

Enforcement by Child Protection Office

Bhaktin Miriam was a very outspoken defender of child abuse, and she brought many serious challenges to the second CPO director, Tamohar Dasa, that he simply refused to respond to. The challenges of Miriam and lack of response had much to do with my conclusions that ISKCON leaders were willfully allowing child abuse to continue. Sanaka Rsi comes to that same conclusion in his second Cost of Silence video released at the end of February 2019.

<http://www.harekrsna.com/sun/editorials/07-05/editorials3.htm>

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by Bhaktin Miriam

Jul 15 USA (SUN) - At the beginning of June of this year, 2005, I heard that a devotee who committed child abuse was being honored and allowed to give classes and lead kirtans in Gita Nagari despite the fact that he is prohibited from doing so by the Child Protection Office. I am not naming him because the police never arrested this man, since the family of the victim did not press criminal charges. Nevertheless, the victim did write a 10-page letter detailing how this man had sexual intercourse with her for about a year when she was only 13 years of age. Even though the sex was consensual, she was much too young to give her consent. Under the law, because of her tender age, this act is considered statutory rape.

Members of the Child Protection Office investigated this case and realized that the devotee perpetrator gave inconsistent testimony about what happened. Meanwhile the victim provided consistent details that she wouldn't have known unless the perpetrator took her to those places.

The CPO report states that if the devotee that committed the sexual abuse doesn't apologize to his victim and gives her restitution of \$3,000, or more, he would be banned from ISKCON. It looks as though he didn't; therefore, he has to be banned from ISKCON. Yet, the current Child Protection Office director is not answering my inquiries concerning this. Also, the CPO report states that he should not be allowed to give classes, lead kirtans or hold managerial positions. Yet, he has been giving classes and leading kirtans many times since the beginning of his "sentence" - in some cases while GBC members were also present.

The former Child Protection Office director, Dhira Govinda Prabhu, complained to the GBC and the leaders of ISKCON many times, but nothing was done to stop this practice. The victim herself complained to the leaders, but nothing was done. Lately, before Bhakti Tirtha Maharaja passed away, this sexual abuser had been in Gita Nagari giving classes and leading kirtans. In fact, it was Bhakti Tirtha Maharaja's desire for this man to do this.

Since Bhakti Tirtha Maharaja favored this man, Maharaja's disciples give this statutory rapists great honor. The disciples want to believe that this man is innocent. What other explanation could be found if their guru favored him? So, these disciples have been spreading rumors that the victim fabricated the whole thing. They are saying that the Child Protection Office, along with the GBC, dismissed the case, or at the very least, they lifted the injunctions while Bhakti Tirtha Maharaja was preparing to leave this world.

On June 23, 2005, I e-mailed Tamohara dasa, the new Director for ISKCON's Child Protection Office. about this whole affair. All he said to me was that this perpetrator filed an appeal and that the appeals panel upheld the original CPO decision on this child abuser. Still, the panel reduced the time that this child abuser had to follow the CPO's injunctions from five years to three years.

I asked Tamohara prabhu what was the reason for reducing this child abuser's "sentence", but he did not reply. I then sent Tamohara prabhu another letter asking him if the abuser apologized and paid restitution to the victim (if he didn't, according to the CPO's injunction he must be banned from ISKCON). He did not reply to that letter either. I then wrote another letter asking him if it's true that this perpetrator's injunctions were lifted while this sexual abuser was in Gita Nagari for Bhakti Tirtha Maharaja's passing away. That letter also went unanswered. I then wrote another letter asking Tamohara prabhu if this perpetrator will get punished for not following the Child Protection Office's (CPO) injunctions. No answer to that letter either.

Tamohara prabhu promised me a copy of the report of the Appeals panel decision. But he never sent it to me. He has not been responding to any of my letters for more than two weeks now. I've heard that he has not been responding to other people's inquiries concerning this case either. The only thing that he would say is that the appeals panel reduced this child abuser's sentence from 5 years to 3. But he refuses to give any details, and would not give the appeals judicial report to those who are interested or following this case.

This child abuser had a member of the GBC as his lawyer, which in itself is a conflict of interest. But when I asked Tamohara prabhu who defended the victim, he would not answer. The only thing that he would say is that he, Tamohara prabhu, did not get involved in the appeals procedure except to appoint the panel.

This sexual child abuser has to follow the CPO's injunctions until July 26, 2005. So far since the beginning of his sentence in 2002, this abuser has failed to follow the CPO's injunctions numerous times. For details of this please read my article entitled "The Persistent Child Abuse Problem in the Hare Krishna Movement".

What is also disturbing is that he is being honored in Gita Nagari just because Bhakti Tirtha Maharaja favored him. Also, if this sexual abuser has not been following the injunctions, then the only alternative is for him to be banned. Otherwise, what is the meaning of a Child Protection Office? Is this office just a public relations campaign? If the Child Protection Office doesn't have any way to enforce their injunctions, then what is the use of having a Child Protection Office? Please, if you can help me bring justice for the victim, I would greatly appreciate it.