

a reply to: *ritvik* Catechism

INSTITUTIONAL CATAclysm



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(July 9th 1977 Letter, Opening lines)



by Krishnakant

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a reply to: "*ritvik Catechism*".

The following is a reply to a GBC paper entitled '*ritvik Catechism*' which was prepared by H.G. Badrinarayan Dasa, H.H. Umapati Maharaja and H.H. Giridhari Maharaja. These three devotees are members of the special GBC sub-committee set up to specifically deal with the *ritvik* issue. They were also the authors of the official GBC 'reply' to the definitive *ritvik* position paper - '*The Final Order*' - which was entitled '*Disciple of My Disciple*' (henceforward referred to as DD). This latest offering appears to not have been circulated widely publicly, and instead appears to only have been intended as an '*in-house*' document.

Somewhat disappointingly the three authors appear not to have properly studied either '*The Final Order*' or our response to DD ('*The Final Order Still Stands*') since their arguments vacillate perpetually between irrelevancy and crass misrepresentation. This is a shame since we might well have come closer to some sort of resolution by now had the select committee dealt more honestly and straightforwardly with the issues involved. For example, the committee consistently fail to even mention **modifications A & B** (what to speak of provide supporting evidence) which lie at the very centre of '*The Final Order's*' thesis, and are referred to constantly throughout our presentations. There really can be little excuse for this since they had promised us a full and comprehensive response to '*The Final Order*' over a year ago.

The result of this apparent inability to confront central, key issues, is that the GBC are rapidly losing credibility in the eyes of many free-thinking devotees. Despite what people may think, that is not a situation we relish. We want a GBC we can be proud of since it was Srila Prabhupada's desire that we all co-operate under its authority.

- Why do we constantly push an issue which the GBC do not appear to consider merits great importance?

Without meaning to sound alarmist, we believe that if the GBC do not properly implement Srila Prabhupada's final, clear and emphatic instructions on initiation, the results for ISKCON could be disastrous. Even as we write the movement is in some danger of splintering, rather as happened to the Gaudiya Matha over a similar issue. It is our prayer that by constantly drawing the GBC's attention to this central issue, they will eventually realise that implementing Srila Prabhupada's *ritvik* system will solve many of the 'perplexities' presently encircling the whole issue of the guru in ISKCON.

A '*catechism*' is a method of explaining an issue which takes the form of questions and answers. In all, the authors have prepared 17 such questions and answers, and we shall deal with each one systematically. Each question and answer set shall be numbered. There are numerous arguments proposed in '*ritvik Catechism*' that we refer to as '*straw man*', since they are not presented in '*The Final Order*' - which is the definitive *ritvik* position paper the GBC select committee were originally supposed to answer, and which is accepted by most pro-*ritviks* as representative of their position.

(The term '*straw-man*' is used to describe an argument that is falsely ascribed to the opposing party. This is done since it is a proposition that can be easily defeated, and acts as a substitute to answering the arguments which are actually proposed by the opposition.)

When referring to the paper '*ritvik Catechism*' we shall simply say the '*authors*'. Any supporting evidence used by the authors shall be in italics. All our points shall be lettered:

Question 1:

Q. Could Prabhupada install a *rtvic* system?

A. Of course he could. He told us that there are timingala fish, that the moon is fire covered with ice, that Bhu Mandala is a flat plane. And we have accepted it. So it is not a question of our willingness or unwillingness to accept that Srila Prabhupada, as the founder/*acarya*, could establish a new system of initiation. Rather it is a simple question of knowing and accepting what Srila Prabhupada actually said. And what he said is "*grand-disciple Disciple of My Disciple regular guru*."

The above answer at least accepts the principle that Srila Prabhupada could have introduced a *ritvik* system had he wanted to.

The phrases used to counter the continuation of the *ritvik* system, "*grand-disciple*" etc., all appear in a tape that was rendered inadmissible by the GBC's own investigative expert (please see "Tape" section in Appendix).

Question 2:

Q. Although Srila Prabhupada wrote and spoke about his disciples becoming regular gurus, didn't he change his mind as he prepared to leave the planet, seeing that they were not qualified?

A. When Srila Prabhupada was asked whether he was dissatisfied with his disciples (as Srila *Bhaktisiddhanta* was) he said no. Rather, he said that he was satisfied. When asked if he was leaving any work unfinished, he said, "Yes, I have not established *varnashram dharma*." This certainly would have been an appropriate time to state that he had not been able to create disciples qualified to be gurus upon his departure. But he did not.

The above question and answer both assume "Srila Prabhupada wrote and spoke about his disciples becoming regular gurus". Until this assertion is first verified, the question of Srila Prabhupada changing his mind does not even arise.

Since Srila Prabhupada only used the term "regular guru" once, and even then only on the disputed May 28th tape (see 'Tape' Appendix), we feel it is quite misleading to state that Srila Prabhupada "wrote and spoke about his disciples becoming regular gurus".

- Where is all this elusive evidence?

Question 3:

Q. Doesn't the guru have to be an *uttama adhikary*?

A. Srila Prabhupada says that the real qualifications is to be a strict follower....who behaves and repeats the teachings as trained by his own spiritual master.

Evidence offered by the authors to support above assertion:

"But there are persons who are less qualified or not liberated, but still can act as guru and acharya by strictly following the disciplic succession."

(Letter to Janardan / April 26, 1968)

"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 the material nature. Lord Caitanya therefore says: 'By My order you may become a spiritual master.' One can 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 4.18.5 purport)

"Such relationship between the disciple and the spiritual master is eternal. One who is now the disciple is the next spiritual master. And one cannot be a bona fide and authorised spiritual master unless one has been strictly obedient to his spiritual master."

(Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.9.43 purport)

Dr. Benford: So everyone I might meet who accepts Krsna as the perfect teacher is the perfect teacher?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, because he is teaching only Krsna's teachings, that's all. It is the same as the example we gave before: they may not be personally perfect, but whatever they are speaking is perfect because it is taught by Krsna.

Dr. Benford: Then you are not perfect.

Srila Prabhupada: No, I am not perfect. None of us claims 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)

Our response:

None of the above quotes explicitly state that an acting *diksa* guru can be less than an *uttama adhikary*. Thus the assertion is not directly supported by this evidence.

If it is such a well-known principle that the initiating *diksa* guru does not have to have first attained the topmost platform of devotional service before he initiates, we would expect Srila Prabhupada to have stated it at least once in his books. As far as we can see he only states the precise opposite - C.c. Madhya 24.330 purport.

The above quotes clearly talk about the process of becoming a guru, not the resultant level of qualification once the aspir-

ant has become a qualified guru. Further the quote from the *Srimad Bhagavatam* 4.18.5 could just as easily be talking about instructing guru since neither the term *diksa*/initiate nor the physical departure of the guru is mentioned. Srila Prabhupada claiming he is “*not perfect*”, and that he has “*so many faults*” are not evidence for anything since we know that this was not actually the case, and therefore Srila Prabhupada was merely stating that out of humility.

The letter to “Janardan” obviously cannot be endorsing non-liberated initiating gurus for the simple reason that in **SAME** letter Srila Prabhupada had earlier said:

“On the whole, you may know that he is not a liberated person, and therefore, he cannot initiate any person to Krishna Consciousness.”

To seriously argue that Srila Prabhupada would then contradict himself a few lines later is very offensive.

Certainly by ‘*strictly following*’ we become qualified to act as a guru even though initially we may not be qualified. This is simply the process for a non-qualified person becoming qualified. Certainly nowhere does Srila Prabhupada state that a non-liberated person is fully qualified to give *diksa*. There are several quotes that prove that the guru must be on the topmost platform of devotional service, an *uttama adhikari* or *mahabhagavat* (see ‘*The Final Order*’). The only way the author’s interpretation could be correct is if Srila Prabhupada directly contradicted himself on this most fundamental aspect of *guru tattva*. We suggest the author’s would be far safer to withdraw their assertion since it is a serious deviation from *bhagavat* philosophy.

Question 4:

Q. Isn’t it offensive to speak of Srila Prabhupada’s “departure”? Didn’t he say he will never leave, that he will always be present in his books?

A. No doubt, any sincere follower feels the presence and mercy of Srila Prabhupada daily. But Srila Prabhupada himself made the distinction between *vani* and *vapu* : physical presence and vibrational (instructional) presence. He wrote a number of letters referring to his “*physical departure*.” It was an event Srila Prabhupada himself spoke of.

We have no idea what relevance the above question has to ‘*The Final Order*’. We constantly use the term ‘*physical departure*’ and have never considered it in any way offensive. Merely irrelevant to the process of *diksa*.

Srila Prabhupada taught that spiritually there is no difference between *vani* and *vapu* .

Question 5:

Q. If “regular gurus” is the system Srila Prabhupada wanted, why have we had so many problems with it?

A. We have had problems with *gurukulas*, *sannyasis*, marriages.... The list goes on and on. That we have a problem establishing the order of the list goes on and on. That we have a problem establishing the order of the guru does not mean the order is counterfeit.

In the above the author’s simply assume that “‘*regular gurus*’ is the system Srila Prabhupada wanted”. However what they assume is the very thing they have yet to prove. We first need to see their evidence supporting the termination of the *ritvik* system, and the subsequent construction of the M.A.S.S. (multiple *acarya* successor system). Let us first see this evidence, and then after that we can discuss whether or not there are any problems with the resulting system.

This is a *straw man* objection since it is not posed in ‘*The Final Order*’.

Question 6:

Q. Wouldn’t *rtvik* be a better system? Or couldn’t we have both systems simultaneously; some initiates can opt for ISKCON gurus, some can opt for *rtvik* from Srila Prabhupad.

A. We don’t have the right to speculate. Our duty and salvation is in following the orders of our founder/*acharya*. That said, it is worth noting the old adage, “The path to Hell is paved with good intentions.” Many thought the zonal *acharya* system sounded great, but in time it bore unexpected fruit that was bitter. The great *acaryas* are trilocan, they can perfectly see past, present, and future. Again, our duty and guarantee of success is in simply following the orders of the *acaryas*.

This is a “*straw man*” argument. We have never proposed the *ritvik* system simply on the basis that we think it is a “*better*” system.

The point the authors claim as their own is the very one we make- that the only consideration must be to execute whatever Srila Prabhupada wanted. He was the person who originally issued *The Final Order*, so we assume he must have wanted the *ritvik* system. Where are his general instructions detailing the elaborate M.A.S.S.

We do say that since a *ritvik* system may be difficult for the GBC to implement in one go, they may want to consider running

both systems in parallel for a short period. In this way ease the transition, that's all. We have never proposed running both systems as any type of permanent arrangement.

Question 7:

Q. Aren't written orders more important than spoken orders (the May conversation being spoken, the July letter being written)?

A. "Guru mukha padma vakya...." Narrotam das Thakur enjoins us to be purified by the words emanating from the mouth of the spiritual master. Also, the May conversation was not just any conversation. It was an extremely formal and sober discussion. Srila Prabhupada had personally petitioned the GBC to meet together, decide if there were any important issues that needed further clarification before he departed, and then to come before him to discuss the issues. The questions were in writing, to come before him to discuss the issues. The questions were in writing, and the answers were written down and entered into the GBC minutes books and signed by all the GBCs present.

The above argumentation once more falls back on evidence from the disputed 'May 28th tape'. (Please see 'tape' section in the Appendix.)

At this stage the proposed consideration regarding "written over spoken" is not relevant. We are not even sure exactly what was spoken since the evidence shows signs 'strongly suggestive of falsification'. At least according to the GBC's own assigned expert, Mr Perle.

Question 8:

Q. Doesn't the July letter prove that Srila Prabhupada wanted a proxy system?

A. It proves that he wanted a proxy system for the remainder of the time he was physically on the planet, as everyone has agreed all along. It was a time-bound system, put in place until Srila Prabhupada's disappearance.

Evidence offered by the authors to support above assertion:

Quoting from the May 28th conversation:

"Prabhupada: Yes. That is formality. Because in my presence one should not become guru."

This is the same thing Srila Prabhupada said even much earlier:

Detroit room conversation July 18, 1971

Mohsin Hassan: Yeah, the tenth. After you, is it any decision has been made who will take over?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. All of them will take over. These students, who are initiated from me, all of them will act as I am doing. Just like I have got many initiated from me, all of them will act as I am doing. Just like I have got many Godbrothers, they are all acting. Similarly, all these disciples which I am making, initiating, they are being trained to become future spiritual masters. Now, they're competent. They can, not only the swamis, even the *grhasthas*, they are called *dasa adbhikari*, and *brahmacaris*, everyone can, whoever is initiated, he is competent to make disciples. But as a matter of etiquette they do not do so in the presence of their spiritual master. This is the etiquette.

Our response:

The author's once more quote from a tape (May 28) which is currently inadmissible.

The authors claim that the July 9th letter was supposed to terminate on Srila Prabhupada's departure. There is nothing offered above which directly supports this termination.

What is stated is that one should not be a *diksa* guru whilst Srila Prabhupada is still physically present. But the author's assumption that the July 9th letter was supposed to terminate does not in any way follow from this given evidence:

It does not follow that because *diksa* gurus must not operate in Srila Prabhupada's physical presence, that no-one can act as a *ritvik* when Srila Prabhupada is physically absent.

In other words we have two mutually exclusive entities, the *ritvik* r, and the *diksa* guru d; and we have two mutually exclusive time periods: before and after Srila Prabhupada's departure: (b) and (a).

We need evidence that:- r cannot exist at time (a). - scenario (1)

Instead we are given evidence that:- d cannot exist at time (b). - scenario (2)

(1) and (2) above are two separate and distinct scenarios.

In logic you could never derive scenario (1) from scenario (2). Evidence for (1) can only come from a direct statement from Srila Prabhupada to that effect, i.e. that r cannot exist at time (a); or a statement to the effect that d **MUST** exist at time (a). If (d) exists at time (a) then it will obviously displace r existing at time (a).

One could argue that the quote from Detroit above is evidence that *diksa* gurus must exist after Srila Prabhupada's departure, hence displacing any possible *ritvik* arrangement at such a time. Objectively speaking this is the strongest piece of evidence we have seen presented by the GBC in support of the M.A.S.S., since it satisfies several of the requisite criteria. Nevertheless there are still several insurmountable problems with it in terms of **modifications A & B** as we shall demonstrate in the Appendix - "*Evaluating the Evidence*".

Question 9:

Q. Doesn't the July letter nullify the May 28th conversation? The letter stands alone as the final instruction.

A. No. The July letter itself refers back to the May 28th conversation. Just as the earlier chapters of the *Gita* support the later chapters, Srila Prabhupada's instructions on continuing the *parampara* after his physical departure are a continuum. Throughout his books, letters, lectures, and the May conversation, the message is always the same: "regular gurus...grand-disciple... *Disciple of My Disciple*".

We recommend the above answer be disregarded since it is utter nonsense. The phrases "*regular gurus- grand-disciple- Disciple of My Disciple*" only ever appear once, and even then only on a tape rendered inadmissible by the GBC's own investigation.

We would be very interested to see first hand all this evidence which is supposedly liberally distributed "*throughout his books, letters, lectures and the May conversation*". Once this phantom evidence is produced we may all be in a better position to evaluate it. Until then we must take such assertions as mental speculation.

If the July 9th instruction is actually referring back specifically to the May 28 conversation, as is asserted above by the author's, then it might be worth reading more carefully what it says about what transpired in the May 28th conversation:

"Recently when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vrndavana, Srila Prabhupada indicated that soon He would appoint some of His senior disciples to act as "rittik" - representative of the *acarya*, for the purpose of performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation."

(July 9th 1977 Letter, Opening lines)

In asserting that the July 9th letter refers back specifically to the May 28th conversation, the authors have made a double contradiction:

Since the letter clearly states what happened in the May 28th conversation, the authors have to agree that the May conversation appoints *ritviks* only. There is no mention in the July 9th letter, that anything else occurred in the May conversation, or that it is deliberately only reporting part of what transpired in the May conversation. Thus, by their own logic, the authors have admitted that Srila Prabhupada simply appointed *ritviks* to continue initiations for after his departure.

Also the same authors have stated in their previous paper DD - (*Disciple of My Disciple*) - that the May28th conversation does not refer at all to any "proxy" arrangement:

"In the present conversation, Srila Prabhupada does not refer to proxy initiations at all, not even in connection with the word *ritvik*."

(*Disciple of My Disciple*, GBC 1997)

However they now state that the July 9th letter refers only to proxies, and that the July 9th letter refers directly to the May 28th conversation. Thus, we are now being told by the GBC that...

a letter that speaks only of proxies, which are to operate solely in Srila Prabhupada's presence, is in fact a faithful summary of an earlier conversation in which proxies are not even mentioned!

- We might ask how the July 9th letter could arise from the May conversation, referring back to it as its very source, when according to the authors the May conversation deals only with the existence of *diksa* gurus for when Srila Prabhupada is not present?

Question 9 cont'd:

"... On one hand, the July letter does stand alone. The proxy system described in the July letter is time bound, meant only for the period during which Srila Prabhupada would remain on the planet. This is the eternal *parampara* system.

We have above two totally unsubstantiated assumptions. Firstly the very thing which needs to be proven, i.e. that the July 9th

letter was “meant only for the period during which Srila Prabhupada would remain on the planet”, is simply stated; as if re-stating that which needs to be proven suddenly becomes proof in itself. You could prove anything if all you needed to do was simply assume that which needs to be proven. Secondly the authors talk of a “system described by Srila Prabhupada in his books, letters, and conversations”. Somewhat unhelpfully the authors omit to tell us what this system is, or where exactly descriptions of it can be found in Srila Prabhupada’s teachings.

Just for the record we can assert with absolute confidence that there is one system that is never described in Srila Prabhupada teachings:

This is the system whereby a powerful *diksa* guru suddenly becomes incapable of giving *diksa* simply and solely because he leaves his physical body.

Unless the authors can come up with clear, universally applicable evidence for the above ‘system’, then they effectively have no evidence that the July letter was “meant only for the period during which Srila Prabhupada would remain on the planet.”

Question 10:

Q. First you say “regular gurus” from the May conversation, and then you say “proxies” from the July letter. Which is it?

A. There is 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. First there is the May conversation, Prabhupada states that he expects his followers to be come regular gurus after his physical departure.

Once again this is evidence from the disputed ‘May tape’ (please see ‘tape’ section in the Appendix).

There is no transcript of the tape where Srila Prabhupada states that he “expects his followers to be come regular gurus after his physical departure”. Neither does such a statement exist in any instruction given by Srila Prabhupada. Thus it is an instruction which has emanated from the wishful minds of a GBC select committee, with absolutely no basis in reality.

Question 10 cont’d

“... Second, there is the garden conversation of July 8th, where Tamal Krsna Maharaja 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. (That the proxy 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 Krsna Maharaja asks about initiation requests coming in from India and Srila Prabhupada responds, “India, I am here.”

(Incidentally the garden conversation is on July 7th, not 8th).

The fact that Srila Prabhupada states “India, I am here” certainly proves that the system was set up to run in his physical presence. This fact has never been in dispute. We have never argued that the *ritvik* system should not have been operated whilst Srila Prabhupada was still present. What the above most certainly does not prove is that the system was set up to only operate during his presence. This is demonstrated by the very next thing Srila Prabhupada says:

“We shall see. In India - Jayapataka”.

If the *ritvik* system was set up to operate only whilst Srila Prabhupada was present, there would be nothing to “see”.

- Srila Prabhupada had only just said he would initiate in India, so why mention Jayapataka Maharaja unless the system was meant to continue past his departure?

Actually, as can be seen by reading the July 9th letter, the *ritvik* system was set up to run ‘henceforward’. For the first four months of its operation Srila Prabhupada was still present, and could thus still theoretically perform the ceremony, health willing of course. So the system was set up to run both during, and after departure. That is why Srila Prabhupada nominated someone to continue in India, so the *ritvik* system could carry on without being interrupted by his leaving the planet.

We have already pointed all this out in ‘The Final Order Still Stands’ (page 14) and again in ‘Best Not To Accept Any Disciples’ (pages 24 & 25), so it really is quite hopeless for the authors to present once more an objection which has already been answered twice before. Perhaps they believe that no-one is actually following the debate, or maybe they are themselves incapable of following a simple line of argument. If the former is the case then the authors should think again; if it is the latter then they have our sympathies, and we look forward to discussing the matter with their more competent replacements.

Question 10 cont’d:

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

The authors have already admitted that the July 9th letter deals with proxies only, and that the May 28th tape does not deal with proxies at all.

- Given this, how can the appointment of proxies for pre-*samadhi* only activity, be part of any “process” whereby Srila Prabhupada moves away from being the “sole initiating spiritual master” for ISKCON, to a state where his disciples are suddenly initiating their own disciples “after his physical departure”?

The authors offer not one tiny grain of evidence to support this mysterious ‘transition’- (which incidentally is simply a re-statement of **modifications A & B** from ‘*The Final Order*’ p.2). What the author’s need to prove then, they simply re-state, in the vain hope no one will notice that their version of events is nothing more than a tiresome liturgy of speculative assumptions, with no relevant evidence whatsoever supporting it.

Question 10 cont’d:

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

This is another splendid example of the authors merely stating that which they need to prove. All they have done is point to three documents: the May 28th transcript, the July 7th Garden conversation transcript and the July 9th letter, and then boldly assert that they are all linked in such a way as to prove that the proxies (*ritviks*) are supposed to transmogrify into *diksa* gurus on Srila Prabhupada’s departure. This assertion is made in spite of the stark reality that none of the three documents mentions any such thing! Anyone with a moderate grasp of English can read these documents and see for themselves that there is no mention of the following:

That the *ritvik* system must stop on Srila Prabhupada’s departure. (**Modification A**)

That the *ritviks* must then turn into *diksa* gurus (**Modification B**)

This so-called ‘catechism’ constantly presents what the GBC would like to believe happened. However, we already had a fair idea about that before we read the first word of this feeble tome. What we really need now is evidence which actually supports the theories being propounded. Merely re-stating discredited beliefs is not going to convince any sensible person of anything.

Question 11:

Q. Doesn’t “henceforward” in July 9 letter mean “perpetually, eternally”?

A. No. A study of Srila Prabhupada’s use of the word “henceforward” shows that he regularly used it to describe situations that were bound by time that he regularly used it to describe situations that were bound by time and circumstance and would be superseded by other situations. In the case of the July letter he used “henceforward” to mean from that time until his physical departure (the event that would supersede the then existing condition).

This is another ‘straw man’ argument since it does not appear in ‘*The Final Order*’ which the GBC were meant to be responding to. Disconcertingly the authors were made fully aware of this when they last tried to present the very same straw-man argument in DD. We dealt with it on page 16 of ‘*The Final Order Still Stands*’ which was also sent to the authors many months before they wrote ‘*ritvik catechism*’. The select committee were never supposed to write a paper in response to their own fabricated objections, they were supposed to respond to ‘*The Final Order*’. For convenience we will reproduce once more our answer:

“If the authors had taken the trouble to read our paper (‘*The Final Order*’) they would see we give the standard dictionary definition of the word: ‘*from now onwards*’. Further the examples of Srila Prabhupada’s use of ‘*henceforward*’ offered in ‘*Disciple of My Disciple*’ merely illustrate our point. One must diligently carry out the order of the spiritual master until one of three things happen:

- 1) **The order is completed.**
- 2) **The guru stops or changes the order.**
- 3) **The order becomes impossible to follow.**

As we pointed out in ‘*The Final Order*’, the July 9th order is not affected by any of these circumstances since:

1. The task is not completed, there are still billions more people who need to be initiated by Srila Prabhupada.
2. Srila Prabhupada never changed or revoked his final order, therefore it still stands.

3. It is still possible to follow, we just need the GBC to agree, and the rest will be plain sailing.

In any case, even if we leave out the word 'henceforward' from the July 9th letter, you are still left with a system of initiation, put in place personally by our *acarya*, with no direct order to terminate it. Thus if the word 'henceforward' had been left out of *The Final Order* altogether, the system still should not have been dismantled."

[p16, 'The Final Order Still Stands']

To simply keep repeating arguments that have already been exposed as being gross mis-representations is called cheating in anybody's language.

Question 12:

Q. The word "ritvik is mentioned in SP's books. It means "proxy."

A. The word "ritvik" in Srila Prabhupada's books means simply "priest." The post-samadhi *ritvik* (proxy) system is never mentioned anywhere in Srila Prabhupada's books, letters, lectures, or conversations.

This is yet another 'straw man' argument. Once more it was dealt with the last time they used it in 'Disciple of My Disciple'. (Page 5, 'The Final Order Still Stands') Again we will reproduce the argument here for convenience:

"Recently when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vrndavana, Srila Prabhupada indicated that soon he would appoint some of His senior disciples to act as "rittik" - representative of the acarya, ..."

(July 9th letter)

(Oxford Dictionary defines "proxy" - as authorised to represent someone else)

In the above letter Srila Prabhupada clearly defines the word *ritvik* (rittik) as proxy. A definition accepted in DD;

"The July 9th letter can only be the recommendation of proxies ..."

(DD, p13)

Thus everyone is agreed that in *The Final Order* Srila Prabhupada defines the word *ritvik* as "representative of the *acarya*" or "proxy". But the July 9th letter also states that this appointment of proxies (*ritviks*), was the very appointment that was discussed on May 28th:

"Recently when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vrndavana, Srila Prabhupada indicated that soon he would appoint ..."

Further this linkage is also acknowledged by DD:

"There is a link between the July 9th letter and the May 28th conversation. The July 9th letter, issued through the GBC, is a follow-up to May 28th conversation, ..."

(DD, p3)

Thus the July 9th letter proves that the use of the word *ritvik* on May 28th was solely in relation to them acting as 'representative of the *acarya*' or proxy. Thus by accepting that the use of the word 'ritvik' in the July 9th letter meant proxy, DD has unwittingly defeated its own premise.

Further the general meaning of the word *ritvik* has never been an issue of contention. DD's use of their Holiness's Hridayananda Dasa Goswami and Suhotra Dasa Goswami to show that 'ritvik' means priest is totally redundant since in 'The Final Order' the word *ritvik* is clearly defined as meaning "priest" (p.52 point b). References are given for every one of the 32 times the word *ritvik* or its derivative is used in Srila Prabhupada's books, and on every occasion it means priest. The issue is - in what capacity were the *ritviks* (priests) that Srila Prabhupada appointed meant to act. It is clear that Srila Prabhupada set them up specifically to act as his proxies. There is no instruction for them to act on their own behalf. For thousands of years *ritviks* have been used in all types of ceremonies and functions. We are only concerned with what Srila Prabhupada wanted his particular *ritviks* to do."

[P5, 'The Final Order Still Stands']

To point out the fact that the post-samadhi *ritvik* system is not mentioned previously by Srila Prabhupada in his books means nothing. Srila Prabhupada does not mention a pre-samadhi *ritvik* system either, and yet the authors think there was nothing wrong with that at all.

This point was in any case answered in detail in 'The Final Order' (p19, 27-30).

The authors have made no attempt to answer the rebuttals we gave last time to these very same points. To simply repeat arguments that have already been dealt with is most unimpressive, and a real sign of desperation.

Question 13:

Q. Srila Prabhupada's will mentions his initiated disciples. Doesn't that indicate that even in the future everyone will be Prabhupada's disciple?

A. No, Srila Prabhupada also called his disciples initiated disciples of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati.

This is a straight-forward fabrication. No such statement exists on the whole of folio. Perhaps this is why they offer no quote to support their assertion. Again they simply state what they want to be true, regardless of reality. The quote we think they may actually be alluding to is given below:

"Thakura Bhaktivinoda also wanted to beget a child who could preach the philosophy and teachings of Lord Chaitanya to the fullest extent. By his prayers to the Lord he had as his child Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaja, who at the present moment is preaching the philosophy of Lord Chaitanya throughout the entire world through his bona fide disciples.

(Srimad-Bhagavatam, Canto Three, Chapter Twenty-two, Text 19 purport)

The reader will quickly see there is actually no mention of the term '*initiated disciple*' above.

We all agree that everyone is a *siksa* disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, so in that sense the quote might be applicable to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's grand-disciples. But the word '*initiated*' precludes any such an interpretation of the will.

- Since when was an '*initiated disciple*' of a current link identical to a *siksa* disciple of a previous *acarya*?

The authors have displayed gross dishonesty in claiming something they must know is not true. This point was already answered in our reply to a paper called '*The Timeless Order*' which unwisely gained the enthusiastic backing of one of the select committee authors. We pointed out this false claim in our paper '*Best Not To Accept Disciples*' which was also sent to the authors long before '*ritvik catechism*'. How sad that Srila Prabhupada's representative body should behave so duplicitously.

Question 14:

Q. The will states that the system of management should not change. Doesn't this mean no change from the proxy system established in the July letter?

A. The quote is taken out of context. In the will "system of management" refers to the management of ISKCON properties. A change from proxy to regular gurus does not change the "system of management" for the properties as outlined in the will.

Below is the relevant section from the will:

The Governing Body Commission (GBC) will be the ultimate managing authority of the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Each temple will be an ISKCON property and will be managed by three executive directors. The system of management will continue as it is now and there is no need of any change."

(Srila Prabhupada's Last Will, 5 June, 1977)

The authors are once more re-cycling an argument that was last used in '*The Timeless Order*', and which was promptly rebutted in '*Best Not To Accept Disciples*' (P29-30). For convenience we will again repeat our original answer:

"Thus we are told the line: '*The system of management will continue as it is now and there is no need of any change*' is only a '*straightforward statement*' that '*refers to the way temples should be organised*'. But that is precisely our point. Part of the way Temples were organised was that when candidates emerged who were suitable for initiation, their names would be sent to the respective *ritvik*. Thus the *ritvik* system was part and parcel of the way temples were organised. In one sense the primary purpose for Temples even existing in the first place was to train devotees up to the standard required for initiation, not just to be able to boast '*three executive directors*'.

It seems the authors are making the absurd assertion that the only aspect of temple organisation that Srila Prabhupada did not want changed was the principle of having '*three executive directors*'. In other words you could scrap everything else, such as having a Temple President or a Treasurer, or donating proceeds of book sales to the BBT or maintaining the Deities, just as long as you proudly keep '*three executive directors*' somewhere in the temple building!

From a purely legal angle:

- a) The clause concerning '*three executive directors*' could only be exclusively linked to the '*no change clause*' if the latter were preceded by the word '*this*'.
- b) In legal documents only words in the form of clauses have significance, not necessarily the juxtaposition of one

sentence with another, unless a word such as `this` is used to exclusively link one sentence to another.

- c) Even if one tries to argue a linkage to `system of management` based on the occurrence of the word `managed` i.e.- `managed by three executive directors` - we are still left with the problem that no linkage can be established to the first part - that `each temple will be an ISKCON temple` - since there is no mention of management here.
- d) In this instance the two sentences in section 2 are not exclusively linked. Therefore the `no change` clause must apply to the will as a whole.

If the above were not the case then the following point would need careful consideration by the GBC:

The `no change` clause only comes in section 2 of the will, not in section 1 which mentions the GBC, so unless it can be applied to the entire will the GBC could legitimately be disbanded.

However tempting the above scenario might sound to some, we could not support such an interpretation of the will since we know it is not what Srila Prabhupada wanted. We might even muster the support of the GBC itself on this point.

Certainly the *ritvik* system was a system of management. It was the way in which Srila Prabhupada wanted Temple Presidents to manage initiations within ISKCON. And as the will attests the GBC had no authority to stop it. As the `ultimate managing authority` it was their duty to maintain it, not destroy it and invent the M.A.S.S:

“The standards I have already given you, now try to maintain them at all times under standard procedure. Do not try to innovate or create anything or manufacture anything, that will ruin everything.”

(SP letter to Bali Mardan and Pusta Krsna who were acting GBC's 18/9/72 as quoted in `The Final Order` p.50)

It is a shame these clear emphatic orders were disobeyed, and even sadder that some people today have got nothing better to do than vehemently and enthusiastically defend such insubordination.”

[*Best Not To Accept Disciples*, p29-30]

Simply re-hashing defeated arguments from other people's papers is not going to help the authors one iota. They must be hoping that the people who read their `ritvik catechism` paper will not have bothered to go through all the various banned `ritvik` papers, and will therefore be susceptible to the author's misrepresentations and cheating. It is significant to note that the authors have made no attempt whatsoever to answer the rebuttals to their points, but have simply re-produced the original arguments. In any debate the logical thing to do when your opponent answers your argument is to try and defeat their answer. Not just keep repeating the original point ad infinitum.

Question 15:

Q. Srila Prabhupada said “When I order, you become guru.” When did he give the order?

A. Taken out of context, the sentence could seemingly point to a future order, but in fact Srila Prabhupada made this statement in the context of the May conversation, as part of a detailed explanation. Just previously in the conversation, Srila Prabhupada had said, “So on my behalf, on my order... Amara ajnaya guru hana. Be actually guru, but by my order.”

Further arguments used by the authors to support the above:

“Be guru, but by my order” is in the present tense, with no indication about the future. The “but” does not indicate future, since “but” can be used in any tense: “I am a guru, but only by the order of Srila Prabhupada,” or “I became a guru, but only by the order of Srila Prabhupada.” It is unreasonable to impose an idea of future tense on a statement that is in the present. When Lord Caitanya said, “On My order, become a spiritual master,” He did not have to repeat Himself and say, “Now I am giving the order.” The words “on My order” themselves point to the order.

Srila Prabhupada quotes “Amara ajnaya guru hana” which is found in *Caitanya Caritamrta*. There, Srila Prabhupada translates it as “under my order.” Srila Prabhupada has used the terms interchangeably: “Under my order... by Srila Prabhupada has used the terms interchangeably: “Under my order... by my order...when I order... on my behalf.”

Our response:

The above argument is again reproduced from the authors' previous paper - `Disciple of My Disciple'. And again we will reproduce our unanswered reply from `The Final Order Still Stands`:

“Srila Prabhupada is supposedly giving an `order` which is only applicable to entities which have yet to come into existence. Thus we are now being told by the GBC that on the May 28th tape Srila Prabhupada is ordering conceptual entities called *ritviks* to become guru then and there. The very same *ritviks* who were not `ordered` until July 9th. Thus Srila Prabhupada is supposedly giving an order for an entity (*ritvik* acting as proxy) to change into another entity (*diksa guru*) before the first entity has even been ordered into existence!

If we are to accept that this was a specific order, rather than a general statement of principle, then surely it would need to have been directed at the specific individuals it was applicable to. The words "on my order" were only spoken to the small GBC delegation who happened to be in Srila Prabhupada's bedroom at the time. It certainly could not be an order for the 11 *ritviks*, because they did not even exist at this point.

DD asserts that the whole May conversation only relates to after Srila Prabhupada's departure. It is also claimed that the words "on my order" are used in a present tense sense. Thus DD is contradicting its own thesis since Srila Prabhupada is supposedly then and there ordering *diksa* gurus, in a conversation which we are told only relates to what is to take place after his departure. How can Srila Prabhupada have been talking about appointing *diksa* gurus then and there when he has only just said - "...in my presence one should not become guru..."? Even leaving that aside, if Srila Prabhupada is ordering *diksa* gurus then and there, in his presence, then this would surely be violating the "law of disciplic succession" which the GBC are so fond of repeating. Perhaps the GBC might then argue that the law would only be broken if the *ritvik/guru* hybrid entities had actually begun initiating pre-departure. But this simply adds to the confusion if we look at the entities Srila Prabhupada was supposedly talking about in the May conversation. We are now dealing with: officiating *acarya/ritvik/* priest/latent *diksa* gurus who do not as yet exist, but when they do will already have been ordered to change function and be something else.

It should be noted that the GBC offer not one scrap of evidence to support their hypothesis that on every occasion where Srila Prabhupada uses the phrase "on my order" he was automatically then and there authorising all and sundry to become initiating *diksa* gurus. If this was indeed the case there should have been large numbers of expectant *diksa* gurus all vying for disciples in ISKCON within a short time of the society being formed - the "law of disciplic succession" was only invoked after 1975; and when using the phrase "on my order" Srila Prabhupada never once restricted its application to post-*samadhi* only.

Also the phrase "on my order" is derived from the verse in the C.C. '*amara ajnana guru hana*', (originally spoken five hundred years ago by Lord Caitanya, and cited by Srila Prabhupada after the words '*On My Order*' in the May conversation). Both the verse and the phrase were repeated on many occasions previous to May 28th 1977 by Srila Prabhupada. As is explained in '*The Final Order*', this verse encourages everyone to become instructing spiritual masters (*vartma-pradasaka* and *siksa*) there & then, not *diksa* gurus post-*samadhi*. This is made abundantly clear in the detailed purports following this verse- "*It is Best Not To Accept Disciples*" (C.c. Madhya, 7.130, purport)."

['*The Final Order Still Stands*', p9 - p10]

If the authors believe rebuttals such as the one above are flawed in some way, then the best thing for them would be to point out the defects. It makes no sense at all for them to keep continuously repeating defeated propositions.

Question 15 cont'd:

"... Considering the context, one can see that Srila Prabhupada is confirming what he has said all along, that under his order, by his sanction, on his behalf, his disciples should become regular gurus after his physical departure. The order is given in his books, confirmed in the May conversation, and begins to unfold with the July letter."

- Above we are enticed with the promise of more spectral evidence: "*the order is given in his books*" we are advised. If the '*order is given in his books*' why not just quote them and put the matter to rest?

Of course no such order exists in Srila Prabhupada's books; thus the authors are either completely incompetent, or deliberately lying.

How can the order to be '*regular gurus after his physical departure*' begin to '*unfold with the July letter*' when:

According to the author's paper DD, the July letter dealt only with the issue of proxies before Srila Prabhupada's departure.

The July 9th letter makes no mention of '*regular gurus*'.

In referring back to the May conversation all the July letter apparently offers is a record of what transpired in the '*May conversation*'.

Question 16:

Q. What about differences in the various GBC papers that have come out? Don't the GBC members keep changing their position?

A. Understandings of how Srila Prabhupada wanted regular gurus in ISKCON to function, if and how the number of gurus should expand, and ISKCON to function, if and how the number of gurus should expand, and understandings of how to apply the order from Srila Prabhupada have evolved. But there never has been any doubt that Srila Prabhupada clearly ordered his followers to carry on the *parampara* as regular gurus. There has never been any doubt that Srila Prabhupada did not institute a permanent, post *samadhi* *rtvic* (proxy) system.

The only way one can reasonably accommodate the notion of completely contradictory understandings arising from the same identical evidence, over a period of twenty years, is if the evidence itself is confusing or unclear. Rather than hang everything on the currently discredited May 28th tape, we suggest the GBC stick to clear signed evidence such as the July 9th policy document.

The fact that for the last twenty years the GBC's justification for dismantling the *ritvik* system and constructing the M.A.S.S., amounts to nothing but a miasma of discordant testimony, only goes to show how strong motivation can blind one to simple truths.

And despite all the differing contradictory interpretations of apparently falsified evidence; all the shifting position papers and guru system reformations; all the subtle philosophical deviations; all the misrepresentations and illogical and unsubstantiated propositions, we are told that through all this the GBC were never in any doubt whatsoever that Srila Prabhupada definitely did not want the *ritvik* system continued. What unbridled nonsense!

Question 17:

Q. What about the Topanga tapes? Didn't Tamal Krsna Maharaja reveal that there was a conspiracy to cover up Srila Prabhupada's desire for a proxy system?

A. In the Topanga tapes Tamal Krsna Maharaja says that it was a mistake to not expand the number of gurus sooner in ISKCON. He concedes that the zonal *acharya* system was wrong. He says that Srila Prabhupada wanted all his disciples to become qualified and become regular gurus. Tamal Krsna Maharaja never said that Srila Prabhupada wanted a *rtvic* (proxy) system.

This is yet another *'straw man'* argument. We have never claimed that the Topanga tapes are direct evidence for a post-*sama-dhi ritvik* system. We have simply maintained that it is evidence against the theory that the '11' were given the role of *diksa* guru by Srila Prabhupada via an order on the 'May' tape. The very theory which is now once again being propagated by the authors.

This ends our examination of the GBC paper '*ritvik catechism*'.

Conclusion:

We have shown that '*ritvik catechism*' is nothing but an unwholesome blend of straw-man arguments, false supposition and the recycling of previously defeated propositions. We hope the GBC will realise that they can no longer get away with this sort of repetitive inanity. The world is watching now. We strongly urge them to re-introduce Srila Prabhupada's *ritvik* system as soon as is practical, or risk an institutional cataclysm, or at the very least utter disapprobation.

Please forgive any offence.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Appendix 1 - The Tape

The only piece of evidence offered by the GBC to justify the disbanding of the *ritvik* system, and the consequent replacement of Srila Prabhupada with the MASS, is a taped conversation held with Srila Prabhupada on May 28th, 1977. Leaving aside whether or not this evidence actually supports the GBC's position, the main problem with the 'evidence' has always been its authenticity. Over the years there have been 5 different official transcripts of the same short (approx. 30 seconds) conversation, and 4 official interpretations. It was with a view to clearing up this issue of authenticity that the GBC passed a resolution in 1997 to have the tape investigated by a forensic examiner. This was done through a special committee set-up for this task, who engaged the services of world renowned forensic investigator, Norman Perle. On September 22nd, 1997, Mr Perle released a report of a preliminary analysis that was done on a **COPY** of the tape. A preliminary analysis is usually done to determine whether there are sufficient grounds for conducting a much costlier and more in-depth forensic investigation. Normally if the preliminary analysis, which only runs some basic checks, finds evidence that casts doubts on the reliability of the evidence, a full forensic examination is recommended by the investigator on the **ORIGINAL** version of the tape, to conclusively determine the nature and scope of any possible tampering. This is what the report concluded:

"In conclusion, this recording exhibits strong signs suggestive of falsification. I do not believe that these deficiencies might possibly be the product of some mechanical process or problem within the recording or duplication process and I believe that they exist at what is considered to be a higher degree than that of a coincidence. I strongly recommend that an independent Forensic Analysis be conducted the Master recording in order to determine the authenticity and originality of the evidence. This analysis requires what is represented as the original recording and the original tape recorder upon which this recording was represented to be made."

(N. Perle, GBC appointed forensic investigator, 22/9/97)

The conclusion, in the words of the GBC's own appointed examiner, is that until such a forensic analysis is done on the **ORIGI-**

NAL tape, we have no grounds for assuming the reliability and authenticity of the evidence. Thus until the investigation is done the GBC effectively have no evidence on the table.

Unfortunately, rather than accept the conclusions of their own expert, the GBC have ignored him. They presently have no plans to conduct a full forensic analysis. Further, in a blatant act of cheating, they have continued to present the tape as 100% bona fide evidence, even though their own investigation has concluded that there are no grounds for doing this. This they need to do, of course, since they have no other evidence to present. The above *'catechism'*, which was produced after Mr Perle's report came out, is an example of such cheating. The authors have presented many arguments using extracts from the tape, even though there is currently no basis for doing so.

They have tried to defend their actions by putting forward two justifications:

1. The preliminary analysis on the copy, which was done on the **WHOLE** tape from which the disputed 30 second extract is taken from, did not reveal any signs of *'editing'* or other *'irregularities'* in the actual crucial 30 second *'appt tape'* section. Thus this section at least remains *'intact'*.

Our response:

A preliminary analysis only runs basic checks and is not even designed to find all the instances of irregularities that can be present on a tape. It is **ONLY** designed to check if there are enough irregularities to cast doubt on the reliability of the evidence, so as to justify conducting a full forensic examination.

Since a preliminary analysis is done on a copy, there are many types of tampering that can only be discovered by doing a forensic on the **ORIGINAL**.

The forensic examiner concerned was asked directly if any portion of a tape can be taken as *'intact'* after a preliminary analysis had discovered enough irregularities to warrant the conduction of a full forensic analysis. His answer was as follows:

"IF the copy contains signs suggestive of falsification, that copy could NOT be relied upon as a faithful and accurate rendition of the original."

"If the preliminary analysis discovers ANY area that is significantly suggestive of falsification, then the ENTIRE re-cording is in question and a Forensic Analysis should be done."

(N. Perle, 13/10/97 & 14/10/97, in response to query asking if ANY part of a tape can be taken as being *'intact'*, after a preliminary analysis had discovered irregularities)

The GBC's second justification:

2. The irregularities discovered can easily be explained by the process that was used when recording Srila Prabhupada's talks:
 - i) Frequent stopping and starting;
 - ii) Re-using tapes by taping over previously recorded tapes;etc.etc.,

Since the taping done was not completely professional many of Srila Prabhupada's tapes would fail such a *'preliminary analysis'* and therefore such a failure in this case is of no significance.

Our response:

If this was actually the case then it begs the question as to why such an investigation was carried out in the first place. If one has no faith in such *'technical'* methods then to have employed them to simply reject them later, when the results did not suit one's purpose, is just another clear example of cheating.

To be able to accurately explain away all the irregularities, in the manner attempted above, one would not only need to be a qualified forensic examiner, but a psychic one at that, since his conclusion would have been reached before the forensic analysis was even performed. If anyone had the ability to precisely pin-point the cause of all the irregularities which a preliminary analysis uncovers, simply through a mixture of guess work and speculation, then he would definitely revolutionise forensic science as we know it.

We are more than happy to expect that a full forensic examination may indeed verify that the supposed *'irregularities'* are all justified, and that the evidence of the tape is fully authentic. The words spoken on the tape fully support our position.

Srila Prabhupada clearly states that he will select *ritviks* to enable initiations to continue to be conducted after his departure.

We simply ask that the GBC get all this established in line with the recommendations of their own investigation, that's all.

Appendix 2: Evaluating the Evidence:

In the 'ritvik catechism' paper, the GBC present a quote from Srila Prabhupada (Detroit) where he speaks of his disciples being qualified to take on the role of *diksa* guru once he departs. We will discuss all statements made by Srila Prabhupada in the 11 year period that ISKCON was running during his physical presence, that mention his disciples taking their own disciples once he departs. There are actually only 6 examples in all. We are only listing those where the issue of Srila Prabhupada's disciples specifically accepting their own disciples once he departs is mentioned, since only this evidence could conceivably be used to support the removal of Srila Prabhupada as the initiating guru for ISKCON, and the subsequent construction of the M.A.S.S. (We have not included two other quotes where the issue of being 'guru' and '*acarya*' when Srila Prabhupada departs is mentioned, since there is no reference to taking disciples, unlike the quotes below.) We have not been able to find any other quotes, neither have the GBC ever presented any others, so we shall take the following list as complete:

"The first thing, I warn Acyutananda, do not try to initiate. You are not in a proper position now to initiate anyone. [...] Don't be allured by such *maya*. I am training you all to become future spiritual masters, but do not be in a hurry."

(SP Letter to Acyutananda and Jaya Govinda, 21/8/68)

"Sometime ago you asked my permission for accepting some disciples, now the time is approaching very soon when you will have many disciples by your strong preaching work."

(SP Letter to Acyutananda, 16/5/72)

"I have heard that there is some worship of yourself by the other devotees. Of course it is proper to offer obeisances to a Vaisnava, but not in the presence of the spiritual master. After the departure of the spiritual master, it will come to that stage, but now wait. Otherwise it will create factions."

(SP Letter to Hansadutta, 1/10/74)

So far as your taking initiation from Brahmananda Maharaja, I have no objection, but it is the etiquette that in the presence of one's Spiritual Master, one does not accept disciples. In this connection, Swami Brahmananda may write me and I will instruct him.

(SP Letter to John Milner, 24/3/71)

"Keep trained up very rigidly and then you are bona fide Guru, and you can accept disciples on the same principle. But as a matter of etiquette it is the custom that during the lifetime of your spiritual master you bring the prospective disciples to him, and in his absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without any limitation. This is the law of disciplic succession. I want to see my disciples become bona fide spiritual master and spread Krsna Consciousness very widely, that will make me and Krsna very happy."

(SP Letter to Tusta Krsna, 2/12/75)

Mohsin Hassan: Yeah, the tenth. After you, is it any decision has been made who will take over?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. All of them will take over. These students, who are initiated from me, all of them will act as I am doing. Just like I have got many initiated from me, all of them will act as I am doing. Just like I have got many Godbrothers, they are all acting. Similarly, all these disciples which I am making, initiating, they are being trained to become future spiritual masters. Now, they're competent. They can, not only the swamis, even the *grhasthas*, they are called *dasa adhikari*, and *brahmacaris*, everyone can, whoever is initiated, he is competent to make disciples. But as a matter of etiquette they do not do so in the presence of their spiritual master. This is the etiquette.

(Detroit room conversation July 18, 1971)

General Points

All evidence is in the form of private letters (except Detroit) which are not always universally applicable.

Usually the letters were issued as a reaction to some premature attempt at being a *diksa* guru, which needed to be blocked.

All evidence exists only because some external circumstance prompted their release. In other words the evidence only exists because someone deviated or (in the case of Detroit) personally asked Srila Prabhupada a question. If Srila Prabhupada wanted something enacted by the whole movement he would either get the GBC to pass a resolution, or send a letter to all his leaders. Thus the July 9th letter is in an entirely different category to the GBC's so-called modifying evidence.

None of this evidence was available publicly at the point of Srila Prabhupada's departure. The letters were released by 'unauthorised' behaviour in 1986; the Detroit tape was only available for the first time last year (1997) in either recorded or transcript form.

Such letters were only ever sent to some of the most ambitious deviants in the society.

- Why seriously promise *diksa* guru-hood only to those least qualified?

Srila Prabhupada never insisted on the letters being published. Even when he was asked if they could print them, he said it could be done only if it did not “*detract from your other important engagements*” (**letter to Gargamuni, 17/2/69**).

- Therefore how could their contents be considered vital appendages to *The Final Order*?

The whole emphasis of the letters is to stop the devotees concerned from being *diksa* gurus now, and at least waiting until after his departure. Delaying something is not the same as recommending it.

In the case of Room Conversations, they cannot possibly be considered a guaranteed means of relaying important policy decisions to the entire movement since:

No guarantee that any given recording would come out audibly.

No guarantee the recording would be transcribed.

No guarantee that the tapes would be listened to in time to act at the point of Srila Prabhupada’s departure.

Even if the tapes were listened to, the right devotee would need to pick out the one or two relevant sentences from literally hundreds of tapes in order to obtain instructions on how to manage initiations within ISKCON.

There is no single example of Srila Prabhupada issuing important directives simply through some casual chat with visitors, or private letters to problem disciples.

With such serious unpredictable hurdles, it is unreasonable to assume that information given in private letters or lecture/ morning walk/ room conversations, and which is not then repeated in his books or instructions to the whole society, is intended to be used to modify an order which was issued to the entire Movement.

It is unbelievable that anyone would direct a massive world-wide organisation by telling a few people something, but omit to ask them to tell everyone else. Would Srila Prabhupada say something to a one time visitor (Detroit), then rely on the tape being audibly recorded; then rely on it being accurately transcribed; then count on all his disciples subscribing to the BBT tape ministry, then hope against hope they all listen to the important bit before he leaves the planet - and as a result develop the correct initiation system. To argue this is pure madness.

To illustrate our point, the Detroit conversation, which is arguably the GBC’s best evidence, was not available in either a recorded or transcript form until last year. How can anyone believe it contains information crucial to the running of ISKCON, or which was meant to somehow displace an order which was sent to the entire movement in 1977?

Specific Points

We will now examine each of the pieces of evidence in detail. In each case it appears that Srila Prabhupada only made these statements, according to the context, to deal with a situation. The letters to Acyutananda, Hamsaduta and Tusta Krishna were dealing with ambitious individuals whose rampant guru ambitions even whilst Srila Prabhupada was still on the planet needed to be curbed. The private letters were clearly worded in order to control these ambitious, potentially deviant disciples. By offering the guru carrot, there was at least the possibility that they would carry on in devotional service and thus in time become purified. Such letters always tell them to wait, and not to do it now. Hardly enthusiastic encouragement. In the case of Acyutananda this ambition manifested barely after he had joined and Srila Prabhupada said “*do not be allured by such maya*”; see letter in 1968 above. In 1972 less than 4 years later Srila Prabhupada is again having to deal with the same desire for being guru from Acyutananda. In the case of the letter to Hamsaduta in 1974 we can see that whereas at least Acyutananda asked for permission, Hamsaduta had already started to accept worship, and that Srila Prabhupada had to rebuke him that “*it will create factions*”. These letters are clearly warnings against unauthorised behaviour, not authorising future guru-ships to those least qualified to take it up.

In the case of the letter to Tusta Krishna, the following evidence will show that our judgement on Tusta Krsna is not without justification that Srila Prabhupada was continually trying to keep him under control:

“Do not try to make a faction.”

(SPL to Tusta Krsna, 72-12-14)

“I have heard that you are having some difficulties [...] Of course, our serving Krishna is voluntary affair, so what can I say? If you think that is the best choice, I must agree, otherwise you might go away altogether.”

(SPL to Tusta Krsna, 72-12-14)

“News has come to me that you want to sell our temple to somebody else which I cannot believe. Even that you have been in charge of the New Zealand centre, now you have taken it as your personal property and you have

demanded from Madhudvisa Swami the price of the temple. This is all amazing to me. I do not know what is your decision. Tusta Krsna has already left and is in Hawaii with Siddha Svarupananda Maharaja. I never believed that again you would go back to your old habits, giving up the Krishna Consciousness Movement in a whimsical way. Please do not do this mistake [...] Now all of a sudden you have changed that program and taken to your original ways? I am so much aggrieved to receive all this news. For Krsna's sake, do not do these things. I request Tusta Krsna to go back to New Zealand and take charge of your duties. Please do not leave Krsna. You will not be happy. That is my request."

(SPL to Tusta Krsna and Beharilal, 73-10-15)

"I may inform you that I have today sent the following cable to Tusta Krsna Maharaja: 'DO NOT SELL NEW ZEALAND TEMPLE TO OTHERS. IF YOU WANT MONEY I SHALL PAY TO YOU. REST ASSURED - BhaktiVEDANTA SWAMI.'"

(SPL to Madhudvisa, 73-10-22)

"I have not heard from Tusta Krsna or Siddha-Svarupa Goswamis nor do I know anything of their plans to return to New Zealand. Try to convince them to return to our Society and work co-operatively. That they have gone away is not good thing and it is a deviation from our line of parampara. Rather, avoiding faultfinding and anarchy, they should keep our standard and work maturely and not cause factions and splitting. I am not at all pleased at what they have done."

(SPL to Madhudvisa, 73-12-15)

"So far I have studied Siddhasvarupa, he is not a bad boy, but he has his own philosophy, from the very beginning."

(SPL to Paramahansa, 75-07-16)

(All emphasis added)

Please note that Tusta Krsna was a follower of Siddhasvarupa who already had initiated disciples before he met Srila Prabhupada. Taking all the above into account it is clear that the above private letter is simply urging an ambitious deviant disciple to at least wait until the spiritual master has left the planet before taking his own disciples. That some devotees would seek to promote this letter as generally applicable beggars belief.

Even in the case of John Milner and Bramahananda, just 6 months before this letter was written, which the GBC have enthusiastically presented as being evidence of Srila Prabhupada endorsing Bramahananda's 'sum total of all the demi-gods' status, Srila Prabhupada severely rebuked him for 'spreading contamination in our society', being a 'rascal', doing 'nonsense' etc. since he was one of the '4 sannyasis' that was spreading *mayavadi* philosophy throughout the society. Later on Srila Prabhupada did not even consider him to be fit to be a *ritvik*, according to His Holiness Tamala Krishna Maharaja's 'Pyramid House Talks'.

We do not wish to drag up all these incidents unnecessarily, especially since currently many of the devotees in question may be in very good standing, but if the GBC seriously consider the above quotes as their strongest evidence then the full facts must be known.

With regards to the Detroit room conversation, had Srila Prabhupada said in 1971 that none of his disciples would ever be *diksa* gurus, the neophyte devotees around him may have been discouraged and left. We have already seen from the letters above that Srila Prabhupada had to write, that some of his disciples were extremely ambitious, trying to initiate after having been in the movement for just a few years; and that Srila Prabhupada was forced to check their ambition by simply encouraging them to at least wait. At that point it is unlikely they had fully grasped just how elevated the *diksa* guru actually needs to be. Even now those that are left are having a hard time understanding. Even now, some 27 years later, many of Srila Prabhupada's original followers still labour under the misconception that anyone can be a *diksa* guru as long as he has been following his initiation vows for the preceding five years. We can also see that in the same room conversation Srila Prabhupada is also endorsing the activities of his god-brothers, even though he said that they none of them were 'qualified to be acarya' and one year later he says that they were all 'dead men' and envious. So it is clear here that Srila Prabhupada is just giving general encouragement, since he emphasises the following points:

That his *grhastha* disciples are just as qualified as his *sannyasis*.

That ALL of his disciples are 'competent' to become *diksa* gurus.

That anyone who is simply 'initiated' is automatically 'competent' to become a *diksa* guru.

That even at that time - 1971- they were ALL already qualified to become fully-fledged *diksa* gurus - 'NOW, they're competent'.

Otherwise we have to seriously accept that Srila Prabhupada is stating that:

- anyone just by being initiated is qualified and authorised to become a *diksa* guru. Thus if the GBC want to take this quote literally then all of Srila Prabhupada's 10,000 disciples, men and women, should all be free regardless of their spiritual

standing, to initiate without the need for the elaborate voting and 'no objection' arrangements that occur at present. Since as Srila Prabhupada states, they are 'all competent'. He does not say that they still need to be qualified. Though he does say that his disciples are being "trained to become future spiritual masters", his very next words are: "**NOW**, they're competent".

- Please remember that as little as one year later Srila Prabhupada had to suspend the whole GBC for gross unauthorised behaviour. Thus we can hardly accept that Srila Prabhupada had such bad judgement that in 1971 he was stating that **ALL** of his disciples were there and then qualified to be *diksa* Gurus even though one year later his leading men were not even able to behave as disciples.

The encouragement given in Detroit was never repeated to the entire movement, nor written into any GBC resolution or directive or published book. Just one mention in a conversation to a one-off visitor to a temple in 1971, and which was not in any case uncovered until twenty years after Srila Prabhupada's departure.

Conclusion

However the above explanations are not central to the argument since even if one does not accept them, the simple objective fact remains that the 'evidence' offered by the GBC, 6 instances in 11 years:

- Do **NOT** represent the "**MANY** references to becoming *diksa* guru upon Srila Prabhupada's departure that are repeated throughout Srila Prabhupada's books, letters and lectures" commonly claimed by the GBC.
- Were **NOT** generally available to the movement in 1977 and thus cannot be used to support '**Modifications A & B**' that were supposed to have been enacted on Srila Prabhupada's departure.
- Do not give a general and clear specific authorisation that all his disciples should start initiating as soon as Srila Prabhupada leaves the planet. Rather the emphasis usually seems to be on them not doing so at least while Srila Prabhupada is present, and encouraging them.

Only if **ALL** the three conditions above were present could we even discuss the possibility that there is some sort of evidence that may point to the *ritvik* system set up by Srila Prabhupada being immediately displaced by the current M.A.S.S. system on Srila Prabhupada's departure.

The many other calls to become guru have been dealt with in previous papers. In essence they refer to becoming instructing spiritual masters, not *diksa* gurus. This is clear since they will incorporate one or more of the following elements:

- No mention of Srila Prabhupada's physical departure being necessary before they can act as guru;
- Little mention of qualification required except to faithfully repeat and preach what Srila Prabhupada has taught them;
- Mention of *amara ajnaya* verse;
- Word 'guru' used to indicate teacher/instructor - no mention of terms 'initiate' or '*diksa*'.

Thus in summary, there is **NO** instruction from Srila Prabhupada that can be used to displace the *ritvik* system that Srila Prabhupada instituted in ISKCON just before he departed. Until such evidence is presented, the system needs to be reinstated at once if we are to remain faithful to Srila Prabhupada's orders.

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