

22/12/2022

Tirupati, India

Letter of complaint to the SABHA regarding the GBC resolution of December 15, 2022 regarding the status of Anirdesya Vapu dasa (formerly known as Bhaktividya Purna Swami)

Respected members of the SABHA,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

My name is Mangalavati Citra devi dasi and we are writing this letter of complaint together with my husband HG Tattvavada dasa. We are shiksha disciples of former Bhaktividya Purna Swami (fBVPS). We also represent thousands of well wishers, initiated disciples, shiksha disciples, followers, academics and government officials who know him around the world.

First of all we would like to establish that we acknowledge that fBVPS did commit mistakes. We are referring to the latest CPO decision of 28/10/2022. He did admit that he three times inappropriately touched the alleged victim when she was above 18 years. As responsible leaders of ISKCON and students of law (Tattvavada dasa), we only judge on what has been admitted and/or on clear evidence (laboratory tests, psychological tests, recordings, pictures and similar). We don't judge based on word-against-word (one person's word against another's). We are very careful about that.

## fBVPS's statements have been misrepresented or ignored by the CPO

As disciples, we have according to shastra, the right to not tolerate an insult against our spiritual master. Srila Prabhupada defines an offence/insult very clearly in the Bhagavad-gita, 16.1-3: "...to call a thief a thief is not fault finding, but to call an honest person a thief is very much offensive for one who is making advancement in spiritual life." In this case, the allegations are to be found in the CPO decision, in the form of misleading information and biased judgement despite the lack of clear evidence and by presenting in a dishonest way, former BVPS's admitted three wrongdoings.

Despite the difference in opinion (word-against-word) of what happened between former BVPS and the alleged victim and her mother, the CPO chose to take sides with the alleged victim without having any clear evidence (laboratory tests, photos, witnesses etc). **Circumstantial evidence is not enough according to lawyers.** Consequently the CPO assumes he is a child abuser, and they defame him to the entire ISKCON as such **despite the fact that there is no clear evidence for that and despite the fact that he has never admitted to that.**

Former BVPS has admitted to touching the alleged victim three times **when she was above 18 years.** He clearly wrote to the CPO that he never interacted in a sensual manner with any minor. He also wrote several times in his correspondence with the CPO, how much he repented his wrongdoings and asked the vaishnava community for their mercy. But still, the CPO wrote in their decision (which the entire ISKCON read and believed) that he lacked remorse, which is a criminal's act of defamation. The statements 1-9 in the CPO decision of 28/17/2022, are according to former BVPS's appeal "either never happened, are taken out of context, or are grossly exaggerated".

Furthermore the CPO decision states that "This makes the history of BVPS abuse the longest in ISKCON CPO history ...". Former BVPS used corporal punishment between 1982-1988 on a small group of individuals who were particularly naughty. The frequency of corporal punishment was a few times per year. Before disciplining the students, fBVPS explained to them for half an hour why they were going to be punished. The stick (which was proportionate according to the size of the student) was used to hit the buttocks generally once. The reasons for the punishment were serious, not trivial. These included theft, physically harming other students and other serious transgressions. An important point to be considered in this case is that fBVPS broke no law, since it was not forbidden in India during that time to discipline

students through corporal punishment. He stopped the corporeal punishment in 1988 because that batch of a few individuals had grown up to be obedient students. Also, the next batch of students were more qualified, **because he was finally allowed to choose whom to accept and whom not to accept into the Gurukula.** To state that former BVPS continuously has been abusing children the last 40 years, is a false statement and therefore a very serious offence. Someone may accuse us for vilifying the CPO and the GBC, but in our defence, we are concerned that the procedures are performed in a proper legal order. We are also doing our duty as disciples to defend our spiritual master as is our right according to shastra.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, where in shastra does it say that it is right to defame and spread false statements about a brahmana vaishnava who has dedicated his life to educating the vaishnava community for decades? Such defamation is actually the first offence against the holy name. In the 12th chapter of the Bhagavad-gita Lord Krishna explains who is very dear to Him, but in 18.68-69, He states who is **most** dear to Him: "For one who explains the supreme secret to the devotees, devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me. There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear."

## ISKCON appears to be functioning heavily under a modern political influence

According to the law, one cannot judge anyone based on word against words. One should judge based on clear evidence. The extreme danger with biased judgements is a chaotic and anarchistic society. Imagine our institution allowing that anyone can say anything about anyone without asking for clear evidences, and on top of that, witch-hunt anyone who questions such methods. And if those independently thoughtful devotees happen to have a position in ISKCON, their leadership position is terminated with immediate effect. That happened to me, in a very questionable way when I was actually just questioning the CPO methodology. (The Swedish National Council (SNC) without following any laws and rules terminated my chairmanship service with immediate effect (09/12/2022). They took advice from a GBC Emeritus, who recently openly defied a GBC decision, to terminate my chairmanship because according to them I had openly defied the CPO and GBC decision on fBVPS, when in actuality I was questioning their methodology.)

It becomes difficult for a devotee who would like to be a leader to function in such a centralised autocratic and bureaucratic movement. We have to be careful about going towards directions which Srila Prabhupada didn't give and did not show in his example in similar situations. ISKCON should carefully seek advice in Srila Prabhupada's instructions, and should never base their punishments on anything other than shastra and Srila Prabhupada's example. We are very worried about the direction which ISKCON is going at the moment. **Therefore we ask all the members of SABHA to remember why they joined ISKCON, and to connect with Krishna and their conscience, to have faith and to take courage and make the decision according to guru, sadhu and shastra.**

---

<sup>1</sup> "When Dakṣa cursed Lord Śiva in harsh words, some of the brāhmaṇas present might have enjoyed it because some brāhmaṇas do not very much admire Lord Śiva. This is due to their ignorance of Lord Śiva's position. Nandīśvara was affected by the cursing, but he did not follow the example of Lord Śiva, who was also present there. Although Lord Śiva could also have cursed Dakṣa in a similar way, he was silent and tolerant; but **Nandīśvara, his follower, was not tolerant. Of course, as a follower it was right for him not to tolerate an insult to his master**, but he should not have cursed the brāhmaṇas who were present." Purport to SB 4.2.20

Srimad Bhagavatam 4.4.17:

*Satī continued: If one hears an irresponsible person blaspheme the master and controller of religion, one should block his ears and go away if unable to punish him. But if one is able to kill, then one should by force cut out the blasphemer's tongue and kill the offender, and after that one should give up his own life.*

Purport: "The argument offered by Satī is that a person who vilifies a great personality is the lowest of all creatures. But, by the same argument, Dakṣa could also defend himself by saying that since he was a Prajāpati, the master of many living creatures and one of the great officers of the great universal affairs, his position was so exalted that Satī should accept his good qualities instead of vilifying him. **The answer to that argument is that Satī was not vilifying [Dakṣa] but defending [Lord Śiva]...**"

## The wrong legal order

The GBC's posting their resolution publicly before the SABHA's review is unethical. Now the GBC has made public their resolution declaring further restrictions on not only fBVPS but on his disciples as well, declaring some of them no longer initiated. How will that be taken back now if the SABHA disapproves? Many devotees are highly questioning whether there is a hidden agenda with such a wrong legal order.

## Answering some points on the GBC resolution

1. ***“Whereas, it was also confirmed that he had engaged in sexual acts with at least one adult woman over an extended period of time;***

There is no explanation to what the GBC means with “at least one adult woman”. Does it mean two, three, one-hundred? There is no place for such vague statements in such grave allegations.

2. *“Whereas, a further investigation by the GBC Guru Services Committee has confirmed the same;”*

**The GBC Guru Services Committee has not contacted fBVPS.** From whom did they get the information? Is it not a common procedure in all types of investigations that the committee should interview the alleged perpetrator?

3. *“Whereas, in February 2007 Anirdesya Vapu das was restricted from accepting disciples via GBC Resolution 312/B which was based upon a CPO decision from September 2000;”*
4. *“Whereas, it has been established that Anirdesya Vapu das violated that prohibition and initiated devotees after that date;”*

In the year 2000, the CPO made a restriction. For one year he was not allowed to give class, lead kirtan and take part in public programs. He was not allowed to give initiations for two years, but after that he could give initiation. In the year 2007, the GBC decided that anyone who had a CPO decision, could not take new disciples. The GBC in 2007 **had not declared** that fBVPS was no longer a bona fide diksha-guru. Regarding the disciples that were initiated after 2007, those were brahmana initiations to already first initiated disciples, **as per the GBC allowance. Therefore, fBVPS has not violated any prohibition.**

5. *“Whereas, based on the 2022 CPO decision and new information about the extent of Anirdesya Vapu das’ abuses that it revealed, and his other violations, the Guru Services Committee has determined that Anirdesya Vapu das is unqualified to serve as either a diksa guru or siksa guru (initiating disciples, or offering spiritual instruction);”*

The GBC should specify the details of the following statements: **“new information about the extent of Anirdesya Vapu das’ abuses that it revealed, and his other violations”.** **There are also no references from GBC resolutions, ISKCON law or shastra supporting the validity of such a proposed decision.** On the other hand we would hereby humbly state **fBVPS is not a fallen Guru**, since 14 years have passed since he three times inappropriately allowed himself to touch the alleged victim, when she was above 18 years.

Śrīla Prabhupāda has explained in a lecture:

““If by accident, if by previous habit, one commits some mistake or falls down, that is excused. And one should be repentant: ‘My dear Lord, I have committed this offence. Please excuse me.’ And one should fast. One should be very much repentant. Then Kṛṣṇa is so kind. But he hasn’t got to take to the prāyaścitta or, what is called, atonement system. A devotee hasn’t got to do that. A devotee’s sinful activities is excused, and if he is repentant, then he is again elevated to his original position. That

is the verdict of all śāstras.”

Not only is this “the verdict of all śāstras,” Śrīla Prabhupāda has himself demonstrated such a consideration in his own dealings with his disciples who had difficulties in the past.”<sup>2</sup>

*“The Agni Purāṇa forbids inflicting a punishment or prāyaścitta on anyone (not to mention a Vaiṣṇava) for the fault that has already been judged and atoned for.”<sup>3</sup>*

*“There is no mention of removing a person (Vaiṣṇava) from the position of guruship, even for sins as heinous as brahmahatyā, and even a sin such as brahmahatyā does not necessarily mean that a guru is no longer bona fide, as the example of Vaiśampāyana shows.”<sup>4</sup>*

*Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura note that there is no further prāyaścitta for one who has given up all activities and is engaged in devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī has added that such a devotee incidentally attains the result of prāyaścitta by his continuous remembrance of the Lord.<sup>5</sup>*

It is commonly known that fBVPS has been chanting 64 rounds on a daily basis for at least a decade.

### **Redundant prāyaścitta or double jeopardy**

The Vedic scriptures, clearly states that the correct prāyaścitta purifies the aggressor of his sinful reactions and the sin itself. Such atonements need to be executed only once. In fact the Agni Purāṇa clearly prohibits a court from trying a person for a sin twice, as cited below:

*“A court should neither entertain, nor hear a cross-suit or a cross-case, without first deciding the original one, nor should it take up a case or suit dismissed or rejected by another tribunal of competent authority.”*

Hence it is important that one consult the śāstras for its prescriptions of the right atonement and not whimsically or emotionally subject the accused to double-jeopardy.”<sup>6</sup>

6. *“Therefore, the GBC affirms that Anirdesya Vapu das is, for the duration of his life, prohibited from:*

- *Accepting disciples in ISKCON; and*
- *Serving as a siksa guru in ISKCON; and*

Where in the history of vaishnavism has any authority of any institution ever come up with such a decision? Please consider the many shastric quotes given in this letter. We assume that the members of the GBC have faith in shastra and that it has clearly been established that the proposed GBC resolution is totally out of Srila Prabhupada’s instructions, shastra and ISKCON law. Please correct us if we are wrong by referring to shastra and ISKCON law,

7. · *Giving any form of spiritual guidance or instruction, including leading or contributing to any classes, meetings, or seminars of any kind, at any ISKCON temple, or affiliated program, festival, venue, or online forum.*

---

<sup>2</sup> Vedic Jurisprudence and Atonement, Prāyaścitta according to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, page 4

<sup>3</sup> Vedic Jurisprudence and Atonement, Prāyaścitta according to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, page 1

<sup>4</sup> Vedic Jurisprudence and Atonement, Prāyaścitta according to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, page 1

<sup>5</sup> Vedic Jurisprudence and Atonement, Prāyaścitta according to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, page 4

<sup>6</sup> Vedic Jurisprudence and Atonement, Prāyaścitta according to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, page 7

Does this mean that fBVPS will be allowed to only talk about material matters? How is that vaishnava prayascitta? Does the GBC have the right to regulate what happens outside of ISKCON? The CPO didn't decide that fBVPS cannot give private lectures. What is the GBC's Krishna conscious reason for this proposal and how is this pleasing to Lord Krishna and Srila Prabhupada? Are some appointed devotees not allowed to talk about Krishna anymore? Let us remind the GBC about what ISKCON's Founder-Acharya, Srila Prabhupada recommends as prayascitta, after having studied carefully the teachings of the previous acharyas and made it available to his followers:

*“Generally, a devotee who is engaged in the nine kinds of devotional activities is engaged in the process of cleansing all material contamination from the heart. He puts the Supreme Personality of Godhead within his heart, and all sinful contaminations are naturally washed away. Continuous thinking of the Supreme Lord makes him pure by nature. According to the Vedas, there is a certain regulation that if one falls down from his exalted position he has to undergo certain ritualistic processes to purify himself. **But here there is no such condition, because the purifying process is already there in the heart of the devotee, due to his remembering the Supreme Personality of Godhead constantly.**”* Purport to BG 9.31

We assume we are writing and talking with devotees who have faith in devotional service as the real cleaning agent of the heart. **That devotional service is more powerful than sins and any material contamination.**

8. *Furthermore, regarding those devotees who accepted initiation from Anirdesya Vapu das:*

*If such an initiation was before February 2007, those devotees are advised to seek spiritual guidance from senior devotees in ISKCON and to continue serving within ISKCON as they have been doing. They continue to be initiated devotees in ISKCON, in the line of Srila Prabhupada, with the full privileges and responsibilities thereof. If any of those devotees choose to seek reinitiation from a guru in good standing in ISKCON, either now or in the future, they are welcomed and encouraged to do so. In such a circumstance, devotees should seek further guidance from their local ISKCON authorities and GBC.*

*If such an initiation occurred after February 2007, the date that Anirdesya Vapu das was prohibited from initiating, those devotees are strongly advised to seek initiation from an ISKCON guru in good standing, as their current initiation status has no standing in ISKCON.”*

Please see the ISKCON law references given below regarding point 8 which are not inline with the ISKCON law regarding this matter.

## ISKCON law regarding rejection of a fallen Guru

After carefully considering the above shastric references and considering the self imposed sadhana and devotional practices that fBVPS has done the last 14 years, we would humbly like to establish the fact that fBVPS is **not** a fallen guru. Despite our own conviction as disciples, we would still like to remind the SABHA team about what the ISKCON law says about rejecting or not rejecting a fallen guru:

### 1.7. Rejection of a Fallen "Guru"

N.B.: The following laws are based on Sri Krsna Bhajanamrta by Sri Narahari Sarkara (an associate of Sri Caitanya), Bhakti Sandharbha by Srila Jiva Gosvami, and Jaiva Dharma by Bhaktivinoda Thakura, in addition to the writings of Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

#### 1.7.1. When a Fallen Guru May Be Rejected

If it is ascertained either by the admission of the guru, or by the testimony of irrefutably reliable witness(es) that the guru was fallen at the time of initiation, then the disciple has a legitimate reason to reject him and take re-initiation from a bona fide spiritual master

#### 1.7.2. When a Fallen Guru Must Be Rejected

##### 1.7.2.1. Hopelessly entangled in sense gratification

If a guru has become hopelessly entangled in sense gratification, and it has been established by reliable testimony or by his own admissions that he has been regularly violating the regulative principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and if there is virtually **no hope for his rectification**, then the disciple should reject him and may accept re-initiation.

#### 1.7.2.2. Takes on demonic qualities

If the spiritual master takes on **demonic qualities and becomes inimical to ISKCON**, he should be rejected and the disciple may take re-initiation.

#### 1.7.3. When Not to Reject a Fallen Guru

If a guru is engaged in sense gratification, violating one or more of the regulative principles, but **there is hope that he can be rectified**, then his disciples should not reject him but **should allow time for such rectification to take place**, and they should take shelter of Srīla Prabhupāda and senior vaiṣṇavas as sikṣa gurus.

#### 1.7.4. When a Suspended Guru May Be Rejected

A disciple of a suspended guru who has severely lost his faith in his spiritual master, or who has developed an offensive mentality towards him, and who is unable to regain his faith, even after hearing many instructions in the matter, may take permission from the spiritual master for release to accept a different initiating guru. The devotee should act in consultation with his local GBC representative. If the suspended guru withholds his permission, then the disciple may seek permission from the GBC body.<sup>7</sup>

## Conclusion

After presenting in this letter, a few śāstric references on punishing a vaiṣṇava, fBVPS's atonements, the fact that his last fall down happened 14 years ago, and presenting what the ISKCON law states, we would humbly like to point out that **the GBC resolution of 15/12/200 on fBVPS is out of line with Srīla Prabhupāda, śāstra, and the ISKCON law.**

"In his purport to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 8.20.1, Śrīla Prabhupāda stresses the contrasting point of when to reject a guru.

*"Anyone who is supposed to be a guru but who goes against the principle of viṣṇubhakti cannot be accepted as guru. If one has falsely accepted such a guru, one should reject him. Such a guru is described as follows (Mahābhārata, Udyoga 179.25): guror apy avaliptasya kāryākāryam ajānataḥ utpatha-pratipannasya parityāgo vidhīyate."*  
(ŚB 8.20.1 purport)"

There are hundreds of lectures given by fBVPS, and we have heard most of those, but never have we ever come across one sentence going against Viṣṇu-bhakti. On the contrary, he always concludes his lectures that our application of devotional service should always be in consideration of what is pleasing to Lord Kṛṣṇa. But if someone in the SABHA thinks differently, we would humbly like to ask for such reference.

Srīla Prabhupāda also explains who is qualified to be a guru: "So when one understands Kṛṣṇa perfectly, he becomes mahātmā. Just try to understand. **Not a politician.** Not by changing dress, saffron-color cloth. No, that is not mahātmā. One who understands Kṛṣṇa perfectly well, he is **mahātmā**. Therefore here it is said, munibhir mahātmabhiḥ. The instruction was received from persons, **munibhiḥ, great philosophers.** Not only philosophers, but mahātmā. **Because one who has understood Kṛṣṇa perfectly...** This is the qualification of guru."

fBVPS is famous in ISKCON for being one of the most erudite scholars and philosophers who have understood the Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy to the level of an expert (muni), His uninterrupted

---

<sup>7</sup> Gurus and Initiation in ISKCON. Law of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Published by the Governing Body Commission, International Society for Krishna Consciousness 1995

engagement and absorption in devotional service witness his spontaneous devotion (mahatma who has understood Krishna perfectly).

*“From the above references provided from pāncarātrika-mārga, vaidika-mārga, the teachings of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Prabhupāda, it has been clearly established that even for the worst kinds of the sins committed by a Vaiṣṇava **who has fully surrendered unto the Supreme Lord**, there is no mention of removing him from the position of guru or giving him other kinds of punishments not found in the revealed scriptures.”<sup>8</sup>*

We are aware of the fact that this issue is emotionally loaded for many ISKCON members. The reasons are different, but we would like to bring to the attention of the revered SABHA members that this CPO decision has been handled in the the wrong legal order as follows:

1. Someone in the GBC or CPO **leaked** the confidential CPO decision to the internet.
2. ISKCON News published a news article on the CPO decision **before** hearing fBVPS' appeal.
3. The GBC made an official statement on the CPO decision **before** hearing fBVPS' appeal.
4. Several ISKCON Gurus and National Councils made their statements **before** hearing fBVPS' appeal.
5. ISKCON News did not publish fBVPS' appeal.
6. ISKCON News published a news article regarding this GBC resolution **before** the SABHA made their statement.

***Why? What was the Krishna conscious purpose of that? Many devotees find these actions in poor taste.***

We are fully aware that some of the members of the SABHA team have family relations with some affected persons in this case, and others have family relations with opponents against fBVPS. Therefore we would humbly like to request the SABHA members to be conscious of this fact and help each other to come to a Krishna conscious solution and understanding, based on Srila Prabhupada's teachings and personal application on similar situations, ISKCON law and shastra.

We would also humbly like to request the SABHA team to explain their decision, with references based on Srila Prabhupada's teachings and personal application on similar situations, ISKCON law and shastra.

Your humble servants,  
Mangalavati Citra devi dasi and Tattvavada dasa

---

<sup>8</sup> Vedic Jurisprudence and Atonement, Prāyaścitta according to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, page 7