

# HG Laxmimoni Devi

**Q What important instructions and leadership examples of Srila Prabhupada do you feel should be preserved and shared for the longevity and solidarity of ISKCON moving into the future?**

For me probably the most important instruction or the most important example that Srila Prabhupada showed was his **ability to adapt Krishna Consciousness to time place and circumstances**; his **willingness to use the resources provided by the immediate situation** to make ISKCON all that it could be at any given time. When he was working with us, who were not qualified initially, he used us to create temples and he gave us a lot of responsibility. Despite our disqualification, he sent us all over the world and he was successful. He took women into this movement and he empowered them and he was successful. He even said that he thought 'his success was contingent on the fact that he did that'. I think that's very important.

His instruction, **to cooperate with each other and be willing to take a lower position or a perceived lower position for the ultimate good**, is also very important; that we as westerners especially and now even in India, the tendency is to always want to be at the top. When Prabhupada went to Japan, he was in dianapon dealing with a bunch of businessmen and at the end everybody had left. One young man was collecting business cards off the table. Prabhupada asked him, "What is your goal in life?" He took his business card and put it at the top of the stack.

So everyone of us is looking for profit, adoration and distinction. Prabhupada encouraged to put that aside. He showed us to put that aside, that '**if you just think of the ultimate good, of the order of the spiritual master and the welfare of the movement and put your own personal desires aside, then the movement will succeed**'. So we cooperatively try to serve the other devotees and that will facilitate a successful mission in general; then everyone will benefit from that success. We try, sometimes, to assure our success at the expense of the bigger success but

Prabhupada wanted us to focus on the bigger success and he was always focused on the bigger success. *He had a very broad vision.*

From the very beginning, we saw the example of Prabhupada sitting on the park bench and a person saying to him, “You must be very lonely because you don't have any money and you don't have any friends”. Prabhupada said, “No, no, no. I have many temples, restaurants, farms, schools and many disciples. They are just separated by time”. So he had a very big vision but he built things very systematically and he was able to adjust on a dime. ***In a moment's notice he would adjust according to what the need of the situation was.*** I think we need to work on that. I think that principle of his was what makes ISKCON successful and what will continue to sustain ISKCON into the future.

Another thing is that success is measured differently in different places and different cultures and Prabhupada was able to function in every culture. He was able to be with big, rich Indian people and make them feel comfortable and he was able to be with professors and clergy men from all over the world. He could chastise people and still they would feel comfortable; because he did it in a very mature, responsible way. So, imbibing that, also being able to understand the mixed cultural nature of the world and that Prabhupada and Lord Caitanya *wanted this movement to spread all over the world*, is very important. He wanted us to become Krishna Conscious.

Once, in Atlanta, there was a big gathering of Sankirtan devotees and in enthusiasm, one of them said, “Srila Prabhupada, what will make you the most pleased” thinking that Prabhupada would say ‘distribute my books’, because they were all book distributors. But Prabhupada didn't say that; he said “Become Krishna Conscious”. So, Prabhupada wanted us to become Krishna Conscious, meaning ***he wanted us to think about Krishna, to always remember Him, never forget Him, to keep Him in the center of our lives.***

So, when we lose focus of that and we start thinking of our secondary details and we make those details to be the core of Krishna Consciousness, then we run into all kinds of trouble, because we become fanatics. And *we become fanatic about the wrong thing*, not necessarily fanatic about remembering Krishna or thinking of Krishna or offering things to Krishna or helping people come to Krishna, but we

become fanatics about how we dress or fanatics about the terms we use to call people, or the way we do something.

Of course, certain things are important if we can keep them in place but we can't make that the focus; the focus has to be remembering Krishna. In any given situation, it may change because the people we are talking to or the people, we are trying to facilitate in their Krishna Consciousness, may change. Culture may change where we are; so *we have to adjust to the needs of the day*. **Prabhupada was very expert in doing that.** He could go anywhere and get off the plane and immediately he would adjust everything so that he could preach in that situation to those people and be successful. So I think, for me those are the most outstanding.

Of course, ***his compassion, his feeling that nobody didn't deserve to become Krishna Conscious, is very important.*** Even amongst us, he was very tolerant of material mistakes. Sometimes, we didn't understand things, sometimes we were too weak to be able to maintain our vows. One incident comes to my mind. There was one devotee who fell down in New York. Prabhupada was in Vrindavan. The devotees in New York took action; they threw him out and they chastised him severely. They wrote to Prabhupada, 'yes, we took action, we chastised him, and we threw him out of the temple'. Prabhupada was very upset; he said, "Just see, what you have done. You have made it impossible for him to come back, very difficult for him to come back. You must get him back at all costs".

Prabhupada said that for every devotee, he shed gallons of blood. So it was very important to keep the devotees in the fold and we should be compassionate to them too. *We have the tendency to be compassionate to people when they come. But once they join, we are not compassionate to them anymore!* So, it is important ***to see what every jiva needs and to try to give them that in such a way that it would bring them closer to Krishna.*** That's what Prabhupada understood compassion to mean. That is why he could preach to anybody, men, women, any country, any culture; that didn't matter, rich, poor, hippies. He could preach to everybody because he had compassion for everybody. ***He saw everybody as deserving the right to serve Krishna, as needing to serve Krishna in order to be happy*** and he wanted everybody to be happy.

So, those are the qualities of Srila Prabhupada that, I think, are most important to imbibe in our movement.

***Q Do you find any areas of Srila Prabhupada's teachings that have still not been appropriately implemented or aspects of his vision for the mission that are yet to be fulfilled? If so, what could be done to fulfil the same?***

You have to have a gurukul. I could say varnashrama; I am sure, many people have said varnashrama. You know, 'fifty percent of my work is done...'. But I don't think even the fifty percent is done. I think that before we can embark on such thing as gurukul, in the real meaning of gurukul (not school, educational institution), I think we need to first work on developing the real core qualities of being a devotee. *We have to become mature. Until we become mature, we won't know how to do these things.*

Another aspect is to just be practical, on the ground; because I was talking to the leaders of the leadership college and the point is 'don't try to do something unless you have sufficient.... Don't try to do something that will impact the lives of other people, significantly'. If something, you do, will hurt people, if it doesn't work, then don't do it unless you have sufficient knowledge to do it and sufficient money to do it and sufficient manpower to do it.

Sometimes we take on things, like gurukul. We don't have sufficient money, sufficient training, sufficient facility to really do what we wanted to do and because of that, we made mistakes and we did it wrong and we have hurt people. We need to be really careful. We look at the books and see that Sandipani muni had a little hut and he was in the forest; doesn't take much to do a gurukul. But he didn't have two hundred, three hundred students and he wasn't living in America and we have to interact with the outside world. So we have to consider how that's going to impact. We have the media; how that's going to impact us. ***We have to have our education, our understanding, of how it all works together, really clear before we embark on these things.***

*Some of these things are dangerous if we don't do them properly; better not to do them than to do them improperly.* So I think that we have a list of things that I can make of things that we need to work on, that we need to get done. But *the first*

*thing, that we need to get done, is we need to become Krishna Conscious. And then we need to consider how to get the other things done systematically in a strategic, clearly planned, well thought out way.*

One thing about the last question is that sometimes we think that if we do that (for example: varnashrama), it will solve all the other problems; everything would be very nice. But the question is, if I ask ten devotees what varnashrama means they would all give me a different definition. No one really understands. They can quote Bhagavad Gita and say that there are four varnas and four ashramas. But if I ask you, ‘how do we ascertain who is what?’ and ‘how do we keep people happy in their varna and ashrama?’, you will get many different answers to that subject. So I think, *until we as leaders, whoever the leaders are, whoever is making those decisions, come to certain unified clarity on the definition of these things, on the way forward on these things, we are not going to reach anywhere.* We are not going to be able to put into practice when we don't know what it is!

We, as leaders, need to work cooperatively to come up with a global perspective as to what these things look like on the ground, we need to agree on that. Otherwise it will be different at every place and there will be conflict.

***Q Please share some of the personal principles and practices which you have held on to in your journey through ups and downs in various leadership roles in ISKCON.***

Well of course, you have written there strong sadhana and I don't know that my sadhana is strong. And I think I find, very often, that when I go to the meetings; whatever meetings, GBC meetings, any kind of meetings, there are so many demands on the people involved and sadhana is often considered to be, kind of, a pain in the neck. You know, like hearing a class, getting your rounds done. Everybody tries to get their rounds done early in the morning. But hearing and chanting, especially hearing from other devotees and having time to contemplate deeply whatever it is, often scrolls off the screen.

So I really think that we have to be careful that we don't... because if you look at the sages of Naimisharanya of Srimad Bhagavatam, when they saw the kali

yuga coming, they got together to do a sacrifice and to put their collective spiritual intelligence into a forum that would crystallize into a way forward and prevent the spreading of kali yuga. We, kind of, sometimes do it the opposite way; ***we come together and talk and talk about a million different solutions but we neglect the power that comes from our own spiritual practice.*** I know for myself sometimes getting up at two 'o' clock in the morning and going to bed at 9:30 in the night, having meetings non-stop from breakfast on, if not before breakfast and it's very difficult to really focus on strong sadhana. So I think that that's an issue.

But for me, you know, I am nobody; I am not very committed. So I tend to sneak away and do what I have to do. But those of my godbrothers who are more in demand, for them to hear and chant, they practically have to hide. They have to just go away and hide, which shouldn't be like that. I don't think that helps the collective decision making at all.

Another thing that has helped me to survive and it is continuing to help me survive is just ***remembering Prabhupada's compassion and my relationship with him and when all else fails just depend on that.*** Good association, good friendships amongst devotees are other important things and also the support of people who are themselves trying to be Krishna Conscious.

***Q Please recount your best and most successful projects (or initiatives) during your tenure as leader / GBC. What were the key success factors in terms of leadership and managerial decisions or approaches which contributed to the success of these projects?***

Well, ***the most successful one is the ILS and that's a very strong team effort.*** I have a wonderful team of devotees that work with me here in Mayapur as well as around the world. That team is really essential to my spiritual practice, my spiritual life as well as the success of that project. In that project, I always feel that I am inviting 1200 of the most advanced and serious devotees of our movement to lunch. That's how I look at it. I am inviting them to my home for lunch and I want to make sure that everything is first class when they get there. So I try very hard to, kind of, put myself in their position and try to make them comfortable.

The team of people with whom I work with, they are from various cultures. But many of them are from Bengal, from Mayapur; and they have a deep feeling for making other people feel good and I am learning a lot from them. So, I really like that service and ***I think that that's one of the most successful projects that I worked on.*** Of course, I ran a school for many many years; which had successes and had not successes. I like to think that it had more successes than not successes but only time will tell that. I think the thing that made that run, also was a team of lot people, very good people who were dedicated and also staying with it over the years.

I notice, now in our movement, that there is a tremendous tendency amongst people, when the going gets tough, to leave. They go somewhere else. But ***I find that sticking with it, with those people who have stuck with it through hell and high water, their projects are the most successful.*** For me also, there were many times when it was really hard and I felt like I couldn't go on one more day but then you go on one more day and then the next day gets a little bit better and then you forget that you were going to quit; you just keep going.

So I think that it is just about tenacity. ***Prabhupada was very tenacious.*** He even said that he used to go to the boat dock and ask them when the next ship was going to India, just thinking that this not going to happen. But then, he just stayed and kept doing it again and again. Eventually things started to pick up and take off. When they picked up and took off, they had other obstacles.

One of my Godsisters was telling me. She is a Bengali; she was telling me that she remembers that when she was a little girl and Prabhupada was talking to her father in Bengali and saying that he had no Idea how fast the movement would grow and how much a problem it would be to manage all the things. He didn't plan, didn't expect that; and now it was very difficult for him to manage everything. It was a personal and friendly conversation with somebody; it wasn't an official communication. But still, there are new obstacles that keep coming. It's not like a fixed one and then it's okay, it's cool now; it's always a new one.

Again, I have to say, association is really important. ***Having a good association of people will help you.*** Now we have the opportunity; before we didn't have the opportunity. Now we have the opportunity to network with other people, which is why I think the ILS is so important. It gives me an opportunity to break the

tendency to be isolated. When you get into a service and you are in one place and you are just doing that thing every day and it demands your attention from morning till night, you get into a box.

Fortunately, for me, I did a lot of travelling even when I ran a school. With the ILS, it is a very international affair. So, *in my whole Krishna Consciousness, I have been very internationally involved; I have never been limited to one scene.* That's been very beneficial for me, I think, because I don't really feel myself as a part of one place. *I feel myself as part of ISKCON and ISKCON has many roles and many different things and I can learn from all of them.* I think that devotees should do that. ***It's very very important that we take the best practices from others, that we share our problems with others and have forums where we can learn from others.*** I know that that's one of the goals of the leadership college.

It has to have an international flavour; but more than international flavour, it's about being willing to develop camaraderie with the people so that you can bear soul and find out from them about how to make it work. Otherwise, you feel very alone and you feel like it is not going to work; you don't get up tomorrow morning. *Good friendships are really important. I think, amongst leaders in our movement, the number one cause of casualty is isolation.* Leaders tend to associate with people below them. We all hear that we should ask for blessings. But what do you do when everyone wants your blessings and you ask for blessings and they say, "how can I give you blessings? You are so senior to me". And there is nobody who can give you blessings. Everyone is diving at your feet and no one is there to go upto. *That's dangerous and a lot of people die from it.*

If you have a good team of people whom you trust, that have a variety of skills, in that case when you have to make decisions, you can take expert advice. I think, taking expert advice even outside of our Hare Krishna movement and then bringing it in according to the time, place and circumstances, resources you have, is important.

We have to understand what our value system is. So that's an important thing. ***When we take advice from others, we have to have our own value system clear so that we can hold that advice upto that value system.*** This is because sometimes it may work on the material level but it may not work for us. We want a different kind of success than they want. They want money or whatever; that's



their number one target and they don't care what happens so much on the way up except that people keep coming back and buying their products.

But we want people to change their lives; we want people to surrender. It is a big thing that we are asking them to do. So, we have to keep our value systems strong and then be willing to gather advice, gather information and with a good team of people who are sincere and share the same goals, the same values, then process that and come up with a direction and way forward.

I don't think that there is one answer to that question. There is no solution, no pill that we can take and it's going to make us all better. Now our movement is so variegated because we have huge congregations. Many places I go in America and Canada, there is hardly anyone in the temple. You go to the mangala arati; it's you and the deities and the pujari. But you go to the Sunday feast and janamashtami, there are twenty thousand people over there. So, there is a large congregation and a lot of people living outside, working outside.

It's different than it was when I became a Hare Krishna. When I became a devotee, if you lived outside you were in maya. I gave birth to my children in a temple. So, it's different now. ***We have to be able to see how those differences impact the lives of other people and make adjustments for that.*** Make them feel welcome and make them feel enthusiastic and somehow involve them so that the temples stay alive and healthy into the future. It's a big risk in some places now. Now every place is as pushy as Mayapur in mangala arati.

***Q Which leadership values should be included in the training for future ISKCON leaders? (Please mention at least three)***

I think that our core values are pretty clear from Prabhupada's books. At the same time, we tend to have a tendency to confuse the details with substance. I think ***one of the core values of a leader is that he has to be flexible, that he has to be able to stay firm in his principles and at the same time flexible in details and the application.*** He must be open to new ideas, able to suspend his own personal mental images or his own idea of what's right and if there is an opposing opinion, to be able to see what they are and see how they may have something to say that's valuable.

I think ***a leader has to be able to walk into the shoes of the persons that they lead and be able to understand what their needs are, what they are going through.*** In vedic cultures, the kings would listen, open court and listen to the praja; they would go to the town squares incognito and have spies listening everybody, to hear what they were thinking, what they were doing. So, they wanted to know what was going on on the ground, so that they could address it, so that they could deal with it, so that they could act appropriately.

I think that ***one thing that leaders have to understand is that without the trust of those they are leading, they can't do anything.*** Prabhupada had nothing else really; of course, he had Krishna and he had the philosophy of Krishna Consciousness. But he didn't have money, he didn't have power, he wasn't fancy, he didn't drive a fancy car, he didn't pay us; all he had was our total trust. ***He was just completely trustworthy because we saw that he cared what we needed and he knew that we needed Krishna Consciousness.*** He wanted us to have that and he was willing to cook, willing to clean, willing to wait on line, willing to struggle himself in order to make sure that we got that thing and whatever we needed in order to get that thing. It made us trust him. So, we never had any scepticism that what's he doing this for, what's in it for him. ***We were completely faithful that whatever he was doing, it was for us.***

That trust made us work with him and to do whatever he said. So, I think ***that the leaders need to understand that that they need to build the trust of the people they are taking care of.*** They need to work on that. Once they have that trust, everything else will go easily; but without that trust not much will happen.

***Q Which leadership skills should be included in the training for future ISKCON leaders? (Please mention at least three)***

I think, a lot of them are there already. There are skills or secondary; I mean they are not 'not necessary' but they are secondary qualities. Duryodhana had great leadership skills. He was actually quite a good manager but he was missing a few leadership qualities. I think that ***the skills that they are being trained in, living a balanced life, communication skills and counselling skills. All those things are very valuable.*** I think they do need to be held up, like I said before, to our value system,

Krishna Conscious value system so that we don't just try to apply them because they work in the outside world. That does not necessarily mean that it will work for us; some things may work for us, some things may not. So we have to see what our limitations are.

For instance, we talked about schools before. In talking about school, you look at a non devotee school where they just hire people. When they put out an advertisement that they want to hire a maths teacher, they get 700 or 800 applications and you graduated here and you got good marks. But for us, we can't even let people, who aren't devotees, apply! *So there is a whole other set of criterion that we need to get.* It tends to take precedence over the other things. So, ***we need to see how things apply in our setting and adjust them accordingly.***

One thing that *I think about the leadership college(I don't want to offend anybody) is that you need to nail down a curriculum.* What I see is there are changes; I mean the stuff online is pretty standard but what happens is that the residential is often one thing this year and another thing next year, depending on who comes. We try to take advantage of everybody who comes, whoever is there, they can chill up with their time because they happen to be in India, they can't afford a ticket to be in GEV. I don't think that that's the best way to run a school.

I think that ***the school should have a standard curriculum.*** If you want to add something to it, great! If you want to change something, fine! But *it should have benchmarks that are going to be met* and they should be carefully thought out and documented so that we can see who is successful. It may even be that people meet those benchmarks without having to go through the leadership college because of their life experience. If we can have them clearly delineated then we can assess that. Right now, I don't think it is that way. I mean, I am a trustee of that college and I don't it's that way. That's why I asked who is going to see this video; I don't want to get myself into trouble. But that's my honest feeling about it.

**Q Which do you see as the core Strengths of ISKCON which you feel should be preserved for the future generations?**

**Q Which do you see as underlying Weaknesses in the way ISKCON is growing and operating today?**

**Q Which do you see as the biggest Opportunities which ISKCON should capitalize on in the near future?**

**Q Which do you see as the biggest Threats to the movement in the near future?**

### **Strengths:**

***Strengths are the devotees.*** It is a Strength that many of the devotees have a lot of skills that they got from universities and other places. Earlier, when we joined, it wasn't there at all. We were all 18, 19 or 20; we quit college to join the Hare Krishna movement. We hated any kind of job or anything, we never worked. Now, we have people who have skills, management skills, leadership skills, production skills, media skills. ***A lot of different people are coming into the Hare Krishna movement with the skills that we need.*** So, that's a big strength.

We have a global pool of perspectives to call on, to broaden our vision and to understand what works in different places and what does not in different parts of the world. We have temples, we have deities, many of which are being worshipped very nicely by very wonderful devotees all over the place. *We have wonderful festivals and a wonderful opportunity to hear from very senior, learned scholarly, exemplary devotees.* We have, of course, the Holy Name. So many books have been translated. All of these that are our strengths, they can also be weaknesses. But we do have a lot of devotees who are translating various books of the acharyas. So we have a lot to look at, to look at things with different angles of vision e.g. Bhaktivinoda Thakur's point of view, Vishwananth Cakravarti Thakur's point of view. That could be very enlightening and enlivening.

We have *opportunities to associate with other devotees* in the kirtan mela or other kind of gatherings, retreats where devotees come together and just try to hear and chant together so that they can become stronger in their preaching. We have experience, sometimes failed experience that we can call on to in order to enlighten our next move, which we never had before.

### **Weaknesses:**

*A lot of things that are strengths could also be weaknesses, if they are done wrong.* Like, ***the availability of other perspectives in scriptures that are translated***

***by other people could be very strengthening or it could be very weakening***, if we don't hold it up properly to Srila Prabhupada's teachings. They bring to the table the same experience and the same perception which Srila Prabhupada had. Just like Prabhupada told us in the very beginning, 'if they say even one thing different from what I have told you, you will become confused'.

Also, there are people who are not bonafide and they are translating books. They have no qualification other than that they speak multiple languages. They are being paid to translate and they have no bath, they have no internal Krishna Consciousness. So what is their qualification for translating? Only that they know words. *And if we read those books with the same credibility as Prabhupada's books, then that's a big mistake.* So that can be a big weakness, a big danger. that's almost like a danger.

The weakness is that we are a little bit disorganized. Considering the global scale of our movement, ***we don't have a structure that manages us globally***. We don't have enough connectivity amongst us. Sometimes, we are separated by language, cultural differences. We don't have the facility to communicate with each other and learn from each other like we should. We don't have enough money or maybe we do have enough money but it's not organized the way we spend it. How we channel it, it's not clear. Mostly it is handled by individuals who have it and they give it where they want.

Other issue which is a weakness is that many gurus are GBC members; ***they don't have enough bandwidth to do both services well***. I think it is a big problem. I know lot of GBC members and gurus who think it's a big problem too. It is said that 80% of the work is done by 20% of the people. So, I think that that's also in our case. *We have so many people who are overburdened with so much responsibility and one of our weakness is we don't hand it off!*

Prabhupada had to hand it off. He had no choice; he was himself. If he wanted to spread the movement, he had to hand it off. Now you can't say that he handed it off to qualified people, because we had no qualification. But he just did it anyway because he had to do it.

Nowadays we are so reluctant to give over responsibility. But we need to, because pretty soon we will be dead. To put it bluntly, my generation is on the downside of the changing bodies exhibit and the time is coming where there is

going to be a new set of people in charge of this place and some of them are already in place; but many of them are not. And who they are going to be, we have to see who is going to step up. So, ***the weaknesses are that we don't know who is following behind many of the people who are not going to be sitting at this table.*** Five years from now there are going to be many empty seats.

### **Opportunities:**

The biggest opportunity is that ***the current leadership should be looking, searching for new leaders, for people who have the spark***; not people who the educational or letters next to their name, but people who have the Krishna Consciousness and the enthusiasm, the spark to take up leadership. Like I said, skills can be learnt but ***the core desire to please Srila Prabhupada and spread Krishna Consciousness is really the most valuable asset.*** So they should be looking out. This is an opportunity because they still have a few good years to train somebody while they are still around to train them. They should grab them whoever they are and offer as much training as possible.

Personally, *I don't think that we should necessarily screen too much the people, who get the training.* After they get the training we can screen them and sort them out. But to come into the training, I think we should take as many people as possible. Like college, you do some screening and take people who can make it through the college. But when you are in the college, we really see who you are; we really see what you can do. We really meet you and see your ability to think and deal with the situations. Then, when you come out, we can screen who is going to become a leader in what sphere or if you are going to become a leader.

But *if we screen too much on this end, we are losing a lot of people.* We don't know who they are and we are not giving them a chance to rise to the top. I think there are a lot of people out there; we don't even know who they are. There could be pretty amazing leaders. ***There is an opportunity now for the present leaders to search out and find new leaders. I think that's a big opportunity*** and it's a short window. So I think that's a big opportunity.

We have to come up with different strategies, different strategic plans, different management structures that we can put into place, as we go forward so that we don't keep making the same mistake over and over again. Now, you have people whom you can interview. *So that's an opportunity because you can learn from their*

**mistakes.** Collectively they can try to correct them before we are not here anymore. Then everybody will have to learn the same way that we learned, in the school of hard knocks. It's not practical.

**Threats:**

***I think the biggest threat to our movement is our internal fighting***, our polarized way of thinking that 'I am right, they are wrong'; this republic and democrat bull-headedness. Prabhupada said that there is nothing outside our movement that could hurt us. *We could only hurt ourselves from the inside.* So, I think there are two big threats. One thing is that we are taking a lot of information from outside and if we don't hold that upto Prabhupada or if we don't keep Prabhupada's mission clearly in front of us and we don't keep Prabhupada's vision clearly in front of us then we run a risk of being diverted. And the gap goes down the wrong way; it could be years before we figure out that we have to recalculate. So that's a threat.

The other threat ***is our internal lack of willingness to respect each other, to respect other people's point of view***, to understand that I may be able to learn from somebody who completely doesn't agree with me. But if I listen to them, I hear them and I see that they are good devotees and they're trying to be Krishna Conscious, they have Prabhupada's mission in their heart, then maybe they have something to offer me so that my vision can grow. If we don't do that then I think that's a very big threat. *We are all locked in our little cells and we think that everybody who doesn't see things in my way is in Maya.* I think that's a big threat.

***Q Please visualise your dream vision for a very successful worldwide ISKCON movement 25 years from now.***

- ***What all do you see in that vision?***
- ***What do you think we need to do to be able to get there?***
- ***What are some of the obstacles / impediments we might face in reaching there?***

It's hard. I mean I know what it should be like but I don't want to be unrealistic because I am not a very unrealistic person in general. ***For one thing, we would need***

***funding somehow or other, tithing or some kind of centralized funding*** that could be distributed to temples in need, to projects to help them grow and strategically allow them to become healthy; not just whimsically but strategically. There must be some plan on the part of our leaders that allows them to visualize the whole world and populate it appropriately. ***We need staff. So we need to be able to hire devotees who can help other devotees.***

This is because the managers, the people who sit at this table, the current leaders, if you ask them, the number one issue they have is finance; how to be a full time devotee and manage to have a family, because then it becomes very saffron at the top. *If it becomes too saffron at the top then the needs of the majority of the community are not met* because they don't understand what the needs of the community are.

We need to proliferate that and on order to proliferate that and spread it out we need money, funding. ***So my ISKCON of future has lots of money and an intelligent mechanism for strategically spending it in order to strengthen weak projects or weak areas where preaching isn't being done well, to hire and provide...*** It will help on two levels. If we can hire staff, it will provide an internal income for devotees so that they can work for devotees instead of working for the outside world, which is a problem. So, *it will provide an internal source of income* and at the same time it *will provide competent devotee assistance* for the people who need it and that will be a big asset that will enable them to do a lot more than they are doing.

So my ISKCON of future has lots of money, lots of staff and an intelligent and systematic way of broadcasting that staff and broadcasting that money. ***Sanyasis are free from any kind of personal motivation; they just travel and give Krishna Consciousness freely to people*** so that they become enlivened, inspired in Krishna Consciousness. Families are respected and they are encouraged to live a balanced lifestyle, raising their families with intelligence and also supporting the movement by their work or maybe working within the movement so that it is a symbiotic relationship. Brahmacharis and brahmacharinis...

***Women are given equal opportunities to be all that they can be in Krishna's service, whatever that means.*** If it means getting married then fine, let the men become qualified. Then let them get married and raise nice families or let them



become preachers, let them become effective members of our society. Whatever their skills are, let them get an opportunity to use them in Krishna's service. They are fifty percent of the population. In Kali Yuga, 12<sup>th</sup> Canto of Bhagavatam states that the women are going to be in power for a while. You better give them the ability to use that power; otherwise it's going to be a problem!

***The deities are taken care nicely.*** Before we install new deities we should take care of the ones we have. We need a central leadership that looks at the big picture and figures out how to make the big picture healthy. ***So my ISKCON the future has that big picture up in the air, drone photography view of what needs to be done here;*** let's deploy people for this. Let's take care of these deities. Not everybody thinks for himself; everybody thinking or at least some people thinking and deploying people in a global way for the health of the whole movement. When the movement is healthy everybody is enlivened.

Another thing, the movement of ***the future I have is that which floods the media, the social media, floods the minds of the devotee with positive information about the preaching and the dynamic activities*** that are going on all over the world and keeps everybody informed regularly of the glories of what's going on, that the devotees are doing. It doesn't have to be something necessarily huge; just had to be positive instead of negative. So that's my ISKCON of future. Of course we have good schools, our children are nicely taken care of. We are taking care of our old people, we need to get that together too. I forgot about that. ***We are going to have a lot of old people; we have to take care of them.***

In my generation, when we joined the Hare Krishna movement, we gave up our families. Many of us walked away from our families and in course of our spiritual life we didn't do very much for the children either. We sent them away and we were traveling and preaching and doing a lot of things and we neglected a lot of other things. So now, a lot of us are, kind of, on our own and we don't have our families behind us, we don't have the traditional support system. ***So, my ISKCON of future will take care of its old people,*** millions of them.

The number one obstacle I see is money. It's not even that we don't have money. We have money; some individuals have lots of money. Then maybe that's not the main obstacle; maybe the main obstacle is trust. ***Because of lack of trust in leadership, money is being withheld.*** People are afraid to give money thinking that

it would not be used wisely. So they use it in a way they think it should be used but their vision is often very insular, it's very short ranged, it's very small and they don't trust the global visionaries. So there's no funding going into that global position.

***Actually, I think, the main obstacle is lack of trust.*** The GBC and the devotees in leadership positions have ***to figure out how to get people to have the level of trust that they had.*** Of course, it is never going to be the same as with Prabhupada but something like that. You see, the leaders who have trust, they have money, they have full facility, they have thousands of people following them wherever they go; whatever they need, it's there. And people who don't have that kind of trust... Even if individuals have that trust, globally the leadership doesn't have that kind of trust. ***So, globally that trust needs to be built up in the body of the leadership*** so that people, in general, understand that there's ISKCON, there's not just my local temple, there's not only my guru; there's a whole society. Prabhupada wanted that society to become successful and I need to be a part of that.