

## Land and Legal Department

### Land- Brief History

- Srila Prabhupada (SP) personally established the ISKCON Kolkata Temple and this was his first temple in India.
- The deities in the temple were installed by SP. Rathayatra too was started by SP.
- From 1971-77, SP was based here. After his departure, HG Adi Dharan Das took over as Temple President and undertook a lot of innovations with the Rathayatra festival.
- Later, he started developing differences with the GBC for following the Ritvik System, and was then expelled. After a legal battle, the land came under the control of ISKCON in 2002.
- HG Dayaram Prabhu was then appointed as Temple President. He focused more on congregation and youth preaching.

### Legal Department- Brief History

- The legal department never had a definite origin. It was due to the legal battle between the then Kolkata Temple President, Adi Dharan Das and ISKCON.
- After Madhu Pandit Prabhu was expelled, GBC requested HG Mahaprabhu Das to help who in turn took HG Dayaram Prabhu's help.
- A devotee named HG Shyam Sukha Das donated his property which was used for constructing a legal office. HG Vidvaan Gauranga Prabhu and HG Dayaram Prabhu worked together for some time.
- After HG Dayaram Prabhu was asked to shift to Bangalore, HG Radha Raman Prabhu took charge of the Kolkata Legal Department. In the meantime, a small legal office was established in Juhu Temple, Mumbai, dealing with Trademark cases, giving legal, etc.
- After Madhu Pandit Prabhu took the case to Supreme Court, an office was setup in Delhi. Later, a legal office was setup by HG Shyam Krishna Prabhu in Vrindavan.
- Now all legal issues in North India are handled by Dayaram Prabhu's assistant.

### Overview of Workflow

- The Bangalore case regarding Madhu Pandit Prabhu is the main one. In the recent past, we have become more aware of our legal responsibilities.
- Bureau is in-charge of all the legal decisions now. Before buying any property, all related papers are properly verified, minutes are prepared of every meeting, Agenda is circulated, Accounts are prepared in proper format, and all telephone calls are recorded for further reference.
- Account heads and the procedures have been streamlined. All legal compliances are regularly followed and all updates are tracked.
- Temples are divided as per zones, ie. North, South, etc. and delegated to devotees. In this way, life of the Head Office becomes easy. In future, a separate person to look after the legalities pertaining to land received as donation will be employed.

### Noteworthy Achievements

- Kolkata temple was regained. Various lands in Vrindavan were regained. Various miscellaneous legal issues were solved.
- There has been enhanced discipline and accountability in the temple dealings.
- GST compliances were handled in time.

## Financial Resources

- For the Bangalore case, 70% of the funds came from Kolkata and 30% from the rest of the temples with Juhu, Chowpatty and Delhi temples being among the largest contributors.
- Some gurus like HH Bhakti Charu Swami, HH Jayapataka Swami donated some part of their guru dakshina for this cause.
- All branches have to spend their own money for legal cases- there is no central pool fund.
- Trademark related cases are funded by the Bureau out of contributions made by all the temples. Income Tax cases are also funded by the Bureau.

## Lessons

- Avoid litigations as much as possible and settle issues out of court. There should be a counterbalance on the sensitive issues. The GBC and Bureau must consider all aspects of the case so that no time, energy and money is wasted.
- We should act as per our constitution and law of the land. All dealings must be done in writing and all procedures must be followed. Earlier many things were not done in a systematic manner.
- Every ISKCON leader, apart from philosophical study, must also be trained in basic Accountancy and Law so that he can take decisions regarding any dealings.