

A Few Words (by Suhotra Swami) - 3rd April 1996

Dear devotees,

Respectful greetings. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Hare Krsna. These are a few words especially aimed at my disciples, but also to all devotees with whom I work in my GBC zone.

This year as you know I was elected to be the GBC Chairman. I feel a great weight has been dropped upon my shoulders. But I am not lamenting. This is Srila Prabhupada's mercy. If it means anxiety for me, that will be my purification.

At the same time, my regular responsibilities are calling my attention. I have a GBC zone, and I have disciples. One temple president in my zone just informed me he cannot continue his service. This may mean the temple will close down, as I do not see anyone else to fill in for him. Actually, there are others whom I would like to ask to take over, but they have their own problems. So it's a kind of a messy situation. I also received a long letter from a disciple who wants to stop book distribution and go back to the university. And there are other letters from disciples who ask me what service they should do and so on.

First, I want you all to know that it is not that I am unhappy by getting these letters. I do not want to discourage anyone from writing. If anything, I feel in my heart I have to give my disciples more association. But I am only one person, and I have a large zone, I am chairman, I am in India, and -- and -- and --.

So, my request is not that you *don't* write me about your problems, and just suffer in silence. No. My request is that you think very deeply *before* you write about how I can help you solve them. And, for my disciples, please don't forget that you are supposed to help me in my service to my spiritual master. So, in the case of the problem temple, where some of the devotees involved are my disciples, I hope that you will think deeply about a plan how ISKCON may continue its mission in that place. Then let me know what that plan is. Otherwise, just to tell me, "we're fried and defeated, please tell us what to do now," is not at all a good start.

There should not be any confusion about what our duty is, because our duty is one--to serve this mission Srila Prabhupada gave us. Now, someone may say, well, sure, but there are so many duties within this mission. Which one is for me? But I don't think that is the essential point. The essential point in our sampradaya is service in attachment. It is often said that this is a raganuga line, so that is what raganuga means. There are people who argue that since raganuga means following in the footsteps of the residents of Vrndavana, therefore raganuga is something totally internal and has no connection with our external, "ordinary" life in ISKCON. Now, I do not agree with that point of view. It's definitely not Prabhupada's mood. These people who speak that way know that very well themselves, therefore they have to justify themselves in so many ways, for instance by saying that Srila Prabhupada did not have enough time to teach us what raganuga is really all about. I believe their attitude is influenced by Mayavadi philosophy. The raga or attachment to Vraja-seva is awarded, it is not conjured up by mental speculation combined with a lackluster attitude to one's regular duties. Raga is awarded in terms of the seriousness with which we take our regular duties in ISKCON. So anyway, whatever attachment we have now should be committed to Srila Prabhupada's mission. We should want to see the mission successful everywhere.

Just like, if you love someone, you do not think in terms of one particular duty to that person. You just want to see that person happy and healthy, and you want to be with that person always. That's how we should see this ISKCON mission. It is "our" Krsna, given to us by Prabhupada. We should carefully consider whether what I want in life is for the betterment of the mission. But instead we think, I am "tired" of this service, I want to do something else, I have this

desire, I have to to satisfy my mind, my life is a mess . . . and I have *real reasons* why all this is so important! But stop and think. If everybody in ISKCON started doing like this, would there be a mission anymore? Are these concerns the foundation of ISKCON? Are they what makes our movement strong? If you admit, no, I guess ISKCON can't function on such a basis, the next question for you to answer is, then where is your personal attachment focused? It's obviously not focused on this mission. I hope what I am saying here is clear enough, and that I can stop now. I am not in a position to send very long texts, since telecommunications to COM from India are not good.

I am writing a book here in Sridham Mayapur which I plan to publish this year, for the centennial. On the spiritual side, it is a most sweet experience. I am getting many realizations by the grace of Srila Prabhupada and the holy dham. My desire to jump back into my European service after May is growing in my heart. I am eager to see all of you again.

There is a lot more I would like to say, but this is enough for now.

Hare Krsna, Jaya Prabhupada.

Suhotra Swami