**Maya’s Last Snare: The Original Sin Again**

By Narasimha das

It will difficult to properly understand the controversy in ISKCON regarding spiritual initiations and the bona fide spiritual master unless we first carefully consider the fundamentals of *guru-tattva* and authorized explanations regarding the cause of conditioned consciousness. (See *“The Original Sin: False Ambition”* at [www.krishnaconsciousnessmovement.com](http://www.krishnaconsciousnessmovement.com) )

**When Good Preachers Go Bad**

Recently I read in an old BTG magazine (Jan./Feb. 1996) three brilliant articles regarding the question, *“How does the living entity, who was originally with Krishna, fall into the material world.”* The first two articles were by Srila Prabhupada. The other one was by one of His disciples. Quoting Srila Prabhupada extensively, the latter author elaborates upon and helps emphasize Srila Prabhupada’s conclusion: the *jiva* soul has no real or substantial contact with matter at any stage; rather he exists eternally as part and parcel of Krishna in the spiritual world. His conditioning under the modes of material nature is simply a momentary dream arranged by Krishna’s external energy to help fulfill his minute, independent desire, or his false ambition to be the Lord. In spite of this brief dream, the soul remains part and parcel of Krishna eternally.

This is one topic of Krishna consciousness that is a difficult for embodied souls to understand, but Srila Prabhupada resolves the topic as simply as possible in His two articles (a lecture and an essay), and the author of this other BTG article in the same issue elaborates on the topic brilliantly, following Prabhupada’s lead, as Srila Prabhupada wanted his disciples to do when writing and preaching. I especially appreciated the way this devotee illustrated that material time is insignificant when compared to eternity. In other words, the devotee referred to above, although not a self-realized soul, as I will show below, did his duty as a preacher and representative of Srila Prabhupada. This is what Srila Prabhupada wanted**.**

**“I am 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.”** (Letter, Aug. 4, 1975)

Srila Prabhupada credited one of his senior, learned Godbrothers with playing an integral part, through his misleading preaching and speculation, in creating the debacle that ruined the once vibrant and powerful mission created by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati. Similarly, many sober devotees credit the writings of this intelligent BTG writer referred to above with playing a key part in the creation of the current bogus system of voted in “gurus” that has severely divided and weakened Srila Prabhupada’s institution, ISKCON.

The question arises: *“How it is possible that many seemingly intelligent devotees have gone along with this unauthorized system of ecclesiastical elections for sanctioning and reprimanding so-called diksa-gurus, a system which is obviously in direct defiance of Srila Prabhupada’s written and verbal orders and in direct defiance of the Gaudiya siddhanta on guru-tattva?*” For those who have carefully studied Prabhupada’s books, it may seem amazing that some of these devotees have been able to go on, in some fashion, with devotional service or *karma-yoga*. A few of these misguided devotees seem able to continue preaching the holy name and serving in brilliant ways —even though they are unable to understand some of Srila Prabhupada’s most important instructions regarding the *sad-guru*, the *guru-parampara*, great Vaisnavas, and the mission and teachings of the Krishna consciousness movement.

At a glance it may seem that the question *“How did the empowered and united institution created by Srila Prabhupada become fragmented by many camps of deviants?”* is as difficult to understand as the question *“How did liberated souls fall into illusion in this material world?”* In fact, looking closer, this question is far easier to resolve --that is, if one has already understood, at least in principle, how conditioned souls come under the influence of the Supreme Lord’s external energy. Following the example of the BTG writer referred to above, I will attempt to resolve this latter question by elaborating upon and emphasizing Srila Prabhupada’s explanations and conclusions.

**Imitators Beware**

In a nutshell, the reason those who are almost liberated or theoretically liberated fall into *maya* again is because they are not in fact completely liberated but only imagine themselves to be so. Instead of learning to remain forever as the humble followers of Lord Caitanya’s or Lord Krishna’s *nitya-siddha parishads*, they try to imitate Them. This is due to false ambition. This same principle applies even to great demigods like Lord Brahma.

**“There is a gulf of difference between theoretical freedom and actual freedom from material bondage.”** (*SB*. 3.27.20, Purport)

**“A *nitya-siddha* devotee comes from Vaikuntha upon the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and shows by his personal example how to become a pure devotee. A pure devotee, therefore, is a practical example for all living entities, including Lord Brahma.”** (*SB.* 7.10.3, Purport)

**“As soon as a foolish disciple tries to overtake his spiritual master and becomes ambitious to occupy his post, he immediately falls down.”** (*SB*. 5.12.14, Purport.)

**“However, one should not imitate the behavior of an advanced devotee or *maha-bhagavata* without being self-realized, for by such imitation one will eventually become degraded.”** (Nectar of Instruction, Verse Five, Purport)

**“That is the teaching of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. *Guru more murkha dekhi*. Caitanya Mahaprabhu is *murkha*? Why is it He’s posing Himself as that *murkha*?—‘I am fool number one.’ That means that is liberation. You must always be ready to be chastised by the guru. Then one is liberated.”** (Conversation, August 16, 1976, Bombay)

**“One should not try to be an artificially advanced devotee, thinking, ‘I am a first-class devotee.’ Such thinking should be avoided. It best not to accept any disciples.”** (*Cc.Madhya*, 7.130, Purport.)

**“They did even consider with common sense—that if Guru Maharaja wanted to appoint somebody as *acarya*, why he did not say? He said so many things, and this point he missed? The real point? And they insisted upon it. The declared some unfit person to become *acarya*. And then another—‘*Acarya*!’ Another—‘*Acarya*!’ So better to remain a foolish [simple] person perpetually to be directed by Guru Maharaja. That is perfection. And as soon as he [the upstart] learns that Guru Maharaja is dead, ‘Now I am so advanced that I can kill my guru and I become guru.’ Then he’s finished.”** (Conv. Aug. 16, 1976, Bombay)

**A Brief History Post-1977 Iskcon**

Everyone who knows anything about the history of ISKCON understands that immediately upon Srila Prabhupada’s disappearance from this world, or even before, some of his leading disciples conspired to claim that they had been chosen by Srila Prabhupada to be his successors and act as *diksha-gurus,* or *acharyas.* They claimed they were chosen *to* lead the movement and initiate new disciples joining the mission of Krishna consciousness as their own disciples. After several of these supposedly chosen successor *acharyas* were exposed for gross deviations, many devotees began to question their absolute authority and their alleged appointment by Srila Prabhupada.

As it turned out, when all evidence was analyzed, no instruction was found from Srila Prabhupada naming these or any others as guru successors. Nor could be found any instruction suggesting the GBC should sanction *diksa-guru*s. Rather Srila Prabhupada had sanctioned only *ritviks* to initiate on His behalf. The *ritvik* system of initiations had been current in ISKCON for several years prior, and just before His departure from this world, Srila Prabhupada instituted it officially to operate without His direct supervision. He did this by the written order dated July 9th, 1977. Srila Prabhupada ordered that this signed document be sent to Los Angeles to be copied and sent to all ISKCON temples and GBCs. Apparently this signed document was largely squashed by conspirators, but in the months following, Prabhupada confirmed this order several times in letters and conversations. Most devotees never saw this July 9th order until 10 or 11 years later.

Unfortunately, Srila Prabhupada’s final order on initiations and similar written and verbal instructions regarding *ritvik* initiations were buried for years by Iskcon’s top brass. Then, in 1987 or 1988, a popular devotee magazine (Vedic Village Review) published these instructions and distributed them widely. At this point, due to the widespread effect this publication was having on popular opinion, various leading GBC men began a campaign to minimize Srila Prabhupada’s final order on initiations, claiming it was a temporary stop-gap instruction only. The doubt they deliberately created was the beginning of wide-scale *guru-aparadha* in the *maya*-ISKCON, particularly among leading GBC men. **“In the *Bhagavad-gita* the Lord says that doubting the words of the authority is the cause of destruction.”** (*SB*.3.26.30, Purport) GBC spokesmen argued that if this order was to be taken seriously, the disciplic succession could not continue.

Such doubtful arguments revealed the GBC’s shallow understanding of the *guru-parampara,* or disciplic succession, which is continued by genuine disciples and self-realized souls --not by ecclesiastical arrangements for sanctioning upstart “gurus”. They argued that the original eleven appointed *ritviks* mentioned in Prabhupada’s final order on initiations had misunderstood their appointment as *ritviks* to be appointments as successor *acharyas* and for this reason they had created an exclusive club of so-called zonal *acharyas*. While agreeing that this was a mistake, the GBC continued to vehemently argue that a “nonliving” guru, a guru without a physical body, cannot possibly continue initiating disciples after his demise, and therefore some system of authorizing new *diksa-gurus* was needed in ISKCON.

**Bad Apples Spoil the Bunch**

With false logic and word jugglery certain leading pundits among the GBC gradually convinced many of their colleagues that they too could become Srila Prabhupada’s successors and initiate their own disciples in ISKCON --even though they had not been appointed by Srila Prabhupada, even though they were not self-realized souls, even though Srila Prabhupada had never suggested any institutional system for sanctioning *diksa-gurus*. Blinded by false ambition, they argued that since Srila Prabhupada was now dead and gone, the GBC was the new absolute authority in ISKCON and this ecclesiastical body should therefore sanction or approve new *diksa-gurus*. When asked where in *sastras* or Srila Prabhupada’s instructions is it said that *diksa-gurus* are nominated, voted in, self-appointed, or sanctioned by clerics, they claimed that Lord Caitanya had already issued a blanket order for all preachers to become gurus and initiate their own disciples in the Krishna consciousness movement. When asked why, then, did devotees need sanction from the GBC to initiate, since Srila Prabhupada himself had not sanctioned any *diksha-gurus* or suggested any system for doing so, they claimed that as a matter of formality and for the sake of maintaining order in ISKCON, preachers should first apply to the GBC for permission to initiate.

In official GBC documents and essays, these arrogant clerics stepped up their campaign to deliberately minimize Srila Prabhupada’s instructions for *ritvik* initiations, minimize His position as *Acharya* of ISKCON, and minimize His status as *Sampradaya Acharya* and *Sad-Guru* by suggesting that He was just one more temporary teacher in a long line of gurus and disciples. In this way, intoxicated by false ambition, most leading preachers in *maya*-ISKCON became infected with *guru-aparadha*. Some also fell into the last snare of *maya*, which is to think oneself equal to Krishna or His empowered expansions.

**“As soon as a foolish disciple tries to overtake his spiritual master and becomes ambitious to occupy his post, he immediately falls down.”** (*SB*. 5.12.14, Purport.)

**“However, one should not imitate the behavior of an advanced devotee or *maha-bhagavata* without being self-realized, for by such imitation one will eventually become degraded.”** (Nectar of Instruction, Verse Five, Purport)

Although the *maya*-gbc has changed its stance repeatedly over the years, today they say that anyone in Iskcon in good standing, minus Srila Prabhupada, can adopt the post of *diksa-guru* in the Krishna consciousness movement, if approved by the GBC, and may even conduct *ritvik* initiations, as long as Srila Prabhupada is not accepted as the initiator. (See *“Idol Worship in Iskcon?” at* [*www.krishnaconsciousnessmovement.com*](http://www.krishnaconsciousnessmovement.com)) Simply by volunteering, any devotee in Iskcon with a physical body, even a dependent woman, can become a pseudo *diksa-guru*, as long as the gbc approves. This idea contradicts the specific orders and *sadhana* Srila Prabhupada established for initiations. Furthermore, such an idea contradicts the *siddhanta* of all Vaisnava *sastras*. The entire gbc stance regarding the issue of *guru-tattva* in Iskcon boils down to one absurd idea: *“The nitya-siddha associate of Krishna, an empowered pure devotee who has an eternal transcendental body, is unable to initiate, yet neophyte sadhakas with gross material bodies are able to do so, as long as the GBC approves.”*

**Instructions on Guru-tattva**

Below I have provided a few examples illustrating the actual Gaudiya Vaisnava *siddhanta* on *guru-tattva*:

**"Vallabha Bhatta wanted to be initiated by Gadadhara Pandita, but Gadadhara Pandita refused, saying, *'The work of acting as a spiritual master is not possible for me. I am completely dependent. My Lord is Gaurasundara, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. I cannot do anything independently, without His order.'* “ (***Caitanya-caritamrta* Antya 150, 151.)

**"Try to understand. Don’t go very speedily.** **A guru can become guru when he is ordered by his guru. Otherwise nobody can become guru."** (Conversation, October 28, 1975, Nairobi.)

**“When one has attained the topmost position of *maha-bhagavata*, he is to be accepted as guru and worshiped exactly like Hari, the personality of Godhead. Only such a person is eligible to occupy the post of a guru.”** (*Cc. Madhya*, 24.330, Purport, citing *Padma Purana*.)

**"One should not try to be an artificially advanced devotee, thinking, 'I am a first-class devotee.' Such thinking should be avoided. It best not to accept any disciples."** (*Cc. Madhya* 7.130, Purport)

These quotes above clearly show that the *maya*-GBC’s claim that anyone can initiate simply because they seem to be following the basic *sadhana* is false. The first quote disproves the *maya*-GBC’s claim that Lord Caitanya issued a blanket order for everyone to become a *diksha-guru*. If one of the **Sri Panca-Tattva** needs an order to initiate His own disciple, then what to speak of others? In truth, Lord Caitanya simply ordered devotees to preach Krishna consciousness in a humble way by speaking whatever they knew about Krishna consciousness to whomever they happened to meet. Thus Prabhupada and our great Gaudiya Vaisnava *acharya*s have advised**, “It is best not to accept any disciples.”**

The quotes below, and many others like them, prove that the bona fide spiritual master does not require an appointment or sanction from embodied souls or ecclesiastical bodies composed of clerics. Rather, the true spiritual master is chosen and personally empowered by Krishna and His expansions in the category of infallible *guru-tattva*. These quotes below also prove that a genuine spiritual master or *nitya-siddha* Vaisnava, such as Srila Prabhupada, is not an embodied soul with a temporary material body, as the *maya*-GBC has repeatedly suggested by claiming that Srila Prabhupada cannot initiate disciples *“posthumously*”.

**"The bona fide spiritual master is in the disciplic succession since time eternal, and he does not deviate at all from the instructions of the Supreme Lord."** (*Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, 4.42, Purport.)

**“He reasons ill who tells that Vaisnavas die, when Thou art living still in sound.”** (From a poem by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura)

**“He lives forever by His divine instructions and the follower lives with Him.”** (Srila Prabhupada’s dedication to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura in *Srimad-Bhagavatam.*)

The quotes below contradict the *maya*-GBC’s claim that new students in Krishna consciousness should be satisfied to surrender heart and soul to a rubber-stamped pseudo-guru sanctioned by neophyte clerics. These quotes also show that true *diksha* is not a matter of ecclesiastical or ritualistic traditions.

**“Unless one is initiated by a bona fide spiritual master, all his devotional activities are useless. A person who is not properly initiated can descend again into the animal species.”** (*Cc. Madhya*, 15.108, Purport)

**“Sri Jiva Gosvami has advised that one not accept a spiritual master in terms of hereditary or customary social or ecclesiastical conventions. One should try to find a genuinely qualified spiritual master for actual advancement in spiritual understanding.”** (*Cc. Adi*, 1.35, Purport)

**“*Diksha* actually means initiating the disciple with transcendental knowledge by which he becomes freed from all material contamination.”** (*Cc*. *Madhya*, 4.111)

**“The spiritual master awakens the sleeping living entity to his original pure consciousness so that he can worship Lord Vishnu. This is the purpose of *diksha*, or initiation. Initiation means receiving pure knowledge of spiritual consciousness.**” (*Cc.* *Madhya*, 9.61)

**“Unless one is initiated by the right person who always carries within his heart the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one cannot acquire the power to carry the Supreme Personality of Godhead within the core of one’s heart.”** (*SB*. 10.2.18)

**“Therefore a disciple should be careful to accept an *uttama-adhikari* as spiritual master."** (*Nectar of Instruction*, Text 5, Purport.)

**"...help can be given only by a spiritual master like Krishna. Therefore the conclusion is that a spiritual master who is one hundred percent Krishna conscious is the bona fide spiritual master, for he can solve the problems of life."** (*Bhagavad-gita As It Is,* 2.8, Purport.)

**Severe Offenders**

Srila Prabhupada Himself prophetically warned of those who would *envy the exalted status of the spiritual master****:*** **“And as soon as he [the upstart] learns that Guru Maharaja is dead, ‘Now I am so advanced that I can kill my guru and I become guru.’ Then he’s finished.”** (Conv. Aug. 16, 1976, Bombay)

After many of the *maya*-GBC’s artificially sanctioned *diksa-gurus* fell down in bizarre ways or left the movement or exhibited strange behavior not befitting Vaisnavas or even ordinary *karmis*, the *maya*-GBC tried to explain these falldowns by claiming that highly advanced Vaisnava *acharyas* often fall into *maya* and therefore no one should blame the GBC for these events and the traumas in the spiritual lives of thousands of devotees these bogus pretenders caused. The *maya-*GBC’s claims regarding so-called falldowns of great Vaisnavas are too offensive to repeat here without a full treatment, which we have already provided in the article *“Sri Guru-tattva 101: A Brief Primer.”* In brief, such statements are proof that the entire *maya-*GBC has been contaminated by blasphemy and severe offenses to Srila Prabhupada, the *guru-parampara,* and all devotees in Srila Prabhupada’s mission.

**“There is no possibility that a first-class devotee will fall down…”** (*Cc. Madhya*, 22.71, Purport.)

**“A bona fide spiritual master is in the disciplic succession from time eternal, and he does not deviate at all from the instructions of the Supreme Lord…”** (*Bhagavad-gita,* 4.42, Purport.)

**“A first-class devotee never deviates from the principles of higher authority…”** (*Nectar of Devotion*, Chapter 3.)

Instead of encouraging all students of Krishna consciousness to accept the infallible, current *Sampradaya Acharya,* Srila Prabhupada, as their *diksha-guru*, as Srila Prabhupada wanted, the *maya*-gbc has repeatedly claimed Srila Prabhupada is dead and that devotees who have joined His mission after 1977 need to accept a GBC rubber-stamped “*diksha-guru*” instead of Srila Prabhupada. Such ideas are refuted in the quotes immediately below.

**“The spiritual master is not the question of [‘living’]… The spiritual master is eternal—the spiritual master is eternal.”** (Lecture, Oct. 2, 1968, Seattle, WA)

**“He lives forever by His divine instructions and the follower lives with Him.”** (Srila Prabhupada’s dedication to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura in *Srimad-Bhagavatam.*)

**“When one has attained the topmost position of *maha-bhagavata*, he is to be accepted as guru and worshiped exactly like Hari, the personality of Godhead. Only such a person is eligible to occupy the post of a guru.”** (*Cc. Madhya*, 24.330, Purport, citing *Padma Purana*.)

**“They did even consider with common sense—that if Guru Maharaja wanted to appoint somebody as *acarya*, why he did not say? He said so many things, and this point he missed? The real point? And they insisted upon it. The declared some unfit person to become *acarya*. And then another—‘*Acarya*!’ Another—‘*Acarya*!’ So better to remain a foolish [simple] person perpetually to be directed by Guru Maharaja. That is perfection. And as soon as he [the upstart] learns that Guru Maharaja is dead, ‘Now I am so advanced that I can kill my guru and I become guru.’ Then he’s finished.”** (Conv. Aug. 16, 1976, Bombay)

**“If everyone just initiates, then there will only be contradictory results. As long as it goes on there will only be failure.”** (From Srila Prabhupada’s poem *Phalguna Krishna Pancami*, 1961.)

When specifically asked how initiations would be continued after Srila Prabhupada was no longer with us, He immediately replied:

**“I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating *acaryas. Ritvik*. Yes.”** (Conversation, May 28, 1977, Vrindaban, India.)

**“So, some deputies… These initiations-- I have deputed my disciples. Is it clear or not?”** (Conversation, Oct. 18, 1977)

When asked if He could accept offerings through His picture or *murti,* as Lord Krishna does, Srila Prabhupada immediately replied:

**“Yes. *Sakshad-dharitena samasta-sastrair*. The guru in non-different than Krishna.”** (Conversation, Oct. 27, 1975, Nairobi)

**“Like Krishna can be present simultaneously in millions of places, similarly the spiritual master also can be present wherever the disciple wants.”** (Letter, May 28, 1968)

The quotes below disprove the *maya*-GBC’s claim that Srila Prabhupada is dead and gone and thus no longer able to initiate new disciples.

**“Although a physical body is not present, the vibration should be accepted as the presence of the spiritual master. Vibration—what we have heard from the spiritual master—that is living.”** (Lecture, Jan. 13, 1969, Los Angeles, CA)

**“The spiritual master is not the question of [‘living’]… The spiritual master is eternal—the spiritual master is eternal.”** (Lecture, Oct. 2, 1968, Seattle, WA)

**“I will never die. I shall live from my books, and you will utilize.”** (Interview, July 16, 1975, Berkeley)

**“Only Lord Caitanya can take my place. He will take care of the movement.”** (Conversation, Nov. 7, 1977, Vrindaban, India)

**“He lives forever by His divine instructions and the follower lives with Him.”** (Srila Prabhupada’s Dedication to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura in *Srimad-Bhagavatam.*)

When clearly asked twice whether He would name a successor, Srila Prabhupada replied:

**“My success is always there. Yes. Just like the sun is always there. It may come before your vision or not—the sun is there. But if you are fortunate, you come before the sun. Otherwise, you remain in darkness. The sun is open to everyone.”** (Conversation, Feb. 12, 1975, Mexico City.)

From these quotes and many others like them it is quite easy to understand how most leaders in *maya*-ISKCON fell from an exalted status as servants of the empowered pure devotee, Srila Prabhupada, and became servants of *maya* instead: they became carried away by false ambition. Simply stated, in Prabhupada’s own words, they became **“envious of the exalted status of the spiritual master.”**

Srila Prabhupada, as the Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead, showed the full opulence of *guru-tattva* and was worshiped and adored by millions of people all over the world. Several of His leading disciples became ambitious to enjoy an exalted status like Prabhupada’s, and they gradually infected many of their colleagues with this same false ambition. For the sake of this ambition, they drove away thousands of sincere souls from Prabhupada’s divine mission and divided ISKCON into many branches of bogus cults. In this way, they disrupted the sublime mission of Lord Caitanya, which is based on humble following and surrender rather than aspiration for position, wealth and followers. ***Na danam, na janam, na sundarim***.

**Again Become a Mouse**

Srila Prabhupada constantly showed the example of humble following and preached Lord Caitanya’s mission of full surrender to Krishna. He often warned that false ambition could ruin ISKCON the way it ruined the Gaudiya Math. False ambition, after all, is the original cause of our fall into material life of birth and death. Because Srila Prabhupada recognized that most of his disciples could not immediately accept Lord Caitanya’s supreme path of pure devotional service, He created an institution with many positions of responsibility and honor to accommodate devotees who insisted on having such positions. He created positions such as *Swami, Gosvami*, Temple President, GBC, BBT Trustee, Brahmin, Personal Secretary and, finally, *Ritvik* of the *Acharya*. But still these ambitious upstarts were not satisfied even with these exalted honors and titles.

At last, they tried to force Srila Prabhupada to appoint them as *diksa-gurus* or *acharyas*. In spite of their insistence, Srila Prabhupada never agreed to appoint *diksha-gurus* and never authorized the GBC to appoint or sanction *diksha-gurus*. The reason Prabhupada never did so is obvious for sane devotees who have understood the fundamentals of Gaudiya Vaisnava *siddhanta.* Sober devotees should carefully note the fate of upstarts who think they are so advanced that they can defy Srila Prabhupada’s orders and imitate or usurp His position.

**“And as soon as he [the upstart] learns that Guru Maharaja is dead, ‘Now I am so advanced that I can kill my guru and I become guru.’ Then he’s finished.”** (Conversation, Aug. 16, 1976, Bombay)

**“On the whole, the spiritual master is an agent of Krishna. Either he is assistant to the *gopis* or assistant to the cowherd boys. He is on the level of Krishna. That is the verdict of all scriptures.”** (Letter, Sept. 26, 1969)

**“One should consider the spiritual master to be as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In spite of all of these instructions, if one considers the spiritual master an ordinary human being, he is doomed. His study of the *Vedas* and his austerities and penances for enlightenment are all useless, like the bathing of an elephant…”** *(SB.* 7.15.26, Purport)

**“Therefore a disciple should be careful to accept an *uttama-adhikari* as spiritual master."** (*Nectar of Instruction*, Text 5, Purport.)

**Disciples of Kali-yuga**

It would take an entire book to detail the deviations and reactions caused by the post-1977 GBC, the *maya*-gbc. These deviations are summarized in the book *Srila Prabhupada Siddhanta* on pages 45 and 46, (Section Three, Item 12, a-j).

In their latest display of madness, the *maya*-Iskcon GBC has repeatedly harassed and attacked Srila Prabhupada’s most successful temple of devotees, namely Bangalore ISKCON. This wonderfully successful temple follows a strict *sadhana* as Srila Prabhupada prescribed, preaches extensively in Bangalore and several other cities in India, distributes millions of books and millions of plates of *prasada*, operates a farm project, and does everything for the pleasure of Srila Prabhupada. The leaders of this temple strictly follow the temple *sadhana* and help train hundreds of resident devotees and *brahmacaris* on the devotional path. This temple of fixed-up, vibrant devotees inspires a very large congregation, many of whom are also quickly becoming fixed-up Vaisnavas and followers of Srila Prabhupada. The temple management is expert and efficient. The huge temple and complex, which includes temples, book warehouses, ashrams, restaurants, goshala, guesthouses, lecture halls, stores, and other buildings and facilities, is kept immaculately clean. The resident devotees are well provided for and are happily engaged in favorable devotional service under Srila Prabhupada’s guidance, and thousands of pilgrims visit daily and receive *maha-prasadam* and books*.*

In spite of all these wonderful programs and success, the *maya*-ISKCON has spent huge sums of money in and out of court to disrupt and take over this temple. Why? What is the fault of Bangalore ISKCON? Simply that they want to keep Srila Prabhupada in His rightful place in ISKCON as *acharya* and *diksa-guru*, in honor of His orders and instructions. But the *maya*-Iskcon finds such success based on Srila Prabhupada intolerable. They find it intolerable that this temple, with its many staunch disciples of Srila Prabhupada, rejects the *maya*-GBC’s defiant system of upstart, pseudo-gurus. The *maya*-gbc finds it intolerable that Srila Prabhupada is alive and well at Bangalore ISKCON.

**“A jealous person in the dress of a Vaisnava is not at all happy to see the success of another Vaisnava in receiving the Lord’s mercy. Unfortunately, in this Age of Kali there are many mundane persons in the dress of Vaisnavas, and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has described them as disciples of Kali. He says *kali-chela*. He indicates that there is another Vaisnava, a pseudo-Vaisnava with *tilak* on his nose and *kanthi* beads around his neck. Such a pseudo-Vaisnava associates with money and women and is jealous of successful Vaisnavas. Although passing for a Vaisnava, his only business is earning money in the dress of a Vaisnava. Bhaktivinoda Thakura therefore says that such a Vaisnava is not a Vaisnava at all but a disciple of Kali-yuga. A disciple of Kali cannot become an *acharya* by the decision of some high court. Mundane votes have no jurisdiction to elect a Vaisnava *acharya*. A Vaisnava *acharya* is self-effulgent, and there is no need of any court judgment. A false *acharya* may try to override a Vaisnava by a high-court decision, but Bhaktivinoda Thakura says that he is nothing but a disciple of Kali-yuga.”** (*Cc., Madhya*, 1.220, Purport)

Srila Prabhupada’s purport above illuminates the reason why the *maya-gbc* has misused so much *lakshmi* to uproot sincere, bona fide Vaisnavas from the project they developed by their sincere devotional efforts over a period of more than two decades. These *kali-chela* upstarts and their misguided followers see Bangalore ISKCON as a cash cow to be squeezed for their own defiant programs of pseudo-Vaisnavism based on false prestige and false ambition.

**"I wish that each and every branch keep their independent identity and cooperate, keeping the *Acarya* in the center. On this principle we can open any number of branches all over the world."** (Letter, February 11, 1967.)

**“So deputies… These initiations--I have deputed my disciples. Is it clear or not?”** (Conversation, Oct. 18, 1977)

**Maya’s Last Trick**

It is said that when a devotee or yogi is liberated, or almost liberated, by dint of pure yoga or devotional service, Maya Devi herself offers him all material facilities beyond his imagination, simply for his wish. It may be concluded that the original sin of the conditioned soul that caused him to fall into conditioned consciousness in the first place is the same propensity that causes him to fall into Maya’s last snare, even as he approaches the thresholds of final liberation. Maya’s last snare works on those who have not rooted out the original cause of falldown: false ambition.

Devotees should not be surprised or depressed to find that this Kali-yuga dream world is full of cheaters who sometimes pose as gurus and Vaisnavas. We should understand clearly that Srila Prabhupada lives forever by His divine instructions and that His followers live with Him. Great Vaisnava *acharyas* are as infallible as Krishna Himself. By remaining always as humble servants at Srila Prabhupada’s lotus feet, anyone can easily transcend the evil influences of material existence and return to Goloka Vrindaban, the supreme spiritual abode. Lord Krishna assures us in the *Bhagavad-gita* that once having returned to His supreme abode, no one returns again to this problematic world of illusion and cheating.