



History of ISKCON Appointed Diksa Gurus 1978-2014

This is a history of GBC resolutions, gurus approved, gurus suspended, and other key events in ISKCON as specifically related to diksa and siksa gurus. Although compiled carefully over many years, and in consultation with many ISKCON members, some historians and some former members, there are undoubtedly a lot of errors and omissions in this document due to a lack of information. There are especially errors in terms of the specific years that some persons were approved or disapproved to act as diksa guru in ISKCON. Such errors are due to a lack of record-keeping on the part of any official ISKCON body. This is intended to be a public document, for the view of anyone interested in ISKCON history; it is not an internal document.

(Note: most GBC resolutions are here in a summary form; some are in the exact wording).

1978 - SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

“The Process for Carrying out Srila Prabhupada’s desires for Future Initiations” –a paper compiled by the GBC in consultation with higher authorities. This paper has a few references to sastra, and gives a general outline of the way in which the process of initiation would go on in ISKCON. It is more a summary of GBC policies than it is a scholarly paper. Some aspects of it—such as saying that disciples have a choice as to whom they take as guru—were not instituted. It explains that new gurus will be chosen by the group of existing gurus, in order for the process to have “spiritual characteristics.”

Pradyumna dasa, Prabhupada’s Sanskrit editor, writes a letter to the GBC explaining how there were many discrepancies in ISKCON’s guru system in relation to sastra and tradition (he did not reference very much sastra—mostly tradition and sadhus).

Result: Pradyumna dasa was removed from translating the Bhagavatam, and his letter ignored.

GBC RESOLUTIONS

- March 19 resolution: Starting in 1979, gurus would need a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of GBC.
- March 21 amendment: GBC committee of existing gurus would select new gurus once a year.
- Zonal Acharya system.

- For each zone, guru would be like Srila Prabhupada was to the world.
- 3 vyasanas, Gurupuja was offered simultaneously.
- Srila Prabhupada disciples should treat the eleven gurus almost like own spiritual master.
- Gurus who fall or leave ISKCON lose their post and can come back as regular devotees.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Bhagavan Das

Bhavananda Das

Hansadutta Swami

Harikesa Swami

Hridayananda Das Goswami

Jayapataka Swami

Jayatirtha Das

Kirtanananda Swami

Ramesvara Das

Satsvarupa Das Goswami

Tamala Krishna Goswami

EVENTS

- Disciples had to take initiation from the guru of his or her zone; those who wanted a different guru had to relocate.
- Each guru had his own seat in temples in his zone, there was another seat for visiting guru, and other Bhagavatam speakers used a third seat (sometimes a fourth seat was used for Bhagavatam speakers who were Prabhupada's grand-disciples).
- The local guru's picture was permanently on the altar, and his pranam mantra was chanted in every kirtana (in the temple, on harinama, etc.) before Prabhupada's pranama mantra, the name of the local guru was added to the premadvani prayers, each guru was given an honorific title which had to be used by everyone when addressing him, and all temple residents had to attend a simultaneous guru-puja daily to Prabhupada and the local guru.

At GBC meetings, the gurus sat on seats higher than that of the other GBC members.

1979 - SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

Twenty-one devotees worldwide joined to write a thirty six page paper similar to Pradyumna's, which they gave to the GBC.

EVENTS

There was a confrontation in Vrindavana between the GBC and BG Nrsingha, Yasodanandana, and others on the issue of guru.

1980 - SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

Ramesvara writes a thoroughly sadhu-sastra-guru based essay on guru reform, mostly that madhyamas can be gurus ("On the Position of the Initiating Guru in the Western USA Zone"). In this paper, Ramesvara writes that he understands his behavior as offensive in terms of accepting worship equal to Srila Prabhupada.

Result: GBC affirms their 1978 paper, and thus rejects Ramesvara's conclusions.

The GBC, in response to Ramesvara's paper, commissions another paper, to be written by Bhagavan, Jagadisha, Satsvarupa Goswami, Jayapataka Swami, and Hridayananda Swami.

This paper establishes that all present gurus are uttama adhikaris and should receive full worship, guru titles, and so forth.

Jadurani married to Kailasa Chandra. Together they distributed a paper, "The Bona Fide Spiritual Master and the Disciple" stating that there should not be appointments of guru, but

rather “self-effulgent maha-bhagavata acaryas” and accused the Zonal Acarya system and guru appointment systems as being bogus.

Hrdayananda dasa Goswami wrote the GBC requesting that all Prabhupada’s disciples who are in good standing should be allowed to initiate.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Suspended for one year:

Hansadutta dasa Goswami

Jayatirtha dasa

Tamal Krishan dasa Goswami

EVENTS

- The GBC hold three “full extraordinary special” meetings to deal with guru deviations.
- Ramesvara removes his vyasasana from the temple room in Los Angeles.
- Talks at the “Pyramid House” in Topanga Canyon, where Tamal Krishna dasa Goswami says that Prabhupada never appointed the eleven to be the sole diksa gurus and that Prabhupada wanted many people to initiate.
- [From Jayadvaita Swami’s paper “Where the Ritvik People Are Wrong”] “At a meeting in Topanga Canyon in 1980, Tamal Krishna Maharaja stated that Srila Prabhupada had never appointed the eleven ritviks to be anything more than ritviks. “If it had been more than that,” he said, “you can bet your bottom dollar that Prabhupada would have spoken for days and hours and weeks on end about how to set up this thing with the gurus, but he didn’t. . .”

The gurus issue a statement that all gurus are uttama adhikaris based on their preaching abilities.

1981 - GBC RESOLUTIONS

- The GBC committee of existing gurus recommends to the GBC names of possible gurus, now needing a 2/3 vote of the committee.
- That all initiating Gurus agree to request a disciple to leave a particular temple only when it is deemed by the Guru that it is a matter of "spiritual life and death" for the disciple. Areas of such extreme concern would be: Having the disciples exposed to direct blasphemy regularly; inability of the disciple to follow the four regulative principles, etc. This would be done after consulting with the local GBC member.
- Instead of simultaneous guru-puja for Prabhupada and the zonal guru in all temples, the guru-pujas would now be consecutive (first Prabhupada, then the zonal guru).

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Reinstated because of accepting the zonal acarya system:

Hansadutta dasa Goswami

Tamal Krishna dasa Goswami

EVENTS

The GBC rejects the conclusion of the Pyramid talks.

1982 - SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

GBC paper “The Process for Expanding the Number of Initiating Gurus in ISKCON” explains the process and rationale for the list of gurus and adding to the list. There are very few references to sadhu-sastra-guru.

GBC RESOLUTIONS

- The acarya committee is disbanded. Now each and every GBC member can be considered a candidate to be guru, subject to ¾ vote of the GBC body. Thereafter, any

GBC who is also initiating recommends godbrothers in their zone to be gurus; such persons must receive a ¾ vote of the GBC body.

- Explanation of what reasons (e.g., too large a preaching area, too many disciples, etc.) would constitute the need to have more than one acarya in a zone.
- Listing of six qualificationsⁱ and six vowsⁱⁱ required for gurus.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Bhakti Swarupa Damodara Swami
Gopala Krishna Goswami
Pancadravida Swami

Suspended:

Jayatirtha Maharaja

EVENTS

Jayatirtha's disciples were ordered to take re-initiation from someone else (in Detroit they were told they had two weeks to do so, or they would lose their privileges of first or second initiation).

1983 - GBC RESOLUTIONS

- Title "Founder-Acarya" can only be used for Prabhupada.
- Prabhupada's name must be prominent on all printed materials, buildings, etc.
- Gurus who are sannyasis must carry their danda for at least ten years.
- In every ISKCON temple there must be a Vyasa asana for the temple's initiating Guru(s) and their pictures must be displayed, [on vyasasana and altar] and regularly offered Guru-Puja.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Suspended:

Hansadutta Swami (at an emergency meeting)

1984 - SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

"Preliminary Report" by Ravindra Svarupa dasa says that ISKCON is a kanishta society and the current guru situation is against the proper practice of Vaisnava relations.

All Hansadutta's disciples need to take re-initiation from someone else.

EVENTS

A group of devotees in California, USA, circulated papers stating that none of Prabhupada's disciples were fit to be an acarya and suggested that all initiations in ISKCON be suspended until a "self-effulgent acarya" emerged.

At a North American temple presidents meeting, a second, special meeting was convened to deal specifically with the problems of gurus in ISKCON, with Ravindra Svarupa dasa leading what came to be known as the reform movement.

Ravindra Svarupa dasa wrote a paper detailing the problem.

1985 - SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

Ravindra Svarupa writes a paper "Under My Order", asking for guru reform.

Result: In 1986, the GBC stated that his paper did not represent their opinion and reaffirmed the principle of Zonal divisions for gurus.

GBC RESOLUTIONS

Gurus can be in any asrama.

All ISKCON leaders must visibly chant 16 rounds a day, must follow the 4 regulative principles, and must religiously attend the daily morning program in the temple, as prescribed by Srila Prabhupada.

- Prospective gurus must have worked in an area at least three years and have recommendations of local GBC secretary, National Secretary, Regional or State Secretary, local Presidents or Temple leaders, as applicable. The recommendations of the Zonal leaders should be submitted in confidential letters to the GBC officers.
- Blessings to initiate apply to a particular geographical area. Gurus who change their area must go through the review process again to establish the GBC as the ultimate authority.
- Initiates must vow at initiation that they are entering the ISKCON disciplic succession where the founder is Prabhupada and where the GBC are the managers.
- Disciples must offer daily guru puja to their diksa guru.
- The GBC secretary in a zone is the ultimate authority, not the Zonal guru.
- Guru worship should be the same for the Zonal guru and for other gurus.
- All Hansadutta or his followers' publicity or paraphernalia is banned.
- A resolution at an emergency meeting in September allowed anyone to initiate if they received the approval of any three GBC members.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Agrani Swami
 Bhakti Abhaya Carana Swami
 Bhakti Tirtha Swami
 Bir Krishna dasa Goswami
 Caru dasa
 Gaura Govinda Swami
 Jagadisha Goswami
 Lokanatha Swami
 Maharam dasa Adhikari
 Narahari Swami
 Paramananda dasa Adhikari
 Radha Krsna Swami
 Virabahu dasa

Suspended:

Bhavananda Swami

EVENTS

- Bhaktidayal files charges against Harikesa Swami with the GBC. The GBC holds an emergency meeting in Los Angeles and pardons Harikesa.
- Prabhupada disciples meet in New Vrindavana to discuss guru reform.
- For the first time all GBC sit on the same level in the temple room (previously gurus sat on higher seats).
- Bhagavan and Sundarupa propose a two-tiered system of acaryas and lesser gurus.
- North European leaders issue a paper protesting against reform.
- Jayapataka Swami writes a letter to Hridayananda Goswami discussing the Zonal Acarya system and how it can work with the addition of many gurus. (This letter clearly illuminates the thinking at that time).

1986 - GBC RESOLUTIONS

- Based upon the GBC guidelines for initiating gurus, any GBC can present a diksa guru candidate before the GBC body. Unless the majority of voting members objects to the nomination, the candidate will be placed on a required one year waiting period, during which he should neither conclude nor convey to others that he will automatically be approved.
- At the end of the yearly waiting period, the GBC body will review the candidates qualification taking account the opinion of the local leadership, and upon majority

approval of the body, he may take up the responsibilities of an initiating guru in ISKCON. (This is a change to majority approval.)

- Blessings are given to those who are already initiating (those who got approved through the approval of any three GBC members).
- As soon as possible after approval, a diksa guru should take an oath in a public ceremony.
- The GBC state that their approval system is not intended to be a statement on the degree or level of God realization of an initiating guru and disciples are personally responsible to accept a guru only after developing faith in that guru.
- The GBC give rules for emergency meetings.
- A special vyasasana for local gurus was made a local option.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Atreya Rsi das Adhikari

Bhaktiprabhava Maharaja

Ganapati Swami

Jagad Guru Swami

Mahanidhi Swami

Mukunda Goswami

Navayogendra Swami

Niranjana Swami

Prahladananda Swami

Ravindra Svarupa dasa Adhikari

Romapada Swami

Rupanuga dasa Adhikari

Vipramukhya Swami (one year waiting period)

Bhavananda Swami can start initiating again after October—he initiates before that and is then expelled.

Suspended:

Pancadravida Swami (expelled from ISKCON)

Bhavananda Swami

EVENTS

The GBC holds an emergency meeting in California to discuss Ramesvara.

Ramesvara and Bhagavan resign and leave ISKCON.

Hamsadutta followers vacate ISKCON Berkeley.

Start of the fifty man committee in addition to the GBC (may have started in 1985).

1987 - SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

Jayadvaita Swami writes “Several Grievances Against the GBC”, Jayadvaita Swami, March 5th, 1987ⁱⁱⁱ

GBC RESOLUTIONS

- Devotees who have first initiation from Prabhupada and second from someone else are understood to be Prabhupada’s disciples.
- Personal seats for gurus are now forbidden. There is one seat for all Bhagavatam speakers, and grand-disciples can elect to sit on the floor to give class.
- The word “Acarya” can only be used for Srila Prabhupada.
- Public worship of gurus is forbidden.
- Prospective disciples should chant Prabhupada mantra for six months and worship him as their siksa guru; during the second six months a prospective disciple may chant the future guru’s mantra.

- Resolutions stating that disciples may (rather than must) take re-initiation after the fall of a guru, that suspended gurus cannot be worshipped. ^{iv}
- The process for serving as a guru in ISKCON is to receive majority approval from a council consisting of all the GBC members of his zone plus at least ten additional senior people in the zone, following the list of compulsory rules and guidelines. ^v
- Disciples are allowed to take initiation from any guru provided the guru is eligible to initiate in ISKCON. ^{vi}
- All gurus are free to preach in any zone.
- Standards for gurus' conduct in terms of ISKCON authority are delineated. ^{vii}

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

A.C. Bhaktivaibhava Swami
 Astaratha dasa
 Bhakti-bhusana Swami
 Bhakti Charu Swami
 Danavir Goswami
 Jayadvaita Swami
 Kavicandra Swami
 Krishna Ksetra dasa Brahmachari
 Krsnadasa Swami
 Sacinandana Swami
 Smita Krsna Swami
 Rohini Suta dasa Brahmachari
 Sivarama Swami
 Trivikrama Swami

Suspended:

Kirtanananda Swami (expelled from ISKCON)
 Ramesvara
 Bhagavan

EVENTS

- Beginning of propagation of ritvik philosophy by Rupa Vilasa dasa and Karnamrita dasa and Nityananda dasa. (Is this year correct?)
- Prabhupada's letters are published.
- Satsvarupa dasa Goswami resigns from the GBC, removes his vyasasana, and writes a booklet on "Guru Reform".
- Temple presidents of Ramesvara's former zone form the Western Zonal Council and elect Badrinarayana as their GBC (He is accepted by the GBC in 1988).
- Tamal Krishna dasa Goswami organizes a peer review committee of fifty Prabhupada disciples to interview the remaining GBC and give a vote of confidence or no confidence. This group also recommended fifteen new GBC members.

1988 - GBC RESOLUTIONS

- A paper is commissioned regarding re-initiation.
- Suspension of "pre-initiation" ceremonies.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Bhaktividyā purna Swami

1989 - GBC RESOLUTIONS

- In addition to the local council, guru candidates' names will be sent to the GBC secretary who will send the name to all GBC members. If, within three months three

GBC members express serious doubts in writing to the secretary, the person's case will be discussed at the next annual meeting.

- All rules about becoming a diksa guru will be applied to siksa gurus also.
- That before officially objecting to any guru candidate's recommendation, a GBC member should contact in writing the guru candidate and the chairman of the ten man committee for clarification. If dissatisfied with the reply, or if not receiving a reply within a reasonable period of time, the GBC member may then officially object. To give enough time for exchange of correspondence, the period allowed to lodge all objections shall be extended to six months.
- Acceptance of the paper "Guru Asraya" as an official paper on re-initiation.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Prithu dasa

Suspended:

Bhagavan dasa

Bhavananda dasa

Ramesvara dasa

1990 - GBC RESOLUTIONS

- Local GBC members should report to the GBC secretary if an ISKCON-approved initiating guru has gone to a non-ISKCON institution, rejected Prabhupada, or had any change of asrama or service that might impact the guru service.
- Official statement against the posthumous ritvik theory.
- Prospective disciples have to pass a test given by the local ISKCON temple president.^{viii}

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Mahavishu Swami (British)

Dhanurdhara Swami

EVENTS

Ritvik debate attended by most North American leaders. (Is this year correct?)

1991 - SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

(GBC RESOLUTION) 78. That the GBC Body presents to the movement an historical and philosophical account of the guru system in ISKCON after 1977, in order to offer devotees an accurate and authoritative history of the guru reforms ISKCON undertook and to put these events in proper historical and philosophical perspective. Ravindra Svarup das will write this paper with assistance from Trivikrama Swami. All GBC members and other ISKCON devotees with advice, documents, recollections, reflections, etc., to offer are welcome to write Ravindra Svarupa das by July 31. The completed paper will, if possible, be circulated for review to all GBC Members prior to the 1992 Annual Meeting.

Result: this paper was never started nor completed.

1992 - GBC RESOLUTIONS

- Changes to the local nominating committee: Local nominating committees for diksa gurus must give the GBC body their reasons for their recommendation, a chronological history of the candidate's service, and the names of all committee members, their service, their vote, and their reasons for voting.
- The local committee must include the local GBC's, Regional Secretaries (if any), Temple Presidents, and resident sannyasis of the region proposing the appointment. Additionally, any neighboring spiritual authorities of a similar caliber and senior

devotees in good standing are ideally to be included in the committee. {92} Once the committee is formed it cannot be reconstituted, except to replace a member who has become spiritually disqualified.

- Clarification of the waiting period before initiation or re-initiation: A candidate must wait at least six months after having been chanting Prabhupada's mantra for another six months, having passed the exam, and having informed the local authorities of choice of diksa guru.
- Moratorium on all pre-initiation or "taking shelter" ceremonies that include any vows of sadhana and loyalty.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Bhakti Bhrnga Govinda Swami

Suspended:

Agrani Swami

Maharama dasa Adhikari

Radha Krsna Swami

1993 - GBC RESOLUTIONS

- If an initiation candidate changes his or her mind about whom to accept as diksa guru, such person must wait six months after declaring the choice of guru, even if the person had already waited six months or more to take initiation from another guru.
- Clarification of the standards for local ISKCON authorities giving recommendations for initiation.^{ix}
- Modification of the rule that GBC members must submit to the GBC EC information on gurus who have left ISKCON, rejected Prabhupada, or changed their service/asrama in such a way as might disrupt their duties as guru to include a written statement from the guru as to his intentions regarding his disciples and his service.

For a devotee to be approved as an initiating guru in ISKCON, all of his initiations must be from ISKCON gurus in good standing. Devotees who have been initiated by bonafide Gaudiya Vaisnavas and who later join ISKCON may be considered as special cases by the GBC Body.

- Devotees who serve in ISKCON may only take initiation from approved ISKCON gurus. Those who take initiation from non-approved gurus must serve outside ISKCON or take re-initiation.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Hanumatprasa Swami

Radhanatha Swami

EVENTS

Hamsadutta asks to be accepted back into ISKCON.

Dhanurdhara Swami is confronted in the LA temple by former students, in a meeting that Badrinarayana arranges.

1995 - SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

"Gurus and Initiation in ISKCON" produced. Part of this document was a paper entitled "On My Order Understood", in which the GBC attempted to explain once and for all what Srila Prabhupada's orders on how initiations in ISKCON would continue after his physical departure. This paper claims to be the "final siddhanta" on guru tattva in ISKCON.

GBC RESOLUTIONS

- Persons who have first initiation from Srila Prabhupada and second from an ISKCON guru may be candidates for guru with their mantra guru's written consent.

- Regarding siksa gurus: Anyone who is born in ISKCON or is a member for at least a year may accept a siksa guru with the approval of the local temple president, gurukula principal, or parents. Such siksa disciples may cultivate a relationship of shelter and towards initiation. If the disciple wants to change siksa gurus, approval must again be sought.
- GBC's who object to a candidate who has been nominated by a local council no longer need to communicate with the council and the candidate to submit specific objections and get the council and candidate's response—they only need to give their objections to the EC.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Radha Govinda Swami
Umapati Swami
Varsana Swami

Suspended: (sometime between 1989-1995)

Jagad-guru Swami (now a member of the Gaudiya math, known as Bhakti Gaurava
Narasingha Maharaja)
Paramananda dasa Adhikari
Narahari Swami
Astaratha Dasa
Atreya Rsi Dasa
Bhaktiprabhava Maharaja

1996 - SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

Jayadvaita Swami publishes "Where the Ritviks are Wrong".

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Rukmini Pati dasa

EVENTS

Names of approved gurus are no longer listed in GBC resolutions.

Prabhupada Centennial reinforces the idea of having Prabhupada at the center.

Prabhupada's disciples are encouraged to take more active part in ISKCON and start to receive special status.

1997 - GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Suspended:

Jagadish Goswami

Others (??)

1998 - GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Vedavyasapriya Swami
Sridhara Swami

Suspended:

Rohini Kumari Swami (Bhaktivaidurya Madhava)
B.V. Madhava resigns
Harikesa resigns and leaves ISKCON

1999 - SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

(In GBC RESOLUTIONS) Acknowledgement that Pradyumna and others had warned of the dangers of the Zonal Acarya system and its components, but had been ignored.

GBC RESOLUTIONS

- GBC statement of the harms of the Zonal Acarya system: “Despite GBC Body efforts to correct the Zonal Acarya deviation as flaws in the system surfaced and many of the Zonal Acaryas left ISKCON, our society continues to be affected by the misunderstandings of that system.”
- New members can choose when and from whom to take diksa without any pressure from anyone (within the constraints of existing resolutions about six months of shelter of Prabhupada, taking the exam, and six months of shelter of the diksa guru).
- All devotees should first chant Prabhupada’s pranama mantra and then the mantra of their diksa guru.
- All devotees should observe Prabhupada’s guru puja daily, in temple or at home.
- ISKCON diksa or siksa gurus may accept a public guru-puja once a year on ISKCON property on their Vyasa-puja.
- Welcoming events for Vaisnavas including diksa and siksa gurus should be modest.
- Prabhupada’s books should be the foundation.
- Gurus should consult with local temple presidents about engaging devotees in service.
- Gurus should minimize the number of people in their personal service, should not engage members of the opposite sex in direct personal service nor be alone with a member of the opposite sex.
- Dakshin and donations given to siksa and diksa gurus are ISKCON property.
- Gurus must tell disciples at the time of initiation that the disciples have a siksa link to Srila Prabhupada who is their preeminent siksa guru.
- All devotees should be trained to worship Srila Prabhupada and can worship their siksa and diksa gurus who are in good standing according to ISKCON law.
- Vyasa puja: Prabhupada’s Vyasa Puja should be held on a grander scale than that for any ISKCON guru; ISKCON gurus should have their Vyasa Puja celebration on only one day a year (may be in the temple room); and local authorities should have at least three day seminars with diksa and siksa gurus to compensate for having only one Vyasa Puja celebration a year.
- Disciples may not address their gurus either publicly or privately with any honorifics other than “Gurudeva” or “Gurumaharaja” (no “His Divine Grace” or anything ending in –pada or –deva).
- Photos of gurus: Pujaris should place photos of their diksa and/or siksa gurus other than Srila Prabhupada on the arati tray rather than the altar. Temple residents may keep guru photos in their rooms but not in public. Disciples of ISKCON diksa and siksa gurus should not wear or publicly display guru t-shirts, posters, bead-bag buttons, athletic caps, etc., (other than Srila Prabhupada).”
- Provision of a single seat in the temple room for Bhagavatam class speakers, regardless of who their guru is.
- Statement that respect should be given to all devotees, not only to diksa gurus.
- Statement of principles: Prabhupada is the preeminent and compulsory siksa-guru for all Vaisnavas in ISKCON. Others’ teaching should be understood through Srila Prabhupada. Disciples of non-liberated gurus are delivered by Krishna by following Prabhupada’s instructions.
- Broad and general definition of siksa guru as any Vaisnava who gives instruction, shelter, and inspiration^x; explanation of diksa guru as one who gives initiation^{xi}, and the relationship between them as unity, not just leader and assistant.^{xii} Explanation that sometimes a siksa guru becomes prominent, and the diksa guru becomes the voluntary instrument of the siksa guru; that both siksa and diksa gurus should be faithful followers of Prabhupada and support each other’s efforts; explanation of varieties of relationships between disciples, diksa, and siksa gurus and the ultimate authority of the GBC.^{xiii}

- All gurus should receive worship below the level given to Srila Prabhupada and must train their disciples to respect all Vaisnavas.
- Establishment of a spiritual leadership task force that will work with a research team to answer questions about guru-tattva and have a system of financial accountability for leader. This group will monitor conduct and philosophical understanding, establish a system of training for devotees and gurus, and establish sastra degrees such as Bhakti shastri.
- **All ritvik theories banned.**

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Suspended: (sometime between 1999 and 2003):

Ganapati Maharaja

Mahabhagavata Swami

Rupanuga dasa

Vaninatha Vasu dasa

Harikesa Swami

Isvara Swami

Rukmini Pati dasa

Somaka Swami (when was he approved)

Navayogendra Swami

2000 - GBC RESOLUTIONS

- Reiteration that all devotees in ISKCON have Prabhupada as the principal siksa-guru and may derive more spiritual inspiration from Prabhupada than from his or her own diksa guru.
- Guru candidates who are not approved by the regional council may appeal the decision to the relevant Regional Governing Body who can choose to overrule the area council and recommend the candidate to the GBC body.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Sankarsana dasa Adhikari

Suspended:

Bhakti Abhaya Carana Swami (Padambhuja dasa)

2001 - GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Giridhari Swami

Mahavishnu Swami (Indian)

[Note: GBC resolutions mark the approval of Mahavishnu Swami as an exception to the idea that one cannot initiate in the presence of one's diksa guru].

Suspended:

Rohini Suta dasa

Suhotra Swami (temporary)

2002 - SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

The GBC asks the SAC to write a paper on the booklet "Prominent Link" by Dhira Govinda dasa which presents Prabhupada as the actual diksa guru because of his being the one who transmits transcendental knowledge.

Result: The GBC accept this paper in 2003. (GBC RESOLUTION) The GBC Body hereby endorses the paper "Initiating in the Presence of One's Diksa-Guru" [see Appendix 1] as a replacement of the previous GBC paper called "Devotees Initiating Before Their Guru's Physical Departure."

GBC RESOLUTIONS

- Gurus can initiate in the presence of their own diksa-guru if the diksa guru so directs and the candidate goes through the regular GBC process.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Devamrita Swami
Kratu dasa Adhikari

Suspended:

Vipramukhya Swami

2003 - SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

The GBC asked the SAC to write a paper about female diksa gurus.

Result: The paper was written, and was accepted by the GBC in 2005.

The GBC accepts the SAC paper on the book “Prominent Link” dealing with the relationship between ISKCON diksa gurus, Srila Prabhupada, and a modified ritvik philosophy.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Matsya Avatara Das
Mukunda Goswami
Madhusevita Das
Kadamba Kanana Swami
Indradyumna Swami
Guru Prasada Swami
Hanumatpresaka Swami
Giriraja Swami
Candramukha Swami
Bhurijana dasa
Bhanu Swami
Bhakti Raghava Swami
Bhakti Caitanya Swami
Bhakti Ballabha Puri Goswami

2004 - SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

- The GBC asked the SAC to write a paper about the roles of the GBC and the disciple in choosing a guru.
- Result: the paper was written and presented to the GBC. No GBC statement, reaction, or otherwise, to that paper is recorded in any official documents.
- The GBC repudiates its “final siddhanta” (in the words of the paper) in the official 1995 paper “Gurus and Initiation in ISKCON” in the following: “The paper, “On My Order Understood”, contains assumptions and assertions that in numerous places do not match the available evidence from the statements of Srila Prabhupada, and the GBC desires to make a more concise statement”.^{xiv}

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Bhakti VV Narasimha Swami
Janananda dasa Goswami
Bhakti Vikasa Swami
Bhakti Vrajendranandana Swami
Paramgati Swami
Partha Sarathi dasa
Prabhavisnu Swami
Prahlanananda Swami

Purnacandra dasa
Purusatraya Swami
Rtadhavaja Swami
Subhag Swami
Suhotra Swami
Vegavan dasa

Suspended:

Prthu dasa
Rasananda Swami
Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

2005 - GBC RESOLUTIONS

- Acceptance of the SAC paper on female diksa gurus, with deferred implementation.
- Rescinding of the resolution requiring siksa gurus to go through the GBC approval process.

SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

The GBC asked the SAC to research the situation of Sukadeva dasa Goswami, who wants to initiate although those who gave him diksa are no longer in good standing. (ISKCON law states that in order to give diksa in ISKCON all of one's diksa gurus must be approved ISKCON diksa gurus who are still in good standing).

Result: The SAC wrote a paper and presented it to the GBC. No official response has been published, and the GBC has reiterated its request for this paper, which has since been re-submitted.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Bhakti Vijnana Goswami
Bhakti Vikasha Swami
Bhaktimarg Swami
Ramai Swami (??)

Suspended:

Suhotra Swami

2006 - GBC RESOLUTIONS

- Encouraging Prabhupada's disciples to go through the GBC confirmation process.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Bhakti Visrambha Madhava Swami
Candramauli Swami
Drutakarma dasa
Keshava Bharati dasa Goswami

2007 - GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Bhakti Gaurava Narayana Swami
Caitanya Candra Caran dasa
Dhanvantari Swami
Satyadeva dasa

2008 - GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Suspended:

Bhakti Ballabha Puri Goswami

EVENTS

Guru Seminars started.

2009 - GBC RESOLUTIONS

- Authorization for both males and females to go through the local area committees to get approval to initiate.
- A detailed procedure is outlined for gurus who renounce their guru responsibilities including: resignation; reasons for discipline (failure to follow religious principles or higher spiritual authority, improper discharge and neglect of duty, and spiritual discrepancy); who has the authority to discipline gurus; and a system of censure; probation; suspension pending investigation; suspension; rescinding of approval to initiate; and appeals.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Krpamoya dasa Adhikari

Suspended:

Paramgati Swami

2010 - GBC RESOLUTIONS

- Greatly expanded minimum standards for diksa-gurus.^{xv}

2011 - GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami

Suspended:

Umapati Swami

2012 - GBC RESOLUTIONS

- All gurus must give prominence to Srila Prabhupada on their websites.
- Whereas the GBC has received inquiries concerning the validity of the current ISKCON process of approving diksa-gurus: **RESOLVED:** The GBC hereby commissions the production of a paper presenting the reasons and supporting evidence for the validity of the current process. The Guru Services Committee shall take responsibility for this paper to be finalized latest by December 31, 2012.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Bhakti Sundar Goswami

Chaitanya Candra dasa

Gunagrahi Swami

Kalakantha dasa

Manonatha dasa

Shyamlal dasa

Vaisesika dasa

Vedavyasa dasa

Suspended:

Dhanurdhara Swami (sometime between 2007 and 2012)

Ramai Swami (sometime between 2007 and 2012)

Prabhavishnu Swami

EVENTS

Disciple Seminars started.

2013 - GBC RESOLUTIONS

- Statement that Krishna is the ultimate guru, and devotees are delivered by Krishna acting through the caitya guru, Prabhupada, the parampara, diksa and siksa gurus, the holy name, etc. All diksa and siksa gurus work together under the GBC to fulfill Prabhupada's instructions, should be strict followers and therefore are acting on the liberated platform.
- Paper: "Harmonizing ISKCON's Lines of Authority".
- Requiring devotees to read "Harmonizing ISKCON's Lines of Authority" before getting initiation, adding the following questions to the exam:
 14. Have you read the GBC Statement on the Position of Srila Prabhupada?
 15. Have you read the paper "Harmonizing ISKCON's Lines of Authority"?
 16. What have you understood as the most important points of the "Harmonizing

ISKCON's Lines of

Authority" paper?

- Postponing the subject of women initiating until 2014.
- Commissioning a paper on women gurus and setting up a committee to create that paper.

SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

The SAC answers a series of questions from the GBC about women diksa gurus. This paper is not released or published.

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Mahatma dasa

Suspended:

Mahanidhi Swami

2014 - GBC RESOLUTIONS

- Statement that a devotee will naturally develop a "particularly strong reciprocal connection" with a devotee who has "come to be a source of substantial instruction vital for one's ongoing progress, along with providing an inspiring personal example and a shelter for that person, thereby becoming his or her instructing spiritual master." The candidate is advised to test this person for some time and then approach local authorities for guidance as to how to take diksa from that person.^{xvi}
- Statement that the GBC does not "directly appoint diksa-guru candidates" although the "ISKCON Law terminology of GBC's 'authorizing' or 'approving' diksa-gurus adds to the perception that the GBC certifies and appoints diksa gurus."
 - Changing of terms in ISKCON Law—all references to "authorization" or "approval" of diksa gurus will be changed to "will/may commence the service of diksa guru." Some resolutions for this year also use the word "approve" and will need to be adjusted.
- Changes to procedures for a person to commence the service of diksa guru in ISKCON
 - Composition of a local council: zonal secretaries and at least ten others from the zone who are familiar with the candidate
 - New principles of evaluation for the local council (the main changes are: 1) that no specific period [it used to be five years] is specified that the candidate has to be free of falldown, and 2) all references to internal states of advancement such as freedom from lust, have been eliminated)^{xvii}
 - If the local council does not accept the candidate, they must inform the candidate in writing (formerly no notice had to be given)
 - The local committee must get "no objection letters" and make formal inquiries of leaders in other zones if the candidate has in the local committee's zone less than five years

- The chairman of the local council then sends the full GBC body a description of how the candidate conforms to the GBC standards, complete history of devotional engagements, and a list and description of all local council members
- GBC members have six months to file letters with the GBC secretary requesting further review
- If only zero, one, or two GBC members request further review, then the GBC secretary informs the chair of the local committee, who then tells the candidate to take vows, after which the candidate may commence initiating. (It is new to have this review process done in this way)
- If there are three or more objections (or if there is even one very strong objection), the GBC EC will work with the objecting members and the local council to resolve the questions. If resolved, the candidate may then begin to initiate. (Note: This is an entirely new part of the process)
- If the GBC EC cannot resolve the questions, then the candidate's case will come to the whole GBC body, and may commence initiating if the candidate receives a simple majority vote.
 - At that GBC meeting, the local council may send one or two delegates to make a presentation; the candidate is also invited to appear in person to make a presentation (Note: this is an entirely new provision in the process.)
- Appeals
 - When a local council does not support a candidate, the case can be appealed to a regional governing body, who can recommend the candidate to the GBC. If there is no regional governing body, the case can be appealed to the GBC body, sponsored by a GBC member.
 - If the GBC “chooses to not approve the candidacy” then the guru services committee will give the candidate direction as to how to “come to the standard to serve as diksa-guru in the future” (Note: This is an entirely new part of the process)
- Women serving as diksa gurus
 - The topic is delayed until the mid-term 2014 meeting
 - A committee of “devotees who have no pre-determined view on the topic” will gather, sort, and present all documents on the topic, do further research, and present this to the GBC
- Every ISKCON project website should have a link to the paper on Srila Prabhupada as the founder-acarya of ISKCON
- Effective on Janmastami, 2015, all candidates for first or second initiation must complete the ISKCON Disciple Course of the GBC Guru Services Committee
- Statement: ISKCON's ethos of multiple diksa- and siksa-gurus serving under the auspices of a global managerial board is unique in the history of Vaisnavism
- Statement: the institutional management has the obligation of safeguarding devotees in their quest for spiritual guidance while simultaneously not intruding upon the necessary freedom of inspiration that is the very heart of this journey
- Re-numbering and re-organizing of parts 6 and 7 of ISKCON law regarding gurus

SADHU-SASTRA-GURU RESEARCH

Ravindra Svarupa publishes a lengthy paper about Srila Prabhupada as the founder-acarya, which the GBC accepts as an official, “foundational” document

“GBC Resolution 307 of 2012 commissioned the Guru Services Committee to produce a paper explaining the commencement of the service of diksa-guru. The second draft of this paper is currently under review.” (This statement is also a resolution)

GURUS APPOINTED AND SUSPENDED

Approved:

Atmanivedana Swami

EVENTS

The official disciple course has been translated into many languages and is also available online. Much public debate has gone on regarding women initiating disciples

APPENDIX

i

1. He is learned in Sastras. Srila Prabhupada says in the first canto of Srimad Bhagavatam that the acarya

does not deliver lectures capriciously or does not try to screw some obscure meaning out of the scriptures. His sastric knowledge should be firmly based in siddhanta or conclusion, and he should be effective in his practical preaching.

2. He should show understanding of and dedication to Srila Prabhupada's mission, maintaining and establishing book distribution and other projects.

3. He recognizes the GBC as the ultimate managing authority in ISKCON.

4. He has excelled in preaching activities.

5. He should also be free from Kamini (attachment to sense gratification), pratistha (false prestige and personal ambitions), and Kancan (the accumulative spirit).

6. He should be free from nisiddha – acar (behavior against Vaisnava principles); he should also be free of kutinati (diplomatic or duplicitous behavior). He should also be free from puja (the desire for personal worship); and he should be free from labha (mundane profiteering).

ii

1. He must agree that his personal mission is the same as the mission of Srila Prabhupada, to flood the world with transcendental literatures like Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam and to "do as he was doing" in establishing ISKCON all over the world.

2. He must agree that Srila Prabhupada is represented by ISKCON and that ISKCON is governed by the GBC. Even Srila Prabhupada said he was a member of ISKCON. Therefore, when Srila Prabhupada gives permission to be a guru, it is to be a guru for and within ISKCON, not outside.

3. He must agree that external behavior is indeed a sign of internal realization and must harmonize with ISKCON policies in general and never act in a way which might unnecessarily jeopardize our worldwide mission. He should understand that taking disciples restricts external behavior.

4. He must agree to carefully study and review aspiring disciples so as not to make a mockery of the initiation process, and he must give his disciples direction and examples which corroborate with that of Srila Prabhupada and teach his disciples that they are part of ISKCON.

5. That as ISKCON is non-different from His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, no one has the right to lead anyone away from ISKCON.

6. That when there is significant difficulty with a GBC member one should state his problem in writing and forward it to the GBC officers committee for necessary consideration.

iii

Including the following:

“[...] 8. The GBC has failed to maintain and protect the spiritual standards of the Society.

[...] 16. The GBC members have allowed, have failed to halt, or have arranged for or demanded gross misappropriation of facilities and funds for their own self-aggrandizement [...]

18. The GBC has needlessly kept incompetent, fallen, or deviant persons as active members of the GBC body, suppressing, denying, and misrepresenting the nature of their incompetence, fall, and deviation.

[...] 23. The GBC members have displayed gross, rampant impurity in their dealings with one another.

[...] 28. The members of the GBC have neglected and misrepresented numerous other teachings and instructions of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

[...] 29. The GBC has failed to adequately respond to just and ongoing pleas for self-reform.

[...] 32. By allowing, advocating, taking part in, perpetuating, and defending these and other forms of contamination and decay, the members of the GBC have brought the ultimate managing authority of the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness to a state of disrepute and pollution.”

iv

65. That if a guru is engaged in sense gratification violating either one or more of the regulative principles but there is hope that he can be rectified, then his disciples should allow time for such rectification to take place and they should take shelter of Srila Prabhupada and senior Vaisnavas as siksha gurus.

66. That if a guru has become hopelessly entangled in sense gratification and it has been shown either by observation or from his own admissions that he has been regularly violating the regulative principles of Krishna Consciousness and that there is virtually no hope for his rectification, then the disciple should reject him and may accept re-initiation.

67. That if the Spiritual Master takes on demoniac qualities and becomes inimical to ISKCON he should be rejected and the disciple may take re- initiation.

68. That if it is ascertained either by the admission of the guru or through irrefutably reliable witness(es) that the guru was fallen at the time of giving initiation, then the disciple has a legitimate reason to reject him and take re-initiation.

69. That there should not be any public worship of a guru who is suspended.

70. That disciples of a suspended guru while performing arotik to the Deities should offer the various articles through Srila Prabhupada to the disciplic succession.

71. That while offering obeisances in a public place the disciples of a suspended guru should recite Srila

Prabhupada's pranama mantra aloud and should chant the mantras to the suspended gurus silently or not at all.

v

GBC compulsory rules for approval of new gurus:

-
- a) Must be strictly following the four regulative principles and chanting 16 rounds daily.
 - b) Must have been an initiated disciple for at least ten years.
 - c) Must not have had a fall-down within 5 years.
 - d) Must have no record of moral turpitude either in his present activities or his previous record.
 - e) Must not have allegiance to a spiritual authority outside of ISKCON unless approved by the GBC, i.e. he must have no loyalty to anything other than to Srila Prabhupada (non-Prabhupada loyalties).
 - f) Must not be lacking in understanding and knowledge of the shastra.
 - g) Must support the GBC system in ISKCON and follow the GBC.

Guidelines for Approval/Disapproval:

- a) Should have a Bhaktivedanta or Bhakti-vaibhava degree in philosophy.
- b) Should not cause doubt about his ability to follow the code of conduct.
- c) Should not be involved in "abnormal situations." An example of this is cited as a disrupted or abnormal family life which could distract a guru from his guru duties or otherwise prove a disruption for him.
- d) Must always be conscientious about presenting proper philosophy.
- e) Must always behave responsibly.

vi

Privileges of ISKCON members concerning gurus:

- a) Privilege to Accept Initiation from Guru of Choice:
Any member of ISKCON may accept initiation from the guru of his choice according to mature faith and desire for advancing in Krishna Consciousness. This is provided the guru is eligible to initiate, the candidate is qualified, and that the procedures authorized in this regard are adhered to.
- b) Privilege to listen to any bona fide ISKCON guru's tapes.
- c) Privilege of an initiated devotee to serve in ISKCON.
- d) Privilege of a disciple to glorify his guru.

vii

Code of Conduct for a guru:

- a) Standards of action of guru in a temple:
 1. No canvassing for disciples.
 2. No transferring disciples without permission of authorities.
 3. No preaching which distracts faith of existing disciples.
 4. Must cooperate with ISKCON spiritual authorities.
 5. Must show good example for other devotees.
 6. Must work and preach for the interest of the temple.
 7. No initiating of any disciple who has not been recommended.
 8. No initiating until one's blessing to be a diksa guru is given.
 9. Coordinate ceremonies with temple schedule.
 10. Should not keep separate accounts unless authorized. (Bank accounts in personal name.)

b) Standards for a guru with ISKCON Spiritual Authority:

[**Note:** a "spiritual authority" is a temple president, regional secretary, local GBC representative, etc.]

1. Must cooperate with ISKCON spiritual authorities.
2. Must preach to disciples and others to cooperate.
3. Must act according to service position, not guru position.
4. Must not undermine spiritual authorities in any way.
5. Must show financial records if need arises.
6. Must avoid confrontation and settle misunderstanding amicably.

c) Standards for a guru in relation with GBC zonal secretaries:

1. Must act under supervision and coordination of GBC zonal secretaries.
2. Must not leave temple or move without informing GBC.

[This refers to a guru shifting his residence. As this may affect the temples and devotees, the GBC zonal secretary should be consulted beforehand.]

d) Standards for a guru in relation with the GBC body:

1. Must respect GBC (Body) as representative of Srila Prabhupada. (A spiritual master is servant to the previous acaryas, therefore respecting the GBC as Srila Prabhupada's representative indicates adopting a respectful serving attitude towards the GBC).
2. Must follow directives of GBC.
3. Must stop initiations if asked to do so by the GBC body.
4. Must follow disciplinary codes as prescribed by GBC Body.

General Codes of Conduct:

- a) Protect the faith of all disciples.
- b) Encourage the faith of new people in ISKCON.
- c) Allow disciples to accept initiation from the guru of their faith.
- d) Instruct all devotees to follow GBC system and guru parampara.
- e) Not to initiate without receiving full blessings.
- f) To surrender one's disciples to the ISKCON temple structure.
- g) To be accountable to the spiritual authorities for one's acts.
- h) Provision for candidate changing his mind on guru choice.

87. The following is the GBC position on guru suspension:

a) Warning (or censure) -

That when a deviation or neglect of spiritual practices is detected and the deviation or negligence is not very severe or habitual, or when guru is transgressing the approved guidelines and codes for guru behavior (such as canvassing disciples, etc.) the guru should be warned (or censured) confidentially.

b) Probation -

That if the warnings are not heeded or if the deviation or neglect of spiritual practices are of a more serious nature, or if the transgressions of guru codes of behavior are repeated and serious, the guru may be put under probation with specific conditions which regulates his guru functions (including temporary withdrawal of authorization to initiate new disciples).

In addition he may be given general recommendations or specific activities to perform as guidelines for his rectification and eventual reinstatement.

c) Suspension -

That if a guru repeatedly breaks one or more of the regulative principles or acts in a manner which seriously and harmfully disregards existing ISKCON or GBC policies or left his ashram of sannyasa without authorization or left the association of devotees and the ISKCON movement, or completely deviates from standard sadhana, he should be suspended.

If a guru is suspended he cannot give initiation, nor maintain an absolute siksa position in relation with his disciples, nor be introduced as initiating spiritual master, nor perform his guru functions such as Vyasa Puja or the acceptance of dakshin.

d) Removal -

If the guru becomes openly inimical to Srila Prabhupada or ISKCON; or otherwise acts demonically; or becomes an impersonalist (mayavadi) or who preaches the philosophy of unauthorized or asampradaya against Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's principles; or blatantly and consistently defies ISKCON and GBC policies; or when one becomes hopelessly entangled in sense gratification and material attachments, as per shastric injunction, he shall be removed from his position as initiating guru.

e) Renunciation of guru responsibilities -

That in situations where a guru becomes hopelessly entangled in sense gratification and material attachments and unable to function or continue acting as spiritual master for his disciples, he may renounce his position and request the GBC to give direction to his disciples for their further advancement in Krishna Consciousness.

f) Permission of disciples to accept re-initiation -

That a disciple of a suspended guru who has severely lost his faith or who has developed an offensive mentality towards his initiating guru, and who is not able to regain his faith, even after hearing so many instructions in the matter, may take permission from the spiritual master for release from vows to accept another initiating guru, take guidance from local GBC men and apply relevant ISKCON laws in this regard; or take permission from the GBC body.

viii

That before a devotee can be recommended for initiation or be officially encouraged to take shelter of a particular ISKCON spiritual master he or she should demonstrate a basic understanding of Srila Prabhupada's teachings by answering an oral or written test administered by the Temple President. The questions to be answered are:

1. What are the qualifications of a bonafide spiritual master?
2. Why are you convinced to follow the orders of the spiritual master in this life, and even life after life?
3. Why does one worship the spiritual master like God?
4. Do you believe the spiritual master speaks the absolute truth? If so, why?
5. Under what circumstances should the spiritual master be rejected?
6. What are the qualifications and responsibilities of a disciple?
7. What is the unique position of Srila Prabhupada in ISKCON?
8. Why do you accept Lord Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead?
9. Why do we follow the four regulative principles?
10. Why do we chant Hare Krishna?
11. What is the position of the GBC Body?
12. Explain the difference between the body and the self?
13. What is ISKCON, and why should one remain in ISKCON?

That before a candidate can be (first) initiated; the guru must receive a written recommendation from the Temple President under whom the candidate is currently serving. In the case of candidates who are not full-time ISKCON members, the recommendation must be given by the Temple President of a temple near the candidate who has familiarity with the spiritual status of the candidate. If said Temple President is also the prospective initiating guru, then special procedures must be followed (see Note below.) Future legislation will deal with situations where there is no Temple President with sufficient familiarity to make or deny a recommendation, as may occur in the case of congregational members who do not live near an ISKCON temple.

The recommendation of the Temple President must certify that the candidate has fulfilled the qualifications for initiation to the best of his understanding, and, specifically, it must state that the candidate has been engaged in favorable devotional service, has chanted sixteen rounds of japa daily, and has adhered to the four regulative principles, all for the previous twelve months. It must also state that the candidate is sufficiently knowledgeable in the philosophy of Krishna Consciousness and the structure and purpose of ISKCON to have passed the prescribed examination, and has accepted shelter of the guru since more than six months. If the candidate has not been serving continuously under the recommending Temple President for the previous twelve months, then the Temple President must still satisfy himself with the activities of the candidate for the full twelve month period by contacting other ISKCON authorities with knowledge of the candidate's activities during the balance time.

The Corresponding Secretary shall prepare and make available to Temple Presidents and Initiating Gurus a standard form which may be used for the recommendation letter.

This formal recommendation process is not intended to replace or overshadow the (more important) need for other regular contact between the ISKCON devotees who are guiding the candidate and the prospective spiritual master regarding the spiritual progress of the candidate. Also, the prospective spiritual master is under no obligation to initiate a devotee because a recommendation has been given or is available to be given.

The same procedures apply for re-initiation. In the case of second initiation, a written recommendation is also required from the appropriate ISKCON authority as above. This recommendation must certify that the candidate has fulfilled the qualifications for second initiation to the best of his understanding, and, specifically, it must state that the candidate has been steadily engaged in favorable devotional service, has chanted sixteen rounds of japa daily, and has adhered to the four regulative principles, all for the previous twelve months (having received first initiation more than twelve months before). As in the case of a recommendation for first initiation, if the candidate has not been serving continuously under the recommending Temple President for the previous twelve months, then the Temple President must still satisfy himself with the activities of the candidate for the full twelve month period by contacting other ISKCON authorities with knowledge of the candidate's activities during the balance time. A similar standard form shall also be prepared which may be used for second initiation recommendations.

Note: Procedures to be followed if the prospective guru is also the Temple President with appropriate jurisdiction: In this case, the local GBC shall either write the recommendations himself or establish a local Board of Initiations, which does not include the prospective guru as a member, to review the qualifications of the candidates. The chairman of this Board of Initiations may then prepare the necessary written recommendations. In the extreme case that the local GBC, Temple President, and prospective guru are all the same person, the GBC Executive Committee shall establish the appropriate procedures to be followed.

The basic definition of guru is anyone who gives spiritual instructions based on the revealed scriptures. The acceptance of such instructions from the spiritual master is called siksa, and consequently one who transmits transcendental knowledge to another is known as a siksa guru.

By taking responsibility for different aspects of siksa, Vaisnavas are known according to their specific dealings. The devotee who first gives siksa is the vartma-pradarsaka guru, and the saints who give general instruction in devotional practice are known as sadhus or siksa gurus. The siksa guru who gives initiation with the holy name and gayatri mantra becomes known as the diksa guru, and those Vaisnavas who elevate one to transcendence by their teachings are also siksa guru.

Any Vaisnava who gives instruction, shelter, and inspiration should be considered as siksa guru. Because the transcendental knowledge which originates from Sri Krishna comes to a devotee through his siksa gurus, he deeply reveres them as confidential servants of Krishna (and worships them according to their station).

xi

The Diksa Guru:

Among many siksa gurus, the one who through personal association and regular instruction inspires faith in a devotee generally becomes the diksa guru. It is Lord Krishna's system that a conditioned soul must surrender to and take initiation from His representative, a guru in parampara.

Although their dealings are different, both the siksa and diksa gurus are representatives of Sri Krishna (and Srila Prabhupada) acting to guide the disciple back to Godhead. The disciple should not see them as superior or inferior on the basis of the difference in their dealings.

The duty of the diksa guru is to train the disciple in the process of devotional service and initiate him by giving the holy name and gayatri mantras. After initiation he further instructs the disciple in the meaning of the Vedas and remains committed to his liberation from repeated birth and death.

In ISKCON the diksa guru is happy to see a disciple receiving training and guidance from many other siksa gurus, for this is opulence of the Society. He may also recommend a disciple to a siksa guru(s) for specific tutoring, which for some reason(s) he is not able to give.

xii

Relationship Between Siksa and Diksa Gurus:

Since faith is the basic ingredient of spiritual life, the dealings among diksa and siksa gurus increase and focus the faith of the disciple in a co-operative relationship. The general sad-acarya is that the multiple siksa gurus, regardless of their spiritual strength, act as associates of the diksa guru. They promote the initiator as the prominent force in the spiritual life of the disciple, who sees first and foremost the mercy and shelter of his diksa guru.

If there are exceptions to this protocol it is primarily evaluated by the gurus who conduct their dealings in a visibly co-operative way. Their common ground of understanding is the directions of Srila Prabhupada. They are not independent agents, for both are subordinate to the leadership of the mission as its servants.

The diksa guru wholeheartedly supports the disciple's faith in, and association with his instructors. He respects the siksa gurus as equal manifestations of Godhead. Although the relationship between diksa guru and siksa guru(s) may appear to be one of leader and his assistant (s), a disciple should be careful to see their spiritual unity while engaged in different dealings.

xiii

Relationship Between Siksa and Diksa Gurus

Since faith is the basic ingredient of spiritual life, the dealings among diksa and siksa gurus increase and focus the faith of the disciple in a co-operative relationship. The general sad-acara is that the multiple siksa gurus, regardless of their spiritual strength, act as associates of the diksa guru. They promote the initiator as the prominent force in the spiritual life of the disciple, who sees first and foremost the mercy and shelter of his diksa guru.

If there are exceptions to this protocol it is primarily evaluated by the gurus who conduct their dealings in a visibly co-operative way. Their common ground of understanding is the directions of Srila Prabhupada. They are not independent agents, for both are subordinate to the leadership of the mission as its servants.

The diksa guru wholeheartedly supports the disciple's faith in, and association with his instructors. He respects the siksa gurus as equal manifestations of Godhead. Although the relationship between diksa guru and siksa guru(s) may appear to be one of leader and his assistant (s), a disciple should be careful to see their spiritual unity while engaged in different dealings.

xiv

RESOLVED:

“On My Order-Understood” is replaced as official GBC policy by the following statement:

The GBC officially accepts the following conclusions about continuing the disciplic succession:

Srila Prabhupada consistently said that his disciples would themselves become spiritual masters.

Guru, sadhu, and sastra all support this standard way of continuing the disciplic succession. Srila Prabhupada said that his disciples would become “regular Gurus” and that each of their disciples would thus be a “disciple of my disciple.” On the strength of our Vaisnava tradition and the statements of Srila Prabhupada, the GBC concludes that Srila Prabhupada intended his disciples to become “regular Gurus” after he physically departed.

xv

Mandatory Qualifications:

1. Must have been an initiated disciple for at least ten years.
2. Must have been strictly following the four regulative principles, regularly attending the morning program, and chanting sixteen rounds daily, and have otherwise remained in good standing for the previous ten years.
3. Must not exhibit tendencies toward behavior contrary to Vaisnava moral principles.
4. Must be free from the following undesirable qualities:
 - a. Attachment to kamini-kancana, sex objects and wealth
 - b. Pratistha, false prestige and personal ambition
 - c. Nisiddhacara, behavior contrary to Vaisnava principles

-
- d. Kuti-nati, diplomatic or duplicitous behavior
 - e. Puja, the desire for personal worship
 - f. Labha, mundane profiteering.
 5. Must have excelled in preaching activities.
 6. Must exhibit proficiency in knowledge and understanding of sastra.
 7. Must preach without concoction and strictly according to the parampara, with sastric knowledge grounded firmly in siddhanta, or conclusive truth.
 8. Must be effective in practical preaching and counseling.
 9. Must have no loyalties that compete with or compromise his loyalty to Srila Prabhupada, to his teachings, and to ISKCON.
 10. Must show understanding of and dedication to Srila Prabhupada's mission with a strong commitment to maintaining and increasing book distribution and other ISKCON projects.
 11. Must recognize the GBC as the ultimate managing authority in ISKCON, support the GBC system, and follow the GBC.
 12. Should be engaged full-time in devotional service in an ISKCON center or other ISKCON-approved preaching program.
 13. Within the previous ten years at a minimum, must not have engaged in serious criminal activities or been responsible for:
 - a. A financial impropriety that put significant funds or other assets at risk
 - b. Risking legal consequences through the improper handling of funds and assets under his/her control
 - c. Causing a loss of significant funds through unauthorized actions
 - d. Any other act of moral turpitude, as defined in the ecclesiastical discretion of the GBC, and/or the legal jurisdiction in which the candidate resides
 An additional requirement is attendance of the Guru Seminar.
 Discretionary Qualifications:
 1. Spiritual degrees – Bhakti Sastri, Bhakti Vaibhava, and Bhaktivedanta (when available) – shall be a strongly recommended qualification for being granted no objection status to serve as a guru in ISKCON.
 2. Should be nothing in his character, conduct, or circumstances to give rise to doubt about his ability to follow the code of conduct for gurus.
 3. Should not be involved in any abnormal personal situation. An example of such a situation would be a disrupted or anomalous family life which could distract a guru from his guru duties or otherwise prove a disturbance to him or his followers.
 4. Should always be responsible, conscientious, and honorable in ordinary dealings.

xvi

Note: this resolution marks the first time the GBC officially suggests that a person's natural siksa guru should normally become the diksa guru of that person.

xvii

New standards (refer to footnote 15 for old standards):

1. is twice-initiated for at least ten years
2. has been requested to initiate by the candidate's own diksa-guru, if physically present
3. is in good standing in ISKCON
4. has good sadhana, including chanting a minimum of sixteen rounds daily and following the four regulative principles
5. has shown consistent adherence to the principles of one's asrama in terms of:
 - acceptable Vaisnava behavior (sadacara)
 - engagement in Srila Prabhupada's mission
6. has substantial knowledge and realization of sastra, including a Bhakti-sastri degree

-
7. preaches according to Srila Prabhupada's teachings
 8. works cooperatively with local authorities
 9. recognizes the GBC body as the ultimate managing authority in ISKCON, supports the GBC system, and follows the GBC
 10. has no loyalties that compete with or compromise the candidate's loyalty to Srila Prabhupada, to his teachings, and to ISKCON