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To: The Governing Body Commissioners of ISKCON, and whomsoever else it may concern

Subject: Introducing the practice of Female Uttarakaacharyas or mantropadesa and initiation by women in ISKCON

Date: 19 February 2019

SrimateRamanujayaNamah

I am deeply concerned with the turmoil that is going on with regards to the mantropadesa and initiation by women preceptors in ISKCON. In a growing organization like ISKCON, confusions, turmoil, statements for and against are bound to prop up. Senior persons at the helm of affairs should go through our ancient texts and try to find out solutions for such problems.

All the Indian systems of philosophy including different systems of philosophy coming under different Vedanta systems like Dvaita, Advaita, Vishista-Advaita, Chaitanya, and Vallabha etc. have evolved from Vedas only, but due to the intuitive experience and expertise of our great Acharyas, different points of views have come up. Every school of Vedanta claims its origin from a great Acharya who is capable of experiencing the Godhead and based on that experience, capable of interpreting the Shastras to provide guidelines to his own successive acharyas and followers. Most of the times our predecessor Acharyas have depended upon shistacara (practices of elders) as guiding principle to resolve any issues. (Yadyadacharatishrestha...).

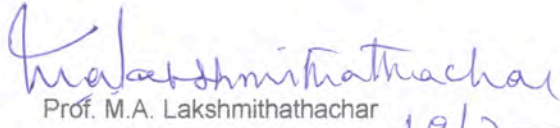
*yadyadācaratīśreṣṭhas tat tad evetarojanaḥ
sayatpramāṇaṁkurute lokas tad anuvartate*

Of course, Vedas and the Shastras (books based on Vedas) project different points of view, sometimes mutually opposed also, which are the main sources of confusions. Persons involved in resolving these issues should always depend upon shistacara instead of totally depending upon Shastric statements alone which are not very easy to interpret. Only persons who are having intuitive experiences of the Supreme can resolve such issues, as they have realized the Supreme. Realizing the importance of the views of such great souls in our Shastras, apart from the Shastric statements, the shistacara or the practices of the elders is given utmost importance to resolve.

Presently, in the case of permitting women acharyanis, the same procedure has to be adopted. Whatever may be the statements of the shastras, either permitting or prohibiting the acharyanis to do mantropadesa or not, the decision should solely depend upon shistacara. In the history of ISKCON if there is shistacara of mantropadesa by women then acharyanis are free to do mantropadesa. There could be some exceptional cases which might have happened due to the demands of time (*āpatkālenāstimaryāda*). Exceptions should not become the general rule. Since there is no crisis as to introduce acharyanis to initiate, this should not be considered a serious issue at present.

If ISKCON, an internationally famous organization, goes against the shistacara and be successful, probably the other schools of Vedanta like Ramanuja, Vallabha, Nimbarka etc. may follow suit, which results the practice of violating the shistacara and not desirable. I wish ISKCON, an internationally reputed organization will not establish a new shistacara violating all the shistacaras practiced even today in all the schools of Vedanta.

With Best Wishes,



Prof. M.A. Lakshmithathachar

19/2

To whomsoever this may concern

From,

Muralidhara Battar,

Descendant of Sri Venkata Batta (f/o Gopala Bhatta Goswami) family

Chief Archaka, Sri Ranganatha Swami temple, Sri Rangam, Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu, India.

Subject: Proposed resolution by ISKCON Governing Body Commission on female Diksa Guru.

Date: 17/2/2019

Hare Krishna,

Namaskaram. Please accept my pranams.

ISKCON is a reputed institution for propagating and protecting Sanatana Dharma. Srila Prabhupada, the Founder-Acharya of ISKCON, has done a monumental service to the whole world, especially the Vaishnava communities, by propagating Srimad Bhagavad-gita and Srimad Bhagavatam all over the world and presented in an authentic manner, or "As It Is."

But recently, it came to my notice that the ISKCON GBC is proposing the appointment of women within ISKCON as acharyas, mantra-gurus who will give diksha. If this is indeed true, then I would like to bring to your kind attention that such decisions are asastriyam. This would be against sanatana dharmas, proper acharams and anushtanams.

In this regard, I have reviewed the pramanas presented in favor of the ISKCON GBC proposal, especially Prabhupada's correspondence to his disciple Hansaduta on 3 January 1969. And I have also reviewed other statements from your guru, which include:

- His conversation with Professor O'Connell, dated June 18, 1976 in Toronto.
- His exchange with a disciple named Atreya Rishi Dasa on June 29, 1972, in San Diego.
- And his comments in his purport to Srimad-Bhagavatam shloka 4.12.32.

After reviewing these statements, my conclusion is that the introduction of the female Diksa Guru system in ISKCON will set a bad example to the society of followers of Sanatana Dharma, and it will certainly have wider ramifications for other sampradayas.

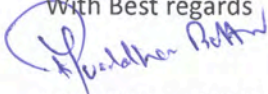
Protecting our own sampradayam may include, and is not limited to, withdrawal of the 1970 letter issued by my late father, Sriman Rangaraja Bhattar, on behalf of the Sri Vaishnava sampradayam, certifying that ISKCON is a genuine Vaishnava sampradayam.

As a friend and well-wisher of ISKCON I urge the GBC body to reject this proposal once and for all. Introducing such asastriya practices will bring about only yoga nashta to the institution.

I hope you understand our concern, and I pray to Lord Ranganatha for all of us to pass through safely during these dark times of Kali-yuga.

"Yogaksemam Vahamyaham"

With Best regards



Muralidhara Bhattar

To, whomsoever it may concern in ISKCON,

From: Lakshmikumara Tatacharyar (Vasudevan), Srirangam.
PhD. Vishishtadvaita (Ramanujacharyar Philosophy)
Prof. Raja Sanskrit College, Kumbhakonam

Subject: Female mantra upadeshak guru in ISKCON

Srimate Ramanujaya Namah.
Namaskaram.

I am connected to Muralidhar Bhattar, chief priest of Sri Ranganatha, Srirangam. I regularly give upanyasams (discourses) at Jagannatha Temple in front of Muralidhar Bhattar's house, where Lord Chaitanya lived. Thus, I am obliged to write this letter as a well wisher of ISKCO and as a preacher of sanathan dharma. Many Indians are also taking back to sanathana dharma anusthans because of ISKCON. So, in a way ISKCON is a saviour of sanathana dharma. But, I came to know that ISKCON is preparing to have females as mantra upadeshak guru. In my humble opinion, it is ashastriya and can destroy ISKCON sampradaya and sanathana dharma.

ISKCON is an international sampradaya and thus a natural leader of other smaller size sampradayas. Many youth of our sampradaya get influenced by ISKCON and then start follow sanathana dharma and come back to teachings of Ramanuja sampradaya. Many of them stay in ISKCON dharma, still we are not disturbing them because they get full opportunity to follow our dharma and we feel secured that in ISKCON they will be protected from adharmas.

But, if adharmas come into ISKCON also, then it will influence our sampradaya also. Our sampradaya members may also start asking us to implement this adharmas. After Sabarimalai incident, it is already a push from outside factors; but now ISKCON also doing so will give strength to adharmic parties of modern world to push adharmas in our sampradaya.

There are many members of our sampradaya who are following sanathana dharma in ISKCON and we are satisfied because they are safe from adharmas. ISKCON's decision to have female mantra upadeshak gurus will certainly make us worried of their dharmic safety. Thus, we may then need to warn them that ISKCON is no more sanathana dharma. This can seriously spoil our relationship.

I have also been told that Swami Prabhupad has allowed females as mantra upadeshaks; but then also, you should also see other sampradayas of sanathana dharma; you should not force them to declare ISKCON as adharmic. In Gita adhyaya 3, Krishna says that you should not act in a way to disturb dharma of others even if you yourself are not dependent on dharmic rules.

I have seen all the four vakyas of Swami Prabhupad on female mantra upadeshak guru. I do not feel that they are nirnayak or conclusive for introducing such an adharmic thing that influences sanathana dharma. One of the vakyas is against female mantra upadeshaks, two of them are allow female mantra upadeshak but in very less number, not to destroy sanathana dharma.

Thus, I request the pradhanas of ISKCON that they do not have female mantra upadeshaks and mislead other sampradayas; please think about us.

With Best Regards,



Laxmikumara Tatacharyar,
descendant of the chief Sr Vaishnava Acharya Sriman Natha Muni,
Srirangam