

February 28, 1986

Dear Prabhus,

Please accept my obeisances. All Glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I would like to make some comments to dispel some of the distorted reports regarding the historic meetings held this fall in New Vrndavana. These distortions seem to be taking two major directions both of which are fallacious and should be corrected.

DISTORTION #1. This meeting was not representative of devotees worldwide. It was largely comprised of inactive or "non achiever" devotees. It was a minority opinion of a biased group etc.

FACT. Please note the enclosed list showing exactly who attended the meeting. There were approximately 250 devotees present; 100 of whom were from outside North America. Which senior Prabhupada disciple was not there? Look at the list. I would suggest that you could count on one hand the number of sannyasis, senior regional secretaries, or senior temple presidents who were not there. There has never been such a broad based, complete gathering of senior devotees or at least not for many years. To suggest that this meeting was not representative or composed mainly of non active disciples is completely without any basis in fact. Moreover a brief look at the list of speakers on the first day (complete list to follow within a few weeks) will clearly establish that almost every speaker is not only in good standing but in most cases a senior leader. It also indicates a broad spectrum of speakers from different parts of the world representing different points of view.

DISTORTION #2. The meetings were un-Vaishnava, blasphemous, offensive, etc.

FACT. The fact is that these accusations about the meeting are themselves unnecessary criticisms without any substance. THEY ARE GROSS DISTORTIONS OF THE HEARTFELT AND PHILOSOPHICALLY BASED STATEMENTS OF THE SENIORMOST VAISHNAVA PREACHERS. Please read every word of the enclosed transcript. Please point out if you can, where is the blasphemy? Has our movement reached such levels of madness that to speak the truth is to blaspheme, to criticize gross sinful deviations (such as Bhavananda's) is offensive?

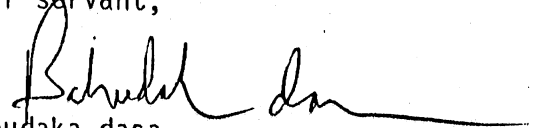
The profound exchange of philosophical realizations that took place in the New Vrndavana meetings was unprecedented in this society. The format of the istagosthi was completely fair and open; anyone could speak and the same time limit was imposed on everyone. The atmosphere of intimidation that has stifled our society since the unauthorized implementation of the Acharya system was notably absent and free speech flourished once again.

The fact that the "reformist" speakers clearly and obviously made a stronger and more forceful case that was vastly appreciated by the body of devotees may have irked certain leaders and their supporters, but we find it unfortunate that although they could not refute the arguments at the proper time they now cry foul with a highly contrived technical objection to the details of calling the meeting, the format of the meeting, etc. Perhaps it is appropriate to note at this time that the meeting was called by the unanimous vote of 14 GBC members (2/3 of the GBC body). This fact should be remembered by those who claim that the procedure of calling the meeting was irregular.

There were a few outbreaks of improper behavior. By far the most noteworthy was the uncontrolled outbreak of shouting by Visvambara Maharaja in the assembly of the Godbrothers. There was also a short outbreak of booing at one point in the joint istagosthi when Visvambara Maharaja made some statement that many devotees appeared to find offensive. That incident was immediately corrected by the chairman and it was never repeated.

We felt it necessary to bring out the facts about this significant assembly of Vaishnavas so the vital business of housecleaning that was begun in New Vrndavana should not be stopped by distortions of what happened there. We will make the rest of the transcripts available as soon as possible and suggest that all senior devotees carefully study what was said in New Vrndavana.

Your sarvant,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Bahudaka dasa', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Bahudaka dasa
Chairman NATP