

What really happened really did, and all of us (that had our eyes open) know it.

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When I first read Bhakta das's interview questions and Gurukripa's answers I thought, "Oh boy, now we'll hear some of the old "ostrich people" (I call them that, as goes the old wives' tale about an ostrich sticking its head in the sand to avoid being seen, which is not actually true, but the saying is still there) trying to throw stones at Gurukripa and trying to find some fault with him instead of addressing what he has said.

It seems that nobody did, at least not thus far. And why? As Srila Prabhupada was often fond of saying, "Silence means you agree." Is it not so? Yet not many of us have had the strength to stand up and agree with our voices. I decided that although I would not prefer to write in this forum very often, I would, as I have known Gurukripa for many years.

He's rough, he's brash, he's intense, and he has the energy of a firecracker (or at least did in the years before Srila Prabhupada left). He's not afraid of anyone and he'll come right into your face and tell you what he thinks of you, or what might be going on, or at least he used to do so. He's street-wise and he's crafty. When he's determined to do something he'll succeed at it, by hook or by crook. Many devotees in the old days couldn't handle him. They weren't used to dealing with anyone with such an intense nature, who lays it all on the table, whether you like it or not.

But you know what? He's honest and he's straightforward. And he loved Srila Prabhupada so completely that you could see it then in his eyes and in his endeavours to please Prabhupada. It didn't matter whether it was "comfortable" for him or whether ANYONE supported his endeavours or helped in any way. He did what not one other person could possibly have done. He gave Srila Prabhupada all the money to build Vrindavan and Mayapur projects. He would do anything that Srila Prabhupada asked him to do, no questions asked.

Gurukripa has given a correct and accurate exposition of what really happened. He most certainly WAS there. He faded away and deigned to get involved with all the travesties that occurred after Srila Prabhupada left and that was more than fine with the "gurus". It was only a bare few years ago that his monumental contribution to building Krishna Balarama temple was even somewhat publicly acknowledged! Finally

they gave him his own quarters, that would be his for life at the guesthouse. (How big of them.)

Everything he said was 100% accurate. The movement was hijacked for personal prestige and profit by unqualified persons. I remember going to Vrindavan right after Srila Prabhupada left the planet. We were all stunned when the news came to us in Hawaii and I had to go immediately, which still took me some weeks to arrange. Two of my close godbrothers told me that Srila Prabhupada had asked for the word to be put out to all the temples that he wanted ALL of his disciples to come to Vrindavan. But the "powers that be" in their infinite wisdom decided that "no, it will be too much strain on Srila Prabhupada. Where will all the devotees stay? How could Vrindavan accommodate such a deluge of devotees from all over the world?"

Let me tell you, we'd have slept in the road. We'd have bathed with buckets from a public water source. Not a one of us would have cared a fig for any bodily comforts. Our beloved Srila Prabhupada was about to leave this world. He who we'd given up our previous lives for, he who had forced our eyes open from the darkness of ignorance, he who had shown the most unbelievable patience and love we'd ever known in our lives, he who had unrestrictedly entrusted us with the most confidential spiritual knowledge...was going to leave his body. Prabhupada was everything to us...and we were everything to him. He loved us and we owed him everything. But they thought it would not be "convenient". I do not use expletives often and especially not on such a forum, but you can fill in what so many of us felt "you dirty b-----s". Our guru, Krishna's pure devotee gave orders and you decided you knew best?!

That they were shown to be unqualified immediately was the least of our observations. Some became mad, others so puffed-up with false prestige became mean and derided those who disagreed with them. So many observations were made. But, who stood up?! Not many of us were equipped to and we were still so young, we didn't have the capacity to possibly organize in a way that could have done anything either. I'll NEVER forget walking into a temple and seeing 11 *vyasanas* set up for these "chosen ones". It was like being in the "twilight zone". They had gone absolutely mad!

When I returned to LA from Hawaii the following spring to finish a degree, it was very strange indeed. I was actually told I should bow down and offer my obeisances whenever I saw Ramesvar. I just kind of laughed this one off, but when they started saying he was a "*naisthikya brahmacari*"...well, this was just too bloody much! Devotees were leaving (forced out is more like it) in droves and this air of insanity was prevailing in the movement as the gurus consolidated their power as the "everything to everyone". We other disciples of Srila Prabhupada that were not willing to follow them

were simply marginalized and pushed away. I remember Ramesvar's "henchmen" in the early 80's with big bulges in their jacket pockets, as they carried guns at all times.

Everywhere on the planet these 11 were considered the new "pure devotees" and those who were given the "shakti" to now be just as Srila Prabhupada was. They gave themselves names like "*Bhaktipad*" and "*Vishnupad*", etc. It was so surreal and so disheartening, but we had no ability to do anything. Most of us were still in our 20's and we had not planned for this. We were not prepared for such a thing happening right after Srila Prabhupada's disappearance. And they knew it. A completely successful "hostile takeover", in corporate parlance. Before anybody could really realize what had happened, it was done.

And how did these magnanimous souls show their mercy to the world by lighting the way for others? How were they to become examples to everyone as the epitome of fully surrendered souls at the lotus feet of the Lord? How did they extend the long arm of their knowledge, their compassion, their mercy? How did they show how they were inspired from within their hearts to serve the sweet will of Guru and Krishna?

Let's see now. If my memory serves me well (it doesn't really have to, as all these are provable historical events) Ramesvar started sneaking out of his window during the night to carry on an affair with a 15 year old girl (the daughter of one of his disciples, I believe). He would go to the holiest of holy places in Westwood, to the movies. Then during the day he would parade around in his sannyasa uniform, being his usual disagreeable self. Did he or did he not always look like he was smelling a bad fart?! He always had that look on his face.

Harikesh was the most self-righteous and most fault-finding, heavy, slam you into the dust if you didn't walk the exact straight party line. What happened to him, I wonder. Oh, that's right he left with his female masseuse after causing a REAL ruckus, as the GBC didn't know what to do with him. He was such a BIG BIG leader, after all, and at first he just went bonkers. They confined him to quarters, if I remember correctly. Such arrogance!

Do any of you remember the Prabhupada centennial double CD made in London for the 1996 celebration? There were many contributions made to it by devotee musicians from all over the world. Almost all were musically sound, even if you didn't particularly like certain kinds of music they pretty much all had talent. He also did a track. If you haven't heard it you really should. (My wife and I were actually embarrassed for him, that he could even think his vocals would be pleasing. He wouldn't have made it 5 seconds on "The Gong Show"!)

Oh, almost forgot, he took millions of dollars with him when he left of ISKCON's assets, but who's counting.

Bhavananda, now there's an advanced soul if I ever met one. He's very charismatic when he wants to be. I don't even have to recount his nefarious homosexual activities in the holy *dham* and all the fallout. He did stop to see me after he was "kicked out", as I was in LA and he needed money. I bought one of his ruby rings and another one from him for what I considered "*bupkas*", so why not. (I was in the gem business, after all.) I bought him lunch at a restaurant in Beverly Hills, where I had an office, and after his first glass of wine (Hey, I couldn't have cared less and let him have whatever he wanted) he started crying in his inimitable shrillest tone, "They kicked me out. Prabhupada gave me my position and they kicked me out". All I could think was, 'Come ON Bhav! Think about what you were doing there! Did you think that having sex with boys was befitting a guru?' Doesn't there come a time when you're supposed to realize your mistakes and at least admit them, if not try to make amends?'

Oh yes, and Hamsadutta Maharaj! He and his band of criminals used to go around and play "shoot 'em up". With REAL GUNS! They shot up a car dealership once and had a really wonderful array of assault weapons and handguns that could blow a man's head off with one shot. "Make my day"! Now those guys actually were pretty scary. A real criminal gang. Remember his second in command, "Jiva Swami"? He died in a shootout in California. And you thought there was no transcendental excitement in ISKCON.

Kirtanananda was also very spiritually advanced, wasn't he? Hey, he's one of the stars of a wonderful book called *Monkey on a Stick*. How proud he must have been. Poor guy, though. For a man like him to have to be convicted of murder, conspiracy and what all else, when he was only doing it all for Krishna. Couldn't those fools in the courts that sentenced him see that he was a saint, who did what he did for the salvation of those concerned? Ah well, I guess only K Swami's devoted followers had the eyes to see.

Dear Satswarup, bless his heart. He simply needed to go into seclusion for deeper meditation and realizations. He needed some TLC that only a woman's touch can provide. I understand that he now is deeply involved with television sports "*katha*" and is becoming quite an expert on all the players and teams. What an inspiration that must be for his disciples. It proves unequivocally that in his years of writing advanced spiritual literature, he was receiving direct inspiration from Supersoul in the heart. I assume his books will now become famous in the line of all the other Vaishnava saints of our Sampradaya.

Tamal Krishna always gave me the willies, to be honest. I have seen him crush people with his words. He was just plain mean to a lot of devotees. He was one I didn't know very well at all, as I would stay far away from him. Gurukripa certainly knew him, though. I remember wondering what an "odd couple" Tamala and Vishnujana Swami

were back in the early days when they had the Radha-Damodara travelling party. Vishnujana was so wonderful and so kind and blissful, and Tamala, well, as I said Tamala was just plain scary to me. I really don't want to say anything else as he's not around anymore. My mom always used to say "let the dead rest in peace". I must say, though, the means used by the higher authorities to take him from this world does not remind me of the passing of any saints I ever heard of.

Jayatirtha was one of the nicest devotees I ever knew. He was kind and compassionate and I only remember him with affection. I went to see him when he had taken sannyasa and was living in London in a house near the Manor. I went there and asked to see him, but was told that JT could not be disturbed. I asked them to please just go and knock and tell him that Hamsavatar was here to see him. One disciple did (adding that he was very busy and he doubted he would see me) and two seconds later he came bounding down the stairs and into my arms. He almost knocked me on my rear end! We went up to his room and sat down together. I asked him first of all why he took sannyasa when those who knew him knew he didn't want to. I'm not going to go into it all, but it seems he and Bhagavan, the only 2 who were householders of the 11, were told they had to, by consensus of the others. Poor JT went a bit crazy and his passing was also similar in auspiciousness.

Bhagavan was a nice guy from all I knew of him, but as with all I mentioned, none were qualified to be the next acharyas. Now I have no personal beef with any of them, nor those others who I have not mentioned. I think I made my point. Qualified? Not in anyone's wildest dreams. How could this all happen? Like I said, hostile takeover, and nobody that wasn't going to fall in line with them knew how to do anything, but just leave.

The point Gurukripa made and that I am obviously agreeing with is that regardless of their personalities, charisma or anything else, they were NOT qualified to become the next acharyas of this Krishna consciousness movement, and were never given carte blanche to do what they did by Srila Prabhupada. In any case most of you reading this that are direct disciples of Srila Prabhupada know it's all true. But what will happen next? Will anything change? I doubt it, at least not in our lifetimes. As I wrote a long time ago, though, I think that many of us could do some important service for Srila Prabhupada still while we are here. At least we can try.

So now it will be interesting to see if anybody else writes in. My hat's off to you, Gurukripa. Thanks for being unafraid to tell it like it was. At least history should reflect the truth. My obeisances to all the sincere Vaishnavas in the world. Maybe some of us will find a way to cooperate together someday before we're gone. There's more of us outside the present ISKCON than inside it. That's for sure. Some of us have money,

some have time, and others are just plain talented. One thing we share is that we all love Srila Prabhupada. Maybe we'll just figure out how to show it yet.

In the service of His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada,

Hamsavatar das

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