

Srila Prabhupada Realizations By Guru Maharaja : South-Africa Retreat 2010



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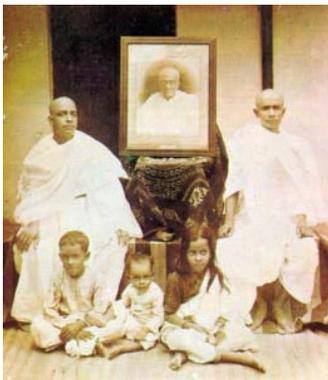
Ramayana means the glorious activities of Lord Ramacandra. But to understand the glories of the Sri Ramachandra, we have to understand the glory of Srila Prabhupada. Rather to understand the –The more we recognize and appreciate the glory of Srila Prabhupada the more we will be able to appreciate of the activities of Supreme Personality of Godhead, because Srila Prabhupada came to give the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The mercy of the Lord flows through Srila Prabhupada, the most bona fide representative of the Lord. Instead of speaking of Grantha Bhagavad to the person Bhagavat. Instead of Bhagavatam the scripture, we are going to speak on the Bhagavatam, the personality, Srila Prabhupada. To recognize Srila Prabhupada properly we have to recognize ISKCON. Because ISKCON is the manifestation of Srila Prabhupada in his absence. We have to recognize the importance of ISKCON because ISKCON is the manifestation of Srila Prabhupada in his absence. Srila Prabhupada is the founder Acarya of ISKCON and to understand this is not difficult. Srila Prabhupada founded, he created ISKCON. He is the one who made ISKCON. But what about the other half, the Acarya aspect? Prabhupada is not only the founder, he is the Acarya of ISKCON.

What is the meaning of Acarya? Acarya means the spiritual master. So Prabhupada is not only the founder of ISKCON, but Prabhupada is also the spiritual master of everyone in ISKCON. Srila Prabhupada is not just the spiritual master of his disciples, Srila Prabhupada is the spiritual master of all the devotees of ISKCON for all time. As long as ISKCON will be there Srila Prabhupada will remain the Acarya of ISKCON. Does that mean there shouldn't be any other guru's? No, there will be gurus but those gurus will be subservient to Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada is the principle Acarya and all the gurus are subordinate. That is the difference between ISKCON and any other institution.



To properly understand this point, let us consider how the initiation system used to be conducted in the past. In the past the guru used to have his ashram and the disciple used to come and get trained by the guru in his ashram. When the guru retired he handed the ashram over to a selected one. He used to appoint an Acarya, and that person used to continue. The other disciples, if they wanted, they could have their ashram and they could continue educating or training their disciples. So it was a small set up. The guru used to educate his disciples himself in a personal way. But with Caitanya Mahaprabhu's sankirtan movement there appeared to be need for a world-wide propagation of Krishna consciousness and this revival of Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mission was started by Bhaktivinodhe Thakur. Prior to Bhaktivinodhe Thakur, Caitanya Mahaprabhu's teachings were practically lost. In the desert of apasampradayas, the nectarean stream of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's sankirtana teachings got lost and Bhaktivinodhe Thakur came to revive that flow of nectar. Bhaktivinodhe Thakur himself could not do much preaching. He just founded the foundation of Caitanya Mahaprabhu's movement. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur started the propagation. Bhaktivinodhe Thakur gave the blueprint in his books and writings but Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur started the propagation. That propagation started in the form of Gaudiya Math, his institution. His institution was very effective during his presence. There were 64 Math's or centers throughout India in those days. The kind of people that surrendered to him were amazing, they were very prominent, very cultured, very wealthy, well established individuals. Gaudiya Math was thriving at that time. But soon after Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur's disappearance, his institution actually crumbled. Why did it happen? When we go into the history then we find that Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur did not want to appoint an Acarya. He did not appoint any successor Acarya. He rather suggested that his disciples collectively

maintain the institution. He did not name anybody as Acarya. He said manage the institution collectively through a governing body. But, unfortunately soon after his disappearance there was a split in the institution. Some thought that the institution should be maintained collectively through a collective management as Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur pointed out but some others felt that how can a spiritual organization be maintained by a group of managers. Therefore there is a need for an Acarya. Although Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur did not appoint an Acarya, they appointed an Acarya. And that personality was an extremely brilliant personality. I heard that he was so brilliant, in those days they used to take notes, there was no tape recorder and if they missed out some parts, they used to ask this person. And his memory was so sharp that he could repeat what Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur had said. If Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur got stuck with some verse, some scriptures, he used to provide. He was an extremely brilliant personality. It was decided that he should become an Acarya. Those that proposed that he become an Acarya, were themselves extremely brilliant personalities. I had the good fortune of being very close to the personality who was the orchestrator of this thing. He was a very brilliant personality as well. Srila Prabhupada was also very close to him. He himself didn't want to become an Acarya. His name was Ananta Vasudev. If he was such a brilliant personality then you can imagine how brilliant a personality was person appointed as Acarya. But unfortunately after some time it was detected that he was having an affair with a woman. They found some love letters written by him and then he was exposed. In this way when the Acarya fell down you can imagine what happened. The structure collapsed. Already the institution was divided.



Now there was a further division, and the substance was lost. That strength that it was standing on the spiritual potency of the Acarya was not there. In course of time we saw how the Gaudiya math disintegrated. Although they are there, their temples are there, the spiritual activities are going on, they're giving initiation, their preaching and their cultivating is going on and so forth, but the dynamic movement that Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati established, that was not there. Then fortunately Srila Prabhupada came, our Srila Prabhupada came. Prabhupada was actually an insignificant personality during that time, it is not that he was lacking in his brilliance by any chance. But nobody could see that. I discovered some early writings of Srila Prabhupada from 1948, 1940 onwards of the Gaudiya Math

magazines. I discovered some early writings and I could see they were such brilliant writings. But Srila Prabhupada was not really recognized. Because they saw him as a householder so there was no exposure to his brilliance, although it was there. It was not that all of a sudden he became saktyaveshtar avatar, as some less intelligent persons think. They think that Srila Prabhupada was a nobody and then suddenly he became a saktyaveshtar avatar. But that is not the case. Srila Prabhupada has always been that great personality. From his writing and his actions we saw Srila Prabhupada's surrender and sacrifice. Who can make such a sacrifice? At the age of 26, a householder, married, with a child and a very very coveted job, Srila Prabhupada practically sacrificed everything for the sake of fulfilling the mission of his spiritual master. Where do we find this kind of sacrifice? At that time Gaudiya math was not that prominently established. It was just one small little house and Srila Prabhupada was one of the first people who actually went to listen to Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur He just came after 10 years of tapasya at Mayapur, chanting 1 billion names, which meant for 10 years Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur chanted 300 000 names, meaning 192 rounds a day without fail. He completed 100 crore names, which means 1 billion names (1000 million names) of the Lord. To fulfill that vow he was there for 10 years. When he completed it he came to Calcutta to start to preach. He rented a part of a small 2 story building and it became his ashram. Some people were coming to listen to him and some became impressed. One of Prabhupada's friends became very impressed with him. Prabhupada was the leader of his group. For example whenever they did anything they wanted his approval. So they wanted to verify the caliber of this sadhu that they came across.



So they wanted Srila Prabhupada to come, 'Come and tell us what you think of this sadhu.' Prabhupada's initial response was that 'I am not interested in this sadhu. I have seen many sadhus and I know what they are. They are just a bunch of professional beggars. They just come and don't have any spiritual profundity, any spiritual depth.' And his friend who was coming from a very wealthy family, one of the richest families of Calcutta of that time, the Mallik family, insisted that 'No Abhay, please come. This sadhu is not like that. Please come. He seems to be very learned, very scholarly. There is something very special about him.' Then Prabhupada finally went and you all know what is the consequence of that meeting. In the first meeting, Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur saw Srila Prabhupada and just addressed him that 'Educated young men like you should spread the message of Caitanya Mahaprabhu throughout the world in the English language.' Prabhupada couldn't figure out who he was actually addressing. 'Me?' 'Yes, you.' Prabhupada was there with other friends, other young men, but when finally Bhaktisiddanta

Sarasvati pointed out that ‘You I am talking to.’ When they were returning home, his friend asked him, Naren Mallik, that ‘Abhay what do you think of it?’ Srila Prabhupada response was that now that the message of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has come through such a personality, he will do something about it. Not only that but Srila Prabhupada commented that something is going to happen but Prabhupada himself committed to this mission. He quit his job and practically left all the other responsibilities to commit himself to this mission. This is how Prabhupada’s spiritual life started. Prabhupada did not get involved straight away. Prabhupada was ——? He did not join Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati’s institution then and there on a fulltime basis. He was carrying on with his own life, preparing himself how to spread this Krishna consciousness all over the world. Once I heard Prabhupada telling himself that at that time he thought that he would make a lot of money by running a business. And with that money, he would go to the West and fulfill this mission. But Prabhupada was not successful in his business. It was a struggle. He quit his job and started a business but his business was a failure. But Prabhupada did not give up.



And Prabhupada mentioned that finally when Caitanya Mahaprabhu sent him to the West, he sent him as a pauper, without any money, without any resources. But all kinds of wonderful things started to happen. So Srila Prabhupada was not in the limelight, Srila Prabhupada was not even in the forefront when Srila Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati was present. But Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur knew who Srila Prabhupada was and what Srila Prabhupada would do. Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur told Prabhupada that ‘You are not successful in your business, you do not love money enough. In order to be successful in business, you have to love money enough. But you do not love money enough, therefore you are not successful in business.’ Then Prabhupada was in Bombay. Devotees were setting up an ashram. They were establishing a centre in Bombay. Prabhupada was very involved. Prabhupada was helping them even though he was a householder. He was not living in the ashram but he was giving them all kinds of help. And some suggested that Prabhupada becomes the president of the temple in Bombay. Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur said, ‘No, there is no need to encumber him with any responsibilities. In due course of time he will do something wonderful.’ Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur detected that here is a person who is so absorbed in hearing. He listens very carefully. He was impressed with that. And Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur also confided in Srila Prabhupada that very soon there will be fire in Gaudiya Math. He could see how the members of that

institution would start to fight amongst themselves for the sake of position and power and property. And Srila Prabhupada was away from all that. And finally after a lot of struggle, when Srila Prabhupada went to the West and there was an opportunity to get a building, a 6 or 7 storey building in Manhattan. At that time it was costing \$100 000. Srila Prabhupada invited his god-brothers, 'Please come. Let's fulfill the mission of our spiritual master collectively.' But they did not respond. Initially Prabhupada tried his best to co-operate with everyone. But when they did not, then Prabhupada had to start it up on his own. In the meantime Gaudiya Math of Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur disintegrated, fell apart. Some temples are there, the temple activities are going on but preaching stopped. That dynamic preaching that Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur set up, that dynamic preaching that was necessary to spread Krishna consciousness all over the world that stopped. Prabhupada once mentioned what they were doing is ringing bells and having picnics. Their spiritual activities were reduced to just ringing bells and having picnics. Prabhupada summarized that the Deity worship that they are doing, was ringing bells and then after offering to the Deities, that is picnic. Now Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur recognized the importance of an institution. Nowadays I often hear that some individuals say that institutionalized religion is bad. They criticize the institution. But we have to recognize that in order to spread Krishna consciousness all over the world effectively, we need an institution. Without an institution, it is not going to happen.



Like, if you want to set up a big multinational business, an essential thing is a structure. Without a structure, can it function properly? Let us go back, in the Gaudiya Math there were scores of temples, with many sannyasis, who were powerful individuals, very erudite, very learned, and very austere. Hundred of temples were there but where was the preaching? Now no preaching was going on. They were just trying to maintain themselves. But the dynamic thrust that is needed, the dynamic spiritual impetus that is needed, was missing. Why? They disintegrated because that collective endeavor of the institution was missing. Therefore they fell apart. Srila Prabhupada came and – I would even go to the extent of saying that from the ruins of the Gaudiya Math – Srila Prabhupada revived the spirit of Srila Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur. And he established the institution of ISKCON. Srila Prabhupada very emphatically told us what the mistake was that his God brothers made after Srila Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur's disappearance. And he warned us, 'You don't make this same mistake.' And what was the mistake? 'Guru Maharaja told us collectively manage the society through a governing body and they didn't do that. They appointed an Acarya.' So the secret or success of this institutional endeavor is collective management.

So let us look at ISKCON's history. In Gaudiya Math, after Srila Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati Thakur's disappearance, one Acarya fell down. And as a result of that the

whole structure collapsed. In ISKCON, if you look at the history, many gurus fell down who were very powerful individuals and very charismatic personalities with many, many followers. They fell down. When they fell down, there was a massive disaster in the movement. Naturally, their disciples, their followers became disheartened and left. They have been a massive loss. But ISKCON did not fall apart. Why? Because this institution having a collective concept of management. The gurus have fallen down but the GBC (Governing Body Commission) was in place. The ISKCON was not resting on the strength of the gurus. The ISKCON was being substantiated by the collective management of the GBC. And therefore we have to understand where our real strength lies and we have to act according to that understanding. We must derive our strength from where the source of our strength is.

The source of our strength is on our unity, in our collective management. There had been many attacks that have come to ISKCON in many, many ways. In many ways there have been many attacks and it seemed as if the society will fall apart but it didn't because of this concept of collective management. As I mentioned the gurus, many powerful gurus have fallen down. Many of you have experienced. And many of you here, I know, have been even initiated by gurus. Like, for example PrabhaVishnu? You are been initiated by? 'Jayatirtha and Bhagavan.' Okay, so two gurus fell down. And how were they? They were very very powerful individuals, with how many followers? Even in South Africa there were hundreds of followers, hundreds of disciples. And what kind of damage it caused. But ISKCON did not fall apart. Damage has been caused. A good part of ISKCON collapsed but ISKCON remained and ISKCON continued and is still continuing. Show me or name how many spiritual institutions are there that is still continuing, after the disappearance of the founder, the charismatic founder that the founder is. Very few. We can name only name a few, say, Christianity, Islam. Then we can go to the extent to say RamaKrishna Mission. They're doing pretty good.

Let us see why these three institutions have been successful. Those three institutions have been successful because the founder of the institution has been recognized and it is on the strength of the founder that the institution is thriving. Christianity is centered on Jesus Christ. Can you imagine if Jesus Christ's position became obscured and some of his followers took his position, became the leader of the guru? And Jesus' position became obscured? Then would there be any Christianity? Same thing applies with Islam, same thing applies also with RamaKrishna Mission. We must give credit to Vivekananda. Although he was the main force behind that institution, not only that, he actually is the createR of the RamaKrishna Mission. RamaKrishna was not the creator of the RamaKrishna Mission. RamaKrishna Mission is the creation of Vivekananda, but the thing is he put RamaKrishna in the centre. And as a result of that, that institution is still thriving. On the other hand, you look at some other institutions. In the recent past there have been many institutions, for example, there has been Rajneesh, so many bhogi yogis, these babas and that babas and so forth. Just wait till they fall apart, till they disappear. What will happen?

One thing also, in this case I can point out, Sai Baba. Sai Baba did not establish the institution on his own strength. He established the institution in the name of Sridhri Sai Baba, who was a very powerful spiritual leader. But he did not really establish a spiritual institution. It is this Satya Sai Baba who actually made it possible. It is on his strength that actually Sai Baba is Sai Baba. He also has some mystic power. No doubt about that. And people are impressed with this mystic power. Most of the institutions, after the disappearance of the leaders, fall apart. For example, Rajneesh? Did you even hear about Rajneesh? Same way, there are so many. Sachidananda, Balayogi. Balayogi created quite a sensation in his time. But what happened to their institutions? They fell apart. Now, why is ISKCON still going so strong, 32 years after Srila Prabhupada's disappearance? Although ISKCON faced so many difficulties, so many crises, ISKCON is still going strong. Why? Because of this collective management and ISKCON has Srila Prabhupada in the centre. And this putting Srila Prabhupada in the centre is not just a sentimental thing in ISKCON. Prabhupada IS the centre. How? Because the basis of ISKCON is actually the books of Srila Prabhupada, Srila Prabhupada's teachings. They are presented in books. Prabhupada himself said 'Books are the bases. In this institution books are the basis. And we are seeing that it is on the teachings of Srila Prabhupada that ISKCON's activities are going on. In the morning, we give Bhagavatam class. Based on what? Devotees go out and preach. Based on what? On the basis of Srila Prabhupada 's books. Whenever we have any discussion, what is the basis of that discussion? Srila Prabhupada's books.

This is the difference between Christianity and ISKCON. Christianity is thriving, but when we go into the bottom of it then you see it is empty. It is on some sentiment that they are carrying on. Why is their basis empty? Because they don't know the teachings of Jesus. Jesus' teachings haven't been presented. What we got in the form of the bible, is just the statements of the Apostles, who came much after Jesus Christ. And that's why Christianity is so confusing in so many ways. And they don't have any philosophical understanding. How can you be considered to be a bona fide religion when they don't even recognize that the animals have soul? Christian understanding is that only human beings have soul, animals don't have soul. What does it imply? They don't know what soul is. They say, 'Love thy Father, Lord, thy God.' But who is God, the Father? No understanding. How can you love somebody Whom you do not know. They're saying, 'Father, Father,' but they're saying His only son is Jesus Christ. What kind of Father is He? Prabhupada once mentioned that, 'I had five children and God, the Father had only one child? Impossible.' So we can see that their spiritual aspect of it and philosophical understanding is practically nil. They don't have any spiritual understanding. Just some rituals and based on that rituals, that religion is thriving. You know, at least Christianity admits human beings have souls. You know what about the Muslims? They say only the men have souls, women don't have a soul. The point is that they don't have any information of the spiritual identity of an individual. They don't have any understanding about the spirit soul and the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Whereas in Prabhupada's teachings and books. It is not that Jesus didn't know about this God, the Father and the identity of the soul. Jesus knew but Jesus'

teachings haven't been presented properly. For that matter we see that Christianity was not established by Jesus or even by the Apostles. Christianity was actually established by Constantine, a king. Just consider that a king is establishing a spiritual organization. What will you get out of that? That is why there is lots of regal display but not spiritual understanding.

Anyway to go back to our main point, Srila Prabhupada created ISKCON in a most perfect way, in the most solid ground on the basis of his books. Books are the basis and purity is the force. Those who are going to propagate Srila Prabhupada's mission, Srila Prabhupada pointed out, they have to be pure. And that's why ISKCON maintained such a strict standard. No matter how exalted a personality you may be, no matter how powerful individual you may be, you deviate from the spiritual path, please step down. That's why we find that in ISKCON such strict and strong measures have been taken whenever the leaders of ISKCON, the gurus of ISKCON deviate. And who is making these decisions? Individuals will deviate. But this collective concept of management, the GBC is the judge. They're judging. They're implementing and they are establishing the standard. And then many of the GBC were also leaders, individually. They have gone and yes, a void has been created but they have been replaced. One seat has been vacated, another person came and occupied that seat. This is how collective management has protected the movement from all kinds of crises and calamities.

Now let us go back to the importance of Srila Prabhupada's position. Like, let us consider some big business conglomerations, like one of the most prominent one's are Ford, Rockefeller, these giant of organizations. Now just consider, Ford Motorcar Company was established by Henry Ford. And still today we can see that who is the ... When we think of Ford, when we speak Ford, who do we speak of? Henry Ford. Ford means Henry Ford. And being the successors or being connected to Henry Ford, the other Fords had become glorious. Now just imagine if Henry Ford was ... There are many institutions somebody sets up, then it is handed over to his sons and grandsons, then what happens? They don't really become that prominent. Now why the other Ford's are glorified? Why other Fords are so fortunate? those who are born in that family? Because they are connected to Henry Ford. Henry Ford created that giant of an institution. And by being connected to Henry Ford, they became glorified. Now same thing with Rockefeller. Some Rockefellers are born in that family. They inherited that legacy, they inherited that wealth. Some others came, they inherited that wealth. In this same way the personality, some very special personality creates that institution and those who become connected, those who are somehow fortunate enough to become connected to him, they inherit the legacy. Now in this case, let us consider, where does our real good fortune lie? Our connection to Srila Prabhupada. That somehow or other we are connected to Srila Prabhupada.



Will Rockefeller institution be the same if we take Rockefeller away from there? Will the Ford institution be the same if we take Henry Ford away from there? No. So similarly we have to understand that our main strength actually lies in Srila Prabhupada 's position as THE founder Acarya of ISKCON. And if that concept is maintained, ISKCON will become stronger and stronger. Like, as I was also pointing out, the old concept of ashram, guru's ashram. One guru is there. He sets it up, then he hands it over to another person. The other person, because the structure is so small, he can actually continue handling it. But when Srila Prabhupada came, Srila Prabhupada created an international institution. To run that institution effectively there has to be a personality who is almost as qualified as Srila Prabhupada, otherwise he will not be able to handle it. Therefore there is a need for a collective concept. This structure is so vast, so powerful that in order to manage that it is not going to be possible to be managed by one particular individual after Srila Prabhupada. Therefore there is a need for that collective management. And we can see the way Srila Prabhupada structured it that is perfect. What is the structure? Just look at the ISKCON structure. The whole world has been divided into different zones. And those zones are managed by the zonal secretaries of the GBC. And in that zones all over the world there are many , many temples. The temples are actually the units. Our actual units are the temples. And those temples are managed by the temple president. Temple presidents have the sole responsibility of management. Prabhupada made it clear. GBC's should not interfere in the local management. They must guide, they must help, and they must see that the standard is being maintained, but they should not interfere too much. They should see, interference should be there, whether the spiritual standards are being maintained, whether enough finance is there, whether they need any manpower, and so on and so forth. But when it comes to managing the temple is the temple president . And as a result of that, you can see ISKCON's development will take place through effective establishment of the temples.

And in his way we can have hundreds of temples, thousands of temples, being managed by qualified individuals and then the temple will be run not whimsically by Temple President but by the Temple council which should have the Temple President, Vice President, Secretary and other important members of the temple.



So Prabhupada gave the perfect structure. And in this structure we can grow endlessly. Endlessly we can grow. And anyway, now again I will re-iterate the structure. What is the structure? Srila Prabhupada is THE founder Acarya. Then the GBC body is the managing authority of structure and then the temples are the units from where our preaching and activities and all the spiritual programs will be conducted. Those temples are managed by the Temple Presidents. Now, in this structure, what is the most important consideration? Srila Prabhupada's position. It is not that Srila Prabhupada after his disappearance, he left. We have to recognize that Srila Prabhupada is still present. Srila Prabhupada is still present. Srila Prabhupada is present through his ISKCON. Srila Prabhupada is present through his vani. Yesterday that point came up a few times. What is the meaning of vani? Vani means Prabhupada's books. Prabhupada is still present in his books. Prabhupada is a spiritual personality. It is not a sentimental concept that 'Oh Prabhupada is present, Prabhupada is present.' We have to see in a practical way how Prabhupada is present. And one thing I can tell you. Line up with Srila Prabhupada, dedicate yourself to Srila Prabhupada, surrender yourself to Srila Prabhupada and commit yourself to the mission of Srila Prabhupada, I can guarantee you spiritual life will become a success. That is the secret of success. Thank you very much all GLORIES TO SRILA PRABHUPADA!! Gaur Premanande!

