

Some
Concerns
About
ISKCON

By His Holiness Bhakti Vikasa Swami

Part-1 and 2

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PART 1

Introduction

So the topic is some of my concerns about matters in ISKCON today. What I am going to speak about specifically in response to the query that I got that it has a much broader application than simply answering the question which has been asked by ... actually two devotees wrote me about this. The background is sometime ago, few months ago, some devotees approached me in Bombay and they had heard one lecture that I had given on ksatriya spirit and they were inspired to take up ksatriya type services. I don't know if it is just from the lecture or if that lecture further inspired them. And they asked what did I think about the idea of starting a ksatriya initiative with in ISKCON. So I said, "Ya that's a good idea" And I referred them to Bhakti Raghava Swami who is heading up Varnasrama initiative with in our movement. Then few days ago I got a letter from another devotee, he is an aspiring devotee of mine, who proposed to join that project. And he gave some of the works that they are doing or that they proposed to do. And one of them was promoting the mid day meals project with in ISKCON. And I didn't reply very extensively but I said that, "No I don't think that's a very good idea. You have joined them and it seems that their ksatriya project is off course" I am just paraphrasing. I can't remember what I exactly said. Then that devotee wrote back. ... So he wrote back and said that well he thought that welfare activities ... he couldn't understand that why ISKCON shouldn't do that or might not be expected to do that but as this is a ksatriya body which is operating with in Varnasrama and that's a pious activity, welfare activities and that's ksatriya's ... one of the things they do is welfare activities for human society. He thought it would be acceptable with in that context. And I also got an email from one of the devotees who had approached me several months before starting this project and told me how it is being very well accepted by ISKCON leaders ... That mid day meal is not ... it's just one of the things ... they have many things that they wish to do and he wishes to meet me to discuss and understand why I have seem to changed. So I am going to speak somewhat extensively. Whatever I say I could say more about this. Another thing I am going to say now about all of these things that I have not said before and I have discussed some of these things with several of you and some of them I have said in recorded lectures which are out there on the internet. So it's not that I am saying anything new in this regard. But I am bringing together in one lecture many different points. I plan to write a book covering these topics in more detail which is a better way to do things overall to cover each point thoroughly with quotes and systematic reasoning but it takes a lot of time and I have many other writing projects. I should finish the ones which are already started. There are many important books which I have to write. That's one of them – some analysis of various problems or deviations with in ISKCON and perennial problems or problems that are liable to perennially afflict our organization. I wanted to write a book but now you could say that I am on the spot ... that's an English saying. Someone asked me specifically about this and I should give them a satisfying reply which can't be done in just brushing it off ... I mean you could just say, "Well that is all nonsense" or something like that but these are serious devotees who ... they want to do something seriously in the service of Srila Prabhupada. I have a serious disagreement with what they are doing. So this lecture, if you hear, it might be

discouraging. The aim is not to discourage but the subject matter is such that it may do but on the other hand it should be spoken. Just like the doctor tells the patient, “You have cancer.” It’s not likely to make him feel better, I mean to make him feel... if he tells him, “Well actually there is no problem. Just take some ... that pain you have. Just take some aspirin for the head ache.” He has got a brain tumor and tell him take an aspirin and ... smile that makes you feel good. We have to tell him, “You have got brain cancer.” So sometimes it’s necessary to say things which are unpleasant otherwise they can’t be ... there is no question of rectifying them. What I am about to say will ... already is often considered to be in the language of others, extreme right wing, conservative, orthodox, fanatical. But actually my attitudes in Krishna Consciousness they were the standard in ISKCON when Srila Prabhupada was present. It was like universal that ... why is that? Because Prabhupada inculcated in us the mood and the attitudes that I am going to talk about. So although it may be called by various names it is actually what Prabhupada taught us. Ofcourse others may dispute that. I could say that I am not writing a book, I am giving a lecture. So I am not going to go into very-very-very long analysis of all the points and counter points. A few years ago, may be ten years ago, one of my godbrothers made the observation that now a days in ISKCON if you just say and do and act in the same way that we did when Srila Prabhupada was present then you are called dinosaur, fanatic or something like that which I thought was an astute observation.

Mid day meals

Benefits of Mid day meal project

So midday meals, you probably all know what this is. There is a program run by several of our ISKCON centers. Actually I think it’s not ... they have separate trusts to do it as far as I know. It’s not done in the name of ISKCON directly. This was actually dreamed up by Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa of the hrtvik center in Bangalore under the name Akshaya patra, which means undiminishable container. It’s from Mahabharata Draupadi. Ofcourse Draupadi didn’t had to go out and beg money because the patra was akshaya by itself so there is a difference there. Madhu Pandit dreamed up this idea and it was later taken up by various ... what we might call standard ISKCON centers in India under the title Mid day meals and the idea is to feed children ... I think mostly government schools may be non-government schools also, I don’t know that much about it, they are mostly government schools, isn’t it? To provide them with mid day meals and this is ... the proponents of this program say that Srila Prabhupada said that no one with in ten miles of our temple should hungry. This program has _____ a tremendous appreciation from various quarters. People seem to like our movement much more then they did before. And they give us land and all kinds of things. It’s said that people who wouldn’t give for regular ISKCON projects, they would give for this. So these are some of the benefits which are mentioned. So many people are getting prasadam, even non-hindus. So that’s the claim for the benefits of Mid day meals programme.

Background of Mid day meal

Now, I want to give some background on this because like I said this ... why am I against this? Well I am claiming that my attitudes are the same attitudes as that when I joined ISKCON because when I joined ISKCON, I had faith that what we were taught is what Srila Prabhupada wanted and that we should do what Prabhupada said and I have stayed with the same attitudes over all these years.

Formation of ISKCON Communications

Now shortly after Srila Prabhupada left this world there was a body formed by some devotees in America with in ISKCON, which was first of all called ISKCON public relations ... I believe it was called but soon they changed the name to ISKCON Communications. I guess because Public relations give the idea that you are doing what's now a days ... you won't understand what this means but if you lived in America or Britain you would know. It's a spin job. In other words, it's publicity to make other people think good about you even though it's not so good and all big people like Presidents of countries, they all have their experts who help them to present to the world ... Just like, "Why" ... it might be asked "are American troops in Afghanistan?" Well you need someone to think up some story apart from the real one because the real one doesn't sound so good. So that's the kind of thing that public relations does. It's meant for misleading ... it gives the impression that it's not quite honest. So then the title was changed to ISKCON Communications which sounds a lot more honest, communications. Like we just want to tell you what we are doing, like we are just being open. So the title was changed to ISKCON Communications.

Two initiatives of ISKCON Communications

Now two of the major initiatives of the ISKCON public relations ... it was formed very shortly after Prabhupada left, may be 1978 or 79. Two of the things they did was to start the ISKCON World review and to start the Food for life programme which many devotees think was ... it's often stated that Prabhupada started it. Srila Prabhupada had a programme called ISKCON Food relief actually which was seems specifically in Mayapur. I don't know if it was ever anywhere else and that was for giving prasadam to the many Bangladeshi refugees who were flooded over to that area of India of that time. So Food for life was started and with in the ISKCON World review it was weekly or fortnightly newspaper which gave news of ISKCON activities all over the world but it also sort to change the whole ethos of ISKCON.

Idea of salvation army

In one of the early editions ... I remember reading this and I tried to find the copy in which it's printed but I couldn't find. But I remember reading about the ISKCON World Review. They gave the idea of the salvation ... they said because ISKCON at that time was quite unpopular especially in America. There was lot of bad publicity which seemed largely due to our aggressive book distribution which Srila Prabhupada ... he was against that. But it seemed to created a lot of oppositions especially what was seen as the cheating tactics of the devotees in ... what's called the change up that ... the devotee would ask, "Could you give a

big note and I will give ...” When someone agree to buy a book they would say, “Can you give a big note and I will give you change because I have so much change?” and then so someone would give a 100 \$ then devotee would slowly give 10 \$... he would come down to 50 \$ and he would say, “Hey you know you are a very generous person. I think that’s ok” The person may be only wanting to give 10 \$ and by some kind of trickery of being very forceful like almost forcefully they take a lot more money from them. They would give them extra books also but people didn’t like that at all. In many ways I mean our movement was considered very strange with the people going out and singing in this street. Well there is much more cosmopolitan now a days. In those days if you didn’t wear your hair style short back ends ... you know there is one hair style for all men. If you didn’t wear your hair like that there was ... they would consider something wrong with you, so what to speak about singing on the streets. Now a days people like it, attitudes have changed but many people like it. So movement was quite unpopular, there were all kind of accusations in the press about us being a cult brainwashing people. So the ISKCON communications sort to change the image of the ISKCON in the public eye and they gave the example of the salvation army which is not very prominent Christian sect which was founded in England in the 19th century and what they did was the salvation army, they would dress in Quasi military uniforms and go into public places and play music and sing songs, hymns, songs about God and they got all kinds of bad publicity. People thought they were stupid, they are not doing anything, they are just other-wordly, they are not doing anything practical for human society, they should go out and get a job and do some work. They were quite unpopular. So perceiving this the leaders of the salvation army they decided, “Ok lets change our tactics, lets do some welfare work and then people will like us.” So it’s true their whole image changed and people, their attitude toward the salvation army became much more favorable and they started helping the _____, having shelters for poor people and things like that.

Issue with that idea

The only problem is which wasn’t mentioned in the ISKCON World review is that you don’t see the salvation army on the streets anymore singing their songs. Actually I remember seeing them may be once in my childhood and if anyone at all thinks of the salvation army, which they hardly do at all because they are not a very significant sect, they think of them in terms of the charitable work they do. So they became better liked but they lost their whole mission. I mean they still had the mission of converting people to Christianity but their focus changed drastically. So it was a good example if you consider that we also, our dharma is to go out in public places, sing the holy names, dress in unusual clothes, it’s many ... similar in many ways. But the point that they lost their ... salvation army lost their whole initial approach and attitude and they became less of a proselytizing movement then a mundane welfare movement. That wasn’t mentioned in the ISKCON World Review.

Other issues with ISKCON World Review

And the ISKCON World Review was also quite bold in introducing with in their pages ... and it was sent free to all the temples so everyone got to see it and there was news, so people like to see news and Ratha yatra in this country, new temple opened in this place but mixed up

with that was ... they had an agenda to change ISKCON and there were things like that Princeton's Reviews of cassettes made by ISKCON devotees and I remember reading one of them that the guitar style is Hendrixian ... you don't know, those of you who are from the west can understand, it's in the style of Jimy Hendrixo, some famous demoniac ... actually very demoniac person. He made one album showing under cover art showed the picture of the universal form but instead of having Vishnu's head in the center, he had his head. Then he had another one with all naked women on the front ... you know that one... electric lady ... anyway. So and then he died ... he had taken illicit drugs, he was lying down _____ and he vomited and he choked on his vomit that's how he died. So praising this music by this devotee as being reminiscent of Jimy Hendrix that's supposed to be a compliment. And there was like book reviews of semi secular or secular books. So it was quite bold in that regard, in that it brought in what we have not dreamed of before ... I remember ... I didn't think about this for years. I was newly in the movement and I asked one of the devotees that among all these rock groups and this and that may be some are like in the mode of goodness. He said, "No they are all demoniac." That was my misconception in the early days. So that was the proper understanding that rock groups were all demoniac. But now there was this thing promoting rock music with in ISKCON. It was very bold in those days and promoting that we should interact with different groups like animal right group and it will give news of not only of ISKCON activities but of different people who are promoting re-incarnation and all this and that. So it sought to make our movement accepted as part of normal society and that devotees can be thought of as normal people with normal interests to a large extent and which was quite different as ... well I say it and it seems to me to be quite axiomatic that it's quite different to the whole ethos that Srila Prabhupada introduced everyone to change society. We were opposed to this whole demoniac way of life. So it's more like becoming accepted by the society on the terms of modern society by accepting many of the attitudes with in it and particularly by performing welfare activities, bodily welfare activities and particularly prasadam distribution which ... of course prasadam distribution is very good, Prabhupada wanted that very much but promoting prasadam distribution in a manner that it's seen by the public as welfare activity for hungry people, for needy people. So that's the background for pretty much all I am going to speak about how attitudes in ISKCON have changed, they were deliberately changed.

Some points against Mid day meal

1.No one is going hungry anyway

Now, when we say well what's wrong with the mid day meals programme, Srila Prabhupada said, "No one should go hungry with in ten miles of our center, any ISKCON center." **Well I proposed that in the places that we are distributing prasad no one is going hungry anyway.** In Bombay, Bangalore, Delhi, they are not going hungry. I mean there are people who are poor, relatively poor but no one is starving in the cities. What happens is many people from poor families, they don't want to send their children to school because they think, "Well they could go to work. I could immediately get some money from them if they are working." Like you know in a mechanic shop, or restaurant or in a cheap dhaba, something like this. So but

if I send them to school not only they not bring any income but we have to feed them also. But if they are working in a cafe or something they will get some food. So the government's initiative to give schooling to all children was being undermined by the fact that many parents didn't want to send their children. They wanted them to work from a young age which means it's also child labor which everyone is against or may.

People in general are against child labor. They think it's simply exploitation and the children should be at school so that they can have a better future. Interestingly no one complains when children appear in advertisements, it's also child labor or when they appear in movies. They are required for parts and some of them become famous child actors. That's also child labor but no one complains about that because they like to go to movies, I guess. And without the kids to play the part then how could it be.

So mid day meals is promoted. So people are not going hungry anyway. **And everyone ... it's not that people are starving and if we provide meals to poor class people then they will spend the money on something else like drink or cigarettes or payment on their TV sets or whatever.**

Quote of Srila Prabhupada against just feeding poor people

So Srila Prabhupada didn't ... Srila Prabhupada said different things at different times. He didn't want ... there is one quote in which he says that simply feeding the poor is nonsense, there should also be some kirtana and some discussion of philosophy. If we only give food to the poor, Prabhupada said that is nonsense because he didn't want ... it's quite clear from his letters that Srila Prabhupada didn't want to promote ISKCON as being a social welfare movement in the way that it's generally considered by mundane people. Although sometimes he did say that distribute prasada and people will appreciate that but it was never something that he promoted so much.

2. People join and just do that activity in many ISKCON centers

Where as now a days people they join ISKCON and they think that in some centers it's like the main activity. **They don't have book distribution... hardly at all but they have the mid day meals and the devotees are sent to go out and collect for mid day meals, not to distribute books or do Harinama as their main service.**

3. Advertizing is totally mundane

So the advertizing to the mid day meals programme if you see there brochures or whatever, it's that you see that "We are helping to build a nation" That appeals to people that we ... but it goes we are helping to build the nation by getting the children educated, we are giving children a good future. But that's completely against our philosophy, the idea of building the nations is totally mundane, the idea that we will build a nation by having more people educated so that they can become loyal doctors, engineers or more likely become factory workers. **The idea we are helping children to improve their life that's also mundane. The**

idea that they can improve their life in a material way is itself mundane and that we want to help develop the present modern society but that wasn't Prabhupada's program at all.

Prabhupada's welfare program was Varnasrama community

His social welfare program was to develop Varnasrama community where people don't have to live in this demoniac society. That was Prabhupada's welfare program. It wasn't that Prabhupada was callous to social welfare but he wanted to do so through and Varnasrama and Varnasrama education that people will be educated according to their role in Varnasrama.

4. Volunteers start thinking in mundane terms

So the advertizing for mid day meals is mundane, mundane meals. And you may say it's just to induce people to give a donation for it but the problem is that when we start talking like this and people go out and speak to the public, they go and meet businessmen and then tell him, "Look we are helping hungry children, we are building up the nation, and we ___keep on repeating it and saying it again and again and again, you start to think like that yourself. And instead of following Caitanya Mahaprabhu's order, *jare dekhe tare kaho krsna upadesa*, you are going and talking to people about mundane things. So it changes the whole atmosphere of ISKCON.

Ex of Sandipani muni school in Vrindavana

Now there is also one very successful programme is in the Vrindavana area called the Sandipani muni's school. It started one school, now they are starting three of four schools. It's not officially under ISKCON but it's run by a devotee who is a member of ISKCON or something like that ... he is initiated by Sivarama Maharaja ... he works ... he doesn't like Sivarama Maharaja it seems but many ISKCON leaders promote that. It's doing very good, giving education to children in the Vrindavana area and collection is promoted by many ISKCON leaders in this project.

Recently I was at a center in Canada and I came out of the main temple hall after the lecture and saw there was a stall promoting this on the Sunday programme, taking donations from the people attending and I saw the brochure which was meant for eliciting donations and I took exception with that. I had a bit of an argument with person who was promoting that programme because the brochure had the heading was "I am powerful" and this was the message that Susmita Sena who is a Bollywood actress, which if we are to speak frankly and in the language that Prabhupada used, which is not at all appreciated with in ISKCON today but she is just a prostitute, to put it straight forward. So she had come to the school and her message to the children, to the girls especially was that, "You should think I am powerful, I can change the world, you get an education and you can change the world." It's totally mundane feminism and as I told this person, devotee or whatever, who is collecting for that, "This is not Bhagavad Gita philosophy. This is Hiranyakasipu philosophy I am powerful. I can change the world" So he said, "Well you have to see, they are making them devotees."

But what devotees with this kind of attitude? The devotee doesn't think, "I am powerful, I can change the world." This is like I say Hiranyakasipu's philosophy, *kartaham*, I am the doer.

So this is ... I am just giving an actual example of how in the name of distributing prasada and then he started of with distributing prasada to the poor people then he got into other kinds of welfare work and this is willingly promoted with in our society as something very good and it was mentioned that Sonia Gandhi I believe came to opening one of their schools, she came. And someone noted that you see what a great thing, we got Sonia Gandhi to come. She never came to any ISKCON center. Actually she didn't, she just came there, she didn't visit any other ... Prabhupada said that about this doctor Radhakrishnan ... Was it Radhakrishnan or Nehru? I believe it was Nehru, grand father in law who came to Vrindavana. Prabhupada said, "He was such a rascal, he came to Vrindavana for the opening of the Ramakrishna mission hospital and he never visit any of the temples, he just went back to Delhi. So Sonia Gandhi ... "Can you see what a great thing? She came to visit" but we say for none of our temples... she never comes to any of our temples, she came to that. Well that shows where she is at because she wouldn't come to any of our temples because she is another ... may be I shouldn't say this as this will go on the internet. You can fill in the blank lines yourself. She is afterall a powerful person and its ... I don't want to make trouble unnecessarily for members of our movement by making statements that might not be appreciated by persons who have the capacity to make troubles for others.

Stand of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati

So the point is you see people are supporting and they like it and they give huge money but it support yes but it's for the wrong reason. About Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura it was said that this is stated in Sarasvati Jay shree... anyway I have also noted in this book Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Vaibhava that certain persons said about him that if you did just changed his message a little bit and just had made some compromise then all the Vaisnavas of Bengal would have followed him. They were saying there was no need for him to fight with everyone. If he just adjusted himself a little bit to them, everyone would appreciate him and even many people who are opposing him they would accept him as their leader. But he didn't, he remained Bhakti siddhanta not karma siddhanta. And we bow our head at his lotus feet, thank Krishna for sending him for being Bhakti siddhanta not karma siddhanta. There are so many who are karma siddhanta and who promotes this will be popular and liked but they won't be Bhakti siddhanta.

Benefits from welfare programs are like happiness in mode of passion

So yes we are getting support, well that helps us, we get permission for ... if people are favorable to us then we get permission for building temples, having festivals but as I see it, it's something like happiness in the mode of passion. In the beginning it's look very good but after sometime you will find that the result is just the opposite of what you thought it would be.

Ex, ISKCON in 1980s acquiring big castles but no spiritual basis

That we saw in the 1980s, when in many parts of the world our devotees stopped doing book distribution and they started selling paintings and all kinds of different things which were much easier to sell than books because if you give people a book which is about giving up sense gratification, who wants to buy a book about that. But if you give them sense gratification then they will buy it much more easily. So with the same effort you get a lot more money. And with that money you can give away books and you can build big temples which happened. You know you never stopped distributing books through all of that, you were there at that time..... We buy big buildings but in the end it because devotees were not getting any spiritual taste by going out and telling people here is the most popular paintings, were paintings of dogs. So by saying Oh this is a nice painting of a dog... by glorifying dog in stead of glorifying God naturally that whatever they were told that you see we are doing this for Krishna ... but they lost their taste and they thought that why do I am doing it for Krishna, I am doing it for what? I can do it for myself. So they ... big castles and all those big castles now a days are empty because there was no spiritual basis. **So in the same way if we are all the time talking about building the nation, feeding the poor, I am powerful, I can change the world, we are not going to get the spiritual taste and it won't be Krishna Consciousness. Krishna Consciousness won't spread and we will talk and think and act as welfare workers and we will become bodily welfare workers.**

Ex, distribution of biscuits and other things

Just like for instance sometime ago I came to know ... we weren't told about it but I came to know through the back door method, well we ... I have requested commission from the regional secretary or whatever they call, local GBC for one area that there is no preaching going on in this town, we have no ISKCON center there, we would like to send some devotees there to do some preaching. He said, "Oh no actually that's already ... there is something going on there already." So what we came to find out is that what was going on ... there has been a flood in that area recently and our devotees had been there during the floods and they were distributing packets of biscuits and what else? Blankets and things like that. So why they should distribute biscuits which is karmi food and just sinful food? You can distribute, distribute some prasadam and then after it is subsided with so many houses destroyed. Someone in America wanted to give a huge donation for building houses for all the people who were ... atleast some of the people who had lost their houses and he wanted to give it to ISKCON because he thought he can trust ISKCON to do a good job. So from doing food relief and then doing flood relief and now they are building houses and just getting more and more entangled because people think that's what ISKCON does, very good. They do a very good job and so the energy of our devotees is diverted more and more into these activities. It makes us popular but we loose our whole mission, we loose our soul. So we couldn't go there to preach because they were building houses for the homeless people.

Conditions set by GBC for Mid day meal

This statement of Srila Prabhupada that giving only food to ... is nonsense. There should be kirtana and katha and tell them some philosophy also. But ... so this mid day meal things,

this came up to discussion that isn't this mundane welfare work? I said ... that way imitating the Ramakrishna mission or something like that. In the end it was decided by the ICC or something like that, RGB, Regional Governing Body of the administrative umbrella body of ISKCON in India that this mid day meal programme could go on but it should... with every distribution of prasadam there should be kirtana and some speaking. But here is the catch that you ... because of this secularism in India you can go and distribute but you can't do kirtana and katha. So the very conditions which they said to make it allowable isn't allowed and when you advertise you can't advertise that it's prasadam. You have to say that it's food, we are feeding the poor.

Whether Mid day meal serves prasadam?

Now about prasadam that question comes up also. **I am not sure if it in all places those who are cooking are actually devotees** because you know where are so many ... in many places we are having difficulty even having devotees to cook with in the temple, what to speak of huge capacity outside. I mean there is the principle, *ye yatha mam prapadyante tams tathaiva bhajamy aham*, Krishna reciprocates, right! **So I just wondered how much love and devotion goes into this mechanized process of cooking because the mid day meals are cooking for thousands of people and it's all done by a mechanized process where you put in ... you know the mound is measured by machine, how much rice, how much dal, how much water, press a button and then take it all out or it all goes ... it's all computerized and then it's packaged. The whole process is very machine like and it's just dropped off at the school by ... in many cases ... I think in almost all cases by people who are not devotees. They are paid to do a job. So I just wondered ... you know prasadam and the whole aim is anyway to ... the idea of feeding so that we can develop the nation. I mean does Krishna accept that? I wonder ... does Krishna oblige to accept it because we call it prasadam? We have to call it prasadam. And that's statement is going to get a lot of flag.**

Srila Prabhupada's response to Andhra Pradesh Relief Fund Committee

So it used to be in ISKCON that people would say that why don't you do social work? Why don't you build hospitals? Why don't you feed the poor? Well now a days folks we can say we do or they already know that we do. Here I am going to read from the Science of Self Realization just to give ... it's quite shocking actually you might think that Srila Prabhupada's response about... this is about specific instance where Srila Prabhupada was asked to perform social welfare work in what appeared to be a very worthy cause. This is There was a letter came from the secretary of the Andhra Pradesh Relief Fund Committee who wrote to Srila Prabhupada. It was during ... there had been a drought throughout Andhra Pradesh so the secretary of the Andhra Pradesh Relief Fund committee wrote to Srila Prabhupada,

Revered Svamiji,

The residents of the twin cities (that means Hyderabad and Secunderabad) are happy to have this opportunity to meet you and your esteemed followers. You may be aware that due to inadequate rainfall during the last two years and it's complete failure this year more than half

of our state (that's Andhra Pradesh) is in the grip of a serious drought. With a view to supplement governmental efforts to combat this evil, a central voluntary organization of citizens drawn from various walks of life has been set up. The members of this organization surveyed the areas affected by drought. The situation is pathetic. There are villages where drinking water is not available for miles. Due to scarcity of fodder the cattle owners are parting with their cattles for a nominal price. Many of the stray cattles are dying away due to unavailability of fodder and cattle. The food problem is also very serious. Due to high prices of food grains on the open market purchase of grains at market prices is beyond the reach of poor villagers with the result that atleast five to six million people are hardly having even one meal a day. There are many who are on the verge of starvation. The entire situation is most pathetic and heart rendering. We therefore appeal to your revered self to consider how your society could best come to the rescue of these millions of souls who are in unimaginable distress. The committee would like to suggest that members of your society appeal to the bhaktas attending your discourses to contribute their might to the Andhra Pradesh Relief Fund. The committee id prepared to send some of its representatives along with members of your society wherever you wish to distribute prasada to the hungry millions in the state. As manava seva is madhava seva, service to man is service to God, the committee is confident that even a little effort by your gracious society, will go a long way in mitigating the sufferings of hundreds and thousands of people.

Yours ever in the service of the Lord,
T.L.Katidia,
Secretary Andhra Pradhesh Relief fund Committee,
Hyderabad, India.

So that's a very respectfully written, about a ... as he has stated a pathetic and heart rendering situation. A specific thing he asked for was that ... Srila Prabhupada at that time was giving public lectures in Hyderabad and that after the lecture it ... that a request be made to the people in attendance to give a donation to the Andhra Pradesh Relief fund Committee. That's all he asked for. He also suggested that members that if ISKCON wanted to send some members the committee would assist them if they wanted to go out into the afflicted areas and distribute prasadam. So that's the request.

Srila Prabhupada's reply,

My dear Mr. Katidia,

Please accept my greetings. With reference to your letter and your personal interview, I beg to inform you that without pleasing the Supreme Personality of Godhead, no one can become happy. Unfortunately people do not know who God is and how to make Him happy. Our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is therefore meant to present the Supreme Personality of Godhead directly to the people. As stated in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Seventh Canto, Sixth Chapter: *tuṣṭe ca tatra kim alabhyam ananta ādye/ kim tair guṇa-vyatikarād iha ye sva-siddhāḥ.*

The idea stated in this verse is that by pleasing the Supreme Personality of Godhead, we please everyone, and there is no question of scarcity. Because people do not know this secret of success, they are making their own independent plans to be happy. However, it is not possible to achieve happiness in this way. On your letterhead I find many important men in this country who are interested in relieving the sufferings of the people, but they should

know for certain that without pleasing the Supreme Personality of Godhead all their attempts will be futile. A diseased man cannot live simply on the strength of the help of an expert physician and medicine. If this were so, then no rich man would ever die. One must be favored by Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Therefore if you want to perform relief work simply by collecting funds, I think that it will not be successful. You have to please the supreme authority, and that is the way to success. For example, due to the performance of saṅkīrtana here, the rain has begun to fall after a drought of two years. The last time we performed a Hare Kṛṣṇa Festival in Delhi, there was imminent danger of Pakistan's declaring war, and when a newspaper man approached me for my opinion, I said there must be fighting because the other party was aggressive. However, because of our saṅkīrtana movement, India emerged victorious. Similarly, when we held a festival in Calcutta, the Naxalite [Communist] movement stopped. These are facts. Through the saṅkīrtana movement we can not only get all facilities for living, but also at the end can go back home, back to Godhead. Those who are of a demoniac nature cannot understand this, but it is a fact.

I therefore request you, as leading members of society, to join this movement. There is no loss on anyone's part for chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, but the gain is great. According to Bhagavad-gītā (3.21), what is accepted by leading men is also accepted by common men:

*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas
tat tad evetaro janaḥ
sa yat pramāṇam kurute
lokaś tad anuvartate*

"Whatever action a great man performs, common men follow in his footsteps. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues." The saṅkīrtana movement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is very important. Therefore, through you I wish to appeal to all the leading men of India to accept this movement very seriously and give us all facility to spread this movement throughout the world. Then there will be a very happy condition, not only in India but all over the world.

Hoping this will meet you in good health,
Your ever well-wisher,
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

So Srila Prabhupada refused the request to take a collection for the Andhra Pradesh Relief fund even though that committee was composed of very big important people who certainly would have become much more favorable. Prabhupada said their attempt was ... well he used the word demoniac, he didn't directly say they are demoniac, but the implication is clear that if you don't accept what I am telling you that you should ... instead of asking us to help you, you should all come and join us and if you don't accept this that's because you have a demoniac nature. That was Srila Prabhupada's response.

So undoubtedly he could have got all kinds of help from these people that they would have asked being the leading men of the state and of India, they would have yes please come, open your center. Prabhupada replied in a manner that ask them to join him but knowing that they

are not likely to join him but likely to not support him or not think of him favorably. But Prabhupada ... that was his style. He didn't think that we should become ... or even help people in that way even though they were suffering. You could say it was a much more valid case you could say then the mid day meals programme. But Prabhupada refused to do so. So I have finished here for now and we can resume a little later.

PART 2

Quotes of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati against opening up hospitals

Arguments against setting up hospitals and other such things

1. Devotees do not engage in such bodily welfare work

I would like to now read some quotes from Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur that I have included in the book Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Vaibhava. “The thousands of karmis who have opened innumerable hospitals. Old age homes, centers for the poor and schools and the thousands of jnanis who have undergone meditation and severe austerities are insignificant compared to single kanistha adhikari Vaisnava, once ringing the bell before the Lord’s deity. This is not sectarianism but plain truth. Athiests are wholly incapable of realizing this. Thus they become either direct or indirect blasphemers of devotional service or adherence to the doctrine of harmonistic all inclusiveness.” So the idea that we are helping people by opening hospitals, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura said that innumerable hospitals, opening up innumerable hospitals by karmis is not even comparable to a kanistha adhikari vaisnava once ringing the bell before the diety. So in other words, stating that the categorical difference between devotional service and bodily welfare work ... now it may be objected that well if devotees do bodily welfare work then what’s the harm but the implication here is that devotees don’t do that. It isn’t their prime concern or even their secondary concern.

2. Becoming open to materialistic ideas often blurs the distinction between devotees and non-devotees

“Being averse to lord Visnu countless jivas have come to mahamaya’s dungeon to envy Lord Vishnu in countless ways. To deliver even one of them from mahamaya’s fortress and make him a devotee of Krishna is unlimitedly better welfare work then the construction of countless hospitals and schools.” So bringing people to Krishna Consciousness is obviously a lot more difficult then performing bodily welfare work but it’s far better also. People in general won’t appreciate that. So it’s easier to get appreciation for things that worldly people approve of. But then you become part of them. You partake of their way of thinking. You may say, “Well we understand we are devotees, we are doing it, but we are not the same as non-devotees” but I have given some examples of how it’s very easy to become part of the ethos that you are supposed to be changing. It’s like if you ... the idea that well you become a little open to materialistic ideas so that people will atleast interrelate with you and then gradually they can appreciate Krishna Consciousness but what I see it often happens the other way that you become like friendly or you relate with people on their level and our devotees tend to become more like non-devotees and then non-devotees becoming like devotees, the distinction becomes blurred.

3. Promoting hospitals and schools upholds materialistic way of thinking

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura states, “Welfare work is good but has two defects – it directly or indirectly encourages Godlessness and supports violence to animals and other living entities.” directly or indirectly encourages Godlessness, here the idea is you see we are promoting that we are helping people by opening up hospitals, opening schools, it supports the materialistic way of thinking, it directly or indirectly it upholds the materialistic way of thinking that this world is the arena for our enjoyment independent of Krishna and the only real welfare for everyone is to surrender to Krishna. So if we tell people, you see we are helping people, you should donate because we are building hospitals and schools then we are by not informing them that the actual welfare work for all living beings is to surrender to Krishna and encouraging them to act in a manner, which they already agree with but which is maya, we are actually encouraging them to be in maya and by speaking like this among our own devotees instead of helping them to get free from maya, we are keeping them in it. So these are some of the problems.

4. Such work is deceiving others and oneself

Again Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, “Sri Caitanya Deva preached through out the world for the welfare of all jivas yet the welfare work he proposed was not of the small minded, paltry, stop gap, changeable or imaginary pie in the sky type like that envisaged by so called social reformers and mundane philanthropists. The welfare work He proposed is of the highest caliber and neither temporary, nor insignificant. The ways to uplift others already invented being and about to invented by ordinary human beings according to their narrow considerations will in no way profit anyone because they are all make shift. Sri Mahaprabhu revealed the actual means for elevating others, *vedyam vāstavam atra vastu śivadam tāpa-trayonmūlanam*, (if you don’t know what that means, you are not studying the books properly because it’s a well known quote from Srimad Bhagavatam) distresses are the effect of a particular cause. Until the cause is terminated, the effect will remain. Unless the root of the banyana tree is destroyed it will again sprout even if one cuts down its trunk and branches thousands of times. The thousands of man made proposals for social welfare are like an attempt to empty the ocean with one’s bare hands. Even if thousands of people engage continuously in such an endeavor for thousands of yugas they will never be successful. By doing so they might cause a vast body of water to accumulate elsewhere. Similarly we cannot empty the ocean of material suffering by our own strength. Atmost we will simply succeed in transferring the problems elsewhere. Ofcourse by doing that you can certainly deceive others and even ourselves.” So this is the severe accusation. Who will dare to make such an accusation that the bodily welfare work being carried out with in ISKCON is deceiving others and ourselves but actually it’s deliberately meant to deceive others that because the idea is that the unstated purpose is actually we understand that bhakti is the highest but people don’t understand so we will engage them in this way. So it’s meant to deceive them. But actually we deceive ourselves because we start to talk, act and think like that, like a mundane person. Instead of approaching people and telling them that Krishna Consciousness is the solution to all problems, we meet them and say, “Please help, we are doing great work by feeding the poor, opening hospitals and so on.”

5. One can use funds for hospitals and schools in preaching

So another quote from Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura... there are so many. "To have faith in the Holy name is so very rare that we may leave it out of consideration. If we had faith even in namabhasa, the most dimly perceived name, we would never have said that suturing the victims of floods is better than kirtana and pracara, singing and preaching about God or that freeing the country from famines or the opening of hospitals is better than preaching devotion to God. Hundreds of famines can be alleviated not only by namabhasa but even by namaparadha, offensive taking of the name." So ofcourse no one is ISKCON is saying that opening hospitals is better than preaching devotion to God. But by their actions they are saying because it's a huge effort to set up a hospital. And setting up a hospital with the same endeavor and funds one could promote the preaching of the Holy name.

Now the idea of running hospitals by devotees and then people are in distress and then you preach to them, you look after them and the employees are devotees. Well may be it's not a bad idea, we find in the ... there is a book by Srila Prabhupada called the message of Godhead in which he gives recommendations that factory owners can call their workers together to chant Hare Krishna and give them all prasadam but as I understand that's for people who already have factories. It's not that Prabhupada is recommending that people who are devotees invest their funds to set up factories so that people can work in a factory and chant Hare Krishna.

Bhaktivedanta Hospital

1. Money collection

I means just like the Bhaktivedanta Hospital was a set up spending huge amounts of money which could have been used for ... well if you want to do social welfare work why not do it the way that Prabhupada said that set up varnasrama communities which is an all around solution. As far as ... ok things I am seeing this I will say it here. I have some doubts about the Bhaktivedanta hospital as much as the money is collected ... they keep on collecting money and all they have devotees full time engaged in collection for it. I wonder because you know so many hospitals are set up in India for profit and then why is this one collecting funds all over the world and in America and there are so many disciples of a certain guru with in ISKCON who they all donate regularly to Bhaktivedanta hospitals and eye camps and this and that and I guess they feel they are obligated to do so that why ... that's part of their devotional service. But why not donate for distributing books, setting up varnasrama, directly activities that Prabhupada recommended and directly devotional? Infact so you are bringing people to Prabhupada's movement and directing them to engage in some bodily welfare work and how they are collecting so much money.

The mid day meals also ... devotee recently wrote to me who was connected with congregation of a certain temple that runs this mid day meals programme and he had been asked to canvass with in his company for the sponsorship of the mid day meals. So it seems

that they are going on more and more widely collecting more and more money and it's which you know they could be collecting money like I say directly for Krishna Consciousness. But they are engaging people who have come to Krishna Consciousness in activities which are not Krishna Conscious. I mean they have to approach their company members, "Look we are feeding the poor, we are building up the nations, we are helping, support children." And get money for them. **Instead of preaching to their company members, instead of raising funds for Krishna Consciousness, they are engaged in raising funds for ... they are engaged in collecting funds for bodily welfare works.** That's what they do ... I mean that's what they say. They may have the understanding that actually it's all spiritual but what they are engaged in, what they actually say and do is that we are collecting funds to help people so that they can get a better future and we are helping to develop the nation like this.

2. Prabhupada's deity at the entrance

Some ... I don't know ... so many things to say... well just one add the Bhaktivedanta hospital in Bombay I have some objection. **Srila Prabhupada he objected that at the yoga pitha in Mayapur the temple of Caitanya Mahaprabhu's birthplace, after Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's departure one of his disciples made a temple honoring Bhaktivinod Thakur at the entrance of the yoga pitha and Prabhupada said that ... he said that's respectful they made ... like they made him like the doorkeeper. So they might bear that in mind that Prabhupada's murti is right there in the ... right in the entrance. So Prabhupada didn't much approve of that.**

3. Usage of funds collected

Oh that thing about collecting funds ... we always use to hear this that the Madhu pandit has set up the Aksaya patra programme for fund collection. We don't hear about that so much but the idea ... but that he had become ... ofcourse I guess it would be difficult to prove this but he made this program ... he is clearly ... he is moving around huge amounts of money and it's said that money has largely been generated from the Aksaya patra program that they say that it costs so much money to feed people but actually one plate costs this much but actually it costs less and so they collect a lot more money then they need to for the actual food distribution and in this way they are generating money. **So definitely lot of money floating around. And whether it's all going to Krishna Conscious purposes or for the purpose that it's said to be collected for ... I don't know it's open to question.**

Barsana Eye Camps

1. Money collection

Eye camps, another thing that's collected for all over the world that eye camps are held by devotees or members of ISKCON like once a year or something in Vrindavana and they collect all year, all over the world on the base of that ... I don't mind but ... I don't know

how it can cost so much money that they have to go on collecting and collecting and collecting in the name of eye camps.

Once I was in Behrain and I was told that a certain doctor who was a disciple of a certain guru in our movement whose followers organize these eye camps, I was told that he had recently moved to Behrain. So then I met him and the first thing he said to me, “Oh we have opened a new eye campaign Barsana” That’s the first thing he said to me like that is what all his devotional aspirations are about. Not like we are distributing books or ... but we opened a new eye camp. So I said to him, “Yes so all those people now they will all be watching TVs very nicely.” And he laughed and he had to agree.

2. Serving tea

One of my disciples who is a doctor, he went to one of those eye ... he participated in one of those eye camps once, he said he will never do it again because it was ... serving free tea he didn’t agree with that, along with the eye camp they had free tea for everyone. So that’s said to be serving Brajvasis but I don’t ... because it’s done in the area of Vraja but I don’t ... you know is that the way to serve Brjvasis is to help them in ... unless you give them spiritual upliftment ... I mean we shouldn’t be in the sentimental mood that everyone who is born in Braja or lives in Braja is a perfect, pure devotee. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura certainly didn’t agree with that. By their activities ... watching TV ... one of my godbrothers who has lived in Vrindavana for many years, he is quite convinced knowing ... he sent me once the list of some of the really horrible things that he knew certain Brajvasis were doing. So we could also work to uplift their character by the regular process of devotional service.

Bhaktivedanta Hospital

4. Sectarianism

You say that Bhaktivedanta hospital, it’s serving devotees. Well a leading devotee at ISKCON in Juhu in Bombay told me that there is free treatment at the Bhaktivedanta hospital for devotees but only from Chowpatty, Pune, not for Juhu devotees. Why the sectarianism? I don’t know if it is changed now. He told me that about two years ago. He said we send our devotees to other hospitals where they ... non-devotee hospitals where they treat us free. I went to the Bhaktivedanta hospital for check up once, they charged me two thousand rupees and something ... that was years ago. And after that I went, did check ups in other hospitals and again they treat me free so ... may be people donate, under the impression that devotees are treated free... well some of them.

Set up of hospitals and schools have entered our culture

Like this mid day meals and Bhaktivedanta hospitals, eye camps, it’s a bit nebulous because not being run in the name of ISKCON. So if anyone brings up any criticism they say, “Well it’s not ISKCON” But everyone relates with it as being ISKCON and like I say

people due to their relationship with ISKCON they are expected to donate for it or to offer, to solicit donations for it and **we may say well that just something on the side that some of our congregation are doing but it's entered the ISKCON culture** and recently I saw brochures for two ISKCON projects for building temples in India in which in both of them they included along with the temple, hospitals, school, old age home as if it's you know something that ... you know that's what ISKCON does... the temple there was like one paragraph about the temple and then the whole rest of the brochure was about the hospital, school ... school doesn't mean gurukul it means teaching mundane subjects. So it's entered our culture. People think that well you know that's ... our own devotees think well that's what ISKCON have a temple, you have to have a hospital and in one center one devotee told me ... he was under tremendous pressure to start mid day meals and he didn't want to do it so I am not the only one against it, he didn't want to do it but he was under tremendous pressure ... that's what ISKCON does, why don't you do it? So ... like I say in that brochure there was a small bit about the temple and all the rest was about old age home, hospital and so you see that the directly spiritual part about the temple is gradually becoming less and less and less and then the hospital becomes the main thing. Like the salvation army, their directly religious activity is it become less and less and less because it's much easier to go along with what people like rather than some higher ideals. So like this some schools and colleges ... Srila Prabhupada is very clear against mundane education which is why he set up gurukuls but then now a days school in ISKCON, they proudly announce that we are ... our school is affiliated with the Cambridge board and we have in Mayapur ... we are proud to announce that our school is affiliated with the Cambridge board... why pride? That's in Mayapur. People come to Mayapur and instead of getting education in Srimad Bhagavatam they get education in how to be another mudha member of modern society ... Oh and they have little kirtana in the beginning and in the end... may be... But the curriculum is mundane.

Few years ago when I was visiting ISKCON Vrindavana, after the mangala arati the vice president made some announcements. One of the announcements he made was that our school basketball team has reached the semi-final of the UP state championships. So we are all supposed to be ... I don't know we are supposed to be enlivened by that that this is another what Srila Prabhupada gave his blood to go to the west and preach so that we develop schools in Vrindavana for such mundane things. It's all the worst ... it's bad enough anyways but in Vrindavana where we should be encouraging the spiritual culture it's completely mundane.

Mundane welfare activities may not necessarily endear us to people, it may trap us

Now the idea is that well you see people they like us and... but not necessarily because after all pretty much every hindu organization in India had run some schools and so people don't particularly like us for that. Even the prasadam distribution what it's called ... that may not necessarily endear us to people.

Ex of FFL in Armenia

In Armenia, which is a country in former Soviet Union, devotees were distributing to the poor and needy for several years, they were distributing food for several years and then one day there was a tremendous attack on our movement by some hoodlums and they came to our temple and severely beat up the devotees. I was in Russia at that time, it came on the news in Russia on the TV. Devotees covered in the blood and they smashed up the temple completely and you would have thought that the people in general would have been supportive, come out in support of us because we have done so much public welfare activity but no one came out in our support. Armenians has a very strong sense of national identity and that people didn't like that we were trying to introduce some new religion. So that practically our movement it never recovered from that and we don't have any ... our movement which was centered around food distribution to people from the poorer section of society that was like the main thing, food for life. But our movement has never recovered from that attack. So I am just saying that it's not necessarily true that we do gain public support and it can become a liability because that people expect you to do it and then if you don't do it then if you don't keep up this you become trapped in doing that.

Ex of school in Bombay

I know in Bombay they made that school and now they want to ... they wanted to stop it at some point but then the parents of the children they wouldn't allow it. There is so much protest and now they have to go to the all the trouble of collecting huge amounts of money and setting up a school elsewhere outside the temple compound because they realize that it's of no benefit whatsoever to the temple and just takes up unnecessary space and the children they don't become devotees after going through the whole school. They just ... because the education is not to make them become devotees per say. So it's like a case of destroying ... you loose your caste and you are still hungry. The brahmana he begged food from a low caste person because he was so hungry and he lost his caste by doing so but the low caste person who fed him could only give him a handful to eat. So he lost his caste and he remained hungry. So we think we are getting some advantage but we become doubly disadvantaged.

Some examples of proper food distribution programmes

Now I am not against feeding the poor per say. I am not like totally against it, we shouldn't do it but there are ways to do it which doesn't compromise our integrity. Just like ... that's my claim that the mid day meals programme it compromises our integrity by promoting that making ... whole suborganization with in the organization, collecting funds in the name of building up the nation, helping children to get a good future which is actually against our philosophy or the philosophy that Srila Prabhupada taught us. So examples of poor feeding programmes that I ... well I am speaking now, who am I but anyway whoever wants to listen, they can listen that I think of very good.

1. In Australia

I am pretty sure it's still going on in Australia I believe it was in Melbourne or Sidney, I can't remember but every night they would from the restaurant whatever was left over ... they have a restaurant at the temple... they would distribute at 9 o' clock or 10 o' clock at night out the back of the temple and you know destitute people would come and they get them prasadam.

2. In ISKCON Melbourne

So that's good in Melbourne ISKCON I am told that they have a programme that they have a program that whoever comes to the temple all day long they give them a full plate of prasadam, they don't ask him to give a donation. So that's very good.

3. In LA

In Los Angeles three or four times a week they take the ... whatever is left over from the restaurant, they go down to one area of the town, they sat up a table. People know they are coming at a certain time, every time, so people who ... destitute they come and while they distribute prasad, they do kirtana, it's very open, they are devotees and like this. So these are very good.

4. Food For All in London

There is also a program in London called not food for life called Hare Krishna food for all. So it's just a little bit different name but it gives a different connotation Food For All instead of Food For Life. In other words, it's not just aimed at the poor but it is meant for everyone. So they have storefront and it's like a free restaurant and they are very openly devotees and people come and they have kirtana and like this.

Everyone needs prasad, not just the poor

So I am not fanatically against distributing prasadam to the poor but of course Srila Prabhupada said that it should be distributed to everyone, everyone is spiritually poor so if we are going to distribute prasad why marry that concept to that of poor feeding and make that a major initiative of our movement? Distribute prasadam widely to everyone. Everyone needs prasadam, it's not just the poor.

Mid day meal programme is not ksatriya program

Now getting back to that this specific question by which I came to narrate all these things that a ksatriya one of their duties is activities for public welfare. That's true but the mid day meals program is not ksatriya program. One of the main facets of being a ksatriya is that you never beg anything from anyone for any reason. Ksatriya never begs, he levies taxes which he uses for the welfare of the people. So ksatriya welfare work ... or the kings, the leaders of the society, actual ksatriyas they are supposed to do that. They are not supposed to beg money.

So if you are begging money from the public that disqualifies you from being a ksatriya, so you can't say that they are ksatriya activities. Now why then am I not in favor of this ksatriya project? Well in concept in the beginning I said yes its good idea but because it's following this mid day meal track I say that although the idea is theoretically good the implementation is wrong. They haven't understood what the mission is.

Brahmana order in ISKCON is not in proper shape

The ksatriyas are supposed to assist the brahmanas. So the idea is like the ksatriyas are assisting the work of the main pure brahminical work of ISKCON by fighting law cases to help and this and that. But then this assumes that ISKCON is on track and the ksatriyas are helping but my proposition which is no doubt controversial is that ISKCON isn't on track so if you help that, you are not really helping anything. So Srila Prabhupada always said about Varnasrama that the first thing is to get the brahmana order and then the others can follow because if the head is not in order even if you have a healthy body if the head is not in order then the whole functioning becomes useless or disarranged. So still the need is there to get the head in order because I have given some examples and I will give some more that ... the best is yet to come in this lecture of how things are not philosophically in order in our movement. So to assist the movement as it presently stands it shows this means that the ksatriya initiative is not going to work. We are still at the stage of needing to get the brahmana order in proper shape.

1. Mid day meal approved by leaders of ISKCON

Like this mid day meal thing I have noted some serious reservations I have about it. But our leaders have approved this program. Presentation was made at the GBC about this this year and it was all approved. And at regional meetings when it was in here India when it's stated that distributing biscuits to the flood stricken people and leaders ... it was a leader's meeting and they are all everyone's clapping and so my contention is that the brahmanas need to be put in order.

2. Temple President arranging funds for helping victims of 9/11

One ... or let me say something else first ... some other examples ... there are many of how I perceived that our leaders are not properly situated in understanding and implementing Srila Prabhupada's teachings is that in the famous incident 9/11 when the world trade center came tumbling down for whatever reason, it's said to be because of some airplanes flying into it, into two of the towers and one of the towers just came down without any apparent reason. There was a huge outpour of public sympathy for the fireman, many of them who were killed in trying to combat the fires with in that building. So one of our GBC members who is also a temple president arranged from his temple community a collection to help the fireman which if you don't see the ambiguity in that with what Prabhupada's teaching are all about then you might be a friend or a victim of the very syndrome that I am talking about.

3. ISKCON golf championship on Gaur Poornima

Another example came on the internet quite a few years ago may be nine or ten years ago. A report of the first ISKCON golf championship which was held in California on Gaur Poornima day and it gave a report ... this is on the Chakra website, which you may remember was prominent in ISKCON at one point. So the report came up and then report how several ex-temple presidents there and we are very grateful that our ... one GBC member also come ... he couldn't spend much time because he was quite busy but he played a few holes with us. So these are just some examples of how that goes what the leaders seem to be very much misleading... themselves not properly situated.

Ksatriya initiative in the current scenario is not easy to implement

One job that ksatriyas are supposed to see is that everyone follows their duties properly so if the ksatriya initiative can get the ... instead of going along with the things that the leader shouldn't be doing ___ you ___ get them to do what they should be doing. That would be a great job to rectify the rot with in our society. How exactly ksatriyas are supposed to discipline brahmanas ... and that would require some research because they are not allowed to physically punish them, may be they could ... may be ksatriyas could withdraw their financial support or something like that. I don't know exactly how it would be done and how it's to be done in the modern age also is ... with in ISKCON that's also ... I mean actually establishing actual ksatriyas it's difficult to think how that could be done in the modern age because the ksatriyas are kings, he is not the CEO or head of a department, he is a king which in a democratic society that's not allowed to have kings and any absolute dictator that are there ... I mean they are subject to be invaded by America for having absolute ... it happened with Suddaam Hussain he was a king you could say. So where this is king like rule ... well the king of Saudi Arabia is still there, he is a king in the sense that what ... he makes the law but that's not considered very good in the modern age how would you have ksatriyas in India or America which are democratic countries? It requires some research actually ... prayer to see how you could actually have ksatriyas. It's not just administrators but administrators with power and power comes from physical strength and fighting skills. That's the power of force, the power to punish. That's really ... the manifestation of ksatriya power comes from. Ultimately the power comes from Krishna but anyway if the ksatriyas' endeavor in ISKCON could be for getting it back on course that would be good.

ISKCON is becoming mundane and is becoming inured to that

So there is no doubt that ISKCON has changed a lot. The ISKCON communications endeavor to change the movement has been successful and but again it's a case of having lost your caste and remaining hungry because in the basic activities temple worship are going on often in a very poor way to standards that Prabhupada gave. Hari Nama sankirtana is going on here and there, not much. In many places book distribution is not much promoted. **In the particular group that with in India that very much promotes the hospital, mid day meals, eye camps and so on, there is not that much emphasis with in their group on book distribution although between them they do that also but where as previously in our movement as**

Prabhupada writes in one of his purports our movement is centered on distribution of books but when we think of that particular group with in ISKCON we are more likely to think of hospitals and mid day meals and eye camps then distribution of books. So ISKCON has changed and my contention is it's become more mundane and it's getting worse and we are inured to that ... inured means there is something bad, you get used to it. So that you just think that it's normal.

1. Initiated devotee supporting Sai baba

Just like to give an example. This is just from less then a month ago. One of my disciples who is temporarily living in France with a husband there told me that in the course of a conversation with an initiated devotee there, she had said something discouraging about Sai Baba, at which this initiated devotee became extremely angry and he thought that she was very wrong in criticizing Sai Baba. Now if at all we have studied Srila Prabhupada's books and tried to understand the mood of his preaching then we can ... or if we have lived in ISKCON in the time when Srila Prabhupada was present and a few year after that we should understand that for someone who is an initiated devotee with in ISKCON to have any good opinion about Sai Baba means there is something seriously wrong but may be even more seriously wrong then that is that when I heard this I wasn't in the slightest bit surprise, you see I am not bluffing you. It will become so used to hearing about all these various deviations that we just think there is nothing extraordinary about it.

People getting used to worse things

Just like a few days previous to that incident which happened in Croatia this lady devotee telling me about her experiences with the initiated fan of Sai baba, I mean the ISKCON initiated person who was a fan of Sai baba I gave a lecture in ISKCON in Jhagra which is the capital of Croatia and at the end of the lecture, a person who seemed he was a new comer may be ... seem like he was coming for the first time or seem very new to our movement, he asked a question, he said, "Well in my childhood I was abused" and he asked how to get over that. So afterward Gokulchandra prabhu who was present in that lecture noted to me privately after the lecture that you see he said that I was abused in my childhood and no one was surprised, it's become like a normal thing, not that it is accepted as a good thing but it's become so common place that if someone says I was abused in my childhood then people just, they don't become surprised because they just he is normal. In other words something which is actually abominable, horrible has become so common that no one is surprised and they think it is normal. So if in our movement we are not surprised when someone tells us that an initiated devotee with in ISKCON becomes angry when Sai Baba is criticized there is something ... in human society if child abuse is so common that it doesn't arouse any surprise, there is seriously wrong in society. So similarly in the ISKCON society if people have favorable disposition towards Sai Baba there is something seriously wrong. So that's the point I am making that and there are so many things like that years ago we would have been shocked, it would have been unthinkable with in ISKCON which are just normal now a days.

2. Journey Home issues

A. Content

One thing which is very-very touchy, very sensitive and people will get upset ... I guess some people will hear this on the internet. It's very sensitive because one of the most ... there is a book written by one of the ... actually it's ghost written means it was written by someone else on his behalf, written by one of the ... probably the most popular leader with in ISKCON today. Now that book ... I can't help thinking that if you have shown it to Srila Prabhupada he would not have been at all pleased because there are pictures of all these mayavadis and mundane people, mundane, famous, mundane welfare workers and there are few pictures of Prabhupada there also and it describes how he met all these different mundane people and there is not a bad word about any of them, the people that Prabhupad, if he spoke about them at all, would criticize them and he speaks about how he met Prabhupada and he doesn't really say that Prabhupada's you know ... I thought it was going to come to ... I read the book and I thought ... it's very well written by the woman who is paid to write it, very readable. So I thought we are going to get to the point and I met Prabhupada and Prabhupada opened my eyes and he made me realize that all these people were rascals and cheaters which is the word that Prabhupada would regularly use for them but no such things. It's just like in each time he would go to one guru and then there is ... he would realize this is not my path and then he realizes when he met Prabhupada, actually sometime later that this is my path. In other words everyone has their path and this is my path and there are all the different paths and you can choose this path or that path or any other path and at the end of the book he says that now having come to Prabhupada now I am engaged in helping with hospitals and feeding children and eyecamps ... in other words the message is what he got from Prabhupada was to have hospitals, eye camps and feeding people and the message to his followers is that this is what he is ... that's his life, that's what is central to his life. So as I see it there are serious problems to that and serious problems with that ...

B. Distribution

From that group then there were never as enthusiastic to distribute Prabhupada's books as they are to distribute this book which even if anyone read that book for hundreds of thousands of times it never even get the idea that you were supposed to surrender to Krishna, Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the purpose of life is surrender to Krishna, I never even get the idea.

C. Erotic scenes

One godbrother told me that he started reading it but he stopped when he came to the erotic part, there is an another godbrother told me that, his feeling was that some erotic or almost erotic scenes that is ... it's not the duty of a sannyasi to write about such things. So I see it is ... that's another example, I mean I just can't imagine what Prabhupada's response would have been if he saw that book but our movement has changed, it's not for the better and if we start to talk about it there could be so many things.

3. ISKCON Mayapur run by a mafia

I mean another of my GBC godbrothers told me that ISKCON Mayapur is run by a mafia and he gave an example of how he had to pay a bribe to a devotee who is supposed to do some official work for him and he complained to one of the leaders of ISKCON Mayapur who just said, “How much did he ask from you?” and he told the amount and then he pulled and said, “Here give him...” means he knew the mafia was going on but he was supportive of it that’s all.

So now a days at the present time in India there is huge outcry against government, corruption and although it would be very difficult to prove I am fairly sure that there is a lot of corruption going on in ISKCON India also because the leaders are not ... you know they are just given a free hand and the whole ... there is not any close checking of them and the whole culture of the country is riddled with corruption. So do we just presume that everyone who comes to ISKCON is a complete saint and they have all this money coming in and what’s going on? Like I say it’s difficult to prove but there are serious grounds to consider ...

4. Temples focusing on collecting funds rather than preaching

Especially when we see that in many temples they are interested in collection so much so that in many temples of ISKCON in India preacher means someone who goes out and collect money, doesn’t mean someone who tries to get people to change their lives and surrender to Krishna. And infact we see in some places in many temples they don’t seem to be even slightly concerned about preaching to people, to surrender and give their life to Krishna and if anyone does that they ... rather they object to that because it disturbs their whole ongoing business.

5. Devotees counselled based on mundane psychology

And in their there are so many things. In many cases when devotees have problems, they are more likely to be counselled on the basis of the mundane psychology then by reference to sastra.

6. Standards of deity worship diminished in India

One thing that Srila Prabhupada that he wrote that I am very afraid that after I leave that the deity worship standard will be diminished but it is. It’s become accepted with in our society. People who join they don’t even know that you are supposed to be a Brahmin initiated devotee to worship the deity. They never heard of such a thing and they make such ... they make their own reasoning that well bhakti is the main thing, Brahmin initiation isn’t important. So the standards have in many cases very much diminished. So that’s serious problem.

7. Prabhupada's books are not encouraged

Recently when I was in America a temple president told me that most of the new comers to our movement now a days they don't read Srila Prabhupada's books, they are not encouraged to do so and actually they don't like to because Prabhupada's books they ... **what is said in Prabhupada's books is not what's preached with in the movement and people don't like to hear it, so many things that are in Prabhupada's books.** For instance that women are less intelligent than men, to say that is practically banned in ISKCON now although it's a point that Srila Prabhupada makes many times. Ofcourse that point in particular should be understood very carefully and not used as a stick to bash women but at the same time it is a point that Prabhupada made many times. So people don't like to read Prabhupada's books because our devotees don't believe what's in them and they want to speak on these things because well I guess they don't believe what Prabhupada says.

8. Books other than Prabhupada's books taking prominence

In some places the idea is that it's openly promoted that well Prabhupada's books they are too difficult to understand so we have other books by other people, by other members of ISKCON, better you give these to people, they can understand them more easily. And there is a whole big sub-movement going on with in ISKCON in India in which they are not allowed to read ... actually there are two of them ... two are going on the two groups means a lot of **people are being brought into ISKCON being told that they are not allowed to read Prabhupada's books until they get permission, they have to read other books and they distribute these other books.** So I am not saying that other books are necessarily wrong but to say they shouldn't read Srila Prabhupada's books, it's just unimaginable how angry Prabhupada would be. But I guess they don't care.

Some devotees from here recently visited one of these temples which is supposed to be preaching in very successful, making money, new members but which is the center of this movement that you have to read other books and not Prabhupada's books and it's all in the book stall, there weren't Prabhupada's books, there are ____ just all kinds of books and then they asked for Prabhupada's books, they had to look around and there were just one or two hidden away somewhere. So those devotees were going there because this center offers training in how to preach. So they were going there for that and then they just left, we don't want this kind of training, we don't need this sophisticated training of how not to give Prabhupada's books to others.

By the way I am also criticized, sometimes people say you see I am engaging my disciples in distributing my books. That's true that my disciples do distribute my books. They are meant to supplement the mission of Srila Prabhupada. They are meant for distribution also. But my answer to that is yes it's true but that if you take my average disciple and compare to the average devotee with in ISKCON you will find on average my disciples read Prabhupada's books and distribute Prabhupada's books significantly more than do others. So it's not that I am promoting that my books and not Prabhupada's books but rather as supplements like the beginners guides for Krishna Consciousness that's by far the most distributed of my books and that's to... by reading that ... that puts in written form many of the instructions that Prabhupada verbally imparted for practicing Krishna Consciousness. So anyway that's

another discussion. Certainly Prabhupada wanted books to be written by his disciples. He criticized the gaudiya math for not having produced their own books, they are still selling the books of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati only so he criticized them for that.

What could be the solution?

So what do we get from all this? Either ISKCON in general, there is something very wrong or I am very wrong and I invite you to consider. Is my perspective simply hypercritical or are there serious ... you know things like GBC members playing in the ISKCON golf competition on Gaur Poornima! I mean any day is _____ but on Gaur Poornima day when you are supposed to be glorifying Caitanya Mahaprabhu ... there is not something wrong with that? And the GBC member is not ... he is not questioned about that.

Case of accusation

Few years ago one GBC member was, one of my godbrothers forced him to make a public apology, forced him means you see this GBC member has accused this godbrother of using astrology to seduce women and he said that there are at least 13 women we can call as evidence for this and this devotee who is an astrologer, you know his whole reputation was ... with in ISKCON was spoiled and his way of life was ... you know people didn't want to come to him and so eventually he in one of the few cases ____ some justice actually and in generally you can't get justice but he actually ... he said, "Ok you have 13 women, bring one, tell me one" so like this he kept on challenging him to bring evidence that he had actually done this. So eventually that GBC member had to make a public apology and apologize the GBC for having ... he even stated this in Mayapur during the GBC meeting. He lied to the whole GBC about practically ... and so they gave an apology and like when on his usual, he continued as a GBC, I mean shouldn't have been, shouldn't have the GBC thought to remove him for engaging in the nastiest, basic politics against character assassination? Because he didn't like that devotee so he didn't have any actual complaint ... actually he didn't like the ... anyway I won't get into but I mean these things, I mean there are serious problems.

Hrtvikism, Gaudiya math, starting another movement are not the solutions

So people may say ya I am hypercritical, although it could also be said that it's just realistic and then why do I ... oh and then some people will say that well you see that shows everything is all wrong so hrtvikism is the answer or join the Gaudiya math but that doesn't necessarily prove the case of ... there are different people will say, "Well it's because of this or it's because of that but why don't you start your own movement?" But these are not necessarily the answers. I mean the hrtvikvadis they are quite active in scanning, they go through all lectures that are put on the internet and they will probably love this one. But the fact that there are problems in ISKCON doesn't prove their case and the fact that hrtvikvadis they are also shown to be corrupt and so many problems and factions among them and all kind of things, it doesn't ... I am not supporting that as a solution although which is one reason you know I have been hesitant to say all these things but like I say people should know at least where I stand and so is it not hypercritical for me why do I stay in ISKCON? I sometimes wonder myself but Prabhupada said, he said, "Not to leave" So that's a very

powerful instruction. Ofcourse sometimes I feel that I didn't really... you know I can't really leave ISKCON but ISKCON left me so to speak because I am just doing the same things and saying the same things that I did when I first joined and ... but the movement changed, I didn't change. So I didn't leave ISKCON, ISKCON left me. I mean all my friends are with in ISKCON. I guess principles are higher then friendship but then it has to be seen as my life is meant to be for the service of Srila Prabhupada. Could I actually serve Srila Prabhupada's mission by going outside of ISKCON? And I will be body that is the body of ISKCON. I am not convinced that I could do so, I could better serve it.

Getting ISKCON in order is a better proposition

For all the wrong things going on still ISKCON is really the only hope for spreading Krishna Consciousness all over the world. So to try to get ISKCON in order is a better proposition. It's not so easy. I mean I am here in Salem, I am trying with cooperation of you all, especially lead by Gokulchandra Prabhu, I am trying to set up just what we might call a normal ISKCON center, what a normal ISKCON center used to be that everyone has to rise early in the morning, I have the full temple program and we focuses on book distribution and bringing people to Krishna Consciousness.

Difficulty in training people

So just trying to do all of this but it is difficult to train even though we have you know there is like this little space in this small town here and in other places also there are some devotees ... you could say with in the broader ISKCON they are my followers but it is difficult to train people with in the present ISKCON society when there are all these mayavada and sahajiya influences. I mean just like for instance ... and then there is thousands of things you could say someone you are bringing new to Krishna Consciousness and they go to Mayapur and on the book stall they pick up the book, the glories of Radharani. And you know they are just new in Krishna Consciousness and if they get that you know what conception that they are going to have of Krishna Consciousness. One of my disciples told me he saw it... one of the devotees had gone to Mayapur, just new person, he just told him, "Look better you don't read...please read Bhagavad Gita as it is" and he took that book from him otherwise he would be lost in you know in the dream clouds of imaginary prema bhava. **So why such books are being produced and offered to the public? That's not the example of our acaryas. Prabhupada hardly talked about Radha, he was the topmost devotee of Radha but it's a very intimate subject but just to bring it out in public to everyone, it's prakrta sahajiya influence.** So with all this mayavada and sahajiya and mundane influences all around, it's difficult to train people. You know you don't want to train people when they first come that there is this problem, that problem and then they just get completely discouraged. But then if you don't tell them then you know they think well they go to ISKCON Vrindavana for instance and they see and hear so many strange things and they think well it must be the right thing to do because it's ISKCON Vrindavana for instance.

Having orders like in church could be a solution

So how to correct the situation? Who will accept these points? I have several times mentioned to various leaders of our society that ... ofcourse it's not my idea it's been floating around to have orders like in the catholic church they have orders that means the different sub-groups which they have a certain amount of autonomy but they offer allegiance to the Pope in Rome. So something like that we could have separate orders where we don't necessarily have to go along with, we are a little different that might be a solution. It's not really a solution if things are off, if they are wrong but atleast it would give us some approved space to do what we are doing.

Kick from maya

How to rectify the situation? It seems very difficult. It seems that if at all things are going to get better and then they are going to have to get worst first because there is no feeling in our movement that there ... things are seriously wrong and rather thinking that well things are right and things get worse and worse and worse. It seems like we really have to get a good kick from ... just like the karmis when are they going to wake up? They need a kick from maya to understand their materialistic plans are all useless. So that may be the situation in our movement also.

Past attempts to solve

I have attempted to go through the regular channels to rectify some things which I found frustrating. I became infamous a few years ago for my open attacks, open means by email which went out all over the internet on one of my godbrothers who is a ... he is passed away now ... popular guru with in our movement and populist you could say, he was known as the mystic guru so I had some severe exception to some of the things he was writing in his books. So I did try to behind the scenes going through the process, discussing with him, having a GBC monitored mediation and all this but nothing works. So I tried coming out publicly and just blasting that it was all bogus and that didn't work either. So I am not sure what to do. I mean you could ... there are devotees who like regularly who are out there on the internet expressing their perspectives of what's wrong but ... I would rather write books and for a long term solution you know internet advocacy doesn't seem to be that effective, I am not saying it's all wrong.

GBC meetings scenario

Just related with that ...I was trying to go through some GBC process of rectifying the ... that **in these books there were some really wild things written**. So I was called to meet this godbrother of mine who was making these wild statements in his books which were widely distributed with in ISKCON and to the public. So I was called to Mayapur at the time of the GBC meeting and I was asked, "Would you like to join the plenary session?" All the GBC members together, "You can join it for a few minute and then you can go off and meet with him." So I said ok and I came in and I saw there is a huge long table with all the GBC

members and now I was present there. Mostly men but a few women there also. So there were like you know there would be like two sannyasis and one women sitting and three or four sannyasis ... mostly sannyasis and then some women ... I thought well this is a bit strange you know the sannyasis and women all sitting up the table. So I went and took a spot to sit not next to any woman and I just looked to my left and I saw there was a painting, it is an abstract painting which means impersonalism and I saw the tiger I couldn't ____ what's it supposed to be ____ abstract. Then I saw the title and it was like the name of some place in Navdvipa dhama and when I looked it at a bit more I could work out that it was like some you know in a very abstract way it's supposed to be some scene in Navadvipa dhama but abstract style which like I say it's impersonalistic. I looked all around the rooms and the room is full of all these abstract paintings. So then the incoming chairman of the GBC started his speech. So this is the first speech in the GBC meeting of ... the first speech in the meeting of the whole year and for about the first ten minutes he would spoke about some karmic movie that he had been to. So you know first I walked in saw men and women all mixed up then I saw abstract paintings and then a meeting of all the leaders which is supposed to discuss how to promote the Sankirtana movement and then there is just this telling about some Monty Python movie that he has been to. I just thought this is very-very strange.

GBC glorifying books

When that devotee who was writing those strange books when he passed away the GBC gave a condolence or obituary or something like that and they noted one of his great contributions was his books and I was on a campaign to say that these books are bogus, all kinds of things, really weird things in them. So then I thought, "Well that's just show our movement is sahajiya movement because if they are praising these books which are completely bogus then what is that?"

My Present response to leader's meeting

So recently I have been invited to a leader's meeting in which different leaders from ISKCON are supposed to meet and discuss the proposed proposals for the GBC and give their input in Mayapur just before the GBC meeting. So I appreciate that because it's been for many years that we just have to accept whatever the GBC say. They can just make rules without discussing with anyone and you know just like overnight in the year 2000 they just changed the social ethos of ISKCON by implementing the women's right bill or something like this without discussing with the members of ISKCON who ____ So I appreciate that but for me it's too late. Ten years ago I might have gone but now I told the devotee who is organizing that meeting that I don't want to go because I don't agree with the idea of sitting around, discussing with women which is part of the ethos in ISKCON today. Where as Prabhupada he wasn't ... he was clearly not against ... he was not for women having leadership roles. I mean he wrote against it several times in his books. He never made any woman GBCs or temple presidents with one exception in the very early days he made a woman a temple president. So I disagree that what to speak of sannyasis, any man should sit around for hours discussing with women ... I am not against women, speak with them a little but women will discuss with men means their fathers, their intimate relatives. But the idea that men and women just all mix up and speak so many things, I am against that, I don't see that that's part of

the culture that we are supposed to be instituting. So that's one reason I told I don't want to go. But the another reason is I think it's ... like I say it's too far gone ... the ideas that I have... I have means my understanding of what Srila Prabhupada taught us and it's demonstrably closer to what Prabhupada said then the lot of things that are going on now today. So I don't think anything at this point it's going to change like I say, you can say, "This is not right, that's not right" but if at all things are going to get better it's going to get worse, it's going to have to get worse first.

Purpose of all this discussion

So then why am I speaking all these things anyway? Well because people ask me, I should atleast make it clear to those who are coming to me what my position is and if they want ... people ask me to be their disciples so they should know what I stand for otherwise they may be disappointed later on, I may be disappointed later if they don't like the stance that I made ... it may seem ... like I say hypercritical of so many sincere devotees.

Actual criterion of sincerity or earnestness

Ya I am sure so many devotees are sincere but who are doing many other things that I am criticizing here or saying that are wrong but what is the actual criterion of sincerity? I mean there are many Christians in this country are very sincere about converting people to Hindus to Christianity and when they get baptized they have to publicly ... one of the things they have to do is publicly rip up their pictures of Krishna and various hindu Gods and stamp on the pictures. So the Christians are very sincere, they think that they are doing something good for the people but ... now I am not saying that our devotees are doing mid day meal and all that are in the same category as those Christians but the point is that sincerity or earnestness is not in and of itself the prime ... earnestness and sincerity are not necessarily exactly the same thing. Their earnestness that should be first of all for the right thing because you can be very earnest and determined and dedicated to doing ... but if it's not the right thing then it's the wrong thing. And even if we open many temples and we have many people joining and so many things, lots of money, lot of public appreciation but if for any reason Srila Prabhupada is not pleased then it's all useless that's all. And I am ... I can always say it's my opinion because I am not saying I am the obituary (?) of the truth but that much in our society is not what Prabhupada actually wanted us to do. So ... and speaking this lecture with the idea of putting it on the internet, I doubt it will make much effect. It's not that you know that this lecture is ... everyone is going to get ... "Ok we are now going to change ISKCON, make it better" That it may be the effect that some people will criticize me for being overly critical of others or some people will say, "Yes that was very good" and you know after short time it will be forgotten. Oh another thing I made several attempts to go through the GBC. Somehow or other it's all ended ...got frustrated. So previously to make such statements one would have been smashed by the powers that ... now a days it's more likely to be ignored or politely acknowledged or may be you know some "Yes we are very concerned" but I don't expect making this public ____ effect any great change.

But like I say for those who are approaching me atleast to them they can be clear that I perceive that there are many things ... our movement is basically off the track, not properly following Srila Prabhupada. I know this is very discouraging, it may sound very discouraging but the good news is you still can follow Srila Prabhupada and whatever anyone does to change this way and that way ... Prabhupada's books are still there. Prabhupada he knew ... put his books out. He said that even if everyone goes away, my books are there and by reading the books people will again take it up.

Center at Salem

And atleast here ... again I am saying as I perceive it here we are following Krishna Conscious and Srila Prabhupada in a manner that is actually conducive to spiritual advancement. It's not mixed up with mundane psychology, mundane welfare or a... mundane welfare work or if you say that the mid day meals etc. is not mundane welfare work, atleast it's presented as if it's mundane welfare work. So it's a close approximation of mundane welfare work and where it begins or ends is subject to discussion. So atleast here we are trying to make that ... make that ethos in which we can practice Krishna Consciousness as Srila Prabhupada wanted us to without making various changes this way, that way and the other way. And we find that atleast some people are appreciating that and finding that there is a vibrant, uplifting, spiritual atmosphere here and we find that. Especially for festivals, more and more devotees are coming, fairly long distances to join in the festivals and rather attend here than in the center in their own town because they find it a better spiritual atmosphere. So Hare Krishna! Any questions or comments on this?

Like I say this might elicit ... when it goes on the internet it might elicit some responses and this and that and people may write to me. I am not much into having protracted arguments by email or on the internet because I see it doesn't go anywhere. So I have stated my case and like I say I am not going to ... I don't intend to get into a knitty-gritty defense of every little point. Can't spend all my time get these email debates they go on and on and on at the end no one changes their positions anyway. So what's the point? Ya any thing? There are no big kirtans after this _____ what we mostly do you know lot of kirtana, recover from all of this.

Few Strange things in our movement

Experience at 3 days leader's meeting

I mean there are so many things that can be said. One of my disciples he said after being to a leader's meeting ... 3 days leader's meeting, "Need about two weeks to recover from it", feel so contaminated by the association of people. I went to one of them once _____ in this area. Were you there I think in Bangalore? You know after sometime I just said, "Hey let's have a kirtana" Because just trying to make a spiritual atmosphere. It was just all so mundane and arguing and this and that and so I did a kirtana which no one could refuse but no one was very enthusiastic for it either.

BTG

So I remember years ago in the BTG printed from America... so many things that ... devotee wrote an article about said, "Oh I just attended another boring BTG editor's meeting" Why boring? I mean it should be the most enlivening thing. Presenting a magazine that's meant for the respiritualization of human society, you are saying it's boring. I mean if you start there is no end to strange things that have entered our movement. And it's not just me saying by the way, it's not my own personal trip.

Referring woman as prabhu

Even you see the GBC in any matter they send out they always refer to woman as prabhu as one of the most prominent and respected GBC members out on his ... what you call that blog? When they speak something... webcast? Blog? When it's spoken it's also called a blog? So he replied to this question what do you think of calling woman prabhu? And he openly said it's all nonsense. So he is also saying that atleast one of the things that's been introduced in our movement recently by or with in the GBC is nonsense. So atleast on some issues there is something, people agree with. On that issue also Harisauri Prabhu who is Prabhupada's servant over a period of a few years, all the time he was with Prabhupada he never once heard Prabhupada or anyone else in ISKCON calling woman prabhu. And now a days if you don't call them prabhu they become upset. It's considered to be a great crime by some people. So anything?

Questions and Answers

Q. Not clearly audible

Ans In Guruvayor they sell prasadam in the temple itself to general public. Their cooking is by machine. In Guruvayor also it's cooked in machine? No it's cooked in the traditional method by brahmanas over fires. ... They have introduced steam cooking. Ya that's a good program that I have said several times to Gokulchandra prabhu, I also said just yesterday that it's an important thing we have to start that people will come ... like in Udipi and in Guruvayor full meal prasada to anyone who comes. So that's a good program, we should do that. And we see in Udipi so many students go there daily. No one complains, they give them prasadam. So we can do that. In Gainesville, in Florida for many years they are being serving prasadam to the students there, mid day ... it was free I believe and now they do it at a very low price and they generally have kirtana going on, they set it on the lawn. So that's well appreciated. That's good

Q. They say, "By Bhakti Vedanta hospital we are making many devotees" (Paraphrased as not clearly audible)?

Ans We are making devotees by this, by Bhakti Vedanta hospital. Ya but again it's like that... I quoted that from Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati if we just compromise this philosophy a bit there would be so many more people would come and join but he didn't. So if you compromise the philosophy a bit so many more people would come but they won't have a

clear understanding of what bhakti is. So some good things, alright, they may become vegetarian and chant Hare Krishna but they won't get a proper understanding of the philosophy if it's not taught. It's a fact that if you just make things a little less strict then people can come much more easily but the problem is that the essence is lost. They will become devotees and then they will also want to go, open hospitals and approach people and tell people, "You see we are helping the poor, this, that and the other" which is not our philosophy to help people on the ... or as a prime activity of our movement to help people on the bodily level. It's very clear from this reply to the Andhra Pradesh Relief Committee. Prabhupada could have agreed. It was not a big thing to ask to have a collection for ... that's all they asked for is a collection to help their activities. Prabhupada refused and said no, he practically told them that your whole idea is demonic.

Q. Why is all this happening when Prabhupada's books are there?

Ans Well I guess people aren't reading Prabhupada's books. And that's another common thing you will find people they are initiated ten years and they haven't read even one canto of Bhagavatam and it's quite common. You know people are initiated and they don't have any idea that they are not supposed to worship demigods, they are not supposed to eat karmi food, it's become very cheap. The quality is being sacrificed for the sake of quantity. So why is it's happening? Well ask the people who are propagating all these things. Why are they doing this? Maya doesn't sleep.

Q. In case of establishing Varnasrama projects, many people propose if we make the standards little less strict many people will come but we see from a logic that we make the standards less strict but because of that at some point we will fail. So does this same thing apply to that also, by establishing Varnasrama that ok we will not keep standards very strict and after that ...

Ans The idea that we don't make standards very strict then many people can come but in Varnasrama communities or temple communities or whatever. But what we factually see is if the standards aren't very strict then the whole project fails. So purity is the force. It's a great art to keep strong standards and at the same time be flexible enough to allow for people's weaknesses but once you institutionalize those standards then everything is lost. Just like for instance in the west if devotees divorce, remarry, it just considered normal. There is nothing really that wrong of it. That's a compromise, that's a compromise with illicit sex. So that's a problem but ... The thing is that the problem is there and it becomes so common and we don't know what to do and then we don't think of it as a problem anymore, still a problem. It's just like AIDS is a problem but people don't talk about it that much, it's just people go on dying all around us because what can you do. So like that child abuse, people know it's a problem but what can you do, you have to go on with life so you may think you know things are so bad so will just go along with it. But if we go along with it then there is no hope of any improvement. I am pretty heavy on my disciples who divorce. I don't encourage in any way whatsoever. And they may become discouraged and go away from devotional service but what do you do? If you say, "Ok Ok it's alright, never mind" and then it becomes accepted. So what do you do? You sacrifice the individual or the standards. It's not easy.

Q. How is it possible that there are sannyasis in the GBC when sannyasis are not supposed to do politics?

Ans Well the GBCs is also not supposed to do politics but it's inevitable when there is an organization and there is power and money and there is people who are less than paramhansas that will be what ... if it wasn't ISKCON we would call politics. So these things go on. Therefore some people propose that there should be no sannyasis on the GBCs. That was Prabhupada's original idea to have grhasthas but then he changed that and he ... It's difficult. I mean an institution means there are going to be problems. Religion or actual religion is you can't institutionalize ... they are very ____ to institutionalize it, goes against the whole spirit but on the other hand we require an institution. So any way may be at some point I will discuss all these things in a book.

Q. Not audible

Ans One can still follow Srila Prabhupada despite all of this. Ya one can do but it can become quite difficult to do so also. Especially if you are surrounded or you don't have association of others who are doing so or who _____ to be doing so but in ... it's just like you may be in a city where there are literally hundreds of devotees ... I am thinking of a particular city not very far from here but in which pretty much all of them regularly eat karmi food and they ... if anyone wants to not do that they discourage them and they say you should take wife out to a restaurant every so often ____ turned out karmi restaurant. So you want to have association of devotees but do you want to associate with devotees who are saying such things and doing such things. So you can follow Srila Prabhupada but it's a difficult path. It's easier to not to, to go with the flow but you have to see where the flow is going. So you can do but it's not always going to be easy.

Q. Not clearly audible

Ans To preach is the only solution. Ya the positive is the only solution. So that's why I said that's what we are trying to do here, to do something in the right way, preaching the right thing... Ya that's a problem Vijay ... Well I shouldn't have said that ... a prominent book distributor in America told me that there is only one or two... if he meets people who are interested and want to visit our centers, he said there is only one or two centers in the whole of America that he would recommend any person to go to because he is afraid if he goes to ... there are more likely to get a bad impression of Krishna Consciousness rather than what enlivens them in the book when they go to the temple they don't find the same thing. Several years ago a leading devotee in Bangladesh he told me that someone has asked him, a member of the public had asked him, "Should we follow what you do or what's in your books?" So even the public can see. So may be that will be the hope also ... book distribution as that goes on more and more and as ... hopefully it will go on more and more and more ... they are certain envious people with in our movement who want to stop that. That's another thing. Years ago there was a north American GBC meeting about how to revive the preaching in America and the first proposal they bought up was to stop book distribution. That's the answer. _____ "See people can't relate to it and this and that" ____ really seriously, seriously off. So but as the books be distributed more and more then it may be that the members of the public themselves demand that you know you give us what's in the books. That may be the hope. Ok Hare Krishna!

