

## Drutakarma Dasa

I have trained myself to keep an open mind about even the most outlandish theories, because that is what I am asking scientists to do - to keep an open mind about ideas that might seem outlandish to them (such as the idea that Darwinism might be wrong). So although my initial reaction was to consider accusations of poisoning Srila Prabhupada too outlandish to bother with, I decided that to be consistent, I should consider the various reports and evidences put forward by supporters and promoters of that theory. After all, although the idea of Prabhupada's disciples poisoning him is outlandish, many outlandish things have happened in ISKCON. So perhaps this would be one more thing, the most outlandish yet.

Up to this point, however, nothing I have seen or heard convinces me that Srila Prabhupada was poisoned by a clique of his leading disciples, as the poison theorists maintain. The so-called "whisper" tapes are not convincing to me. Furthermore, it is hard to believe that this imagined clique of murderers would be discussing their plans, even in whispers, in the presence of devotees with tape recorders running.

Reverse speech evidence is even less convincing. When speech experts play supposed reversal messages to test groups, they do not hear the same things that the advocates hear. Even if, for the sake of argument, we admit that there are unambiguous messages to be found in reverse speech, they reveal only attitude and not action.

Concerning Prabhupada's own statements, I do not see that he anywhere indicated his disciples were poisoning him. Finally, the physical evidence, in the form of hair samples and Prabhupada's general condition, is not consistent with arsenic poisoning or any other kind of intentional poisoning.

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