

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja

80.10.00. A

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: ...I consider Tamal Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja more sober, and senior man, and in his consideration I could trace and could see of your experience your departed master, I want to hear what is his _____ around the present situation.

Tamal Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: My feeling is that Haṁsadūta Mahārāja is a very sincere devotee. He loves Śrīla Prabhupāda, he loves Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya, he loves his disciples, and he loves his God-brothers. And in preaching work there is bound to be sometimes some imperfection. In preaching there will be some – not everything is perfect. In this material world nothing can be done perfectly. So sometimes there is mistake; in him, in myself, in everyone, but the motive is very good. And I personally feel that in a similar situation a few years ago there was one God-brother of ours named Siddha Svarūpa Ānanda Mahārāja who also could not get along with his God-brothers. But Prabhupāda always took his side; our Prabhupāda always tried to protect this devotee, and to have all of us – Prabhupāda’s disciples, allow this devotee to continue to function and serve in the best way he could.

Haṁsadūta Mahārāja is many, many, many times a more sincere disciple of Prabhupādas than this Siddha Svarūpa Ānanda was. And Prabhupāda dealt with great compassion and mercy upon this Siddha Svarūpa. And I feel that in this case Śrīla Prabhupāda would deal with great compassion and mercy and protection and understanding for Śrīla Haṁsadūta, because I know that Śrīla Haṁsadūta is teaching his disciples to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, he is teaching them to attend *maṅgala-āratī*, he is teaching them *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā* philosophy, he is teaching them the standard process of *bhakti-yoga*. And that is actually what is ISKCON. ISKCON means to teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The institutions, the buildings, the rules, they’re all to facilitate the teaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So we must see, is Kṛṣṇa consciousness being taught? If there is some other thing being taught then it is serious, but if Kṛṣṇa consciousness is being taught, even there may be some other slight impurity also, never mind the impurity. One time I asked our Śrīla Prabhupāda, that _____ [?]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: To certain extent, then I shall ask him to say.

Tamal Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: One time I asked our Guru Mahārāja, that your God-brother Tīrtha Mahārāja, there is many disagreements with him and other God-brothers, so perhaps he is displeasing Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Prabhupāda. And my Guru Mahārāja said, ‘Oh no.’ He said, ‘Oh no.’ He said, ‘He has very much pleased our Guru Mahārāja. Our Guru Mahārāja is accepting his service just as Kṛṣṇa accepted the service also of Pūtanā. Pūtanā came – there may have been something impure, but she was Kṛṣṇa’s, she came in the gesture of offering service, and Kṛṣṇa accepted the best thing of what Pūtanā came with.’

So then some devotee may not have been perfect in his offering to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta was such a great Ācārya that he would only see the good in what the person was bringing forth.

So I see so much good in Śrīla Haṁsadūta and I am seeing that and I am not seeing the other things because to me that is more important. That will endure. That is what Kṛṣṇa is seeing. And I think that is what Prabhupāda would see now. I do not see all these other smaller things. They will all, they are unimportant from the eternal consideration. From the eternal consideration these small deviations are not very important; insignificant. So that is my opinion.

Devotee: [Explains in Bengali (?) what Tamal Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja has just said.]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Now this new gentleman.

Devotee: Gopāl Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Gopāl Kṛṣṇa.

Devotee: He's a Governing Body Commissioner for Bombay, Delhi, and Canada, and Western India, and Gujarat.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: What is your idea of the present situation of ISKCON? And how...

Devotee [Gopāl Kṛṣṇa?]: I think basically you have heard what Haṁsadūta Mahārāja has said. The real problem is, the real question for the GBC Body now is whether we should accept what Haṁsadūta Mahārāja is like and let the preaching go on, or whether we have to become very strict in enforcing discipline. So this is a real thing. Haṁsadūta Mahārāja has always been like he is, so we have to decide whether we're ready to accept him and still accommodate him, or whether we want to enforce a very strict discipline on him.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Now you have come to pass a particular judgement about the present situation.

Devotee: We have to resolve the present problem.

Bhāvānanda Mahārāja: Mahārāja, it's not that we can pass a judgement because we are not the GBC Body. But from the outcome of our talks here today, then we all have to fly to America and meet with the entire GBC and convince them of our mood.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Who is he?

Devotees: Bhagavān Mahārāja.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: And there?

Devotee: Prabhupāda Kṛpa Mahārāja.

Tamal Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: Formally Hari Sauri Prabhu.

Devotee: _____ [?]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: What is your opinion about the present situation? What do you feel at your heart?

Prabhupāda Kṛpa Mahārāja: I think the main difficulty we have to resolve is what level of authority the GBC can wield on individuals. Our Śrīla Prabhupāda made a society, and because we're all individuals we have our different characteristics, and Prabhupāda accepted all of those, but at the same time kept us within some guidelines for keeping a united preaching front in order to make the preaching effective

worldwide as well as in a local way. So we seem to be finding difficulty in getting a balance; how to allow an individual to do his preaching in the way that he knows how, and at the same time to keep a unified front for the preaching work on a worldwide level. So some devotees feel sometimes that that may be disturbed by some activity that Haṁsadūta Mahārāja performed in this last previous year. So therefore the attempt was made to discipline Śrīla Haṁsadūta in a certain way to check those tendencies. But at the same time now, we see practical results that he has become very much disturbed by that. So now we're looking to try to see how we can proceed in the future so that we can accommodate everybody but still keep what's considered a level of respectability or a proper control on the preaching activities; for the Ācāryas and for the GBC.

Devotee: [13:35 - 16:05 Bengali?]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: _____ [?]

Bhagavān Mahārāja: You have heard everything. Now what's your recommendation?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: And what is your recommendation as the chairman to save the situation? Let me know that. How we can accommodate, adjust in the present circumstances to do the maximum good for the ISKCON and Prabhupāda? What should be your recommendation?

Bhagavān Mahārāja: My feeling is that everyone has come here rendering voluntary service, but because we are such an international organisation, whatever one person does that affects so many people. So therefore, out of respect for everyone, even the Ācāryas sometimes they have to limit themselves, even though philosophically speaking the Ācārya cannot be limited. But because we have a special organisation based on worldwide preaching, we also have to respect certain limiting situations. In this way, Śrīla Prabhupāda tried to give everyone such a feel that they more or less would not interfere with everyone else. He tried to solve the problem by giving everyone a big enough field so they would not interfere with everyone. One of the problems in America, Mahārāja, is that there are ten GBC, so many GBC are there that sometimes you cannot move without bumping into another GBC. And this has led to very much... we can say, like politics, but in one sense it's inevitable in such a small space everyone has so many different ways of preaching. Prabhupāda knew this and therefore he wanted to spread everyone out in such a way they could do what they want without disturbing. Now originally, Prabhupāda wanted Haṁsadūta Swāmī to be in Śrī Laṅkā; that was one of his final – he didn't mean that he should always just stay there. He wanted him to specifically develop Śrī Laṅkā. But he told him also that he could all over and do some preaching activity. However, after Śrīla Pabhupada's disappearance, the GBC put Haṁsadūta in America, and when he got into America, due to his particular personality he started doing some activities which created some controversy. And Prabhupāda also said that certain devotees have tendency to create some controversy where they go. So to try to solve that he wanted to give them some field. Anyway, this is what happened, and er... obviously controversy was created, there was the incident with the guns, and that made worldwide news. And of course we don't take so much publicity serious some times, but the fact is that everyone's preaching work all over the world was affected by such a thing. And the GBC felt that this was some irresponsible activity. But the point where we stand now, he has disciples in America so it is not so practical just to tell him to leave America. What I would suggest therefore, would be that he be given some spot, if he's going to stay in America, some spot where he's not, at least in another state with the same GBC.

Devotee: Explain how America is divided into different states.

Devotee: _____ [?]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Who is he?

Bhagavān Mahārāja: Rāmeśvara Swāmī. And they at the present moment have very great fight.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: And the zone was allotted by Swāmī Mahārāja to whom; both of them?

Bhagavān Mahārāja: Well, Rāmeśvara Swāmī has been there for about ten years...

Devotee: Even during Prabhupāda's lifetime.

Bhagavān Mahārāja: ...and the upper part of that zone has been under changing management for several years, by different GBC.

Devotee: _____ [?]

Bhagavān Mahārāja: My feeling, Mahārāja, is that we could at least reach some compromise, at least if he was not in the same state. He has two other states, Washington and Oregon.

Devotee: _____ [?]

Bhagavān Mahārāja: The thing is, if there's going to be two GBC in one state it is very difficult. So at least they must be harmonious. Right now it is too difficult to make some harmony.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: _____ [?] What is Tamal Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja's suggestion? _____ [?]

Tamal Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: The proposal by Bhagavān Mahārāja is not bad, except there is one difficulty. That in this state which he is mentioning there is an important *āśrama* which is the centre of Hamsadūta Mahārāja's activities. Therefore if he, if Hamsadūta Mahārāja is not allowed to organise, to work in that state, then he loses that very important *āśrama*.

Bhagavān Mahārāja: But another one can be acquired.

Tamal Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: Perhaps.

Bhagavān Mahārāja: That was their plan. Their plan was to get another farm in Washington.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Let him say, then you will...

Tamal Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: But I personally think that our leaders must come to a different platform of working together. We must learn to accommodate many different methods of preaching. Jayatīrtha Mahārāja was speaking with me on the telephone three or four days ago, and he said that if ISKCON is to survive it must be a confederation; a confederation of devotees who all agree on the basic principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Although I agree that the United States is one country and what is done in one place does indeed affect another place, still, I feel that all of the members involved are intelligent persons and if we can deal with each other, if we can extend our trust and love to the next person, that

will bring out gradually the best in each person. I feel that we must deal on the platform of Vaiṣṇavas, not just on the platform of managers, or parliamentarians. So I feel that in this case, I have seen Haṁsadūta Mahārāja, I have been with him; his heart is very, very pained and hurt. And I feel that Prabhupāda would bestow his mercy and kindness and compassion in some way on him. Exactly how, that Prabhupāda would be able to know how to do, but he would not chastise him any more; that no more chastisement, no more reprimand. Prabhupāda would deal in such a way that his heart would be pacified. So I cannot participate in chastising in that type of mood any more because that is hurting him too much. And a Vaiṣṇava cannot see another person hurt; it gives him pain.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: What is the purpose of his saying that about...

Devotee: _____ [?]
 _____ [?]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: What is your suggestion of how to come to a practical solution? What do you suggest?

Tamal Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja [?]: The situation is very complex, because we're dealing with the disciples of Haṁsadūta Swāmī, with Haṁsadūta Swāmī himself, we're dealing with the God-brothers, and the society, and we're dealing with the disciples of other spiritual masters. The situation has been brought to a level of personal conflict. At the same time the difficulties are mainly on principles, of behaviour, principles of management. Nothing is black and white. Nothing is completely bad or completely good. The basic thing which I see is that Prabhupāda has appointed a Governing Body Commission and told us that no one of us is the absolute Ācārya. That means each one of us should have the humility that Prabhupāda did not think that we are perfect, nor are we independent. Although this will be admitted but in actual practice the tendency is not to listen to our God-brothers, or listen to the Governing Body, and then when we make mistakes we get in trouble and a correction is tried to be made, then we resent that and we revolt to that sometimes.

Devotee: _____ [?]

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