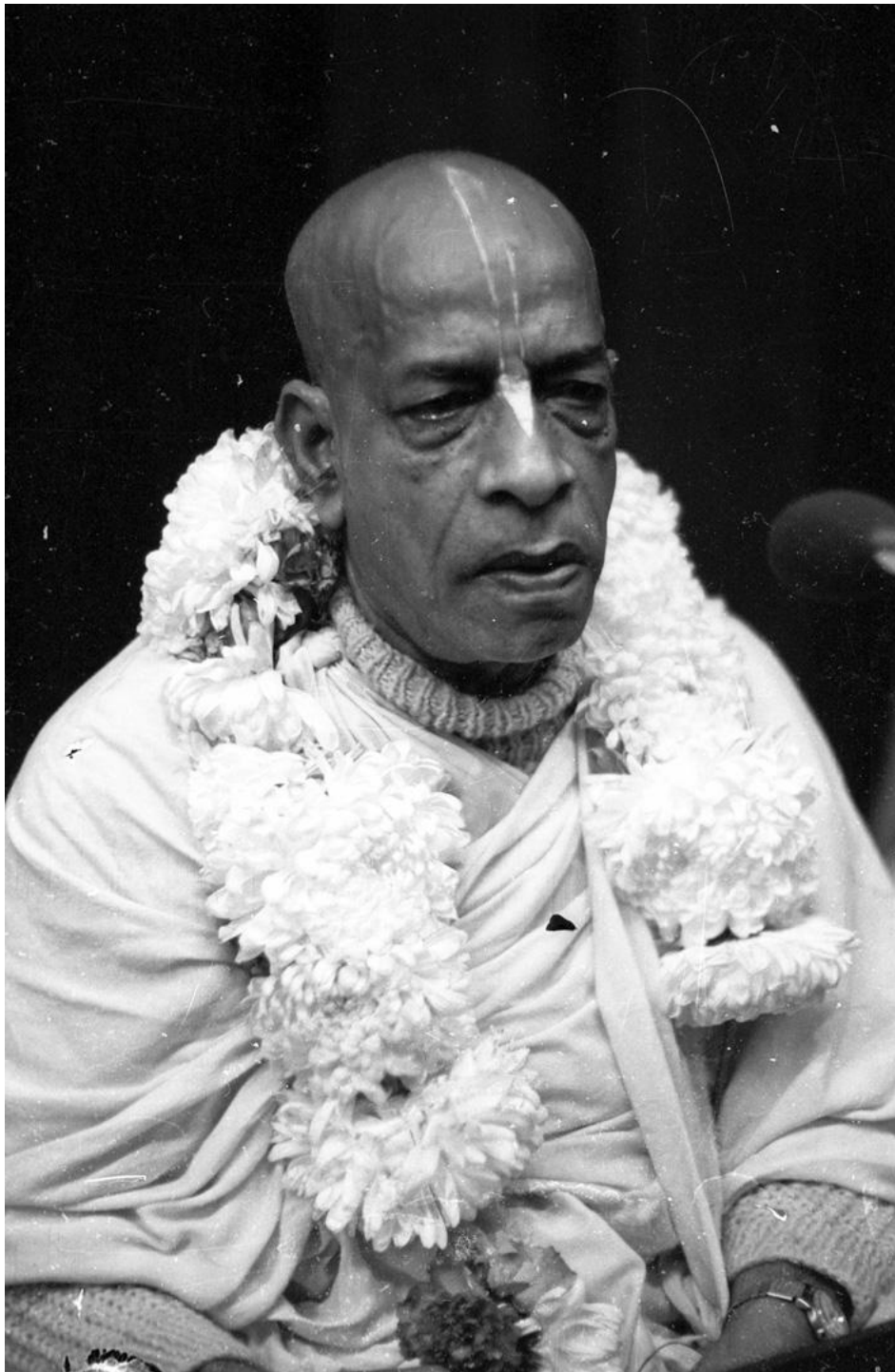


a response to: *'Continuing The Parampara'*

Srila Prabhupada: Our Diksa GURU



Srila Prabhupada: Our *Diksa* GURU



“Mundane votes have no jurisdiction to elect a Vaisnava *acarya*. A Vaisnava *acarya* is self effulgent, and there is no need for any court judgement. A false *acarya* may try to override a Vaisnava by a High Court decision, but Bhaktivinode Thakura says that he is nothing but a disciple of *Kali-yuga*.“

(CC (BBT 1975) Madhya 1.220)



by Krishnakant

Srila Prabhupada: Our *Diksa* GURU

A reply to the Sivarama Swami Paper - 'Continuing The Parampara'

"A Spiritual Master is the principle, not the body."

(SPL 28/5/68)

"What we have heard from the Spiritual Master, that is living."

(Lecture, 15/1/69)

MADHUDVISA: Is there any way for a Christian to, without the help of a Spiritual Master, to reach the spiritual sky through believing in the words of Jesus Christ and trying to follow his teachings?

SRILA PRABHUPADA: I don't follow.

TAMALA KRISHNA: Can a Christian in this age, without a Spiritual Master, but by reading the Bible, and following Jesus's words, reach the ...

SRILA PRABHUPADA: When you read the Bible, you follow the Spiritual Master. How can you say without. As soon as you read the Bible, that means you are following the instruction of Lord Jesus Christ. That means that you are following the Spiritual Master. So where is the opportunity of being without Spiritual Master.

MADHUDVISA: I was referring to a living Spiritual Master.

SRILA PRABHUPADA: Spiritual Master is not question of ... Spiritual Master is eternal...so your question is 'without Spiritual Master'. Without Spiritual Master you cannot be at any stage of your life. You may accept this Spiritual master or that Spiritual master. That is a different thing. But you have to accept. As you say that "by reading Bible", when you read Bible that means you are following the Spiritual Master represented by some priest or some clergyman in the line of Lord Jesus Christ.

(Morning Walk, Seattle, 2/10/68)

INTRODUCTION

This document is a reply to the pamphlet entitled: "*Continuing The Parampara*", by Sivarama Swami.

The aim of the following presentation is to demonstrate point by point, how virtually every argument used by the author is incorrect. Even if the original pamphlet has not been read, since we will quote in full, word for word, the conclusion that the author proposes, and then comprehensively answer it, this presentation will also serve as a stand alone document.

In effect, it acts as a handbook to highlight the errors in the main conclusions on *guru-tattva* that are currently being presented by both the author and the Governing Body Commission.

Continuing The Parampara is divided into five sections, making the following main points:

1. Introduction. (p4 - 7)
2. That Srila Prabhupada *did* consider his disciples to be qualified *diksa* gurus. (p8-14)
3. That Srila Prabhupada appointed eleven *diksa* gurus on May 28th 1977. (p15-21)

4. That a *diksa guru* does not need to be liberated, but he *does* need to be physical present on the planet to give *diksa*. (p22-30)
5. That there is no *sastric* explanation or historical precedent for *ritvik*, and that it therefore must be unacceptable. (p31-34)

For ease of reference, this document will be structured in a format similar to the original presentation, since it is our intention to answer it section by section. Thus our section headings correspond exactly with those used in "Continuing The Parampara", and all the quotes taken from 'Continuing' will be separated from the main text by being presented in boxed sections.

In addition, the author has referred to the proponents of the idea that Srila Prabhupada continued to remain a *diksa guru* through the use of *ritviks*, or priests, themselves as 'ritviks'.

This is incorrect since we are not all priests. We wish to put Srila Prabhupada rightly back in the centre of our movement. Thus we are *Prabhupada-Anugas*, or followers of Srila Prabhupada, and this is how we shall refer to ourselves herein.

SECTION 1.2 (p4-5)

QUESTIONS

"It is very obvious that there are questions to be answered by the leadership of our society."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p4

No Answers

It is clear that a measure of progress has only been achieved because the leadership has been pressured into acknowledging these questions. It is worthy of comment that *they have failed to do so voluntarily*.

- Why have they waited seventeen years in order to only *begin* answering these questions?

One might reasonably question why those who have begun to deal with these matters, matters that the author himself admits needs to be addressed, have been the victims of many reprehensible actions:

Banned

- Why have they been banned from every ISKCON temple in the UK , even though they have yet to be defeated in open debate?

The last time such a debate was held in 1990, the video recording of the event was mysteriously banned by the G.B.C.

Srila Prabhupada indicates that behaviour of this nature is unacceptable:

"Regarding Narottama das, our policy should be to keep members as much as possible. We should not flatly say 'You must leave'. That is not our policy."

(SPL (VI 1987) 69.8.20)

This ban is also extremely hypocritical, considering the following sentiments expressed in the Preface to the paper:

"The proper way to understand these important issues is by open discussion amongst Vaishnavas."

Ranchor Das - Continuing The Parampara p3

How can there be open discussion when we are not even allowed to enter the Temple!

Book Distribution

- Why have they been prevented from obtaining Srila Prabhupada's books for distribution?

Book distribution is extremely important, a point repeatedly emphasised by Srila Prabhupada:

"There is no doubt about it, to distribute books is our most important activity."

(SPL (VI 1987) 73.8.4)

Violence

- Why have they been threatened with physical violence ?

One can only observe that there are disturbing parallels with the violent sequence of events that befell another devotee who also attempted to bring these matters out in the open - Sulocana Dasa, who was later assassinated.

Apology

"Last December in my "GBC SECRETARY'S REPORT" I wrote a briefer article on the *Ritvik* theory. The beginning of the article was I feel in retrospect (unfortunately) personal and accusatory. Reading it later in print I would have wished a more neutral and positive approach. I apologise for any offence caused."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p5

Unfortunately just recently (October), whilst describing the *Ritvik* philosophy, the author repeated comments very similar to those contained in the report mentioned above:

"It's tinged with *mayavada*, and in due course of time it will go towards *sahajiya*, because that's the result. Because if you lose shelter, then you become overly agitated by sex life, and you mix *mayavada* and sex together, you get *sahajiya*."

Sivarama Swami - Soho St., Ritvik Discussion

- Why issue an apology if you intend to repeat the same personal and accusatory remarks?

SECTION 1.5 (p6)

INCOMPLETE

"Ritviks say that ... (1) Only an *uttama-adhikari* or *mahabhagavata* may act in the capacity of guru."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p6

Incomplete Presentation

This is an incomplete presentation of our position. We actually state that *uttama-adhikari* is the required level of qualification for a *diksa* guru, or a guru in the *parampara*.

The qualification to be a *siksa*, or instructing guru, is simply to preach.

This distinction is important, especially as the author himself later utilises quotes that encourage everyone to be a *siksa* guru, a fact with which we concur.

NOT ELECTED

"Ritviks say that ... 5) Although physically absent, Srila Prabhupada would remain the initiating guru until a (self proclaimed) *maha-bhagavata* succeeded him to be the 'next' link in the *parampara*."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p7

Self Effulgent

Again this is an incorrect presentation of our position. We state that a successor *mahabhagavata diksa* guru in the *parampara* would not be 'self proclaimed', but self *effulgent*, as was the case with Srila Prabhupada.

A *bona fide diksa* guru does not indicate his existence by proclamation, but by demonstrating his potency, just as Srila Prabhupada did.

This is confirmed by *sastra*:

"One who is situated in the disciplic succession can be understood by the result of his activities. This is always true as far as the activities of the Lord and His devotees are concerned."

(CC (BBT 1975) Madhya 16.65)

APPOINTMENT

"Ritviks say that ... 8) The idea that a guru can be appointed is false."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p7

No Appointment

Yet again we have another incorrect presentation of our position. We state that if he so wishes, Srila Prabhupada can authorise

anyone to become a guru. We pursue this question in Section 2.6 when the author repeats this point.

CONSPIRACY

"In addition ... 11) Rtviks tender incomplete evidence. [And] 12) Exaggerate and concoct facts in order to suggest a 'great conspiracy'."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p7

Unsubstantiated

The author later, is able to give only *one* example of what he claims to be 'incomplete evidence'. Even this one example, as we shall see, is not justified. Neither does he provide evidence of where we 'exaggerate and concoct' facts.

- Why doesn't he substantiate his claims with proof, instead of just engaging in sweeping generalisations?

Until he does so, it is very difficult to take seriously his allegations.

SECTION 2.2 (p9)

OMISSION

"The first point I would like to highlight here is how this quote is abridged in 'Betrayal'. [...] Such inaccurate submission of evidence is not uncommon in Rtvik publications and in fact is the basis of the theory itself; partial presentation of the truth to achieve a preconceived end."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p9

Abridged

(The quote in question is the line, "You become guru. But be qualified. Little thing, strictly follower...").

Although certain quotes in *The Betrayal* are indeed abridged, this particular reference is actually reproduced in full in *Become Srila Prabhupada's Disciple*.

That this fact is not mentioned is all the more remarkable as *Become Srila Prabhupada's Disciple* is the document that the author claims to be dealing with:

"I have used the publication *Become Srila Prabhupada's Disciple* as the *basis* for our arguments."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p6

"I would like to begin by quoting in total, Fact 1, the April 22nd 1977 conversation that *Become Srila Prabhupada's Disciple* opens with."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p8

The author rather surprisingly omits to inform the reader that *Become Srila Prabhupada's Disciple* does indeed provide the complete quotation. As *Become Srila Prabhupada's Disciple* was published a year before *The Betrayal*, one is consequently tempted to enquire upon whose part the alleged dishonesty actually lies.

Legitimate Omission

The Betrayal serves solely to highlight what Srila Prabhupada stated about his disciples qualifications at *that particular point in time*. 'Little thing, strictly follower' is a general instruction relating to how one can become a *guru*. For legitimate reasons of brevity, other less pertinent parts of the morning walk are also omitted.

SECTION 2.3 (p10)

NOT QUALIFIED

"I shall not attempt to read meaning into such an unqualified word. [...] 'Hmm' indicates that he has made his own observation which may lie beyond the purview of the ordinary reader. It does not necessarily mean that all his disciples are conditioned souls."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p10

Instructive Comments

In fact 'Hmm' is not the only thing Srila Prabhupada says. He makes a series of instructive comments:

"Hmm yes. [...] I am waiting for that [...] But the training must be complete [...] (The process of purification) O yes must be there [...] But be qualified [...] You can cheat, but it will not be effective [...] Don't go backwards.

(Morning Walk April 22nd 1977)

Not Qualified

At least on April 22nd 1977, it is very clear what Srila Prabhupada thought of his disciple's level of qualification to be *guru* at that particular moment in time.

They *could not possibly have been qualified* on April 22nd, otherwise:

- What was he waiting for?
- Why was further training required?
- Why was purification required?
- Why state '*but be qualified*'?

How *quickly* they can become Guru is another matter entirely.

However, it is indisputable that on April 22nd 1977, they were certainly *not* qualified.

Spiritual Vision

It is also interesting to note how the author uses the phrase:

"...Srila Prabhupada is lying on his *deathbed*..."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p10

This offensive phrase can be added to '*posthumous ritvik*', and '*write Srila Prabhupada a letter and see if he replies*', used by other G.B.C.'s, as examples revealing a lack of spiritual vision.

SECTION 2.4 (p11)

ERROR

"The list of discrepancies is long. However the most glaring is the title of the booklet '*Become Srila Prabhupada's Disciple*'. [...] However, everyone is Prabhupada's *siksa* disciple already."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p11

Original

The *Prabhupada-Anugas* are the original advocates of the principle that everyone is Srila Prabhupada's *siksa* disciple. This is admitted by the author:

"The *ritvik theory* attempts to compensate for the falldown of *gurus* by inventing a new process for the continuation of the *parampara*. It does so by making Srila Prabhupada everyone's guru through *siksa* and *diksa*, virtually ending the chain of disciplic succession."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p6

For the author to assert that this point has been overlooked is therefore a surprising error, *as he has already accepted that this principle is both widely understood and extensively preached by his opponents.*

Title Justified

The document *Become Srila Prabhupada's Disciple* deals exclusively with becoming Srila Prabhupada's *diksa* disciple.

That, everyone still has to accept. Thus, many may yet become his *diksa* disciples.

The title is therefore quite justified and reflects the purpose the document is trying to fulfill.

SECTION 2.5 (p11)

INITIATIONS

"Thus 'complete retirement' indicates stopping initiation and allowing others to do so."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p12

Retirement

Complete retirement does not necessarily imply that Srila Prabhupada could *not* continue to act as *diksa guru*, since after July 9th 1977, Srila Prabhupada *did* effectively retire completely from all activities connected with initiation: Recommendation, acceptance, name giving, entering the name in the initiated disciples book, and the fire sacrifice. In fact, everything was managed by the *ritviks* that he appointed. Yet all the persons initiated through such a process, wherein Srila Prabhupada had effectively retired from all activities connected with initiation, were still the disciples of Srila Prabhupada.

In any case we will examine later whether or not Srila Prabhupada did actually proceed to select *diksa gurus*, as the author claims.

SECTION 2.6 (p12-13)

APPOINTMENT

"Srila Prabhupada does not say that an *acarya* could not be appointed. [...] He has never said a guru, or *acarya* cannot be chosen or appointed. [...] Here I confirm again that a guru or *acarya* can be appointed provided he is qualified."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p13

Not Authorised

On this point there is no disagreement. In fact, we argue strongly that the main reason that the so-called 'chosen 11' were *not Diksa Gurus*, is *because* Srila Prabhupada had *not* so authorised them. Our point is that the spiritual master *can only give this authorisation*. We will show later that such an authorisation was never given.

However, it can not be given by some ecclesiastical voting committee, as presently occurs in our movement:

Voting procedures [...] for guru candidate [...] who will be established by the voting members.

(GBC document.)

Voting for guru process [...] by a two third vote of the GBC [...] all GBCs are candidates for appointment as guru.

(GBC document.)

The GBC is the highest ecclesiastical body guiding ISKCON.

(Back To Godhead)

This is explicitly condemned in *sastra*:

"Mundane votes have no jurisdiction to elect a Vaisnava acarya. A Vaisnava acarya is self effulgent, and there is no need for any court judgement. A false acarya may try to override a Vaisnava by a High Court decision, but Bhaktivinode Thakura says that he is nothing but a disciple of Kali-yuga."

(CC (BBT 1975) Madhya 1.220)

"Srila Jiva Gosvami advises that one not accept a spiritual master in terms of hereditary or customary social, and ecclesiastical conventions."

(CC (BBT 1975) Adi 1.35)

Conference

Thus the GBC has become an ecclesiastical conference that elects new members by means of a voting system. This system is strikingly similar to that adopted by the College of Cardinals within the Roman Catholic church.

It is therefore clear that the prevailing guru system functions and sustains itself by means of practices that cannot possibly be described as authorised.

SECTION 2.7 (p13-14)

LITTLE THING

"In either case the 'little thing' indicates that the completion of the training is not a monumental task that Srila Prabhupada envisaged spanning over decades."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p13

Not Explained

In order to prove that becoming qualified is a 'little thing', the author provides quotes in which it is stated how simple it is to become a *guru*. However, it is not explained that these quotes refer to the '*amara ajanana guru handa*' verse, wherein Lord Caitanya encourages everyone to become a guru by simply repeating what he knows. We will conclusively show in section 4, that here Lord Caitanya is simply encouraging everyone to become a *siksa* guru or preacher. This is a position which *all* members of the *sankirtan* movement of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu are obliged to assume.

Ultimately the key question is whether or not Srila Prabhupada *did* actually select individuals to become *Diksa* Gurus. We will see in the next section that he only selected *Ritviks*, and not *Diksa* Gurus.

SECTION 3.1 (p15-18)

EVIDENCE

"My proposal, which I shall show in the following section is that Srila Prabhupada did complete the training, at least to his satisfaction, and did choose some gurus."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p14

No Evidence

Finally the much heralded '*evidence*' for the selection of 11 *Diksa* Gurus is presented. Unfortunately if one anticipates conclusive evidence in the form of many recorded conversations and confirmatory written documents, one is immediately disappointed. Infact the only '*evidence*' put forward by the author is the so-called '**Appointment Tape**', which in any case, as we will show, points to a rather different claim.

Before proceeding further, one is immediately confronted by a number of pressing questions:

- Why is there no *written* evidence?
- Why was the '**Appt Tape**' initially concealed?

No Documents

Srila Prabhupada invariably confirmed any major decision in writing. It is not unreasonable to consider a decision of this nature to be of considerable importance. One may therefore enquire why, if Srila Prabhupada had in fact appointed eleven *diksa gurus*, he never confirmed the decision in writing, or indeed, made any further reference to the appointments.

It is impertinent to suggest that he acted in such a cavalier manner.

As Srila Prabhupada states, this is not the first time such a major decision has been proclaimed without any recorded proof:

"They wanted to create artificially somebody acarya, and everything failed. They did not consider even with common sense: that if guru Maharaja wanted to appoint somebody as acarya, why did he not say? He said so many things, and this point He missed? The real point? And they insist upon it. They declared some unfit person to become."

(SPC (BBT 1991) 15.08.76)

"I have also read specifically your articles on the matter of acaryas, wherein on the 14th paragraph I see the acarya shall be entitled to nominate in writing his successive acarya. But we do not find any record where our Srila Prabhupada nominated any acarya after Him. Different persons have interpreted on this point, and everyone of our Godbrothers are acting as acarya, so this is a controversial point which I do not wish to enter into while we are proposing for co-operation."

(SPL (VI 1987) 69.8.38)

Concealed

One may also justifiably wonder why such supposedly conclusive evidence for the appointment of *diksa gurus* was concealed until 1983. If the 'appointment tape' does indeed clearly indicate the appointment of *diksa gurus*, then one may reasonably question why it was not immediately presented as evidence in 1977. Why such secretive behaviour if the evidence actually indicated the appointment of *Diksa Gurus*?

Warnings

It is clear that Srila Prabhupada anticipated problems:

"So Sridhar Maharaja and his two associate gentlemen unauthorised selected one *acarya* and later it proved a failure. The result is now everyone is claiming to be *acarya* even though they may be *kanistha adbhikari* with no ability to preach. In some of the camps the *acarya* is being changed three times a year. Therefore we may not commit the same mistake in our ISKCON camp."

(SPL (VI 1987) 74.4.52)

The following conversation, held *the day before* the alleged appointment of eleven *diksa gurus* was made, is also worthy of consideration:

Bhavananda: There will be men, I know. There will be men who want to try and pose themselves as gurus.

Tamala Krishna: That was going on many years ago. Your Godbrothers were thinking like that. Madhava Maharaja ...

Bhavananda: Oh yes. Oh, ready to jump.

Srila Prabhupada: Very strong management required and vigilant observation ..."

(Room Conversation May 27 1977)

The words '*Very strong management required and vigilant observation*' are unlikely to be those of someone about appointing eleven *diksa gurus*. On the contrary, Srila Prabhupada indicates quite clearly that unqualified persons should be prevented from occupying the post of *guru*.

Rather surprisingly, the author requires that the reader accept that less than twenty-four hours later, Srila Prabhupada appointed eleven such individuals.

Miracle

Reflecting on the minimal qualifications necessary for assuming the position of *diksa guru*, the author assures the reader that Srila Prabhupada appointed eleven *diksa gurus* who were qualified, and yet immediately concedes their lack of qualifications:

"He did not give such 'high' information to his disciples in the 12 years that he was with them. No doubt it was due to the lack of qualification of the average disciple."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p30

This presumably explains the current fashion for 'transcendental' discussions with representatives of the Gaudiya Math, an activity not recommended by Srila Prabhupada :

"We shall be very careful about them and not mix with them. This is my instruction to you all. They cannot help us in our movement, but they are very competent to harm our natural progress. So we must be very careful about them."

(SPL (VI 1987) 74.4.52)

"There is nothing new to be said. Whatever I had to say, I have already said in my books."

(Arrival Address, Vrindavan, 17 May 1977)

It is worth repeating that after 11 years, as his remarks on April 22nd 1977 demonstrate (quoted in Section 2.3), Srila Prabhupada still did not perceive anyone qualified to be a *Diksa Guru*. Yet, thirty-six days later, eleven of them simultaneously became 'qualified'. One might reasonably wonder how, that if no one could achieve this qualification in eleven years, they managed to do so in such a short period.

Appointment Tape

A transcript of the most common version of the tape, and that utilised by the author, is given below:

Satsvarupa: Then our next question concerns initiations in the future, particularly at that time when you are no longer with us. We want to know how first and second initiations would be conducted.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. I shall recommend some of you. After this is settled up. I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating acarya.

Tamal Krishna: Is that called ritvik acarya?

Srila Prabhupada: Ritvik. Yes.

Satsvarupa: What is the relationship of that person who gives the initiation and ...

Srila Prabhupada: He's *guru*. He's *guru*.

Satsvarupa: But he does it on your behalf.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. That is formality. Because in my presence one should not become *guru*, so on my behalf. On my order, *amara ajnaya guru hana*, be actually *guru*. But by my order.

Satsvarupa: So they may be considered your disciples?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, they are disciples, but consider ... who

Tamal Krishna: No. He is asking that these *ritvik acaryas*, they are officiating, giving *diksa*, their ... the people who they give *diksa* to, whose disciples are they?

Srila Prabhupada: They are his disciples.

Tamal Krishna: They are his disciples.

Srila Prabhupada: Who is initiating ... his grand disciple ...

Satsvarupa: Then we have a question concerning ...

Srila Prabhupada: When I order you become *guru*, he becomes regular *guru*. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple. Just see.

(Room Conversation May 28th 1977)

SECTION 3.2 (p18-19)

Here the author lists what he claims are 10 alleged defects in the explanation of the appointment tape given in 'Become Srila Prabhupada's Disciple'. Rather than deal with every one of these points separately, in the next section we will use the same analysis as used in *Become* to refute the author's interpretation of the appointment tape. We will therefore simultaneously highlight the errors that the author makes and defend the original analysis given in *Become*.

SECTION 3.3 & 3.4 (p19-21)

Not Appointed

The author asserts that the evidence for the appointment of the eleven-*diksa gurus* is contained in the opening lines. However, upon closer examination, one finds that the only functionaries that Srila Prabhupada appoints are not *diksa gurus*, but *officiating acaryas*, a term highlighted and approved by the author. It is significant that the author concedes *that they were selected on the understanding that they would continue to function in this capacity after Srila Prabhupada's apparent departure.*

- 1) There is one question. How will initiation be conducted, especially in Srila Prabhupada's absence?
- 2) Prabhupada says he will 'recommend devotees to act as *officiating acaryas*.
- 7) This understanding of "*ritvik acarya*" is consistent with Srila Prabhupada's use of officiating *acarya*. In addition, it explains that upon his disappearance the devotees performing initiation are 'officiating gurus'.

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p20

At this point it is clear that there is an admission that Srila Prabhupada selected *officiating acaryas* to act on his behalf, both before and after his departure. *In making this startling admission, the author has chosen to diverge from the official GBC position that Srila Prabhupada did not select officiating acaryas for after his departure, but only for the duration of his physical presence.*

EVASION

"As a final point we would like to give a new definition of the word *rtvik* or *rtvik acarya*."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p20

Manoeuvres

Until this point, argument has revolved around whether or not Srila Prabhupada appointed *ritviks* or *diksa gurus*. However, choosing to approach the problem from a rather novel perspective, the author casually asserts that *the officiating acarya and diksa guru are one and the same*. It would appear that the author, unable to sustain an otherwise untenable position, has decided, by dint of some remarkable semantic manoeuvres, to evade the issue by redefining the question. Indeed, he provides for his unfortunate reader an entire section (section 3.4) in which the term *ritvik* is exhaustively redefined.

Honorific

The rationale for this amazing claim is as follows: 'Srila Prabhupada used the word *acarya*, which means *guru*, in conjunction with the word officiating, so he was really appointing *diksa gurus*'. However, the author omits to mention that in Vedic culture it is conventional to give any priest the honorific title of *acarya*.

The following excerpts from *sastra* demonstrate this quite clearly:

"Sri Raghunatha das was the son of Govardhana Majumdara. Their family priest was Balarama acarya."

CC (BBT 1975) Madhya 16.217

"Candapura is just east of the house of the two brothers Hiranya and Govardhana, the father and uncle of Raghunatha das Goswami. In Candapura lived Balarama Acarya and Yadunandana Acarya, the priests of these two personalities."

CC (BBT 1975) Antya 3.165

It is the custom that any person expert in a particular field is honoured by the title *acarya*. For example, *Dronacarya* was given this title for his expertise in military science. Thus the priest is also considered a type of *guru*, or teacher, The *ritviks*, being expert priests, would naturally be called *acarya*. For example, in the *Krishna Book*, a *ritvik* is described as a 'learned performer of sacrifices'.

Definition of Ritvik

There are similar references to *ritviks* in the *Srimad Bhagavatam*:

***Sa-rtvik-sabhyah* - with all the priests and members of the sacrificial assembly.**

SB (BBT 1987) 4.6.1-2

***Rtvik* - the priests.**

SB (BBT 1987) 4.7.16

***Rtvik* - priests conducting the ceremony.**

SB (BBT 1987) 5.3.2

***Rtvik* - the priests.**

SB (BBT 1987) 5.3.3

***Rtvik* - the priests.**

SB (BBT 1987) 5.4.17

***Saha-rtvik-acarya-sadasyah* - with all the priests, *acaryas* and members of the holy assembly.**

SB (BBT 1987) 8.20.22

***Adhvaryuna* - by the *rtvik* priest.**

SB (BBT 1987) 9.1.15

Infact, the term *ritvik* appears on many further occasions in the *Srimad Bhagavatam*:

Ritvik: 4.6.1; 4.7.16; 5.3.2; 5.3.3; 5.4.17; 7.3.20; 8.20.22; 9.1.15.

Rtvijah: 4.5.7; 4.5.18; 4.7.27; 4.7.45; 4.13.26; 4.19.27; 4.19.29; 5.3.4; 5.3.15; 5.3.18; 5.7.5; 8.16.53; 8.18.21; 8.18.22; 9.4.23; 9.6.3.

Rtvijam: 4.6.52; 4.21.5; 8.23.13; 9.13.1.

Rtvigbhyah: 8.16.55

Rtvigbhih: 4.7.56; 9.13.3.

Each time it is always translated as a *priest*. From this it is quite clear that *ritvik* means a priest only, a definition confirmed by standard works dealing with Sanskrit grammar:

Ritv-ij. Priest. (Literally, Sacrificing in season).

SGS (OUP 1927) 79b

There is *no mention* of such a functionaries being *diksa* gurus or themselves accepting disciples. Thus, the use of the word *acarya* after the terms *officiating* or *ritvik* does *not* mean *diksa* guru, but refers only to a qualified priest. Indeed, as the author himself explains, *officiating* means to discharge priestly or divine service.

The dictionary meaning of the word 'officiating' is 'to discharge priestly or divine service, or act in an official capacity'.

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p19

It is therefore clear that a person who functions as an *officiating acarya* simply performs these duties and does *not* accept disciples.

So *Acarya* yes, but the key is **what kind of Acarya?** As we have conclusively demonstrated, the *acarya* in question is he who *discharges priestly service*, not he who accepts disciples. The word *officiating* or *ritvik*, gives this meaning only to the word *Acarya*, as has been admitted by the author himself.

Interchangeable

It is clear that Srila Prabhupada himself never made any such distinction between *ritvik acarya* and *ritvik*. A brief selection of examples will suffice:

- i) On the 'appointment tape' itself he indicates that *ritvik acarya* is the same as *ritvik*.
- ii) On July 9th 1977 when a letter naming the eleven *ritviks* is sent out to all Temple Presidents and members of the Governing Body Commission, the word used is *ritvik*, not *ritvik acarya*.
- iii) On July 10th 1977 Tamal Krishna, when informing Hamsadutta of his appointment, refers to him only as a *ritvik*, not *ritvik acarya*.
- iv) On July 19th 1977, Srila Prabhupada dictates a letter in which he again uses the term *ritvik* and not *ritvik acarya*.

One may therefore conclude that since Srila Prabhupada used the word *officiating acarya* once, *ritvik acarya* never, but *ritvik* at least three times, the terms are therefore interchangeable, and any assertion by the author to the contrary is nonsense.

The author asserts that not only does *officiating acarya* mean acting on behalf of the *acarya*, but that the *officiating acarya* has his own disciples. However *absolutely no evidence to substantiate this assertion is presented*.

Clear Evidence

Srila Prabhupada however, *does* provide clear evidence, but not, unfortunately, for the claim made by the author:

Tamal Krishna: These men. They can also do second initiation. So there is no need for devotees to write to you for first and second initiation. They can write to the man nearest them. But all these persons are still your disciples. Anybody who would give initiation is doing so on your behalf.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.

(Room Conversation July 8th 1977)

"After considering the recommendation, these representatives may accept the devotee as an initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada by giving a spiritual name, or in the case of second initiation, by chanting on the gayatri thread, just as Srila Prabhupada has done. The newly initiated devotees are disciples of AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. The above eleven senior devotees are acting as his representative."

(Letter July 9th 1977)

Also interesting, is what his secretary, Tamal Krishna Goswami, says when he communicates this information over the next few days:

"His divine grace said: 'You are a suitable person and you can give initiation to those who are ready for it. I have selected you among eleven men as 'ritvik or representative of the acarya, to give initiations, both first and second initiations, on my behalf' (A newsletter is being sent to all Temple Presidents and GBC in this regard, listing the eleven representatives selected by His Divine Grace. Those who are initiated are the disciples of Srila Prabhupada, and anyone who you deem fit and initiated in this way, you should send their names to be included in

Srila Prabhupada's 'initiated disciples book'

(Letter July 10th 1977)

Conclusive Evidence

This proves conclusively that Srila Prabhupada selected ritviks and that those disciples so initiated belonged to Srila Prabhupada. Although the author might respond that this arrangement was of a 'temporary nature', and only intended whilst Srila Prabhupada was physically present. He would be extremely unwise to do so, as he has already admitted that on the appointment tape the selection of Ritvik-Acaryas was made for after Srila Prabhupada's departure.

The author is accordingly caught in a logistical trap of his own creation.

It is abundantly clear that *ritviks* were selected to act for *after Srila Prabhupada's departure*. It is equally clear that the disciples so created are Srila Prabhupada's. There is *no mention* of the disciples belonging to the *ritviks*.

The remarkable simultaneous *Ritvik/Diksa* Guru hybrid entity proposed by the author may therefore be discarded.

Contradicted

The author concedes that Srila Prabhupada selected *officiating acaryas* to function after his departure, and then seeks to evade the consequences of this admission by contriving his own novel definition of *officiating acarya*.

As we have seen however, Srila Prabhupada directly contradicts this. It has been shown that the officiating *acarya* is non-different from the *ritvik*, and such *ritviks* were directly instructed to act in such a manner that all the disciples initiated would belong to Srila Prabhupada.

This is the central issue:

- What does Srila Prabhupada select ?
- What do they do ?

We have used *the authors own words* to demonstrate that Srila Prabhupada selected *ritviks* to initiate disciples for *himself only*, after his physical departure.

Alteration

However, for completeness let us return to the appointment tape and examine what else the author has to say.

Before proceeding further, it is worth noting that when referring to '*grand disciple*' the author has reproduced the transcript as '*he is grand disciple*'. In fact the tape clearly states '**his grand disciple**'. We will send a copy of the tape to interested devotees, so that they can decide for themselves what is said. There is a clearly recognisable difference between '**he is**' and '**his**' - two words as opposed to one. This alteration in the transcript has considerable implications, as we shall see later.

The author states that '**Yes, they are disciples**' is not conclusive evidence for the fact that those initiated would be disciples of Srila Prabhupada, since Srila Prabhupada goes on to say:

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, they are disciples, but consider ... who ...

However, the initial statement still holds.

- If they were not his disciples why say 'yes'?
- If they *were* his grand disciples, why not say *my* grand disciples?

Speculation

One cannot construct an argument based on what Srila Prabhupada *may* have gone on to say. It is sufficient to examine what actually was said.

- Why project forward in this manner?

Significant

The author proposes that the phrase 'they are his disciples' proves that they are the disciples of the *ritvik*.

It is suggested that this must be so since there is no need for Srila Prabhupada to speak in the third person.

It is perhaps appropriate to examine the text a little further. Discarding repetition, we find: '**they are his disciples - who is initiating - his grand disciple**'.

- The three words underlined *must* refer to the same entity since they follow immediately after each other.

- The last '**his**' must refer to Srila Prabhupada since in these circumstances, only *he* could possibly have grand disciples.
- Thus the first '**his**' must also refer to Srila Prabhupada.

One can only observe that Srila Prabhupada *speaks in the third person*. It is significant that he did *not* say 'my grand disciples'.

This demonstrates why the alteration in the transcript is so significant. There is an immense difference in meaning between '**he is**' and '**his**'.

Grand -Disciple

- Why does Srila Prabhupada mention 'grand disciple' if he has not already selected *gurus*?

The answer is given by what he says next:

Srila Prabhupada: His grand disciple [...] When I order you become *guru*, he becomes regular *guru*. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple. Just see.

Srila Prabhupada simply describes the normal process for 'becoming guru', and this will result in Grand Disciples being created. However, this process of 'becoming Guru' is only 'when' he gives the 'order'. The use of '**when**' means something that has *not yet happened*, and that therefore *that order had yet to be given*.

This confirms what is said earlier in the tape:

Srila Prabhupada: On my order, amara ajnaya guru hana, be actually guru. But by my order.

Other Evidence

All the other evidence clearly shows that this order to be *diksa* guru was never given, but simply reconfirms the appointment of *ritviks*. It is unfortunate that the author is unable to produce any documentary evidence to substantiate *his* claim.

Srila Prabhupada has discussed the topic of '*ordering gurus*', but at the beginning of the tape when he mentions whom he may be selecting, he uses *only* the terms officiating *acarya* and *ritvik*. Thus the situation of '*grand disciples*' would only occur if, and when, Srila Prabhupada was to give the order for someone to become *diksa* guru.

As we know, *this instruction was never given*.

Summary:

- The author admits that *officiating acaryas* were indeed appointed to act after Srila Prabhupada's departure.
- Srila Prabhupada indicates quite clearly that *officiating acarya* is the same as *ritvik*.
- Srila Prabhupada states that disciples made with the assistance of *ritviks* belong solely to him.

Confirmation

Many of the written documents issued after the appointment tape reiterate these points. These documents have been circulated as part of the paper "*What Srila Prabhupada Really Wanted - The Facts*", and are summarised below:

- Room Conversation, July 8th 1977. (already quoted p9)
- July 9th 1977 letter from Srila Prabhupada to temple presidents and members of the GBC: (already quoted p9)
- July 10th 1977 letter from Srila Prabhupada to Hamsadutta, signed by his personal secretary. (already quoted p9)
- July 11th 1977 letter to Kirtananada Swami, signed by Srila Prabhupada's personal secretary:

"A letter has been sent to all Temple Presidents and GBC which you should be receiving soon describing the process for initiation to be followed in the future. Srila Prabhupada has appointed thus far eleven representatives who will initiate new devotees on his behalf."

- July 19/31st 1977 Morning Walk, and subsequent letter from Srila Prabhupada to Hamsadutta, signed by his personal secretary:

"And nobody is going to disturb you there. Make your own field and continue to become *Ritvik* and act on my charge."

- Room Conversation October 18th 1977

SRILA PRABHUPADA: So I have deputed some of you to initiate?

TAMALA KRSNA: Yes. [...]

SRILA PRABHUPADA: This initiation. I have deputed my disciples, is that clear or not?

TAMALA KRSNA: It's clear.

The author has admitted that:

"On July 8th he [Srila Prabhupada] chose 11 individuals. The controversy was - what were they chosen for?"

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p18

(In fact, only nine were chosen on July 8th 1977, two more being added on July 9th 1977.)

As the quote from July 8th 1977 shows, and as both the appointment tape *and every other piece of evidence shows*, it is very clear what they were chosen for - to make disciples for Srila Prabhupada.

The author states that this is the central question, and indeed it is. We would however suggest that it has been conclusively answered.

The Will

The final Will was drawn up on June 4th 1977, with a codicil added November 5th 1977. In this document, Srila Prabhupada instructed that future executive directors for the '*permanent properties*' in India were to be his '*initiated disciples*'. Therefore future disciples *must* have been perceived as belonging to Srila Prabhupada, *otherwise the pool of potential directors would inevitably become exhausted*.

It was also indicated quite clearly that there should be *no change to the system of management and that it should continue in its current form*.

We have already established the nature and function of that current form:

- i. *Ritviks* appointed.
- ii. Disciples belong to Srila Prabhupada.
- iii. No mention of *ritviks* having disciples.
- iv. No mention of *ritviks* becoming *diksa* gurus.

Management

It has been suggested that the *ritvik* system in place was not an '*area of management*' and therefore does not fall under the terms of Srila Prabhupada's Will. One can however show conclusively that Srila Prabhupada *did* consider the *ritvik* system to be an area of management and therefore he most certainly did *not* wish to see it changed:

- a) Tamal Krishna Goswami in the '*Topanga Canyon Confession*' in 1980, stated that Srila Prabhupada set up the *ritvik* system in order to '*manage this movement*', since he could not '*physically manage everyone*' himself'.
- b) In the 1975 GBC resolutions it is clearly stated that the '*GBC would have sole responsibility for managerial affairs*'. And some of the managerial issues the GBC dealt with that year are given below:

"In order to receive first initiation, one must have been a full time member for six months. For second initiation there should be at least another one year after the initiation."

Resolution No. 9 March 25th 1975

"Method of initiating Sannyasis."

Resolution No. 2 March 27th 1975

These resolutions are important since they demonstrate conclusively that the methodology for conducting initiations was deemed a system of management. And a method for conducting initiations is all the *ritvik* system is. These resolutions were all checked and approved by Srila Prabhupada. Thus initiation methodology was definitely considered by Srila Prabhupada as a system of management, and thus the *ritvik* system does fall under the terms of Srila Prabhupada's Will.

This shows conclusively that 'management' refers to the ritvik system that was already in place by 1977.

And the Will clearly states that such management systems should "continue" and that there should be "no change" enacted.

Tenacious

It is unfortunate that the author chooses to adhere so tenaciously to the notion that Srila Prabhupada appointed eleven *diksa* gurus.

It is surprising, not only since it has been conclusively shown in the preceding section that such an assertion is manifestly

untrue, but also because the appointed *diksa* guru theory is directly contradicted by other leading 'gurus'.

This presentation by the author is the latest in an elaborate sequence of 'definitive' responses to the *ritvik* issue that has been attempted over preceding years. Unfortunately, many of these responses *contradict not only the authors presentation, but each other.*

A selection of examples will suffice:

- i. San Diego debate January 1990.
- ii. ISKCON Journal March 1990.
- iii. Discussion held by Jayadvaita Swami London October 1993.
- iv. "Continue the Parampara", Sivarama Swami, 1994.

Contradictions

These attempts to settle the *ritvik* question 'once and for all' have led to several bizarre contradictions between the author and other members of the GBC:

"My proposal, which I shall show in the following section is that Srila Prabhupada did complete the training, at least to his satisfaction, and did choose some gurus."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara 1994

This conflicts directly with statements made by other senior figures within the Society:

*"The evidence is incontrovertible, its thorough, its exhaustive, its accepted by just about everyone, we do not need to argue that. Srila Prabhupada did not appoint anyone to be guru for the future, he appointed *ritviks* to continue in his presence. That much is accepted by everyone."*

Jayadvaita Swami - San Diego Debate 1990

This point was again repeated by Jayadvaita Swami in the 1993 South London discussion.

Ravindra Svarupa das also made a similar observation:

*"These people are acting as *ritviks*, priests. And it's a fact that Srila Prabhupada never said 'alright, here is the next *acarya*, or here is the next eleven *acaryas* and they are the authorised gurus for the movement, for the world'. He did not do that."*

Ravindra Svarupa das - San Diego Debate 1990

Bhakti Caru Swami also commented on this matter, making no reference to *diksa* gurus being appointed, or to the *ritvik acaryas* automatically becoming *diksa* gurus:

*"It was much later in July, that Srila Prabhupada named eleven devotees and the *ritvik-acarya* arrangement came out."*

Bhakti Caru Swami [quoted by Suhotra Swami] ISKCON Journal March 1990 p18

One then finds, *in the same publication*, Jayapataka Swami contradicting the others, but supporting the author:

"So the sub-committee went and discussed this with Srila Prabhupada, and the members came back and reported to us, the rest of the GBC. And they stated that Prabhupada was going to name some people who would be initiating in the future, even after his disappearance. And that the devotees they would be initiating would be their disciples and Srila Prabhupada's grand disciples."

Jayapataka Swami - ISKCON Journal March 1990 p14

Further contradictions are found when considering another spurious claim by the author, already refuted in the previous section:

*"As a final point we would like to give a new definition to the word *ritvik* or *ritvik acarya*. Not accepting a preconceived meaning of the word *ritvik*, but seeing it as an adjunct to the word *acarya*, and similar to the meaning of the word officiating, I would propose that any guru, is an officiating *acarya* or *ritvik acarya*. That is because he is acting on behalf of his guru. Like all devotees do. That does not mean that the disciples are his guru's but as a Vaisnava he does it on the guru's behalf."*

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p21.

This is contradicted by Bhakti Caru Swami:

Interviewer: You were brought up in a Vedic environment. What is your understanding of *ritvik acarya*?

Bhakti Caru: The word *ritvik* literally means a priest who performs a sacrifice.

(Bhakti Caru Swami ISKCON Journal March 1990 p13.)

It is significant that Bhakti Caru Swami makes no distinction between *ritvik* and *ritvik acarya*, neither does he give any indication that a *ritvik acarya* is actually the same as a guru and possesses disciples in his own right.

Also in the same magazine:

“How did Prabhupada’s disciples act towards their ritviks while Prabhupada was on the planet? Fire sacrifice, beads, name - then goodbye! Prabhupada authorised it. He’s my guru. This other guy is just performing a ceremony! And that’s the actual position of the ritvik. He’s just an officiating priest.”

Satyaraja das - ISKCON Journal March 1990 p38

Confusion

These ineptly handled attempts to ‘deal with’, or perhaps conceal, the *ritvik* issue have merely resulted in further confusion, and are indicative of the level of philosophical turpitude that pervades the GBC.

Most importantly a significant proportion of the eleven alleged appointees themselves have subsequently admitted that the *guru* appointment was a hoax and that they were originally appointed as *ritviks*. This a fact that is never mentioned by the GBC.

Pyramid House

In this instance, it would perhaps be appropriate to leave the final word to Tamal Krishna Goswami, who in 1980 admitted the sweeping nature of the fraud:

“Actually Prabhupada never appointed any gurus, he appointed eleven ritviks. He never appointed them gurus. Myself and the other GBC have done the greatest disservice to this movement for the last three years because we interpreted the appointment of ritviks as the appointment of gurus. [...] Srila Prabhupada said: ‘All right. I will appoint so many ...’ and he started to name them. He made it very clear that they are his disciples. At that point it was very clear in my mind that he were his disciples. [...] You cannot show me anything on tape or in writing were Prabhupada says: ‘I appoint these eleven as gurus’ it does not exist. Because he never appointed any gurus. This a myth.”

(Tamala Krishna Goswami: Pyramid House Confession December 3rd 1980)

This is a devastatingly frank admission and indicates quite clearly the scale and monstrous nature of the hoax perpetrated by the original eleven.

It is perhaps appropriate at this point to observe that *the Pyramid House document is common knowledge amongst currently initiating gurus, and that therefore one can only conclude that they too, are tainted with this duplicity.*

SECTION 4.1 (p22-23)

PROOF

“It is the conclusion of ‘Become’, the *Rtvik* proposal for the continuation of the *parampara*. The next *acarya* steps forward on the podium and declares that he ‘made it.’”

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p23

Self-Effulgent

Again this is an incorrect presentation of our position. What we actually state is that the next *Acarya* will emerge through self-effulgence *not* self-proclamation.

“A Vaisnava acarya is self effulgent, and there is no need for any court judgement.”

(CC (BBT 1975) Madhya 1.220)

As far as ISKCON is concerned Srila Prabhupada only left authority for himself to remain in place as the sole *diksa* guru. So whenever the next acharya emerges, and however qualified he may be, he will not be initiating within ISKCON since there is no authority for anyone other than Srila Prabhupada to do this. At some point a new acharya will certainly come, and when he does he will be self-effulgent, and will not be approved or rubber stamped by any type of committee or ‘court judgement’ as the GBC currently do. Such activity is wholly condemned by Srila Prabhupada.

False Presentation

We do *not* necessarily advocate, as the author states, that *no* other qualified individuals will emerge:

“Because they are based on the same erroneous logic as Fact 3, they are subject to a similar analysis and prove to be insubstantial to establish that Srila Prabhupada wanted, for all time to come, to simply have ritualistic priests who initiated everyone as his disciple.”

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p21

Whether or not another qualified pure devotee emerges is totally in the hands of Krishna. It is Krishna, and not an ecclesiastical voting body that maintains the *Parampara*.

This adds to the many other spurious claims made by the author throughout the whole document, where he has continually miss-stated our position.

Practical Results

It is surprising that in order to reinforce his point, the author quotes the following from the *Science of Self Realisation*:

“Quotation and counter quotation cannot solve the problem [...] we have to accept everything by its practical result.”

(Science of Self Realisation Ch 3)

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p23

One can only observe that the appalling ‘practical results’ of the self appointed *gurus* are a matter of public record.

SECTION 4.2 (p23-25)

LITTLE THINGS

“There are apparently “contradictory” statements in regards to the level of advancement of the spiritual master. Some say he must be liberated, others not.”

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p24

To support this idea of “contradiction” regarding the qualification of a guru, the author supplies quotes, which apparently seem to indicate only minimal qualifications, are required to take up the post of guru. However, the quotes supplied fall into two categories, and are actually stating a different conclusion to that alleged by the author.

First Become

Firstly a significant proportion of the quotes indicate that simply one should “strictly follow” and **then** he will **become** a guru. In other words they are simply stating a *process*, which if followed will lead to the state of guru being attained. This is what the word **become** means - something, which **will** occur if the process is strictly followed. Eg. If I state that:

‘Strictly follow your medical professor and you will become a doctor’

No one would interpret this statement as implying either that you are a doctor *now*, or that simply by attending a medical course, you are a qualified doctor. Similarly, these quotes from Srila Prabhupada are not “contradictory”, but simply state the obvious: Follow the instructions of your Guru, and in due course of time you will also *become* qualified as a Guru.

In fact the following line on which the author has based the theme of his whole paper, also includes the all important word - **become**..:

“*Amara ajnaya guru hana. You become guru. But be Qualified. Little Thing, strictly follower.*”

(Morning Walk, 22nd April, 1977)

This in no way states that **once** you are a qualified Guru, you do not need to be liberated.

Preacher Guru

Secondly, the quotes also state that many persons are required to take up the role of Guru, in order to expand the preaching. These quotes make reference to Lord Caitanya’s famous instruction in the Caitanya Caritamrita, whereby he encourages everyone to take up the role of Guru simply by repeating what they have heard.

In fact this is the context to the line quoted above, around which the author bases the theme of his whole paper :

“Amara ajnaya guru hana. You become guru. But be Qualified. Little Thing, strictly follower.”

(Morning Walk, 22nd April, 1977)

(*Amara ajnaya guru hana* is the Bengali for Lord Caitanya’s instruction to become guru).

However to understand *how* Lord Caitanya wishes us to become Guru, we must actually study the purports following this verse :

“Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Sri Krishna as they are given in *Bhagavad Gita* and *Srimad Bhagavatam*. In this way become a Spiritual Master and try to liberate everyone in this land.”

(7:128, Madhya Lila, C.C)

“That is one should stay at home, chant the Hare Krishna mantra and preach the instructions of Krishna as they are given in *Bhagavad Gita* and *Srimad Bhagavatam*.”

(Purport, 7:128 Madhya Lila, C.C.)

“One may remain a householder, a medical practitioner, an engineer or whatever. It doesn’t matter. One only has to follow the instruction of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, chant the Hare Krishna maha-mantra and instruct friends and relatives in the teachings of *Bhagavad Gita* and *Srimad Bhagavatam* [...]”

It is best not to accept any disciples.”

(Purport, 7:130 Madhya Lila, C.C)

It is this verse upon which the exotic notion that an individual of minimal qualifications can be a *diksa* guru, crumbles. The text clearly advises everyone to become an instructing, or *siksa* guru. The ‘qualification’ is simply to repeat accurately what one has heard. It is also stated very clearly that one should *not* accept disciples. If *this* is the type of *guru* the author wishes everyone to become then there is no dispute.

In fact one of the verses the author himself quotes, makes clear the nature of this instruction :

“Because people are in darkness, we require many millions of gurus to enlighten them. Therefore Caitanya Mahaprabhu’s mission is ... you become guru.” (21, May, 1976)

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p24

Thus Lord Caitanya is simply urging everyone to preach what they know. But these ‘millions’ of Gurus, as stated earlier, are instructed *not* to take disciples. Someone who simply preaches but does not formally take disciples is a *Siksa*, *not Diksa*, guru, whose whole purpose is to formally accept disciples.

Srila Prabhupada confirms this point repeatedly:

“Yare dekha, tare kaha, Krishna upadesa. You haven’t got to manufacture anything. What Krishna has already said, you repeat. Finish. Don’t make addition, adulteration, then you become guru [...] I may be fool, rascal [...] so we have to follow this path, that you become guru, deliver your neighbourhood men, associates, but speak the authoritative words of Krishna then it will act [...] anyone can do. A child can do.”

(Morning Walk May 11th 1977)

Child Gurus

The instruction to ‘*be guru*’ is meant for everyone in the world, and indeed, anyone who is preaching is such a *siksa* guru. Even children. Yet one would hope the author is not seriously proposing that any child who repeats what he has read in a book is automatically a *diksa* guru in the *parampara*.

Any assertion that this is so is clearly nonsensical, since, as it is clearly stated above ‘*it is best not to accept disciples*’.

Srila Prabhupada has clearly stated many times that *siksa* and *diksa* gurus are the same, since they both take one to Krishna. Also everyone is eligible to become either *siksa* or *diksa* guru. However the minimum qualifications do differ. Here Lord Caitanya has stated that simply by repeating what he has heard, one is already a *siksa* guru.

The qualification to be a *Diksa* or *Parampara* Guru, as we shall now see, is much more demanding.

Parampara

Let us briefly examine what Srila Prabhupada states to be the qualifications of a *parampara*, or *diksa* guru:

“Unless one is initiated by the right person, who always carries within his heart the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one cannot acquire the power to carry the Supreme Godhead within the core of ones own heart.

(SB (BBT 1987) 10.2.18)

“On the whole, you may know that he is not a liberated person, and therefore, he cannot initiate any person to Krishna Consciousness. It requires special spiritual benediction from higher authorities.”

(SPL (VI 1987) 68.4.18)

“Any person who seriously desires to achieve real happiness must seek out a *bona fide* spiritual master and take shelter of him by initiation. The qualification of his spiritual master is that he must have realised the conclusion of the scriptures by deliberation and be able to convince others of these conclusions.

Such great personalities, who have taken shelter of the supreme godhead, leaving aside *all* material considerations, are to be understand as *bona fide* spiritual masters.”

(SB (BBT 1987) 11.3.21)

Srila Prabhupada cites this verse in a purport to *Srimad Bhagavatam* 5.14.41, describing the necessity of accepting a *bona fide* spiritual master. In that purport he cites many of the important verses on *guru tattva*:. *brahmada brahmite; tad vijnanartham; tad viddhi; ta erad gurum;* and *yasya prasada bhagavat-prasada*. He mentions the qualification of purity or self realisation of the guru twice: ***‘One cannot get from the path of material existence until one receives shelter at the lotus feet of a pure devotee’***. And in commenting on all of these cited verses, he observes: ***‘This is essential. One must come to Krishna Consciousness, and therefore one must take shelter of a pure devotee. Thus one can become free from the clutches of matter’***.

There are actually many many more similar quotes. We have actually compiled a compendium which is available to any interested reader. Please see the end of this booklet.

However we challenge the author to produce one quote which supports the conclusion that a *diksa* guru can ever be anything other than a self-realised pure devotee.

Instructions

Furthermore, even if the author insists on arguing that there are non-liberated *diksa* gurus, Srila Prabhupada gives recommendations as to which grade of guru should actually take up such a post.

Furthermore, he also advises the prospective disciple what grade of guru he should accept.

“One should not become a spiritual master unless he has attained the platform of *uttama-adhikari*.”

(NOI 5(BBT 1975)

“Unless one is a resident of Krishna-Loka, one cannot be a spiritual master.”

(SPL Mukunda Das, 10/6/1969)

“A neophyte Vaisnava or a Vaisnava situated on the intermediate platform can also accept disciples, but such disciples must be on the same platform, and it should be understood that they cannot advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life under his insufficient guidance. Therefore a disciple should be careful to accept an *uttama-adhikari* as a spiritual master.”

(NOI 5(BBT 1975))

“The *guru* must be situated on the topmost platform of devotional service. There are three classes of devotees, and the *guru* must be accepted from the topmost class.”

(CC (BBT 1975) Madhya 24.330)

- Thus whatever belief about how many grades of *Diksa* guru there may exist, why not follow Srila Prabhupada’s recommendation as to who should actually take up such a post?

We apologise for the lengthy treatise, but it is very important to establish that Srila Prabhupada does not issue “*contradictory*” instructions on this or any other subject. By understanding that there are different minimum qualifications for different types of gurus, these apparently “*contradictory*” quotes are easily harmonised. Anyone and everyone can immediately take up the role of *Siksa* Guru simply by preaching, but the eternal *Sad Guru* who takes us back home to Godhead, is always a self-realised pure devotee - *Uttama adhikari*.

EXTRAORDINARY

"If a guru succumbs to weakness and falls down he is no longer a guru representing the *sampradaya*. Thus the *sampradaya* always remains pure."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p6 &33

Merry-go-round

Connected with this idea of the non-liberated *diksa* or *parampara* guru, the author also asserts that gurus may 'come and go' from the *parampara*.

This is directly contradicted by *sastra*:

"A bona fide Spiritual Master is in the disciplic succession from time eternal, and he does not deviate at all from the instructions of the Supreme Lord as they were imparted millions of years ago to the sun-god, from whom the instructions of Bhagavad-Gita have come down to the earthly kingdom."

(BG (BBT 1983) 4.42)

This shatters the ludicrous concept proffered both by the author and other members of the Governing Body Commission that members of the *parampara* can fall down.

Impossible

According to this verse, it is *quite impossible* that Jayatirtha, Bhagavan, Bhavananda, *et al* were *ever* members of the *parampara*. This verse *directly contradicts* statements made by Sivarama Swami, Jayadvaita Swami, and others, that the above-mentioned personalities were Bona-Fide members of the *parampara*.

One finds the following comment by Srila Prabhupada equally instructive:

"Well if he is bad, how can he become a guru? How can iron become gold? Actually a guru cannot be bad, for if someone is bad, he cannot be a guru. You cannot say bad guru. That is a contradiction. A guru cannot be bad. There is no question of a bad guru, any more than a red guru or white guru. Guru means 'genuine guru'."

(Science of Self Realisation Ch 2)

Summary

Everyone must be a preacher or *siksa* guru, and indeed, this is not difficult to do. All the quotes that the author uses to support his conclusion are actually in this vein. They all state simply '*instruct and repeat*'. This refers to a *siksa* guru, and *he* can be on many levels depending upon his individual spiritual progress.

However, a *parampara* or *Diksa* guru, who initiates the disciple with the transcendental knowledge that delivers one back to Godhead, *is always a self realised pure devotee*. Everyone is eligible to become such a guru by '*strictly following*' the process of Krishna Consciousness. However, this is the *method for becoming* such a guru, not the level of qualification attained *once* one has achieved the level of becoming such a guru.

Furthermore, *such a person does not fall down, and is always eternally a member of the parampara*.

This is actually the understanding that totally harmonises all of Srila Prabhupada's instructions on the qualifications of the *guru*. Thus, different minimum qualifications for different types of guru.

SECTION 4.3 (p26-29)

PHYSICAL PRESENCE

"The departed guru no longer accepts disciples, or gives *diksa*."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p27

This assertion is entirely spurious, and results from:

- A misinterpretation, unwitting or otherwise, of a phrase from a letter.
- A complete failure to grasp the essence of what *diksa* actually means.

The Letter

The letter in question states:

“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.”

(SPL Tusta Krishna 2 December 1975)

Before we actually deal with what the letter states it is interesting to note the background to this letter:

Considering the magnitude of the authors claim, it is perhaps rather surprising that he is able to advance only *one* document, a letter which itself was written to a follower of Siddha Svarupa, an individual *who already had disciples and was initiating in Srila Prabhupada's physical presence.*

If, as the author states, that there are ‘many other quotes’ demonstrating that *diksa* has to be given by a physically present guru, why can he only find a quote that relates to a person condemned by Srila Prabhupada:

“So far as I have studied Siddha Svarupa, he is not a bad boy, but he has his own philosophy, from the very beginning. It is almost inevitable that there should be enviousness amongst the Godbrothers, just like amongst my Godbrothers.”

(SPL (VI 1987) 75.7.43)

It is unfortunate that the author fails to advise the reader of this pertinent point.

Ambitious

It is interesting to note that Srila Prabhupada wrote similar letters to other disciples on the frequent occasions that they manifested this unfortunate desire to accept disciples. In order to curb their seemingly boundless ambition, he would often admonish them by requesting them to wait until he had departed.

“The first thing, I warn you Achyutananda, do not try to initiate. You are not in a proper position now to initiate anyone. Besides that, the etiquette is that so long as the Spiritual Master is present, all prospective disciples should be brought to him.”

(SPL (VI 1987) 68.8.17)

Suppressed

One might reasonably question why, if this letter is so important, and states such a significant ‘law’, then:

- Why was such an important letter suppressed for so many years?
- Why was the person who made the letters public ordered to return them by an ISKCON *guru*?

Context

Now we shall turn to the actual content of the letter. Firstly the author has only extracted a phrase from the letter, and therefore *taken it out of context.* Thus to understand what the whole ‘*law*’ is, one must deal with the proceeding statements.

“Every student is expected to become acarya. Acarya means one who knows the scriptural injunctions and follows them practically in life, and teaches them to his disciples. [...] 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.”

(SPL (VI 1987) 75.12.5)

Thus the letter actually states:

Srila Prabhupada wanted that his disciples to first **become** *acarya*. The word *become* means something, which has yet to be achieved. Thus further qualification was required from his disciples.

‘Keep trained up very rigidly and **then** you are Bona Fide Guru, and you can accept disciples on the same principle’. So therefore only accept disciples if you are actually qualified to be a Guru.

This letter merely sets out the time period in which his disciple could theoretically become a *diksa* guru (i.e. ‘*can*’, not ‘*will*’), namely after departure, but it is not in and of itself authorisation to do so. Without authorisation no-one can be a *diksa* guru, however qualified.

This law was never mentioned in any of Srila Prabhupada's books, nor did Srila Bhaktisiddhanta follow it, and just recently Sivarama Swami himself allowed his own disciple, Mahavishnu Swami, to break it.

Clearly Srila Prabhupada was simply trying to curtail the ambitions of one of his disciples.

The Law

What we are interested in establishing are the precise instructions Srila Prabhupada left for all his followers within ISKCON, not this instruction to one ambitious disciple regarding a 'law' that is not mentioned anywhere else.

The letter in question does not deal with that situation, and one is therefore unable to argue, as the author does, that: 'if Srila Prabhupada continued to accept disciples after his disappearance the letter would be meaningless'. The letter would not be meaningless in such a situation, since the letter does not address such a situation. Even if Srila Prabhupada continued to accept disciples after his disappearance simply on the basis that there were no disciples qualified to continue the disciplic succession, that in itself would mean the above law could not even function. In that circumstance Srila Prabhupada could not be contravening a law that could not even be implemented. And since the letter only sets out a possibility, i.e. you 'can' do something, not you 'will' do something, it cannot overturn a direct order.

That order was to run a system with just Srila Prabhupada as the *diksa* guru.

What the author does not allow for is that not only must the disciple must be qualified to take on unlimited disciples, but authorised as well. The very best the author could argue is that this one disciple was authorised, yet in the end the disciple left Srila Prabhupada's mission, and was not authorised by Srila Prabhupada to even act as a *ritvik*.

Thus the above 'law' is not contravened if Srila Prabhupada continues to take disciples, since the law in no way inhibits the ability of the Guru to initiate whenever he wants. It only restricts the disciple. And since there is no authority within ISKCON for anyone other than Srila Prabhupada to initiate, and since the only recipient of the letter was never even authorised to be a *ritvik*, what to speak of a *Diksa* guru, we can see how weak the Author's position is. Particularly since he himself has allowed one of his own disciples to break this very same 'law'. Thus it is clearly the Author who sees this law as 'meaningless'.

It is certainly not, as the author appears to suggest, the 'custom' that every disciple automatically takes on unlimited disciples simply because his spiritual master has left the planet. A procedure such as this is not only absurd, but a complete fabrication. Even the GBC do not accept this since they have elaborate systems for authorising *diksa* gurus within ISKCON. If everyone is already authorised to initiate, by dint of the above private letter, then why do the GBC feel the need to once again authorise people to initiate? Even the Author himself needed to wait for the GBC to allow him to initiate, but why if he was already authorised to do it?

Diksa

It is significant that the author has chosen to show that a *diksa* guru must have a physical body. This is due to a misconception as to the nature of *diksa*. *Diksa* is not a fire *yajna*, nor is it an 'electrical discharge' from a living body. It is only if one understands *diksa* in these rather primitive terms that one supports the notion that *diksa* requires a physically present material body.

It is therefore important to establish the nature of *diksa*. We find *sastra* extremely clear on this point:

"Diksa actually means initiating a disciple with transcendental knowledge by which he becomes freed from all material contamination."

(CC (BBT 1975) Madhya 4.111)

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

(CC (BBT 1975) Madhya 15.108)

"In other words, the Spiritual Master awakens the sleeping living entity to his original consciousness so that he can worship Lord Visnu. This is the purpose of diksa, or initiation. Initiation means receiving the pure knowledge of spiritual consciousness."

(CC (BBT 1975) Madhya 9.61)

This is the unequivocal verdict of *sastra*. At no point is there to be found mention of physical presence. Indeed, since *diksa* is understood to be the receipt of transcendental knowledge, *sastra* actually states the opposite:

"Reception of spiritual knowledge is never checked by any material condition."

(SB (BBT 1987) 7.7.1)

"The potency of transcendental sound is never minimised because the vibrator is apparently absent."

(SB 2.9.8.)

Srila Prabhupada makes it clear that the spiritual master need not actually be physically present:

PARAMANANDA: We're always feeling your presence very strongly, Srila Prabhupada, simply by your teachings

and your instructions. We're always meditating on your instructions.

SRILA PRABHUPADA: Thank you. That is the real presence. Physical presence is not important.

(Conversations(BBT 1991) 06.10.77)

"I'm always with you never mind if I am physically absent."

(SPL (VI 1987) 67.9.4)

"In the absolute world there is no distinction as me, or he, and I. Krishna and His representative is the same. Just like Krishna can be present simultaneously in millions of places. Similarly, the Spiritual Master can be present wherever the disciple wants. A Spiritual Master is the principle, not the body. Just like a television can be seen in thousands of place by the principle of relay monitoring."

(SPL (VI 1987) 68.5.16)

CURRENT LINK

Current link constitutes physical presence. To interpret it any other way changes the "law".

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p28

Erroneous

This adds to the many arguments that the author uses, but is unable to substantiate with any quote from *sastra*.

The term "current link" is used by Srila Prabhupada in the following verse from the *Srimad Bhagavatam*:

"In order to receive the real message of the *Bhagavatam* one should approach the current link or spiritual master in the chain of disciplic succession."

(SB (1987) 2.9.7)

However in the purport in which this verse appears, Srila Prabhupada makes no mention that "current link" is synonymous with physical presence.

The only rationale that the author is able to advance for the above claim is that the above quote must correspond with *his* interpretation of the letter quoted in the last section.

However we have just conclusively shown that the "law of disciplic succession" does *not* state that the *Diksa* Guru can only operate with a physical body.

It simply states that the succession of the Guru by his qualified disciple can only occur once the Guru has departed.

There is no mention that the Guru must cease to operate if there are no disciples qualified to succeed him.

As we have noted earlier, the letter in question *does not even deal with this scenario*, but only the situation where there exist disciples qualified to be Guru.

And if there is no qualified successor, there can be no immediately successive link in the chain. This explains why the notion that the 'Ritvik' philosophy also allows one to take initiation from *anyone* other than Srila Prabhupada is unfounded.

Initiation must be taken from the "current link" only.

That "current link" will remain Srila Prabhupada until demonstrated otherwise.

The haste with which the author seeks to establish that Srila Prabhupada is no longer available is not only unwise but totally unsupported by *sastra*.

Still Current

Thus it is clear that *whilst there is an apparent gap, the most recent acarya remains current.*

It is ridiculous to assert that in the absence of a physical presence one must accept an inferior substitute.

This is absurd, and is totally unnecessary since Srila Prabhupada has in any case assured us:

"I shall remain your personal guidance, physically present, or not physically present, as I am getting guidance from my Guru Maharaja."

(Room Conversation, Vrindavan 14/7/77)

All that is required is to *accept Srila Prabhupada until the next qualified link in the disciplic succession emerges.*

“The predecessors of the spiritual master are his spiritual master, his grand spiritual master, his great grand spiritual master and so on, who form the disciplic succession of acaryas.”

(SB (1987) 3 29 17)

As indicated the disciplic succession is a chain of *qualified acaryas only*, and *not*, as is the current practice, someone who has not apparently *‘fallen down’* in the preceding five years, and been fortunate enough to get the required number of votes at the annual Mayapura assembly.

Redundant

The argument extended by the author is, in any event, not only flawed, but redundant, because as has been shown in the previous section, Srila Prabhupada appointed *ritviks* and *not diksa gurus* to continue after his disappearance.

SECTION 4.4 (p29-30)

KNOWLEDGE

“In this regards Srila Prabhupada clearly states that a devotee other than an *uttama adhikari* can initiate.”

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p29

The *only thing* Srila Prabhupada *does* indicate is that a person other than an *uttama adhikari* is *forbidden* to assume the position of *diksa guru*.

His comments with regard to the possibility of lesser-qualified individuals accepting disciples are not a dispensation, but a warning:

“One should not become a Spiritual Master unless he has attained the platform of *uttama-adhikari*. [...] A neophyte Vaisnava or a Vaisnava situated on the intermediate platform can also accept disciples, but such disciples must be on the same platform, and it should be understood that they cannot advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life under his insufficient guidance.”

Therefore a disciple should be careful to accept an *uttama-adhikari* as a Spiritual Master.”

NOI 5 (1975)

This is confirmed elsewhere:

“The guru must be situated on the topmost platform of devotional service. There are three classes of devotees, and the guru must be accepted from the topmost class.”

(CC (BBT 1975) Madhya 24.330)

- Why not accept this advice?

Srila Prabhupada comments:

“At the present moment it has become fashionable to disobey the unimpeachable directions given by the *acar-yas* and liberated souls of the past.”

(SB (BBT 1987) 4.18.5)

Knowledge

As stated earlier, anyone can act as a *siksa guru*, but a *diksa guru*, by definition, must possess full *divya-jnana*.

Srila Prabhupada indicates this quite clearly:

“Then you can say ‘Yes, I know everything’ *Diksa*. *Diksa*, initiation, *diksa*, this Sanskrit word, *diksa*, means *divya-jnanam ksipayati* ask from spiritual master with service and surrender the transcendental knowledge. The more you ask, you become a man of knowledge. Then you can challenge, and then ‘Yes, I know everything’.”

(Morning Walk 11th June 1974)

“Which explains the of *divya-jnana*, transcendental, that is *diksa*. *Di divya diksanam*. *Diksa*. *Divya-jnana*, transcendental knowledge. [...] if you don’t accept a spiritual master how you’ll get transcen...You’ll be taught here

and there, here and there, and waste time. Waste time for the teacher and waste your valuable time. Therefore you have to be guided by an expert Spiritual Master.“

(Room Conversation 27th January 1977)

This *Divya-jnana* is extremely advanced knowledge:

“In the matter if of *divya-jnana* - [it comprises] knowledge of the original form [conveyed] within the divine mantra along with which is specific knowledge of [the individuals] relationship with the Supreme Lord.”

(Bhakti Sandarbha 243)

OPTIMISM

“In due course he will also reach the *uttama* stage and be able to give the highest realisations.”

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p 30

Speculation

“There are three classes of devotees, and the guru must be accepted from the topmost class.”

(CC (1975 Ed) Madhya 24.330)

Srila Prabhupada does clearly not support the peculiar proposal that one accept a lower grade of *guru* and hope he becomes an *uttama-adhikari*.

As the quote above and the many quotes given earlier prove, it is ludicrous to suggest, as the author does, that one abandon Srila Prabhupada on the speculative principle that one of the current Gurus may make it!

Srila Prabhupada only always urges us to accept a Bona-Fide Guru. He never urges us to accept a person who may end up being Bona-Fide, given enough time, and providing he does not fall down.

Qualification First

As the author asserts, one may certainly become an *uttama-adhikari* through the practice of Krishna Consciousness, but Srila Prabhupada indicates quite clearly that one should *first* attain the level of *uttama-adhikari*, and *only then* occupy the post of *diksa guru*.

The view that we need many gurus to fulfil the preaching mission is *fully achieved* through everyone acting as preacher, or *siksa guru*. That this is so has been fully explained in the purports to the *Amara ajanana guru hana* verse quoted earlier.

It is nonsense to suggest that one endeavour to find an individual senior to yourself and optimistically hope that he will prove able to provide liberation. *Sastra* indicates quite clearly that if one wants full *divya-jnana*, then one must go to the person who possesses it. *Srila Prabhupada is such a person.*

Resolution

If Srila Prabhupada provides us with the *essential core* of our transcendental knowledge, *then we must therefore be receiving divya-jnana from him.*

This is stated in a recent GBC Resolution:

- a) **Srila Prabhupada is the foundational *siksa guru* for all ISKCON devotees because he has realised and presented the teachings of the previous *acaryas* of the Brahma Madhava Gaudiya *sampradaya* appropriately for the modern age.**
- b) **Srila Prabhupada’s instruction are the essential teachings for every ISKCON devotee.**
- c) **Srila Prabhupada’s books are the embodiment of his teachings and should be accepted as the standard by all future generations of ISKCON.**
- d) **Every ISKCON spiritual master is responsible to guide his disciples to follow Srila Prabhupada’s instructions.**

(Resolution No. 35 GBC Minutes 1994)

It is clear that the Governing Body Commission states that it is Srila Prabhupada whose instructions we are to follow. It is the instructions of Srila Prabhupada that are the foundational and essential *siksa* for everyone.

- If his instructions are not transmitting *divya-jnana* then whose are ?

It is clearly *not* the present 'spiritual masters' who are currently giving the essential *divya-jnana*. They are simply advising from where it may be obtained. *They are assisting but not directly transmitting*. As noted earlier, this has been admitted by the GBC themselves.

Diksa Guru

If therefore, it is Srila Prabhupada who is giving us *divya-jnana* and thus enabling us to destroy our sinful reactions, *then he cannot be none other than our diksa guru*.

The *diksa* guru is not the individual who provides the spiritual name or lights the sacrificial fire.

The *diksa* guru is he who gives *diksa*, the transcendental knowledge that destroys all sinful reactions and takes us back to Godhead.

The choice is very simple:

- Is the person who tells you to read Srila Prabhupada's books giving *divya-jnana*, or the person whose books you actually read ?

The answer is of course quite clear.

SECTION 5.1 (p31)

HISTORY

"Wild accusations, distorted quotes, slanted perspectives, allegations, accusations, supposed conspiracies etc. [...] Utilising exaggerated historical events to weaken others faith to have them reject our spiritual tradition for a counterfeit."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p31

No Example

It is unfortunate that the author appears unable to provide any example of an occasion in which the information that has been presented is composed of either 'wild accusations' or 'slanted perspectives'. Nor are examples provided of 'exaggeration' or 'dishonesty'.

We claim to present the truth regarding the history of ISKCON. Until such time as the author is able to *prove* otherwise, he would perhaps be wise to refrain from allegations of this nature.

It is clear that the author is both unable and unwilling to dispute any of the case histories and allegations made in documents such as *The Betrayal*. One can only observe that the author is entirely at liberty to present, for instance, an alternative case study of Bhavananda. One would suspect that his failure to do so is significant.

Reaction

We do demonstrate very clearly that Srila Prabhupada appointed *ritviks* and that this order was subsequently ignored. '*Ritvik*' is therefore *not* a reaction to the history of ISKCON. But rather the history of ISKCON is the direct reaction for ignoring Srila Prabhupada's instructions to act as *Ritviks* only, and instead unauthorisedly assuming the role of *Diksa* Guru.:

"Don't be allured by cheap disciples. Go on steadfastly to render service first. If you immediately become guru, then the service activities will be stopped; and as there are so many cheap gurus and cheap disciples, without any substantial knowledge, and manufacturing new *sampradayas*, and with service activities stopped, and all spiritual progress choked up."

(SPL (VI 1987) 68.8.17)

DECEPTION

"However as the basic premise of 'Betrayal' is hypocrisy, fraud and deception, all historical events take on an equally twisted perspective."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p31

Untrue

Unfortunately, none of these claims are substantiated with evidence. It is significant that the author appears unable to provide the reader with precise examples of instances in which the historical information presented is either inaccurate or untrue.

Only *some* publications deal with the less pleasant aspects of the Society. Of these, one must concede that the exposure of

serious crimes may perhaps be considered provocative. It is however, almost impossible to render revelations concerning such crimes as murder and child abuse less disagreeable.

No Compromise

We make however, no apology for this apparently intransigent attitude, and consider that depravity and dishonesty must be fought wherever it is found.

It is outrageous to imply that one may compromise or defer to corruption of this magnitude.

Srila Prabhupada made this quite clear:

"We cannot make any compromise with anyone for cheap popularity."

(SPL 67.12.13)

"So this Krishna Consciousness movement is a challenge to all the rascals and fools, that's all. So those who have taken this movement very seriously, they should be very sober and understand at least you must expose all these rascals. That will be very much appreciated by Krishna."

(SPL 1973)

SILENCE

"Thus it is clear that the GBC needs clearer lines of communication with the rest of the society of devotees."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p4

The startling silence with regard to these matters is a cause for serious concern.

In order to assess where the alleged dishonesty and deception lies, one might care to consider the following questions at some length.

- Who kept the 'appointment tape' hidden for so long?
- Who kept Srila Prabhupada's letters hidden for so long?
- Who kept Srila Prabhupada's conversations hidden for so long?
- Who kept Srila Prabhupada's Will hidden for so long?
- Who kept Srila Prabhupada's final instructions hidden for so long?
- Who supported corrupt individuals until it was no longer possible to do so?
- Who *continues* to conceal the truth regarding these individuals?

And significantly, *who have been the very persons who have made these documents available.*

- Why have the authorities been so unwilling to ensure an earlier circulation of this material?

The apparent unwillingness of the author to address these issues is perhaps significant.

SECTION 5.2 (p31)

HYPOCRISY

"If malpractices of the past disqualify one from representing the truth, then the author of the rtvik publications should certainly consider that as a leader of an authorised group disbanded by Srila Prabhupada in the past, his perception of reality may be similarly marred at the present."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p31

Attributes

It is unfortunate that the author fails to mention that this alleged misdeed occurred some 18 years ago, a lapse indicative of a remarkably selective presentation of evidence, a failing that he repeatedly attributes to his opponents:

"Such inaccurate submission of evidence is not uncommon in Rtvik publications and in fact is the basis of the theory itself; partial presentation of the truth to achieve a preconceived end."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p9

In any case the individual mentioned is responsible for only a proportion of those documents circulated.

It is also worthy of comment that *The Betrayal* consists principally of direct quotations from Srila Prabhupada's books.

Discreditable

The continual need to attack the character of those presenting the message, rather than the message itself, suggests that the author is seeking to conceal the lack of his evidence by diverting the mind of the reader.

This ironically is another failing that he again attributes to his opponents:

"...the *Ritvik* philosophy is so unsound, that it requires a stunned and baffled reader to swallow it. That is exactly what the histories seem to do."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p31

HORROR

"Is there anything in the past of this group that would indicate that their present contribution is any less a horror than the tales they weave in their writings?"

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p31

Tales

Though he states we report 'tales', the author seems to forget all the information reported is either factual histories taken from official GBC documents, or quotes from Srila Prabhupada's books. One would hardly call this information 'tales'.

Furthermore, the main difference between ourselves, and the factual histories that we report, is that we have never claimed to be self-realised pure devotees. There can be no doubt that as individuals we possess faults and are in consequence subject to error. As such, we are open to correction. We would suggest however, that such imperfections should most certainly *not* be found in those assuming the position of *diksa* guru.

TRUTH

"There is, in fact truth to some of the historical perspectives held by *Rtviks*."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p31

Failure

The author has failed to produce any example in which it is demonstrated that *any* of the accusations of moral, financial and philosophical corruption are false.

"I hold that the overall motive of ISKCON's leadership has been to serve Srila Prabhupada's desires while inexperience (in Prabhupada's absence) and deviation by some members, have resulted in embarrassment."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p31

However it is at once apparent that the author remains unwilling to reveal either the breadth or nature of those deviations, and the manner in which they have been concealed.

SECTION 5.3 (p31)

QUOTES

"But there is no indication in Srila Prabhupada's books, not one quote, where he states that this is how the guru succession must go on."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p32

Documents

Similarly however, there is no detailed information regarding the Governing Body Commission, and the manner in which it will manage the movement in the future, nor is there any detailed mention about the nature and function of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, to be found within Srila Prabhupada's books. *But Srila Prabhupada does deal with these matters in separate documents.* In the same manner the *ritvik* system is also dealt with in documents originating from Srila Prabhupada.

Those documents have already been listed.

Conversely we have seen that the author is unable to produce *any* document that indicates that Srila Prabhupada appointed eleven *diksa* gurus

Unnecessary

Srila Prabhupada demonstrated over a period of several years how he need not be physically present, either for the initiation process, or to give *divya-jnana* to the majority of his disciples. This was conducted through the medium of the *ritviks* and the distribution of his transcendental teachings. To continue this process after his departure did not require a lengthy treatise but simply an instruction to continue, which as has been demonstrated, was exactly what was done. *There was no need to elaborately explain, that which had been practically demonstrated for many years.*

Formality

Furthermore it would appear that the author has misunderstood, unwittingly or otherwise, how *ritviks* function. Contrary to his assertion, such functionaries do *not* continue the guru succession, but simply assist newcomers to formally accept Srila Prabhupada as the *bona fide acarya*.

Ritvik is the title given to the person who officiates at the ceremony at which the new disciple is given a spiritual name. The provision of the spiritual name is itself only one part, or element, of the initiation ceremony, a ceremony which, according to Srila Prabhupada, is only a formality.

"Initiation is a formality. If you are serious, that is real initiation. My touch is simply a formality. It is your determination. That is initiation."

(Back to Godhead)

Thus there is no need to explain only one part of a ceremony which itself is not elaborately described in Srila Prabhupada's books, and is only a formality anyway.

Complete

However Srila Prabhupada's books *do* clearly explain the essential principles of initiation, *diksa*, and how the spiritual master is able to transmit *divya-jnana* without the necessity of a physical body. The use of *Ritviks* to give a spiritual name is simply an alteration in the detail of how such principles are applied. It does not alter any principle itself.

Surprising

It is surprising that the author has quoted the following to support his arguments:

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

(SPL (VI 1987) 74.11.59)

This clearly indicates that Srila Prabhupada's books are understood through their own potency, and that there is therefore no need for a physically present guru to understand the books. The following quote further confirms this:

DEVOTEE: Srila Prabhupada when you're not present with us, how is it possible to receive instructions? For example in questions that may arise...

SRILA PRABHUPADA: Well the questions are ans... answers are there in my books.

(Morning Walk, Los Angeles, 13/5/73)

REDEFINITION

“Like the word Hindu, the word *rtvik* has entered with one meaning, but is being given another meaning altogether.”

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p31

Doublethink

This is *doublethink*, for it is the author himself who states his intention of redefining the word:

“As a final point, we would like to give a new definition to the word *Rtvik* or *Rtvik Acarya*.”

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p21

SECTION 5.4 (p32)

PRECEDENT

“Nowhere in Gaudiya Vaisnavism, or any Vaisnava tradition is *rtvik* philosophy practised or believed. Why would Prabhupada, such a faithful adherent to *sadhu*, *sastra* and *guru* introduce something which has no philosophical basis or historical precedent.”

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p32

Unprecedented

Srila Prabhupada did many things that had no apparent historical precedent. Indeed, most things he did, especially in regard to initiation, appear to be unprecedented. The principle of *guru*, *sadhu*, *sastra* would, in principle, indicate that many of Srila Prabhupada's actions were extremely unusual.

There are many examples, but one will suffice:

When giving second initiation, it is understood that the *guru* himself must personally whisper the *mantra* in the ear of the initiate. This is not only the tradition, but also how the process is described in *sastra*. The use of a tape recorder would certainly contravene established practice.

On one occasion, he instructed the spouse of a prospective initiate to whisper the *mantra* on his behalf:

“I am enclosing herewith your sacred thread, duly chanted on by me. *Gayatri mantra* is as follows [...] Ask your wife to chant this *mantra* and you hear it and if possible hold a fire ceremony as you have seen during your marriage and get this sacred thread on your body. Saradia, or any twice initiated devotee, may perform the ceremony.”

(SPL (VI 1987) 71.4.8)

Absolute Plane

However, we also understand from *sastra*, that a pure devotee such as Srila Prabhupada is not answerable to the conditioned souls. Indeed, his actions may well be beyond their comprehension.

Sastra indicates this quite clearly:

“Srila Kaviraja Gosvami and one who follows in his footsteps do not have to cater to the public. Their business is simply to satisfy the previous *acaryas* and describe the pastimes of the Lord.”

(CC (BBT 1975) Madhya 2.85)

Principle

The use of *ritviks*, or proxies, even when the Spiritual Master is physically present, was not apparently widely practised before the advent of Srila Prabhupada. It is however important to understand that the use of a *ritvik* to give a spiritual name on behalf of the spiritual master, even though the spiritual master is not physically present, does *not* contravene any known principle.

It *must* be conceded that our knowledge of the *parampara* is neither detailed nor extensive enough to speak conclusively about every practice that was adopted in the past. *Our guide can only be Srila Prabhupada himself.*

Insufficient Reason

It is clear therefore, that *historical precedent* is in itself not sufficient reason to assert that Srila Prabhupada would not do or approve of any particular practice. The author's assertion that this must be so may be rejected.

Ultimately we must follow what Srila Prabhupada actually did, rather than what we think he *should* have done. In a previous section we have shown conclusively that Srila Prabhupada only appointed *Ritviks* to conduct initiations after his physical departure.

SECTION 5.5 (p32-33)

CONCLUSION

"I request my readers to consider the 'Purposes of this Paper', which we list below as having been confirmed."

Sivarama Swami - Continuing The Parampara p32

Discarded

Unfortunately as the proceeding sections have shown, there is either an error or mistake on virtually every page of the Paper "Continuing The Parampara". The evidence presented by the author is both ineffectual and inadequate, and may be discarded. It has been demonstrated that *the real conclusions that can be drawn from Srila Prabhupada's teachings are frequently diametrically opposed to those of the author.*

CONCLUSION

In Section 5, the author restates the points he set out in Section 1 to prove. However, as we have shown, point by point, the author has failed to prove a single point. Rather, he has simply assisted us to prove once and for all that Srila Prabhupada did appoint *ritviks* for after his departure, to initiate disciples for Srila Prabhupada only. In fact, *the correct conclusions that can be drawn are stated below:*

- **Srila Prabhupada appointed eleven *ritviks* to make disciples for him after his immediate departure.**
- ***Diksa guru* in the *parampara* must be pure devotees.**
- ***Diksa guru* in the *parampara* never fall down.**
- **Anyone and everyone is encouraged to be an instructing or *siksa guru*. However it is best to not accept disciples.**
- ***Diksa* is the transmission of transcendental knowledge. This is obtained through Srila Prabhupada's *vani* and therefore *diksa* does not require a physical body. Indeed, if we are obtaining such transcendental knowledge from Srila Prabhupada, then there can be no bar on him giving us *diksa*.**

Continuing The Parampara was supposed to be the definitive document on the guru issue presented by the head of our movement in the British Isles, member of the Governing Body Commission and predominant initiating *guru*. We would however humbly suggest that unless evidence to the contrary is forthcoming, the points presented herein must be accepted, as they have all been thoroughly substantiated.

At the very least, as this rebuttal has shown, the case against '*ritvik*' is far from strong, and thus the temple and book ban against our members is a great travesty of justice. 'Innocent until proven guilty', and this document has failed to prove us guilty. Far from it. Rather the reverse has been very comprehensively proven.

We humbly offer our apologies for any offences that have been caused to HH Sivarama Swami or any of the devotees by this or any other presentation. But the truth has to be told.

Accept Srila Prabhupada as your *diksa guru* and go back to Godhead.

Srila Prabhupada ki jaya !

We have quoted a number of sources in this document:

1. The 1977 'Appointment Tape'.
2. Video footage of the 1990 San Diego debate.
3. Tape and transcript of the 1993 Jayadvaita Swami mock debate.
4. Compendium of quotes on the qualification of the guru.
5. All the final documents appointing *ritviks* and the Will.
6. Sundry other sources.

Please enquire for copies.

Correspondence on any matter related to the Guru & other issues is welcome.

www.iskconirm.com
irm@iskconirm.com