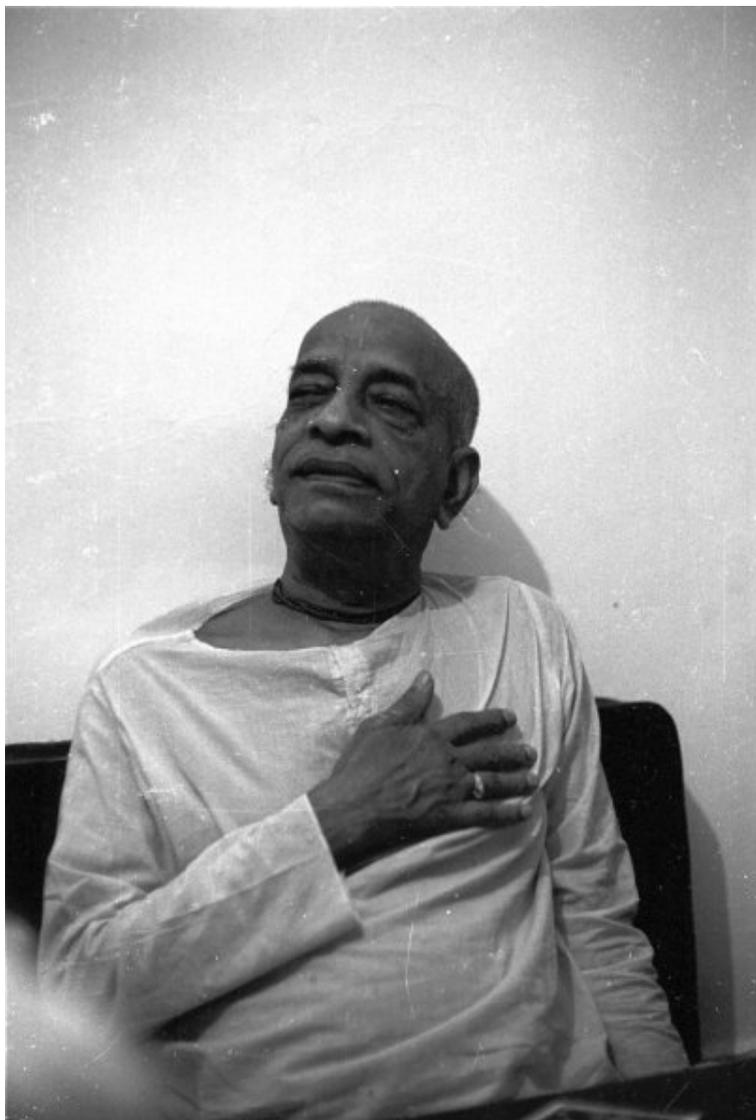


a response to: **H.G. Mayesvara prabhu**

An Overview Of 'Dual System' Reasoning



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“If death takes place, let it take here. So there is nothing to be said new. Whatever I have to speak, I have spoken in my books. Now you try to understand it and continue your endeavour.

Whether I am present or not present, it doesn't matter.”

(Arrival Address, Vrindavan, May 17th, 1977)



by Krishnakant

An Overview Of 'Dual System' Reasoning

Jan 16 1999 - There has been some talk recently that ISKCON should adopt a '**dual initiation system**'. The idea being that both the *ritvik* system and the 'guru' system currently in place in ISKCON should go on side by side. H.G. Mayesvara prabhu has been largely instrumental in pushing this idea, and the following article draws on some of his and others suggestions.

First we must be clear that devotees who opt for this 'dual system' approach do so for a variety of underlying reasons which we shall expand on. Thus to say someone supports a 'dual system' (henceforward DS) can often be misleading if one presupposes their reasons for doing so are identical. Through discussions with various DS sympathisers we have identified at least ten different reasons devotees have for going down that route:

- 1. The Best We Can Get** - This is often proposed by *ritvik* adherents who feel they will never win outright, and so should be prepared to settle for at least the shared option of *ritvik* initiations.
- 2. It is better than nothing** - This is similar to 1), except the DS is seen as a **BEGINNING** to, not the **END** of the campaign- as 1) above. The option always exists to advance further down the road to total *ritvik* domination. The *ritvik* adherents would be happy to accept it just to 'get something going'.
- 3. Strategic** - This is an advance on 2) in that the DS is now consciously seen and used as a necessary tool for overthrowing the present guru system completely. Thus the DS becomes a pro-active **STRATEGIC** move, rather than the more passive acceptance of '*some sort of progress*'. These *ritvik* adherents will accept the system pretending that they are sincere about co-existence, but know deep down that once it is up and running, and people see the benefits, it will completely over-run the present guru system in ISKCON. Rather as a cuckoo takes over another bird's nest.
- 4. Transitional Measure** - This is the official stance proposed in '*The Final Order*', and hence adopted by the IRM. Quoting from page 51 of *The Final Order*:

"It may be considered necessary to ease in the *ritvik* system gently, in phases perhaps. Maybe it can even run concurrently with the M.A.S.S for a short, pre-specified time period, in order not to create undue tension and disturbance. Such points will need careful consideration and discussion."

Thus approaches 1, 2, 3 and 4 are all fuelled by the same underlying conviction - that the *ritvik* system is what Srila Prabhupada really wanted, and that the current guru system is bogus. Thus approaches 1-4, though they have the guise of DS tolerance, are in reality and spirit in favor of **REPLACING** the current system altogether, not just **INSERTING** the *ritvik* system. They merely differ in their optimism regarding the chances of getting the *ritvik* system re-instituted within ISKCON. They increase in optimism from approach 1, the least optimistic, to approach 4, the most optimistic. Approach 4 sees the DS as something to be used merely transitionally, once the battle has been won. Indeed, approach 4 is so optimistic that it does not even favor the need to use approach 3, the '**foot in the door**'; as an intermediate step required to propel the *ritvik* system to final victory.

There are also at least 6 other reasons whereby the DS proponent genuinely wants to **INSERT** the *ritvik* system into ISKCON with no underlying intention, either stated or clandestine, to replace altogether the current guru system:

- 5. Holding Measure** - Some DS adherents consider it is presently unclear what Srila Prabhupada really wanted, and therefore whilst it is being made clear, both systems should run side by side. (Please note that **REPLACE** adherents would also be happy with 5, since in reality it is the same for them as approach 2, '**Better than nothing**'. '*If they want to give us a dual system while we carry on campaigning, then there is no loss to us, only gain.*')
- 6. The Sadhus are divided** - Everything must be done according to *Guru, Sadhu* and *Sastra*. Since many '*Sadhus*' in ISKCON are divided on this issue, one cannot reach a resolution until all the *Sadhus* are in consensus. Thus to absolutely

favour one system over the other cannot be done at this time.

- 7. Best of Both** - It is accepted that both systems have innate value, and a DS would thus preserve these benefits. In due course Krishna will reveal what he **REALLY** wants.
- 8. Pragmatic** - Since there are many followers from both sides, the dual system would keep everyone 'happy' and working together in harmony distributing books etc. After all we must accept the reality of many happy 'guru-disciple' relationships going in ISKCON.
- 9. Will attract more support** - The idea of *ritvik* is too much, too fast, for most 'sober' persons to swallow. Instead we can get a more broad based reform achieved if we allow the possibilities of both systems, since many more devotees will be attracted to this more 'mature' approach.
- 10. Defeating Extremism** - Unless we institute the dual system, ISKCON will ultimately be destroyed since both sides are convinced they are right, and will wage all out war to achieve their aims, resulting in huge casualties and possibly even ISKCON's destruction- which nobody wants.

Aside from the above ten agendas, the situation is further complicated by adherents proposing DS in the guise of one reason, when ultimately their aim is different. For instance one could propose any of the **INSERT** reasons 5-10, simply as a ruse to get '**the foot in the door**', the strategic stance, since in reality the person wants to overthrow the current system. Also some DS adherents have more than one of the above reasons in mind when proposing the dual system.

It is further complicated by the fact, as noted above, that the **REPLACE** adherents (*ritviks*) are more than happy to accept DS as long as it is not permanent, and that they are not obliged to give up their *ritvik* campaigning. This is for the simple reason that there is no loss for them. Thus even the IRM would accept DS temporarily, though they would never actively campaign for it.

From the above analysis it can be seen that the recent campaign to push the DS idea as a silver bullet, or magic solution, is quite simplistic. The reasoning behind DS is much more complicated and variegated than has thus far been presented. Prominent DS adherents have suggested that supporters of IRM and '*The Final Order*' are 'extremists' for not even considering the merits of operating the two systems within ISKCON. As we saw above under option 4, this criticism is itself an oversight since it was in '*The Final Order*' (page 51) that a dual system approach was first proposed way back in 1996.

Thus in reference to Mayesvara prabhu's campaign of **INSERTING** the *ritvik* system over **REPLACING** it, there are in reality 3 possibilities:

INSERT

INSERT in order to REPLACE

REPLACE

Arguments in favor of a Dual System

We will now go through the arguments put forward in favour of a dual system and judge their merits.

- 1. The Best We Can Get** - The recent successes have shown this to be totally untrue. Since the public launch of '*The Final Order*' in May 1997, we have seen constant unchecked growth. Neither has the rate of this growth slowed down, or reached a plateau. Rather the rate of growth has **INCREASED** since the launch of the IRM after the Bangalore meetings in July 1998. Please bear in mind that the IRM has barely been up and running 6 months and yet we are holding our 3rd successful conference, with Gurus, Sannyasis and Temple Presidents all getting involved. Ironically this view is actually endorsed by Mayesvara prabhu, an avid DS proponent, since he has stated that it is only a matter of time before the '*ritviks*' win completely by force of attrition and through the extrapolation of what is happening now!
- 2. Better than nothing** - If the GBC gave us the dual system with no pre-conditions, we would be happy to take it. We would then carry on as we are now until the current bogus guru system was completely extinguished. We would have lost nothing; rather we would just be one step closer to what we want. But as far as actively **CAMPAIGNING** for a DS, that is something else - please see next item.
- 3. Strategic** - Strategically the current IRM campaign of **REPLACE** (with *ritvik*) is the best stance; for if the optimism of the '**REPLACE**' advocates is unfounded, they can always drop back to a strategy of '**INSERT in order to REPLACE**'. Indeed the results of a **REPLACE** campaign maybe that the GBC will grant a DS as a middle way. They are hardly going to give **MORE** than what is asked for, nor will they necessarily be happy giving exactly what is asked for. On past form the GBC are more likely to give **LESS**. Thus even strategically the **REPLACE** path has to be the most sensible and potentially productive option.
- 4. Transitional Measure** - As mentioned earlier, in this approach the DS is only recommended as a possible means

of smoothing the transition, and thus does not really favor a DS as such. The IRM would only favor this approach as an exercise in change management.

- 5. Holding Measure** - See 2 above. Further, it is very clear what Srila Prabhupada wanted, as evinced by the failure of anyone to provide evidence for **modifications A & B**. Also if one is unclear about any course of action the logical thing is to **DO NOTHING**, not **DO EVERYTHING**. Doing nothing would of course leave ISKCON with the *ritvik* system anyway, since that was the last system Srila Prabhupada left in place before his departure. '**Doing nothing**' means leaving the *ritvik* system up and running.
- 6. The Sadhus are Divided** - The fact that there is disagreement does not imply that an issue is intractable. It simply means someone is wrong. And how can one be a *sadhu* and not be following Srila Prabhupada's order. Disobeying the order of the spiritual master is the greatest offence against the holy name. If two groups are saying opposing things they can't both be following Srila Prabhupada's order. One (or even both) parties are definitely not. Thus the *Sadhus* are not divided. The genuine *Sadhus* are never divided, since they are always in line with the order of guru. At the moment at least one group is definitely not in line with the order of the guru, and are thus not really *Sadhus*.
- 7. Best of Both** - The issue is not what the values and benefits of either system are, but which system Srila Prabhupada wanted. One thing that everyone is agreed on is that he definitely did not want **BOTH**. To say that each system may have merit is merely begging the question - how can anything have **ANY** merit if it has not been directly sanctioned by Srila Prabhupada? Also Krishna may have already revealed what he wanted, and it could be that some do not see it. Just because there is not universal acceptance does not mean Krishna has not revealed the truth. For many devotees the clear inability of the GBC to answer even the basic arguments for the re-instatement of Srila Prabhupada's final order is a sign that Krishna has already revealed the truth, and that it will only be a matter of time before everyone else sees this.
- 8. Pragmatic** - The biggest single contributing factor to the decline of ISKCON has been the bogus and unauthorized guru system, the M.A.S.S. How will perpetuating this disastrous embarrassment aid in keeping ISKCON healthy? And what is the meaning of preaching if we are not running ISKCON as Srila Prabhupada wanted it? In terms of remaining sensitive to the feelings of 'grand-disciples' we have allowed for a transitional period. But the aim has to be to educate all people that as long as they want to be part of ISKCON we must run things according to Srila Prabhupada's desires only. Otherwise by the logic of the 'pragmatic' approach, we should also allow H.H.Narayana Maharaja and many others to initiate in ISKCON. Why stop only at one group of gurus. The Gaudiya Matha also has much support in ISKCON. In some areas Narayana Maharaja followers heavily outnumber the *ritviks*. Also what about Harikesa das? He still has many followers in Russia who now practice the '**3 regulative principles**'. If we are going to accommodate other gurus and disciples why not them also? Ultimately we can see that the argument based on pragmatism alone, and without reference to Srila Prabhupada's order leads to absurdity and endless deviation.
- 9. Will attract more support** - In our experience most devotees who advocate the dual position, over and above a singular one, are those who are quite confused about what Srila Prabhupada wanted. Sometimes this is down to simple laziness, they have not read the relevant papers nor researched the issue thoroughly themselves. To such persons the DS appears a good compromise, and means they do not have to think things through too strenuously. Once one is certain of Srila Prabhupada's instructions on this matter one will naturally be inclined to campaign for that only. In the case of a *ritvik* conviction such a devotee will only support a dual system for the utilitarian reasons 1-4 given above. Furthermore, for every person whose support might be gained from a DS approach, many would be repulsed. Many *ritvik* supporters would be aghast at the very notion of keeping a bogus guru system going on for one second longer than necessary.
- 10. Defeating Extremism** - There is nothing extreme about following the order of the Guru. Of course both sides may say that they are the ones who are following, and each may be equally adamant, but we cannot be afraid of implementing the truth simply because it may cause temporary disruption. If we do not fix the problem, we will all be jointly responsible for ISKCON's permanent disruption. It has already been messed up for the last 21 years. Enough is enough. If ISKCON is not rectified we will all be the losers. One cannot judge success or winning and losing in terms of material assets alone. This judgement can only be made in terms of how much adherence there is to the order of Srila Prabhupada's order. There is no question of a war destroying ISKCON. If Srila Prabhupada's order is not followed ISKCON will already be destroyed. An ISKCON without Srila Prabhupada as the sole *Diksa* Guru, as he wanted, cannot be ISKCON.

The argument is made lets '**co-operate**'. But co-operate around what, and on what basis? Co-operate in continuing to bring living entities to unauthorised gurus? Co-operation must be based on the truth **ONLY**. Yes Srila Prabhupada told us to co-operate to push on his mission.

But integral to that mission is the fact that he is the sole *Diksa* Guru. That **IS** the mission.

The IRM's approach has, and will continue to be, calm and philosophical anyway. There is nothing extreme about philosophical argument in support and in pursuance of the truth. The IRM promotes a constructive not destructive campaign. A campaign to reform from within, rather than attack from outside. This can only be done however without compromising the truth. Adherence to the truth is thus the only practical way forward, which no amount of fudge and compromise will better.

Conclusion

We humbly suggest that we must put all political considerations aside, and be guided only by the will of Srila Prabhupada, for only then will we get his mercy, and then anything is possible. To support anything that is not in line with Srila Prabhupada's desires, simply for expediency, will not lead to success since it is not rooted in the truth, and therefore will not be empowered by Krishna. The one thing we can say for certain is that regardless of how confused or divided we are over the *ritvik* issue, we **DEFINITELY** know Srila Prabhupada did **NOT** want **BOTH!** Thus logically the **INSERT** stance is nonsensical. ISKCON must be guided by Srila Prabhupada's orders. If one does not know what they are then one should remain quiet. Preaching from a position of ignorance is the height of hypocrisy and arrogance. Just because one may not be clear of Srila Prabhupada's orders does not mean they **ARE** unclear, or that they are unclear to everyone else. Disagreement is not evidence that there is no clarity, or that there are no clear instructions. It can just as easily be evidence that one party is wrong. Since the GBC have been defeated over and over, and cannot stand behind any one of their numerous contradictory position papers, it could just be that the *ritvik* position is correct. Certainly that is our strongly held conviction.

The only rational approach is to take the following steps:

1. Determine what Srila Prabhupada wanted.
2. Then implement that.
3. If it is unclear to you what Srila Prabhupada wanted then go back to step 1 until it is clear

One should specify exactly what Srila Prabhupada did want, support ones conclusion with explicit applicable evidence, and campaign for that **ALONE**. Why campaign for two things - when it must be the case that at least one of them is not what Srila Prabhupada wanted. It makes no sense.

Summary

1. *ritvik* arrangement to continue or he did not.
2. If he did not, we should not **INSERT** it, since we would be disobeying the orders of the spiritual master.
3. If he did want it, we should **REPLACE** the current system, since the current system would be bogus, and by replacing it we would once more be following the orders of the spiritual master.
4. If we do not know what Srila Prabhupada wanted, we should attempt to find out what he did want, and implement that **ALONE**.
5. We should not implement a dual system simply because both have many followers and it may keep some of them happy - (in itself highly unlikely). Our job is to keep Srila Prabhupada happy.
6. The only circumstance the IRM feels would justify a DS is as a temporary measure to smooth the transition from the multiple *acarya* successor system, to the re-institution of the *ritvik* system.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

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