

a response to: Srila Prabhupada's Guru System vs. *Ritvikvada*: The Facts Plain And Simple

# RAVINDRA SVARUPA'S FOUR-STEP-VADA



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**“It is best not to accept any disciples. One has to become purified at home by chanting the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* and preaching the principles enunciated by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Thus one can become a spiritual master and be freed from the contamination of material life.”**

**(Madhya, 7:130)**



**by Krishnakant**

# H.G. RAVINDRA SVARUPA'S ... FOUR-STEP-VADA

A response to:

**“Sri Prabhupada’s Guru System vs. Ritvikvada: The Facts Plain And Simple”**

This is a response to a paper entitled “*Sri Prabhupada’s Guru System vs. Ritvikvada: The Facts Plain And Simple*”. This paper was posted by Jahnu Dasa (a disciple of H.H. Harikesa Swami) on 27/4/98, and subsequently, onto vaisnava discussion/news web sites, with His Grace Ravindra Svarupa prabhu named as the author.

It is a curious title to begin with, since as far as we can determine *ritvik* WAS Sri Prabhupada’s chosen guru system. The continued following of this system in no way entails the crafting of any separate philosophy or *vada* as seems to be implied. It strikes us as bizarre, therefore, to set Sri Prabhupada in opposition with his own explicit signed order. To even contemplate making such a proposition one would think H.G. Ravindra Svarupa *prabhu* (henceforth referred to as ‘the author’) must have stumbled onto some very convincing evidence proving that the *ritvik* system was meant to stop on Sri Prabhupada’s departure, and that the 11 *ritviks* were then to transmogrify into as-good-as-God *diksa* gurus (modifications A & B from ‘*The Final Order*’). So does the author offer clear explicit evidence supporting modifications A & B? Unfortunately not. His ‘evidence’ comprises of nothing more than repeating these modifications in a condensed form:

It was understood that these proxies ( <i>ritviks</i> ) would go on to initiate their own disciples after Sri Prabhupada’s physical departure.
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We were already aware as to what the GBC now say was ‘understood’ - (leaving aside the fact that this ‘understanding’ was itself radically altered in the mid-eighties by the author himself) - that is why we formulated them as modifications A & B and stuck them on page 2 of ‘*The Final Order*’. What we were really hoping to see was evidence which supports these modifications. To just say modifications A and B were ‘understood’ completely misses the whole point of ‘*The Final Order*’ paper. Instead of providing the requisite evidence, the author presents his own ‘*four-step-vada*’, relying heavily on a conversation (May 28th) which supports the *ritvik* system after departure, and which in any case has been rendered currently inadmissible by the GBC’s own investigative expert. Thus once more we are offered an article riddled with inaccuracy, misrepresentation and irrelevancy.

There are two things notable about the paper - “*Sri Prabhupada’s Guru System vs. Ritvikvada: The Facts Plain And Simple*”. Firstly, the author offers very little by way of his own words or new arguments. 95% of the paper is simply him directing us to look at three other papers - “*Where the Ritvik People Are Wrong*”, “*Disciple of My Disciple*”, and the “*Timeless Order*”. He seems oblivious to the fact that these papers have already been soundly rebutted, (and that in any case all three contradict each other and the author himself). For the debate to continue meaningfully the author needs to address our refutations, not merely re-present defeated arguments. We noted a similar problem with another recent GBC paper, ‘*Ritvik Catechism*’. Is it that the GBC are deliberately targeting a temple audience who may not have had the chance to read the relevant counter arguments? Or perhaps they are hoping that most people will not take the time and trouble to follow the debate. We cannot think of any other explanation for the continual recycling of already rebutted arguments. If this is the GBC’s strategy, it is certainly high risk, and could back-fire on them very badly. At the very least there should be some attempt to explain why all the numerous counter-arguments, thus far presented by us, are not valid.

Secondly, apart from the three occasions he quotes directly from the “*The Final Order*”, the author consistently fails to address our stated position, offering instead numerous ‘straw man’ arguments. Once again this is in keeping with other recent GBC papers including one by the author (please see ‘*His Grace Ravindra Svarupa Prabhu Defends his MASS*’). Why the GBC should constantly avoid a proper point for point rebuttal of ‘*The Final Order*’ is bewildering since this is what devotees on both sides of the debate have been calling for. The GBC and their supporters have gone to all the trouble of preparing many papers claiming to address the ‘*ritvik*’ question, but not one attempts a point for point rebuttal of the definitive *ritvik* paper that the GBC originally commissioned- ‘*The Final Order*’. Instead they present assertions and arguments we never make, and defeat them instead. For example we clearly demonstrated that approximately 50% of the GBC’s official response to ‘*The Final Order*’, called ‘*Disciple of my Disciple*’, consisted of straw man arguments (please see- ‘*The Final Order Still Stands*’). Our complaint has never been challenged by anyone. Surely someone in the GBC must recognise the futility of such an approach. As long as they do not, the controversy can only grow.

Below we shall concentrate on arguments made by the author which have not already been refuted in our responses to - "Where the Ritvik People Are Wrong", "Disciple of My Disciple", and the "Timeless Order". Quotes from the author shall be boxed. Our responses will follow.

The Case For Proxy-Initiation:

1. "Henceforward" in July 9th Letter
2. Statements That Support Proxy-Initiation
3. "My Disciples" and "System Of Management Should Not Change" in Srila Prabhupada's Will
4. "But When I Order" & "When I Order" in May 28th Conversation
5. Topanga Canyon Talk
6. Guru Qualification & Authorization

Above the author inaccurately summarises our position without once quoting from 'The Final Order', or even referring to its central argument regarding **modifications A & B**.

1. "Henceforward" in July 9th Letter A letter dated July 9th, 1977 was composed by Tamal Krishna Goswami and approved by Srila Prabhupada as follows:

It is irrelevant and speculative to state the letter was 'composed' by His Holiness Tamal Krishna Goswami.

- Can the author prove exactly how the letter arose?
- Maybe Srila Prabhupada composed or dictated it?

In any event, since Srila Prabhupada 'approved' it, every word has the same authority as if it came from Srila Prabhupada himself.

The proxy-initiation adherents postulate that the above letter constitutes a "Final Order" or "policy document" on how initiations will take place after Srila Prabhupada's departure.

- In what sense is it mere 'postulation' to state that this is a 'policy document', or that it is a 'Final Order'?

It is definitely an order. And unless the author has uncovered other subsequent orders relating to the system for initiation to be used within ISKCON, it is most certainly Srila Prabhupada's 'Final Order' - by definition. Also since it was sent officially to every GBC and Temple President in the movement, it was definitely a 'document' setting out a 'policy' to be applied throughout the whole society. Thus it is unclear how making such factual statements can be classified as mere postulation.

- Does the author dispute these facts?

They emphasize the word "henceforward" as proof of the eternal nature of this instruction and point out that Srila Prabhupada never issued an instruction to rescind it.

We have never once stated that the word 'henceforward' is proof that the instruction is 'eternal'. The author would know this had he actually studied the position paper which the GBC themselves commissioned. We make it perfectly clear that the July 9th order is only applicable for the duration of ISKCON ('The Final Order' page 36, point 10). Since ISKCON is anticipated to last no more than 10,000 years, it is clear that we have never claimed that this instruction is eternal.

There are obvious flaws with this attempt at trying to isolate the July 9th letter. Notice the first line of the letter states:

**"Recently when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vrndavana..." This refers back to the May 28th conversation, when Srila Prabhupada was asked specific questions by the GBC on how initiations would be conducted after his physical departure. Srila Prabhupada answered with "regular guru", "his disciple", "disciple of my disciple" and "grand-disciple."**

Firstly the author is still apparently clinging to a piece of evidence which the GBC's own world expert examiner has classified inadmissible unless a full forensic investigation is carried out, due to suspected tampering. Even without such tampering, a court of law would never see such taped evidence as precedential over signed legal documents such as the July 9th *ritvik* order. Even allowing for such evidence to be considered there are other serious points of objection with regards using it to modify Srila Prabhupada's *Final Order* on initiations within ISKCON.

If it is indeed the case that the July 9th letter is specifically referring back to the May 28th conversation, and not some other discussion, then the very fact that the letter does not advise the reader to listen to that conversation tape, or read a transcript of it, would clearly indicate that Srila Prabhupada considered the July 9th letter an accurate and complete summary of the

conversation. It makes no sense whatsoever to say that a letter relating directly to such a momentous conversation, and which begins by promising to impart the very conclusion of that discussion, would then go on to omit the two most important points, namely **modifications A & B**. We already covered this point in detail in *'The Final Order'* pages 9, page 22, page 25 etc.

Furthermore, the author is misleading his readers by claiming Srila Prabhupada *'answered'* with *'regular guru,' 'his disciple,' 'disciple of my disciple'* and *'grand-disciple'* the question concerning how initiations would be conducted in his absence. This is simply a fabrication. The author should well know that the question of *'how initiations would be conducted after his physical departure'* was the first question asked at the beginning of said conversation. The **ANSWER** given to **THIS** question was *'Officiating acarya'* and *'ritvik'*. Other questions were asked subsequently. The words *"regular guru," "disciple of my disciple"* and *"grand-disciple"*, were spoken at the very **END** of the conversation segment in answer to **OTHER** questions. The words *'his disciple'* were also spoken later in the conversation in answer to another question. This misrepresentation is ultimately futile since anyone who studies the conversation can instantly see through it. It is interesting to note at this point how having reproduced the July 9th letter in full, the author has **NOT** produced the tape transcript he refers to. Doing so would immediately have discredited his supposed version of events about what was *'answered'* with what by Srila Prabhupada. For an understanding of what really transpired on May 28th might we humbly refer the reader to *'The Final Order'* pages 21-26.

Next the author offers his **four-step-vada**, which he believes proves Srila Prabhupada's desire to implement the M.A.S.S. (multiple *acarya* successor system) within ISKCON for after his departure:

The guru-succession adherents see the July 9th letter as part of a continuum, a series of events over which Srila Prabhupada directed the transition from his being the sole initiating spiritual master to his disciples' carrying on after his physical departure.

By describing his camp as *'guru succession adherents'* the author clearly implies that we do not believe or accept the principle of succession. This is another misrepresentation, albeit subtly executed. As we have said, Srila Prabhupada shall remain our current link in the succession for as long as ISKCON exists.

So here is step one:

First there is the May 28th conversation, where Srila Prabhupada states that he expects his followers to become regular gurus after his physical departure.

The above is demonstrable nonsense. Nowhere in said conversation does Srila Prabhupada *'state'* - *'I expect my followers to become regular gurus after my physical departure'*. We challenge anyone to locate such a sentence. It is pure phantasmagoria. Srila Prabhupada clearly answers H.H. Satsvarupa Goswami's first question in favour of the *ritvik* position: *'officiating acarya,' 'is that called ritvik acarya,' 'ritvik yes'*. No amount of word jugglery can get around this stubborn fact. Later in the conversation Srila Prabhupada only links the possible emergence of *'regular'* gurus (a term used here for the first and only time) to his issuing an order, not to his departure. Thus step one on the way to M.A.S.S. heaven does not factually exist, except in the author's mind.

Step two:

Second, there is the garden conversation of July 7th, where Tamal Krishna Maharaj asks what to do about the backlog of initiations, held up until Srila Prabhupada regains his health. Srila Prabhupada discusses handing over the process of initiation to his senior disciples, who will act as proxies while he is physically present.

Srila Prabhupada never limits the activities of these soon to be appointed proxies to during his physical presence **ONLY**. To imply that he did would thus be sheer dishonesty. Anyone who reads the conversation will see for themselves that no such statement is ever made.

(That the proxy-initiation system is based on Srila Prabhupada's physical presence is reinforced when Srila Prabhupada is listing which senior devotees should act as proxies for him. Srila Prabhupada says the aspirants should write "whoever is nearest." Tamal Krishna Maharaj asks about initiation requests coming in from India and Srila Prabhupada responds, "India, I am here.")

This *'India I am here'* argument has already been dealt with twice before in *'The Final Order Still Stands'* (page 14-15) and *'...Best Not To Any Accept Disciples'* pages 24-25). Suffice to say the author fails to mention that directly after saying **'India I am here'** Srila Prabhupada goes on to say **'We shall see. In India Jayapataka'**. Why would he say this if the proxy system was only to run during his presence? Thus the second step is also dangerously rickety. Let us see if the third step of the author's M.A.S.S.-*vada* is any more solid.

Step three:

Third is the July 9th letter confirming the garden conversation of two days previous and highlighting which senior devotees should start the process.

The July 9th letter sets up the *ritvik* system and makes absolutely no mention of anyone other than Srila Prabhupada acting as *diksa* guru for ISKCON. It also says nothing at all about anyone starting any sort of 'process', other than acting from that time onwards as *ritviks*. To suggest otherwise is wishful fantasy. This third step actually only leads to the *ritvik* system, the very place the author does not wish to go. At present the author is hovering precariously in mid air, with nowhere to stand.

- Will the last step offer some support?

Step four:

Finally, after Srila Prabhupada's physical departure, those devotees first selected as proxies, step into the role prescribed by Srila Prabhupada in the May 28th conversation: regular gurus.

The only role prescribed by Srila Prabhupada was to act as *ritviks*. If 'regular guru' means '*diksa* guru', then that particular entity cannot act without a specific 'order'. That order was never given. The only order was for *ritviks*. Further there is no order for these *ritviks* to 'step into' anything. All step 4 above is, is a statement of what actions the GBC took after 1977, not the evidence to support such a sequence of events.

The above arguments are more fully developed in our responses to the GBC papers '*Disciple of My Disciple*' and '*Ritvik Catechism*', respectively titled '*Final Order Still Stands*' and '*Institutional Cataclysm*'.

To summarise our objections to the four-step-vada: there is no **EVIDENCE** presented by the author to support it. There are no clear explicit statements, or signed documentation from Srila Prabhupada, which in any way demonstrate or support the transition from proxy to *diksa* guru that the so-called 'guru-succession adherents' claim to 'see'. Without this evidence the author has no case. Simply re-stating that which needs to be proven does not in itself constitute any sort of proof.

We might also ask the following.

- How can the May 28th Conversation, which '*Disciple of My Disciple*' (the official GBC reply which Ravindra prabhu directs us to) claims makes **NO** reference to proxies, be an explanation of how to modify a letter which '*Disciple of My Disciple*' claims deals **ONLY** with proxies?

Perhaps the author will answer this for us.

There are a number of questions to be asked when considering the July 9th letter as a *Final Order* on how to conduct initiations after Srila Prabhupada's physical departure:

1. Why would Srila Prabhupada use one letter to introduce a new system of continuing the *parampara* that went against all of his teachings on the subject for ten years previous?

We have repeatedly asked to see all these 'teachings' from the 'previous ten years' that allegedly prove that Srila Prabhupada must be replaced as the *Diksa* Guru for ISKCON on his departure. So far we have seen nothing (the evidence offered by the author has already been dealt with and in any case does not even mention the terms '*ritvik*' '*diksa*' or 'initiate' and is thus irrelevant). Again just stating something does not make it true. Instead of wasting web site with such empty claims, the author would be better advised to produce the actual supporting evidence. In this way we can quickly settle the matter. These bluffing tactics may have worked for the last 20 years, but no longer. Let us see these all these teachings the *ritvik* system would contravene were it to be re-introduced.

In any case, even though there was **NO** new system of continuing the *parampara* introduced, there was not just 'one letter' either. Over 108 'letters' were sent out to every temple president and GBC. There were of course also other supporting instructions. (Please see the '*Final Order*').

If Srila Prabhupada had wanted to set up a new system of initiation, that went against the *parampara* norm, why didn't he write about this in his books? Even after the July 9th letter was issued, during the four month period that followed before Srila Prabhupada's departure, we find no mention of a proxy-initiation system in any of his purports.

How can it be a 'new' system when the use of representatives to assist in initiation ceremonies became the 'norm' after 1973? In fact the **ONLY** system of initiation for ISKCON that is mentioned in Srila Prabhupada's books is fully consistent with the system that was in place when Srila Prabhupada was on the planet. There is certainly no mention of the multiple *acharya* system, in place in ISKCON now, in Srila Prabhupada's books. Thus the only statements that are in the books regarding initiation in ISKCON are fully consistent with the continuation of the system that was in place in ISKCON when Srila Prabhupada was on the planet. The use of *ritviks* after July 9th was merely the devolving to representatives the final aspect of initiation that was still performed by Srila Prabhupada - the formal acceptance through the issuing of a spiritual name. Everything else - the *pariksa*, the subsequent recommendation for initiation, the fire *yajna*, the chanting on the beads etc., had already been devolved. There is no mention in Srila Prabhupada's books that this system must be replaced with the current multi-guru system, with all its many associated rules and regulations. This subject has already been dealt with extensively in '*The Final Order*' pages 27-29.

3. "*The Final Order*" states: "We have no interest in conspiracy theories..." If the proxy-initiation adherents are not into conspiracy theories, why wouldn't they ask Tamal Krishna Goswami what was meant by the July 9th letter, since he wrote it?

To say we have no interest in 'conspiracy theories' is not synonymous with saying we totally agree with His Holiness Tamal Krishna Goswami's interpretation of this letter. Maybe he is confused about the letter, perhaps due to the enormous emotional trauma he was experiencing prior to Srila Prabhupada's departure. After all he has given several different interpretations of the letter already. What we are saying is that it is certainly not necessary to bring up unpleasant accusations involving a concerted and deliberate group effort to cover up Srila Prabhupada's instructions in order to establish the *ritvik* position. We might also humbly point out that it is the proper etiquette, when referring to our *sanyasis*, to always prefix their name with 'His Holiness'.

As mentioned above, over the years His Holiness Tamal Krishna Maharaja has frequently changed his mind on the exact understanding of this letter:

In 1978 he agreed with the 'zonal *acharya*' understanding of this letter. In 1980 at Topanga Canyon he gave the 'M.A.S.S.' or multi-guru system version. In 1984, in his book '*Servant of the Servant*' he referred back to the 'zonal *acharya* appointment' theory. In 1986 he supported the 'MASS' version of events. His current position is not known since the official 'final *siddhanta*' as given in '*Gurus and Initiation in ISKCON*' has resurrected the old 'appointment' theory.

4. If the July 9th letter is indeed such a clear and undisputed policy document, why did it take ten years to be presented as such?

This argument makes no sense since it took the GBC a similar amount of time to understand Srila Prabhupada's 'clear and undisputed' instructions that the zonal *acharya* system was utterly bogus.

5. Why place so much importance on the word "henceforward" when Srila Prabhupada used the word numerous times in a time-bound sense?

This is just a 'straw-man' argument since the '*Final Order*' does not do this. It actually states one could **REMOVE** the word 'henceforward' from the July 9th letter and not alter the fact that it should have continued to operate after Srila Prabhupada's departure (please see '*The Final Order*' page 3). We fully concede that the word 'henceforward' can be used in a time-bound sense. We simply argue that in *The Final Order* the word is time-bound to the duration of the ISKCON, the movement for whom, and to whom, the letter was written (please see '*The Final Order*' pages 7 & 8).

For a more in-depth study of the above, we suggest you read "*Disciple Of My Disciple*", "*Where The Ritviks Are Wrong*" and "*The Timeless Order*."

Apart from the fact that all these documents have already been rebutted, the author has committed a sloppy blunder in recommending them since, as we have demonstrated in our rebuttal papers, they actually contradict each other (and him).

The author quotes from the July 7th garden conversation, then makes the following observation:

Now, he was naming proxies who were to receive requests for initiation directly, give spiritual names and chant on their beads-all on Srila Prabhupada's behalf while he was physically present.

By stating that this arrangement was meant to occur only for whilst Srila Prabhupada was physically present, the author has once again simply stated that which needs to be proven. His assertion never appears in the July 7th conversation, nor anywhere else for that matter.

This was quite a big change and immediately puts these newly chosen proxies into a special category. As explained in the first section of this paper, Srila Prabhupada used a four-step continuum of turning the initiation process over to his disciples: May 28th he spoke of his disciples initiating their own disciples after his departure, July 7th he appointed proxies to initiate on his behalf while he was physically present, July 9th Tamal Krishna Goswami composes a letter to inform the Society of what Srila Prabhupada had set up on July 7th, and finally after Srila Prabhupada's departure these proxies begin initiating their own disciples.

Having understood Srila Prabhupada's intentions, let us take another look at those statements:

Again the author has repeated the four-step continuum vada he mentioned earlier without any proof. He is simply saying 'this is what we believe happened. We do not need to present any evidence for this version of events since if we believe that is what happened, then it must have happened'. This then appears to be the process by which Srila Prabhupada's intentions have been 'understood'.

"...the process for initiation to be followed in the future."

"...continue to become *ritvik* and act on my charge."

"...continue to become *ritvik* and act on my behalf."

"Future" refers to the formal designation as one of the proxies chosen personally by Srila Prabhupada to perform initiations on his behalf while he was physically present. "Continue" means to preach and act as proxy while Srila Prabhupada is



physically present. It was understood that these proxies would go on to initiate their own disciples after Srila Prabhupada's physical departure. This understanding is in line with what Srila Prabhupada said in the May 28th conversation. Tamal Krishna Goswami, who composed both letters and who took part in the room conversation confirms that this was Srila Prabhupada's intent. To conclude that these statements "clearly indicate that the *ritvik* system was intended to continue without cessation" is not supported by the May 28th conversation nor the tenor of Srila Prabhupada's teachings.

Again the author has just re-stated that which he had already decided to be the case. Thus we can forget normal dictionary definitions of English words as we know them. Words like "henceforward", "future" and "continue" must now only refer to Srila Prabhupada's physical presence, because the author is already committed at the outset, without any evidence, that the *ritvik* system was to be replaced by the M.A.S.S., after Srila Prabhupada's physical departure. The author then goes on to interpret every other piece of evidence in line with this original groundless dogma. The very dogma that is under the microscope. This is circular reasoning in four steps:

**Let us assume that the '4-step continuum' is what happened. (1)**

**Because of (1) the *ritviks* system is wrong. (2)**

**All evidence must be interpreted in line with (1) above. (3)**

**Thus all the evidence proves that the *ritvik* system is wrong. (4)**

The author's four step vada rests on the dogmatic belief that somehow the May 28th conversation magically turns the July 9th letter into a special dispensation for the *ritviks* to go on and be *diksa* gurus. Needing to see the PROOF and EVIDENCE for this 'magic' is the very issue under debate, and yet this is the very evidence we are denied. Please note above how the author tacitly admits that there is no factual tangible evidence for this mystical transformation of the *ritvik* order into an order for 11 *diksa* gurus:

It was understood that these proxies would go on to initiate their own disciples after Srila Prabhupada's physical departure.

Note the word '**understood**'.

**Not stated.**

**Not ordered.**

**Not written down.**

Just *understood*.

- But understood by whom, and on what grounds?

This is never clarified.

The author is thus hopelessly mired in an amorphous world of baseless groundless beliefs. This can be swiftly remedied if he would simply follow the final July 9th order.

To use His Holiness Tamala Krishna Maharaja's understanding as some sort of reliable evidence merely increases our concern for the author's own judgement since, as we have demonstrated above, the Maharaja has already changed his mind about what happened at least 3 times.

We also note the author has again just **ASSUMED** that the '*tenor of Srila Prabhupada's teachings*' contradict the *ritvik* system. Which specific teachings he might mean the author fails to divulge.

3. "System of management should not change" and "My disciples" in Srila Prabhupada's Will

In this section the author merely repeats arguments verbatim from the '*Timeless Order*' and '*Where the Ritvik People Are Wrong*'. (Please see '*Best Not To Accept Any Disciples*' and '*Response to H.H. Jayadvaita Maharaja*').

4. "But By My Order" & "When I order" in May 28th Conversation.

Here the author simply repeats arguments verbatim from '*Disciple of My Disciple*'. (Please see '*The Final Order Still Stands*').

5. Topanga Canyon Talks .

Here the author simply repeats an accusation made by the paper '*Timeless Order*' against our use of the '*Topanga canyon Talks*'. (Please see '*Best Not To Accept Any Disciples*')

## 6. Guru Qualification & Authorization

In this section the author simply reproduces quotes that have already been answered in the 'Final Order', 'Best Not To Accept Disciples' and 'CHAKRA'S Army Still Off Target'.

Additionally the author produces the following quote and rationale:

**"A conditioned soul is hampered by four defects: he is sure to commit mistakes, he is sure to become illusioned, he has a tendency to cheat others, and his senses are imperfect. Consequently we have to take direction from liberated persons. This Krsna consciousness movement directly receives instructions from the Supreme Personality of Godhead via persons who are strictly following His instructions. Although a follower may not be a liberated person, if he follows the supreme liberated Personality of Godhead, his actions are naturally liberated from the contamination of material nature. Lord Caitanya therefore says: 'By My order you may become a spiritual master.' One can immediately become a spiritual master by having full faith in the transcendental words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and by following His instructions."**

**(SB 4.18.5p)**

Are we to believe that Srila Prabhupada is speaking about *siksa* only here? If so, what is the need of being liberated? He's saying that a strict follower is liberated and thus qualified to be guru, period.

This is most astonishing since this same quote has been use previously in several other GBC publications, and in a paper by the author himself, as evidence that the Guru does **NOT** need to be liberated. Indeed in the most recent official GBC paper 'Ritvik Catechism', the GBC have used this quote in a section that counteracts that idea that the Guru must be on the highest platform. We will therefore refrain from answering the above point until the GBC can agree amongst themselves as to what this week's official interpretation of the above quote might be.

The author also offers the following quote and explanation:

**"When a neophyte devotee is actually initiated and engaged in devotional service by the orders of the spiritual master, he should be accepted immediately as a bona fide Vaisnava, and obeisances should be offered unto him. Out of many such Vaisnavas, one may be found to be very seriously engaged in the service of the Lord and strictly following all the regulative principles, chanting the prescribed number of rounds on japa beads and always thinking of how to spread the Krsna consciousness movement. Such a Vaisnava should be accepted as an uttama-adhikari, highly advanced devotee, and his association should always be sought."**

**(NOI 5p)**

Srila Prabhupada saw his disciples with such qualifications as pure devotees. Are we qualified to judge them differently? Does the fact that some gurus fell, mean that all are fallen?

The 'Final Order' does not state this point or even talk about judging devotees in the movement, and on the contrary states that the movement may be full of pure devotees. No, all we are stating is that Srila Prabhupada did set up the *ritvik* system to allow initiations to continue. Whether or not Srila Prabhupada created pure devotees is not relevant to his clear and unequivocal *Final Order*. As disciples our duty is simply to follow the instructions of the guru. It is inappropriate to abandon the guru's instruction and instead speculate as to how many pure devotees there are now, or will be in the future, It is nowhere stated that it is mandatory for a pure devotee to become a *diksa* guru. Such persons would be delighted to work within the *ritvik* system if that was their guru's order (please see 'The Final Order' page 34). Thus this is yet another 'straw-man' argument that can be safely disregarded.

Finally the author offers one other quote not dealt with specifically in all our previous papers:

**"Sanatana Gosvami clearly defines the bona fide spiritual master. One must act according to the scriptural injunctions and at the same time preach. One who does so is a bona fide spiritual master. Haridasa Thakura was the ideal spiritual master because he regularly chanted on his beads the prescribed number of times. Indeed, he was chanting the holy name of the Lord three hundred thousand times a day. Similarly, the members of the Krsna consciousness movement chant the minimum number of sixteen rounds a day, which can be done without difficulty, and at the same time they must preach the cult of Caitanya Mahaprabhu according to the gospel of Bhagavad-gita As It Is. One who does so is quite fit to become a spiritual master for the entire world."**

**(Cc Ant 4.103p)**

Chanting the holy name and preaching are the qualifications for becoming a spiritual master for the whole world. Does this mean *siksa* only? Srila Prabhupada says "spiritual master." Many of our senior devotees have been preaching for 25-30 years! Do they not have the above mentioned qualifications?

Firstly the same devotees who have been preaching for 25-30 years are the same ones who have recently fallen down - Jagadi-

sha prabhu and Rohini Kumar prabhu were two of the most senior men left in the movement. Thus just preaching for 25-30 years does not in itself prove a person is very advanced, or qualified or authorised to initiate.

- How does the phrase 'spiritual master' automatically preclude *siksa* guru?
- Since any new *bhakta* also chants 16 rounds and preaches according to the *Bhagavada Gita As It IS*, could not the above quote also apply to them?
- Is the author then suggesting that every new *bhakta* is a *mahabhagavat* (the minimum qualification for *diksa* guru)?

Devotees who chant and preach are spiritual masters for the whole world, since they are qualified to preach, or give *siksa*, to anyone, anywhere in the whole world.

## Summary

In conclusion the author offers a mixture of previously defeated arguments from papers that contradict each other, straw man arguments, and unsubstantiated statements of dogmatic belief. Not very appetising it has to be said.

The author's total incapacity to even attempt to deal with '*The Final Order*' and give relevant explicit evidence for **Modifications A & B**, is quite unnerving, and does not augur well for an early resolution to this issue. Such evasive and irrelevant verbiage appears to be very much de rigueur amongst the current GBC's and their apologists. We humbly pray for an early shift in paradigm.

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