

IRM's Response To Niscala

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We shall go through Niscala's article - "The Actual Role of Guru - a Response to IRM" answering her main points. We will reproduce her article whilst our comments will be following.

Dear IRM, Thank you for your reply (VNN Story [5573](#)).

I am surprised you think me quick to jump to the conclusion that you were cheating... I waited 6 months for a reply and I sent the letter 4 times, the last time here, still nothing.

We said nothing about you being 'quick to jump'. We apologised unreservedly for the delay, and would quite understand why you might become suspicious.

We sent a reply to your two letters on VNN within a couple of days of their being posted, but for some reason they were not put up straight away. One reply still has not been posted after three weeks.

According to your own claim, being off-line is a "pathetic excuse",

No we have never said being 'off-line' was a pathetic excuse for not seeing what someone has written. It is only pathetic if you use it as an excuse for posting straw man arguments. We are sure you will see the distinction.

but still you use it!

No, we never attempted to post up false straw man versions of your position (or anyone else's), and then try to attack those using the excuse that we had not seen what you actually wrote because we were off line. You are making a false accusation. And whilst on the subject of [Kundali](#), we hope you will take note that of the three main points of debate we were discussing, he has conceded two, and refused to answer the third unless we become his most sincere friends. We are sure you would agree that this is also quite pathetic.

Anyway, it is an excuse, none-the-less, so we'll put that behind us. Main thing is you replied, so thank you.

"If she were to go back and carefully re-read the paper 'GBC Heresies' she will see that we do not use these quotes as direct evidence for the *ritvik* position."

So the quotes you give in "[GBC Heresy](#)" are not direct evidence for *ritvik* position.

That's right, it is supporting evidence. Direct evidence is the [July 9th](#) order, the final [will](#) etc.

Jaya! We are in agreement there.

Good, it just shows how important it is to read things properly before launching an attack.

And we all know physical presence is not required for instruction- we can still reach Rupa Goswami via his books and so many other *acaryas*.

Yes, and unlike those other previous *acaryas* Srila Prabhupada is still the current link, unless you have hard evidence to the contrary (*and having read your article we can see you don't*).

"Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Enquire..."

But you have not yet answered my point- that how does it give evidence- even indirect- that the book-form of the guru, the *vani*, can perform the main function of the *diksa* guru, which is to progressively clear all of the doubts of the disciple by answering his questions and doubts, and in this way, help him apply the teachings to his life?

As an initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada your hero Kundali Muni has not had a physically present *diksa* guru for nearly twenty three years. Are you saying that he has not been following the Bhagavad Gita verse you quote, having his doubts answered by a *diksa* guru etc. Should he now take re-initiation from a '**living guru**'? Perhaps Kundali would argue that all his doubts and enquiries have been '**progressively cleared**' by reading Srila Prabhupada's books. Certainly that is what Srila Prabhupada said:

"In my books the philosophy of Krsna Consciousness is explained fully so if there is anything you do not understand, then you simply have to read again and again. By reading daily the knowledge will be revealed to you and by this process your spiritual life will develop."

(*Letter to Brahmarupa Dasa, 22/11/74*)

So you have a choice, either

1. .. Enquiry from the *diksa* guru ends on his departure.

Or

2. .. Enquiry from the *diksa* guru can continue even after his departure by reading his books etc. Please let us know which of the above options you agree with. If it is 1) then please inform all of Srila Prabhupada's disciples, including [Kundali](#), that they need to take re-initiation. If it is 2) then we are in complete agreement.. We hope this answers your point.

Arjuna was well-versed in the vedic literature, still he became confused about his duty, same with Pariksit, same with Sanatan- who had done much study of vedic literature. So when one questions the guru, one becomes enlightened and free from doubt and this is what the guru-disciple thing is all about. We have taken it to mean all-glory-honour-and-*daksina*, but it is simply this: "Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Enquire..." Enquire means to ask questions and it states further that the guru "will reveal the truth", the correct understanding.

The above has been answered.

That is why taking on a *diksa* guru is essential and why it is always done with his *vapuh* present;

We agree that it is imperative to '**take on**' a bona fide **diksa** guru. Please give direct evidence that this can only happen if the guru is physically present. As far as we can see this is your (and the GBC's) invented injunction.

later when one's doubts are cleared there is initiation, the formalizing of the relationship. It can be done via *ritvik* or in person, that is a detail.

Good, you also agree that initiation through the use of *ritviks* is only a '**detail**', not a principal. We will hold you to that.

"...in this way these quotes simply eliminate one of the most common objections to the *ritvik* position. So often the GBC claim that the guru must be physically present in order to act, yet these quotes prove the opposite."

This is your verbal sleight-of-hand. You have stealthily substituted a general word "act", to replace a specific one "initiate".

Clearly you are not aware of what *diksa* actually means:

"*Diksa* is the process by which one can awaken his transcendental knowledge and vanquish all reactions caused by sinful activity. A person expert in the study of the revealed scriptures knows this process as *diksa*."

(C.c. Madhya, 15.108, purport)

You may end up having to agree that the guru can still answer enquiries after his departure, and since the *divya jnana* he gives through his books, tapes etc., is the main constituent of *diksa*, our statement is completely correct. If the *diksa* guru can act, or give *siksa* (instruction in the form of *divya jnana*) then that is one of the main objections to *ritvik* eliminated. *Diksa* means the receipt of *divya jnana*, and that is not obstructed by [physical proximity](#).

How convenient to do away with specifics to support your argument! Wonderful how the English language can be used thus, is it not?

Now you see how misplaced your sarcasm was.

No one is claiming that the spiritual master needs to be present in order to "act" in the matter of giving instructions. I contest that he needs to be present in order to "act" in the matter of initiating, for it is not just conducting a ceremony- which can be done by a priest- but it means taking responsibility for guiding the disciple out of illusion, to "reveal the truth" by answering his every enquiry.

This has now been answered above.

One who does so is guru, no matter what the *ritviks* may claim; one who does not, is not guru, no matter what the GBC's claim. Simple.

"Proof of the actual *ritvik* system is in legal documents such as the July 9th directive and Srila Prabhupada's Final Will."

.....legal documents such as the July 9th directive ...?

Can a lawyer confirm this?

Yes we have lawyers in Calcutta who have confirmed this. All the ISKCON gurus are now co-defendants in a case brought against them on precisely this issue.

Anyway, we'll forgive you on that one, the Will is such a "legal document" so you are half-right at least.

No, we are completely right, and we will win the case, just wait and see.

To my memory (correct me if I'm wrong) the relevant part of the Will, states that everything should be kept going as it is. Hardly a "proof of the actual *ritvik* system"

What exactly do you mean by "actual"? The Will states that the systems of management going on within ISKCON must continue without change. The *ritvik* system is such a system. Therefore this is direct

evidence supporting the continued application of the *ritvik* system. We have posted our entire [legal submission](#), you would be advised to study it if you want to understand better the robust nature of our position..

We are obviously expected to take it to mean your version of the *ritvik*-system, i.e. post-*samadhi ritvik*, which Prabhupada never set up, and which is a vast departure from the pre-*samadhi ritvik* which he did.

The issue of *samadhi* has been brought up by you above. Do you have direct evidence to support your theory that the system was only meant to run pre and not post *samadhi*? If you have the GBC will need it for their defence.

Simply because of the fact that the essential feature of the guru/disciple relationship is enquiry/response, in regard to advancing in the understanding of the transcendental science and the practical application of it to the life of the disciple.

We have already answered your main objection. There are many disciples of Srila Prabhupada who had no physical interaction with him whatsoever, even when he was still on the planet. So it cannot be an essential element of *diksa*. Practical application was taught through his books, TP's, sannyasis, Bhakta Leader etc etc. There was no need for lots of *diksa* gurus running around then, and there is certainly no need now. Indeed we hope to put a stop to it in the not too distant future. We should point out that all these types of objections were dealt with in detail years ago in [The Final Order](#).

It would save a lot of time if you would first study the position you are trying to attack.

"Of course the issue of whether or not Srila Prabhupada authorised his disciples to be *Diksa* Gurus has been covered extensively in 'The Final Order' and our other many papers. In summary Srila Prabhupada states: a) 'Best Not To Accept Disciples" - (CC:7:130) - when explaining the instruction from Lord Chaitanya to 'become guru'"

OK, why "best not to..."? Let us apply the rest of Prabhupada's teachings to the answer, using one of your favourite quotes..

Quote 3: "Sometimes a spiritual master is not properly authorized to initiate, ...and gets carried away by a large number of followers"

There are many warnings against this in *sastra* - the dangers of accepting a large number of disciples

As you well know, the quote from the C.c. says **'best not to accept ANY'** not **MANY**. Who is being dishonest now?

- unless we are on the par of Srila Prabhupada we should not imitate him and do so and expect to be unaffected by the wealth and prestige offered, as confirmed in *sastra* and by the facts of our history. What is the proper authorization?

"He who follows can..." "I am a bonafide teacher as long as I follow..."(letter, 29th Oct, 1967)

How is it following his direction to partake of the worship of thousands of disciples? We can follow in his footsteps, according to our capacity, and do as he did - which is what he told us to do, but we cannot imitate:

And we should become guru in the manner prescribed. That means **not** initiating **ANY** disciples of our own, but simply preaching and distributing Srila Prabhupada's books. This is what he **'authorised'** us all to do, nothing else.

this is sastric advice in regard to the following of the great *acaryas*.

Sastric warnings in this connection:

"Some unnecessary creepers that grow with the bhakti creeper...mundane adoration, mundane profiteering and mundane importance. All these are unwanted creepers" (Cc. 19.159)

Adoration, profiteering and importance are all associated with the present role of gurus in our society. The only role should be to free the disciples from illusion, which is a painstaking procedure. It took Krsna 18 chapters and He is God. Being a guru is a service, and a very difficult one. If it was enough to read books, then there would be no need for guru. But *sastra* says, guru is essential.

The current link Guru instructs through his teachings. His teachings are all there in the books. If you were correct then even when Srila Prabhupada was present it would be useless to just read his books, we would need him there all the time explaining everything verbally. If you are saying he is no longer the current link, then please explain exactly how when and where he ceased to be so?

"b) Virtually all of the instructions to become guru are not time -dependent as they would need to be if they referred to *diksa* guru - that is they do not specifically speak of becoming guru after Srila Prabhupada's departure.etc. etc."

If they do not speak specifically of a time frame, and they are based in *sastra*, then the instruction is eternal. The only mention of a time frame according to my knowledge, is Prabhupada's specification that *diksa* cannot be done while one's guru is still present (*vapuh*).

Exactly, that is why so many of the quotes where Srila Prabhupada is ordering everyone to become guru, even children, must only be instructing.

These orders are immediate, no mention of waiting till after departure.

He said it is "not the etiquette". Still, even while he was with us, he allowed one sannyasi to initiate his own disciples, so it was obviously not very important etiquette...

Srila Prabhupada never allowed his own disciples to initiate within ISKCON.

There is no authority for this in any generally applicable instruction. If there is then please produce it. We will pay you \$1,000 for each quote that is applicable to the entire movement (available to the GBC in 1977), which clearly states that his disciples can give *diksa* before or after his departure within ISKCON.

"We are glad that you agree that if one does not reply with logic and *sastra* then it is a sign of cheating. As you will see from the latest exchange between Kundali and the IRM, Kundali has made it clear he cannot be bothered to reply to our points, and instead simply explains why he does not need to reply. We hope you are honest enough to apply your standards of cheating to 'Kundali', and either demand he replies to our specific points, or reject him as a cheater.."

It is said that one uses a thorn to remove a thorn, but what does one do if there is no thorn to remove? Where there is no logic and *sastra* in an argument, there is no need to apply logic and *sastra* as a reply. In fact, there is no need to reply at all, because such an argument is self-deflating.

We could say the same about you, as shown above you have absolutely no case, but still we have shown you the common courtesy of responding. When you thought we were not responding you got all high and

mighty; what would you have said if we had replied to you in the way you write above? You would have gone ballistic. Double standards?

I am surprised you place such value on logic and *sastra*, as I have not found any of it in your articles to Kundali, nor in your books, just absurd claims.

Clearly you have not read this exchange. Kundali backs down from two of his main objections, leaving only one that he refuses to answer unless we become his very sincere friends. As we say, quite pathetic, and not an impressive example of logic or *sastra*. You seem to be intent on following in his footsteps, which is a pity.

Your basic claim that pre-*samadhi ritvik* equals post-*samadhi ritvik* is absurd, because it permits not the real function of an initiating guru- the clearing away of misgivings from the heart, by answering all enquiries.

Then you better tell Kundali to get re-initiated since he must have a twenty three year backlog of misgivings.

Now Srila Prabhupada is always with us in *vani* form, but does that mean we can question his books and a disembodied voice will echo from within? Now you may say, that the answer is there somewhere, you just have to find it, but then why have a guru? Why have a teacher, just study books, you will get your doctorate no worries, why go to a doctor, read books on medicine... My dear scholars, *vani* and *vapuh* may have certain aspects in common, but they are not identical in all respects, or else we would have no trouble being initiated by Rupa Goswami. Srila Prabhupada may be in his books but he has not become them. *Acintya-bheda-bheda-tattva* means that the personality and the paraphernalia of the Supreme Lord and his pure devotees are simultaneously one and different. Only stressing the one-ness is known as Mayavada. Srila Prabhupada is not different from his picture as well, but does that mean he is a picture? Or a fibre-glass murti? I am open for discussing your realizations on this but it has to be based on *sastra*. You have not answered my points so far...but have referred me to your books. But there as well I can find no answers...

You cannot have read them, otherwise you would have realised that all your objections have been thoroughly dealt with way back in 1996.

"In trying to understand Srila Prabhupada's teachings we are instructed to not 'jump over' to the previous *acaryas*. Instead one must understand Srila Prabhupada's instructions from Srila Prabhupada himself."

And Srila Prabhupada has instructed us in many places to study the books of the great *acaryas*, such as in the introduction to Srimad Bhagavatam. Should we ignore those instructions?

Therefore, "Jumping over" means only to ignore one's own guru's instructions in favour of the previous *acarya*'s. But we are primarily giving quotes and directions from Srila Prabhupada, so where is such an attitude of jumping over? How can we ignore such literature and still follow the above mentioned instructions of Srila Prabhupada? Gurus do and can fall as described in the books of these *acaryas*

Not members of the disciplic succession. Nowhere is this stated by Srila Prabhupada, he only states the opposite:

"A bona fide spiritual master is in the disciplic succession from time eternal and he does not deviate at all from the instructions of the Supreme Lord." (Bg. 4.42, purport)?"

"There is no possibility that a first class devotee will fall down." (C.c. Madhya, 22.71)

"A spiritual master is always liberated." (SP Letter to Tamal Krsna, 21/6/70)

"Narada Muni, Haridasa Thakura and similar *acaryas* especially empowered to broadcast the glories of the Lord cannot be brought down to the material platform.

(S.B. 7.7.14, purport)

You are trying to use the teachings of other *acaryas* to overturn our immediate *acaryas* teachings. According to Narahari Sarakara, whose books you want to refer to, this is very sinful:

"...a disciple who listens to the words of other Vaisnavas, even if their instructions are proper and true, but does not re-confirm those teachings with his own spiritual master and instead directly personally accepts these instructions, is considered a bad disciple and a sinner." (verse 49, Sri Krsna Bhajanamrta by Srila Narahari Sarakara)

Please note we only quote this to show that even by your own authority what you are doing and teaching is off.

They are not necessarily perfect in every respect, as given in the quote below, nor are these "falls" necessarily disqualifications. What is the "only" necessary qualification was so often repeated by Srila Prabhupada- here is one of many quotes:

"So far as my qualifications are concerned, I am just trying to carry out the order of my guru" (letter, 12th Nov, 1971).

"I am a bonafide teacher as long as I follow the instructions of my spiritual master. That is the only qualification for becoming a teacher" (letter, 29th Oct.,1967)

"No, I am not perfect. None of us claim to be perfect; we have so many faults. But because we don't speak anything beyond Krsna's teachings, our teaching is therefore perfect" (Consciousness: the missing link, pages 13-14)

To my sense of judgement Srila Prabhupada is perfect in all respects, perfect in every vaisnava quality one could consider, despite this statement. But to be so perfect is not necessary in order to be bonafide, or else it would nullify this statement.

Since he is perfect, clearly he was just encouraging us lot. To be the sort of guru he was authorising, you are right, we do not need to be perfect. But to be the sort of guru he is, and initiate, you do.

That would seem to cover all your main points. Please don't hesitate to write again if you have any further queries. We are afraid we are not responsible for how quickly things get posted on VNN, though we remain eternally grateful that in the end they normally are.