

认识益世康的权威体系

GBC官方立场文件

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历史背景

多年前，为了益世康的未来，GBC启动了一项系统工程。他们选择了对这运动来说最为重要的若干主题，并组成委员会来讨论这些主题。其中一个委员会的任务是研究益世康中的权威体系，并探讨出一种方法解决不同权威体系的分歧。这个委员会的成员有巴努·斯瓦米，古茹帕萨达·斯瓦米，帕拉达南达·斯瓦米，茹阿麦·斯瓦米，希瓦茹阿玛·斯瓦米，巴铎纳茹阿央·达斯，以及之后加入的尼然佳纳·斯瓦米。

本文重点

因此，本文的重点就是来定义一个所有人都应该遵守的原则，包括启迪或训示灵性导师，启迪或训示灵性导师的门徒，GBC区域成员，地区秘书，庙长以及其他益世康授权的管理者。本文的目标是消除对灵性导师和管理者的误解，同时减少这些潜在的误解对那些接受他们共同照顾的奉献者的影响。

“灵性导师”指的是启迪灵性导师，训示灵性导师，或两者皆是

需要注意的是，从此处开始，除非特别说明，当我们使用“灵性导师”的时候，我们指的是启迪灵性导师和训示灵性导师（包括身兼这一身份的管理者）。另外，当我们使用“灵性权威”的时候，我们指的是那些（灵性导师或管理者）以自己的训示（希克沙）和榜样构成了奉献者对奉爱服务的信念的基础，同时继续构建着奉献者信念的人。

益世康内的权威

本文并不是要事无巨细或盖棺定论地分析益世康的管理系统，也无意详细分析古茹-塔特瓦——灵性导师的必备资格与职责以及选择灵性导师的过程。

本文的基本出发点是：无论奉献者是启迪灵性导师，训示灵性导师，托钵僧，管理委员会成员，区域秘书，地区秘书，庙长，团队领导或任何一位处在益世康权威地位的人，只有他或她在全体GBC的权威下追随圣帕布帕德的训示，在益世康中服务时，授予他的权威性才是全部有效的。

为了强调这一出发点，我们认为我们只需强调，圣恩自始至终，明确无误地在他的教导以及他自己签署的官方文件里的这一原则。因而，圣帕布帕德明确地确立全体GBC为最高管理权威，同时表示全体GBC的负责范围包括有责任在必要的时候为整个益世康提供灵性指导（希克沙），那些从事着灵性导师服务的奉献者也包含在内：

记者：是否任命了某人接替你作为运动的第一导师？”

圣帕布帕德：我正在训练一些人，我指的是一些进步的学生，这样他们就能够很容易承担起这份责任。我让他们成为GBC。”【1】

换句话说，尽管全体GBC的是益世康的最高管理权威，但GBC成员的职责并不仅仅是管理，而是教导。

【1】1976年6月4日，洛杉矶，与记者的室内谈话

两套权威体系

每位奉献者都从更高权威处接受他或她的灵性启发，因而益世康中存在两套权威体系，每个各有其代表——一个被认为以灵性为主，另一个被认为以管理为主。两套权威体系都服务他们各自独立却又相互依赖目标，从而共同服务于我们创始人阿查尔亚的训示。两套体系都由全体GBC授权来给予奉献者庇护，让奉献者接受他们的照顾。这一庇护既包括训示，也包括他们自己的榜样。虽然我们用以灵性为主或以管理为主这样的词汇来区分这两套灵性权威，我们并不是说管理权威就是与灵性权威相对。也绝不是说灵性权威体系就更有优先权或本质上更纯粹。

“管理也是灵性活动……这是为了推广奎师那。”【2】

“在我们的传教工作中……我们要处理大量资产和资金，这么多书籍要买进卖出，但因为这些交易都属于奎师那知觉运动，它们不能被视作物质的。一个全心投入这类管理工作的人也并不意味着他脱离了奎师那知觉。只要人严格遵守每天念诵十六圈玛哈曼陀罗的规范原则，那么他为了传播奎师那知觉运动而从事的这些与物质世界的交易就是在培养灵性的奎师那知觉。”【3】

在一个灵性的社团，一位管理者无法仅仅通过宣称和实施这些规则来完成他管理的职责。这些规则本身必须有一个灵性的基础，这些原则的推广和强化也必须复合外士那瓦原则。只有怀着这样的认识，管理者才会渐渐承担起他们所担负的灵性权威的全部力量。

因此，我们应该认识到“灵性”与“管理”的同一性。但差异性也是存在的，要想理解这共存的同一性与差异性，我们需要先明确这两个词汇的内涵。

【2】1977年1月，加尔各答，室内谈话

【3】《圣典博伽瓦谭》5.16.3要旨

灵性权威体系

灵性权威体系始自主奎师那，然后传至布茹阿玛，那茹阿达，维亚萨以及整个师徒

传系，直至圣帕布帕德，我们的创始人阿查尔亚。从属于我们的师徒传系，并在全体GBC的权威下服务的人都有权在这一灵性体系中给人庇护，得到益世康的保护。这一灵性体系可以包括管理委员会成员，区域秘书，灵性导师，托钵僧，地区秘书，庙长，团队领导，以及旅行和社团传教士。实际上，任何人只要严格追随一位名副其实的灵性导师，无论是自身的行为还是戒律，都有权代表灵性权威体系。

通常来说，最重要的灵性权威是一个人的启迪或训示灵性导师。经典中明确说明，奉献者应该听从和忠于他们的灵性导师。因而，灵性导师对他的门徒发挥着实际的权威影响，藉此灵性导师能够训练和教育其门徒的奉爱成长。因此，在给予门徒灵性教育和必需的启示，从而促使他们在奎师那知觉中进步这一过程中，灵性导师扮演着至关重要的角色。

管理权威体系

管理权威体系，与圣帕布帕德的训示一致，包括对协会的监督及其规则的实施源自全体GBC。当我们在管理结构的文中使用“权威”这个词时，我们并不是指一个绝对的，绝对正确的权威——例如经典的权威性——而是授权去组织传教运动，以使这个运动保持与圣帕布帕德的训示相协同。为了执行这一授权，他的追随者接受了圣帕布帕德赐予的益世康管理系统，用这个系统开发庙宇，汇聚奉献者（非庙宇居民），开发像农场和灵性学校这样的项目，以及组织其他有利于运动的活动和实体。因此，为了更好地服务这一不断扩展的领域及其成员，这一结构目前包括各种地区性、国家性和洲际性的管理委员会，其成员包括，而不仅限于，管理委员会成员，区域秘书，灵性导师，托钵僧，地区秘书，庙长，团队领导以及旅行和社团传教士。

分歧之处

尽管理想情况下，一切都应该按照圣帕布帕德对益世康的愿景来实现，但我们已经看到一个权威体系中的人干涉另一个权威体系的各种趋势。

比如，有些灵性权威有时会干涉本已称职而负责的管理者。这些灵性权威并不认为他们自己是地区管理结构中的一员，而他们的传教确实对当地有影响（尽管实际上他们应该为此负责）；但是他们仍然在这一结构中直接或间接地管理一些项目。

因此，他们时常管理奉献者、资金，甚至是他的追随者和依赖者【4】所负责的项目，却并没有与相关的管理结构达成一致。他们鼓励他们的依赖者来主导他们的服务，这样他们就在无心之间损伤了管理权威体系，进而也损伤了依赖者对灵性权威自己管理体系的忠诚。

这种局面不仅会导致迷惑，也会带来分裂的精神。这种情况也会引发管理者的不和，尽管资历浅的管理者通常会压抑自己，不直接表达他们的抱怨，因为他们都害怕做出冒犯，尤其是对灵性导师的冒犯。

另一方面，也有管理权威有时会提供不足的灵性照顾。这更会火上浇油，促使灵性导师出手干预，让他的门徒换一个联谊或服务。

比如，管理者可能有时会向那些接受他们照顾的人强调管理目标的重要性胜于萨达纳，纯粹地传教或者培养奉爱服务的纯洁性。对于一些处在他们管理范围内却并未对管理目标提供帮助的人，管理者甚至会忽略他们的灵性成长，尽管说管理者们自己对于提供启发可能也是无所作为，或者干脆授权别的权威来做这份服务。

【4】 依赖者”并不仅指灵性上的依赖。有些情况下，奉献者在经济上也依赖他们的灵性权威，其经济也是由灵性权威自己组织的结构来维系的。

对管理权威体系的尊重

上面提到的局面会给灵性和管理权威体系制造紧张。

当然，对于一些经济独立，同时又与当地组织团体没有任何管理关系的奉献者，确实会出现这种紧张局面，这也是可以理解的。尽管如此，也不应该认为当地管理结构无所作为，他们依然在他们当地照顾奉献者的管理体系中团结所有奉献者，启发奉献者。

因此，出于对益世康管理者从事的服务的尊敬，灵性导师应该始终先获得负责自己门徒生活的地区的管理者的许可，然后再为门徒组建一个新的团体、建议一项新服务，或者介入其他管理决定。

当然，最理想的情况是从灵性导师-门徒的关系的一开始就训练门徒向当地管理者致以尊敬。许多益世康的管理者都承担着维系标准的责任，包括庙宇、神像、派书以及其他圣帕布帕德给予我们的标准。

“安置神像意味着有规律的崇拜，从不延误，也不为了任何利益。” **【5】**

因此，灵性导师应该通过与门徒当地的领导和管理者合作，以此教导他们的门徒服务圣帕布帕德的使命。

但这并不意味着管理者就可以认为他或她可以完全无视他或她照顾的人的合理需要，这也不意味着当灵性导师请他们好好照顾他们的门徒的时候，他或她可以对灵性导师表达的关注意置之不理。管理者应该像对待他们自己灵性导师那样高度重视其他灵性导师的想法。

如果，考虑到门徒的义务和他们要承担的责任，灵性导师强烈感觉当地管理结构对他的门徒所提供的照顾严重不足，那么他可以代表他的门徒向更高层，当地

GBC成员，或其他益世康申请部门提出请求，正如文后所列。

【5】致希瓦南达的信，1971年9月2日

5 Letter to Sivananda, 2 September 1971

关于这一点我们之后还会详述。但在那之前，我们先简要讨论一下信念这个主题。信念对于我们在这里讨论的主题有着至关重要的意义，两个权威体系中的人都与此密切相关。

权威建立在信念的持续培养之上

益世康最伟大的财富是其成员的信念。即便没有庙宇，没有项目，没有收入，只有屈指可数的几个追随者，只要有信念，就会兴盛繁荣，名副其实的兴盛繁荣。想一想圣帕布帕德这封信的内容：

“梵文经典里有句谚语：有热情的人才会得到幸运女神的青睐。在西方世界，这句口号有数不胜数的例子。这里的人们对物质成就有着强烈的热情，并且得其所愿。同样，根据圣茹帕·歌斯瓦米的训示，如果我们对灵性充满热情，那么我也能在这一领域成功。比如，我一把年纪来到你们国家，但我有一个财富：热情以及对我灵性导师的信念。我认为，无论我与你们共同合作取得了什么成就，这些财富都在给与我希望的光芒。” **【6】**

在《博伽梵歌原意》9.3的要旨中，圣帕布帕德写到：信念是在奎师那知觉中进步的最重要因素……只有靠信念，人才能在奎师那知觉中进步。”

灵性权威体系中的人，其传教和行为方式应该能够滋养和保护那些依赖他们对纯粹奉爱服务的信念，对我们师徒传系的信念，对圣帕布帕德的信念，对益世康的信念，也包括益世康的管理。灵性导师更是有责任滋养和保护益世康的管理者的信念，即他们（灵性导师）是灵性权威体系的合适代表。如果灵性导师的行为与此相反，他们会损害他人的信念。

【6】致佳亚·哥文达的信，1969年10月15日，海德

反之，管理权威体系中人，其管理、传教和行为应该构建和维系灵性权威体系的人及其门徒对他们的信任。管理者如果对他们照顾的奉献者表现出真诚的关怀，灵性导师自然会鼓励他们的门徒协助管理者的服务。但如果管理者的行为方式违背灵性原则，与他们负责的奉献者的灵性利益有冲突，这同样也会损害他人的信念。

因为，为了保护益世康所有成员的信念，我们有必要清楚地为两套体系明确地界定出各自遵守的原则。

灵性导师并不是独立的

上面已经将原则讲得很清楚，不过为了进一步澄清，我们将在益世康的管理结构中讨论灵性导师的地位。

在圣帕布帕德还在世的时候，他是益世康唯一的启迪灵性导师，是益世康最伟大的训示古茹，是最高的管理权威，高于GBC：

“.....我们在用管理委员会来管理奎师那知觉运动。我们有20位GBC成员照看着整个世界运动，在GBC之上是我。在GBC之下是每个中心的庙长，秘书和财务。所以庙长对GBC负责，GBC对我负责。我们就是这样在管理.....”【7】

圣帕布帕德离世后，现在的管理结构便有所不同。圣恩训示GBC应该是益世康最高管理权威。同时，他也指示协会中应该有多位灵性导师：

“任何人，只要他在主柴坦尼亚的货真价实的代表的指导下追随主柴坦尼亚的训示，他就可以成为灵性导师，我希望我不在之后我所有门徒都成为名副其实的灵性导师，向整个世界传播奎师那知觉。”【8】

【7】致瓦苏戴瓦的信，1976年6月30日，新温达文

【8】致玛杜苏丹的信，1967年11月2日，纳瓦兑帕

这就导致一个充满挑战的局面。许多灵性组织有一位灵性导师来运营，他是整个机构唯一的领袖，而益世康在同一个组织里有许多位灵性导师，而且还有一个“管理委员会”作为整个机构的“最高管理权威”来运营。益世康中从事灵性导师服务的人都应该追随圣帕布帕德训示，同时在全体GBC的指导下工作。

因此，灵性导师有义务追随协会的政策和行为规范，包括GBC发布的公告所列事项，也有义务遵守GBC管理层的决定。这一义务包括敦促他们的门徒与自己居住地的益世康内现存的管理体系和关怀奉献者团队联谊，并在其中从事服务，而不是让他们只与自己（灵性导师）或自己联谊，或只参与自己的团队和项目，而与益世康地区管理结构毫无关系。

门徒应该避免在他们的权威之间制造矛盾

门徒也应该对益世康有着更宏观的认识。当然，一位灵性导师可能比其他某位GBC成员，或者任何其他益世康管理者灵性上更进步（同时也可能当地GBC或益世康管理者比某位灵性导师灵性更进步）。

无论如何，考虑到协会的灵性管理，正如我们已经清楚表明的，圣帕布帕德将权威授予了全体GBC及其成员，以及其他益世康的管理者。

如果门徒错误地坚信他或她的灵性导师高于全体GBC和益世康的法律与政策，那么灵性导师和其他权威应该纠正这一错误。不然，这种错误的观念下的行动会给他或她的灵性导师与管理权威带来矛盾。

实际上，所有门徒都应该追随益世康权威，同样所有启迪和训示灵性导师也应该在益世康内追随他们自己的权威。

因此，通过自身的榜样和理论，所有灵性导师都应该不仅仅教育和训练他们门徒的奉爱发展，也应该教育和训练他们与益世康管理结构的关系，正如灵性导师也应该摆正自己与这一结构的关系。

应该教给古茹门徒的原则：

益世康的灵性导师都有责任帮助他们的每一位门徒清楚地理解下列原则：

- 1) 灵性导师的权威性来自他对圣帕布帕德毫不偏离的追随。这包括毫不偏离圣帕布帕德训示地在他的使命，益世康中活动。
- 2) 灵性导师是益世康的一员，因此有责任服从其领导层，即GBC的集体意志。
- 3) 灵性导师并不仅仅因为他是灵性导师而享有任何特权或对益世康的资源享有任何优先权。不仅如此，灵性导师不应该误用他的权利和他对门徒的特权。
- 4) 所有启迪和训示灵性导师都应该以身作则追随他们自己的益世康权威，门徒们则应该以他们的榜样去追随自己的益世康权威。
- 5) 门徒最核心的任务是通过灵性导师皈依奎师那，而这一任务也包括承认和尊敬其他益世康的管理层的上级，他们在门徒的灵性进步过程中也提供着帮助。
- 6) 灵性成熟的管理者可以成为奉献者的主要训示古茹，虽然这些奉献者不是他们的启迪门徒，而奉献者的启迪灵性导师应该全力支持这种关系。

古茹的行为规范

不仅如此，为了向管理权威体系表示尊敬，同时也为了帮助培育和保护管理者对灵性权威体系的信心，每一位灵性导师都应该：

- 1) 在初次拜访一处属于益世康庙宇或传教中心的时候，或最好是在抵达之前，询问当地管理者他（灵性导师）该如何在自己的访问期间服务这一地区（而非灵性导师只考虑自己的日程安排）。

2) 在计划访问一个没有庙宇或传教中心的地区或区域之前，先征求区域GBC的意见，看当地的领导对这一地区和区域有何期望和愿景是他（灵性导师）可以效劳的。

3) 当管理议题出现分歧的时候，尽量与其他相关权威合作解决问题。如果无法达成共识，那么灵性导师应该服从相关权威的决定，有需要的话，保留向更高权威请求帮助的权利。

管理者的职责

为了达成益世康内部的合作，向灵性权威体系表示尊敬，同时也为了培养和保护灵性导师及其门徒对管理权威体系的信心，所有管理者都应该：

1) 接受启迪灵性导师和其他访问自己管辖范围内的巡游传教者的建议，尤其是有关奉献者关怀的问题。

2) 保护灵性权威的依赖者们对纯粹奉爱服务的信心，对接受和服务启迪灵性导师和训示灵性导师的信心。

3) 在自己的管辖范围内，鼓励和支持一项奉献者关怀系统（比如顾问系统，婆罗门顾问委员会等等）

4) 确保在自己的权威体系里管理者们都接受过关怀奉献者的训练。

5) 向访问灵性导师汇报他们门徒的灵性状况和整体情况。

6) 鼓励和帮助来访灵性导师和其他旅行传教士会见有需要，同时也最敬重他们的帮助的门徒。

7) 确保有一个公平公正的启迪推荐系统，从而避免当地管理体系为了管理利益而施加不当的压力或从中操纵。

结论

为了奉献者灵性生活的圆满，圣帕布帕德为益世康成立了一个有着明确权威范围的管理结构。益世康的每位成员都应该尊重这一结构，并学会如何在这一结构下工作。管理结构的目标是灵性的：通过与奉献者的联谊，服务的机会以及高效的传教策略来协助益世康成员的灵性进步。与此同时，益世康确保从一位名副其实的灵性导师接受启迪的至关重要性。

当然，最重要的，是我们的创始人阿查尔亚，圣帕布帕德，他是益世康中许多奉献者的启迪灵性导师，也是每位奉献者首要的训示灵性导师，无论是现在还是在未

来。同样重要的是现在在益世康中服务的众多启迪和训示灵性导师。

所有灵性导师和他们的门徒应该同样认同我们协会中众多管理者的重要性，他们帮助指导和训练奉献者，照料着益世康为他们的灵性进步所提供的设施。所有灵性导师和他们的门徒应该在益世康的管理系统中共同努力，这不仅有助于他们的灵性，也能够帮主整个协会成长。

这种共同的、互相的尊敬精神是保持协会团结、取悦圣帕布帕德、发扬齐颂圣名运动的最佳方式。怀着主柴坦尼亚的心态，圣帕布帕德渴望齐颂圣名运动传播到世界各地，“到每一个城镇每一个乡村”。他通过自己接连不断的旅行、写作和讲座展示了他的渴望。他要求他的门徒在全球各地开设中心，派发他的书籍，安排引人入胜的节目，派发帕萨达等等。圣帕布帕德渴望益世康能不断发展，如主柴坦尼亚的仁慈之月冉冉升起。

正是为了这个目标，圣帕布帕德成立了益世康这个有着管理结构的灵性机构。这个结构的目的是维系他设立的标准，为奉献者提供庇护和灵性滋养，以及支持和扩展齐颂圣名使命。为了取悦圣帕布帕德，从而派发施瑞施瑞高茹阿·尼太的仁慈，益世康中的每个人——灵性导师，门徒，同样包括管理者——都应该在这个结构中团结一致，携手共进。

【全文完】

Understanding ISKCON's Lines of Authority

Official GBC position paper
Approved Mayapur 2012

History of the Topic

Several years ago the GBC embarked upon developing a systematic plan for the future of ISKCON. They selected several issues of primary importance to the movement and formed committees to discuss those issues. One of the committees was requested to study the divergent lines of authority within ISKCON and suggest a method for settling disagreements between them. The members of this committee were Bhanu Swami, Guruprasada Swami, Prahladananda Swami, Ramai Swami, Sivarama Swami, Badrinarayan Dasa, and, later, Niranjana Swami.

Focus of the Essay

Hence, this essay will focus exclusively on defining principles that should be followed by initiating or instructing spiritual masters, disciples of initiating or instructing spiritual masters, Zonal GBC members, Regional Secretaries, Temple Presidents, and other ISKCON-authorized managers. The aim is to prevent misunderstandings between spiritual masters and managers, as well as to minimize the influence these potential misunderstandings may have upon devotees under their combined care.

“Spiritual Master” Means Diksa, Siksa, or Both

It should be noted that, from here on, unless specified, whenever we refer to “the spiritual master” we mean both initiating spiritual masters and instructing spiritual masters (including managers who act as such). Additionally, whenever we refer to “spiritual authorities” we mean anyone (spiritual master or manager) whose instructions (siksa) and example have formed the foundation of a devotee’s faith in devotional service and who continues to build on that foundation of the devotee’s faith.

Authority Within ISKCON

This essay is not a detailed or definitive analysis of ISKCON’s management system, nor is it a detailed analysis of guru-tattva—the requisite qualities and duties of a spiritual master and the process of choosing a spiritual master.

The basic premise of this essay is as follows: Whether a devotee is an initiating spiritual master, an instructing spiritual master, a sannyasi, a Governing Body Commissioner, a Zonal Secretary, a Regional Secretary, a Temple President, a

congregational leader, or anyone else in a position of authority within ISKCON, the authority bestowed upon that devotee is complete only if he or she follows Srila Prabhupada's instruction to serve in ISKCON under the authority of the full GBC.

To establish this premise, we feel we need do no more than emphasize that His Divine Grace consistently and clearly established this principle in his teachings, as well as within official documents he himself signed. Srila Prabhupada thus clearly established the full GBC as the ultimate managing authority and also indicated that the full GBC's jurisdiction includes the responsibility to offer spiritual guidance (siksa) when necessary, to the whole of ISKCON including all devotees serving as spiritual masters:

Reporter: "Is there anyone who is designated to succeed you as the primary teacher of the movement?"

Srila Prabhupada: "I am training some, I mean to say, advanced students so that they may very easily take up the charge. I have made them GBC."¹

In other words, although the full GBC is the ultimate managing authority in ISKCON, the GBC member's duty is not only to manage but to teach.

¹ Room Conversation with Reporter, Los Angeles, June 4, 1976

3

Two Lines of Authority

Since every devotee accepts his or her spiritual inspiration from higher authorities, two lines of authority, with their representatives, exist within ISKCON—one is seen as primarily spiritual, while the other is seen as primarily managerial. Both lines of authority serve their own unique yet interdependent purposes in submission to the orders of our Founder-Acarya. Both are authorized by the full GBC to give shelter to devotees under their care. This shelter is given through both instruction and example.

By distinguishing the two lines of spiritual authority in these terms—as primarily spiritual or primarily managerial—we are not suggesting that managerial authority is contrary to spiritual authority. Nor are we suggesting that the spiritual line of authority is somehow more privileged or intrinsically more pure.

"Management is also spiritual activity. . . . It is Krishna's establishment."²

"In our preaching work . . . we deal with so much property and money and

so many books bought and sold, but because these dealings all pertain to the Krsna consciousness movement, they should never be considered material. That one is absorbed in thoughts of such management does not mean that he is outside of Krsna consciousness. If one rigidly observes the regulative principle of chanting sixteen rounds of the maha-mantra every day, his dealings with the material world for the sake of spreading the Krsna consciousness movement are not different from the spiritual cultivation of Krsna consciousness.”³

In a spiritual society a manager cannot fulfill his or her duty to manage simply by declaring and enforcing rules. The rules themselves must have a spiritual foundation, and their implementation and enforcement must be applied in accordance with Vaisnava principles. Managers who serve with this understanding will generally carry the full weight of spiritual authority for those under their charge.

We should therefore see the oneness between “spiritual” and “managerial.” But there is also some difference, and understanding this simultaneous oneness and difference requires the use of these two distinct terms with their explanations.

2 Room Conversation, January 16, 1977, Calcutta

3 Srimad Bhagavatam, 5.16.3, purport

The Spiritual Line of Authority

The spiritual line of authority begins with Lord Krishna and continues to Brahma, Narada, Vyasa, and the entire disciplic succession through Srila Prabhupada, our Founder-Acarya. Those who are submissive to our sampradaya and who serve under the authority of the full GBC are authorized to give shelter in this spiritual line, under the auspices of ISKCON. This spiritual line can include Governing Body Commissioners, Zonal Secretaries, spiritual masters, sannyasis, Regional Secretaries, Temple Presidents, congregational leaders, and both traveling and community preachers. In fact, anyone who strictly follows a bona fide spiritual master, both by example and precept, can be authorized to represent the spiritual line of authority.

Generally speaking, the most prominent spiritual authority is one’s initiating or instructing spiritual master. The scriptures clearly say that devotees should obey and be loyal to their spiritual masters. The spiritual masters thus exert authority over their disciples, and in so doing the spiritual masters are able to train and educate their disciples in the development of bhakti. The spiritual masters, therefore, assume a significant role in giving their disciples the spiritual

education and inspiration necessary to advance in Krishna consciousness.

The Managerial Line of Authority

In the managerial line of authority, and in accordance with Srila Prabhupada's instructions, the supervision of the Society and the enforcement of its rules proceed from the full GBC. When we use the word "authority" in the context of the managerial structure, we do not mean an absolute, infallible authority—such as the authority of scripture—but the mandate to organize the preaching movement so that it is aligned with the instructions of Srila Prabhupada. To carry out that mandate, his followers have adapted ISKCON's managerial system, given by Srila Prabhupada, to take into account the proliferation of temples, congregational devotees (who are not temple residents), and projects like farms and gurukulas, as well as other favorable organizations and entities. Thus, to better serve this expanding field and its members, this structure presently includes various regional, national, and continental governing bodies consisting of, but not limited to, Governing Body Commissioners, Zonal Secretaries, spiritual masters, sannyasis, Regional Secretaries, Temple Presidents, congregational leaders, and both traveling and community preachers.

Defining the Point of Divergence

Although in an ideal world everything would work according to Srila Prabhupada's vision for ISKCON, we have seen tendencies from those in one line of authority to interfere with those in the other line of authority.

For instance, there are spiritual authorities who sometimes interfere with competent and responsible managers. They do not consider themselves part of the zonal managerial structure where their preaching has influence (though they are in fact accountable to it), but they are still either directly or indirectly managing some project(s) within that structure.

Therefore at times they manage devotees, money, and even projects that their followers and dependents⁴ are responsible for, without a clear agreement with the managerial structure with which they intersect. By so doing, they may inadvertently undermine the managerial line of authority by encouraging their dependents to direct their service, and thus their loyalty, to their spiritual authority's own management structure.

This scenario creates not only confusion but a spirit of separatism as well. Situations such as these can also become points of contention for managers, although the more junior managers often refrain from directly voicing their

grievances because they feel intimidated out of fear of committing offenses, especially to spiritual masters.

On the other hand, there are also managerial authorities who sometimes provide inadequate spiritual care. This can fuel the spiritual master's inclination to intervene by suggesting an alternative for his disciple's association or service.

For instance, managers may sometimes place greater importance on management goals than on sadhana, preaching purely, or the development of purity in the devotional service of those under their care. Managers may even neglect the spiritual development of those within their jurisdiction who do not offer resources to help their managerial vision, even though said managers may have done little to inspire help from them or to empower other authorities to do the same.

4dm e “aDvionetpteaeinnsd caedrn ebt aysl” ts ahore ef is nntarount ccotinaullryley ts hd toehspeee swnpdhieroin tatur auelp saopunitr htithouerairrtli yse psd iehrpiatevunea dlt heaneumtt.h Tsoehrleivtreiees s ac rarene aidnt esatdrae.n feineas nwchiaelrlye

Deference to the Managerial Line of Authority

The above-mentioned scenarios cause tension between the spiritual and the managerial lines of authority.

Of course, it is understood that circumstances do arise where there are financially independent devotees who have no managerial connection with locally organized sanghas. Still, it should not be assumed that no effort is being made by local management structures to include every devotee, or aspiring devotee, within their locally managed system of care for congregational devotees.

Therefore, with respect to the service performed by ISKCON managers, a spiritual master should always seek approval from the managers overseeing the area of jurisdiction in which his disciples are living before suggesting a new sangha or service for them, or intervening in other managerial decisions.

Best, of course, is to train the disciples to offer respect to their local managers right from the start of the spiritual–master/disciple relationship. Many ISKCON managers are carrying out the responsibility of maintaining the temples, Deities, book distribution, and other standards given to us by Srila Prabhupada.

“Deity installation means regular worship without fail and for good.”⁵

Therefore spiritual masters should teach their disciples to serve Srila Prabhupada's mission by cooperating with their local leaders and managers.

But this does not mean that a manager should assume that he or she has complete freedom to ignore legitimate needs of those under his or her care or that he or she has the freedom to ignore concerns expressed by spiritual masters who ask them to see that their disciples are properly cared for. They should be sensitive to the concerns of the spiritual masters as well as their Disciples.

If the spiritual master still strongly feels that the level of care for his disciples within the local management structure is inadequate, taking into account the level of commitment and responsibilities being asked of them (his disciples), then he may appeal on their behalf to the higher levels of management, the local GBC member, or other ISKCON avenues of appeal, as listed later in this paper.

5 Letter to Sivananda, 2 September 1971

More on this point will be addressed later. But before we do that, we will first briefly discuss the topic of faith. Those in both lines of authority would be well served to consider the relevance of faith to the broader issues being discussed here.

Authority Is Built on the Continuous Development of Faith

ISKCON's greatest asset is the faith of its members. Even if there are no temples, no projects, no income, and only a few followers, if there is faith, there will be prosperity, in the true sense of the term. Consider what Srila Prabhupada has written in the following letter:

“There is a proverb in Sanskrit literature that enthusiastic persons achieve the favor of the Goddess of Fortune. In the Western part of the world there is tangible example of this slogan. People in this part of the world are very much enthusiastic in material advancement and they have got it. Similarly, according to the instructions of Srila Rupa Goswami, if we become enthusiastic in spiritual matters, then we also get success in that way. Take for example, I came to your country in ripe old age, but I had one asset: enthusiasm and faith in my Spiritual Master. I think these assets only are giving me some lights of hope, whatever I have achieved so far with your cooperation.”⁶

And in his purport to “Bhagavad-gita As It Is” 9.3, Srila Prabhupada writes: “Faith is the most important factor for progress in Krishna consciousness. . . It is only by faith that one can advance in Krishna consciousness.”

Those in the spiritual line of authority should preach and behave in such a way that they nourish and protect their dependents’ faith in pure devotional service, in our sampradaya, in Srila Prabhupada, and in ISKCON, including its management. Spiritual masters also have the added responsibility of nourishing and protecting ISKCON’s managers’ faith that they (the spiritual masters) are fit representatives of the spiritual line of authority. If the spiritual masters act in a contrary way, they will erode the faith of others.

6 Letter to Jaya Govinda, Tittenhurst, 15 October 1969.

Conversely, those in the managerial line of authority should manage, preach, and behave in such a way that they build and sustain the trust of those in the spiritual line of authority and their disciples. By the managers showing genuine concern for the devotees under their care, the spiritual masters will then naturally encourage their disciples to assist the manager in his service. But if managers act in a way contrary to spiritual principles, in conflict with the spiritual interests of those devotees for whom they are responsible, that will also erode others’ faith.

Therefore, to safeguard the faith of all of ISKCON’s members, it is necessary that we delineate clear principles for both lines of authority to follow.

Spiritual Masters Are Not Independent

To further clarify the need to introduce well-defined principles, we will examine the position of spiritual masters within the managerial structure of ISKCON.

When Srila Prabhupada was physically present, he was ISKCON’s sole initiating spiritual master, its preeminent siksa guru, and the supreme managerial authority, superior to the GBC:

“[...]we are managing our Krishna Consciousness Movement by the Governing Body Commission, GBC. We have got about 20 GBC’s looking after the whole world affair, and above the GBC I am there. Below the GBC there are the temple president, secretary, treasurer in every centre. So the temple president is responsible to the GBC and the GBC is responsible to me. In this way we are managing..”⁷

In Srila Prabhupada's physical absence the structure is now somewhat different. His Divine Grace instructed that the GBC should be the ultimate managing authority for ISKCON. At the same time he indicated that the Society should have multiple spiritual masters:

"Anyone following the order of Lord Caitanya under the guidance of His bona fide representative can become a spiritual master, and I wish that in my absence all my disciples become the bona fide spiritual master to spread Krishna Consciousness throughout the whole world."⁸

⁷ Letter to: Vasudeva, New Vrindaban, 30 June, 1976 ⁸ Letter to Madhusudana, Navadvipa, 2 November 1967.

This gives rise to a challenging situation. Many spiritual organizations have one spiritual master operating as the sole head of the institution, whereas ISKCON has many spiritual masters within one organization, in addition to a "governing body" that operates as the "ultimate managing authority" for the institution as a whole. Those serving as spiritual masters in ISKCON are meant to follow the instructions of Srila Prabhupada and work under the full GBC.

The spiritual masters are thus obligated to follow the Society's policies and codes of conduct, including those outlined in this GBC-approved paper, and to abide by the decisions of its management. Included within that obligation is the responsibility to inspire their disciples to associate with and serve within ISKCON's already-existing managerial and devotee-care sangas, located within their disciple's area of residence rather than only inspiring them to associate with themselves (the spiritual masters) or with their sangas and projects that have no connection with the ISKCON zonal management structure.

Disciples Should Avoid Creating Conflict Between Their Authorities

Disciples should also understand the greater picture within ISKCON. Certainly a spiritual master may be more spiritually advanced than any given GBC member or any other ISKCON manager (while there may also be cases where the local GBC or ISKCON manager may be more spiritually advanced than a particular spiritual master).

Nevertheless, concerning the spiritual management of the Society, as we have already clearly shown, Srila Prabhupada invested authority in the full GBC and its individual members and in other ISKCON managers.

If a disciple has the mistaken conviction that his or her spiritual master is above the full GBC and ISKCON's laws and policies, that should be corrected by the spiritual master and other authorities. Otherwise, that misconception may lead to actions which create conflict between his or her spiritual and managerial authorities

Indeed, all disciples should follow their ISKCON authorities in the same way that all initiating and instructing spiritual masters should follow their own authorities within ISKCON.

By both example and precept, therefore, all spiritual masters should not only educate and train their disciples in the development of bhakti but should also educate and train them about their relation to the managerial structure of ISKCON, as well as about the spiritual masters' own relation to that structure.

Principles Being Introduced Education of guru's disciples

It is the responsibility of the spiritual masters within ISKCON to help every one of their disciples clearly understand the following:

- 1) The spiritual master draws his authority from his fidelity to Srila Prabhupada. This includes fidelity to Srila Prabhupada's order to work within his mission, ISKCON.
- 2) The spiritual master is a member of ISKCON and, as such, is accountable to the collective will of its leadership, the GBC Body.
- 3) The spiritual master does not derive any specific right or prerogative over ISKCON resources simply by dint of his being a spiritual master. Moreover, the spiritual master should not misuse his rights and prerogatives over his disciples.
- 4) The disciples should follow their ISKCON authorities in the same way that all initiating and instructing spiritual masters set an example by following their own ISKCON authorities.
- 5) Disciples have the essential task of surrendering to Krishna through the spiritual master, and included within this task is recognizing and respecting other superiors within ISKCON's management who are helping them in their process of spiritual progress.

6) Spiritually mature managers may be the main siksa gurus for devotees who are not their initiated disciples, and such relationships are to be fully encouraged by the initiating spiritual masters.

Conduct of gurus

Moreover, to show respect toward the managerial line of authority and to help nurture and protect managers' faith in the spiritual line of authority, every spiritual master should:

1) When first visiting or preferably before arriving at a recognized ISKCON temple or preaching center, ask the local manager how he (the spiritual master) may serve that yatra during his visit (rather than the spiritual master only pursuing his own agenda).

2) Before planning a visit to a zone or region where there is no local temple or preaching center, first ask the Zonal GBC if there is a vision local leaders have for that place or region which he (the spiritual master) could serve.

3) If there is a disagreement in terms of managerial decisions, do his best to cooperate with the relevant authority. If no agreement can be reached, then the spiritual master should defer to the decision of the relevant authority, with the option of appealing to higher authorities if necessary.

Duties of Managers

To build cooperation within ISKCON, show respect for the spiritual line of authority, and help nurture and protect the faith of spiritual masters and their disciples in the managerial line of authority, all managers should:

1) Be receptive to advice given by initiating spiritual masters and other itinerant preachers visiting their area of jurisdiction, especially on matters concerning devotee care.

2) Protect the faith that their dependents have in pure devotional service and in the principle of accepting and serving an initiating spiritual master and instructing spiritual masters.

3) Encourage and support a system of devotee care (i.e., counselor system, brahminical advisory board, etc.) within their sphere of management.

- 4) Assure that the managers in their line of authority are themselves trained in the principles of devotee care.
- 5) Inform visiting spiritual masters about the spiritual health and overall well-being of their disciples.
- 6) Encourage and help visiting spiritual masters and other itinerant preachers to reach out to those disciples who are in need and who would be most responsive to their help.
- 7) Insure that there is an equitable system for initiation recommendations which does not condone unwarranted pressure or manipulation from the local management for managerial gains.

Summary

To promote the full flourishing of devotees' spiritual lives, Srila Prabhupada created for ISKCON a managerial structure with clear lines of authority. Every member of ISKCON should respect this structure and learn to work within it. The goal of the managerial structure is spiritual: to facilitate the spiritual advancement of ISKCON's members through association with devotees, opportunities for service, and effective preaching strategies. Simultaneously, ISKCON affirms the fundamental importance of accepting initiation from a bona fide spiritual master.

Of paramount importance, of course, is our Founder-Acarya, Srila Prabhupada, who is the initiating spiritual master of many devotees in ISKCON and the foremost instructing spiritual master of every devotee, now and in the future. Also important are the many initiating and instructing spiritual masters now serving in ISKCON.

All spiritual masters and their disciples should likewise appreciate the importance of the many managers in our society, who help guide and train disciples and oversee the facilities ISKCON provides for their spiritual advancement. All spiritual masters and their disciples should work cooperatively within ISKCON's managerial system, both to benefit themselves spiritually and to help the Society flourish.

This cooperative, mutually respectful spirit is the best way to preserve the Society's unity, please Srila Prabhupada, and expand the sankirtana mission. In the mood of Lord Caitanya, Srila Prabhupada desired that the sankirtana

movement be spread all over the world, “to every town and village.” He demonstrated that desire by his constant traveling, writing, and speaking. He requested his disciples to open centers far and wide, distribute his books, arrange for attractive festivals, distribute prasada, etc. It was Srila Prabhupada’s desire that ISKCON continue to expand, to rise as the benediction moon of Lord Caitanya’s mercy.

It is for this purpose that Srila Prabhupada established ISKCON as a spiritual institution with a managerial structure. The purpose of this structure is to maintain the standards he established, to offer shelter and spiritual nourishment to the devotees, and to support and increase the sankirtana mission. To please Srila Prabhupada by delivering the mercy of Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai to the conditioned souls, everyone within ISKCON—spiritual masters, disciples, and managers alike—should work cooperatively within this structure.

[end]