



12 Commitments for Unity & Respect

Commitment 1:

mayasvara dasa - September 2001

We are committed to working cooperatively with all the devotees of the Lord to re-establishing the International Society for Krishna Consciousness as the impeccable representation and fulfillment of the teaching, wishes and vision of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Commitment 2:

We recognize that His Divine Grace stressed several basic underlying themes that are undisputed by all his followers. We believe that to successfully navigate ISKCON through the difficulties it faces during this period of dynamic growth, resulting from the public's ever increasing interest in Krishna Consciousness, it is essential that we adhere to these principals. Some of the re-occurring themes emphasized by His Divine Grace that we concur on are;

- a. That *devotional service* means service to the Vaishnava Devotees of the Lord, The Spiritual Master and the Supreme Personality of Godhead *in that order*. "*If you love me, love my dog. gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayoḥ dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ*"
- b. That the way we demonstrate our Love for Srila Prabhupada is to resolve differences and co-operate together.
"*...work cooperatively ...Fighting between devotees will destroy everything.*"
"*...different political parties conflict but always serve the country ...Unity in Diversity*"
- b. That it is our mission to propagate Lord Caitanyas Sankirtan Movement based on:
"*Purity is the force, Books are the basis, Preaching is the essence and Utility Is the Principle.*"
- c. That we should always be practical in our endeavor and *judge things by the result*.
phalena phala-kāraṇam anumīyate 'By seeing a result, one can understand the cause of that result.'
- d. That every devotee should be extremely careful to avoid the "Mad Elephant" offense known as "Vaishnava Aparada" and always treat all the devotees with utmost respect because doing so is essential in developing one's Krishna Consciousness. *yadi vaiṣṇava-aparādha uṭhe hātī mātā upāde vā chiṇḍe, tāra śukhi' yāya pātā*

Commitment 3:

We believe that Srila Prabhupada's desires can best be understood by carefully studying His specific instructions, given both in writing and by example (Guru), the Vedic Literature, (Sastra), and the collective opinion of all the devotees, particularly the disciples of His Divine Grace, but not limited to them. (Sadus) We believe this is essential in knowing what is to be done and consistent with the mandate to serve each other and cooperate.

Commitment 4:

We recognize that after studying all the available resources, the disciples of Srila Prabhupada have arrived at different conclusions regarding how His Divine Grace wanted initiations to be carried out after his departure from this mortal world. The research that has been done on this complicated issue indicates that there is more than one bona fide way to conduct an initiation according to Guru, Sastra, Sadhu.

Commitment 5:

We believe that Srila Prabhupada would be extremely disturbed at the current unrest and conflict among the devotees in the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. We further believe that he would immediately implement significant practical and effective reforms to restore the integrity of ISKCON, to protect it's reputation and improve rapport between all the devotees.

Commitment 6:

We believe that if Srila Prabhupada were physically here to do so he would suspend the current method of initiation, at least for awhile, *even if he had originally authorized his disciples to become Diksa Gurus!* We believe he would issue such an extreme instruction out of respect to all those who have sat on the vyasasan before us and to allow time for his disciples to reconcile their differences in order to prevent further altercation within ISKCON.

Commitment 7:

We believe that for numerous utilitarian and intelligent reasons Srila Prabhupada would want us to establish a respectable "*Alternative Initiation Method,*" (AIM) *even if he did not originally intend that to be the process of initiation for ISKCON.* We believe this because fallen Guru's have been extremely disruptive, public embarrassing and have threatened the credibility of the entire society. It is also apparent that after 21 years the GBC is still in the process of defining the role, jurisdiction, and extent of power for an ISKCON Guru.

It is our observation that this type of indecisive ambiguity, combined with the raging international controversy that it has fueled, is crippling our movement. We therefore conclude that to introduce an *Alternative Initiation Method* would be the wisest, most sensitive and responsible thing the GBC could do to unite and preserve ISKCON at this time.

Commitment 8:

We recognize that some people want to take initiation from a "living" guru and that many devotees believe Srila Prabhupada intended for his students to "...accept disciples". We believe that His Divine Grace would not undermine the

healthy Guru/Disciple relationships that currently exist between his followers and their respective disciples because doing so would unnecessarily disrupt the lives of many sincere devotees and create additional chaos in ISKCON.

We honor our God brothers who have accepted the role of “Diksa Guru” as their duty to Srila Prabhupada and sincerely pray for their success. We further believe that all these relationships do not diminish the role of Srila Prabhupada as the founder Acarya of ISKCON and vow to respect and esteem them.

Commitment 9:

We are committed to cooperating with the GBC and serving Srila Prabhupada because we believe that is his foremost desire. We therefore humbly request that the leaders of ISKCON recognize that *we too are bound by paramatma to represent the voices of many capable and mature devotees*. For that reason we believe their realizations about Guru-tattva can not just be patently ignored.

We can not deny the havoc that has been created by Guru’s who have fallen down and how much the Guru-tattva dispute has fractured our community. Because of all the controversy, the difficulties of the current guru system, and the potential for further disgrace, we believe it is prudent to favor the more conservative *Alternative Initiation Method*. Because this is the more humble alternative we believe it represents a more honest understanding of our own limitations

Commitment 10:

We believe that the majority of the devotees are anxious to resolve the initiation issue and ready to adopt the mood of “Unity in Diversity” just like Srila Prabhupad instructed. We believe this can only be achieved if all parties vigilantly practice the highest principals of Vaishnava etiquette, and agree to work towards that unity by engaging our aggregate intelligence.

We believe Krishna is trying to tell us, via the collective body of disciples, that reform is absolutely essential and *it begins by ending the initiation feud but includes other serious issues as well*. We believe it is important not to ignore, deny or minimize the need for correction, and to interpret these events as an urgent sign to re-unite under one banner so the skills of all the devotees can be enrolled into the long overdue, badly needed arduous process of reform.

Commitment 11:

We are committed to working side by side with the GBC in order to preserve the future of ISKCON and protect the reputation of Srila Prabhupada. We are not rigid about how to make His Divine Grace more directly accessible to new initiates, but we are convinced doing so will allow everyone to fully participate in building ISKCON into the powerful League of Devotees that Srila Prabhupada always wanted it to be.

With faith we pray that the GBC seriously study the benefits and advantages of incorporating an *Alternative Initiation Method* into ISKCON so the preaching effort can be re-joined as one dynamic, unstoppable, world class, unified representative of Srila Prabhupada for all the conditioned souls.

Commitment 12:

We ask the GBC to recognize that these *are our Commitments and we will not go away*. We pray that they understand how important it is for us to stop working against each other, which Srila Prabhupada said on numerous occasions would “*Destroy Everything*”, and to start working together again. It is our heartfelt desire that the GBC accept these *Twelve Commitments* as our attempt to start the process of “Unity in Diversity”. We pray that they will use the power that only they have to honor our convictions and welcome us in the process of assisting them build ISKCON into the most dynamic spiritual force of the Universe.

We the undersigned are committed to the above Twelve Commitments and respectfully request the ISKCON lawmakers consider these points carefully in formulating the guidelines for our future.

Name City Date

Dovetail the ISKCON Grape Vine into a positive servant of Srila Prabhupada! If you support these commitments and want to personally do something to end the feud that will destroy the society Srila Prabhupada gave his life to establish then please duplicate these paper, distribute profusely, collect as many signatures you can and return to: *Mayesvara Dasa* 687 Villanova Road – Ojai, California, 93023 **Phone:** (805) 640-0405 **E-mail:** Roberts_Bill@phdnswc.nswses.navy.mil

Your Participation Can Make A Difference In The Future Of ISKCON!