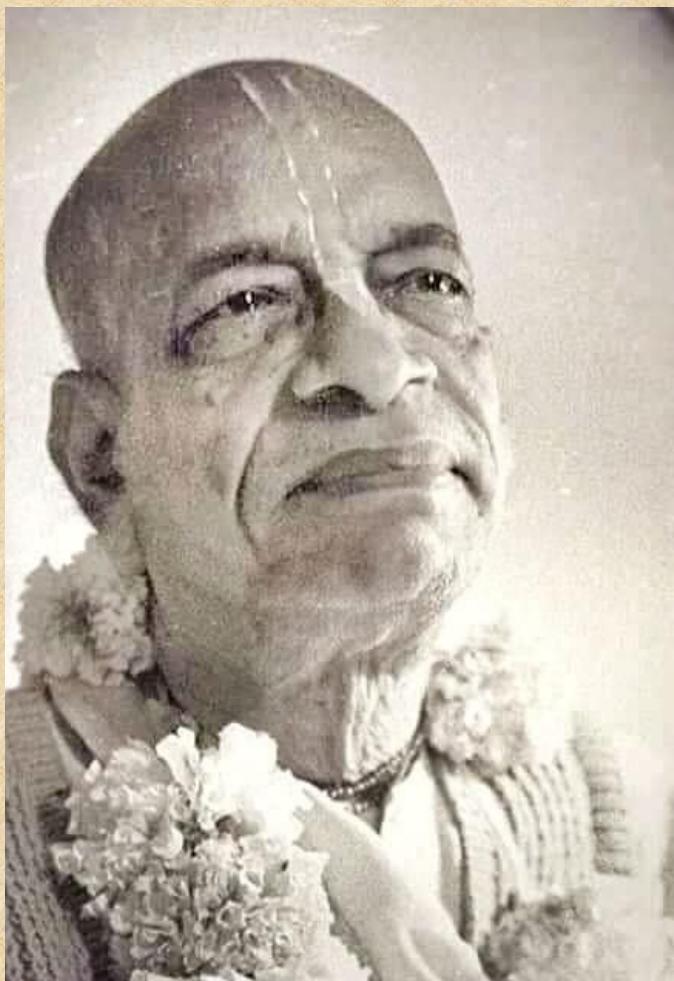


# ISKCON

# CONSTITUTION



International Society for Krishna Consciousness  
Founder-Ācārya: His Divine Grace  
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Inaugurated on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026, Vasanta Pañcamī.

All quotations from Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, lectures,  
conversations and letters:  
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Constitution in pdf format for free:  
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# ISKCON CONSTITUTION



International Society for Krishna Consciousness  
Founder-Ācārya: His Divine Grace  
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda



## DEDICATION

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale*

*śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

We offer our respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe*

*nirviṣeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāscātya-desa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

This ISKCON Constitution is dedicated to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).

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## INVOCATION

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā  
cakṣur unmīlitam yena tasmai śrī-gurave namah*

I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him.

*śrī-caitanya-mano-’bhīṣṭam sthāpitam yena bhū-tale  
svayam rūpaḥ kadā mahyam dadāti sva-padāntikam*

When will Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, who has established within this material world the mission to fulfill the desire of Lord Caitanya, give me shelter under his lotus feet?

*vande ’ham śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pada-kamalam śrī-gurūn vaiṣṇavāniś ca  
śrī-rūpam sāgrajātam saha-gana-raghunāthānvitam tarī sa-jīvam  
sādvaitam sāvadhūtam pariṣana-sahitam kṛṣṇa-caitanya-devam  
śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pādān saha-gaṇa-lalitā-śrī-visākhānvitamīś ca*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master and unto the feet of all Vaiṣṇavas. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī along with his elder brother Sanātana Gosvāmī, as well as Raghunātha Dāsa and Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, and Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī. I offer my respectful obeisances to Lord Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda along with Advaita Ācārya, Gadādhara, Śrīvāsa and other associates. I offer my respectful obeisances to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Śrī Kṛṣṇa along with Their associates Śrī Lalitā and Viśākhā.

*he kṛṣṇa karuṇā-sindho dīna-bandho jagat-pate  
gopeśa gopikā-kānta rādhā-kānta namo 'stu te*

O my dear Kṛṣṇa, You are the friend of the distressed and the source of creation. You are the master of the *gopīs* and the lover of Rādhārāṇī. I offer my respectful obeisances unto You.

*tapta-kāñcana-gaurāṅgi rādhe vṛndāvaneśvari  
vṛṣabhānu-sute devi prapamāmi hari-priye*

I offer my respects to Rādhārāṇī, whose bodily complexion is like molten gold and who is the Queen of Vṛndāvana. You are the daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu, and You are very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

*vāñchā-kalpatarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca  
patitānāṁ pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namah*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto all the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord. They can fulfill the desires of everyone, just like desire trees, and they are full of compassion for the fallen souls.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda  
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādī-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Śrī Advaita, Gadādhara, Śrīvāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare  
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*

## PREAMBLE

1. His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (Śrīla Prabhupāda) founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in 1966. He propagated the practice of devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna, on an unprecedented global scale, thus fulfilling the instruction of his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the desires of the previous *ācāryas*, and the prediction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu that His holy name would be spread to every town and village of the world.
2. Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed his disciples and followers to lead a life of devotion, compassion, simplicity, and morality, and to advance spiritually to the point of reawakening their dormant love for Krishna.
3. Śrīla Prabhupāda wished that his followers, through all future generations, work cooperatively, in a spirit of unity in diversity, to preserve his legacy and propagate Krishna consciousness into the future. He established the Governing Body Commission (GBC) as the ultimate managing authority of the Society to ensure that the affairs of ISKCON be administered worldwide to the highest standard of purity, exemplary leadership, and fidelity to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta*.

4. ISKCON is an international society consisting of individual members and organizations working in cooperation to participate in, support, and propagate the saṅkīrtana movement as inaugurated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and spread worldwide by ISKCON’s Founder-Ācārya, Śrīla Prabhupāda.
5. This Constitution is intended to provide the foundation for good governance of ISKCON, motivating members to imbibe the vision, mission, and values of the Founder-Ācārya, providing guidance, inspiring cooperation and reciprocal care, fostering accountability, establishing standards for interaction among its constituencies, and encouraging the participation of all members in divine service, with love and trust for one another and a sense of mercy and benevolence toward the whole of humanity.
6. This Constitution is a living document which can evolve and adapt over time through the process of amendment as provided for in this Constitution.

## ARTICLE 1 - CITATION

- 1.1 This Constitution may be cited as the Constitution of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).

## ARTICLE 2 - DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

### 2.1. DEFINITIONS

As used in this Constitution, the following words and expressions shall have these meanings:

- 2.1.1. *Śrīla Prabhupāda*: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-*Acarya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).
- 2.1.2. ISKCON: International Society for Krishna Consciousness.
- 2.1.3. GBC: Governing Body Commission of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.
- 2.1.4. ISKCON Law: The body of resolutions, passed by the GBC, regulating ISKCON, including but not limited to its management, conduct, and governance.

- 2.1.5. ISKCON Organization: an association of ISKCON members, formally registered or otherwise, that is accepted and recognized by the Governing Body Commission or one of its authorized agencies.
- 2.1.6. Society (with capital S): International Society for Krishna Consciousness.
- 2.1.7. ISKCON Devotee: a practitioner of *bhakti-yoga*, or Krishna consciousness, who identifies as a member or follower of ISKCON.

## 2.2. REFERENCES

- 2.2.1. All quotations in the Constitution, unless otherwise indicated, are from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, lectures, letters, and conversations.
- 2.2.2. These quotations have been referenced to support and clarify various statements of the Constitution or to directly illuminate points of philosophy. Quotations selected among similar ones should be taken as representative of the principle, not as Śrīla Prabhupāda’s exclusive or irreplaceable statement on a particular topic.

## 2.3. TRANSLATIONS

- 2.3.1. The English-language version of this Constitution shall be legally binding in all respects and shall prevail in cases of inconsistencies with translated versions, if any, to discern the form, spirit, intent, and appropriate usage of words.

## ARTICLE 3 - SCOPE AND JURISDICTION

### 3.1. THE CONSTITUTION AND ITS APPLICATION

- 3.1.1. This Constitution shall be globally applicable to all ISKCON entities and shall assist the Governing Body Commission in its governance of ISKCON. All ISKCON entities shall, unless not permitted under local legal jurisdiction, ensure that their by-laws, policies, and management decisions shall be consistent with the Constitution.
- 3.1.2. ISKCON Organizations, while functioning as self-governing entities in their respective jurisdictions, shall, unless not permitted under local legal jurisdiction, carry out all their activities and powers in adherence to and harmony with this Constitution.
- 3.1.3. This Constitution shall, unless not permitted under local legal jurisdiction, take precedence over all administrative and legislative decisions of all ISKCON Organizations and authorities.
- 3.1.4. Any laws, resolutions, or directives that are in contravention shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, unless not permitted under local legal jurisdiction, be made consistent with this Constitution.

## ARTICLE 4 - THEOLOGICAL ELEMENTS OF KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

### 4.1. A CONCISE STATEMENT OF *SIDDHĀNTA*

4.1.1. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta*, the essential philosophical conclusions of the Vedic revelation as taught by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and as presented by Śrīla Prabhupāda, can be encapsulated in the following ten tenets:

- 4.1.1.1. Lord Krishna is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- 4.1.1.2. Lord Krishna is the independent controller of all energies, both material and spiritual.
- 4.1.1.3. Lord Krishna's internal energy facilitates the endless enjoyment and bliss He derives from His loving relationships with His devotees (*rasa*).
- 4.1.1.4. The living entities are eternally parts and parcels of the Lord and are thus spiritual by nature.
- 4.1.1.5. The living entities in the material world are prone to be controlled by the external (material) energy.
- 4.1.1.6. The living entities in the material world can become liberated and thus attain eternal blissful life in a loving relationship with the Supreme Lord.

4.1.1.7. Everything is inconceivably one with (*abheda*) and different from (*bheda*) the Supreme Lord, Lord Krishna. This doctrine is called *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*, the philosophy of inconceivable simultaneous oneness and difference.

4.1.1.8. Pure love of God is the highest goal of life.

4.1.1.9. One can attain love of God by practicing *bhakti-yoga*, pure devotional service, under the guidance and in the association of advanced devotees.

4.1.1.10. This knowledge can be obtained from the revealed scriptures, such as *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and, received through the authorized Vaiṣṇava disciplic succession, the *paramparā* system.

4.1.2. The following quotations represent selected examples of scriptural evidence corroborating the philosophy of Krishna consciousness.

## 4.2. LORD KRISHNA

4.2.1. Translations and purports by Śrīla Prabhupāda describing Lord Krishna (Śrī Kṛṣṇa), the Supreme Personality of Godhead:

4.2.1.1. *oṁ namo bhagavate vāsudevāya  
janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itaratas cārtheśv abhijñah svarāttene  
brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ  
tejo-vāri-mṛdām yathā vinimayo yatra tri-sargo 'mṛṣā  
dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakam satyam param dhīmahi*

“O my Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, son of Vasudeva, O all-pervading Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. I meditate upon Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa because He is the Absolute Truth and the primeval cause of all causes of the creation, sustenance and destruction of the manifested universes. He is directly and indirectly conscious of all manifestations, and He is independent because there is no other cause beyond Him. It is He only who first imparted the Vedic knowledge unto the heart of Brahmājī, the original living being. By Him even the great sages and demigods are placed into illusion, as one is bewildered by the illusory representations of water seen in fire, or land seen on water. Only because of Him do the material universes, temporarily manifested by the reactions of the three modes of nature, appear factual, although they are unreal. I therefore meditate upon Him, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is eternally existent in the transcendental abode, which is forever free from the illusory representations of the material world. I meditate upon Him, for He is the Absolute Truth.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.1)

#### 4.2.1.2.

*ete cāṁīśa-kalāḥ pumisah  
kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam  
indrāri-vyākulaṁ lokam  
mr̥dayanti yuge yuge*

“All of the above-mentioned incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord, but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead. All of them appear on planets whenever there is a disturbance created by the atheists. The Lord incarnates to protect the theists.”  
(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.28)

#### 4.2.1.3.

*īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ  
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ  
anādir ādir govindaḥ  
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is Kṛṣṇa, who has a body of eternity, knowledge and bliss. He has no beginning, for He is the beginning of everything. He is the cause of all causes.” (*Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā*, 5.1, quoted in *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* 11.54, purport)

4.2.1.4. “Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead ... is full with all opulences, and as such He possesses all riches, all strength, all reputation, all knowledge, all beauty and all renunciation. He is eternally a person and eternally supreme.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 6.140, purport)

4.2.1.5. “There is nothing in existence not related to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In a sense, there is nothing but Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and yet nothing is Śrī Kṛṣṇa save and except His primeval personality.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā* 1.51, purport)

4.2.1.6. “According to the *acintya-bhedābheda* philosophy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, there are varieties, but all of them constitute one unit.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.12.10, purport)

4.2.1.7. “Rādhārāṇī is the internal potency of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and She eternally intensifies the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa ... She is the medium transmitting the living entities’ service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā* 4.56, purport)

4.2.1.8. “The loving affairs of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are transcendental manifestations of the Lord’s internal pleasure-giving potency.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā* 1.5, purport)

4.2.1.9. “Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are the same. Kṛṣṇa, by expanding His pleasure potency, becomes Rādhārāṇī.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.13.20, purport)

4.2.1.10. “The pastimes of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are self-effulgent. They are happiness personified, unlimited and all-powerful.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 8.206)

### 4.3. ŚRĪ CAITANYA MAHĀPRABHU

4.3.1. Translations and purports by Śrīla Prabhupāda describing Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

#### 4.3.1.1.

*namo mahā-vadānyāya  
kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te  
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-  
nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ*

“O most munificent incarnation! You are Kṛṣṇa Himself appearing as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You have assumed the golden color of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and You are widely distributing pure love of Kṛṣṇa. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 19.53)

#### 4.3.1.2.

*yad advaitamī brahmopaniṣadi tad apy asya tanu-bhā-  
ya ātmāntar-yāmī puruṣa iti so 'syāṁśa-vibhavaḥ  
saḍ-aiśvaryaiḥ pūrṇo ya iha bhagavān sa svayam ayaṁ  
na caitanyāt krṣṇāj jagati para-tattvam param iha*

“What the *Upaniṣads* describe as the impersonal Brahman is but the effulgence of His body, and the Lord known as the Supersoul is but His localized plenary portion. Lord Caitanya is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa Himself, full with six opulences. He is the Absolute Truth, and no other truth is greater than or equal to Him.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 1.3)

- 4.3.1.3. “Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the selfsame Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This time, however, He appeared as a great devotee of the Lord in order to preach to the people in general, as well as to religionists and philosophers, about the transcendental position of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the primeval Lord and the cause of all causes.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Introduction)
- 4.3.1.4. “Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu was accepted as an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa not on the basis of popular votes but by evidence from the *sāstras* and bona fide scholars.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 14.18, purport)

4.3.1.5. “Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu introduced the simple process of chanting the Holy name of Krishna for the people of this fallen age of Kali. It is said in the sastras that the same result that was formerly attained by difficult sacrifices or yoga practice is easily achieved in this age simply by chanting the Holy name of God, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.” (Letter to Dr. Yogi Raj Dev Svarupa, 4 Dec 1975)

4.3.1.6. “If knowledge does not include the understanding of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Kṛṣṇa, it is simply superfluous. By Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s grace, the nectar of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes is flowing in different directions in hundreds and thousands of rivers. One should not think that the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are different from Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 25.271, purport)

4.3.1.7. “Lord Caitanya is the ideal teacher of life’s prime necessities. He is the most munificent bestower of love of Kṛṣṇa. He is the complete reservoir of all mercies and good fortune. As confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Upaniṣads*, He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa Himself, and He is worshipable by everyone in this age of disagreement. Everyone can join in His *saṅkīrtana* movement.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā*, Preface)

4.3.1.8. “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is always accompanied by His plenary expansion Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, His incarnation Śrī Advaita Prabhu, His internal potency Śrī Gadādhara Prabhu and His marginal potency Śrīvāsa Prabhu. He is in the midst of them as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One should know that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is always accompanied by these other tattvas.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā* 7.4, purport)

## 4.4. THE HOLY NAME

### 4.4.1.

*nāma cintāmaṇīḥ kṛṣṇaś*  
*caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ*  
*pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto*  
*'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ*

“The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is transcendently blissful. It bestows all spiritual benedictions, for it is Kṛṣṇa Himself, the reservoir of

all pleasure. Kṛṣṇa's name is complete, and it is the form of all transcendental mellites. It is not a material name under any condition, and it is no less powerful than Kṛṣṇa Himself. Since Kṛṣṇa's name is not contaminated by the material qualities, there is no question of its being involved with māyā. Kṛṣṇa's name is always liberated and spiritual; it is never conditioned by the laws of material nature. This is because the name of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself are identical.' (from the *Padma Purāṇa*, cited in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 17.133)

#### 4.4.2.

*kaler doṣa-nidhe rājan  
asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ  
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya  
mukta-saṅgaḥ parami vrajet*

“My dear King, although Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, there is still one good quality about this age: Simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.3.51)

#### 4.4.3.

*kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa-avatāra  
nāma haite haya sarva-jagat-nistāra*

“In this Age of Kali, the holy name of the Lord, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, is the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Simply by chanting the holy name, one associates with the Lord directly. Anyone who does this is certainly delivered.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā* 17.22)

#### 4.4.4.

*hare kr̄ṣṇa hare kr̄ṣṇa kr̄ṣṇa kr̄ṣṇa hare hare  
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare  
iti ṣoḍāśakam nāmnām kali-kalmaṣa-nācanam  
nātah parataropāyah sarva-vedeṣu dṛṣyate*

“The sixteen words Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare are especially meant for counteracting the contaminations of Kali. To save oneself from the contamination of Kali, there is no alternative to the chanting of these sixteen words.” (from the *Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad*, cited in *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, Chapter 18)

#### 4.4.5.

*harer nāma harer nāma  
harer nāmaiva kevalam  
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva  
nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

“In this Age of Kali there is no other means, no other means, no other means for self-realization than chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name of Lord Hari.” (from the *Bṛhan-Nāradīya Purāṇa*, cited in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 17.21)

## 4.5. VEDIC KNOWLEDGE

4.5.1. Excerpted from Śrīla Prabhupāda's works.

4.5.1.1. [Lord Caitanya said:] “The conditioned soul cannot revive his Kṛṣṇa consciousness by his own effort. But out of causeless mercy, Lord Kṛṣṇa compiled the Vedic literature and its supplements, the *Purāṇas*.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 20.122)

4.5.1.2. “In the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, has claimed that He is the father of all living entities, regardless of form ... for their benefit, because they are hovering under the impression that they can lord it over material nature, the *Vedas* are given to them for their guidance. Therefore the *Vedas* are called *apauruṣeya*, for they are not written by any man or demigod, including the first living creature, Brahmā ... Every living entity within this material world is subject to four deficiencies: he commits mistakes, he accepts one thing for another, he cheats, and he has imperfect senses. The *Vedas*, however, are not written by any living creature within this material world ... All other systems of knowledge are defective because they have been written or spoken by men or demigods who are products of this material creation.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.2.31, purport)

4.5.1.3. “*Bhagavad-gītā* is the sound incarnation of the Lord because it is spoken by the Supreme Lord, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the sound representative of the Lord because it was spoken by the incarnation of the Lord about the activities of the Lord ... it is the essence of the Vedic desire tree and the natural commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras*, the topmost philosophical thesis on the subject matter of Brahman.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.1.8, purport)

4.5.1.4. “*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the sublime literature which surpasses all other Vedic scriptures due to its transcendental qualities. It is transcendental to all mundane activities and mundane knowledge ... *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is not only a superior literature but is the ripened fruit of all Vedic literatures. In other words, it is the cream of all Vedic knowledge . . . By submissively hearing this transcendental literature, one can attain the full pleasure of his heart's desire.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.3, purport)

4.5.1.5. “In our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we have ... limited our study of the Vedic literatures to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. These four works are sufficient for preaching purposes. They are adequate for the understanding of the philosophy and the spreading of missionary activities all over the world.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Madhya-līlā 22.118, purport)

## 4.6. THE DISCIPLIC SUCCESSION

4.6.1. Regarding the need and nature of the disciplic succession (the succession of spiritual masters), in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s words, excerpted from his works:

4.6.1.1. “Our process is to receive knowledge through the *paramparā* system, from Kṛṣṇa to Brahmā, to Nārada, Vyāsa, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the Six Gosvāmīs. By disciplic succession, Lord Brahmā was enlightened from within by the original person, Kṛṣṇa. Our knowledge is fully perfect due to being handed from master to disciple.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Madhya-līlā 7.66, purport)

4.6.1.2. “Nārada Muni ... is the son and disciple of Brahmājī, and from him the disciplic succession in the line of Brahmā has been spread ... He initiated even Vyāsadeva, the author of the Vedic literatures, and from Vyāsadeva, Madhvācārya was initiated, and thus the Madhva *sampradāya*, in which the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* is also included, has spread all over the universe. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu belonged to this Madhva *sampradāya*; therefore, Brahmājī, Nārada, Vyāsa, down to Madhva, Caitanya and the Gosvāmīs all belonged to the same line of disciplic succession.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.9.6-7, purport)

4.6.1.3. “Caitanya Mahāprabhu directly empowered Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī. Following in their footsteps, the other Gosvāmīs understood Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His mission. One should understand Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa from the Six Gosvāmīs in the paramparā system.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 25.271, purport)

4.6.1.4. “The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is conducted under the supervision of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī ... Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in order to bestow upon human society the benediction of the science of Kṛṣṇa. The most exalted of all the activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa are His pastimes of conjugal love with the gopés. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the best of the gopīs. Therefore, to understand the mission of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and follow in His footsteps, one must very seriously follow in the footsteps of the Six Gosvāmīs—Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana, Bhaṭṭa Raghunātha, Śrī Jīva, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa and Dāsa Raghunātha.” (*The Nectar of Instruction*, preface)

4.6.1.5. “Our society, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, has been formed to execute the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā* Concluding Words)

4.6.1.6. “I am simply serving my spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Maharaj and all the acaryas in the disciplic succession. If I have done anything of credit it is that I have not changed their teachings. I have not added anything of my own interpretation.” (Letter to Bhima, Krsna das, Sanat Kumara, Nityananda, Samba and Joseph, 16 May 1974)

4.6.1.7. Mohsin Hassan: “After you, is it any decision has been made who will take over?”

Śrīla Prabhupāda: “Yes. All of them will take. These students who are initiated from me, all of them will act as I am doing. Just like I have got many Godbrothers, they are all acting. Similarly, all these disciples which I am making, initiating, they are being trained to become future spiritual masters.” (Conversation, Detroit, 18 July 1971)

## ARTICLE 5 - THE FOUNDER-ĀCĀRYA

### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

5.1.1. His Divine Grace Abhay Caraṇāravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (Śrīla Prabhupāda), is the Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. We accept Śrīla Prabhupāda as the pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa especially empowered by Him to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava devotional tradition, worldwide. Śrīla Prabhupāda fully represents and transmits the tradition and teachings of his own Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and the Brahma-Mādhva Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*.

### 5.2. HIS FOUNDING OF ISKCON

- 5.2.1. To fulfill the previous *ācāryas'* desire for a united worldwide organization to expand Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission, Śrīla Prabhupāda founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) as a distinct branch of the Brahma-Mādhva Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. Therefore, he is the Founder-Ācārya of ISKCON.
- 5.2.2. Following in the footsteps of his Guru Mahārāja and our previous *ācāryas*, Śrīla Prabhupāda also set essential standards for the practice of Krishna consciousness, bhakti-yoga, for the modern age.

5.2.3. Śrīla Prabhupāda thus plays a vital role in the fulfillment of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's prediction: "In every town and village of the world, the chanting of My name will be heard." (*Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, as referenced in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā* 25.264).

### 5.3. HIS WORLDWIDE PROPAGATION PREDICTED IN THE SCRIPTURES

5.3.1. We accept Śrīla Prabhupāda as the *senāpati-bhakta*—commander-in-chief among Lord Caitanya's devotees—prophesized by Locana dāsa Ṭhākura in *Caitanya-maṅgala* (*Sūtra-khaṇḍa*, song 12, texts 564–65), in words attributed to Lord Caitanya:

*ebe nāma saṅkīrtana tīkṣṇa khaḍga laiyā  
antara asura jīvera phelibe kāṭiyā*

“Taking the sharp sword of the congregational chanting, I will root out and destroy the demoniac mentality in the hearts of all the conditioned souls.”

*yadi pāpi chāḍī dharma dūre deśe yāya  
mora senāpati-bhakta yāibe tathāya*

“If some sinful people escape and, giving up religious principles, go to far off countries, then my *senāpati-bhakta* (commander-in-chief among devotees) will come at that time to give them Krishna consciousness.”

5.3.2. The greatness of Śrīla Prabhupāda's literary contributions, his translating and commenting on *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and other essential Vaiṣṇava texts—and his overseeing their translations into dozens of languages and their distribution worldwide—is best understood in the context of the following verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

a. *tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavo  
yasmin prati-ślokam abaddhavaty api  
nāmāny anantasya yaśo 'nkitāni yat  
śṛṇvanti gāyanti gṛṇanti sādhavaḥ*

“On the other hand, that literature which is full of descriptions of the the transcendental glories of the name, fame, forms, pastimes, etc., of the unlimited Supreme Lord is a different creation, full of transcendental words directed toward bringing about a revolution in the impious lives of this world's misdirected civilization. Such transcendental literatures, even though imperfectly composed, are heard, sung and accepted by purified men who are thoroughly honest.”

From the purport:

“We know that our honest attempt to present this great literature conveying transcendental messages for reviving the God consciousness of the people in general and respiritualizing the world atmosphere is fraught with many difficulties. Our presenting this matter in adequate language, especially a foreign language, will certainly fail, and there will

be so many literary discrepancies despite our honest attempt to present it in the proper way. But we are sure that with all our faults in this connection the seriousness of the subject matter will be taken into consideration and the leaders of society will still accept this due to its being an honest attempt to glorify the Almighty God. When there is fire in a house, the inmates of the house go out to get help from the neighbors who may be foreigners, and yet without knowing the language the victims of the fire express themselves, and the neighbors understand the need, even though not expressed in the same language. The same spirit of cooperation is needed to broadcast this transcendental message of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* throughout the polluted atmosphere of the world. After all, it is a technical science of spiritual values, and thus we are concerned with the techniques and not with the language. If the techniques of this great literature are understood by the people of the world, there will be success.”

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.11)

*b. anarthopāśamāṁ sākṣād  
bhakti-yogam adhokṣaje  
lokasyājānato vidvāṁś  
cakre sātvata-samihitām*

“The material miseries of the living entity, which are superfluous to him, can be directly mitigated by the linking process of devotional service. But the mass of people do not know this, and therefore

the learned Vyāsadeva compiled this Vedic literature, which is in relation to the Supreme Truth.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.6)

This verse, part of Vyāsa’s trance before compiling the *Bhāgavatam*, stresses the importance of the people of the world receiving this message. It is Śrīla Prabhupāda who fulfilled this vision to make the message of the *Bhāgavatam* accessible to people all over the world.

5.3.3. Indications of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s status and mission are also found in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya-līlā* 2.13–14:

*tā-sabā tārite prabhu sei saba deśe  
yogya-bhakta jīva-dehe karena ‘āveśe’*

To deliver people in regions throughout the universe who could not meet Him, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally entered the bodies of pure devotees.

*sei jīve nija-bhakti karena prakāśe  
tāhāra darśane ‘vaiṣṇava’ haya sarva-deśe*

Thus He empowered living beings [His pure devotees] by manifesting in them so much of His own devotion that people in all other countries became devotees by seeing them.

Purport:

As stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya* 7.11):

*kali-kālera dharma — kṛṣṇa-nāma-saiṅkīrtana  
kṛṣṇa-sakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana*

Unless one is empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, one cannot spread the holy names of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* throughout the world. Persons who do so are empowered. Therefore they are sometimes called *āveśa-avatāras*, or empowered incarnations, for they are endowed with the power of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Considering his unprecedented accomplishments, the above descriptions aptly describe Śrīla Prabhupāda himself.

#### **5.4. AS FOUNDATIONAL INSTRUCTING SPIRITUAL MASTER FOR ISKCON**

- 5.4.1. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, lectures, letters, conversations, and exemplary actions shall remain the permanent and irreplaceable basis for all future teachings and activities of ISKCON. He is and will ever remain the foundational and preeminent instructing spiritual master of all ISKCON devotees.
- 5.4.2. As Founder-Ācārya, Śrīla Prabhupāda gave directions for management, principles of cooperation, and other practical guidelines, and these form the basis of and inspiration for all of ISKCON's policies.
- 5.4.3. All members of ISKCON, in all generations, have or will have a direct and personal relationship with

Śrīla Prabhupāda as Founder-Ācārya through his books, teachings, mission, service, and Society. It is essential that ISKCON members maintain an awareness of his presence in their lives and cultivate an ever-deepening realization of his *vāṇī* (instruction) regardless of whom they serve as their *dīkṣā-* or *sikṣā-gurus*.

- 5.4.4. As the Founder-Ācārya, Śrīla Prabhupāda's standards, values, principles, and exemplary behavior form the foundational culture of ISKCON. As individual members internalize these, they become instruments of Śrīla Prabhupāda's love and compassion. Our loyalty and common fidelity to our Founder-Ācārya will be shown by our willingness to cooperate with one another.
- 5.4.5. Śrīla Prabhupāda's position is historically unique and of immeasurable importance for all members of ISKCON today and into the future. Śrīla Prabhupāda established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, and went on to create over one hundred ISKCON communities. He spread Lord Kṛṣṇa's message around the world through his books, lectures, continually guiding his disciples, carefully organizing his Society, tireless service, and limitless compassion and kindness.

## 5.5. TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY HIS OWN STATEMENTS

- 5.5.1. Followers of religious traditions sometimes transmute and mythologize the figure of their founders beyond the statements of the founders

themselves. ISKCON members shall guard against such deviations. Irrespective of their motivation, such alterations can deeply affect ISKCON's theological and philosophical integrity, the historical trustworthiness of our tradition, and even the reputation and credibility of our Founder-Ācārya himself.

- 5.5.2. ISKCON members shall avoid all unauthorized representations of Śrīla Prabhupāda that supersede his own declarations of himself as an individual spirit soul and a dedicated and empowered representative of the Supreme Lord and our *paramparā*. The highest authority in understanding and defining Śrīla Prabhupāda shall remain Śrīla Prabhupāda himself, through his own statements.

## 5.6. EXCLUSIVITY OF THE TITLE

- 5.6.1. The appropriate and official title of Śrīla Prabhupāda shall be “His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).”
- 5.6.2. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s unique position as Founder-Ācārya shall be recognized and honored in ISKCON through the use of the titles “Founder-Ācārya” and/or “Prabhupāda.” ISKCON members are perpetually prohibited from being addressed, by themselves or others, as “Founder-Ācārya” and/or “Prabhupāda.”

5.6.3. The expression “International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Founder-Ācārya: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda” (or its corresponding translations) must appear, where permissible, on all buildings and official materials of the Society, including but not limited to documents, letterhead, publications, signage, and digital media.

## ARTICLE 6 - THE SEVEN PURPOSES OF ISKCON

### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

6.1.1. Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed the purposes, objectives, and mission of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in various ways throughout his teachings, both formally and informally, in written and spoken forms. On 13 July 1966, the objectives of ISKCON were summarized in the seven purposes listed in the certificate of ISKCON's incorporation registered with the State of New York.

### 6.2. ISKCON'S SEVEN PURPOSES

- 6.2.1. To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.
- 6.2.2. To propagate a consciousness of Krishna, as it is revealed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.
- 6.2.3. To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Krishna, the prime entity, thus to develop the idea within the members, and humanity at large, that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Krishna).

- 6.2.4. To teach and encourage the *saṅkīrtana* movement, congregational chanting of the holy name of God as revealed in the teachings of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- 6.2.5. To erect for the members and for society at large, a holy place of transcendental pastimes, dedicated to the Personality of Krishna.
- 6.2.6. To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler and more natural way of life.
- 6.2.7. With a view towards achieving the aforementioned Purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, magazines, books and other writings.

## ARTICLE 7 - ISKCON DEITIES

### 7.1. THE DEITY FORM OF THE LORD (*ARCĀ-VIGRAHA*) IS NONDIFFERENT FROM THE LORD

7.1.1. “In order to be seen by our material senses, the Supreme Personality of Godhead accepts a favorable form which is called *arcā-vigraha*. This *arcā-vigraha*, sometimes called the *arcā* incarnation, is not different from Him. Just as the Supreme Personality of Godhead accepts various incarnations, He takes on forms made out of matter—clay, wood, metal and jewels. There are many śāstric injunctions which give instructions for carving forms of the Lord. These forms are not material . . . The smiling face of the Deity in the temple is beheld by the devotees as transcendental and spiritual, and the decoration of the body of the Lord is very much appreciated by the devotees. It is the duty of the spiritual master to teach how to decorate the Deity in the temple, how to cleanse the temple and how to worship the Deity. There are different procedures and rules and regulations which are followed in temples of Viṣṇu, and devotees go there and see the Deity, the *vigraha*, and spiritually enjoy the form because all of the Deities are benevolent.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 3.25.35, purport)

7.1.2. “The form of the Lord as worshiped in the temples is called *arcā-vigraha* or *arcāvatāra*, the worshipable

form, the Deity incarnation. This facility is offered to neophyte devotees so that they can see the real form of the Lord face to face and offer their respectful obeisances and sacrifices in the form of *arcā*. Through such facilities the neophytes gradually invoke their original Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Deity worship in the form of temple worship is the most valuable benediction given by the Lord to beginners. All neophytes must therefore engage in the worship of the Lord by keeping the *arcā-vigraha* (*arcāvatāra*) at home or in the temple.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 4.30.27, purport)

7.1.3. “[T]he deity worship must be completely pure in terms of cleanliness and punctuality, otherwise there will be some offense.” (Letter to Sri Govinda, 31 Jan 1973)

## 7.2. STANDARDS FOR INSTALLATION AND WORSHIP

7.2.1. The GBC shall, from time to time, establish:

- parameters and procedures for authorizing the installation of Deities by ISKCON Organizations.
- appropriate standards of Deity worship.
- one or more agencies to supervise the standards of Deity installation and worship, offer specialized training to *pūjārīs* and other parties responsible for maintaining Deity worship in an ISKCON temple, and to provide supervision,

training, or facilitation for whatever else may become required at any time.

7.2.2. ISKCON Organizations, shall strictly fulfill the requirements for installing Deities and shall carefully follow the established standards of Deity worship.

### **7.3. LEGAL PROPRIETORSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY**

7.3.1. Any and all Deities in any ISKCON Organizations, however acquired including but not limited to purchase, gift, or inheritance, are irrevocably deemed to remain solely the property of ISKCON.

7.3.2. No ISKCON member has any legal or equitable right or interest in, or proprietorship of, the paraphernalia used for worship, including, but not limited to, Deity dresses and ornaments, offering trays and *pūjā* equipment, *śrīgāsanās* and altars, etc. All these are the property of the Deity, and as such, always remain the property of ISKCON.

7.3.3. The sacred duty and responsibility of maintaining the standard of worship at the established level at any particular ISKCON property rests with the ISKCON organization where the particular Deities have been installed.

## ARTICLE 8 - ISKCON MEMBERSHIP

### 1. 8.1 GLOBAL MEMBERSHIP

8.1.1. Whoever subscribes to the following Affirmation Statement shall be accepted as a Global Member of ISKCON:

“I wish to be counted as part of the spiritual family of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), and I will practically support its mission. I accept the teachings of Lord Krishna as presented by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of ISKCON. I am grateful to participate in this spiritual movement intended for the upliftment of the entire human society.”

8.1.2. Global Membership in ISKCON is open to all without discrimination of any kind, including but not limited to considerations of race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, or religion.

8.1.3. ISKCON’s Global Membership is international; the member is first and foremost a member of the entire, worldwide International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

8.1.4. Global Membership in ISKCON shall be recognized by all ISKCON Organizations and related entities throughout the world, regardless of where one originally became a member, one’s

present domicile, or one's particular engagement in ISKCON.

- 8.1.5. Global Membership is international and unaffected by modifications of the status of the local or national entity with which members might be involved.
- 8.1.6. All Global Members are eligible for accepting spiritual and administrative responsibilities for which they possess the required qualifications.

## 8.2. DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT

- 8.2.1. All Global Members are encouraged to exemplify their dedication to Krishna consciousness, and commitment to the mission of ISKCON in particular, by:
  - 8.2.1.1. Practicing daily chanting of the Hare Krishna *mahā-mantra*.
  - 8.2.1.2. Following the four regulative principles outlined by Śrīla Prabhupāda, namely no eating of meat, fish or eggs, no intoxication, no illicit sex, no gambling,
  - 8.2.1.3. Studying and applying the philosophy and practice of Krishna consciousness, as presented in Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings.
  - 8.2.1.4. Associating with other members
  - 8.2.1.5. Receiving instruction and personal guidance from exemplary ISKCON devotees.

- 8.2.1.6. Participating in the propagation of Krishna consciousness.
- 8.2.1.7. Accepting the policies and standards established by the Governing Body Commission.

### **8.3. LOCAL PARTICIPATION**

- 8.3.1. All ISKCON members are encouraged to associate with, participate in, and serve, in local and/or other ISKCON Organizations.
- 8.3.2. Individual ISKCON Organizations can, if they wish, establish additional membership programs to facilitate participation in their activities. These may include additional parameters, requirements, and categories, provided they are consistent with the Constitution and ISKCON Law.
- 8.3.3. ISKCON Organizations may restrict participation, suspend, or revoke membership in their specific organizations. However, one's Global Membership can be revoked only by the ISKCON Governing Body Commission or its specifically appointed agents.

### **8.4. ETHOS OF MEMBERSHIP**

- 8.4.1. Global Members of ISKCON are encouraged to:
  - 8.4.1.1. Avail themselves of the programs and facilities provided by ISKCON for their spiritual life.

- 8.4.1.2. Advance in spiritual life and achieve pure love for Krishna through the approved process and practices of *bhakti-yoga*, sincerely striving for purity in motivation and behavior.
- 8.4.1.3. Avail themselves of opportunities to serve the mission of ISKCON.
- 8.4.1.4. Participate in spreading Krishna consciousness according to their capability.
- 8.4.1.5. Relate with one another in the spiritual family of ISKCON with love and respect, in a cooperative spirit.
- 8.4.1.6. Regularly associate with devotees, both in person and through other means, seeking guidance, shelter, and friendship.
- 8.4.1.7. Exhibit exemplary ethical behavior.
- 8.4.1.8. Maintain a respectful and constructive spirit while expressing their views on the policies of ISKCON Organizations and the conduct of other ISKCON members.
- 8.4.1.9. Responsibly fulfill their commitments, vows, and promises in relation to their devotional engagements and *āśrama* status, and to honor all their other legitimate and ethical obligations.
- 8.4.1.10. Respect all forms of life, avoiding or minimizing violence against any living entity, and to especially protect cows.

- 8.4.1.11. Respect, protect, and care for the natural environment.
- 8.4.1.12. Engage in honest occupations to maintain themselves and their families.
- 8.4.1.13. Regularly, in proportion to their capacity, offer financial and/or other support. Śrīla Prabhupāda recommended donating at least fifty percent of one's income—gross, disposable, or discretionary—for the service of Lord Krishna and His devotees.

## 8.5. RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

- 8.5.1. All ISKCON members can:
  - 8.5.1.1. Practice devotional service according to their nature, inspiration, and personal capacity.
  - 8.5.1.2. Seek guidance and inspiration, as well as *śikṣā* and *dikṣā* relationships, from qualified ISKCON devotees of their choice.
  - 8.5.1.3. Utilize their intelligence, discrimination, conscience, and free will in choosing their personal expression, occupation, engagement, and allegiance to specific ISKCON Organizations, projects, and individuals.
  - 8.5.1.4. Choose which ISKCON Organizations, projects, and individuals to support by contributing through donations and any other forms of support.

- 8.5.1.5. Choose their marital status, spouse, and other aspects of family life.
- 8.5.1.6. Develop the qualifications to become eligible for spiritual and/or administrative responsibilities.
- 8.5.1.7. Share the message of Krishna consciousness in appropriate forms and by reasonable means at their disposal and under the guidance of ISKCON policies. This, however, does not bestow the right to represent ISKCON either formally, officially, or legally to the government, media, or educational, religious, or any other institution or to the public.
- 8.5.1.8. Freely and reasonably associate, form groups, and generate initiatives aimed at supporting one another's wellbeing, spiritual practices, and the propagation of Krishna consciousness. To acquire formal recognition and status in ISKCON, such groups and initiatives need to undergo the relevant procedures for certification.
- 8.5.1.9. Approach higher administrative authorities in the event of having grievances.
- 8.5.1.10. Express their views in a respectful manner on subjects including, but not limited to, the policies of ISKCON Organizations and the conduct of other ISKCON members.

- 8.5.1.11. Refuse service engagements offered to them within ISKCON that are against the principles of Krishna consciousness, unethical, illegal, or harmful to themselves or others.
- 8.5.2. These rights are not exhaustive and could include additional rights afforded by ISKCON Law and local ISKCON Organizations.

## 8.6. INITIATION

- 8.6.1. Global Members who are not initiated and who wish to deepen and consolidate their commitment to Krishna consciousness are encouraged to accept formal Vaiṣṇava *dīkṣā* (initiation) from a qualified ISKCON initiating spiritual master (*dīkṣā-guru*), according to the standards and prerequisites established by the Governing Body Commission, which shall include, among other items, the acceptance of the following lifelong vows as established by ISKCON's Founder-Ācārya, Śrīla Prabhupāda:
  - 8.6.1.1. Chanting daily a minimum of sixteen rounds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* (1,728 repetitions of the full mantra):

*Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare  
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*
  - 8.6.1.2. Following the four regulative principles: no eating of meat, fish, or eggs, no intoxication, no illicit sex, and no gambling.

8.6.2. Although initiation may be a prerequisite for certain services, it does not, in and of itself, bestow any specific privileges in ISKCON Organizations.

## ARTICLE 9 - THE GOVERNING BODY COMMISSION

### 9.1. THE ULTIMATE MANAGING AUTHORITY OF ISKCON

9.1.1. As established by Śrīla Prabhupāda in his Will, signed in June 1977, the Governing Body Commission (GBC) is the ultimate managing authority of ISKCON:

1. “The Governing Body Commission (GBC) will be the ultimate managing authority of the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness.”

9.1.2. Śrīla Prabhupāda established the GBC to oversee and govern ISKCON, thus aligning with the desire of his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, for a collegial, cooperative direction of the Krishna consciousness movement.

- a. “Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, at the time of his departure, requested all his disciples to form a governing body and conduct missionary activities cooperatively. He did not instruct a particular man to become the next *ācārya*.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 12.8, purport).
- b. “As we have increased our volume of activities, now I think a Governing Body Commission (hereinafter referred to as the GBC) should be established.” (Direction of Management, 28 July 1970)

- 9.1.3. The GBC, pursuant to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Will, shall ensure that his wishes are carried out and his legacy protected. The GBC is, therefore, entrusted with the duty of caring for the whole of ISKCON on behalf of the Founder-Ācārya, in conformity with his teachings.
- 9.1.4. In fulfilling such duties, the GBC shall align itself with *guru*, *sādhu*, and *sāstra*.

## 9.2 DUTIES

- 9.2.1. The primary duties of the GBC shall include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - 9.2.1.1. preserve and promote Śrīla Prabhupāda’s position as the Founder-Ācārya of ISKCON and seek to instill his vision, mission, and values into future generations of ISKCON members.
  - 9.2.1.2. To create, promote, and oversee the implementation of strategic plans for the fulfillment of ISKCON’s mission, including but not limited to:
    - 9.2.1.2.1. opening and maintaining temples, centers, and other projects;
    - 9.2.1.2.2. caring for the spiritual development of ISKCON members;
    - 9.2.1.2.3. promoting the distribution of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books worldwide;
    - 9.2.1.2.4. promoting the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*;

- 9.2.1.2.5. distributing sanctified vegetarian food (*prasāda*);
- 9.2.1.2.6. promoting the reading and systematic study of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books and their distribution in appropriate forms;
- 9.2.1.3. To promote unity in diversity within ISKCON worldwide.
- 9.2.1.4. To consider the needs, interests, and concerns of its constituencies in its leadership and policy making.
- 9.2.1.5. To solicit the wisdom, intelligence, scholarship, and practical expertise of other individuals and groups, through consultation, dialogue, and involvement, as appropriate.
- 9.2.1.6. To regularly and effectively communicate its vision, decisions, resolutions, policies, initiatives, and other actions, as well as ensuring that essential information is translated into the primary languages of ISKCON members.
- 9.2.1.7. To promote effective and respectful communication between ISKCON and the general public, government agencies, academia, religious organizations, the media, and other relevant persons and groups.

- 9.2.1.8. Establishing standards of transparency and accountability along with education and training to help ensure that at all levels of the organization its members, and especially its leaders, conduct their activities according to the highest ethical, legal, and moral standards. The GBC shall endeavor to prevent or eradicate any unethical or disreputable behavior anywhere within the institution.
- 9.2.1.9. Establishing systems to effectively fund the global functions of ISKCON.
- 9.2.1.10. Giving special attention to projects of global significance, such as developing Śrīdhāma Māyāpur.
- 9.2.1.11. To ensure that ISKCON's moveable, immovable, and intellectual properties are adequately protected. This includes, but is not limited to, physical assets, trademarks, and copyrights.
- 9.2.1.12. Ensuring that these aforesaid assets are utilized in pursuance of ISKCON's mission and purposes, according to established standards. All reasonable precautions shall be taken to prevent these assets from being diverted to unauthorized purposes or inadequately managed.

9.2.1.13. The GBC does not and shall not claim infallibility or flawlessness in its decisions. It shall allow the expression of dissent and differences of opinion. The expression of any disagreements with the GBC should be communicated in a civil, respectful manner, as befitting of Vaiṣṇava culture.

### 9.3 POWERS

9.3.1. In exercise of its role as the global governing body and ultimate managing authority, and for the fulfillment of its duties, the GBC has the following powers:

- 9.3.1.1. To enact laws, in the form of resolutions, which are, unless stated otherwise, binding for the whole of ISKCON.
- 9.3.1.2. To publish statements, papers, and other documents that shall constitute the official position and policy for the whole of ISKCON.
- 9.3.1.3. To serve as the final arbiter and arbitrator in all matters pertaining to ISKCON, including, but not limited to, philosophical, theological, spiritual standards, administration, and certification and accountability of leadership positions.
- 9.3.1.4. To establish as many corporations, trusts or other legal entities, offices, ministries, departments, and other agencies as deemed required, engaging whatever personnel in these agencies as necessary.

- 9.3.1.5. To establish geographical territories throughout the world and define leaders for each of them.
- 9.3.1.6. To establish standards for leadership roles and procedures for leadership appointments.
- 9.3.1.7. To establish standards, parameters, and procedures by which any officer of an ISKCON Organization or any ISKCON member or any ISKCON Organization can be declared unfit, not in good standing, or disassociated. Reasons for these declarations would include, but are not limited to, philosophical deviation, immoral conduct, organizational insubordination, or violating the Oath of Allegiance.

## 9.4 GBC MEMBERSHIP

- 9.4.1. New GBC members are elected by existing members, according to procedures the GBC may establish from time to time.

- a. From a room conversation dated 28 May 1977, Vṛndāvana: Satsvarūpa: [I]n the event that some present GBC member leaves, either leaves ...

Prabhupāda: Another should be elected.

Satsvarūpa: By the votes of the present GBC....

Prabhupāda: So, there is no question of changing GBC.

Satsvarūpa: No.

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

9.4.2. Any member of ISKCON in good standing is eligible to become a member of the GBC, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, *āśrama*, or other such considerations.

9.4.3. Tenure is, in principle, potentially for life, provided the member retains the physical, mental, and spiritual capacity and the commitment to satisfactorily fulfill the responsibilities of the service and to participate and perform at acceptable levels of effectiveness. In addition, the GBC may establish policies regarding tenure of its members.

a. From a room conversation, 28 May 1977, in Vṛndāvana:

Satsvarūpa: ... So our first question is about the GBC members. We want to know how long should they remain in office?

Prabhupāda: They should remain for good.

9.4.4. The membership of the GBC shall not, at any time, be less than twenty-five (25) members. If this minimum membership cannot be maintained for any reason whatsoever, the remaining GBC members shall appoint new members within a period of eighteen (18) months.

9.4.5. The GBC shall mandate periodic or individual appraisals of its members to determine their continued qualification and/or to help improve their service.

- 9.4.6. The GBC members must be loyal to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instructions, mission, and values and have the intention to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda and ISKCON to their best ability and capacity.
- 9.4.7. Individual GBC members do not possess inherent, independent authority; rather, they derive their authority and power from the Governing Body Commission. Individual GBC members may be assigned authority over a specific geographic area or other function. Regardless of their assigned responsibilities, their primary duty is to serve ISKCON as a whole.
- 9.4.8. Individual GBC members shall follow and promote ISKCON Law. They shall imbibe and uphold the principle of rule of law, preventing the arbitrary exercise of power by subordinating it to well-defined and legitimately established laws, fairly applied to all.
- 9.4.9. GBC members and other ISKCON leaders must recognize and respect the dignity, rights and creativity of individuals and communities, and encourage autonomy within approved boundaries and parameters.

## ARTICLE 10 - REPRESENTATION OF ISKCON MEMBERSHIP

- 10.1. The GBC shall from time to time establish one or more bodies to perform any needed representative function and purpose. Either individually or collectively, these bodies shall fulfill the following functions, which must include but are not limited to:
  - 10.1.1. Reviewing and evaluating GBC resolutions and other decisions.
  - 10.1.2. Proposing legislation.
  - 10.1.3. Suggesting issues and themes that should be addressed by the GBC.
  - 10.1.4. Expressing the needs, interests, concerns, and expectations of the constituencies such bodies represent.
- 10.2. The composition of such bodies shall ensure an adequate representation of ISKCON's members and/or ISKCON Organizations.
- 10.3. The GBC from time to time may modify the functions and purposes of such bodies.

## ARTICLE 11 - ISKCON ORGANIZATIONS

### 11.1. DEFINITION

- 11.1.1. ISKCON is an international society consisting of individual members and organizations working in cooperation to participate in, support, and propagate the *saiikīrtana* movement as inaugurated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and spread worldwide by ISKCON's Founder-Ācārya, Śrīla Prabhupāda.
- 11.1.2. An ISKCON Organization is an association of ISKCON members, formally registered or otherwise, that is accepted and recognized by the Governing Body Commission or one of its authorized agencies.
- 11.1.3. To be accepted and recognized by the Governing Body Commission, an ISKCON Organization must:
  - 11.1.3.1. Accept the authority and teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda as expressed through his books, articles, lectures, conversations, letters, and exemplary behavior.
  - 11.1.3.2. Have objectives aligned with the mission of ISKCON as given by Śrīla Prabhupāda, as delineated in ISKCON's Seven Purposes, and as defined in its Constitution.
  - 11.1.3.3. Have no objectives or activities contrary to the mission of ISKCON.

- 11.1.3.4. Have irrevocably dedicated through a legal conveyance its current and future real property and other assets to the mission of ISKCON.
- 11.1.3.5. Use ISKCON identity in accordance with GBC-approved standards.
- 11.1.3.6. Remain subject to audits and reviews of, including but not limited to, doctrinal, safeguarding, and financial compliance.
- 11.1.3.7. Ensure that its directors and officers are ISKCON members in good standing.
- 11.1.3.8. Ensure that all directors and officers take the required Oath of Allegiance, as prescribed by the GBC.
- 11.1.3.9. Adhere to the Constitution and to ISKCON Law.

## **11.2. ISKCON PROPERTIES**

- 11.2.1. ISKCON properties shall include, but not be limited to, immovable properties, such as land and buildings, as well as intellectual properties, such as trademarks and copyrights.
- 11.2.2. ISKCON Organizations' immovable properties cannot be mortgaged, borrowed against, sold, transferred, or in any way encumbered, disposed of, or alienated, without permission of the Governing Body Commission or its designated agents.
- 11.2.3. Similarly, ISKCON Organizations shall ensure that intellectual property belonging to ISKCON is well protected and exclusively utilized for the mission of ISKCON.

### 11.3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 11.3.1. ISKCON Organizations, in the form of temples, centers, communities, institutes, and other type of projects, are vehicles through which ISKCON's mission is organized and conducted.
- 11.3.2. The primary role and responsibility of ISKCON Organizations is to actively take up the mission of ISKCON and to provide leadership and spiritual care to the members and other participants in their activities.
- 11.3.3. In particular, ISKCON Organizations are responsible for:
  - 11.3.3.1. Facilitating the spiritual needs of the members of ISKCON serving under their aegis and of society in general, including but not limited to:
    - 11.3.3.1.1. Preserving the integrity of Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings.
    - 11.3.3.1.2. Worshiping, any installed Deities in their care, according to established ISKCON standards.
    - 11.3.3.1.3. Providing opportunities for devotional association.
    - 11.3.3.1.4. Providing spiritual instruction, shelter, guidance, and inspiration.
    - 11.3.3.1.5. Offering opportunities for systematic spiritual education.
    - 11.3.3.1.6. Ensuring the exemplary personal conduct of their leadership;

- 11.3.3.1.7. Promoting the spirit of enthusiastic service. Ideally, such service should be “individual, spontaneous, and voluntary,” as Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged.
- 11.3.3.2. Fulfilling the mission of ISKCON by, including but not limited to:
  - 11.3.3.2.1. Inspiring members to perform outreach activities.
  - 11.3.3.2.2. Setting and monitoring goals for achieving ISKCON’s objectives.
  - 11.3.3.2.3. Offering opportunities to engage in devotional service.
  - 11.3.3.2.4. Promoting cooperation between ISKCON members and their various initiatives, and cultivating mutually beneficial relationships with the society at large.
- 11.3.3.3. Conducting their affairs in accordance with ISKCON’s standards and policies, which include, but are not limited to:
  - 11.3.3.3.1. Maintaining and preserving the practices and standards established by Śrīla Prabhupāda.
  - 11.3.3.3.2. Establishing appropriate processes, systems, and controls, which may include, but are not limited to, regular financial reporting and audits.
  - 11.3.3.3.3. Becoming responsible for implementing systems for discipline

and dispute resolution in their respective jurisdictions and constituencies.

- 11.3.3.3.4. Protecting and maintaining ISKCON's movable and immovable properties, including intellectual properties.
- 11.3.3.3.5. Encouraging communication and cooperation between ISKCON members and ISKCON Organizations.

## 11.4. RIGHTS

- 11.4.1. ISKCON Organizations have the inherent right to:
  - 11.4.1.1. Conduct their affairs as they deem best, in accordance with the standards, policies, and regulations set by the GBC.
  - 11.4.1.2. Be represented in the Society as a whole through representative bodies or other mechanisms established or authorized by the GBC.

## 11.5. ISKCON-CONNECTED ORGANIZATIONS

- 11.5.1. Due to legal and other considerations, in some cases it might be necessary or beneficial for the mission of ISKCON to establish entities that are not directly, legally, or formally ISKCON Organizations, and which operate independently of ISKCON, but which pursue and/or support all or part of ISKCON's purposes.
- 11.5.2. Policies regarding the relationship and interaction between ISKCON and such entities, including

possible recognition by ISKCON in some form, may from time to time be established by the GBC.

## ARTICLE 12 - DISCIPLINE AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

### 12.1. INTRODUCTORY PRINCIPLES

- 12.1.1. Appropriate disciplinary measures may be required in the event of noncompliance or wrongdoing by ISKCON members, ISKCON Organizations, and/or anyone in a position of leadership, authority, or organizational responsibility.
- 12.1.2. ISKCON and ISKCON Organizations shall place due emphasis on reforming, improving, and rectifying inappropriate behavior. At the same time, wrongdoings shall be dealt with using reformatory measures and/or commensurate penalties, including but not limited to restrictions, censure, probation, suspension, and removal through a system of fair and due process.
- 12.1.3. When any disputes arise among members of ISKCON and/or ISKCON Organizations, the parties are strongly encouraged to settle the dispute in an amicable manner based on the unifying principles of Krsna consciousness and Vaiṣṇava etiquette, or to resolve such disputes through the conflict management systems established within ISKCON and/or ISKCON Organizations.

### 12.2. RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADMINISTERING DISCIPLINE AND RESOLVING DISPUTES

- 12.2.1. The GBC and all ISKCON Organizations shall be responsible for implementing systems for discipline and dispute resolution in a fair and reasonable manner in their respective jurisdictions and constituencies.
- 12.2.2. These systems range from administrative processes wherein respective ISKCON authorities deal with issues arising out of the ordinary course of administering an ISKCON Organization to formal adjudication systems. These systems shall be guided by the fundamental principles of fair and due process for all parties.

### **12.3. PRINCIPLES OF FAIR PROCESS**

- 12.3.1. ISKCON Organizations shall implement the following principles of fair and due process when investigating and adjudicating wrongdoings and/or resolving disputes among their members. In general, these principles apply to both dispute resolution and disciplinary proceedings. In cases where a principle is specific to disciplinary proceedings, the spirit of the principle shall be applied to dispute resolution proceedings.

#### **12.3.2. Duty to disclose and obstruction of justice**

- 12.3.2.1. Actions that are recognized as unlawful and/or criminal under the secular laws of a jurisdiction shall, if mandated to do so, be reported by ISKCON Organizations, ISKCON members, and persons in position of leadership or authority to the appropriate

secular authorities, as failure to do so can be tantamount to obstruction of justice.

#### 12.3.3. Equality before the law

12.3.3.1. All ISKCON Organizations and members of ISKCON, regardless of position and/or authority, are equal before the law, and no one shall claim to be above the law.

#### 12.3.4. Presumption of innocence

12.3.4.1. Presumption of innocence shall govern any investigative and adjudicative process.

#### 12.3.5. Impartiality

12.3.5.1. All disciplinary proceedings shall maintain impartiality when arriving at their decisions, regardless of the status of the parties concerned.

12.3.5.2. All proceedings, tribunals, panels, and committees shall maintain a fair and impartial process of investigation and adjudication. This shall include, but not be limited to, separation of the investigative from the adjudicative process, as well as investigators from adjudicators.

#### 12.3.6. Conflict of Interest

12.3.6.1. The GBC and ISKCON Organizations shall maintain high standards of integrity, accountability, and credibility. It is vital that ISKCON members and the public be confident of this commitment. Accordingly, any conflict of interest in any proceeding in ISKCON and ISKCON

Organizations must be declared and/or avoided.

12.3.6.2. This policy is intended to supplement, and not replace, any applicable secular law governing conflict of interest.

12.3.7. Freedom from retaliation

12.3.7.1. Any form of retaliation, intimidation, and/or harassment of a complainant, witness, or someone reporting wrongdoing in good faith and in a responsible manner shall constitute unacceptable behavior and shall be dealt with appropriately.

12.3.8. Confidentiality

12.3.8.1. All adjudication proceedings shall be conducted under terms of confidentiality for all parties concerned.

12.3.9. Notice and opportunity to be heard

12.3.9.1. Every party to any proceeding, whether a complainant or a respondent, shall be given an adequate opportunity to be heard during the adjudication process.

12.3.10. Notice to the accused

12.3.10.1. The accused shall be notified of the charges leveled at them, the rules and policies of ISKCON that are relevant to the accusation(s) and charge(s), and the consequences they face if found guilty.

12.3.11. Knowing the identities of the parties to the proceedings

12.3.11.1. The identities of parties to the proceedings shall also be furnished to each other, except in cases where revealing the complainants' identity may be harmful to them or is in contravention of local laws.

12.3.12. Right of access to evidence

12.3.12.1. Parties to any proceedings and/or disputes shall be granted reasonable access to all relevant evidence considered by decision makers. This may include, but not be limited to, tribunals, review panels, and disciplinary committees. Parties will also be granted the opportunity to respond to such evidence within a reasonable time.

12.3.12.2. Parties shall have the right to present their own evidence and the right to question the evidence adduced by the other parties.

12.3.13. Time is of the essence

12.3.13.1. There should be a reasonable time limit in which an alleged wrongdoing must be adjudicated, particularly in cases where sanctions and/or limits have already been imposed on the accused.

12.3.14. Right to a fair decision

12.3.14.1. Parties in any adjudication proceeding shall have the right to a decision that is neither unreasonable nor arbitrary.

12.3.14.2. After the adjudication, parties have the right to be notified of the decision, along with the right to a properly written decision

containing clear statements on the reasons for the decision.

**12.3.15. Standards and burden of proof**

12.3.15.1. The standard of proof for all adjudication proceedings shall be “preponderance of evidence” and not “beyond reasonable doubt.”

**12.3.16. Appealing Decisions**

12.3.16.1. Parties shall be entitled, in adjudication, to appeal the decision of a lower authority to a higher authority.

**12.4. REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION**

12.4.1. In cases where culpability is established, a system whereby offenders are rehabilitated and reintegrated into ISKCON shall be applied when appropriate.

## **ARTICLE 13 - CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL**

### **13.1. INTRODUCTION**

- 13.1.1. A Constitutional Council shall be established by the ISKCON Governing Body Commission (GBC).
- 13.1.2. The Constitutional Council shall possess the highest authority in the interpretation of the ISKCON Constitution. This Council, however, does not equate to an apex judicial authority or supreme court.

### **13.2. AMBIT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL**

- 13.2.1. The Council is the competent body having the authority to determine the constitutional validity of any GBC resolution, decision, or executive order.

### **13.3. COMPOSITION**

- 13.3.1. The Constitutional Council shall consist of seven (7) Council officials, each appointed by a 2/3rds majority vote of the quorum of GBC members.
- 13.3.2. A Council Official may be removed from office by a 2/3rds majority vote of the quorum of the GBC.
- 13.3.3. The tenure of each Council Official shall be for a period of five (5) years, which is renewable. The length of the renewed tenure shall be defined by the GBC and each Constitutional Council Official.
- 13.3.4. A Council Official may not serve concurrently as a voting GBC member during his or her tenure.

13.3.5. In the event of the resignation, demise, or inability of a Council Official to serve his or her full term for any reason whatsoever, the Council shall continue its functions with a minimum of five (5) Council Officials until the GBC appoints new Council officials to the vacant positions.

#### **13.4. FUNCTIONS, DUTIES, AND POWERS OF THE COUNCIL**

13.4.1.1. The Council shall have the following functions, duties, and powers:

13.4.1.1.1. To assess and determine the constitutionality of GBC resolutions and recommend revisions and amendments, if any, to resolve inconsistencies.

13.4.1.1.2. To provide an opinion when consulted by the GBC on any matters, issues, or clarification arising from or in regard to the Constitution.

13.4.1.2. The Council shall perform its functions, duties, and powers as stated above while taking into consideration the secular laws of applicable jurisdictions.

#### **13.5. PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE COUNCIL**

13.5.1. The Council shall be deemed to have achieved a quorum for holding a meeting, in person or online, if five members are present.

- 13.5.2. Any decision of the Council must be supported by a majority vote of at least four (4) Council Officials.
- 13.5.3. The Council may consider petitions of its own accord or petitions brought before it by at least three GBC members.
- 13.5.4. Petitions brought forth by any ISKCON Organization or ISKCON member must be sponsored by at least three GBC members.
- 13.5.5. In the event that the Council determines a petition to lack merit or relevance, the petition shall be dismissed. This decision shall be final and is not subject to appeal.
- 13.5.6. The Council shall maintain records of all petitions received and, upon request, share this record with the GBC.
- 13.5.7. When reviewing petitions with merit, and upon finding truth to the concern that a policy, decision, or law has elements of unconstitutionality, the Council shall notify the GBC of its decision in writing, with clear reasons for its decision, indicating the specific section(s) of the policy, decision, or law they have determined to be unconstitutional.

- 13.5.8. The GBC, within twelve weeks of being notified of the Council's decision, shall accept or appeal the decision, in writing, by a simple majority vote of the quorum.
- 13.5.9. In cases where the GBC appeals the Council's decision, the Council shall reconvene to consider the appeal and then provide in writing, within twelve weeks, its final decision. If the Council confirms its original decision, the GBC, by a 2/3 majority of the total voting members, may reject the Council's decision.
- 13.5.10. Such a vote of rejection by the GBC must be completed within 90 (ninety) days, or the decision of the Council shall become binding.
- 13.5.11. During the review period, the GBC decision, policy, or law under consideration shall remain in place and binding on ISKCON.
- 13.5.12. Other procedures of the Council, such as the election of a chairperson, shall be determined by the Council, as necessary.

## ARTICLE 14 – AMENDMENTS

- 14.1. Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, the GBC may, in exercise of its inherent power, amend by way of addition, variation, or repeal any provision of this Constitution in accordance with the procedure laid down in this Article.
- 14.2. An amendment of this Constitution may be initiated only via a proposal for a resolution, sponsored by at least five (5) GBC members. The proposed amendment shall be discussed at the next General Meeting or within two months of being submitted, whichever comes first.
- 14.3. Such a resolution can be passed only during a General Meeting by a two-thirds majority of the total number of GBC voting members.

## ARTICLE 15 – RATIFICATION

The ISKCON Governing Body Commission, in service to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, to the ISKCON members, and to the ISKCON Organizations, hereby ratifies, confirms, and adopts this Constitution on this 16<sup>th</sup> day of April 2025.

## APPENDIX A

### COMMITTMENT TO PRESERVING DISCIPLIC SUCCESSION

#### A.1. THE *PARAMPARĀ* SYSTEM

A.1.1. A fundamental aspect of the proper transmission of spiritual knowledge is the principle of *paramparā*, disciplic succession, to which every genuine spiritual master belongs.

a. “The path of spiritual realization is undoubtedly difficult. The Lord therefore advises us to approach a bona fide spiritual master in the line of disciplic succession from the Lord Himself. No one can be a bona fide spiritual master without following this principle of disciplic succession.” (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 4.34, purport)

A.1.2. Transcendental knowledge is originally revealed by Krishna. The same message, not accessible for discovery by the material mind and senses, has been passed from guru to disciple since time immemorial.

a. “God is guru, original guru. God gave lessons to Brahmā. Brahmā gave lessons to Nārada. Nārada gave lessons to Vyāsadeva ... if you follow this disciplic succession, then you get perfect knowledge ... Therefore the injunction is, *tad-*

*vijnānārtham* sa *gurum evābhigacchet* [Mundaka Upaniṣad 1.2.12): ‘You must go to guru.’ And who is guru? This *paramparā* system. *Evaṁ paramparā-prāptam imam rājarshayo viduh* [Gītā 4.2] So this is the process. If you want perfect knowledge, you must approach guru.” (Lecture on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.26.32, Bombay, 9 January 1975)

A.1.3. The *paramparā* principle is applied by specific disciplic successions.

- a. “*Sampradāya* means a particular line of disciplic succession.” (Conversation, Tittenhurst, 11 September 1969)

A.1.4. Four lineages are recognized as authentic *sampradāyas*:

- a. “There are four lines of disciplic succession: one from Lord Brahmā, one from Lord Śiva, one from Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune, and one from the Kumāras. The disciplic succession from Lord Brahmā is called the Brahma-sampradāya, the succession from Lord Śiva (Śambhu) is called the Rudra-sampradāya, the one from the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmījī, is called the Śrī-sampradāya, and the one from the Kumāras is called the

Kumāra-sampradāya. One must take shelter of one of these four *sampradāyas* in order to understand the most confidential religious system.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.3.20-21, purport)

## A.2. ISKCON BELONGS TO A BONA FIDE *SAMPRADĀYA*

A.2.1. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness belongs to the Brahmā-madhva-gauḍīya-sampradāya:

- a. “Our *sampradāya* is known as Brahmā-madhva-gauḍīya-sampradāya.” (Lecture, Hyderabad, 16 Aug 1976)
- b. “We belong to the Brahma-sampradāya. Brahmā’s disciple and son also, Nārada; his disciple, Vyāsadeva; and his disciple is Mādhavācārya; and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu belongs to this Mādhavācārya-sampradāya. His spiritual master was Īśvara Purī, and Īśvara Purī’s spiritual master was Mādhavendra Purī. This Mādhavendra Purī happened to be in the disciplic succession of Mādhavācārya; therefore we, coming down from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, we are known as Madhva-gauḍīya-sampradāya.” (Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.1-2, Bombay, 22 March 1972)

A.2.2. Through loyalty to the principle of *paramparā* and allegiance to the teachings of the *ācāryas*, ISKCON members can achieve complete spiritual blessings.

- a. “This is the way of the *paramparā* system. If we follow the *ācāryas*, we attain the same benefit as our predecessors.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.30.10, purport)

### A.3. ISKCON’S COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE THE DISCIPLIC SUCCESSION

A.3.1. In observance of the *paramparā* principle and in adherence to the instructions of our Founder-Ācārya, ISKCON fully embraces the system that qualified ISKCON members should become instructing and initiating spiritual masters.

- a. Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, *āmāra ājñāya guru hañā* [Cc., *Madhya* 7.138]. One can understand the order of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he can become guru. Or one who understands his guru’s order, the same *paramparā*, he can become guru.” (Conversation, Vrindavan, 28 May 1977)
- b. “My Guru Mahārāja is tenth from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, I am eleventh, you are the twelfth. So distribute this knowledge.” (Arrival Lecture, Los Angeles, 18 May 1972)

## A.4. ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA WANTED THAT ALL HIS FOLLOWERS BECOME SPIRITUAL MASTER

A.4.1. The Founder-Ācārya consistently encouraged his followers to take the responsibility to become gurus and teach others.

- a. “To become spiritual master is not very difficult thing. You’ll have to become spiritual master. You, all my disciples, everyone should become spiritual master ... So I hope that all of you, men, women, boys, and girls, become spiritual master.” (Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā lecture, London, 22 August 1973)

A.4.2. Śrīla Prabhupāda repeatedly expressed his desire that, ideally, all his disciples and future followers would carefully study and diligently practice the teachings of the *sāstra*, thus becoming qualified as gurus.

- a. “I want to see my disciples become bona fide Spiritual Master and spread Krishna consciousness very widely, that will make me and Krishna very happy.” (Letter to Tuṣṭa Kṛṣṇa, 2 December 1975)

## A.5. QUALIFICATIONS FOR SERVING AS GURU

A.5.1. In explaining the prerequisites for becoming a spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda emphasized strict

adherence to spiritual standards and faithful presentation of the message:

- a. “Guru means he speaks the same thing as the original master says. The original master is Kṛṣṇa. And guru means he has to repeat the words of Kṛṣṇa, that's all. To become guru is not very difficult. Kṛṣṇa says that He is the Supreme; a guru will say that ‘He is Supreme; I am servant.’” (Conversation, London, 1 September 1973)
- b. “Although a follower may not be a liberated person, if he follows the supreme, liberated Personality of Godhead, his actions are naturally liberated from the contamination of the material nature. Lord Caitanya therefore says: ‘By My order you may become a spiritual master.’ One can immediately become a spiritual master by having full faith in the transcendental words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and by following His instructions.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.18.5, purport)

A.5.2. Although Srila Prabhupada at times indicated that the role of the spiritual master is reserved for liberated souls, he clarified that the “liberated position” is accessible to those who rigorously follow the devotional process.

- a. “Guru must be liberated.” (Lecture, Gorakhpur, 16 February 1971)
- b. “Devotional service is so perfect that simply by following the rules and regulations and executing them under the direction of the spiritual master, one is liberated.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.33.10, purport)
- c. “If one sticks to the principle of abiding by the order of the spiritual master, he will always remain in a liberated position.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.20.13, purport)

A.5.3. Following the instructions of the Founder-Ācārya in choosing an initiating spiritual master, ISKCON members shall primarily rely on observable and verifiable qualifications.

- a. “[O]ne may be found to be very seriously engaged in the service of the Lord and strictly following all the regulative principles, chanting the prescribed number of rounds on *japa* beads and always thinking of how to expand the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Such a Vaiṣṇava should be accepted as an *uttama-adhikārī* ... One should not become a spiritual master unless he has attained the platform of *uttama-adhikārī*. A neophyte

Vaiṣṇava or a Vaiṣṇava situated on the intermediate platform can also accept disciples, but such disciples must be on the same platform, and it should be understood that they cannot advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life under his insufficient guidance. Therefore a disciple should be careful to accept an *uttama-adhikārī* as a spiritual master.” (*The Nectar of Instruction*, text five)

A.5.4. The correct understanding and presentation of the philosophy, combined with sustained exemplary personal behavior, constitute the essence of the qualifications for serving as guru to others. In other words, loyal, diligent, studious disciples make competent gurus.

a. “One who is now the disciple is the next spiritual master. And one cannot be a bona fide and authorized spiritual master unless one has been strictly obedient to his spiritual master.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 2.9.43, purport)

## A.6. RITVIKISM: REJECTED AND BANNED

A.6.1. The theory that Śrīla Prabhupāda wished to continue directly initiating disciples after his departure through “*ritviks*” – celebrants performing the ceremony of initiation on his behalf – is a philosophical deviation that

goes against the *paramparā* principle established by Lord Krishna and upheld by all our *ācāryas*. Ritvikism is never mentioned in *sāstra*, has never been practiced by any bona fide *sampradāya*, and Śrīla Prabhupāda never presented or endorsed it.

A.6.2. The ritvikism falsehood shall be permanently shunned in ISKCON as unfounded and misleading. It is utterly erroneous to espouse it, deluding and misguiding to teach it, and blasphemous to attribute it to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

A.6.3. The ritvikism invention shall be banned in ISKCON; it shall not be tolerated or accommodated in any way, shape, or form. No one who espouses, teaches, or practices ritvikism can be an ISKCON member in good standing.

- a. Mohsin Hassan: After you, is it ... any decision has been made who will take over?

Prabhupāda: Yes. All of them will take over. These students, who are initiated from me, all of them will act as I am doing. Just like I have got many Godbrothers, they are all acting. Similarly, all these disciples which I am making, initiating, they are being trained to become future spiritual masters . . . they are competent to

make disciples. (Room Conversation, Detroit, 18 July 1971)

## A.7. *ŚIKṢĀ* AND *DĪKṢĀ-GURUS*

A.7.1. An ISKCON member can only accept one *dīksā-guru* (initiating spiritual master) but can receive instruction and guidance from many *śikṣā-gurus* (instructing spiritual masters).

a. “A devotee must have only one initiating spiritual master because in the scriptures acceptance of more than one is always forbidden. There is no limit, however, to the number of instructing spiritual masters one may accept.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, 1.35, purport)

## A.8. RESPECTING ALL SPIRITUAL TEACHERS

A.8.1. It is said that “guru is one” in the sense that every bona fide spiritual master will teach the same essential theological truths and will faithfully present the teachings of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna.

a. “As God is one, similarly, guru is also one. There cannot be different gurus. Because God is one, how there can be different gurus? The principle of guru is one.” (Arrival lecture, San Francisco, 15 July 1975)

A.8.2. As children have a special relation with their own parents but also respect their parents' siblings and other family elders, so ISKCON members may have their own *dīkṣā*- and *śikṣā-gurus* but should also respect all devotees.

A.8.3. ISKCON members, in the spirit of unity in diversity, should avoid guru-based sectarianism and other forms of divisiveness.

A.8.4. Different spiritual masters may instruct their disciples slightly differently regarding the details of [and fill this in] – but not regarding principles.

a. “[A] basic principle is that one has to accept a spiritual master. Exactly how one follows the instructions of his spiritual master is considered a detail. For example, if one is following the instruction of his spiritual master and that instruction is different from the instructions of another spiritual master, this is called detailed information. But the basic principle of acceptance of a spiritual master is good everywhere, although the details may be different.” (*The Nectar of Devotion*, Chapter 6)

## A.9. FREEDOM OF CHOICE

A.9.1. ISKCON members have the prerogative to decide from whom to seek guidance and inspiration.

A.9.2. ISKCON members should choose their spiritual masters – initiating and instructing – in full freedom and after careful analysis, without being swayed by undue subtle or explicit pressure, or by being canvassed.

a. “One has to understand with intelligence, with cool head, this spiritual science; but you have to approach to a person who is actually in the knowledge of spiritual science, or science of God ... you must have to find out such a person where you can surrender yourself ... first of all you have to find out whether you have approached a person who is really authority or not. If you think that, ‘This man, this person, is really authority,’ then you surrender there. Otherwise there is no meaning of imitating, that, ‘Oh, so many persons have accepted this person as spiritual master or authority. Oh, let me also accept.’ No. *Bhagavad-gītā* does not say like that. *Bhagavad-gītā* says that, ‘You try to understand the whole spiritual science very nicely. And if you think the man who is instructing you is actually the authority, then surrender.’ Then accept him as spiritual master. Not blindly or dogmatically. Try to understand.” (Lecture

on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.5.1–3, Boston, 4 May 1968)

A.9.3. Choosing a spiritual master is a deeply personal and momentous choice in life. ISKCON members are forbidden to try to directly or indirectly coerce others into choosing a particular ISKCON guru.

A.9.4. The need for careful consideration and scrutiny also applies to the acceptance of a disciple by the spiritual master.

a. “It is enjoined that the spiritual master also observe the disciple at least for one year, and the disciple also study the spiritual master at least for one year. So when both of them are convinced that ‘He can be my spiritual master’ or ‘He can be my disciple,’ then the relationship is established.” (Lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā*, 4.34-39, Los Angeles, 12 January 1969)

## A.10. THE GBC REGULATES THE SPECIFICS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

A.10.1. The standard requirements and criteria for functioning as a genuine spiritual master or qualified disciple are thoroughly described in *sāstra* and in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s teachings.

A.10.2. The GBC shall, from time to time, determine or revise the details of the process of initiation in ISKCON,

including but not limited to the prerequisites, mandatory training, and minimum preparation time of aspiring disciples.

A.10.3. The GBC shall, from time to time, establish standards, prerequisites, and procedures for ISKCON members to take up the service of initiating disciples.

A.10.4. Such standards may include, but are not limited to, being loyal to ISKCON, possessing a minimum in seniority and experience, displaying exemplary behavior, demonstrating sufficient spiritual knowledge, presenting this knowledge in an unadulterated manner, and exhibiting adequate pastoral proficiency.

A.10.5. Śrīla Prabhupāda introduced, for instance, the idea of *sāstric* examinations as part of the requirements for serving as a spiritual master in ISKCON.

- a. “Another examination will be held sometimes in 1971 ... One who will pass this examination will be awarded with the title of Bhaktivedanta. I want that all of my spiritual sons and daughters will inherit this title of Bhaktivedanta, so that the family transcendental diploma will continue through the generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate disciples.” (Letter to Hamsadutta, 3 January 1969)

A.10.6. Although not precluding the possibility of future personal difficulties, the enacting of testable, verifiable standards to serve as guru helps protect prospective gurus from falling prey to immaturity, impatience, and/or personal ambition. Such standards aid in safeguarding prospective disciples from receiving insufficient or improper guidance, and assists ISKCON in preserving the sacred principle of *parampara*.

A.10.7. The GBC shall establish systems to assist and monitor ISKCON gurus, including but not limited to support, education, discipline, and rehabilitation.

## APPENDIX B

### A GARLAND OF INSTRUCTIONS

#### B.1. INTRODUCTION

B.1.1. The themes highlighted here represent some important features of ISKCON, its purposes, and culture. The quotations illustrate crucial themes, but are not exhaustive or exclusive. These and other important topics are illuminated in many other passages within the written and spoken words of the Founder-Ācārya, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Aspects of his mission not specifically mentioned here are not necessarily less important or less relevant.

#### B.2. THE BROADER TRADITION

B.2.1. “Actually this movement was started by Kṛṣṇa Himself in the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. At least five thousand years ago the movement was presented by Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. From this *Bhagavad-gītā* we can understand that this system of consciousness was spoken by Him long, long before—He imparted to the sun-god Vivasvān. That calculation goes to show that before the repetition of the *Bhagavad-gītā* in the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, it was once before explained at least forty million years ago. So this movement is not at all new. It is coming down from disciplic succession.” (Lecture, press release, Los Angeles, 22 December 1968)

B.2.2. “When Kṛṣṇa appeared, He gave His orders, and when Kṛṣṇa Himself appeared as a devotee, as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, He showed us the path by which to cross the ocean of Kali-yuga. That is the path of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared, He ushered in the era for the *saikīrtana* movement. It is also said that for ten thousand years this era will continue. This means that simply by accepting the *saikīrtana* movement and chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, the fallen souls of this Kali-yuga will be delivered. After the Battle of Kurukṣetra, at which Bhagavad-gītā was spoken, Kali-yuga continues for 432,000 years, of which only 5,000 years have passed. Thus there is still a balance of 427,000 years to come. Of these 427,000 years, the 10,000 years of the *saikīrtana* movement inaugurated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu 500 years ago provide the opportunity for the fallen souls of Kali-yuga to take to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and thus be delivered from the clutches of material existence and return home, back to Godhead.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.5.23, purport)

B.2.3. “The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is so powerful that it can inundate the entire world and interest all classes of men in the subject of love of Godhead.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 7.25, purport)

### B.3. THE MISSION

B.3.1. “This human form of life is a chance to be trained to be agreeable to the orders of the Supreme Lord. To bring about this training in society is the mission of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.12.22, purport)

B.3.2. “Humanity must be trained to engage in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. That is the purpose of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.17, purport)

B.3.3. “Because of the present world situation, Kṛṣṇa has descended in the form of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.1.17, purport)

B.3.4. “The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not a sentimental religious movement; it is a movement for the reformation of all the anomalies of human society.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 17.141, purport)

B.3.5. “The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is just trying to make Kṛṣṇa known all over the world as the Supreme Personality of Godhead (*kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.28]).” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.10.70, purport)

B.3.6. “The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement follows the process of *pañcarātrika-vidhi* and that of *bhāgavata-vidhi* simultaneously, so that people can take advantage of the

movement and make their lives successful.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.19.10, purport)

B.3.7. “The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is based on this principle: chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra at every moment, as much as possible, both inside and outside of the temples, and, as far as possible, distribute *prasāda*. This process can be accelerated with the cooperation of state administrators and those who are producing the country's wealth. Simply by liberal distribution of *prasāda* and *saṅkīrtana*, the whole world can become peaceful and prosperous.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.12.10, purport)

B.3.8. “The movement will go on increasing more and more, provided the leaders of the movement remain firmly Kṛṣṇa conscious by following the regulative principles and the primary activities of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra regularly.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.2.20, purport)

#### B.4. OPEN TO ALL

B.4.1. “It is not a sectarian movement meant for a certain class of men, but it is a necessary movement for all humanity irrespective of caste, creed, or color.” (Letter to Mr. David J. Exley, 21 February 1968)

B.4.2. “In this movement there are many different races of men from all parts of the world participating, but because they think of themselves as servants of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they do not differentiate between black and white, yellow and red. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness

movement is therefore the only means to make the living entities free of all designations.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.22.29, purport)

B.4.3. “Kṛṣṇa consciousness is open to all. Just like we are calling everyone, ‘Come and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.’ It is open to all ... We are not restricting here that only the rich persons or brahmins or pious family or rich family can come here. No. Everyone. Everyone is welcome . . . Kṛṣṇa says, 'Never mind. Even if he is in sinful family, whatever he may be, if he comes to Me, he also can enter into the spiritual kingdom.' So there is no such restriction ... Here, when people come here, we don't inquire whether he is poor or rich or this or that. 'Come on. Sit down. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.' The opportunity is equal for everyone.” (Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.1.2-5, Montreal, 23 Jan 1968)

## B.5. SCRIPTURAL BASIS & *SIDDHĀNTA*

B.5.1. “The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is based on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā*. Because *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī and *Bhagavad-gītā* was spoken by Kṛṣṇa, there is no difference between them.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.11.4, purport)

B.5.2. “The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is pushing forward the publication of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as explained especially for the understanding of the modern civilized man, to awaken him to his original consciousness.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.26.38, purport)

B.5.3. “One should not partially study a book just to pose oneself as a great scholar by being able to refer to scriptures. In our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we have therefore limited our study of the Vedic literatures to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. These four works are sufficient for preaching purposes. They are adequate for the understanding of the philosophy and the spreading of missionary activities all over the world. If one studies a particular book, he must do so thoroughly. That is the principle.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 22.118, purport)

B.5.4. “Within the past five hundred years, many erudite scholars and *ācāryas* like Jīva Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Viśvanātha Cakravartī, Vallabhācārya, and many other distinguished scholars even after the time of Lord Caitanya made elaborate commentaries on the *Bhāgavatam*. And the serious student would do well to attempt to go through them to better relish the transcendental messages.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.1, purport)

B.5.5. “In the Caitanya Caritamṛta it is said that nobody should be neglectful of the siddhānta because by siddhāntic conclusion one becomes firm in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. So these siddhāntic conclusions are being mentioned in all my books, and the boys and girls in our Kṛṣṇa Society should now give more attention for studying

the books very attentively.” (Letter to Krsna Devi, 17 February 1970)

## B.6. ASSOCIATION OF DEVOTEES

B.6.1. “Transcendental devotional service cannot be complete and cannot be relishable without the association of devotees. We have therefore established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.9.11, purport)

B.6.2. “Srila Rūpa Gosvāmī explains how to perform devotional activities in the association of other devotees ... The International Society for Krishna Consciousness has been established to facilitate these six kinds of loving exchanges between devotees [“Offering gifts in charity, accepting charitable gifts, revealing one's mind in confidence, inquiring confidentially, accepting *prasāda* and offering *prasāda*.”] ... The life of the Kṛṣṇa conscious society is nourished by these six types of loving exchange among the members.” (*The Nectar of Instruction*, Verse 4, purport)

B.6.3. “The topmost benediction for those who are living in this material world and are subjected to the repetition of birth and death (transmigration) is association with pure devotees. One should search out such pure devotees and remain with them. That will make one completely happy, even though living within the material world. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is started for that purpose.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.30.34, purport)

B.6.4. “Our Society is like one big family and our relationships should be based on love and trust.” (Letter to Upendra, 6 August 1970)

## B.7. OPENING TEMPLES AND WORSHIPING DEITIES

B.7.1. [Nārada Muni said:] “The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the support of this entire cosmic manifestation, with all its moving and nonmoving living entities, and the temple where the Deity of the Lord is installed is a most sacred place.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.14.27-28)

B.7.2. “Especially for this age of Kali, the process accepted by the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is to open hundreds and thousands of Viṣṇu temples (temples of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Jagannātha, Balarāma, Sītā-Rāma, Gaura-Nitāi and so on) . . . in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement Lord Viṣṇu is worshiped in every temple according to a schedule of twenty-four hours of engagement in performing kīrtana, chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, offering palatable food to Lord Viṣṇu and distributing this food to Vaiṣṇavas and others.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.16.60, purport)

B.7.3. “The Deity is known as the *arcā-vigraha* or *arcā-avatāra*, an incarnation of the Supreme Lord in the form of a material manifestation (brass, stone or wood). Ultimately there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa manifest in matter or Kṛṣṇa manifest in spirit because both are His energies. For Kṛṣṇa, there is no distinction between matter

and spirit. His manifestation in material form, therefore, is as good as His original form, *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 13.139, purport)

B.7.4. “Observing the various types of festivals, such as Śrī Janmāṣṭamī, Rāma-navamī and Nṛsiṁha-caturdaśī, is also included in the process of Deity worship.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.5.23-24, purport)

B.7.5. “Now that we have opened some Centers, they must be maintained and our work go on. Book and prasadam distribution, Sankirtana and Deity worship is our only business so these programs must remain energetic. Your number one duty is to see that they are continuously carried on with enthusiasm.” (Letter to Jagadisa, 3 Dec 1973)

## B.8. A TEMPLE IN EVERY HOME

B.8.1. “The best process for making the home pleasant is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If one is in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he can make his home very happy, because this process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is very easy. One need only chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, accept the remnants of foodstuffs offered to Kṛṣṇa, have some discussion on books like *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and engage oneself in Deity worship. These four things will make one happy.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 13.8-12, purport)

B.8.2. “Everyone can execute the cult of Kṛṣṇa consciousness at home, as ordered by the Lord. Everyone can congregationally chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. One can also discuss the subject matter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and install Deities of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa or Gaura-Nitāī or both and worship them very carefully in one’s own home. It is not that we have to open different centers all over the world. Whoever cares for the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement can install Deities at home and, under superior guidance, worship the Deity regularly, chanting the *mahā-mantra* and discussing the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. We are actually teaching in our classes how to go about this.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 3.190, purport)

B.8.3. “Everyone can establish a small temple in his house, and he can begin family-wise: himself, his wife, his children. That is wanted. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement wants to see that every house has become a temple of Kṛṣṇa. That is our program.” (Lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 7.1, Ahmedabad, 13 December 1972)

B.8.4. “The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is trying to elevate human society to the perfection of life by pursuing the method described by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu ... That is, one should stay at home, chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and preach the instructions of Kṛṣṇa as they are given in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 7.128, purport)

## B.9. CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

B.9.1. “In our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, the *guru-kula* plays an extremely important part in our activities because right from childhood the boys at the *guru-kula* are instructed about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thus they become steady within the cores of their hearts, and there is very little possibility that they will be conquered by the modes of material nature when they are older.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 7.5.56-57, purport)

B.9.2. “Any five-year-old child can be trained, and within a very short time his life will become successful by realization of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Unfortunately, this training is lacking all over the world. It is necessary for the leaders of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to start educational institutions in different parts of the world to train children, starting at the age of five years. Thus such children will not become hippies or spoiled children of society; rather, they can all become devotees of the Lord. The face of the world will then change automatically.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 4.12.23, purport)

B.9.3. “Recently I have visited our Gurukula school in Dallas, and I was quite satisfied how the boys and girls are being trained up to be ideal Vaishnavas. This training from an early age is important, and I also was fortunate to have received such training when I was a child.” (Letter to Tulsi devi dasi, 12 Oct 1974)

B.9.4. “Please also take care of the children. They are our future hopes, and the adolescent age is the most dangerous age. It is the turning point of one's life. In this age, if you take care of the children, surely they will come out first class Krishna Conscious devotees.” (Letter to Hayagriva, 7 Nov 1969)

## B.10. COMPASSION AND OUTREACH

B.10.1. “The activities of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are meant not only for oneself but for others also. This is the perfection of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One who is interested in his own salvation is not as advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness as one who feels compassion for others and who therefore propagates the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Such an advanced devotee will never fall down, for Kṛṣṇa will give him special protection. That is the sum and substance of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.2.36-37, purport)

B.10.2. “The members of this disciplic succession ... should go everywhere to deliver the fallen souls by vibrating the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and the instructions of *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. That will please the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.5.22, purport)

B.10.3. “Every member of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is interested in going door to door to try to convince people about the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, the teachings of Lord Caitanya. That is the purpose

of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. The members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement must be fully convinced that without Kṛṣṇa one cannot be happy.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.44, purport)

B.10.4. “Following the examples of the previous *ācāryas*, all the members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement should try to benefit the conditioned souls by inducing them to become Kṛṣṇa conscious and giving them all facilities to do so. Such activities constitute real welfare work. By such activities, a preacher or anyone who endeavors to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness is recognized by the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.4.44, purport)

B.10.5. “Regarding lecturing by woman devotees: I have informed you that in the service of the Lord there is no distinction of caste or creed, color, or sex. In the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord especially mentions that even a woman who has taken seriously is also destined to reach Him. We require a person who is in the knowledge of Krishna, that is the only qualification of a person speaking ... we want so many preachers, both men and women.” (Letter to Jayagovinda, 8 Feb 1968)

B.10.6. “At the present moment the entire world is in a dangerous position under the spell of a godless civilization. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement needs many exalted, learned persons who will sacrifice their lives to revive God consciousness throughout the world. We therefore invite

all men and women advanced in knowledge to join the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and sacrifice their lives for the great cause of reviving the God consciousness of human society.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.10.6, purport)

## B.11. BOOK DISTRIBUTION

B.11.1. “According to Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, distributing literature is like playing on a great mṛdaṅga. Consequently we always request members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness to publish as many books as possible and distribute them widely throughout the world.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 19.132, purport)

B.11.2. “In our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, all our activities are concentrated upon distributing Kṛṣṇa literature. This is very important. One may approach any person and induce him to read Kṛṣṇa literature so that in the future he also may become a devotee.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.2.37 purport)

B.11.3. “Please also try to introduce our books in the colleges and schools as well as local libraries. I have received word from other centers that our literatures are very well received and often they are being used as course textbooks in the schools and colleges.” (Letter to Nayanabhirama, 26 Oct 1970)

B.11.4. “I’m specially pleased to hear that your distribution of our books and magazines has increased. Go on in this

way, increasing more and more. Each time someone reads some solid information about Krsna his life becomes changed in some way. These literatures are the solid ground upon which our preaching stands, so I want that they should be available to everyone, as many as possible. So please try for this.” (Letter to Damodara, 3 Dec 1971)

B.11.5. “My first concern is that my books shall be published and distributed profusely all over the world. Practically, books are the basis of our movement.” (Letter to Mandali Bhadra, 20 Jan 1972)

B.11.6. “Somehow or other, if the book goes in one's hand, he will be benefited ... If he reads one *śloka*, his life will be successful. If one *śloka*, one word. This is such nice things. Therefore we are stressing so much, ‘Please distribute book, distribute book, distribute book.’” (Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.16.8, Los Angeles, 5 Jan 1974)

B.11.7. “This is my request. Print as many books in as many languages and distribute throughout the whole world. Then Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will automatically increase.” (Arrival Address, Los Angeles, 20 June 1975)

B.11.8. “I want that every respectable person has a full set of Bhagavatam and Caitanya Caritamrta in his home.” (Letter to Alex, Bob, Drdhavrata, Gupta, Rsabhadeva, Stan, 24 Jan 1977)

## **B.12. BACK TO GODHEAD MAGAZINE**

B.12.1. “Back to Godhead should be the life and soul for the Society.” (Letter to Rayarama, March 1967)

B.12.2. “I consider sale of Back to Godhead so valuable because in the beginning I worked for Back to Godhead day and night alone in India. I still remember the hardship for pushing on this Back to Godhead.” (Letter to Madhudvisa, 14 April 1970)

B.12.3. “Back to Godhead is my life and soul.” (Letter to Gurudasa, 16 April 1970)

B.12.4. “I cannot stress this point enough that we must handle this publication of Back to Godhead very nicely for it is one of the most important aspects of our society.” (Letter to Hamsaduta, 17 Feb 1973)

B.12.5. “Our ‘Back To Godhead’ is the backbone of our movement so we should always be thinking how to increase it increase it increase it.” (Letter to Rocana, 21 Nov 1974)

## **B.13. SIMPLE LIVING, HIGH THINKING**

B.13.1 “The human necessities of life are fully supplied by the Lord in the shape of food grains, milk, fruit, wood, stone, sugar, silk, jewels, cotton, salt, water, vegetables, etc., in sufficient quantity to feed and care for the human race of the world as well as the living beings on each and every planet within the universe. The supply source is complete, and only a little energy by the human being is

required to get his necessities into the proper channel. There is no need of machines and tools or huge steel plants for artificially creating comforts of life. Life is never made comfortable by artificial needs, but by plain living and high thinking.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.2.37 purport)

B.13.2. “Simple living and high thinking, that is wanted.”  
(Arrival Address, Honolulu, 25 May 1975)

B.13.3. “That you are growing all your own grains is very good. It is my ambition that all devotees may remain self-independent by producing vegetables, grains, milk, fruits, flowers and by weaving their own cloth in handlooms. This simple life is very nice. Simple village life saves time for other engagements like chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa maha-mantra.” (Letter to Tusta Kṛṣṇa, 23 Aug 1976)

## B.14. COW PROTECTION

B.14.1. Lord Kṛṣṇa, as the teacher of human society, personally showed by His acts that the mercantile community, or the *vaiśyas*, should herd cows and bulls and thus give protection to the valuable animals. According to *smṛti* regulation, the cow is the mother and the bull the father of the human being. The cow is the mother because just as one sucks the breast of one's mother, human society takes cow's milk. Similarly, the bull is the father of human society because the father earns for the children just as the bull tills the ground to produce food grains. Human

society will kill its spirit of life by killing the father and the mother. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.29, purport)

B.14.2. “The Supreme Personality of Godhead, in His instructions of *Bhagavad-gītā*, advises *go-rakṣya*, which means cow protection. The cow should be protected, milk should be drawn from the cows, and this milk should be prepared in various ways. One should take ample milk, and thus one can prolong one's life, develop his brain, execute devotional service, and ultimately attain the favor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead ... when we produce food grains and vegetables, we can give protection to the cows; while giving protection to the cows, we can draw from them abundant quantities of milk; and by getting enough milk and combining it with food grains and vegetables, we can prepare hundreds of nectarean foods. We can happily eat this food and thus avoid industrial enterprises and joblessness. Agriculture and cow protection are the way to become sinless and thus be attracted to devotional service. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.6.12, purport)

## B.15. RATHA-YĀTRĀ FESTIVAL

B.15.1. “From my childhood I was very much fond of Radha Kṛṣṇa, and now my good disciples are helping me to open so many Radha-Kṛṣṇa temples all over the world. It gives me so much pleasure. Now introduce Ratha Yatra. That was my childhood activity. I want to see my disciples all over the world introduce two items, opening Radha

Krsna temples and Ratha Yatra festivals.” (Letter to Bhakta dasa, 10 Nov 1973)

B.15.2. “This book distribution and Ratha Yatra Festivals should go on all over the world. I want to introduce this Ratha Yatra Festival programme all over the world.” (Letter to Madhudvisa, 7 Aug 1973)

B.15.3. “I have received reports from all over the world; from Calcutta, San Francisco, Tokyo, Melbourne, Pittsburgh, and here in London also, that Rathayatra festival was a very great success, and this has very much engladdened me. So you have many festivals like this, and engage the public in Krishna consciousness as much as possible.” (Letter to Tulasi, 1 Aug 1972)

## B.16. BHAKTIVEDANTA INSTITUTE

B.16.1. “[W]e have formed the Bhaktivedanta Institute for organizing scientific presentations of Krishna Consciousness. This party is our most important preaching arm with which we will be able to destroy the bogus speculation and cheating which goes under the banner of scientific advancement. Therefore I have got great hope for Swarup Damodar and his colleagues. I want them to travel vigorously throughout the world to lecture in all universities and other institutions. There is no lack of financial resources and we shall spare nothing to see to this party's success.” (Letter to Amarendra, 2 April 1977)

## B.17. ADAPTABILITY

B.17.1. “The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not stereotyped or stagnant.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā* 7.28, purport)

B.17.2. “An *ācārya* who comes for the service of the Lord cannot be expected to conform to a stereotype, for he must find the ways and means by which Kṛṣṇa consciousness may be spread.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā* 7.31–32, purport)

B.17.3. “It is the concern of the *ācārya* to show mercy to the fallen souls. In this connection, *desa-kāla-pātra* (the place, the time and the object) should be taken into consideration ... Therefore it is a principle that a preacher must strictly follow the rules and regulations laid down in the *sāstras* yet at the same time devise a means by which the preaching work to reclaim the fallen may go on with full force.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā* 7.38, purport)

B.17.4. “The method of worship—chanting the mantra and preparing the forms of the Lord—is not stereotyped, nor is it exactly the same everywhere ... One has to consider the particular time, country and conveniences. What is convenient in India may not be convenient in the Western countries.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.8.54, purport)

B.17.5. “The expert devotees also can discover novel ways and means to convert the nondevotees in terms of particular time and circumstance. Devotional service is

dynamic activity, and the expert devotees can find out competent means to inject it into the dull brains of the materialistic population. Such transcendental activities of the devotees for the service of the Lord can bring a new order of life to the foolish society of materialistic men. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His subsequent followers exhibited expert dexterity in this connection.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.16, purport)

B.17.6. “Sometimes members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness—especially in the Western countries—find it difficult to approach people to distribute books because people are unfamiliar with the traditional saffron robes of the devotees. The devotees have therefore inquired whether they can wear European and American dress before the general public. From the instructions given to King Pratāparudra by Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, we can understand that we may change our dress in any way to facilitate our service. When our members change their dress to meet the public or to introduce our books, they are not breaking the devotional principles. The real principle is to spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, and if one has to change into regular Western dress for this purpose, there should be no objection. (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 14.5, purport)

## APPENDIX C

### UNITY IN DIVERSITY

C.1. Unity in diversity represents a foundational theological Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava precept:

- a. “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu confirms the conclusion of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* on the strength of His philosophy of *acintya-bheda-bheda-tattva*. That philosophy holds that the Supreme Lord is simultaneously one with and different from His creation. That is to say, there is unity in diversity.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 9.360, purport)

C.2. Similarly, the notion of unity in diversity also serves as one of ISKCON’s foundational organizational principles:

- a. “Material nature means dissension and disagreement, especially in this Kali yuga. But, for this Krsna consciousness movement its success will depend on agreement, even though there are varieties of engagements ... Please try to maintain the philosophy of unity in diversity. That will make our movement successful.” (Letter to Kirtanananda, 18 October 1973)

C.3. Naturally, such a theological and organizational understanding should inform and shape the International Society for Krishna Consciousness both culturally and structurally.

C.4. Śrīla Prabhupāda's application of the unity-in-diversity principle includes establishing worldwide standards to unify ISKCON, under the oversight of the Governing Body Commission.

C.5. At the same time, within the boundaries of those common standards, Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged a high degree of autonomy – for ISKCON Organizations, centers, initiatives, and individuals:

- a. “Krishna Consciousness Movement is for training men to be independently thoughtful and competent in all types of departments of knowledge and action, not for making bureaucracy ... our leaders shall be careful not to kill the spirit of enthusiastic service, which is individual and spontaneous and voluntary.”  
(Letter to Karandhara, 22 December 1972)

C.6. ISKCON's organizational formula therefore involves nurturing the spirit of initiative, creativity, and diversification at the individual and local levels, but within the parameters of rigorous spiritual practice and theological fidelity.

- a. “So please stay on the purity platform; chant 16 rounds daily and without fail, follow all the regulative principles, and read all our books and your life is sure to be successful.” (Letter to Vaikunthanatha, Saradiya, 4 April 1971)

C.7. Balancing autonomy and cooperation, individuality and compliance, creativity and discipline, freedom and collaboration for the common good, requires adopting organizational, cultural, administrative, and legal instruments and structures to allow the harmonious interaction of individual, local, national, continental, and global initiatives.

C.8. Being part of an international society implies certain moral imperatives and obligations toward the global organization and its international needs. The global ISKCON leadership has the responsibility, to support, nourish, and equip the individual parts, national or local, and this is especially true in times of crisis or emergency. In turn, the parts need to invest resources in the global effort in ways that benefit the whole and achieve collective objectives, even if these objectives only indirectly or subsequently benefit the individual entities.

- a. “As far as possible the centers should act freely, but conjointly. They must look forward to the common development. That should be the

principle.” (Letter to Tamala Krsna, 13 October 1969)

C.9. Unity – if interpreted as forced uniformity and uncritical homogeneity – can be overly constraining. Diversity – when expressed as unbridled autonomy – can easily become disorder, fragmentation, or anarchy. It requires effort to carefully maintain equilibrium. Śrīla Prabhupāda therefore instructed the leaders to regularly come together to promote integration and unity while maintaining variety and diversity.

a. “[I]f we keep Krsna in the center, then there will be agreement in varieties. This is called unity in diversity. I am therefore suggesting that all our men meet in Mayapur every year during the birth anniversary of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. With all GBC and senior men present we should discuss how to make unity in diversity.” (Letter to Kīrtanānanda, 18 October 1973)

C.10. Maintaining unity in diversity is a delicate, challenging subject requiring ongoing attention.

a. “[F]or this Krsna consciousness movement its success will depend on agreement, even though there are varieties of engagements ... we must be very careful to maintain unity in diversity, and remember the story in Aesop's Fables of the

father of many children with the bundle of sticks. When the father asked his children to break the bundle of sticks wrapped in a bag, none of them could do it. But, when they removed the sticks from the bag, and tried one by one, the sticks were easily broken. So this is the strength in unity. If we are bunched up, we can never be broken, but when divided, then we can become broken very easily.” (Letter to Kīrtanānanda, 18 October 1973)

C.11. A practical manifestation – and testing ground – of the principle of unity in diversity is the interactions between various sections of ISKCON, each of which may possess diverse norms, dynamics, priorities, and cultural sensibilities. The members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness also act within different dimensions, or “ecosystems”. These ecosystems will ideally interact harmoniously. Three especially important interconnected, and interdependent, ecosystems within ISKCON are:

C.11.1. The institutional (the organization or Society)

C.11.2. The teacher-student (*guru-sīṣya*)

C.11.3. The social (family, friends, occupation, etc.)

C.12. ISKCON's institutional ecosystem indicates the aspect of the formal organization, including administrative, educational, and legal functions that, for example:

- C.12.1. formally establish and manage temples and centers
- C.12.2. conduct the worship of ISKCON Deities,
- C.12.3. provide facilities for devotees to associate, received training, and engage together in devotional service,
- C.12.4. organize and implement outreach activities.
- C.12.5. ensure the operation of the Society according to local and national legislations,
- C.12.6. officially represent the Society through appointed officials, etc.

C.13. ISKCON members individually and autonomously determine the degree of their participation in and commitment to the organizational aspect of ISKCON, and freely choose to participate in specific initiatives within that organizational aspect.

C.14. Teacher-student interactions form a network of interpersonal relationships for the transmission of spiritual knowledge and the offering by the teacher to the student of personal shelter and guidance (*guru-siṣya*). This relationship of instruction, tutoring, and inspiration between teachers (including ISKCON's Founder-Ācārya and *dīkṣā-* and *sīkṣā-gurus*, as well as other mentors, etc.) and their students, disciples, followers, and admirers, constitutes an essential

component of the underlying fabric of spiritual connections within the Society. These relationships may at times be formalized or solemnized, such as through the ceremony of initiation, or remain unofficial, such as in more experienced devotees offering occasional or ongoing advice to less experienced devotees.

C.15. The social sphere includes the family, which for most members represents the natural, recommended, and primary environment for practising their devotional life. Connection with the larger circle of relatives, one's student or occupational life, personal finances, and all other obligations linked to being a part of the broader society, are included in this ecosystem. An important aspect of social life – and spiritual progress – is the development of friendships and other forms of loving and trusting relationships with fellow devotees.

C.16. In the above ecosystems, the unifying principle is to advance in spiritual life. Devotees should therefore perform their duties and responsibilities in the three ecosystems with the intent to spiritually benefit themselves and their peers, subordinates, and superiors.

C.17. These three ISKCON ecosystems are interdependent. They need to be individually healthy and interact harmoniously. The weakness or neglect of any one of these ecosystems – or the excessive emphasis on any one of them – would negatively affect the other two and the whole Society.

## APPENDIX D

### GOD-CENTERED SOCIETY AND *DAIVA-VARNAĀŚRAMA-DHARMA*

D.1. “Human society all over the world is divided into four castes and four orders of life. The four castes are the intelligent caste, the martial caste, the productive caste, and the laborer caste. These castes are classified in terms of one’s work and qualification and not by birth. Then again there are four orders of life, namely, the student life, the householder’s life, the retired, and the devotional life. In the best interest of human society there must be such divisions of life, otherwise no social institution can grow in a healthy state. And in each and every one of the above-mentioned divisions of life, the aim must be to please the supreme authority of the Personality of Godhead. This institutional function of human society is known as the system of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, which is quite natural for the civilized life.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.13, purport)

D.2. The *varṇāśrama* institution offers the perfect process for making one eligible to return home, back to Godhead, because the aim of every varṇa and āśrama is to please the Supreme Lord. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.3.13, purport)

D.3. “You have to establish *varṇāśrama*.” (Morning Walk, Mayapur, 5 Feb 1976

D.4. ISKCON recognizes that the purpose of life, for everyone in human society, is to awaken love of God.

a. “The supreme occupation [*dharma*] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.6)

D.5. We uphold the principle that everyone, regardless of birth or background, should be accorded full dignity as a human being, and, on the spiritual platform, be recognized as a spirit soul, an eternal part and parcel of Krishna with the inborn right to practice devotional service and advance in Krishna consciousness.

“The life of a human being is a chance to prepare oneself to go back to Godhead, or to get rid of the material existence, the repetition of birth and death. Thus in the system of *varṇāśrama-dharma* every man and woman is trained for this purpose.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.19.4, purport)

D.6. Awareness of this fundamental spiritual equality should illuminate all personal interactions and societal policies.

a. [Lord Caitanya said:] “I am not a *brāhmaṇa*, I am not a *kṣatriya*, I am not a *vaiśya* or a *sūdra*. Nor am I a *brahmacārī*, a householder, a *vānaprastha* or a *sannyāsī*. I identify Myself only as the servant of the servant of the servant of the lotus feet of Lord

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the maintainer of the gopīs. He is like an ocean of nectar, and He is the cause of universal transcendental bliss. He is always existing with brilliance.”” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 13.80)

- b. “Occupational duties are known as *varṇāśrama-dharma* and apply to the four divisions of material and spiritual life—namely *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *sūdra*, and *brahmacarya*, *grhastha*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa*.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.20.9, purport)

D.7. The principles of *daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma*, in their unadulterated form, promote psychophysical well-being, social harmony, virtuous life, law and order, and elevation to the mode of goodness. These principles also facilitate the attainment of devotional advancement.

D.8. When our work, families, occupations, and social interactions are God-centered, then naturally we will become better servants of God, better parents, better citizens, better business owners, better workers, and better in so many other ways – thus we help promoting the common good for all. Engaging in the service of Krishna according to our natural propensity and phases of life forms the essence of *daiva-varṇāśrama*, or a God conscious society and all ISKCON members are encouraged to take advantage of the system.

D.9. Applying *daiva-varṇāśrama* in particular individual and collective situations requires dialogue and analysis because of the differences in social, political, economic, and cultural circumstances.

D.10. Regardless of individuals' acquired psychophysical natures (*svabhāva*), which influence their occupational engagements, ISKCON devotees' personal lifestyles shall ideally be inspired and informed, by the qualities characteristic of the mode of goodness: cleanliness, self-control, austerity, purity, honesty, cultivation of knowledge, faith, religiousness, etc.

D.11. Roles and positions within *varṇāśrama* should be based on a person's nature, character, qualifications, inclination and activities. Status should never be determined simply by birth. The natural subdivisions in a *varṇāśrama* society are found in every society and are ultimately created by the Lord.

a. “According to the three modes of material nature and the work associated with them, the four divisions of human society are created by Me. And although I am the creator of this system, you should know that I am yet the nondoer, being unchangeable.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.13)

D.12. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness rejects the hereditary caste system – a perversion of the original *varṇāśrama-dharma*.

a. “If one shows the symptoms of being a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *sūdra* ... even if he has appeared in a different class, he should be accepted according to those symptoms of classification.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.11.35)

D.13. ISKCON members and organizations should avoid *varṇāśrama*-related customs, practices, and norms that could be illegal or detrimental to individual growth and collective progress. Both state and ISKCON laws provide direction on which practices shall be considered applicable and which not.

a. “Unfortunately ... the system of social and spiritual orders has now become a hereditary caste system. But this is not the actual system.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.21.52-54, purport)

D.14. In applying *varṇāśrama-dharma*, principles and details shall be carefully distinguished, taking into consideration time, place, circumstance, and the individuals involved. Educational institutions such as *varṇāśrama* colleges can be established to teach a simpler, more satisfying and natural lifestyle focused on self-realization.

a. “This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is trying to reestablish *daiva-varṇāśrama*, where *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *sūdra*, everyone. Systematic. We are therefore proposing to start a college, *varṇāśrama* college. It is proposed. We are trying so many things, but this is also one of the programs, that the people

of the world, they should be educated according to the quality and work: *brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, śūdra*.” (Lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 7.1, Bhubaneswar, 22 Jan 1977)

b. “Vedic culture or brahminical culture teaches one how to be satisfied with possessing the minimum necessities in life. To teach this highest culture, *varṇāśrama-dharma* is recommended. The aim of the *varṇāśrama* divisions — *brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, śūdra, brahmacarya, grhastha, vanaprastha* and *sannyāsa* — is to train one to control the senses and be content with the bare necessities . . . In human society, therefore, the brahminical culture, *kṣatriya* culture and *vaiśya* culture must be maintained, and people must be taught how to be satisfied with only what they need. In modern civilization there is no such education; everyone tries to possess more and more, and everyone is dissatisfied and unhappy. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is therefore establishing various farms, especially in America, to show how to be happy and content with minimum necessities of life and to save time for self-realization, which one can very easily achieve by chanting the *mahā-mantra* — Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.19.21, purport)

## APPENDIX E

### PROTECTING THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN

#### E.1. ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA ON CHILDREN IN KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

E.1.1. “A child is a rare gift given by Krishna, but at the same time a great responsibility; every parent has the responsibility to see that his child grows up K.C. I know that you understand this, and will always make Krishna the center of your home.” (Letter to Hamsadutta, 15 Aug 1967)

E.1.2. “I may inform you that all our children born of the Krishna conscious parents, they are welcome and I want hundreds of children like that. Because in future we expect to change the face of the whole world, because child is the father of man.” (Letter to Krishna devi, 21 Aug 1968)

E.1.3. “To raise one soul to Krishna Consciousness is counted by Krishna as a very great service, so you do this duty very carefully and Krishna will certainly bestow His blessings upon you.” (Letter to Krishna Devi, 2 Nov 1969)

E.1.4. “For you, child-worship is more important than deity-worship. If you cannot spend time with him, then stop the duties of pujari ... These children are given to us by Krishna, they are Vaisnavas and we must be very careful to protect them. These are not ordinary children, they are Vaikuntha children, and we are very fortunate we can give

them chance to advance further in Krishna Consciousness. That is very great responsibility, do not neglect it or be confused. Your duty is very clear.” (Letter to Arundhati, 30 July 1972)

E.1.5. “Please also take care of the children. They are our future hopes, and the adolescent age is the most dangerous age. It is the turning point of one's life. In this age, if you take care of the children, surely they will come out first class Krishna Conscious devotees.” (Letter to Hayagriva, 7 Nov 1969)

E.1.6. “If we are able to make a whole generation of our children into fine Krsna Conscious preachers, that will be the glory of our movement and the glory of your country as well. But if we neglect somehow or other and if we lose even one Vaisnava, that is very great loss.” (Letter to Stokakrsna, 20 June 1972)

## E.2. DECLARATION

E.2.1. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) is committed to the well-being of all individuals involved with ISKCON, especially children and other vulnerable persons. ISKCON recognizes that children, for their full and harmonious development, need to be raised in an atmosphere of love, support, guidance, and understanding. ISKCON acknowledges that children so raised are likely to play a vital role in the future of our

Society and the world. Prioritizing the interests of the Society's children is in the best interests of the children and of ISKCON and society at large.

E.2.2. ISKCON affirms that children should be protected, nurtured, and guided. They should be provided an environment free from exploitation and abuse.

E.2.3. The protection of children is paramount in ISKCON. ISKCON is therefore committed to making every reasonable effort to protect its children and to prevent their abuse.

E.2.4. ISKCON shall endeavor to prevent abuse and harassment to the fullest extent possible, to provide preventative education and guidance and to promote healing as needed.

## APPENDIX F

### ISKCON-RELATED ENTITIES

#### F.1. INTRODUCTION

F.1.1. Due to legal and other considerations, in some cases it might be necessary or beneficial to establish or recognize entities that are not directly, legally, or formally ISKCON Organizations, and which operate independently of ISKCON, but which pursue and/or support all or some of ISKCON's Purposes.

F.1.2. Policies regarding the relationship with and interaction between ISKCON and such entities, including possible recognition by ISKCON in some form, may from time to time be established by the GBC.

F.1.3. During his lifetime, Śrīla Prabhupāda personally established the following ISKCON-related entities: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, the Mayapur-Vrindaban Trust Fund, the Bhaktivedanta Swami Charity Trust.

#### F.2. THE BHAKTIVEDANTA BOOK TRUST (BBT)

F.2.1. Central to the mission of ISKCON is the distribution of transcendental knowledge through books, other publications, and other media, especially those by and of Śrīla Prabhupāda:

- a. “Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wanted to print as many books as possible

and distribute them all over the world. We have tried our best in this connection, and we are getting results beyond our expectations.” (*Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Ādi-Īlā*, 12.8, purport)

F.2.2. On 28 July 1970 Śrīla Prabhupāda announced the creation of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT):

- a. “So far my books are concerned, I am setting up a different body of management known as the BHAKTIVEDANTA BOOK TRUST.” (Direction of Management, 28 July 1970)

F.2.3. In March 1972, Śrīla Prabhupāda legally established the BBT in India.

F.2.4 In May 1972, Śrīla Prabhupāda legally established the BBT in the USA by executing a “BHAKTIVEDANTA BOOK TRUST AGREEMENT (“the Agreement”)

F.2.4.1. Excerpt from that Agreement:

#### “PURPOSE OF TRUST

This trust is created and shall be operated exclusively for the benefit of the INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS ... and specifically for the Book Fund and Building Fund hereinafter set forth in particular. This trust shall exist independently of the

International Society for Krishna Consciousness and the Trustees' functions and duties stated herein shall be separate and not dependent on the Governing Body Commission of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.”

### **F.3. MAYAPUR-VRINDABAN TRUST FUND (MVT)**

F.3.1. From the original trust document executed on 4 September 1972 in Los Angeles, USA, under “PURPOSE OF TRUST”:

- a. “This Trust Fund is created and shall be operated exclusively for the regular maintenance of two Temples at Mayapur and Vrindaban (India) of the INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS ... The income from this Trust Fund will be specifically spent for regular seva puja (temple worship) of the two Temples ... This trust shall exist independently of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.”

### **F.4. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI CHARITY TRUST**

F.4.1. Registered by Śrīla Prabhupāda on 5 November 1977, nine days before his departure, the primary purposes of the Bhaktivedanta Swami Charity Trust include

renovating and revamping temples and other holy places in Gauḍa-maṇḍala-bhūmi – a circumference of 270 kilometers centered on Mayapur - as well as promoting collaboration among the followers of Lord Caitanya.

F.4.2. About the first purpose above, from the original trust deed: “To erect temples ... and other buildings for the advancement of the objects of the trust and to maintain after and improve the same, including existing buildings and to furnish and equip the same ... To help with finances of other institutions having similar objects.”

F.4.3. About the second purpose above, from the original trust deed: “In keeping with the spirit and vision of the previous acaryas of the Gaudiya Madhva sampradaya, to cement relations among the sister temples of the Gaudiya Madhva sampradaya under one banner and those *[sic]* to solidify the preaching of the message of Caitanya Mahaprabhu as desired by His Divine Grace Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Prabhupad, Srila Thakura Bhaktivinode and all the previous acaryas in this line.”

## APPENDIX G

### ISKCON AND OTHER RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

#### G.1. PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

G.1.1. ISKCON adheres to the principle that Krishna consciousness, or *bhakti-yoga*, the process of awakening pure love of Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as taught by Lord Caitanya, is the highest form of religious practice and expression. Love of Krishna is the supreme goal of life.

G.1.2. Understanding that, our *sāstras* and *ācāryas* inform us that Lord Krishna repeatedly appears in the world, and sends His empowered representatives, to deliver the forgetful souls who have forgotten the Lord's service.

- a. “Sometimes He descends personally, and sometimes He sends His bona fide representative in the form of His son, or servant, or Himself in some disguised form.”  
(*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.7, purport)

G.1.3. Understanding this truth, ISKCON values and appreciates the diverse great spiritual and religious expressions, understanding them to be responses to God's mercy as He has manifested at different times and places.

G.1.4. While we believe that Krishna-*bhakti* offers access to the fullest understanding of the Absolute Truth, ISKCON respects the validity and authenticity in other religious faiths. ISKCON

members are encouraged to be respectful to people of faith from other traditions and to see the need for people of different faiths to work together for the glorification of God and for the benefit of society as a whole.

G.1.5. ISKCON views dialogue between its members and people of other faiths as an opportunity to listen, develop mutual understanding and trust, and to share our commitment and faith with others, while respecting their commitment to their own faith.

G.1.6. ISKCON affirms the responsibility of each individual to develop his or her relationship with the Supreme Lord. This inquiry and search for God is the inherent and sacred right of every living being, as guided by their own individual conscience and free choice, and should remain unhindered by any unreasonable restrictions of either government or society.

G.1.7. ISKCON considers love of a supreme personal God to be the highest category of religious expression. We recognize and respect this expression in other theistic traditions.

a. “Anyone who accepts the supremacy of God, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, his process of worship has to be considered in the category of *bhakti-yoga*.” (Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.8, Hyderabad, 22 April 1974)

G.1.8. ISKCON respects the practitioners, communities, and faith of other religious traditions as well as the free will of individuals to worship and practice in the spiritual tradition of their choice.

We encourage all faithful people to seriously pursue their path of religious practice, with special emphasis on chanting the names of God.

- a. “It doesn’t matter which set of religious principles one follows: the only injunction is that he must follow them strictly ... Whether one is a Hindu, or a Mohammedan or a Christian, he should follow his own religious principles.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.26.15, purport)
- b. “Muhammad said that you chant ‘Allah.’ So it is authorized, because he is God’s representative. Therefore my request is, or our request is that you chant the name of Allah. We don’t say that you chant Kṛṣṇa. You chant the holy name of God. If Allah is approved name of God, you chant this. That is our request. We don’t force you that you chant the name of Kṛṣṇa. No, we don’t say that. If somebody says Jehovah is the name of God, that’s all right; you chant Jehovah. Allah is the name of God; that’s all right, you do it. We simply request that you chant the holy name of God. That’s all.”  
(Room Conversation, Tehran, 14 March 1975)

G.1.9. We also respect the spiritual worth of paths focused on genuine self-realization and a search for the Absolute Truth in which the concept of a personal Deity is not explicit.

a. “Lord Buddha preached the preliminary principles of the Vedas in a manner suitable for the time, and so also did Śaṅkarācārya to establish the authority of the Vedas. Therefore both Lord Buddha and Ācārya Śaṅkara paved the path of theism ... We are glad that people are taking interest in the nonviolent movement of Lord Buddha.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.24, purport)

G.1.10. We also value communities and organizations that advocate humanitarian, ethical, and moral standards as beneficial to individuals and society.

a. “[B]y the practice of giving up the fruits of one's activities one is sure to purify his mind gradually ... In that respect, social service, community service, national service, sacrifice for one's country, etc., may be accepted so that some day one may come to the stage of pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord ... if one decides to sacrifice for the supreme cause, even if he does not know that the supreme cause is Kṛṣṇa, he will come gradually to understand that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme cause by the sacrificial method.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 12.11, purport)

## G.2. INTERACTIONS WITHIN GAUDĪYA VAIṢNAVISM

G.2.1. ISKCON encourages and promotes a spirit of reciprocal respect and collaboration among all the authentic Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava organizations, especially among the legitimate spiritual descendants of His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

G.2.2. The appropriate degree of communication and cooperation between ISKCON and other Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava organizations depends on various considerations, such as the standards and attitudes of each organization.

G.2.3. In the spirit of faithfulness to our Founder-Ācārya, other than hosting occasional guest speakers at special events, we welcome speakers and *kīrtana* singers at ISKCON's temple programs and festivals whose words and standards strictly adhere to the teachings of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and who align and cooperate with ISKCON's policies, regulations, and authorities.

G.2.4. ISKCON appreciates the missionary efforts of the genuine spiritual descendants of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and wishes them all success in propagating the message of Lord Caitanya.

- a. “Among Vaiṣṇavas there may be some difference of opinion due to everyone's personal identity, but despite all personal differences, the cult of Kṛṣṇa consciousness

must go on. We can see that under the instructions of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja began preaching the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in an organized way within the past hundred years. The disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja are all Godbrothers, and although there are some differences of opinion, and although we are not acting conjointly, every one of us is spreading this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement according to his own capacity and producing many disciples to spread it all over the world.”  
(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.31, purport)

