



We have experienced from many perspectives how individuals and groups of devotees are dedicated to protecting Srila Prabhupada. We hear this sentiment from the ISKCON camp, from the Rtviks and from other camps outside of ISKCON. In fact, it's almost become a platitude.

From my perspective, the real challenge lies in coming to agreement on a uniform definition of who Srila Prabhupada is, beginning at the very top level, meaning what spiritual platform he is on. In my mind, making such a determination begins with coming to a determination of whether he is a nitya-siddha or a sadhana-siddha. If out of sentiment one says that Srila Prabhupada is nitya-siddha, a designation popularly placed on Srila Prabhupada by some devotees, that in itself is at least a true statement. The question is, what is the level of realization behind the statement.

In the context of ISKCON the question is, what official presentation of Srila Prabhupada is being made that establishes Srila Prabhupada 100% in that position of nitya-siddha? In other words, what are all the symptoms or indications exhibited throughout Srila Prabhupada's entire life and

pastimes that lead us to believe that he is a nitya-siddha? Unfortunately, we find that ISKCON offers no such definitive statement.

Years ago I wrote my [Sampradaya Acarya](#) paper, in which I make the argument that Srila Prabhupada is a nitya-siddha, and not only that, but also a Sampradaya Acarya -- one of only [32 members of the exclusive guru-parampara](#) list set forth in the Introduction of Bhagavad-gita As It Is. Without repeating the main points of that paper, which I encourage our Sun audience to read if they're so inclined, the fact is that Srila Prabhupada was sent on a mission by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu and/or Nityananda Prabhu to spread the Krsna consciousness movement around the world. And if one begins to train their mind to see Srila Prabhupada in that way, then their perspective will change dramatically.

When you look at the highlights of Srila Prabhupada's entire lila, and in particular his ISKCON lila, you will begin to see how Srila Prabhupada has made this fact abundantly clear. I wouldn't say that he was 'dropping big hints', but rather that he was sending out a message for those who, if they were advanced enough, purified enough, non-envious, would be able to see that he is a Sampradaya Acarya. Unfortunately, few if any of the disciples at that time were advanced enough to actually realize Srila Prabhupada's exalted nature, although we did spontaneously love and serve him in that mood.

One only has to consider any one of the Lord's lilas, whether it be Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu 500 years ago, or Sri Krsna 5,000 years ago, to see that very few of those who observed the lila at the time appreciated on the highest level just who Krsna was. How many people on the battlefield of Kurukshetra knew that He was Krsna? How many during Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's lila knew that Lord Caitanya was God? But in both cases, great Acaryas have spoken volumes in order to bring the fallen conditioned souls to the realization that these personalities were actually God.

Of course, biographies have been authorized and written about Lord Caitanya, like the Caitanya-caritamrta and the Caitanya Bhagavat, what to speak of the authorized biographies of the great Acaryas who came in succession from Him. Today and in the future, we are in an era wherein those personalities who are empowered to the same degree that Krishna Das Kaviraja was empowered to write the Caitanya-caritamrta, should be clearly describing who Srila Prabhupada really is. What is needed is a bona fide, authentic biography of Srila Prabhupada which establishes him as a nitya-siddha, maha-bhagavat Sampradaya Acarya.

Personally, I found that it takes a great deal of effort, both mental and practical, in order to break free from the immature, illusory impressions that I carried with me of who is Srila Prabhupada. These were embedded into my consciousness at a very early point in my Krsna conscious devotional life. Needless to say, the impression that is being given of Srila Prabhupada through Satsvarupa's Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta also requires purging, and that is the point of my personal commentaries in the Sun's "[Deconstructing the Lilamrta](#)" series.

Unless one has made some progress in understanding Srila Prabhupada from this perspective, it's almost impossible to know how to protect Srila Prabhupada. We can put our attention on protecting his books, or his temple assets, or his stellar image, but if we don't really understand who Srila Prabhupada is, then our efforts to protectively serve him will be flawed.

We are taught to protect Krsna in His many manifestations as diligently as possible, such as in the form of the Deities in the temple, the Holy Scriptures, and the Holy Name. But our ability to

act spontaneously to protect God, when circumstances call for it, is completely relative to our personal level of realization that these manifestations are non-different than Krsna, the Supreme Personality.

So if one applies this same principle to Srila Prabhupada, one has to appreciate how important it is to preserve and protect what Srila Prabhupada has left us. Of course, the list is very long in that regard. But ultimately, what has not been protected due to a lack of realization and appreciation of Srila Prabhupada's exalted spiritual status, is his mood, his mission, his urgency, his preaching spirit, his transcendental vision which was all-inclusive and above any level of material contamination, and his true place in the parampara.

Whether Srila Prabhupada's mood can be duplicated or resurrected, even to a degree, completely depends upon one's acceptance of the philosophical position that Srila Prabhupada is an exalted member of the Sampradaya, which I refer to as a Sampradaya Acarya. If he is relegated to being just a member of the Sampradaya, equal in stature to his godbrothers, or just the Founder/Acarya of ISKCON rather than the preeminent Founder/Acarya of the Sampradaya itself, then how can his mood truly be represented and recreated?

Srila Prabhupada obviously tried to impress upon us and the world - and his godbrothers - that the way he was managing and pushing on Krsna consciousness within his ISKCON society was what the previous Sampradaya Acaryas wanted. Thus, they reciprocated by empowering not only Srila Prabhupada himself, but all of his disciples, who were able to accomplish what they did in such a short time. We were just young recruits with so little pious background or real life experience, yet due to Srila Prabhupada's potency, we accomplished great things -- because this is what the Sampradaya, which is ultimately Krsna, wanted us to do.

Today, without a Sampradaya Acarya personally present, unfolding his lila and enveloping us in it, we are required to collectively accomplish the task which he tried to define for us and display for us. Collectively we can accomplish this, but individually it becomes an impossibility due to our lack of spiritual advancement as individuals. So to accomplish the re-establishment of Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON without him being personally or physically present, is the real challenge before us. First of all we must realize, then protect, the true exalted spiritual position of Srila Prabhupada, the Sampradaya Acarya.

*'Protecting Srila Prabhupada', originally published in 2009, has been updated for presentation on Srila Prabhupada's 2012 Vyasapuja.*