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Prabhupada Is Always Right

Posted on September 10, 2009 by [Vrajabhumi](#)



Gurus brainstorming at Prabhupada conference

Is Prabhupada always right? That was the big question on the minds of some of ISKCON's top leaders at a recent conference in Hungary. Your editor at *Hare Krishna News* was lucky enough to be able to get an interview with one of the participants, His Holiness Dhumbhamrita Swami Maharaja.

Hare Krishna News: Hare Krishna Maharaja, please accept my humble obeisances, all glories to Srila Prabhupada.

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Dhumbhamrita: Hare Krishna, and thank you for providing a forum to allow the word to get out about the important discussions and resolutions on the very important and timely topic we all came to an agreement on. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Hare Krishna News: Maharaja, could you tell our readers in a nutshell what the conference was all about.

Dhumbhamrita: Well, if your readers have been living anywhere other than under a rock for the last few years they would know that there has been a lot of discussion amongst devotees lately concerning certain statements and concepts Srila Prabhupada made in his books and in talks.

Hare Krishna News: Well, actually most of our readers are probably either living under a rock or have rocks in their heads. The rest are probably stoned. We have lots of high friends in low places, so to speak. So maybe you could be a bit more specific?

Dhumbhamrita: Acha

Hare Krishna News: Gesundheit!

Dhumbhamrita: Er, I see. Well let me simplify this for your, um, audience. Sometimes Srila Prabhupada made statements which by modern or common understanding, in today's world, might seem a bit, um, wrong. Or even offensive or foolish. How do we reconcile those statements in our preaching and in our own understanding?

Hare Krishna News: Okay, I think our readers can understand that. You guys were essentially finding fault with Prabhupada. Some of our readers might find that offensive Maharaja. After all when Jesus came down from the mountain the first commandment on the scroll was "Prabhupada is the Lord your God." And didn't Prabhupada perform miracles to prove he was a God? I heard that somewhere on the Internet.

Dhumbhamrita: No no, we were analyzing the fault finding of others against Prabhupada. We were trying to show that no matter what Prabhupada said or did or didn't say or didn't do — Prabhupada was always right.

Hare Krishna News: Oh, so you're saying Prabhupada is your God. I'm sorry for jumping the gun, it's late and the pills are kicking in right about now.

Dhumbhamrita: No offense taken. We expected devotees to be touchy on this subject matter.

Hare Krishna News: Thank you Maharaja, please continue.

Dhumbhamrita: Well, as I was saying, Prabhupada sometimes said things which to the average person would seem to be ignorant or racist or sexist. For example we talked about how Prabhupada said that women have brains that only weigh 32 ounces. Now an average person would conclude that Prabhupada was ignorant about the true size of women's brains, and because of that may conclude that Prabhupada wasn't perfect and always right about everything. His Holiness Sivarama Maharaja made a pertinent comment about this, saying that maybe someday Krishna will change the size of women's brains to fulfill the perfect teachings of Srila Prabhupada. We all laughed at the devotion and wit of the always hilarious Sivarama Maharaja. But we came to the conclusion that in fact Prabhupada was right. It was only our mundane vision, due to our propensity to err because of our reliance on our imperfect senses, which caused us to even consider the slightest possibility that Prabhupada could ever be wrong about anything.

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Hare Krishna News: So women's brains weigh 32 ounces?

Dhumbhamrita: Yes, very small women. You must remember, while Prabhupada was a giant among men, still he was living in a pretty tiny body. All of the women in his life were his family members, who were probably much smaller than he was. We believe Prabhupada based his brain size theory upon his family members alone since the rest of the world were all hogs, dogs, camels and asses. So they didn't count since they are not even human.

Hare Krishna News: I see. It's all about context, not relativism?

Dhumbhamrita: Yes, the absolute truth is that Prabhupada can make no mistakes because he was an empowered avatar sent by Krishna to save the world. If we perceive that he made a mistake, it's not relative. And if we look hard enough, the context of those controversial statements will bear out the absolute truth of them.

Hare Krishna News: Jaya Prabhupada!

Dhumbhamrita: To give another example; His Holiness Devamrita Swami made a reference to Prabhupada once saying something "against the emancipation of African Americans."

Hare Krishna News: Against the emancipation of African Americans?

Dhumbhamrita: The Emancipation Proclamation? The end of slavery during the American civil war in the 19th century?

Hare Krishna News: Oh, you mean that time when Prabhupada said that black people should be made into slaves because they are scary violent drunks?

Dhumbhamrita: Devamrita didn't exactly phrase it like that, he said Prabhupada said something "against the emancipation of African Americans."

Hare Krishna News: I guess that is a polite way of putting it. This is what Prabhupada actually said:

"Sudra is to be controlled only. They are never given to be freedom. Just like in America. The blacks were slaves. They were under control. And since you have given them equal rights they are disturbing, most disturbing, always creating a fearful situation, uncultured and drunkards. What training they have got? They have got equal right? That is best, to keep them under control as slaves but give them sufficient food, sufficient cloth, not more than that. Then they will be satisfied."

Dhumbhamrita: Oh, Okay. Anyways, Devamrita Swami made an interesting point about that statement. He mentioned that some university professor in America wrote a book about the American slaves. It's about the reason for giving freedom to the black slaves in America. He says it wasn't for moral or political reasons, as has been the mainstream theories, but that it was a conspiracy by northern industrialists who believed that if the slaves were set free, that they would migrate north to work in their factories. It was the beginning stages of the second industrial revolution and they needed lots of cheap labor who would work in hellish conditions.

Hare Krishna News: Sorry Maharaja, I just don't get the point.

Dhumbhamrita: Devamrita Swami was making the point that even when the slaves were set free, that life was still hellish, they were still being exploited.

Hare Krishna News: Still lost.

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Dhumbhamrita: He was saying that just like it was now acceptable in academia, intelligent class of people, to postulate that slaves were no better off after they got their freedom, that what Prabhupada had said was the same as that, i.e. that maybe emancipation wasn't a good idea. Devamrita Swami put a smile on all our faces and a laugh in our throats with his transcendental logic.

Hare Krishna News: So the conclusion by Devamrita Swami was that Prabhupada was right?

Dhumbhamrita: Yes, Prabhupada is always right. That was the parameter or boundary of our discussion. In fact, Sivarama Maharaja kindly pointed out that "Prabhupada is always right" is the basis for membership in ISKCON, if anyone disagrees with Prabhupada they are not welcome in ISKCON. Eff em, kick them out, we are Prabhupada's movement, Prabhupada's devotees!

Hare Krishna News: He said that?

Dhumbhamrita: Yeah, but in a funny holy way. I guess you had to be there. He's got this really cool deep Dracula voice, and he always seems like he's about to kick someone's rear. But in a spiritual way.

Hare Krishna News: Okay than. Anything else?

Dhumbhamrita: Yeah, we discussed a conversation Prabhupada had in the 1970s with a few disciples. Jamadagni and Kanupriya I think. What had happened is that they had asked Prabhupada some questions about the literal accuracy of the Bhagavatam. For example, they said King Ugrasena is said to have had 4 billion bodyguards. 4 quadrillion according to Sivarama Swami though. They wanted Prabhupada to explain if that was meant to be taken literally. They didn't believe that it was possible for King Ugrasena to have 4 billion bodyguards, nor would he have been able to house and feed and take care of 4 billion people.

Prabhupada told them if they didn't like to take it all literally then just ignore it. They then said that there is so much stuff like that in the Puranas, stuff that seems to be physically impossible. Like a mountain 80 miles high that Krishna and Balarama jumped off of; or the description of Jambudvipa, etc. How should they present that stuff when preaching to intelligent people? Prabhupada said to them "don't bring it up." They said sometimes people they preach to bring it up to them. They also wanted to know for themselves how they should understand it since it was obvious to them that a lot of stories in the Puranas are not realistically plausible. They wanted to know if they are metaphors, analogies, or non-literal in whatever way. Prabhupada said it was all literally true. That was what he wanted his disciples and his ISKCON to teach, EVERYTHING IN SASTRA IS LITERALLY TRUE.

Hare Krishna News: So, um, what did you Maharaja's decide? That Prabhupada was right?

Dhumbhamrita: Of course. You see we can't judge reality very well because of imperfect senses. There is only one absolute authority, and that is sastra. Sastra is infallible. And Prabhupada was infallible as well. Even if it may seem that something in sastra is highly implausible or impossible, we must remember that Krishna's shakti is achintya, inconceivable. So we must accept an infallible source of knowledge when it conflicts with a fallible source, like our senses and mind. Sivarama Maharaja nicely explained that transcendental concept for our enlightenment.

Hare Krishna News: So sastra can never be seen as telling stories with a bit of poetic license, or alankara – literary embellishments for the sake of making a metaphoric point or entertaining story? It's only to be taken literally?

Dhumbhamrita: No, sometimes sastra tells you it's telling you a metaphoric story. But the rest of the time Prabhupada wanted us to teach it as literally as possible.

Hare Krishna News: And since Prabhupada is always right...

Dhumbhamrita: We will not deviate from his program. We are not to become bigger than our guru, more intelligent than our guru, that is guru-aparadha, that is the path to hell. Prabhupada explains that we must be intelligent and take shelter of a bona fide guru, to not do anything other than what he desires you to do. That is the path of perfection and the secret of spiritual life. The guru is everything and you are nothing, you must always be a fool in the presence of your spiritual master. That is what Prabhupada teaches us.

Hare Krishna News: So even though we can't see giant mountains, or see an ocean of liquor or an ocean of yogurt surrounding earth, we should still accept that our senses are imperfect and therefore unreliable, that whatever the sastras say about anything, we have to believe in and teach that all of it is literally true? Wouldn't that make us seem to most people kind of like fundamentalist Christians who believe in and teach that the Universe and everything in it was created in 6 days, 6000 years ago, because the Bible tells them so?

Dhumbhamrita: Prabhupada is always right. If anyone says different than we reject their association. We don't need them, who cares what they think? Eff everyone who doesn't accept everything Prabhupada said as being perfect because he was empowered by God. Prabhupada was infallible. A perfect being. We are his servants. We push on his plan.

Hare Krishna News: How do you know he was perfect and infallible?

Dhumbhamrita: We just know. Look at what he accomplished. Google it!

Hare Krishna News: So, you can judge a person's level of infallibility by their external accomplishments? What if they don't accomplish much of anything? Does that mean they cannot be infallible? Weren't some of the gurus in the Gaudiya parampara more or less hermits who accomplished nothing much other than high levels of self-realization and Krishna consciousness?

Dhumbhamrita: Yeah, but we weren't saying it was just Prabhupada's books and ISKCON that proves he was infallible. It was also his character, his purity, his devotion.

Hare Krishna News: Black people, women, gurukulis and Jews might beg to differ.

Dhumbhamrita: Well, that was the whole point of our conference. To show how people misunderstood what Prabhupada said. To show that Prabhupada was always right, and even if he was wrong Krishna would change reality to make it fit what Prabhupada said. If you don't like our philosophy, as Sivarama Maharaja said, you can eff off.

Hare Krishna News: Srila Prabhupada ki jaya! ISKCON gurus ki jaya!

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