

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja

79.03.01.B

(Bengali spoken for about 17:15 minutes)

Devotee: It is not clear, what is the *sannyāsa* position within our Society now?

Devotee: You want to know from Mahārāja? Mahārāja, his question is, “What is the position of a *sannyāsī* in the Gauḍīya *sampradāya*?”

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: The general *sannyāsī* is to be called a *sannyāsī* who has dedicated his thought, word, and deed, in the service of the Lord. He should be considered as a *sannyāsī* in the Gauḍīya system, or mission. But that is not all. There also should be a gradation amongst *sannyāsīs*. That is according to the degree, the intensity of self dedication to the Lord. But the general position is that in general who has dedicated his thought, word, and deed, *kāya-mano-vākya*, only for the service of the Lord, he can be considered a *sannyāsī*, in our society. He won't go back...

Devotee: Sorry, can you repeat what question you asked.

Devotee: _____ [?]

Devotee: Yes, Mahārāja is saying, he's telling Mahārāja that probably you want to know what is the position here of the *sannyāsīs*, in ISKCON.

Devotee: Mahārāja, his question is, “What is the position of *sannyāsīs* in ISKCON? What should be their duty now that Śrīla Prabhupāda is not present, he's *aprakat*. So in that case; but specially this situation as you know...”

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: We shall expect that who are supposed to represent Prabhupāda's will, future will for propaganda, that body we should obey. This is a general thing. It is expected that the body who represents the future will of Prabhupāda, and nominated by him, generally, we should abide by their decisions, in a general sense.

Devotee: What should be the procedure to take Mahārāja?

Devotee: That is the procedure.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Redactive method, descending method. Advice is descending from the domain of the Lord to this world. We shall try to remember this, and we shall try to submit us to that decision, setting aside our individual internal suggestions, generally. There maybe, rarely, special cases.

Devotee: You see, his problem is, Mahārāja, that now his position is that he's in South America, and he himself has a South American body; so he was preaching very nicely in South America for Śrīla Prabhupāda. So many young boys became very attached to him.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: You see now Swāmī Mahārāja has departed and many intricate questions will arise, in different forms. And before this Svarūpa Dāmodara and that Yaśodānandan, and Pradyumna,

and a few persons came to me. Already advised their against the Ācārya Board, they're not satisfied with their dealings. And I asked them, both parties, if represented come to me then I shall try to help you in the adjustment. But _____ differences that are arising here and there.

Devotee: They have already taken your decision.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: And if they can solve within them, it is well and good. Amongst themselves, if they can solve the problems that are arising now, if you can solve it within yourself, it is well and good. Because...

Devotee: How it is possible Mahārāja? It is not possible because everybody has vested interest. Only a Vaiṣṇava, and a senior Vaiṣṇava...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: If it is necessary to solve the problem, any help from my side, I shall try my best from my experience about the association and my meagre *śāstric* knowledge I shall try to help you. This good will I can express. What more can I do?

Devotee: I wanted you to give me advice in this manner, specifically in this manner. When Śrīla Prabhupāda departed, this Ācārya-ship was not clear to many of us. So...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: I told that he nominated eleven Ācāryas. And when they came to me I suggested that this Ācārya Board may be expanded according to the necessity of time and space, demand of time and space it may be expanded. And a system should be followed so that the non Ācārya God-brothers, they may have some fair chance to live respectfully in this Mission. We're having a bitter experience, and through this bitter experience we're learning something. And with that we may try to help you, if necessary.

Devotee: I am having, myself, I am having a bitter experience with the present situation. So...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: That Pradyumna, perhaps with twenty points he came to me; in a written note, that these are the objections against the Ācāryas, the practices and behaviour of the Ācāryas. These are, about twenty objections we have got. And perhaps that is being circulated amongst the non Ācārya stalwarts in the Mission.

Devotee: I didn't see that Mahārāja.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: How to control.

Devotee: Mahārāja, he has...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: What will be the position of the Ācāryas and the Governing Body, and those stalwarts that are outside the Governing Body? The newcomers. Of course, it is a very difficult task to adjust, very difficult. But with the sympathetic attitude of the Ācāryas, and with the *śāstric* toleration of the non Ācāryas, it can meet together. *Śāstric* toleration, that is formal necessary toleration, and the sympathetic attitude of the Ācāryas. Both of these two things are required to go on together.

Devotee: In my own case Mahārāja...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: And the newcomers must be helped. The missionary activities should not be stopped, never should be stopped, then this is necessary, the newcomers should be helped, ungrudgingly.

Devotee: In the case of myself Mahārāja, I'm a *sannyāsī* by Śrīla Prabhupāda, and I'm preaching. So I'm preaching in a specific place, and I am, by the Lord's grace, some people are coming and they are giving some faith, that by following my instructions, they will advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So if these people don't want to follow anybody else, how are they to be initiated within Kṛṣṇa consciousness society?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: I can't follow.

Devotee: Through his preaching, the Lord is sending many souls who are taking to the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes.

Devotee: And these new souls who are coming to this path, they have placed their trust and faith on him.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes.

Devotee: That he will take them to a higher platform of realisation. So now, he...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes, direct. And he does not see any superior soul to whom he can take them, and recommend.

Devotee: Right. Previously he could take them to Śrīla Prabhupāda and place them at his lotus feet. But now, who can he go... and even if he goes, the souls, they do not accept them.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: I have seen so many who are non Ācārya, but the Ācārya people they're not coming to me, so if we are to live together then some adjustment should be made. How to go on? Otherwise the dissension, that is very easy, but that is not desirable so much. If united we stand, that will be better. Otherwise dissension must come, separation must come, but that is not so very desirable, especially so soon, so quick.

Devotee: One point is this Mahārāja, then for example, I see within...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: So I like to meet both the camps, both the camps.

Devotee: Yes, we have suggested, Bhakti Caru Mahārāja and myself have suggested, and I actually spoke to Svarūpa Dāmodara who is a GBC, who also has given agenda for the meeting, GBC meeting agenda. I should have brought it and could have shown it to you.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: But in the meeting...

Devotee: So in the agenda he has mentioned...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Ācārya party, not majority.

Devotee: No.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Non Ācārya is majority.

Devotee: Yes.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: So, you may not be afraid too much.

Devotee: No. So he has placed in the agenda, he has mentioned in the agenda that, "I propose that all of us go and consult and take the good advice of Śrīdhara Mahārāja." He has mentioned in his agenda for this meeting that, "We should all go because there's nobody else to guide, and Śrīla Prabhupāda specifically mentions Śrīdhara Mahārāja's pure good name, that we should go to him for spiritual advice. For anything we should come to him. So let us go." He has suggested in that meeting so now I don't know how they will see it.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: What will be the fate of that resolution?

(More Bengali for about 50 seconds)

Devotee: How many disciple do you have now? Three zero. _____ [?]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: _____ [?]

Devotee: He said, "Before you took your disciples, before you gave *dīkṣā*, did you feel some sort of inspiration from inside, the *caitya* Guru, of Prabhupāda, telling you to give them initiation?"

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Within, any inspiration?

Devotee: Yes, it's much like you're a *sannyāsī*, you're preaching, people are coming...

Devotee: No, not like that. Sometimes Prabhupāda, through the medium of...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Some spiritual conscience has directed you.

Devotee: Were you convinced that actually Prabhupāda wanted that from you? Or did you have a dream?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Nothing of the like, only simple spiritual conscience.

Devotee: I mean, you are confident that what you have done is the correct thing.

Devotee: I still feel it was proper for me to do.

Devotee: But spiritually, he conscience was clear, and that his action was in the right...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Accepted by Prabhupāda.

Devotee: I want to remain within ISKCON, but in the way they want to put me now, I cannot remain.

Devotee: That is another question.

Devotee: That is, like he spoke about bitter sentiments.

Devotee: No. He said that, I told him that you have taken disciples. First, he asked me whether you had taken disciples or not. So I said yes, you have initiated...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: What is the name of that Punjabi *sannyāsī*?

Devotee: Bhakti Caitanya Swāmī.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Bhakti Caitanya. And his name?

Devotee: Paramānanda.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Paramānanda. Only these two have begun already?

Devotee: No, there's one more, Virahaprakāśa Swāmī.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Where is he?

Devotee: He's also in South America.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: South America. These three only, has become independently we're seeing now?

Devotee: Yes. They've initiated independently.

Devotee: _____ [?]

Devotee: They're trying to put him down, they're trying to remove him, from ISKCON, but Paramānanda Swāmī, he wants to stay within ISKCON and do his preaching, but they want him to either give up his position or leave.

Devotee: And I have already taken the responsibilities so I don't see how it can be given it up. I see it so cheaply.

Devotee: And he's saying, "Since I have already taken up the responsibility of a Guru, it's not possible for me to just give it up."

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Very subtle and difficult questions to be solved. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Devotee: That can be done by yourself, that people can come to you, they have faith, trust in you and you initiate them. Then after you give them to somebody else?

Devotees: _____ [?]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Take something, *prasādam*...

Devotees: _____ [?]

...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: ...and decision, how it comes.

Devotee: We should wait and see.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Wait and see, and also, put your feeling, your position put to the committee, “That this is my position. How do you decide about me?” The central body is there. You put your questions.

Devotee: I’m almost sure of their decision.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: But still try, to make the best of a bad bargain.

Devotee: Mahārāja, I want to bring one contradiction within this existing Committee Body. Guru Mahārāja formed the GBC Body of twenty five members. They’re life-time GBC members. Nobody has the authority or the capacity to remove them from this position, other than Guru Mahārāja himself. And he also made this Governing Body Commission, the sole and supreme authority on all decisions within the ISKCON Society. But the present situation is that the eleven Ācāryas, who are also within this GBC Body, they have formed, although not officially, but in exercising their power, a body within the body, and is more or less controlling all the decisions of the Society. For example, specially on the question of increasing the circle of initiating Gurus, Ācāryas. Actually, this decision should be made by the GBC Body, all twenty five, and not just the eleven.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: But have the Ācārya Board accepted the principle that they will expand?

Devotee: No. They don’t want to expand.

Devotee: It is simply, I will tell you; Bhakti Caru Mahārāja was called by Satsvarūpa Mahārāja, Hṛdayānanda Goswāmī, Bhāvānanda Goswāmī, and two or three, Tamal Kṛṣṇa Goswāmī was also present there. And they asked his opinion as to who should be the initiating Guru of Manipur State. Although the Manipur State is under Svarūpa Dāmodara, he’s the GBC of Manipur, but since he’s not an initiating Guru, they require an initiating Guru residing in that area.

So Bhakti Caru Mahārāja told them the truth, what he felt. He said, “If you are actually interested in the *pracār*, the preaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the Hari *Nāma*, then the best person would be to make Svarūpa Dāmodara himself the initiating Guru because the Manipuris, they are a little proud of being Vaiṣṇavas, and original Vaiṣṇavas. And they also have great respect for Svarūpa Dāmodara since he has been to the West and he has a good name, and they will accept him very easily. So considering these practical points, the best thing would be to make him the initiating Guru.” This was his suggestion.

Of course, no decision has been taken as yet, but they were not very happy with this suggestion. They were, of course only one person, this Hṛdayānanda Goswāmī who was there, he said, “Yes, if Prabhupāda was here probably he would have said that Svarūpa Dāmodara should become that.” He was the only person who actually accepted this proposition.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Hṛdayānanda?

Devotee: Hṛdayānanda Goswāmī.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: His jurisdiction is where?

Devotee: South America.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: He's a recognised Ācārya?

Devotee: Yes. He's one of the eleven.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: One of the eleven. Any precedent of the Ācārya Board, no?

Devotee: No. The point is that they have no official committee of Ācāryas.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: But any precedent of the Governing Body?

Devotee: The President and the Director, so to say, they have Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary. The Chairman is Satsvarūpa Mahārāja, till yesterday.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: For one year; three posts for one year only, and this year Satsvarūpa.

Devotee: No, last year was Satsvarūpa, and this year Hṛdayānanda is the Chairman.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: And his term will...

Devotees: One year, will terminate, will extend to the next Gaura Pūrṇimā festival.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Then new such come?

Devotee: Yes. Now the new set has taken office, already, as from today.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: From today, this Hṛdayānanda has been, is in the Chair? And the Secretary?

Devotee: I don't know who he is.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Vice Chairman and Secretary, three posts together. But from the Chair this proposal has come for expansion. Let me wait and see what is their combined decision, then if I will have anything to say, then I shall say at that time. And they may come to me with some questions then I shall say my opinion is this. What do you think?

Devotee: I think that is very good Mahārāja.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: After hearing their decision, then if any suggestion comes to me, I shall say to them. Is it not?

Devotee: Yes. After the meeting, I think many devotees, many of the GBCs, I don't know about the Ācāryas, although Svarūpa Dāmodara has proposed in his agenda that he's submitted for them, his meeting, within the agenda he has strongly suggested that they should come and...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Take some advice.

Devotee: Take some advice from you.

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