely mature as this mentor acts as a “pulling engine” and is not yet able to apply principles of collegial culture thus sharing

his responsibility with others, with his wards. Even if he tries to do so, he does it as “delegation”, leaving the ends of “control threads” in his hands and not allowing Krishna to control the situation through collective intelligence of the devotees. Delegation is a managerial (not tutorial) approach to management. Any leader inevitably passes this step in his growth, but he should not get stuck on it, thus becoming an autocrat. Very often leaders stop here and that gets them into a crisis of confidence and loss of powers. And all this happens because they do not even suspect about the existence of a higher ideology of leadership based on sat-sanga principles. Therefore it is very important for this mentor to be under direction of a more experienced mentor (the head of mission) who will help him to pass through this growth crisis and to find a new understanding of leadership service.

Third step: head of mission. So, realization of sat-sanga principles and their application in the sphere of one’s responsibility, characterizes the following step of a leader’s development. At this point he does not pull devotees forward, but rather he sees his role in maintaining values of sat-sanga, because these values awaken individual responsibility for the Mission in others and help them with their growth as leaders. Basically at this level we have a mature disciple who is capable to infinitely expand Missionary service of his spiritual master. *The head of the mission is that mentor, under whose influence some members of his groups also become mentors and later reach the level of a head of the mission.*

This is how Srila Prabhupada describes these stages in a disciple’s growth:

“That is the way of Indian teaching, that there is one teacher, and how he's managing hundreds? That means there are groups. One who is elderly student, he's taking some beginners: "Write a or A like this." That he can teach. What he has learned, he can teach. Similarly, next group, next group. So in this way, one teacher can manage hundreds of students of different categories. This is organization. Not that everything I have to do. I cannot teach anybody to do it. That is not intelligence. Intelligence is that

employ others to help you. That is intelligence. Not that "Oh, I was busy, I could not do it." Why? What about your assistant? Train assistant so that in your absence things can be done. ... Everyone should be teacher and student." (Room conversation, Paris, 31-st of July 1976).

Here Srila Prabhupada relates the word “teacher” to the head of mission (organization), his assistants are mentors, and members of their groups are followers. Thus *Srila Prabhupada sees purpose of a spiritual organization in broadcasting siksa, spiritual understanding, when every devotee in sanga is at the same time both the teacher and the disciple.*

Devotees accepting leadership responsibilities in groups of spiritual association or in any ISKCON project, are mentors. Being disciples, all of them should be under the direction of a mentor in sanga, their siksa-guru. Though in this sanga as well as in any other sanga there is a head (in this case – head of the mission), he acts not alone, but through the interaction of leaders. So actually sanga controls everything. That is the secret of Srila Prabhupada’s formula we quoted above. Teacher doesn’t teach everyone himself. His business is to properly organize coeducation. *If the leader were to keep all programs under his direct vigilant control, they would not be able to continue in his absence,* as Srila Prabhupada points it out. High collegial managerial culture is possible only when mentors embody same values and principles of sat-sanga, as the head of the mission. Being in a collegial leadership service, mentors themselves develop up to the level of mission heads and they also start leaders’ sangas, etc.

Leaders in our society should not just be appointed on their post, but they should first pass through the specified stages of a leader’s growth, otherwise they won’t have sufficient qualification for performing this service. The success of a spiritual organization is possible if leaders of higher management (Community leaders, Temple Presidents, Regional secretaries etc.) are at the level of the heads of the mission.

9. Constitution of Srila Prabhupada – Mission for life

This chapter of the book is the most important in a sense. Until now we looked at various questions and subjects connected with sat-sanga culture in the society of devotees, but now we will actually speak about the subject of this sat-sanga. Pure devotees discuss with each other topics about Krishna and fulfillment of His desires. On our spiritual level we discuss and realize the mission of our spiritual teacher.

Srila Prabhupada very clearly and consistently expressed the will of previous Acaryas and of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in a document called: “Constitution of association” (see full text in Appendix 5). Not so many devotees are familiar with this document. Generally everybody knows its reduced version called: «Seven purposes of ISKCON». These purposes are mentioned in the Charter of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness registered on July, 1966 in New York. The text of the constitution remained in Srila Prabhupada's diary. It was made at the time of preparing legal documents for ISKCON's registration and intended not so much for the government, but for the society's members. Before that, in the year 1953, Srila Prabhupada had already compiled a similar document while starting in India a vaisnava society called “League of devotees” (see its full text in Appendix 6). Therefore to have a complete picture of Srila Prabhupada's vision we will provide below both texts and compare their similar points.

Why do we need such comparison? Having seen similarities in the key points of these texts the reader will be able to become convinced that ISKCON's Constitution personifies long-term missionary meditation of our Founder-Acarya.

Quotes from the ISKCON Constitution will be in **bold print**, and quotes from the “League of devotees” *in italics*. For convenience of perception we will replace initial numbering from the texts with uniform numbering, but we will keep the sequence. After each comparison we will share our understanding and

conclusions drawn from Srila Prabhupada's instructions.

In discussing points from the Constitution we will sometimes rely on H.H. Bhakti Vijnana Gosvami Maharaja's laborious research that he kindly shared with us. We express him our deep gratitude for his deep analysis and selection of quotes.

1. To educate the greater human society in the techniques of spiritual life as the basis for a balanced psychic and biological development, and thereby achieve for the first time in human society a real peace and unity among the contending forces in the world today.

1. To propagate spiritual knowledge systematically for checking the imbalance of life, to the whole race of India and the world over, with a view to educate the people in general in the techniques of spiritual life as the basis for balanced psychic and biological developments of the human race and thereby achieve real unity and peace of the contending elements of the present world.

How does an imbalance in one's intellectual and biological development occur, thus leading one to antagonism and hostility? The person identifies himself with the body and mind. We discussed it in this book: karma and jnana-vritti. From the first type of identification comes continuous fight for resources and property. And because of the second type (out of attachment for one's limited understanding) people are not even capable to hear each other. Some representatives of human race are so immersed in illusion of lording over matter and nature that they consider themselves as gods on earth (yoga-vrittih) and are attached to the mood of control and power. All these false self-identifications and gross or subtle desires for egoistical pleasure create continuous rivalry and hostility on all levels within the society: conflicts in family, national or religious intolerance and so forth.

Srila Prabhupada says in the first point of the ISKCON constitution that our Movement was started to help correcting this

state of affairs by means of *systematic distribution of spiritual knowledge and its methods of practice*. He uses a remarkable word *techniques* which can be translated in Russian as “practices, techniques and methods”.

The problem of the modern world that needs to be solved is that spiritual life is given a status of certain idea, so-called “belief” a person identifies with according to the religious group he belongs to. Generally such understanding comes from the influence of the Christian tradition. In this sense Buddhism has a higher understanding. If you ask Buddhists: “Do you believe in Buddha?” – they reply: “We do not believe in him, we follow him”. That is *techniques*. You can believe or not believe, but if you rise early in the morning, take a bath and start meditating, your life changes. It is called *to follow*. That is our work: we should try to change focus of civilization from illusory beliefs separating us onto universal beneficial practices.

There is a Vedic tradition, there is Buddhism, there are various sattvic psychological systems allowing the person to stop identifying oneself with destructive psychological roles. All these teachings contain universal knowledge that helps mankind to recover physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. Do we have to be engaged particularly with them? Not exactly... In the beginning of Isopanisad it is postulated that harmony and integrity (*purnam*) has its Source (*om purnam*). Speaking in more details, the Source of the creation emanates two complete wholes – the soul and the nature. Srila Prabhupada speaks in this point of his Constitution about the need to harmonize human nature, i.e. his subtle (mental) and gross (physical) bodies. But this completeness is inseparably linked with completeness of the soul, and also with the highest Complete Whole (God). And it does not exist separately from them.

Because people are not doing any spiritual practice that would include knowledge of oneness and difference of: the soul and the nature (gross and subtle material bodies), the nature and the Lord, the soul and the Lord – achievement of this harmony still

remains elusive despite the efforts of mankind's great minds throughout the millennia. Therefore our service to society and its individuals is to restore this harmony not separately from the soul and the Lord, but in union with them and on the basis of the authorized Vedic knowledge passed down to us without distortions through the chain of disciplic succession.

When the person tries to harmonize his life on the physical, social and emotional plans, it subconsciously prepares him to understand that he is purnam (complete whole - spirit distinct from matter), and that he is also a part and parcel of Om purnam (the highest source of harmony, God). However this understanding will come to him only if his teachers will see sattva connected with its Source, in other words his teachers are devotees. Therefore after the first point of the Constitution there is a second one that speaks about the Lord's Personality. In Isopanisad we can also find that right after introduction mantra there is a "postulate about Isavasya" explaining that the person should study not just material goodness, but sattva in its connection with the Lord.

The main meaning of this point from the Constitution lies in the fact that any teaching has an objective value (clear and acceptable for society at large) not because followers believe in its validity but because it has positive effect on people's lives. This positive influence will be manifested in the creation of external social harmony as well as in internal personal growth, in the development of qualities like: commitment to execution of one's duty, honesty, peacefulness, positive thinking, compassion and so forth. Srila Prabhupada answered the question "How to recognize your disciples?" with a phrase: "They are true ladies and gentlemen". That means he believed that vaisnavism is capable to form such qualities in people and therefore vaisnavas can help society to build sattvic (and theistic) culture. But if our practice does not help the development of these qualities and moral culture to flourish in individuals in ISKCON, we can reasonably conclude that ISKCON members do not follow the path specified by its founder-acarya and Lord Krishna and we still have to prove Them our commitment for it.

One of the main lessons given to Arjuna by the Supreme Lord was in pointing out the need to actively apply spiritual knowledge in the social role he had: “*Therefore, O Arjuna, surrendering all your works unto Me, with full knowledge of Me, without desires for profit, with no claims to proprietorship, and free from lethargy, fight.*” (Bhagavad-Gita, 3.30). Sri Krishna was not pleased with Arjuna's choice to leave the battlefield and devote himself to spiritual practice. Spiritual practice is given to the person to help him change his life and society by connecting them with the Lord. And it does not mean at all that one should reject various social duties or run away from solving physical and intellectual problems, using spiritual knowledge as an excuse. On the contrary, one should apply received knowledge to solve all these problems. That is the real task of the person learning spiritual culture.

A devotee should train people in general in principles of dharma and sattva. Following them makes one's life more stable and one's mind protected from anxieties. Then devotion (bhakti) becomes protected from the influence of the lower modes of nature which according to Srila Rupa Gosvami have an extremely destructive impact on bhakti. (Nectar of Instruction, verse 2). Therefore devotees should be concerned about harmonizing their lives and helping others to do that. Having solved this task, they will also become effective preachers. People can be convinced not so much by words as by one's personal example. By having good relationships in a family, happy children, prospering material life, peaceful and happy mind, good health and respect in the society, devotees will be able to help a lot of people to accept the authority of Vedic knowledge.

Certainly, on this path there is a danger of deviating to karma when we use bona-fide knowledge to cultivate a spirit of sense enjoyment. Srila Narada Muni pointed it out to Vyasadev. But he also told about the method to heal the person addicted to sense enjoyment. The essence of this method is that we have to learn how to spiritualize our attachments, rather than refuse them. (Srimad-Bhagavatam, 1.5.33-36). Therefore devotees should learn and educate people in principles of dharma and sattva, showing

how those principles are connected with the main purpose of human life. But even if ordinary people are not ready to listen about such exalted subject matters, a devotee still should care for them; help them to overcome emotional and physical pains. Because a devotee while giving this knowledge of dharma and sattva to ordinary people, does not see it separated from Bhagavan, as a result of applying this knowledge people get not just sukriti, but bhakti-sukriti, i.e. they get interest and qualification to listen about the Source and the true purpose of activity. Any contact with the mood of a sincere devotee that happens during some common activity (in a professional, social or family field), leaves an indelible trace in the person's heart, sowing seeds of bhakti in it. Eventually these seeds will inevitably sprout and turn into experience of selfless devotional service not contaminated by karma, jnana or yoga.

2. To propagate the Sense of Godhead, the all attractive Personality of primal and eternal Form, as He Himself revealed in His own words in the Bhagavad Gita, the Holy Scripture of the Lord Sri Krishna, the Godhead.

2. To imbibe and develop in the mind of the individual soul the all attractive Personality of Godhead (Shree Krishna) in His Primeval and Eternal Form as He has revealed Himself in His own words the Bhagwat Geeta. He has to be known all over the world in the manner as revealed by Lord Chaitanya who practically demonstrated the transcendental process of approaching the Absolute Godhead by his acts of Congregational Chanting of the holy Name of Godhead. There is nothing in the teachings of Lord Chaitanya which is not intelligible by human reasonings or is against any religious feeling accepted by the civilized society of the world.

The material world is like a big house without the Owner, Purusa. Living beings belong to the prakriti category, a dependent (female) principle. Therefore if there is no Purusa, the purpose of their activity disappears, and they simply start to quarrel with each other. Srila Prabhupada in the introduction to Bhagavad-gita

explains that one's desire to do something for others is the soul's sanatana-dharma (eternal quality). But when living beings just run around trying to please each other, they do not find peace in this activity, because none of them is capable *to accept* service, to be an actual enjoyer. The Lord is compared to the root of a tree or to the stomach within a body, i.e. he is the *only* recipient of any activity. Without accepting this fact there cannot be any question about achieving peace neither in the person's mind, nor in the society.

As we said earlier, in the material world it is common to identify personalism with confessionalism. If I address the Lord with His name or meditate on His form, it means that I am limited by a material conception of Truth connected with my religious group. The universal Truth for everyone can be only formless and nameless. Those are mayavada postulates which limit the Absolute in His possibility to reveal Himself to the jiva's senses, thereby turning Him from a live attractive Reality into a formal mental idea. The words *Sense of Godhead* Srila Prabhupada uses here mean not just "God consciousness", but "Feeling God". It is an important point.

So, in the introduction to the Bhagavad-gita Srila Prabhupada says that everyone naturally wants to serve some living being he is attracted to. But there is only One Living Being who can fully awaken such desire in everyone thus uniting the world in joint activity. That is the meaning of the Holy Name "Krishna" ("All-attractive"), and so it doesn't have anything in common with the limited concept of some religious group. Of course, in India there is a small group of materialistic priests who consider Krishna to be available only to Hindus. But these people are not neither Krishna's devotees, nor real followers of the Vedas -the universal teachings of the entire creation.

In this point of the Constitution Srila Prabhupada says that our Mission and "technique" is to help people "to reveal the All-attractive Personality of Godhead in their minds". Just in this way the soul can wake up from its hibernation in ignorance and join the collective service. The name of God can sound different depending

on the quality that attracts us to Purusa. And His Image can also be different depending on the way God attracts our feelings. But it will still be the same Krishna, All-attractive Personality of Godhead. Therefore *the universal psychology (techniques)* we are offering to the world is helping souls to wake up by engaging their mind and feelings in the service to the Master of the senses (*hrisikena hrisikesa savanam*). It is possible to do that in any tradition according to that Image and Name of God which attracts people there, but our role as ISKCON devotees lies in helping people to purify their perception of religion from contamination with mayavada, materialistic religious sectarianism dividing one united family of the Lord into groups of “believers in different gods”. This should be studied while studying the universal theistic message of Bhagavad-gita addressed to all society. As to commitment for chanting specifically the Name "Krishna", it is rather a question of spiritual rasa in one’s relationships with the Lord, not a wide social question.

When people’s senses are engaged in the service of the Lord, jnana’s effect (liberation from perplexity and sufferings) comes by itself. We do not reject this aspect of psychological practice, we also prosecute these subjects. However it is one thing to try to become liberated from sufferings for one’s own sake, and it is another thing to do that because our sufferings are not pleasing to Krishna. The effect in these two cases will be absolutely different: in the first case it will be temporary and ephemeral, in the second case – final and obvious. Why? Because this is a quality of the soul: it cannot do for itself something that it is ready to do for the Personality that is important and attractive to her. *The desire* of Krishna and especially of his representative accessible to our feelings – the guru, is a stimulating force for our enlightenment. Actually it is impossible to reach a steady effect of jnana without having spiritual Personalism. Therefore even in Buddhist practice there is worship of Buddha’s form.

3. To bring together individuals in a Society, regardless of nationality and irrespective of creed or caste, in order to develop a nearness to the Godhead and thereby the idea that within the members and humanity-at-large there is an infinitesimal soul-spirit that is part and parcel in quality with the Godhead, and that all life is meant for the satisfaction of said Godhead, the Supreme Soul.

3. To bring together members individually to one another and nearer to Godhead who is the Prime Entity and the individual souls are infinitesimal entities and humanity at large that individual souls being part and parcels in quality of Godhead the Absolute whole, they (the individual souls) are meant for the satisfaction of the Supreme Soul Godhead as it is revealed in the scriptures.

The process of connecting bhakti, the worship of the Lord as a Personality, and the unification of the society is important for us in Srila Prabhupada's mood. For Srila Prabhupada Krishna is the Father of this world, therefore the answer to a question: "How is it possible to please the Father?" – is obvious for him: it is necessary to unite His family in joint service. There is no other way to satisfy Krishna, because the Father is happy only when his children cooperate with each other, understanding that despite distinctions in their nature they are members of one family. And those who help Krishna to fulfill his intimate desire, He accepts in His heart as the most dear servants. So we cannot speak about sat (Krishna consciousness) without *sanga* (social unity).

4. To encourage the teachings of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who demonstrated practically the transcendental process of approaching the absolute Personality of Godhead by His acts of congregational chanting of the holy name of God, a process known as Samkirtan.

4. To prepare the ground work of spiritual atmosphere for the people in general by Samkirtan movement as it is recommended in the scriptures and as propounded by the Father of the "Samkirtan" movement Lord Chaitanya.

Here Srila Prabhupada already speaks specifically about the method which can unite society in one uniform spiritual family.

The first three points of the Constitution describe *sambandha-jnana*: the first point describes connection with the nature, the second –connection with the Lord, and the third the jiva's position. The following three points starting with this one, describe the corresponding aspects of *abhideya-jnana*.

To create sat-sanga it is necessary to not just come together, but to perform bhajana-kriya, i.e. sankirtana. Sanga (society) means distinctions in the nature: we can have different religions and mantras, we can belong to different races or genders, etc. But "sat" means recognizing the fact that God is one, and we are his devotees (i.e. obedient children of the Father) and therefore we are ready to congregationally chant prayers and Names that attract us to Him. *Congregationally does not mean equally.* In the Sankirtan Movement of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu people could go outside and join various groups that glorified God in some special way. It created one common spirit, a social miracle.

"The purport of the verse is that even Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu—He is God himself, Krishna Himself—He felt, alone, unable to do this task. So this is the position. You are cooperating; therefore I am getting the credit. Otherwise alone what could I do?"

"Ekake amara nahi paya bol. Caitanya Mahaprabhu

Himself wanted our cooperation. He is God, Krishna. Therefore cooperation is very important thing. Nobody should think that 'I have got so great ability. I can do.' No. It is simply by cooperation we can do very big thing. 'United we stand; divided we fall.' So be strong in pushing on Krishna consciousness, and Krishna will help. He is the strongest.

"Still, we must be combined together. Sankirtana means many men combined together chanting. That is sankirtana. Otherwise kirtana. Bahubhir militva kirtayeti sankirtana. Bahu means many; many combined together. That is Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mission—combined together. All nations, all persons, they should combine together. There is hope in our society, combination. There are Hindus; there are Muslims; there are Christians; there are black, white. Combine them. That looks very beautiful, just like combination of many flowers.

(Conversation with Radha-Damodara group, 16.03.1976, from the "Transcendental diary" by Hari Sauri dasa).

This quote is important because Srila Prabhupada explains intimate desire of the Lord. The Lord is omnipotent, but He does not want to manifest his power in any other way but through cooperation of his various devotees. He puts Himself in dependence from devotees, from their sanga, thus showing an example for all the leaders. Therefore, if we really want to see an unlimited power of the Supreme Lord, there is only one way to do it, especially in Kali-yuga. Forgetting our position, our religious "exclusiveness", we should cooperate with each other, and involve everyone else in this sanga and bhajana-kriya. This is a prescribed dharma given by the Supreme for this age.

When devotees perform sankirtana-yajna without a mood of social unity and without thinking about the benefit of ordinary people who does not accept the bhakti path, such practice does not lead to development of piety neither in devotees, nor in the society (although it should according to the first point of the Constitution). Therefore Shrila Prabhupada uses the expression *"to prepare the ground work of spiritual atmosphere for the people in general"*,

thus emphasizing that the sankirtan practice should be done in such a way that people feel its positive effect in their own lives and in society. How can it be achieved? Devotees have to discuss this question in sanga, become inspired by the understanding coming out of this discussion, and then tell people why they perform sankirtan, why people should join this practice (irrespective of their faith), and what benefit they will receive from it. Then Krishna will arrange everything in such a way that favorable changes (even the most simple, in day to day life) will start happening with people. And then these people will subconsciously, and sometimes even consciously, connect them with the effect of sankirtan. In this way society will start to gradually recognize the presence of God in social life. This is what our faith in the sankirtan method should be.

5. To prove by active work and preaching that Lord Sri Krishna is the only enjoyer of all the outcomes of individual and collective sacrifice, penance, meditation, arts, culture, science, because He is the Supreme Proprietor of the whole universe, eternally apart of Him everyone knows Him as a friend. Real peace can be attained when this is realized, in fact.

5. To prove it practically by active work and preaching that Shree Krishna is the only Enjoyer of all the outcome of everyone's sacrifice, penance, meditation, arts, culture, science, because He is the Supreme Proprietor of the whole Universe, and Eternal Friend of everybody. Real peace is possible to be attained when this is realised in fact. Such supramundane state of existence is called Divine Life. This supramental state of Divine life is described in the "Ishopanishad" as follows:

*"Ishabashyamidam Sarbam Jatkinchit Jagatyam Jagat
Tenataktena Bhunjitha Magridha Kashyachit Dhanam."*

This point of ISKCON Constitution is a peace formula from the Bhagavad-gita (5.29). In it Srila Prabhupada goes even further, explaining that if we recognize God not merely as a speculative idea, but as the Personality and the main Participant of social life, He should be clearly present in the art-works, in the

business transactions, in the Presidium of scientific conferences, etc. All social life should be somehow connected with Him and devoted to Him. How to achieve it, in what form? Certainly, the point is not in the preponderance of any religion in social life. The point is that this social life without sense of God's presence and His approval (the principle of Isavasya) is incomplete, and therefore people who are engaged in various social activities, should learn to devote them to Him. Srila Prabhupada says here that ISKCON devotees by their own example of active social life and by preaching should show how to do it and what positive effect it has. For this purpose there should be people among devotees with rather high social respect, because a scientist will be inclined to listen about the importance of a spiritual world view from another successful scientist, a businessman will listen to another businessman; a doctor will listen to a doctor, etc.

6. To assist whenever and wherever possible in the building of a social structure on the real foundation of spiritual progress and establishment of peace and unity between men throughout the world.

6. To undertake civic enterprises which do not come in conflict with the ideals and missions of the 'League' with all the principles in view.

Creation of Healthy God-centered society is a joint service which is capable to unite people of different faiths, cultures and nationalities. By means of any religion representing interests of a rather narrow group, it is impossible to unite people: *“Religious affiliation in terms of different countries and cultural circumstances is obviously not the common religion of the human being;”* (Srimad-Bhagavatam, 2.8.18, purport). But there is something in common, something that connects all living beings. That is service. Service is one's eternal designation, or the intrinsic nature of every living being. Therefore everywhere we can see everyone serving someone. The person in a healthy state (in Krishna consciousness) consciously serves God and His family, seeing all living beings and

all that exists to be connected with Him. In the conditioned consciousness the jiva continues to serve his/her family and society without seeing their connection with the Lord, i.e. it serves unconsciously.

If this spirit of joint service is revived in human society, then the God-centered social system called varnasrama-dharma will naturally become manifest because *“The occupational duties of the castes and the orders of society, following the principles of livelihood, also depend on the principle of devotional service.”* (Srimad-Bhagavatam, 2.8.18, purport). The varnasrama structure (rigid division of people on social orders) is secondary. Therefore Srila Prabhupada puts it in the end of the document, in the section of the secondary purposes. But the principle of joint service of society as God’s family, performed according to the nature of people, is essential. That is what is being spoken about in this point.

It should be noted that one’s engagement according to one’s nature (varna) and following one’s asrama-dharma are necessary for both ordinary people and devotees (at least while they are conditioned), because this way of life is the best for bhakti growth. Srila Prabhupada wanted members of his Krishna consciousness movement to be protected by such healthy lifestyle, creating joint settlements for this purpose – he will speak about it in the following points of the Constitution. An example of such joint life will be important for other people also. In the purport to Srimad-Bhagavatam 5.13.11, Srila Prabhupada writes: *“The Krishna consciousness movement aims at creating an atmosphere of non-envy. Of course it is not possible for everyone to become Krishna conscious, but the Krishna consciousness movement can create an exemplary society wherein there is no envy”*.

So, devotees should *“assist whenever and wherever possible in the building of a social structure on the real foundation of spiritual progress and establishment of peace and unity between men throughout the world”*. If some devotee does not have enough maturity and does not have such wide vision, – then he needs to perform service under the direction of mature devotees who will

help him to become gradually purified from selfishness and to develop love and devotion. Consciously and enthusiastically participating in this joint service, devoted can involve in it ordinary people, whose Krishna consciousness has not awakened yet. In this book we already discussed the point that just positively participating in society, devotees spread bhakti-ajñata sukṛiti in it, because they practice bhakti-yoga and have different motives. When people see devotees' attitude to others, see their attitude towards activity, they automatically, at the subconscious level, connect it with Krishna. And so bhakti-sukṛiti awakens in them.

One of the particular manifestations of joint service among devotees and all other people, that Śrīla Prabhupāda taught devotees, is charity (it is more emphasized in the quote from the "League of devotees"). But a devotee helps people not because he is pushed by an idea of kindness and desire of fame (jñāna and karma - vṛtti), but simply because they are his brothers and sisters, and Krishna does not want them to suffer. The Devotee is acting due to God's compassion, or his Krishna consciousness. Of course, there are devotees that have the philosophical idea "the worse, the better" in their minds: "Let them suffer. May be they'll remember about God.", or: "What is the point to rescue a drowning man's clothes?" For people who feel with their mind, not the heart, it is difficult to understand that the drowning man is rescued by pulling him out with his clothes. Certainly, we try to rescue the person, not his clothes. Therefore, when we feed people, we give them not just food, but Krishna-prasadam. However we will also give unoffered food if there is no possibility to give prasadam. Here are few quotes:

"To celebrate moving from the straw huts into the "Lotus" building, the first big couple multistorey buildings were also rooms for Śrīla Prabhupāda were, we made a big feast on which we invited inhabitants of neighboring villages. All the dishes were put on the banana leaves which are used as disposable plates in Bengal. After the feast all the guests piled banana leaves in a temple backyard. Prabhupāda went to his room. I was sitting in the room together with him, when suddenly there was a dog yelp

outside the windows. Prabhupada stood up and went on the verandah. From the verandah he saw a heap of dirty plates in which Bengalese kids in ragged shirts were pottering. In hands they had sticks with which they drove dogs away, being at war with them for the leftovers from these plates. When Prabhupada saw children fighting with dogs for poor leftovers, he began to cry. Large tears rolled down his cheeks. "How hungry they must be..." – he said quietly. The view of these hungry children battling with dogs for someone's leftovers made Srila Prabhupada so sad that he told: "No one should be hungry in the radius of ten miles from the temple. Everyone around our temples should be satisfied". After this event we started a program which later on was called "Food for life"

(Remembrances by H.H. Jayapataka Swami. Unfortunately, we were unable to find this quote in English; it was translated from Russian)

"Prabhupada: ... During aratrika time, hundreds of children come to us. I give little prasadam. You have seen it?"

Dr. Patel: Yes.

Prabhupada: They are very interested in dance and... Now, I wish that they may be given sumptuous food and dress.

Dr. Patel: Yes, dress, I also thought of that. Some of them are very badly dressed, poor people...

Prabhupada: Yes, if they come, "All right, come here. Just take your bath, be cleansed, tilaka, and a nice dress" and giving them some food.

...

Dr. Patel: I think, I think we must do that. Then we will be able to propagate.

Prabhupada: Not with that purpose. Here is a poor child. He comes

automatically to dance. So we should take care of them.
(Morning walk, 17-th of February, 1974 z.)

“During this tour when Srila Sarasvati Thakura and his followers were returning from a darṣana of Sakṣi-gopala, he noticed that his householder followers refused to give alms to some poor people who were requesting help. He then sarcastically described their attitude as, “Money should not be given to poor, distressed people ... if it is given it will be karma-kanda.”

(“Ray of Viṣṇu” by Rupa-vilasa dasa)

It should be noted that the first five points of the Constitution describe steps of a person’s gradual development to gain a wide non-sectarian vision and join more consciously in the service of uniting everyone – the creation of a healthy God-centered society. The forms that such service can take may differ according to various cultures and people’s conditioning: *“... there is no religion save and except the devotional service of the Lord, though this may be presented in different forms.”* (Srimad-Bhagavatam, 2.8.18, purport). Because only mature devotees have an ability to see the intrinsic tendency of living beings for service and thus to unite them on this basis, therefore they should direct it or be its initiators and inspirers. The following points of the Constitution speak about the way these devotees can gain such a deep and wide vision.

7. To attempt to save men individually from the chain of victimization the ongoing trend in modern civilization operates by, in the name of ideologies of false sentiment, so that Man may again be a free soul, to act and live freely with spiritual vision. This is possible by individual spiritual initiation, Diksha, when a man can see everything in Godhead and Godhead in everything.

7. To save man individually from the system of chained victimization by the trend of modern civilization of false sentiments so that man may again be a free soul to act and live freely, an inspired life with spiritual vision. This is possible by individual spiritual initiation through the proper channel when a man can see everything in Godhead and Godhead in everything.

In the previous six points of the Constitution Srila Prabhupada gave instructions on how can ISKCON serve the society uniting and elevating it. Here and further on Srila Prabhupada explains where ISKCON members will take spiritual force and purity for such service and where the souls awakened for pure devotion after coming in contact with devotees will find shelter. This source of spiritual power and purity should be diksa, due devotee initiation into spiritual knowledge. Srila Prabhupada emphasizes that diksa is a process of spiritual awakening of the personality, rather than one-time religious ritual of initiation into the tradition. He speaks about diksa as a process for personal realization of spiritual truth and gaining of spiritual freedom.

It is interesting that many devotees display a ritualistic accent towards diksa. They think that one-time religious ritual is enough to become a full-fledged devotee. As this thought is irrational (doesn't have any common sense) and does not have direct relation to the science of bhakti, we can see the result of it: instead of placing emphasis on the disciplic position, on development of personal spiritual awareness, devotees mystify guru's role and reduce spiritual initiation down to a ritual of initiation by this guru. Of course, the matter is not in discrepancies in translation, but in the way our mentors understand a science of

bhakti (*techniques*). As we know from Bhagavad-gita 2.72, a devotee can actually devote himself to the Lord in one moment, but it depends more on the personality, rather than the ritual. As to the initiation ritual, its necessity and importance are in the weakening vices of karma and giving the devotee a chance to make fruitful personal efforts in spiritual life.

Following Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur, Srila Prabhupada gave two initiations to his disciples. The first one (harinama initiation) was like a door into the spiritual tradition, and the second one (actual diksa) meant recognition of certain successes in the practice of bhakti and blessing the deepening of one's personal awareness and, as a result, spiritual leadership in the society. The brahminical thread a devotee receives during the diksa ceremony means that he is expected to cultivate brahminical spiritual energy. Here Srila Prabhupada writes in the purport to the verse from Bhagavad-Gita 18.54:

“Since God is full, a living entity who is engaged in God's service, in Krishna consciousness, becomes also full in himself. He is just like a river cleansed of all dirty water. Because a pure devotee has no thought other than Krishna, he is naturally always joyful. He does not lament for any material loss or aspire for gain, because he is full in the service of the Lord. He has no desire for material enjoyment, because he knows that every living entity is a fragmental part and parcel of the Supreme Lord and therefore eternally a servant. He does not see, in the material world, someone as higher and someone as lower;”

At the initial, religious level humility of the devotee lies in his submission to instructions of seniors and in execution of practices favorable for his spiritual development and purification, the most important being chanting maha-mantra on one's beads. Having established himself at this level the devotee, thanks to good sat-sanga, can go further and gain a deeper form of humility, which will be manifested in his conscious inspiration for eternal service to Krishna's Mission revealed to him through his serious association with his guru. This point of the ISKCON Constitution speaks about

the necessity to train this type of devotees.

In this regard it is important to note that accepting shelter in a religious tradition can protect the person from the ideological influence of materialistic civilization only for some time, but individual spiritual realization is capable to really make him to be not subjected to this influence. Therefore only a devotee, who properly passed through the diksa process, is capable to act even outside of his tradition, in the usual society, as its leader.

Srila Prabhupada personally showed how to train people applying “personal approach”. For example, he used his morning walks to help his disciples (through personal association with them) to gain vision how does Krishna’s energy act in natural phenomena, in living beings, in the human society. It is curious that Srila Prabhupada in this point instead of the Name "Krishna" uses the word "Godhead". Probably he emphasizes with it that the diksa process should bring devotees outside the limits of religious conditioning (level of kanistha-adhikaris). These devotees who passed through the process of spiritual transformation (diksa) can actually become servants of all mankind. They will help to overcome various conflicts existing in modern society due to religious, national, political and other differences, and to train people in true tolerance which allows to see spiritual equality of all living beings.

8. To further toward realization this highest truth as revealed by Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the six Goswamins headed by Srila Rupa and Sanatana Goswamins.

8. To propagate and realize the highest Truth as revealed by Lord Chaitanya through His Philosophy known as "Achinta Vedaveda Tatwa" (everything simultaneously one and different from the Absolute Truth) and other allied books of knowledge as revealed by the six authorised disciple Goswamins, headed by Sreela Rupa and Sreela Sanatana.

A devotee, having become a brahmana, can start a deep study of the exalted gaudiya-vaisnava theology presented in the works of six Goswamis of Vrindavan. Understanding the subtleties of bhakti-yoga, he becomes suitable to participate in the implementation of those exalted and difficult missionary tasks that our Acaryas have put on their shoulders out of their love for Sri Gaurasundara.

9. To have for its objectives amongst the others four principles which the Goswamins had in view. They are the following:

9.1. To erect a holy place of transcendental pastimes as well as a place where members of the Lord Sri Krishna can flourish.

9. To re-excavate and/or reclaim the holy places of transcendental Pastimes of the Personality of Godhead Shree Krishna, as well as the places where his devotees flourished including the various temples of worship.

A very important aspect of the missionary program of the Goswamis is that pure devotees should have a spiritual homeland, the Lord's Holy Dham, where they will be able to get stronger and nourished by realizations of subtle nuances of devotional service by seeing the lives of exalted devotees, the way they worship the Lord and associate with each other in this worship. In the important work "Gita-nagari" describing congregational life of devotees in such

Dhama, Srila Prabhupada writes:

“The Proprietor and Deity of the Gita-nagari will be Sri Krishna Himself. The temple of Sri Krishna, which shall be situated in the centre of the Gita-nagari, shall contain the Vighraha of Sri Krishna placed on the Chariot of Sri Arjuna seated along with Sri Krishna. The Vighraha shall be known as Partha Sarathi. The Sri Murti of Sri Partha Sarathi shall proclaim throughout the world as to how much the Personality of Godhead can be merciful to His devotees. That Godhead can be made the driver of the Chariot of His devotee is one of the many examples of how the Supreme God can meet His devotee in the simplest way as between friend and friend: senayor ubhayor madhye rathaa sthapaya me 'cyuta. "O infallible one, please draw my chariot between the two armies." [Bg. 1.21]

The powerful Godhead with His Eternal Energy as Arjuna shall be worshipped in the Gita-nagari according to the rites of the scriptures.

The inhabitants of the Gita-nagari shall dwell in that transcendental city as the denizens of the Kingdom of God and as associates of the Personality of Godhead. They shall become the actual Harijan, as it is described in the Scriptures.”

9.2. To propagate all over the world in the form of missionaries the process of devotion, the transcendental service to the Godhead, and to make known that this devotional service is the main function of the human being.

9.2. To arrange lectures and discourses by eminent devotees for the benefit of the members of the 'League' and send missionary for this purpose in all parts of the world to recruit members of the 'League'.

Each city should have Gita-nagari "offices", i.e. preaching centers where travelling sadhus will give lectures and through which new people will join.

“Next point, in order to understand this teachings of Bhagavad-gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam, there should be centers where people can assemble daily, morning and evening, and try to understand this Krishna Consciousness or God consciousness movement. So we are trying to open branches all over the world in every city, in every town, in every village, and people should take advantage of it. There is no question of monetary transaction to enter into these centers and institutions, but because we have to maintain such institutions, public should voluntarily contribute and that is very gladly accepted.”

(Srla Prabhupada’s letter to Rayarama, October 17th, 1968)

9.3. In order to accomplish this, to adopt proselytizing methods of peaceful means and to establish a broader society of association for all members, including scholars and admirers, to engage in this service as put forth in the Srimad Bhagwatam.

9.3. To make the 'League' an international organization for spiritual development through education and culture, also by recruiting members of the 'League' from all nationalities.

Srla Prabhupada specifies here that the preaching of devotees should be free from fanaticism and is based on education and culture. Moreover, here he emphasizes that devotional service should also be done together with those who are not yet devotees, but are positively disposed. Thus there will be a lot of social groups favorably disposed to our movement: allies, relatives of devotees, colleagues from work, sponsors, scientists and other figures. This concept is the basis of the Bhaktivedanta Institute created by Srla Prabhupada, who envisioned an educational institution for training all people who for are not ready to fully accept the path of bhakti for various reasons. Here is how Srla Prabhupada explains this principle in Gita-nagari:

“Under such cooling shade of peace and tranquility, the people in general will be able to follow the footprints of the

Mahatmas and thus being influenced by the Internal Energy of Godhead, they shall be able to combine themselves for a higher mission of life. Mahatmas who are already under the influence of Internal Energy of Godhead do possess themselves immense strength for the deliverance of the fallen people of the world, but although they possess such power, they exercise such strength in a corporate body—in order to give a chance to the less powerful souls who intend to serve God. Sri Bajranga jee Hanuman, although He was Himself competently able to combat with Ravana, still took help from a little spiral [spider] in the matter of constructing a bridge over the gulf of Ceylon, in order to give such a little being a chance of service in the service of Sri Ramacandra. What to speak of Sri Hanumanajee, even Sri Ramchandra, Who is the Personality of Godhead Himself, possessing all the power to create, maintain or annihilate the whole universe, played the part of a man, and took the help of His Monkey Devotees, in order to deliver Seeta Devi from the clutches of Ravana. In the battlefield of Kuruksetra, all the men who assembled there and could have been killed within a twinkling of an eye by a mere symbolic sign of Sri Krishna, were requisitioned to fight with Bhima and Arjuna in (order) to give credit to His (Krishna's) most beloved friend and devotee. Therefore, if the inhabitants of Gita-nagari want to establish a perfect Kingdom of Heaven (Rama Rajya), (they) can endeavor to do so combinedly in the service of the Personality of Godhead. The inhabitants of the Gita-nagari shall therefore engage their everything, namely (their) life, their wealth, their intelligence, and the words in the service of the Lord.”

Krishna speaks about the same principle in Bhagavad Gita 3.26: “So as not to disrupt the minds of ignorant men attached to the fruitive results of prescribed duties, a learned person should not induce them to stop work. Rather, by working in the spirit of devotion, he should engage them in all sorts of activities [for the gradual development of Krishna consciousness]”.

In this way devotees will be able to cooperate peacefully with other people in society and will give many people the ability to develop devotion for the Lord.

9.4. To install, wherever it is possible, the worship and temple of Radhakrishna and that of Sri Chaitanya, and to give facility to everyone to become trained in the modes of Archan or preparatory principles of devotional service.

As we noted earlier on, our program of soul's liberation and recovery is *hrisikena hrisikesa sevanam...*, i.e. engagement of senses in the service of the Master of the senses. This is what happens in the process of arcana, worship of the Lord's Form. Therefore in each educational center (Temple) there should be a program of some kind for anyone who has joined and started to follow vaisnava principles, to receive experience and skills in arcana.

10. To introduce to the members of the Society and humanity-at-large a simpler and more natural purpose in life by means suitable to the particular place and time, and as enjoined in the Bhagavad Gita.

This point is not mentioned in the "League of devotees", because people in India were accustomed (especially at that time) to simple and natural living. However, after arriving to the West, Srila Prabhupada saw that city life in the modes of passion and ignorance did not give devotees many chances of progress in their spiritual lives. Ideally if devotees are not engaged in preaching, it is better for them to live in the country. But if that is not possible for some reason, then it is better to stay away from the influence of Kali civilization, especially from informational influence.

"We want to do whatever is easy and save time for Krishna consciousness. As far as you are able to adjust to a natural way of life, do it immediately. Our principle is that we are against nothing and for nothing. Only for Krishna. We want whatever is favorable for Krishna."

(Letter from Srila Prabhupada to Nityananda, 16-th of March, 1977)

Starting with the 10th point and up to the 13th, Srila Prabhupada describes various practical aspects of activities in ISKCON for its success in the field of service to the whole society (points 1-6), as well as in the field of spiritual and social development of the society of devotees (points 7-9).

11. To organize educational programs, such as classes and lecture tours, and to institute services, such as mailing, for the benefit of the members of the Society and humanity-at-large.

11. To open free mail services to advise by post in respect of enquiries made to the 'League' on spiritual subjects.

We can only imagine what kind of activities in the area of long distance education and information distribution Srila Prabhupada would start in our Internet era. But this absorbing service he left for us.

12. To publish periodicals, books and/or pamphlets in all important languages in order to reach human society and give an opportunity to same to communicate with the Society.

Wide work for the printing and distributing of literature was developed in ISKCON by Srila Prabhupada. This is the last point among seven purposes of ISKCON: *“With a view towards achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, magazines, books and other writings.”* Many devotees thought that if we simply distribute books, all other purposes will be automatically reached. But everything is not so simple, and in the ISKCON Constitution this point is defined quite modestly. Nevertheless, book distribution is a service that demands the most intense devotion (especially in the unfriendly environment of modern cities) and meditation on Krishna’s and Srila Prabhupada’s mercy. Therefore all devotees, who are seriously engaged in this service, undoubtedly have very deep spiritual taste.

13. To invoke the quality of goodness particularly in every member of the Society, individually by the process of Diksha and by establishing one in the status of a Brahmin (good and intelligent man) on the basis of truthfulness, knowledge and faith in the transcendental service of the Lord.

13. To revoke the quality of goodness particularly (Satwaguna) in every member of the 'League' individually by the process of Spiritual initiation (Diksha) by establishing him in the status of a qualified Brahmin (good and intellectual man) on the basis of truthfulness, forgiveness, equality, tolerance, education, purity, knowledge (specific and general) and faith in the transcendental service of Godhead.

To accept membership of all orders of life namely:

(i) Brahmachari i.e. unmarried scholars fully devoted to the service of Godhead.

(ii) Grihasthas i.e. married householders living with family and devoted to the service of Godhead.

(iii) Banapasthas i.e. retired householders not living with family but devoted to the service of Godhead.

(iv) And Sanyasis or Tyagis i.e. Retired householders fully renounced to the service of Godhead without any family attachment.

In this point of the Constitution Srila Prabhupada notes that the secondary aspect of diksa, namely: purification and development of personal qualities of goodness – is nevertheless a very important aspect, because peace and harmony in the society depend on it. Modern society, including society of devotees, obviously lacks people who possess basic piety. And that affects very badly both the preaching efficiency of our organization and the individual spiritual growth of devotees. Srila Prabhupada points out here the importance of moral and intellectual aspects in the diksa process. That explains why he paid so much attention on preaching to students, intellectuals, politicians, business people – i.e. to everyone who showed at least any sign of piety and common sense.

14. Among the secondary objectives of the Society, it shall undertake the following activities:

14.1. To revive the scientific system of social orders of classification based on intelligence, martial spirit, productivity and common assistance, generally known as the four castes with reference to quality and worth for the common cause of world society.

14.2. To discharge as a matter of course the vitiated system of supremacy of one man over another by false prestige of birthright or vested interests.

Srila Prabhupada writes here about the necessity to somehow or other restore the varnasrama order in society but on the basis of objective test of people's qualities instead of de facto caste superiority basis. The problem of modern civilization is that everyone thinks about his rights, and no one thinks about his duties. To restore varnasrama means that people will start thinking about their duties towards society, and thus it will again become strong and solid. Such duties (dharma) are only four in number and they are defined by natural inclinations of people.

14.3. To popularize the vegetable-grain diet under approved methods in order that full value of protein, carbohydrate, fat and vitamin benefit may be derived therefrom.

It means that to open vegetarian cafes and restaurants, to run culinary courses, etc. – is also one of the ISKCON purposes, even though it is of secondary importance.

14.4. To discourage intoxicating or addicting habits of all descriptions and dimensions and to expose such persons thus afflicted to approved methods of spiritual realization.

14. To initiate members in the rules of the Goswamins above mentioned by controlling over (i) illegitimate connections with woman (ii) intoxicating habit (iii) diets regulated with vegetable dishes (iv) gambling, unnecessary sporting or recreation enterprises.

This area of social work is unfortunately not well developed in ISKCON, even though it is obvious that the need for such service from our side increases day by day. Devotees can obviously do a lot of things in this regard as they not simply speak about freedom from various addictions, but also strictly desist from it themselves (acar). It is good to know that in recent years many devotees actively joined in the national project “Common cause” which is definitely connected with this purpose of the Constitution. In point 9 of the Constitution it was emphasized that not only ISKCON members are engaged in the implementation of the Goswamis’ Mission, because the mission of the Supreme Lord cannot be limited by a framework of a spiritual organization. ISKCON does not have the monopoly of this Mission, but it is its servant (would be more modest to say – one of the servants).

Existence of secondary purposes connected with pious activities in the ISKCON Constitution reminds us that we should not neglect the mode of goodness while doing our spiritual practices. Though the practice of bhakti in itself does not depend on material conditions, it is a problem if the devotee is under the influence of the lower modes of nature, he commits offenses in the sphere of bhakti, and that is already something different.

Summing up our analysis of Srila Prabhupada’s Constitution we will refresh the general logic of the document. In the beginning (points 1-6) our Founder-Acarya speaks about the necessity of devotees’ serving society in general, being also a part of the Lord’s family like the vaisnava society is. Having this understanding, devotees should actively work to lower the level of disharmony and suffering, very common in modern society, and also help uniting everyone around universal cultural values and service to the Supreme Lord. It is obvious that religion in the

modern world does not fulfill this task. That indicates the presence of an atheistic mayavada virus in it.

Then (in points 7 to 9) Srila Prabhupada explains what spiritual and social resources ISKCON can use to help society establishing a culture of goodness founded on values of bhakti. For this purpose it is necessary to bring up in our society some wide-minded, cultural and spiritually enlightened leaders (item 7) who will seriously take the Mission of Gosvamis of Vrindavan and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu (point 8). To fulfill this task devotees will have to manifest a duplicate of the spiritual world (Holy Dham) where they would be able to cultivate spiritual qualities and social skills. Srila Prabhupada follows with applied questions, showing the main directions and instruments of activity for the achievement of the main objectives stated above.

The Constitution compiled by Srila Prabhupada describes a gradual path of spiritual development from mundane piety up to true devotion of God and His Divine Grace envisions this development not as a separated individual process, but on the contrary, as a process directed to create a healthy society based on cultural values, that serve in the achievement of the prime purpose of human life. This is how our Founder-Acarya sees our development.

We are just briefly covering this part of the ISKCON Constitution, to write about it in detail is not the purpose of this book. Srila Prabhupada speaks here not just about philosophy of bhakti, but about a practical social program that will allow devotees and all people in general who participate to realize the philosophy, and go back home, back to Godhead. We hope this section of the book can help leaders to more clearly see their place in Srila Prabhupada's mission.

10. The Mission or the organization?

Of course, the title of this section does not mean opposition of these concepts. However we had to call it this way because the thinking process of the religious person contaminated by desire for jnana, will definitely equalize these two concepts: to serve the Mission for him means to serve the religious organization (and vice versa). At the very beginning of the book we quoted Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, who in a very categorical manner separates these two concepts, describing the spiritual organization as a tool in the hands of sadhus. If the spiritual organization works for itself, he calls it organized religion – the most dangerous phenomenon of this world. Organization is like a razor edge – therefore it is appropriate to bring up this question once again, since we are members of an organization. In the “Constitution of association” Srila Prabhupada, like his Spiritual master, very precisely establishes an emphasis on submitting the purposes of the Mission namely service to the entire society as the Lord’s family.

It is quite surprising, but in our society the emphasis is given to service performed by the devotee in the organization and for the organization and what a devotee does outside of it is not usually accepted as bona-fide and pure devotional service. In principle, if we actually train people who perceive themselves as spiritual beings and do not identify themselves with the body (and thus with any organization or belief), we should be happy seeing devotees serve the Mission wherever it may be (in the family, at work - anywhere). Devotees can be engaged in pure devotional service without even changing their own non Vaishnava faith, did our Acarya invalidated this principle? Clearly not.

If religion teaches the person to identify himself with it, it is a material religion. If religion teaches the person to follow the spiritual essence wherever he is, that religious organization (even though it may appear to be material) is actually completely spiritual. Do we agree with this definition? Isn’t that the meaning Srila Prabhupada puts in the diksa definition which we saw in the Constitution? We purposely inquire from you, because we address

leaders, and leaders are not those who have ready answers. They think about important subjects on the basis of true understanding of sastric principles and make decisions without shifting responsibility onto someone else. If we agree that ISKCON is a spiritual organization and not one of many religions of the material world, then we should direct the energy of our management towards implementing points of Srila Prabhupada's Constitution, thus making ISKCON the center of creation and coordination of various healthy forces in society. Our GBC will then deal not only with ISKCON problems and projects. As Srila Prabhupada's true representative, it will think of the best way to promote spiritual revival of the entire human society. It means that ISKCON should become an educational force in the world and train leaders capable of acting in any community or religion, promoting their progress both in spiritual, and in social spheres.

Management system of ISKCON has great value when it is directed to solve missionary tasks, and in that case it is completely bona-fide. But when it aims only at strengthening its own authority, it becomes autocratic.

We understand our current situation, the tendency towards another extreme - democracy, when ISKCON leaders act independently from each other and actually have full "freedom" to accept from their followers some personal service, donations, etc., this creates an even bigger threat for our Movement's purity and devotees' faith. But the logical, intellectual, escape from this problem is a move towards autocracy, when the organization simply strengthens external control through "authorized sadhus", even though it protects leaders from personal temptations for some time, nevertheless, it strengthens a spirit of alienation and formalism in the society that also interferes with the development of natural spiritual connections in bhakti.

It is impossible to bring up the true leader by means of control as it prevents the person to gain internal, conscious responsibility. Some external control by seniors is necessary for immature followers, but if seniors make the juniors accustomed to

it, then it means that the mentors do not have faith in the conscious position of their followers, because they do not have it themselves. Only in deep and sincere sanga can leaders gain these internal spiritual values, so that even without obvious external control over them, they “*will be impossible to corrupt*” (Conversation where Srila Prabhupada checks the new “Back to Godhead” magazine, 24-th of June, 1976, New Vrindavan). Certainly, if the person cannot submit to internal values, he should be under the external control of ksatriya culture. But such devotee just should not be a spiritual leader in the society. These questions are solved in the sanga of ISKCON leaders on the basis of principles of moral and personal care.

In this book we spoke mainly about two material forces, or traps (karma and jnana-vritti), but there is also the third one which is their synthesis and a root – desire for siddhi, perfection (yoga-vritti). Visvanath Cacravarti Thakur explains in his commentaries to the Bhakti-Rasamrita-Sundhu (1.3.1) that Love to God is manifested in three desires or rasas: desire to reach Krishna (bhagavad-prapti-abhilas), desire to give pleasure to Krishna with one’s service (anukulya-abhilas) and desire to constantly feel Krishna’s closeness in one’s heart (saudhara-abhilas). These three composing prema desires, when reflecting in the prism of the material world, become perverted into desire for karma, jnana and yoga. The desire to give pleasure to Krishna with one’s service (anukulya abhilas), is a non-perverted desire for karma, because karma is a desire to be "The enjoyer" by the fruits of one’s actions. The desire to reach God (bhagavad-prapti-abhilas) is a prototype of desire for jnana, - to become a great "Benefactor and well-wisher" like God. And the desire to feel Krishna’s closeness (saudhara-abhilas), is a prototype of the perverted desire to merge with God or to gain mystical "Control".

These three spiritual desires described above are manifested in the bhakti practice in its three aspects – *jiva doya*, *nama ruci* and *vaisnava seva*. Jiva doya is our charity in relation to others (spiritual elevation, return back to Godhead). Vaisnava-seva consists of practical activities giving pleasure to Krishna’s senses

(manifestation of anukulya abhilas). And Nama rucih is our intimate prayer to God, unity with Him. When bhakti is not free from the influence of matter, instead of these aspects (in their correlation) there is a mixture of three vrittis with prevalence of one of them. That is the power of the modes of material nature. The desire for yoga is manifested in a devotee by putting the success of his spiritual life in dependence to close association with exalted devotees, uttama-adhikaris, and in absorption in his personal bhajan, thus staying internally “aloof” from social life, including association with “ordinary devotees” and preaching. Influence of the jnana-vritti is manifested in our desire to create a great organization that will save and elevate everyone, and at the same time considering friendship with devotees and depth of our personal sadhana to be something secondary. And the karma-vrittih is an aspiration to find a “cushy lob” within ISKCON, to enjoy one’s piety, career and good relationships, without having a big desire to devote one’s life to the guru’s mission.

The desire for yoga is a synthesis of desires for karma and jnana. It is related with karma through desire for pleasure, but not only one’s enjoyment with the fruits of activity, but also with people’s whole-hearted devotion. I.e. it is an encroachment upon the soul and her love. When the leader is motivated by a desire for jnana, he acts not for his own sake, but for the sake of some idea or the organization that embodies this idea. But when he is motivated by yoga, there is a subtle manipulation of people and an attempt to attach them to the leader’s personal charisma and "divinity". Having been disappointed with karma, people come to jnana: they become religious, followers of any "-ism". Then, having been disappointed with their believes, the majority of them come back to karma, but some go further and fall into the “embraces of saints and chosen ones”, from which it is much harder to escape. Contamination with jnana is pride, contamination with karma is selfishness, and contamination with yoga is a deal (between the cheater and the cheated), the most sophisticated trap of Maya. Why do we speak about it in so much detail? The desire of fruits of activity, religious authority, and also a leader’s charisma – are three obstacles on the way to bhakti (vritti), or they can be intrinsic

components of the bhakti-yoga process. Therefore each ISKCON leader should well understand these questions and feel the difference between these two situations.

Making contrast between one aspect of bhakti and another one shows impurities in our heart. We saw that in the Constitution compiled by Srila Prabhupada all three aspects of bhakti were presented in full, furthermore they were presented as interdependent. He speaks about the importance of creating communities, development of relationships among vaisnavas (vaisnava-seva), about the importance of diksa as a process of personal awareness in spiritual life and about the study of vaisnava theology (nama ruci), he also emphasizes the value of organizing centers for preaching and distribution of the spiritual message in society (jiva-doya). Certainly, different vaisnavas according to their nature will have different tendencies in service to this Mission, but we should not only appreciate the service of others, we should also be vividly interested in different moods within Krishna consciousness, without opposing the organization (preaching) and communal relationships, two necessities to one's personal spiritual practice. When our chanting, preaching and relationships get nourished from each other – only then we obtain pure bhakti.

Conclusion

Watching the failures in the managerial structure of Russian ISKCON for many years (and doing it from within the structure), we ask ourselves: what is the cause behind the mistakes leading to the stagnation of this wonderful Movement started by Srila Prabhupada? We saw many great preachers appointed to the managerial ISKCON structure, losing after a while their missionary enthusiasm and empowerment in their service. The majority of them are already not engaged in any active devotional service in ISKCON or have even left our society. Is it only an influence of Maya's illusory energy or there is some fatal mistake in the managerial system that puts leaders into a dangerous situation? If maya is so strong, then why devotees engaged in active preaching are not submitted to its destructive influence and continue to enthusiastically serve for many years? That is something we have to deeply analyze, and this work is our humble contribution for making our society more closely connected with Srila Prabhupada and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's Mission in the managerial sphere.

Conclusions:

1. There are three ideologies of management: autocratic, democratic and collegial. The first two are generated by the influence of karma and jnana respectively, and only the third one, collegial, is connected with the spirit of pure bhakti-yoga and is favorable for its development.
2. Srila Prabhupada compiled the "Direction of management" legal document with a purpose in mind to establish a collegial culture of management at all the levels within ISKCON. But then he cancelled some of its points, because immature leaders of society substituted collegiality for democracy, and that had a devastating effect in all spheres.

3. To establish a collegial spiritual culture in our society, it is necessary to train members of society (first of all its leaders) in the principles and spirit of sat-sanga.
4. Without establishing collegial spiritual culture in the society we cannot carry out the second (not fulfilled) part of Srila Prabhupada's Mission – to establish daivi-varnasrama.

It is often possible to see leaders in our society arguing with each other and referring to externally inconsistent instructions: "Srila Prabhupada said this, Srila Prabhupada said that ...", but usually in these discussions you won't hear about fundamental principles that a spiritual organization is based on. Therefore devotees cannot go outside the sphere of contradictions. The reason is that we still do not apply the Vedic principle of deductive knowledge (from general to particular) in the practical questions. Some leaders understanding that discussions with other leaders without having common conceptual grounds cannot bring anything good, just silently build "their own ISKCON". If there is no analysis of the general ideology of the spiritual organization within the sanga of its leaders, many of them will lose their faith in the possibility of ISKCON as a united spiritual organization, because they will face the fact that leaders are not capable to unite through enthusiastic submission to one managerial kernel. In the physical absence of the Founder-Acarya only a uniform ideology founded on his instructions and a mutual strategy based on it, can play the role of this uniting kernel.

We have to admit that in our society some leaders avoid clarifying which paradigms of management are connected with values of bhakti and which ones are against bhakti values (i.e. they avoid clarifying our ideology). Their message is: "Wherever there is an organization, there will always be politics, careerism and violence, because this is material world. But our ISKCON is still bona-fide, therefore we just have to tolerate and continue going on. The main thing is to try to chant Hare Krishna and to be good vaisnavas". Actually, this position means their rejection of the

concept of spiritual organization and its substitution with the concept of organized religion. Of course we all know that imperfections and impurities are inherent in any efforts including managerial. But managerial impurity itself is not capable of becoming an opponent to bhakti until it becomes vritti, i.e. desire to separate management from bhakti.

In the Upadesamrita (verse 2) Srila Rupa Gosvami warns devotees about *niamagraha*, which is expressed either in neglecting spiritual instructions, either in following them without understanding their meaning. The first way is more dangerous for the new devotees, and the second one is particularly dangerous for the leaders, because complete understanding of the meaning and the spirit of instructions given by the Founder-Acarya in his writings, is important for their proper application according to the place, time and circumstances.

In the introduction to this book we told our readers that the Conclusion will contain important points about application of the concepts of collegiality within the society of devotees. And now you may be asking yourself: “So what should I do with this knowledge in a situation where a lot of things around me are done differently?” - Now is a right time to talk about that. In the beginning we have to remind you that true understanding gives not only enthusiasm, but also tolerance (*utsaha*, *niscaya* and *dharya* are inseparably linked together). Therefore the first sign that you are being moved not by an abstract moral idea, but by inspiration coming from the sat-sanga, is that you do not try to violently change an existing order of things, but simply discuss with devotees those values that inspire you. Devotees are very sensitive to Krishna’s voice and consequently if you do not claim for truth, but sincerely and relying on Srila Prabhupada discuss with them important subjects, you will find the atmosphere to be gradually changing, devotees “opening up” in the sanga and feeling enthusiasm in it. That is the sign that shows you have received necessary empowerment to be the maintainer-leader.

The topic of collegiality can sometimes aggravate seniors if

they suspect that it goes against the principle of accepting authority. Then a lot will depend on how much do you really appreciate what has been done by the seniors before the “new trends”. It happens sometimes that the leader is already a little tired and wants a usual order of things to continue without any changes. There's nothing to be done, and in some cases you will have to deal with contradictions by involving more senior devotees. The main thing is not to put shortcuts on devotees, especially on the leaders: “this one is a democrat”, and “that one is an autocrat”. Such tendency shows that sat-sanga principles become not some spiritual value, but some kind of ideological "brand". Ideas will not relieve us of the consequences of our offenses. At this stage of analyzing sat-sanga principles it is more important to discuss them, observing the first experience of how they work in the sphere of relationships and collegial service, instead of trying to “implement” them.

If ISKCON leaders do not learn to reveal Krishna’s will in the sat-sanga and to enthusiastically follow his will, aren’t they showing their expectations for a new Acarya to come, to become a source of inspiration and unite everyone? And could this message to the Lord be considered the manifestation of our devotion to Srila Prabhupada? The answer is quite clear. We are sure that if ISKCON leaders are able to unite around values and principles established by Srila Prabhupada, they will insert new energy in his Movement, thus making it more powerful and a pure tool of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu’s mercy.

Appendix 1. Harmonizing ISKCON's Lines of Authority

History of the Topic

Several years ago the GBC embarked upon developing a systematic plan for the future of ISKCON. They selected several issues of primary importance to the movement and formed committees to discuss those issues. One of the committees was requested to study the divergent lines of authority within ISKCON and suggest a method for settling disagreements between them. The members of this committee were Bhanu Swami, Guruprasada Swami, Prahladananda Swami, Ramai Swami, Sivarama Swami, Badrinarayan Dasa, and, later, Niranjana Swami. After a thorough discussion, the members of this committee concluded that the most pressing issue to address was the tension created when spiritual masters sometimes act as an independent line of authority within ISKCON.

Focus of the Essay

Hence, this essay will focus exclusively on defining principles that should be followed by initiating or instructing spiritual masters, disciples of initiating or instructing spiritual masters, Zonal GBCs, Regional Secretaries, Temple Presidents, and other ISKCON-authorized managers. The aim is to prevent misunderstandings between spiritual masters and

managers, as well as to minimize the influence these potential misunderstandings may have upon devotees under their combined care.

"Spiritual Master" Means Diksa, Siksa, or Both

It should be noted that, from here on, unless specified, whenever we refer to "the spiritual master" we mean both initiating spiritual masters and instructing spiritual masters (including managers who act as such). Additionally, whenever we refer to "spiritual authorities" we mean anyone (spiritual master or manager) whose instructions (siksa) and example have formed the foundation of a devotee's faith in devotional service and who continues to build on that foundation of the devotee's faith.

Authority Within ISKCON

This essay is not a detailed or definitive analysis of ISKCON's management system, nor is it a detailed analysis of guru-tattva—the requisite qualities and duties of a spiritual master and the process of choosing a spiritual master.

The basic premise of this essay is as follows: Whether a devotee is an initiating spiritual master, an instructing spiritual master, a sannyasi, a Governing Body Commissioner, a Zonal Secretary, a Regional Secretary, a Temple President, a congregational leader, or anyone else in a position of authority within ISKCON, the

authority bestowed upon that devotee is complete only if he or she follows Srila Prabhupada's instruction to serve in ISKCON under the authority of the GBC Body.

To establish this premise, we feel we need do no more than emphasize that His Divine Grace consistently and clearly established this principle in his teachings, as well as within official documents he himself signed. Srila Prabhupada thus clearly established the GBC as the ultimate managing authority and also indicated that the GBC's jurisdiction includes the responsibility to offer spiritual guidance (çikñä) to the whole of ISKCON, including all devotees serving as spiritual masters:

Reporter: "Is there anyone who is designated to succeed you as the primary teacher of the movement?"

Srila Prabhupada: "I am training some, I mean to say, advanced students so that they may very easily take up the charge. I have made them GBC."¹

In other words, although the GBC is the ultimate managing authority in ISKCON, the GBC's duty is not only to manage but to teach.

Two Lines of Authority

Since every devotee accepts his or her spiritual inspiration from higher authorities, two lines of authority, with their representatives, exist within ISKCON—one is

¹ Room Conversation with Reporter, Los Angeles, June 4, 1976

seen as primarily spiritual, while the other is seen as primarily managerial. Both lines of authority serve their own unique yet interdependent purposes in submission to the orders of our Founder-Acarya. Both are authorized by the GBC to give shelter to devotees under their care. This shelter is given through both instruction and example.

By distinguishing the two lines of spiritual authority in these terms—as primarily spiritual or primarily managerial—we are not suggesting that managerial authority is contrary to spiritual authority. Nor are we suggesting that the spiritual line of authority is somehow more privileged or intrinsically more pure.

*"Management is also spiritual activity. . . . It is Krishna's establishment."*²

"In our preaching work . . . we deal with so much property and money and so many books bought and sold, but because these dealings all pertain to the Krsna consciousness movement, they should never be considered material. That one is absorbed in thoughts of such management does not mean that he is outside of Krsna consciousness. If one rigidly observes the regulative principle of chanting sixteen rounds of the maha-mantra every day, his dealings with the material world for the sake of spreading the Krsna consciousness

² Room Conversation, January 16, 1977, Calcutta

*movement are not different from the spiritual cultivation of Krsna consciousness."*³

In a spiritual society a manager cannot fulfill his or her duty to manage simply by declaring and enforcing rules. The rules themselves must have a spiritual foundation, and their implementation and enforcement must be applied in accordance with Vaisnava principles. Managers who serve with this understanding will generally carry the full weight of spiritual authority for those under their charge.

We should therefore see the oneness between "spiritual" and "managerial." But there is also some difference, and understanding this simultaneous oneness and difference requires the use of these two distinct terms with their explanations.

The Spiritual Line of Authority

The spiritual line of authority begins with Lord Krishna and continues to Brahma, Narada, Vyasa, and the entire disciplic succession through Srila Prabhupada, our Founder-Acarya. Those who are submissive to our sampradaya and who serve under the authority of the GBC are authorized to give diksa and shelter in this spiritual line, under the auspices of ISKCON. This spiritual line can include Governing Body Commissioners, GBC Zonal Secretaries, spiritual masters, sannyasis, Regional Secretaries, Temple Presidents, congregational leaders,

³ Srimad Bhagavatam, 5.16.3, purport

and both traveling and community preachers. In fact, anyone who strictly follows a bona fide spiritual master, both by example and precept, can be authorized to represent the spiritual line of authority.

Generally speaking, the most prominent spiritual authority is one's initiating or instructing spiritual master. The scriptures clearly say that devotees should obey and be loyal to their spiritual masters. The spiritual masters thus exert authority over their disciples, and in so doing the spiritual masters are able to train and educate their disciples in the development of bhakti. The spiritual masters, therefore, assume a significant role in giving their disciples the spiritual education and inspiration necessary to advance in Krishna consciousness.

The Managerial Line of Authority

In the managerial line of authority, and in accordance with Çréla Prabhupāda's instructions, the supervision of the Society and the enforcement of its rules proceed from the GBC. When we use the word "authority" in the context of the managerial structure, we do not mean an absolute, infallible authority—such as the authority of scripture—but the mandate to organize the preaching movement so that it is aligned with the instructions of Çréla Prabhupāda. To carry out that mandate, his followers have adapted ISKCON's managerial system, given by Çréla Prabhupāda, to take into account the proliferation of temples, congregational devotees (who are not temple residents), and projects like farms and

gurukulas, as well as other favorable organizations and entities. Thus, to better serve this expanding field and its members, this structure presently includes various regional, national, and continental governing bodies consisting of, but not limited to, Governing Body Commissioners, GBC Zonal Secretaries, spiritual masters, sannyasis, Regional Secretaries, Temple Presidents, congregational leaders, and both traveling and community preachers.

Defining the Point of Divergence

Although in an ideal world everything would work according to Çréla Prabhupāda's vision for ISKCON, we have seen tendencies from those in one line of authority to interfere with those in the other line of authority.

For instance, there are spiritual authorities who sometimes interfere with competent and responsible managers. They do not consider themselves part of the zonal managerial structure where their preaching has influence (though they are in fact accountable to it), but they are still either directly or indirectly managing some project(s) within that structure.

Therefore at times they manage devotees, money, and even projects that their followers and dependents⁴ are

⁴"Dependents" are not only those who are spiritually dependent. There are instances where devotees are also financially dependent upon their spiritual authorities and are financially maintained by the structures the spiritual authorities have themselves created.

responsible for, without a clear agreement with the managerial structure with which they intersect. By so doing, they may inadvertently undermine the managerial line of authority by encouraging their dependents to direct their service, and thus their loyalty, to their spiritual authority's own management structure.

This scenario creates not only confusion but a spirit of separatism as well. Situations such as these can also become points of contention for managers, although the more junior managers often refrain from directly voicing their grievances because they feel intimidated out of fear of committing offenses, especially to spiritual masters.

On the other hand, there are also managerial authorities who sometimes provide inadequate spiritual care. This can fuel the spiritual master's inclination to intervene by suggesting an alternative for his disciple's association or service.

For instance, managers may sometimes place greater importance on management goals than on sadhana, preaching purely, or the development of purity in the devotional service of those under their care. Managers may even neglect the spiritual development of those within their jurisdiction who do not offer resources to help their managerial vision, even though said managers may have done little to inspire help from them or to empower other authorities to do the same.

Deference to the Managerial Line of Authority

The above-mentioned scenarios cause tension between the spiritual and the managerial lines of authority.

Of course, it is understood that circumstances do arise where there are financially independent devotees who have no managerial connection with locally organized sanghas. Still, it should not be assumed that no effort is being made by local management structures to include every devotee, or aspiring devotee, within their locally managed system of care for congregational devotees.

Therefore, with respect to the service performed by ISKCON managers, a spiritual master should always seek approval from the managers overseeing the area of jurisdiction in which his disciples are living before suggesting a new sangha or service for them, or intervening in other managerial decisions.

Best, of course, is to train the disciples to offer respect to their local managers right from the start of the spiritual-master/disciple relationship. Many ISKCON managers are carrying out the responsibility of maintaining the temples, Deities, book distribution, and other standards given to us by Çréla Prabhupāda.

"Deity installation means regular worship without fail and for good."⁵

⁵ Letter to Sivananda, 2 September 1971

Therefore spiritual masters should teach their disciples to serve Çréla Prabhupāda's mission by cooperating with their local leaders and managers.

But this does not mean that a manager should assume that he or she has complete freedom to ignore legitimate needs of those under his or her care or that he or she has the freedom to ignore concerns expressed by spiritual masters who ask them to see that their disciples are properly cared for. They should be sensitive to the concerns of the spiritual masters as well as their disciples.

If the spiritual master still strongly feels that the level of care for his disciples within the local management structure is inadequate, taking into account the level of commitment and responsibilities being asked of them (his disciples), then he may appeal on their behalf to the higher levels of management, the local GBC, or other ISKCON avenues of appeal, as listed later in this paper.

More on this point will be addressed later. But before we do that, we will first briefly discuss the topic of faith. Those in both lines of authority would be well served to consider the relevance of faith to the broader issues being discussed here.

Authority Is Built on the Continuous Development of Faith

ISKCON's greatest asset is the faith of its members. Even if there are no temples, no projects, no income, and only a few followers, if there is faith, there will be prosperity, in the true sense of the term. Consider what Çréla Prabhupāda has written in the following letter:

"There is a proverb in Sanskrit literature that enthusiastic persons achieve the favor of the Goddess of Fortune. In the Western part of the world there is tangible example of this slogan. People in this part of the world are very much enthusiastic in material advancement and they have got it. Similarly, according to the instructions of Srila Rupa Goswami, if we become enthusiastic in spiritual matters, then we also get success in that way. Take for example, I came to your country in ripe old age, but I had one asset: enthusiasm and faith in my Spiritual Master. I think these assets only are giving me some lights of hope, whatever I have achieved so far with your cooperation."⁶

And in his purport to "Bhagavad-gita As It Is" 9.3, Çréla Prabhupāda writes: "Faith is the most important factor for progress in Krishna consciousness. . . . It is only by faith that one can advance in Krishna consciousness."

Those in the spiritual line of authority should preach and behave in such a way that they nourish and protect their dependents' faith in pure devotional service, in our sampradaya, in Çréla Prabhupāda, and in ISKCON, including its management. Spiritual masters also have the

⁶Letter to Jaya Govinda, Tittenhurst, 15 October 1969.

added responsibility of nourishing and protecting ISKCON's managers' faith that they (the spiritual masters) are fit representatives of the spiritual line of authority. If the spiritual masters act in a contrary way, they will erode the faith of others.

Conversely, those in the managerial line of authority should manage, preach, and behave in such a way that they build and sustain the trust of those in the spiritual line of authority and their disciples. By the managers showing genuine concern for the devotees under their care, the spiritual masters will then naturally encourage their disciples to assist the manager in his service. But if managers act in a way contrary to spiritual principles, in conflict with the spiritual interests of those devotees for whom they are responsible, that will also erode others' faith.

Therefore, to safeguard the faith of all of ISKCON's members, it is necessary that we delineate clear principles for both lines of authority to follow.

Spiritual Masters Are Not Independent

To further clarify the need to introduce well-defined principles, we will examine the position of spiritual masters within the managerial structure of ISKCON.

When Srila Prabhupāda was physically present, he was ISKCON's sole initiating spiritual master, its preeminent

çikñä guru, and the supreme managerial authority, superior to the GBC:

"[...] we are managing our Krishna Consciousness Movement by the Governing Body Commission, GBC. We have got about 20 GBC's looking after the whole world affair, and above the GBC I am there. Below the GBC there are the temple president, secretary, treasurer in every centre. So the temple president is responsible to the GBC and the GBC is responsible to me. In this way we are managing.."7

In Çréla Prabhupāda's physical absence the structure is now somewhat different. His Divine Grace instructed that the GBC should be the ultimate managing authority for ISKCON. At the same time he indicated that the Society should have multiple spiritual masters:

"Anyone following the order of Lord Caitanya under the guidance of His bona fide representative can become a spiritual master, and I wish that in my absence all my disciples become the bona fide spiritual master to spread Krishna Consciousness throughout the whole world."8

This gives rise to a challenging situation. Many spiritual organizations have one spiritual master operating as the sole head of the institution, whereas ISKCON has many spiritual masters within one organization, in addition to a "governing body" that operates as the "ultimate

⁷Letter to: Vasudeva, New Vrindaban, 30 June, 1976

⁸Letter to Madhusudana, Navadvipa, 2 November 1967.

managing authority" for the institution as a whole. Those serving as spiritual masters in ISKCON are meant to follow the instructions of Çréla Prabhupāda and work under the GBC Body.

The spiritual masters are thus obligated to follow the Society's policies and codes of conduct, including those outlined in this GBC-approved paper, and to abide by the decisions of its management. Included within that obligation is the responsibility to inspire their disciples to associate with and serve within ISKCON's already-existing managerial and devotee-care sangas, located within their disciple's area of residence rather than only inspiring them to associate with themselves (the spiritual masters) or with their sangas and projects that have no connection with the ISKCON zonal management structure.

Disciples Should Avoid Creating Conflict Between Their Authorities

Disciples should also understand the greater picture within ISKCON. Certainly a spiritual master may be more spiritually advanced than any given GBC member or any other ISKCON manager (while there may also be cases where the local GBC or ISKCON manager may be more spiritually advanced than a particular spiritual master).

Nevertheless, concerning the spiritual management of the Society, as we have already clearly shown, Çréla

Prabhupāda invested authority in the GBC and its individual members and in other ISKCON managers.

If a disciple has the mistaken conviction that his or her spiritual master is above the GBC and ISKCON's laws and policies, that should be corrected by the spiritual master and other authorities. Otherwise, that misconception may lead to actions which create conflict between his or her spiritual and managerial authorities

Indeed, all disciples should follow their ISKCON authorities in the same way that all initiating and instructing spiritual masters should follow their own authorities within ISKCON.

By both example and precept, therefore, all spiritual masters should not only educate and train their disciples in the development of bhakti but should also educate and train them about their relation to the managerial structure of ISKCON, as well as about the spiritual masters' own relation to that structure.

Principles Being Introduced

Education of guru's disciples

It is the responsibility of the spiritual masters within ISKCON to help every one of their disciples clearly understand the following:

1) The spiritual master draws his authority from his fidelity to Çréla Prabhupāda. This includes fidelity to Çréla Prabhupāda's order to work within his mission, ISKCON.

2) The spiritual master is a member of ISKCON and, as such, is accountable to the collective will of its leadership, the GBC Body.

3) The spiritual master does not derive any specific right or prerogative over ISKCON resources simply by dint of his being a spiritual master. Moreover, the spiritual master should not misuse his rights and prerogatives over his disciples.

4) The disciples should follow their ISKCON authorities in the same way that all initiating and instructing spiritual masters set an example by following their own ISKCON authorities.

5) Disciples have the essential task of surrendering to Krishna through the spiritual master, and included within this task is recognizing and respecting other superiors within ISKCON's management who are helping them in their process of spiritual progress.

6) Spiritually mature managers may be the main çikñä gurus for devotees who are not their initiated disciples, and such relationships are to be fully encouraged by the initiating spiritual masters.

Conduct of gurus

Moreover, to show respect toward the managerial line of authority and to help nurture and protect managers' faith in the spiritual line of authority, every spiritual master should:

1) When first visiting or preferably before arriving at a recognized ISKCON temple or preaching center, ask the local manager how he (the spiritual master) may serve that yatra during his visit (rather than the spiritual master only pursuing his own agenda).

2) Before planning a visit to a zone or region where there is no local temple or preaching center, first ask the Zonal GBC if there is a vision local leaders have for that place or region which he (the spiritual master) could serve.

3) If there is a disagreement in terms of managerial decisions, do his best to cooperate with the relevant authority. If no agreement can be reached, then the spiritual master should defer to the decision of the relevant authority, with the option of appealing to higher authorities if necessary.

Duties of Managers

To build cooperation within ISKCON, show respect for the spiritual line of authority, and help nurture and protect the faith of spiritual masters and their disciples in the managerial line of authority, all managers should:

- 1) Be receptive to advice given by initiating spiritual masters and other itinerant preachers visiting their area of jurisdiction, especially on matters concerning devotee care.**
- 2) Protect the faith that their dependents have in pure devotional service and in the principle of accepting and serving an initiating spiritual master and instructing spiritual masters.**
- 3) Encourage and support a system of devotee care (i.e., counselor system, brahminical advisory board, etc.) within their sphere of management.**
- 4) Assure that the managers in their line of authority are themselves trained in the principles of devotee care.**
- 5) Inform visiting spiritual masters about the spiritual health and overall well-being of their disciples.**
- 6) Encourage and help visiting spiritual masters and other itinerant preachers to reach out to those disciples who are in need and who would be most responsive to their help.**
- 7) Insure that there is an equitable system for initiation recommendations which does not condone unwarranted pressure or manipulation from the local management for managerial gains.**

Summary

To promote the full flourishing of devotees' spiritual lives, Çréla Prabhupāda created for ISKCON a managerial structure with clear lines of authority. Every member of ISKCON should respect this structure and learn to work within it. The goal of the managerial structure is spiritual: to facilitate the spiritual advancement of ISKCON's members through association with devotees, opportunities for service, and effective preaching strategies. Simultaneously, ISKCON affirms the fundamental importance of accepting initiation from a bona fide spiritual master.

Of paramount importance, of course, is our Founder-Acarya, Çréla Prabhupāda, who is the initiating spiritual master of many devotees in ISKCON and the foremost instructing spiritual master of every devotee, now and in the future. Also important are the many initiating and instructing spiritual masters now serving in ISKCON.

All spiritual masters and their disciples should likewise appreciate the importance of the many managers in our society, who help guide and train disciples and oversee the facilities ISKCON provides for their spiritual advancement. All spiritual masters and their disciples should work cooperatively within ISKCON's managerial system, both to benefit themselves spiritually and to help the Society flourish.

This cooperative, mutually respectful spirit is the best way to preserve the Society's unity, please Çréla Prabhupāda, and expand the sankirtana mission.

In the mood of Lord Caitanya, Çréla Prabhupāda desired that the sankirtana movement be spread all over the world, "to every town and village." He demonstrated that desire by his constant traveling, writing, and speaking. He requested his disciples to open centers far and wide, distribute his books, arrange for attractive festivals, distribute prasada, etc. It was Çréla Prabhupāda's desire that ISKCON continue to expand, to rise as the benediction moon of Lord Caitanya's mercy.

It is for this purpose that Çréla Prabhupāda established ISKCON as a spiritual institution with a managerial structure. The purpose of this structure is to maintain the standards he established, to offer shelter and spiritual nourishment to the devotees, and to support and increase the sankirtana mission. To please Çréla Prabhupāda by delivering the mercy of Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai to the conditioned souls, everyone within ISKCON—spiritual masters, disciples, and managers alike—should work cooperatively within this structure.

Appendix 2. Direction of Management

**INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA
CONSCIOUSNESS, INCORPORATED**

**FOUNDER-ACHARYA: HIS DIVINE GRACE
A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA
DIRECTION OF MANAGEMENT**

I, the undersigned, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, disciple of Om Visnupad Paramhansa 108 Sri Sriman Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaj Prabhupada, came in the United States in 1965 on September 18th for the purpose of starting Krishna Consciousness Movement. For one year I had no shelter. I was travelling in many parts of this country. Then in 1966, July, I incorporated the Society under the name and style the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, briefly ISKCON. The lawyer was Mr. J. Goldsmith. Gradually the Society increased, and one after another branches were opened. Now we have got thirty-four (34) branches enlisted herewith:

Amsterdam, Holland

Atlanta, Georgia 1476 Oxford Rd. N.E. 30322

Baltimore, Maryland 1300 N. Calvert St.

Berkeley, California 2710 Durant Avenue 94704

Berlin, West Germany

Boston, Massachusetts 40 N. Beacon St. 02134

Boulder, Colorado 623 Concord St.

Buffalo, New York 40 Englewood Ave. 14214

Chicago, Illinois 2210 N. Halstead St.

Columbus, Ohio 318 East 20th Ave. 43201
 Detroit, Michigan 74 West Forest St. 48201
 Edinburgh, Scotland, U.K.
 Hamburg, West Germany 2000 Hamburg 6,
 Bartelstrasse 65
 Honolulu, Hawaii 2016 McKinley St. 96822
 Laguna Beach, California 130 Woodland Drive 92651
 London, England 7 Bury Place, Bloomsbury, W.C. 1
 Los Angeles, California 3764 Watseka Ave. 90034
 Montreal, Canada 3720 Park Ave.
 New Vrndavana, W. Virginia RD 3 Moundsville
 26041
 New York City, New York 61 Second Ave. 10003
 Paris, France c/o Serge Elbeze, BO 113 Paris 14
 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 416 South 10th St. 19147
 Provincetown, Massachusetts 104 Bradford St.
 San Diego, California 3689 Park Blvd.
 San Francisco, California 618 Frederick St. 94117
 San Jose, California 70 Hawthorne Way
 Santa Barbara, California 6654 del Playa, Goleta 93017
 Seattle, Washington 5516 Roosevelt Way N.E. 98105
 St. Louis, Missouri 4544 LaClede Ave. 63110
 Sydney, Australia 298 Birrell St. Bondi, N.S.W. 2026
 Tokyo, Japan 6-16, 2 Chome Ohhashi, Meguro-Ku
 Toronto, Canada 40 Beverly St., Ontario
 Vancouver, Canada 260 Raymur St., No. 305, B.C.
 Washington, D.C. 2015 Q Street N.W. 20009

As we have increased our volume of activities,
 now I think a Governing Body Commission (hereinafter
 referred to as the GBC) should be established. I am
 getting old, 75 years old, therefore at any time I may be

out of the scene, therefore I think it is necessary to give instruction to my disciples how they shall manage the whole institution. They are already managing individual centers represented by one president, one secretary and one treasurer, and in my opinion they are doing nice. But we want still more improvement in the standard of Temple management, propaganda for Krishna Consciousness, distribution of books and literatures, opening of new centers and educating devotees to the right standard. Therefore, I have decided to adopt the following principles and I hope my beloved disciples will kindly accept them.

There was a meeting in San Francisco during the Ratha Yatra festival 1970 and many presidents of the centers were present. In that meeting it was resolved that an ad hoc committee be set up to form the constitution which is taken into consideration. My duty was to first appoint twelve (12) persons to my free choice amongst my disciples and I do it now and their names are as follows:

1. Sriman Rupanuga Das Adhikary
2. Sriman Bhagavandas Adhikary
3. Sriman Syamsundar Das Adhikary
4. Sriman Satsvarupa Das Adhikary
5. Sriman Karandhar Das Adhikary
6. Sriman Hansadutta Das Adhikary
7. Sriman Tamala Krishna Das Adhikary
8. Sriman Sudama Das Adhikary
9. Sriman Bali Mardan Das Brahmachary
10. Sriman Jagadisa Das Adhikary
11. Sriman Hayagriva Das Adhikary
12. Sriman Krishnadas Adhikary

These personalities are now considered as my direct representatives. While I am living they will act as my zonal secretaries and after my demise they will be known as Executors.

I have already awarded Sannyas or the renounced order of life to some of my students and they have also got very important duties to perform in this connection. The Sannyasis will travel to our different centers for preaching purpose as well as enlightening the members of the center for spiritual advancement. The Sannyasis will suggest for opening new centers in suitable places and the GBC will take action on it.

As was stipulated by the ad hoc committee, the function of the GBC will be as follows with particulars:

PARTICULARS OF THE GOVERNING BODY COMMISSION

"The purpose of the Governing Body Commission is to act as the instrument for the execution of the Will of His Divine Grace. And further,

1. The GBC oversees all operations and management of ISKCON, as it receives direction from Srila Prabhupada and His Divine Grace has the final approval in all matters.

2. His Divine Grace will select the initial 12 members of the GBC. In the succeeding years the GBC will be elected by a vote of all Temple presidents who

will vote for 8 from a ballot of all Temple presidents, which may also include any secretary who is in charge of a Temple. Those 8 with the greatest number of votes will be members for the next term of GBC. Srila Prabhupada will choose to retain four commissioners. In the event of Srila Prabhupada's absence, the retiring members will decide which four will remain.

3. The commissioners will serve for a period of 3 years, and they may be re-elected at the end of this period.

4. The chairman is elected by the GBC for each meeting. He has no veto power, but in event of a vote tie, his vote will decide. The same will apply for votes cast by mail between regular meetings.

5. Throughout the year, each of the commissioners will stay with His Divine Grace for one month at a time and keep the other commissioners informed of His Divine Grace's instructions.

6. The primary objective of the GBC is to organize the opening of new Temples and to maintain the established Temples.

7. Advice will be given by the GBC in cases of real property purchases, which will be in the name of ISKCON, INC. (Trucks or other vehicles will be purchased in the name of the local president).

8. Removal of a Temple president by the GBC

requires support by the local Temple members.

9. The GBC has no jurisdiction in the publication of manuscripts, which will be handled by a separate committee; profits to be returned to Srila Prabhupada."

So far my books are concerned, I am setting up a different body of management known as the BHAKTIVEDANTA BOOK TRUST. The trustees of this body are also members of the GBC, but their function is not dependent on the GBC.

ISKCON Press was created for the exclusive publication of my books and literatures and should be continued in that way.

During my absence no one shall live in my apartment.

ACB

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Witnessed by:

Date July 28th 1970

(Robert F. Corens)

Rupanuga das Adhikary

(William R. Ehrlichman)

Bhagavan das Adhikary

(Kelly Gifford Smith)

Karandhar das Adhikary

Date July 28th, 1970

At the World Head Quarters

3764, Watseka Avenue

Los Angeles, California 90034

Appendix 3. Letter to Karandhara, 22-nd of December, 1972, Bombay.

Los Angeles

My dear Karandhara,

Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your dated December 11, 1972, and I have noted the contents with care. Regarding your proposal to cash my bonds and take that house in New York, I have heard from Bali Mardan that the bid was refused and that he has made another bid, but it will be some time before it is decided. And Dhananjaya has telephoned to Bombay to request for keeping that down payment, because George is very keen to purchase one monastery and there is every chance they will get it before one week. At least let us see. So there is no immediate need to cash my bonds, nor take the money from London. Jayatirtha has informed that Bali Mardan has saved more than \$100,000 in few months time only, so New York is very rich place for collecting, so why not he shall collect there for few more months to raise the whole price? Also, that place on 77th Street is not so much important as 5th Avenue and 40th Street. If we are taking such big place for big risk, why not in the important business district?

Now my plan for books in India is this: We shall pay MacMillan for 20,000 copies of Bhagavad-Gita at \$1.25 each. Price may be settled as it is required, but not more than \$30,000. I shall pay for 5,000 copies from my bonds, you pay for the balance 15,000 copies from Book

Fund there. 5,000 Gitas may be sent immediately to India, the balance you distribute other places. In India we want to order a variety of books. So you may immediately order from Dai Nippon 5,000 copies each of KRSNA (Vol. II) (Hard-bound), TLC (soft-bound), NOD (soft-bound), KRSNA TRILOGY (soft-bound), Srimad-Bhagavatam (5,000 of each volume), plus you may send to India 10,000 each of each of the small books, like Easy Journey, Topmost Yoga, Beyond Birth and Death, Isopanisad, like that. So these books should be given at cost-price only, not wholesale price, and you may cash some of my bonds to pay the total cost-price of the above books to Dai Nippon and ISKCON Press. They shall pay me back here into one M-V Trust Fund Account at the rate of ten rupees per dollar, plus they shall give me some profit. So you may inform me what is the cost per book for each of the above, and the total cost you are having to deduct from my bonds. All books should be sent to India as quickly as possible.

Regarding the work of Pradyumna, now he is working very hard to finish those missing portions, and he will send you very soon. Actually, whatever else he may be doing, I very much appreciate Pradyumna's work. Everyday he gives me some solid work, at least something every day, so I am very much appreciating. I was in Ahmedabad preaching daily in the morning and evening for last two weeks, and at least ten thousand were coming to hear. From January 12th our second Hare Krishna Festival will go on in the Cross Maidan in Bombay, and Tamala Krishna and Syamasundara are planning something very gorgeous just to push on the

preaching work. Meanwhile I am little resting behind the scenes for few days, and one Karatieya Mahadevia has been very kind to give us his place all to ourselves just by the seaside on Warden Road. Many big men of Bombay are coming to see me daily for confidential talks, and they are beginning to very much become inclined to our philosophy. I think in this place, it is very restful and there is no interruption, so I think I shall be able to increase my translations work.

Regarding your points about taxation, corporate status, etc., I have heard from Jayatirtha you want to make big plan for centralization of management, taxes, monies, corporate status, bookkeeping, credit, like that. I do not at all approve of such plan. Do not centralize anything. Each temple must remain independent and self-sufficient. That was my plan from the very beginning, why you are thinking otherwise? Once before you wanted to do something centralizing with your GBC meeting, and if I did not interfere the whole thing would have been killed. Do not think in this way of big corporation, big credits, centralization—these are all nonsense proposals. Only thing I wanted was that books printing and distribution should be centralized, therefore I appointed you and Bali Mardan to do it. Otherwise, management, everything, should be done locally by local men. Accounts must be kept, things must be in order and lawfully done, but that should be each temple's concern, not yours. Krishna Consciousness Movement is for training men to be independently thoughtful and competent in all types of departments of knowledge and action, not for making bureaucracy. Once there is

bureaucracy the whole thing will be spoiled. There must be always individual striving and work and responsibility, competitive spirit, not that one shall dominate and distribute benefits to the others and they do nothing but beg from you and you provide. No. Never mind there may be botheration to register each centre, take tax certificate each, become separate corporations in each state. That will train men how to do these things, and they shall develop reliability and responsibility, that is the point. I am little observing now, especially in your country, that our men are losing their enthusiasm for spreading on our programmes of Krishna Consciousness movement. Otherwise, why so many letters of problems are coming, dissatisfied? That is not a very good sign. The whole problem is they are not following the regulative principles, that I can detect. Without this, enthusiasm will be lacking. Even mechanically following, and if he gets gradually understanding from the class, he will come to the point of spontaneous enthusiasm. This spontaneous loving devotional service is not so easy matter, but if one simply sticks strictly to the rules and regulations, like rising early, chanting 16 rounds, chanting gayatri, keeping always clean—then his enthusiasm will grow more and more, and if there is also patience and determination, one day he will come to the platform of spontaneous devotion, then his life will be perfect. All of this I have told you in Nectar of Devotion. So I do not think the leaders are themselves following, nor they are seeing the others are following strictly. That must be rectified at once. Each centre remain independent, that's all right, but the president and other officers must themselves follow and see the others are

following the regulative principles carefully, and giving them good instruction so they may understand nicely why this tapasya is necessary. And GBC and Sannyasis will travel and see the officers are doing this, and if they observe anything lowering of the standard, they must reform and advise, or if there is some discrepancy I shall remove it. Of course, if new men are coming, they may not be expected immediately to take to our regulative principles cent per cent. Therefore we should not be so anxious to induce them to live in the temple. Anyone who lives in the temple must agree to follow the rules and regulations without fail. So if some new man moves in with us he may become discouraged if he is forced in this way. Therefore let them live outside and become gradually convinced in the class why they should accept some austerity, then they will live with us out of their own accord and follow nicely everything. It is very difficult to give up very quickly so many bad habits as you have got in your country, so educate them gradually, first with chanting, and do not be so much anxious to count up so many numbers of new devotees, if such devotees go away later being too early forced. I want to see a few sincere devotees, not many false devotees or pretenders.

So my point is that the regulative principles must be followed by everyone. Otherwise their enthusiasm dwindles and they again think of sex and become restless, and so many problems are there. There is some symptom of missing the point. The point is to be engaged in doing something for Krishna, never mind what is that job, but being so engaged in doing

something very much satisfying to the devotee that he remains always enthusiastic. He will automatically follow the regulative principles because they are part of his occupational duty—by applying them practically as his occupational duty, he realizes the happy result of regulative principles. So the future of this Krishna Consciousness movement is very bright, so long the managers remain vigilant that 16 rounds are being chanted by everyone without fail, that they are all rising before four morning, attending mangal arati—our leaders shall be careful not to kill the spirit of enthusiastic service, which is individual and spontaneous and voluntary. They should try always to generate some atmosphere of fresh challenge to the devotees, so that they will agree enthusiastically to rise and meet it. That is the art of management: to draw out spontaneous loving spirit of sacrificing some energy for Krishna. But where are so many expert managers? All of us should become expert managers and preachers. We should not be very much after comforts and become complacent or self-contented. There must be always some tapasya, strictly observing the regulative principles—Krishna Consciousness movement must be always a challenge, a great achievement to be gained by voluntary desire to do it, and that will keep it healthy. So you big managers now try to train up more and more some competent preachers and managers like yourselves. Forget this centralizing and bureaucracy.

Hoping this meets you in good health.
Your ever well-wisher,
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Appendix 4. "Carrying out Srila Prabhupada's Order". The GBC as ISKCON's ultimate managing authority.

- **Introduction**

The beginning of this paper takes us to Vrindaban in the early 1960s. We see Srila Prabhupada sitting alone in his rooms at the Radha-Damodar temple. He is looking out at the samadhi of Srila Rupa Goswami and meditating on the state of his spiritual master's mission: what it had been when his guru maharaja was present, what it was meant to become, and the sad state it had fallen into. Later on he would write in the Chaitanya Charitamrita:

"Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura, at the time of his departure, requested all his disciples to form a governing body and conduct missionary activities cooperatively. Despite the spiritual master's order to form a governing body and execute the missionary activities of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, the two unauthorized factions began litigation that is still going on after forty years with no decision."

Adi Lila 12.8 / purport

Srila Prabhupada felt great pain when he considered how his spiritual master's once-powerful mission had been shattered by party spirit, individual ambition, distraction

by material facility, and loss of the spirit of cooperation. His analysis was that a key cause of the collapse of the Gaudiya Math's united efforts was their failure to follow the order of their spiritual master. The day before his departure from this world, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur had instructed his followers:

"Form a governing body of 10-12 persons for managing the mission's work" December 31st, 1936 Bhaktivedanta Research Institute / diary of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur.

Srila Prabhupada was also meditating on executing his own instructions from his spiritual master: to take the message of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to the West. He foresaw the mission of his spiritual master reinvigorated into a powerful world-wide mission, carrying the mercy of Lord Chaitanya to every town and village.

As he told Mr. Ruben, one of the acquaintances Srila Prabhupada made in his early days in New York City;

Mr. Ruben: "He seemed to know that he would have temples filled up with devotees. He would look out and say, "I am not a poor man, I am rich. There are temples and books, they are existing, they are there, but the time is separating us from them." December, 1965 / Lilamrita / volume 2-chapter 15

He even printed on his business card, when he was living and holding classes in borrowed loft space in the Bowery:

"Centers throughout the world".

In Srila Prabhupada's heart, in seed form, were all the aspects of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur's mission. One by one, by his tireless efforts over the following years, Srila Prabhupada gave those desires of his guru maharaj form and function via his ISKCON, the vehicle he crafted to carry out book publication and distribution, expansive hari nama, diorama displays, exquisite Deity worship, opulent prasadam distribution, farm communities, gorgeous public festivals, and bold preaching challenging to its core the mundane view of the world and our purpose in it.

Srila Prabhupada's vision, the re-manifestation of his spiritual master's own vision, was of a vibrant society, with many strong persons all working under the umbrella of the same institution. Srila Prabhupada meditated long and hard on how to keep his new society united. How in the future, when there would be many powerful devotees with their myriad projects and followers, to keep them all under the same umbrella? How to avoid the party spirit of the single acharya view that so ravaged the Gaudiya Math? How to have a firm yet flexible structure that allows for unity in diversity?

Srila Prabhupada's solution was the same as his guru maharaja's—to form a governing body to manage his ISKCON.

What follows is the history of Srila Prabhupada's implementation of the GBC principle as well as an explanation of the scope and scale that he intended it to have.

- **Srila Prabhupada implements the GBC principle**

From early on, Srila Prabhupada was considering implementing a governing body to help supervise his Society:

"In my idea, there should be one central body of trustees for directing all the different centers ..." Kirtanananda & Hayagriva – August 23rd, 1968

"In the future we can form a central governing body for the whole institution." Tamal Krishna, October 18th, 1969

"You have asked about the management of our society, and the position is that management should be done in such a way that people may not break away. That is the first business of management. I have already explained the matter to you and Tamala, so you do it consulting amongst yourselves, gradually coming to the general governing body for managing the whole affairs." Brahmananda -- October 28th, 1969

"I think we should have a central governing body for dealing with important matters."

Brahmananda June 19th, 1970

During the July 1970 San Francisco Ratha Yatra, at Srila Prabhupada's request, the American temple presidents held an organizational meeting.

"Srila Prabhupāda asked the many temple presidents

assembled for the Ratha-yātrā to meet and discuss forming a governing body to manage ISKCON. The devotees met and then reported that they thought only one of them should be elected the chief representative."
Lilamrita / volume 4-chapter 31

"They hadn't understood. The strength should be in a group, Srila Prabhupāda said, not in a single individual. Since he was ISKCON's founder-ācārya, what need was there for another single leader?" Lilamrita / volume 4-chapter 31

In response, Srila Prabhupada had a document titled "Direction of Management" drawn up.

Add the following footnote: *"The Direction of Management* will be discussed at other places in this paper as well." I don't know how to add footnotes. Editor: Please do this.

After giving a short history of his activities since coming to America, along with a list of the temples existing at that time, the "Direction of Management" states:

"As we have increased our volume of activities, now I think a Governing Body Commission (hereinafter referred to as the GBC) should be established. I am getting old, 75 years old, therefore at any time I may be out of the scene, therefore I think it is necessary to give instruction to my disciples how they shall manage the whole institution."

Srila Prabhupada went on to name twelve of his senior disciples stating:

"These personalities are now considered as my direct representatives. While I am living they will act as my zonal secretaries and after my demise they will be known as Executors."

In spelling out their duties, the first clause states:

"The purpose of the Governing Body Commission is to act as the instrument for the execution of the Will of His Divine Grace. And further, the GBC oversees all operations and management of ISKCON, as it receives direction from Srila Prabhupada and His Divine Grace has the final approval in all matters."

The document goes on to describe the process for selecting GBC members as well as their terms of office. It was then witnessed and signed on July 28th, 1970.

Editor: Please add the following footnote: "See the section in this paper titled "Election of GBC members" for more on this topic."

Thus, carrying on with the vision of his spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada had now launched ISKCON's own governing body commission or "GBC".

Srila Prabhupada wasted no time implementing his new system. Only nine days after signing the "Direction of Management" he wrote:

"Now I have set up the Governing Body Commission to handle management, questions of philosophy, and personal problems".

Upendra – August 6th, 1970

Ten days later, he wrote:

"So now the factual administration will depend on the Governing Body Commission and the sannyasis are entrusted for making propaganda work. I wish to remain on the background to give you some directions." Bali-mardana -- August 16th, 1970

The message above became a steady drumbeat as he trained his disciples to follow the system he was putting into place.

Towards the end of the year, Srila Prabhupada wrote to the GBC members themselves:

"I have received the report of Pittsburgh GBC meeting. I am happy to see you all so active and serious about carrying on the work which I have started. Now I want that all administration may be done by all of you 12 GBC members all over the world."

Karandhara – November 30th, 1970

1971 carried on in the same tone as Srila Prabhupada continued to train his GBCs and followers around the world.

"It is good that you GBC members are meeting and conjointly discussing such things as life membership, book distribution, etc. The future hope of solid standing of our mission is on the proper management of our governing body." Bhagavan – February 16th, 1971

"It is proposed by the 15th September a meeting of GBC will be held there. We require to hold this important

meeting of the GBC to formulate the rules and regulations how things will be worked on.” Tamal Krsna—August 14th, 1971

See Appendix A for the full text of “Direction of Management” document.

- **Not a smooth or easy road**

However, 1972 showed that Srila Prabhupada was not going to have a smooth or easy road training his fledgling GBCs. As he would write later on:

“Of course you GBCs are in training...” Karandhara – March 15th, 1973

And much training was going to be needed as the GBC principle and practice unfolded. As the temple presidents had misunderstood Srila Prabhupada’s intent going into their 1970 meeting at the San Francisco Ratha Yatra, without the protection of following proper procedure, some GBCs held a meeting in New York on March of 1972 and made decisions displeasing to Srila Prabhupada. Obligated to step in, Srila Prabhupada wrote:

“I have just now received one letter which has described your GBC meeting of nine men in New York, and I have cabled Rupanuga the following message: “GBC Meeting irregular. My strong disapproval, Make no changes.”

“The meeting of the GBC appeared to be very unconstitutional, because all the men were not informed

or invited. Syamasundara. was not invited, Sudama was not invited, Krishna das was not invited, Tamala Krishna was not invited, neither I was informed. Why? You cannot hold meeting of 8 persons without inviting the others. Seven may be a quorum, that's all right, but you cannot convene without a general announcement to all the members and myself, giving a proposed agenda, like that, the topics to be discussed, why the meeting is being called, etc. Then there is correspondence for deciding these things, and if there is great necessity, then meeting may be called, but not whimsically, only after much thought is given and there is clear intimation of all the members plus myself." Hamsadutta—April 2nd 1972

Srila Prabhupada suspended the GBC temporarily and told his temple presidents to carry on independently *"..until I thoroughly revise the whole procedure."*

But after rectifying the situation, Srila Prabhupada carried on with the GBC principle undaunted. A few months later we find him writing:

"Now I want all of you to work cooperatively and very frankly, that is our process, not that we shall always plot and scheme and write letters. Madhudvisa is GBC man for South Pacific zone, so his direction must be followed by everyone and all of the devotees there should address their problems to him for his consideration." Madhudvisa and Amogha – August 24th, 1972

"The GBC authority must be accepted under all circumstances, not that there will be fighting amongst

you.” Bali-mardana and Pusta Krsna – September 18th, 1972

Srila Prabhupada closed out the year:

“So far your question, how far should the orders of my duly appointed officers like GBC, etc., be obeyed and followed, the answer is that they must always be followed exactly as he says. Have you not heard me on this point? Why these questions are repeated again and again?” Jayadharmā -- December 13th, 1972

- **A new threat / Spiritual authority alone is not always enough**

The year of 1974 saw a new and grave threat. The temple president in Hawaii left ISKCON, sold the temple, and kept the money. There was the threat of the same thing happening to the temple in Auckland, New Zealand. Srila Prabhupada understood that in some situations, his spiritual authority as ISKCON's founder-acharya would not be enough to safeguard the assets he and the devotees had worked so hard to build up. Srila Prabhupada responded like fire, putting in place legal safeguards to help prevent this from happening again.

Having his secretary contact all ISKCON temples, Srila Prabhupada sent out a directive dated July 22nd 1974 and titled *“Topmost Urgency”*. It ordered that amendments immediately be added *“to all official registration documents, constitutions, incorporation*

papers, etc."

"In particular it shall be clearly understood that no real estate may be purchased or sold by any officer of the Society without the express permission of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder-Acharya of ISKCON."

"There shall be a Governing Board Committee of trustees appointed by the Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada according to the document Direction of Management dated July 28, 1970. The GBC is to act as the instrument for the execution of the will of His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada."

It is imperative to note that Srila Prabhupada wanted it specifically recorded that the GBC was to act as Srila Prabhupada's legal agents in protecting ISKCON's properties.

Srila Prabhupada's pattern of insisting on having legal protection for properties was confirmed in his instructions regarding ISKCON in Fiji. On November 25th of 1974 he wrote to Subal Maharaja, one of his representatives in Fiji:

"Regarding your registration, it should be clearly stated that no property can be sold or mortgaged without my express sanction."

Following up, Srila Prabhupada wrote to Vasudeva Dasa:

"Before the finalization of registration takes place I

would request you to send me one copy of the constitution for our society there so I can approve it finally. My name should be there as the founder-acharya, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. I should have full authority in all matters.” December 29, 1974

A few months earlier Srila Prabhupada wrote:

“Regarding the International Trust Board, we are now expanding and so our interests should be carefully guarded. Certainly the 12 GBC members are being trained up strictly under my guidance so that they will protect the interest of the society very, very carefully. All our property should be well protected, and I think in every document my name as Founder-Acarya should be mentioned. Special care should be taken that no property can be sold or mortgaged by local managers as was done by Gaurasundara. This is my only concern.”: Bali-mardana – September 5th, 1974

In 1976 Srila Prabhupada was obliged to step in again on the Fiji situation:

“In connection with our ISKCON project in Fiji, I beg to inform you that we are managing our Krsna consciousness movement by the Governing Body Commission, GBC. We have got about 20 GBCs looking after the whole world affair, and above the GBC I am there. Below the GBC there are the temple president, secretary, treasurer in every centre. So the temple president is responsible to the GBC and the GBC is responsible to me. In this way we are managing.”

“The deed for the property and temple should be made

in favor of "His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, founder-acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness." It cannot be dedicated to any of the office bearers."

"If you want to consider this project as an ISKCON project then you must abide by the orders and direction of the GBC, which you do not like to do". Vasudeva Dasa—June 30th, 1976:

Srila Prabhupada went so far as to write directly to the manager of the bank in Fiji instructing, in his capacity as the *"final authority on all ISKCON matters,"* not to give any loans to ISKCON Fiji unless he received Śrila Prabhupāda's direct empowerment:

"In regards the loan of \$80,000.00 solicited by Deoji Punja in the name of ISKCON, or any other loans solicited in the name of ISKCON, as the Founder-Acarya and final authority on all ISKCON matters please be informed that until you receive authorization from me you may kindly wait in these matters of loans until further notice from me." Mr. B. J. Murdock—July 29, 1976

Two points are made clear by the above letters. The first is that Srila Prabhupada definitely wanted to personally have legal control and the second is that he intended the GBC to act as his agent in this regard.

See Appendix B for the full text of "Topmost Urgency" memo.

- **Oath of Allegiance**

After the shock of the sale of the Hawaii temple, Srila Prabhupada moved on several fronts to put in place legal means to avoid such a thing from happening again. One of those methods was requesting an Oath of Allegiance be signed by all ISKCON officers.

The following is a conversation with the GBC in Mayapur on March 27th 1974.

Prabhupada: That Oath of Allegiance, so addition, alteration, you have made, complete, so that it may be typed?

Tamal Krsna: This Oath of Allegiance is a legal document also, isn't it?

Prabhupada: Eh.

Tamal Krsna: It's both a legal document and a spiritual document.

Prabhupada: Yes.

Prabhupada: I think this Oath of Allegiance should be signed by the presidents also.

Jayatirtha: That's nice.

Tamal Krsna: Also.

Prabhupada: Hm?

Tamal Krsna: Also.

Prabhupada: Yes. Not only the GBC, but the president.

It is worth noting the following. Srila Prabhupada carefully discussed and reviewed the wording of the Oath. He confirmed that it was both a "spiritual" and a

"legal" document. He wanted it formally signed by the temple presidents and GBCs.

Here are two clauses from the Oath that help summarize the document:

1. To accept His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada as the Founder-Acharya and Supreme Authority of ISKCON. To follow his teachings, instructions and directions.

5. To be guided by the spiritual directions of ISKCON's management, to co-operate with the local GBC representative, and to fulfill my duties in a serving spirit never intentionally acting against ISKCON's interests.

The following conversation confirms that Srila Prabhupada was very serious about using this Oath as a legal recourse in cases of misdeeds by ISKCON officers.

"Regarding Manasvi, you should immediately prosecute. The charge should be breach of trust and misappropriation of funds. I have received today the Oath of Allegiance duly signed by him and notarized. When required it will be supplied to you. Therefore I wanted this declaration. Immediately prosecute."
Paramahansa—September 4th, 1975

See Appendix C for the full text of Oath

- **Involvement in management or “oversight” only?**

There was a question of whether the role of the GBC was simply to preach and inspire or to actually have a role in the details of management. Continuing with his duty of defining the duties he intended a GBC member to carry out, Srila Prabhupada answered clearly:

“You mention that you are no longer much occupied with seeing that the rent and mortgage is paid and that the incense is sold, but GBC means to be occupied with everything in the zone. It is not that now we are preachers we can neglect all other points. No, the GBC member is supposed to know everything and anything about the condition and situation of all matters within his jurisdiction. That is the meaning of secretary. So because we are engaged in many fields of activity I am especially relying upon that knowledge of my GBC assistants and secretaries to manage everything properly. But if we do not take time to understand how the financial matters are going on, then at any moment we may experience some calamity due to our inattention to these matters.”

Srila Prabhupada continued in the same letter:

“Therefore, you should try to keep yourself always informed how the financial matters are improving and keep your watchful eye on every feature of our Krishna Consciousness activity. That is also part of preaching work. I am also preaching daily. But I am at the same

time managing everything, seeing the statements of accounts, going to the bank, giving advice on every topic, like that.” Satsvarūpa--July 1, 1972

Two years later, Srila Prabhupada underscored the same theme, putting special stress on properties:

“Regarding the International Trust Board, we are now expanding and so our interests should be carefully guarded. Certainly the 12 GBC members are being trained up strictly under my guidance so that they will protect the interest of the society very, very carefully. All our property should be well protected and I think in every document my name as Founder-Acarya should be mentioned. Special care should be taken that no property can be sold or mortgaged by local managers as was done by Gaurasundara.” Bali-mardana –September 5, 1974

- **Spiritual vs. Material management—A false dilemma**

Are we to understand that the phrase “the GBC is the ultimate managing authority” does not extend to authority over Society-wide “spiritual” matters? Sometimes such an argument is put forward expressing that the GBC is “the ultimate managing authority” but that this role does not continue into “spiritual” affairs. Inherent in this presentation is the implication that “management” is a separate, lower activity – something material. However, we find that Srila Prabhupada did not differentiate between the “spiritual” duties of his leaders

and diminish to the status of "material" those services that were managerial or administrative by nature. Srila Prabhupada did not see the detailed and practical management responsibilities required for spreading the sankirtan movement, sustaining the devotees, and protecting ISKCON's assets as in any way divorced from pure sadhana and seva.

"Now we are world organization. There is spiritual side, and there is material side also. That is not material side. That is also spiritual side, means systematic management. Otherwise how it will be done?" Morning Walk, December 5, 1973, Los Angeles

Abhirama: But trouble is it seems that in my..., engaged in management work, sometimes my spiritual activities suffer. That is unfortunate.

Prabhupada: No, no. Management is also spiritual activity. Why do you talk like that? After all, it is Krishna's establishment. Room Conversation, January 16, 1977, Kolkata

"One should not give up anything connected with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, thinking it material or enjoyable for the material senses."... In our preaching work also, we deal with so much property and money and so many books bought and sold, but because these dealings all pertain to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, they should never be considered material. That one is absorbed in thoughts of such management does not mean that he is outside of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If one rigidly observes the regulative principle of

chanting sixteen rounds of the mahā-mantra every day, his dealings with the material world for the sake of spreading the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are not different from the spiritual cultivation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

SB 5.16.3, purport

As a practical example, during the book distribution boom in the 1970s, legal expenses became a regular part of most temple budgets in America. One of the GBC members, Rupanuga prabhu, suggested in his monthly report to Srila Prabhupada that to save money and have reliable representation, some of ISKCON's devotees could become lawyers. Srila Prabhupada liked the idea and told Rupanuga prabhu that he could also become a lawyer.

"Regarding our men becoming lawyers, yes do it. For a graduate it is not difficult. You can also take a degree."
Rupanuaga—November 8, 1976

Srila Prabhupada wrote *"I want you to get a legal degree and fight like Arjuna for Krishna."* Get reference

Thus Srila Prabhupada saw all services to Krishna as spiritual.

- **The GBC as spiritual authority**

What follows are a series of statements by Srila Prabhupada confirming that he intended the GBC

members to serve as spiritual authorities.

"Now I have set up the Governing Body Commission to handle management, questions of philosophy and personal problems." Upendra -- August 6th, 1970

"The Governing Body Commission's duty is therefore to see that every member is following the rules and regulations and chanting sixteen rounds regularly on the beads. I hope the GBC in cooperation with the Sannyasis in their touring program will be able to keep vigilance systematically in order to keep the Society as pure as possible." Bali-mardana -- August 25th, 1970

"As GBC man you shall be my personal secretary for maintaining the highest level of Krishna Consciousness amongst the devotees in your zone...you GBC men are my selected few for insuring that what I am doing will be carried on very nicely for the pleasure of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu...So now you are doing my work and you shall be like me and be yourselves the worthy representatives of our disciplic succession."

Madhudvisa, June 16th, 1972

"This is the function of the GBC, to see that one may not be taken away by maya. The GBC should all be the instructor gurus." Madhudvisa, August 4th, 1975

In response to questions from a magazine reporter, Srila Prabhupada said:

Interviewer: What happens when that inevitable time comes when a successor is needed?

Ramesvara: He is asking about the future, who will guide the movement in the future?

Prabhupada: They will guide. I am training them.

Interviewer: Will there be one spiritual leader, though?

Prabhupada: No, I am training GBC, eighteen all over the world.

Magazine Interview -- June 10th, 1976

To re-cap. Srila Prabhupada listed as duties of the GBC: to answer philosophical questions, to keep the Society as pure as possible, and to maintain the highest level of Krishna Consciousness amongst the devotees. He said that his GBC representatives should all be instructor gurus.

When the magazine reporter asked "*Will there be one spiritual leader?*" Srila Prabhupada replied "*No, I am training GBC, eighteen all over the world*".

- **Incorporating the Society world-wide**

With ISKCON spreading world-wide, the question of how to register the local branches came to the fore. As we see in the following letter, Srila Prabhupada initially questioned the merit of having multiple separate corporations.

"I am little concerned about your attempt to form ISKCON Ltd. My idea is that we should not form a separate organization in London. The same International Society for Krishna Consciousness as we have branches in

different places in USA, a similar branch may be opened in London or in Germany. The basic principle of our preaching work, methods and management must be the same. I do not know why a separate registration is required.” Mukunda – Seattle, October 1, 1968

As it became clear that in some situations national and local law would require separate registration, Srila Prabhupada acquiesced and even appreciated it as a worthwhile training exercise for the local managers.

“Never mind there may be botheration to register each centre, take tax certificate each, become separate corporations in each state. That will train men how to do these things...” Karandhar—December 22nd, 1972

But as his following instructions on the Fiji situation confirmed, Srila Prabhupada was adamant that he remain the ultimate and final authority and the GBC be his agents to help execute that authority.

“The deed for the property and temple should be made in favor of “His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, founder-acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.”

“If you want to consider this project as an ISKCON project then you must abide by the orders and direction of the GBC.” Vasudeva—June 30th, 1976.

Srila Prabhupada’s intent was the same for the corporation in India:

Resolved: ISKCON’s corporate papers in India contain

undesirable voting power for the life members. A committee will be formed to correct this. That committee will consist of the GBCs of India who will report their work to the GBC.

Resolved: The present ISKCON Bureau in India should be expanded from its present membership. The GBCs of India will meet and decide who will be on this Bureau. Meeting minutes after GBC committee's meeting with Srila Prabhupada / May 28th, 1977.

It is important to note that Srila Prabhupada instructed the GBC representatives in India to report to the full GBC. He also wanted his GBC representatives to decide who should serve on the India Bureau.

Note: My guess is that this will be challenged by some in India. Where are these notes? How certain are we sure of their accuracy? Some will say "These are not Srila Prabhupada's words / instructions but rather those of Tamal Krishna Maharaja or some other member of the GBC committee.

To reinforce the conclusion that Srila Prabhupada intended all ISKCON corporations to work under direction of the GBC, let us consider again the "Topmost Urgency" memo of July 22nd 1974. Therein Srila Prabhupada spells out:

"There shall be a Governing Board Committee of trustees appointed by the Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada according to the document Direction of Management dated July 28, 1970. The GBC is to act as the instrument for the

execution of the will of His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada."

When issuing this memo, Srila Prabhupada instructed:

"AMENDMENTS TO BE IMMEDIATELY ADDED TO ALL OFFICIAL REGISTRATION DOCUMENTS, CONSTITUTIONS, INCORPORATION PAPERS, ETC."

The above references make it clear that Srila Prabhupada intended the GBC to be the means for implementing his will throughout all the corporations that comprised his international Society and that all these corporations must ultimately follow the guidance of the GBC.

- **Election of GBCs?**

The "Direction of Management" of July 18th, 1970 laid out a plan for election of the GBCs by the temple presidents and for a three year term of office. Yet Srila Prabhupada never put this procedure into practice. After the initial establishment of the GBC and his issuing the "Direction of Management," he built on and adjusted its themes.

At the 1975 Mayapur GBC meeting, the following resolution was passed.

5) Resolved: The selection of GBC members is that Srila Prabhupada will nominate, and if there is a discrepancy, His Grace will change him. There will be no elections, and the present GBC members will remain.

It is essential to note that these resolutions were presented to and approved by Śrīla Prabhupāda. The resolutions were then recorded in the official GBC Meeting Minutes book.

Confirming the above, in the last few months before his physical departure, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked the GBCs present with him in Vrindaban to meet together and then come back to him with any key questions for how ISKCON should go on. As instructed, those GBC members held their meeting and came back to Srila Prabhupada with questions about how to complete the translation of the Bhagavatm, what about initiations after Srila Prabhupada's physical departure, and the how GBC would go on.

What follows is the section of that conversation regarding the GBC:

Satsvarūpa: So our first question is about the GBC members. We want to know how long should they remain in office.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: They should remain for good.

Satsvarūpa: So there is no question of changing GBC?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. Rather, one who is competent, he can be selected to act by the board of the GBC.

Satsvarūpa: But then, in the event that some present GBC member leaves, either leaves ...

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Another should be elected.

Satsvarūpa: By the votes of the present GBC (note: Satsvarupa is repeating what Srila Prabhupada had just stated).

Later in the conversation, Śrīla Prabhupāda repeats these points:

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So there is no question of changing GBC.

Satsvarūpa: No.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Rather, one who is competent, he can be selected to act by the board of the GBC. (Here Srila Prabhupada confirms that the selection should be done by the members of the GBC)

Vrindaban—May 28th, 1977

Srila Prabhupada makes it clear that there should be no term of office. If someone leaves, that person can be replaced. If someone proves to be especially competent, that person can be added, not by election of the presidents, but "*selected to act by the board of the GBC.*"

Srila Prabhupada knew fully well that he was speaking for the historical record. He had asked the GBC to present these questions specifically so that there would be no doubt in the future about how he wanted his ISKCON to be carried on.

- **"Final"–"Ultimate"–"Supreme"– but not "Absolute"**

A structure that gives final, ultimate, and supreme authority to the GBC may raise concerns about the possibility of a dictatorial or oppressive governance of ISKCON. Does the GBC possess absolute power to wield at its whim?

The role as "ultimate" or "final" authority does not mean the GBC has "absolute" authority. In fact, an essential element of Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions for the governance of ISKCON is that the GBC, both collectively and when acting as its individual members, must recognize and respect the dignity and rights of ISKCON's officers and the devotees in general.

In his well-known letter to Karandhara Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote:

"Krishna Consciousness Movement is for training men to be independently thoughtful and competent in all types of departments of knowledge and action, not for making bureaucracy. Once there is bureaucracy the whole thing will be spoiled. There must be always individual striving and work and responsibility, competitive spirit, not that one shall dominate and distribute benefits to the others and they do nothing but beg from you and you provide."

"...our leaders shall be careful not to kill the spirit of enthusiastic service, which is individual and spontaneous and voluntary. They should try always to generate some atmosphere of fresh challenge to the devotees, so that

they will agree enthusiastically to rise and meet it. That is the art of management: to draw out spontaneous loving spirit of sacrificing some energy for Krishna.”

“Krishna Consciousness movement must be always a challenge, a great achievement to be gained by voluntary desire to do it, and that will keep it healthy.”
Karandhar—December 22nd, 1972

Individuals, local leaders, and communities all working peacefully within ISKCON’s laws have an inherent, guaranteed right to perform their service without inappropriate, oppressive, or arbitrary interference. Since 1975, via resolutions made in Māyāpur, etc., ISKCON has developed a set of laws, standards, and appeals processes by which the GBC, other ISKCON leaders, and devotees in general are expected to conduct themselves. ISKCON, by Srila Prabhupada’s design, is a society governed by established laws and guidelines.

One check and balance is that the individual GBC members are under the full GBC. An individual GBC member does not carry the authority of the full GBC body and can be corrected, chastised, or removed by the full GBC if necessary.

Another of the checks and balances desired by Srila Prabhupada is a constitution for ISKCON. Completing this task has been assigned to the Constitutional Committee as part of the GBC’s strategic planning.

- **Confirmation of the scope of authority for the GBC**

Nearing the end of his manifest pastimes, Srila Prabhupada had a conversation, on June 2nd 1977, with the devotees he had asked to create a draft for his last Will and testament. Here is that conversation:

Girirāja: So we drafted a Will ... Should I read it?

Srila Prabhupāda: Hm?

Girirāja: Then we can type it. "I, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, settler of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, and disciple of Oā Viñēupāda 108 Ṣré Ṣrémad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvaté Gosvāmé Mahārāja Prabhupāda, presently residing at Ṣré Kāñēa-Balarāma Mandir in Vāndāvana, make this, my last will. 1. The Governing Body Commission, GBC, will be the trustees of the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness."

Srila Prabhupāda: You can... Then there will be question, "The trust deed will be given? Then there will tax."

Girirāja: No, because the ISKCON trust is already there, and ISKCON is already tax exempt. The only difficulty is if you create a new trust.

Srila Prabhupāda: No, no new trust.

Girirāja: No

Srila Prabhupāda: Instead of trustees...

Tamāla Krishna: Use a different word.

Srila Prabhupāda: Ah.

Rāmeçvara: Not to apply in trust.

Girirāja: Oh, I see.

Rāmeçvara: It's a different word.

Srila Prabhupāda: Supreme managers.

Gopāla Kāñëa: Supreme managers.

Srila Prabhupāda: Or the ultimate managers, like that.

Gopāla Kāñëa: The ultimate executives?

Srila Prabhupāda: Yes.

Tamāla Krishna: Yes, the executors.

Gopāla Kāñëa: Ultimate executors.

Tamāla Krishna: Or commissioners. You have...

Srila Prabhupāda: Hm. Yes, commissioners.

Tamāla Krishna: Commissioner is good, 'cause it's already...

Srila Prabhupāda: Use such word.

Tamāla Krishna: Use a word that's proper.

In its final form, signed by Srila Prabhupada, the Will

used the words “ultimate managing authority”. The conversation above confirms the scope of authority Srila Prabhupada intended for the GBC. It is clear by his using terms like “ultimate” and “supreme” that he intended the GBC to be the final management body over the entirety of ISKCON: a decision-making body that no other entity, body, or individual could equal or surpass.

- **Cooperation / “Unity in Diversity”**

In the effort to layout the GBC’s role as ISKCON’s ultimate managing authority, let us not forget Srila Prabhupada’s direction that his followers work together in a mood of mutual respect and cooperation.

“Now we are growing, and if we work cooperatively, our strength will also grow, and then the mission will not be checked in its progress.” Candanacarya—March 12th, 1970)

“ I thank you very much, all of you, for appreciating my humble service which I am trying to render as a matter of duty ordered by my Guru Maharaja. I request all my disciples to work cooperatively and I am sure our mission will advance without any doubt.” Tamal Krishna— August 14th, 1971

“Good manager means he is able to satisfy everyone and live in cooperative manner with all the devotees, so if you manage things nicely (every devotee) can do tremendous work” Giriraja—May 2, 1972

Now, we have by Krsna's Grace built up something significant in the shape of this ISKCON and we are all one family. Sometimes there may be disagreement and quarrel but we should not go away. These inebriates can be adjusted by cooperation, tolerance and maturity... The test of our actual dedication and sincerity to serve the Spiritual Master will be in this mutual cooperation to push on this Movement" To whom—December 9th, 1973

Always with an eye for how to make the philosophical a practical reality, Srila Prabhupada wrote the following:

"If we keep Krsna in the center, then there will be agreement in varieties. This is called unity in diversity. I am therefore suggesting that all our men meet in Mayapur every year during the birth anniversary of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. With all GBC and senior men present we should discuss how to make unity in diversity" Kirtanananda—October 18th, 1973

It is clear that Srila Prabhupada wanted and expected the GBC and all the members of ISKCON to deal with each other in a humble, respectful, and cooperative spirit.

"We must be very careful to maintain unity in diversity and remember the story in Aesop's Fables of the father of many children with the bundle of sticks. When the father asked his children to break the bundle of sticks wrapped in a bag, none of them could do it. But, when they removed the sticks from the bag, and tried one by one, the sticks were easily broken. So this is the strength in unity. If we are bunched up, we can never be broken, but when divided, then we can become broken very

easily.” Kirtananda-October 18th 1973

- **Summary**

This paper’s review of the historical record establishes the following:

1. The structure of management for ISKCON, carefully put into place by Srila Prabhupada, was of a governing body as the ultimate managing authority.
2. Srila Prabhupada wanted the GBC to *“handle management, questions of philosophy, and personal problems”*. He expected his GBC members to oversee *“the preaching work”* and *“spiritual standards”* as well as *“financial matters”*. He wrote: *“GBC means to be occupied with everything and anything in the zone”*.
3. Assuming that the GBC body acts within appropriate guidelines and ISKCON laws, Srila Prabhupada expected the devotees to follow the decisions of the GBC.
4. Spiritual authority alone was not always enough. Srila Prabhupada worked hard to make sure that he also had legal control, with the GBC serving as his agents. With his physical departure, Srila Prabhupada, via his Will, indicated that he wanted the GBC to have the legal means to protect the assets of the Society, especially property.

5. **"Ultimate managing authority" means in *all* spheres of ISKCON's activities: philosophical, spiritual, administrative etc. To Srila Prabhupada, all of these activities were spiritual. *"After all, it is Krishna's establishment"*.**
6. **The GBC members are not simply administrators but are also intended to exemplify, establish, and guard spiritual standards and doctrine.**
7. **Although different corporations may be needed to meet local legal standards, all of these corporations are meant to follow the direction of the GBC.**
8. **GBC members are meant *"to serve for good...assuming they are fit"*. New and replacement members are to be selected by the existing GBC members.**
9. **Ultimate and final authority does not mean absolute authority. Srila Prabhupada intended ISKCON to be a Society governed by laws and a code of ethics. He intended there to be a constitution that protects the individual members and officers of ISKCON.**
10. **These principles will only be effective if practiced in a humble, respectful, and cooperative spirit. It also assumes the GBC's fidelity to Srila Prabhupada's vani, their practice of strong sadhana, and the on-going training and**

assessment of the performance of ISKCON's leadership, including the GBC.

- **Conclusion**

This paper closes as it began—with Srila Prabhupada in Vrindaban. However, this time, instead of being “a lone fighter”, he is now the world-renowned founder-acharya of ISKCON. He has opened over 108 temples, farms, schools, restaurants, and preaching centers and he is surrounded by loving disciples. Srila Prabhupada is in the quiet of his home in Vrindaban, manifesting his last pastimes and preparing to leave this world.

Devotees asked Srila Prabhupada if he was departing like his own spiritual master, frustrated with his disciples. Srila Prabhupada said “No”. Rather he was very pleased with them and how they were carrying on the missionary work.

“Later in the morning Yasodana Maharaja offered a prayer in this same vein and Prabhupada said, “I have no objection. I like your association, and at all our temples it is like Vaikuntha. My Guru Maharaja left very dissatisfied, but I am not at all.” Tamal Krishna Maharaja’s diary—June 6th, 1977

The following narrates Srila Prabhupada’s comments specifically about the GBC:

“The GBC held meetings and established a committee with Ramesvara, Jayapataka, Giriraj, Gopal Krsna,

Jayatirtha and myself to form trust properties of all India holdings. A trust deed was drafted, based on the BBT document, and read to His Divine Grace. Prabhupada was very satisfied and said, "Jaya future directors of ISKCON." And later he said, "Now I can die peacefully."
Tamal Krishna Maharaja's's diary—May 28th 1977

Srila Prabhupada turned his thoughts to writing his Will. (See Appendix D for the full text of Srila Prabhupada's will).

In the very first clause, where one traditionally names the beneficiary or successor, Srila Prabhupada put his GBC.

"The Governing Body Commission (GBC) will be the ultimate managing authority of the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness"

Knowing that he was signing a document that would serve as the historical and legal record for executing his Will and intent, Srila Prabhupada referred to the GBC as "the ultimate managing authority"—and that ultimate authority was intended by him to be over "the *entire* International Society for Krishna Consciousness".

Here we have Srila Prabhupada, in his last instructions to his followers and to the world, confirming the system he began in 1970 and spent so many years carefully, lovingly, and strongly establishing.

It was asked at the beginning of this paper:

"Srila Prabhupada's vision, the re-manifestation of his spiritual master's own vision, was of a vibrant society, with many strong personalities all working under the umbrella of the same institution. Srila Prabhupada

meditated long and hard on how to keep his new society united. How in the future, when there would be many powerful personalities with their myriad projects and followers, to keep them all under the same umbrella? How to avoid the party spirit of the single acharya view that so ravaged the Gaudiya Math? How to have a firm yet flexible structure that allows for unity in diversity?"

Srila Prabhupada's answer was to establish the GBC system. It is the thread running throughout the fabric of ISKCON, serving to unite while at the same time allowing for diversity. It allows the flexibility for there to be many strong leaders and varied projects and initiatives. The uniting factor is that ultimately all these individuals, projects, and programs are under the final authority and directions of the GBC. Remove this GBC thread and Srila Prabhupada's hope for a unified ISKCON unravels.

As Srila Prabhupada said just nine days before his departure:

"The institution depends on the GBC." Room conversation / November 5th, 1977

In his final few days Śrīla Prabhupāda appealed to all of his followers:

"Your love for me will be tested by how after my departure you maintain this institution."

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Following Srila Prabhupada's GBC system is both a test and a gift given to us by His Divine Grace. Doing so is

essential to sustain ISKCON and to keep it under the shelter of his divine instructions and in line with his transcendental vision.

Appendix 5. Constitution of Association

1. The name of the society is The International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

2. The headquarters of the Society are located at Radhakrishna Temple, 26 Second Avenue, New York City, 10003, USA.

3. The objectives for which the Society is being established are:

(A) To educate the greater human society in the techniques of spiritual life as the basis for a balanced psychic and biological development, and thereby achieve for the first time in human society a real peace and unity among the contending forces in the world today.

(B) To propagate the Sense of Godhead, the all attractive Personality of primal and eternal Form, as He Himself revealed in His own words in the Bhagavad Gétä, the Holy Scripture of the Lord Sri Krishna, the Godhead.

(C) To bring together individuals in a Society, regardless of nationality and irrespective of creed or caste, in order to develop a nearness to the Godhead and thereby the idea that within the members and humanity-at-large there is an infinitesimal soul-spirit that is part and parcel in quality with the Godhead, and that all life is meant for the satisfaction of said Godhead, the Supreme Soul.

(D) To encourage the teachings of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who demonstrated practically the transcendental process of approaching the absolute Personality of Godhead by His acts of congregational chanting of the holy name of God, a process known as Samkirtan.

(E) To prove by active work and preaching that Lord Sri Krishna is the only enjoyer of all the outcomes of individual and collective sacrifice, penance, meditation, arts, culture, science, because He is the Supreme Proprietor of the whole universe, eternally apart of Him everyone knows Him as a friend. Real peace can be attained when this is realized, in fact.

(F) To assist whenever and wherever possible in the building of a social structure on the real foundation of spiritual progress and establishment of peace and unity between men throughout the world.

(G) To attempt to save men individually from the chain of victimization the ongoing trend in modern civilization operates by, in the name of ideologies of false sentiment, so that Man may again be a free soul, to act and live freely with spiritual vision. This is possible by individual spiritual initiation, Diksha, when a man can see everything in Godhead and Godhead in everything.

(H) To further toward realization this highest truth as revealed by Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the six Goswamins headed by Çréla Rupa and Sanatana Goswamins.

(I) To have for its objectives amongst the others four principles which the Goswamins had in view. They are the following:

1. To erect a holy place of transcendental pastimes as well as a place where members of the Lord Sri Krishna can flourish.

2. To propagate all over the world in the form of missionaries the process of devotion, the transcendental service to the Godhead, and to make known that this devotional service is the main function of the human being.

3. In order to accomplish this, to adopt proselytizing methods of peaceful means and to establish a broader society of association for all members, including scholars and admirers, to engage in this service as put forth in the Çrémad Bhagwatam.

4. To install, wherever it is possible, the worship and temple of Radhakrishna and that of Sri Chaitanya, and to give facility to everyone to become trained in the modes of Archan or preparatory principles of devotional service.

(J) To introduce to the members of the Society and humanity-at-large a simpler and more natural purpose in life by means suitable to the particular place and time, and as enjoined in the Bhagavad Gétä.

(K) To organize educational programs, such as classes and lecture tours, and to institute services, such as mailing, for the benefit of the members of the Society and humanity-at-large.

(L) To publish periodicals, books and/or pamphlets in all important languages in order to reach human society and give an opportunity to same to communicate with the Society.

(M) To invoke the quality of goodness particularly in every member of the Society, individually by the process of Diksha and by establishing one in the status of a Brahmin (good and intelligent man) on the basis of truthfulness, knowledge and faith in the transcendental service of the Lord.

(N) Among the secondary objectives of the Society, it shall undertake the following activities:

1. To revive the scientific system of social orders of classification based on intelligence, martial spirit, productivity and common assistance, generally known as the four castes with reference to quality and worth for the common cause of world society.

2. To discharge as a matter of course the vitiated system of supremacy of one man over another by false prestige of birthright or vested interests.

3. To popularize the vegetable-grain diet under

approved methods in order that full value of protein, carbohydrate, fat and vitamin benefit may be derived therefrom.

4. To discourage intoxicating or addicting habits of all descriptions and dimensions and to expose such persons thus afflicted to approved methods of spiritual realization.

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, Acharya

Raymond Marais

Michael A. Grant

Robert Lefkowitz

James S. Greene

Appendix 6. The League of Devotees Prospectus

**ALL GLORY TO SREE SREE GURU AND GOURANGA
PROSPECTUS
THE
LEAGUE OF DEVOTEES**

(Incorporated under Societies Registration Act)

**Registered office
BHARATI BHAWAN
ANTIYA TAL, SIPRI ROAD,
JHANSI.
THE LEAGUE OF DEVOTEES
PROSPECTUS**

The purpose of establishing an association like 'The League of Devotees' on the wish of Om Vishnupada Paramhansa 108 Sree Sreemat Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswatee Goswami Maharaj and Thakur Bhakti Vinode of Nabadwipa (W. Bengal) is keenly felt a necessary enterprise on the face of the present world situation with special reference to the degraded and distressed condition of the human being.

The human being in general has forgotten his real purpose of life, being too much attracted by the External Energy of the Absolute Truth and as such he is enamoured with the beauty of material Nature without any consideration of his spiritual identity.

This forgetfulness has begun from a time immemorial and

from that time immemorial the living entity is transmigrating from one form of body to another by a gradual process of evolution. When he attains the boon of human form of life his consciousness is enlightened and developed so much so that he can know himself, this Cosmic World and the ABSOLUTE TRUTH.

In the lives other than the human being, the consciousness of the living entity is enwrapped with grossest type of materialism and as such living entities in that state of existence do not know anything beyond the prime necessities of animal life namely Eating, Sleeping, Fearing and Sense-gratifying.

Human form of life is therefore obtained after a struggle for existence by millions and millions of transmigrating evolutions and the purpose of this life must not therefore be spoiled in such engagements of animal life as simply by Eating, Sleeping, Fearing and Sense-gratifying.

The modern trend of human civilization is supposed to be a polished type of animal life. It has improved the method of eating by discovering varieties of palatable dishes. It has improved the method of sleeping by constructing massive and attractive palatial buildings and resting places, provided with well furnished coaches and sleeping bedsteads.

It has improved the quality of Fearing by various defence measures which are exacting more than 50% of human energy with the ultimate result that it has invented the Atomic Bomb which facilitates the dying process of

human being. None of the scientific discoveries can save the man from the cruel hands of death. It has improved the method of sense-gratification by inventing cinemetographic pictures, phonographic sounds, wireless radios, horseless carriages and similar other illusory things on the one hand. On the other hand it has improved the dressing method of the fair sex which gratifies the sense enjoyment lust of human being. The market is full with the advertisements of pictures of beautiful women for selling such sense gratifying articles as varieties of Toilets, Jewelleries, Sarees, Medicines, contraceptives and similar other materials. And to maintain this animal type of civilization for the benefit of a handful men of demoniac principles, ninety-five percent people of the human race is chained up to become victims of this wrong type of civilization, devoid of spiritual value.

There is no peace even now in the villagers' life because the innocent villagers are also being attracted by the glamour of the polished type of animal civilization and that also for the benefit of 5 percent contending polished demons. As such 95% of the innocent human being is suffering from the pangs of this animal civilization.

The League of Devotees stands to protect both this 5% polished demons as well as the 95% innocent victims for real freedom and blessed life. It does not propose to stop the animal necessities of life namely: Eating, Sleeping, Fearing, and Sense gratifying processes, but it proposes to check the one sided imbalance of life

without consideration of spiritual value.

Life is after all Spirit and upon the Spiritual foundation subtle matters like intelligence and mind and gross matters like the material encagement of body have developed according to one's desire and inclination (the law of Karma). This desire and inclination has overpowered the spirit soul in such a manner that it cannot get rid of the influence of the External Energy of the Absolute Truth by its own effort without enlightenment.

It is a mistake to identify spirit soul either with the gross matters (earth, water, fire, air and sky) or with the subtle matter (mind, intelligence and ego) because both of them are produced of the External Energy of Godhead. Living entity being the Product of Spiritual Divine Nature or internal Energy of Godhead, Spirit Soul or living entity is qualitatively equivalent with Godhead. It is not therefore possible to manufacture such living being in the laboratory of material science.

We need now to open a laboratory of spiritual science where research in the Divine Nature of living entity can be made and thereby ascertain the real necessities of the spirit soul, which governs the material world. This can be evolved for the peace and prosperity of the living being who is in essence Spirit and not matter. Let us now find out the Divine Nature of living entity.

The process of manipulating such spiritual laboratory to make research in the Divine Nature of living being is clearly defined in the Bhagwat Geeta and its practical demonstrator is Lord Chaitanya.

The League of Devotees wants to bring in practical use, these two big transcendental Subjects in prominence for the benefit of human society at large. The League of Devotees considers, on the authority of the Bhagwat Geeta, every living being as part and parcel of Godhead. Every living being is impregnated by Godhead Himself in the womb of mother material Nature and thus it becomes possible to see the different living entities born in the material world. Every living being is therefore a Divine child of the Almighty Father and all of them, never mind in whatsoever form they may be, are Divine brothers in the kingdom of God.

Having forgotten that transcendental relation (eternally fixed up), the living entity is struggling for existence in the material world bewildered with the result that in every step of life he is baffled in his attempt to become a happy creature. He does not know that such material attempt for existence will never be successful and it is only by Divine attempt that one can eternally be free from the bondage of birth, death and insufficiency.

The human form of life is a chance to realise this fact. The human being now must therefore try to know his relation with the Absolute Truth. He must now learn to spend up his energy in accordance with that eternal relation and ultimately must attain to the highest perfection of life by achieving the spontaneous love of Godhead. The present state of perverted love for material products is only sense gratification but spontaneous love of Godhead is real transcendental existence. Such love of Godhead can bring in real happiness for the human being. If the human being wastes the opportunity of the human form of life,

he is sure to go down again in the cycle of animal evolutionary process in search of false material happiness.

The League of Devotees therefore stands to save the human being at large from going down again in the cycle of animal life and wants to raise him to the position of transcendental loving servitor of Godhead which is his eternal birthright as he is the Divine child of Godhead.

The League of Devotees after deliberate consideration of authoritative scriptures for Spiritual science has put forward the following aims and objects in view for the society.

(a) To propagate spiritual knowledge systematically for checking the imbalance of life, to the whole race of India and the world over, with a view to educate the people in general in the techniques of spiritual life as the basis for balanced psychic and biological developments of the human race and thereby achieve real unity and peace of the contending elements of the present world.

(b) To build up a social structure on the foundation of spiritual progress and establishment of peace and amity between man and man throughout the whole world.

(c) To propagate the sense of Godhead (who is one and the Absolute, who is the fountainhead of all opulence, all powers, all fame, all beauty, all knowledge and all indifference, Who is the Creator of everything that is visible and not visible in the manifested world or beyond,

who is therefore the Original protector and Enjoyer of everything that be) everywhere in the greater society of human race.

(d) To bring together members individually to one another and nearer to Godhead who is the Prime Entity and the individual souls are infinitesimal entities and humanity at large that individual souls being part and parcels in quality of Godhead the Absolute whole, they (the individual souls) are meant for the satisfaction of the Supreme Soul Godhead as it is revealed in the scriptures.

(e) To save man individually from the system of chained victimization by the trend of modern civilization of false sentiments so that man may again be a free soul to act and live freely, an inspired life with spiritual vision. This is possible by individual spiritual initiation through the proper channel when a man can see everything in Godhead and Godhead in everything.

(f) To imbibe and develop in the mind of the individual soul the all attractive Personality of Godhead (Shree Krishna) in His Primeval and Eternal Form as He has revealed Himself in His own words the Bhagwat Geeta. He has to be known all over the world in the manner as revealed by Lord Chaitanya who practically demonstrated the transcendental process of approaching the Absolute Godhead by his acts of Congregational Chanting of the holy Name of Godhead. There is nothing in the teachings of Lord Chaitanya which is not intelligible by human reasonings or is against any religious feeling accepted by the civilized society of the

world.

(g) To prove it practically by active work and preaching that Shree Krishna is the only Enjoyer of all the outcome of everyone's sacrifice, penance, meditation, arts, culture, science, because He is the Supreme Proprietor of the whole Universe, and Eternal Friend of everybody. Real peace is possible to be attained when this is realised in fact. Such supramundane state of existence is called Divine Life. This supramental state of Divine life is described in the "Ishoponishad" as follows:

*"Ishabashyamidam Sarbam
Jatkinchit Jagatyam Jagat
Tenataktena Bhunjitha
Magridha Kashyachit Dhanam."*

(h) To propagate and realise the highest Truth as revealed by Lord Chaitanya through His Philosophy known as "Achinta Vedaveda Tatwa" (everything simultaneously one and different from the Absolute Truth) and other allied books of knowledge as revealed by the six authorised disciple Goswamins, headed by Sreela Rupa and Sreela Sanatana.

(i) To re-excavate and/or reclaim the holy places of transcendental Pastimes of the Personality of Godhead Shree Krishna, as well as the places where his devotees flourished including the various temples of worship.

(j) To prepare the ground work of spiritual atmosphere for the people in general by Samkirtan movement as it is

recommended in the scriptures and as propounded by the Father of the "Samkirtan" movement Lord Chaitanya.

(k) To undertake civic enterprises which do not come in conflict with the ideals and missions of the 'League' with all the principles in view.

(1) To arrange lectures and discourses by eminent devotees for the benefit of the members of the 'League' and send missionary for this purpose in all parts of the world to recruit members of the 'League'.

(m) To open free mail services to advise by post in respect of enquiries made to the 'League' on spiritual subjects.

(n) To make the 'League' an international organisation for spiritual development through education and culture, also by recruiting members of the 'League' from all nationalities.

(o) To revoke the quality of goodness particularly (Satwaguna) in every member of the 'League' individually by the process of Spiritual initiation (Diksha) by establishing him in the status of a qualified Brahmin (good and intellectual man) on the basis of truthfulness, forgiveness, equality, tolerance, education, purity, knowledge (specific and general) and faith in the transcendental service of Godhead.

(p) To accept membership of all orders of life namely:

(i) Brahmachari i.e. unmarried scholars fully devoted to the service of Godhead.

(ii) Grihasthas i.e. married householders living with family and devoted to the service of Godhead.

(iii) Banapasthas i.e. retired householders not living with family but devoted to the service of Godhead.

(iv) And Sanyasis or Tyagis i.e. Retired householders fully renounced to the service of Godhead without any family attachment.

(q) To initiate members in the rules of the Goswamins above mentioned by controlling over (i) illegitimate connections with woman (ii) intoxicating habit (iii) diets regulated with vegetable dishes (iv) gambling, unnecessary sporting or recreation enterprises.

'The League of Devotees' invites every individual member of the human society to become a constituent member of the Society and learn there of the Spiritual techniques in perfect order. The 'Bhagwat Geeta' is recognised all over the world. This great book of knowledge is the basis of Spiritual techniques. The League of Devotees requests all people of the world to make a sincere study of this book of knowledge without malafide interpretations and learn from it about our Divine relation with the Personality of Godhead. God is Great is known to all. But He is so great that it is impossible for the tiny brain of the living being to have a

clear conception of Godhead as He is. Therefore, to attempt to know God and His huge affairs of diverse Energy by dint of our own knowledge acquired by imperfect senses of limited potency, is always a futile attempt. If we want to know God and our eternal Divine relation with Him, we must know it from Godhead Himself as He reveals Himself in the Bhagwat Geeta. Let us not misunderstand this Great Book of spiritual significance by our imperfect empiric knowledge, but let us learn it from Him alone or from His devotee recognised by Him.

The League of Devotees will give all help to you by personal touch by literature, by instruction and by correspondence. Do not leave the opportunity. Make your life perfect by contacting our relation. So far payment is concerned it is immaterial. If you are unable to pay the membership fees still The League of Devotees will not deny its utmost services unto you, because The League of Devotees is pledged to serve the Supreme will of Godhead and by faith it stands to serve you at least for bringing you nearer to Godhead. But if you are able to pay do not try to avoid the membership fee. Every pie paid to this institution is engaged in transcendental service of Godhead and it is our duty to engage our life, money, intelligence and words in the transcendental loving service of Godhead if we want at all to realise God and thereby to make a perfection of this human form of life.

In conclusion it may be said that the aims and objects of the institution "The League of Devotees" are not manmade ideologies but they are picked up from the

original treasure house of India's spiritual culture attained by the great Rishis and Acharyas who transcended the conditional stage of existence and such spiritual experience is recorded in Sanskrit language. As such it is now necessary that men of culture all over the world may learn and read Sanskrit language the mother of all other languages of the Aryan stock. The League of Devotees therefore will maintain a Sanskrit academy and a degree College specially for the purpose of disseminating the benefit of this great language to all. Scholars from all countries will be welcome to remain as inmate of the institution if they agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the institution. There is scope for admitting free students also by special arrangement.

After political independence of India, the state language should have been made Sanskrit but it has not been so. Formerly though Sanskrit language was not known to the general mass of people in India still the written language of India was Sanskrit. As a result of this there was a strong sense of cultural unity of the ruling classes i.e. the Brahmin & the Chhatriya who were followed by the Vaishyas & Sudras. The spoken languages of India was as usual always different over district after district but due to the cultural unity of the people through the written Sanskrit language there was no question of Provincial or other narrow rivalries. If Sanskrit language is therefore made again the written language of India the cultural unity of India will not only be more Strengthened than ever but also it will be participated by the enlightened people of the world. The League of Devotees aims at this perfection for its objective of spiritual and cultural

advancement.

OM TAT SAT
Abhay Charanaravindo Bhaktivedanta
Founder & Secretary.

Dated at Jhansi the day of Aukshoya Tritiya the 16th.
May 1953.