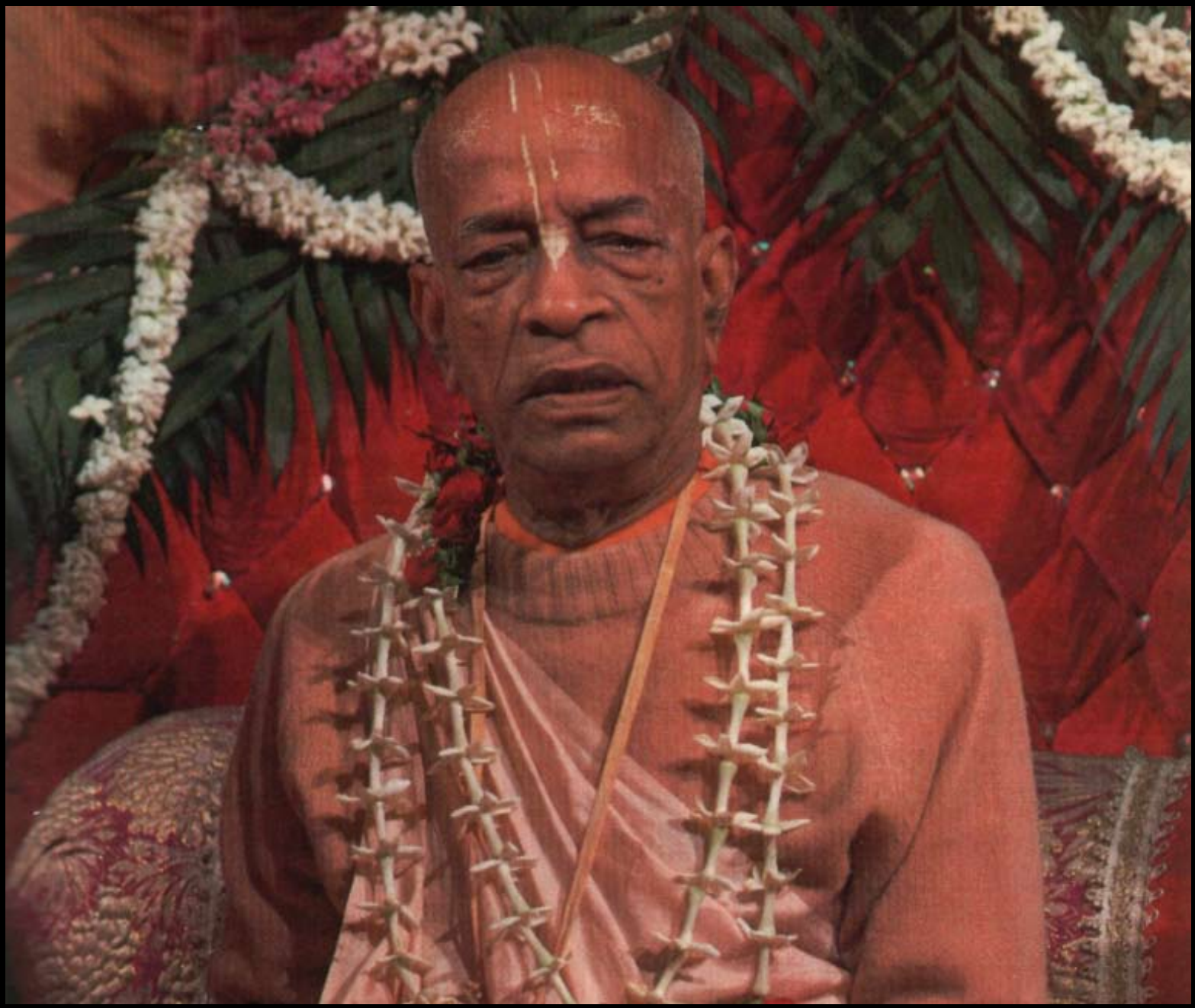
a reply to 'Disciple of My Disciple'

THE FINAL ORDER

STILL STANDS!



THE FINAL ORDER STILL STANDS!

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”Change means rascal....

Anything change means it is the domain of rascals, pandemonium”.

(Srila Prabhupada, morning walk, Delhi 14/12/75)

“So these rascals will change every year their theology”.

(Srila Prabhupada, morning walk, LA 21/12/73)

by Krishnakant

THE FINAL ORDER STILL STANDS!

Introduction

The Governing Body Commission (GBC) of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness has released a paper called *'Disciple of My Disciple'* (Henceforward referred to as DD) in partial response to a paper called *'The Final Order'*. When we first saw DD we advised the GBC that amongst other things it seriously contradicted their current "official Final *Siddhanta*" (*siddhanta* meaning -highest understanding or scriptural conclusion) which was given in the GBC's 1995 publication 'Gurus and Initiation in ISKCON' (henceforward referred to as GII). It was in response to GII that *'The Final Order'* had originally been written. We wanted to show that the current GBC 'final *siddhanta*' was not in line with Srila Prabhupada's actual final wishes on initiation as set out in the July 9th policy document. The GBC now appears to concede that DD does in fact contradict GII, and that DD now represents their new official 'final' *siddhanta*. This climb-down was intimated in the following message from one of the principal architects of the new GBC position:

> "You note that on this topic, there have been differing comments and differing interpretations by various GBC's and senior ISKCON members over the years. It strikes me as no wonder that there appear to be contradictory statements."
>
> " I stand by my previous letter. The purpose of our paper was not to prove the GBC right or wrong. It was to step back and take a fresh, unbiased, and honest look at the May conversation. One could just as easily argue that the GBCs willingness to recognise DOMD shows their openness to fresh ideas, if well founded. We are not set in cement....we want the truth."
> **(Badrinaryana Dasa, 10/4/97 & 18/4/97, replying to our point that DD contradicted GII)**

Thus it should be noted that one of the main aims of *'The Final Order'* has been achieved. In not defending GII whilst replying to *'The Final Order'*, but rather crafting an entirely new position that contradicts GII, the GBC has tacitly acknowledged that *'The Final Order'* has successfully shown major flaws in GII, as was its original intention.

This recent ecclesiastical U-turn has some extremely serious implications:

It means they are admitting that for the last twenty years the GBC's official explanations of how they were authorised to initiate after Srila Prabhupada's departure were all false.

It means that the GBC, by their own admission, have proven themselves unreliable when it comes to understanding what Srila Prabhupada wanted, since in examining the same identical evidence for twenty years they have produced at least four different contradictory 'official' explanations for how they were supposedly authorised to initiate.

It means that anyone who has been intimidated, ostracised or thrown out of ISKCON for criticising the GBC's previous 'explanations' were treated completely unjustly.

In light of the GBC's poor track record on this issue, devotees should at least be open to the possibility that the new *siddhanta* offered in DD may also be completely false. This is practically admitted in Badrinarayana prabhu's remark- "We are not set in cement...we want the truth". In other words it is quite possible that in a couple more years we shall be issued yet another theological treatise as the GBC struggles for any interpretation of the evidence which allows their invented multiple *acarya* successor system (M.A.S.S.) to continue, and the original 'representative of the *acarya*' (*ritvik*) system to be suppressed. We wonder what Srila Prabhupada would think of all this:

> **"So these rascals will change every year their theology".**
>
> (Srila Prabhupada, morning walk, LA 21/12/73)

"Change means rascal....Anything change means it is the domain of rascals, pandemonium".

(Srila Prabhupada, morning walk, Delhi 14/12/75)

We had prayed that in recognising the flaws in GII, the GBC would see sense and decide to re-instate Srila Prabhupada's final order without the need for any further external pressure. In the conclusion to *'The Final Order'* we said it would be far better for the GBC to correct matters internally, rather than perpetuate a messy public battle of polemics. We even sent the GBC an earlier draft of this present paper along with the plea that they withdraw DD. Sadly the GBC body have chosen to ignore this advice.

In this paper we shall set out to prove that the latest GBC *siddhanta* is even more seriously flawed than their previous doctrine. We shall show that DD does not in any way prove modifications a) & b) (from *'The Final Order'*), and that as a result Srila Prabhupada's final order on initiation, as given in the July 9th policy document, still stands.

Modification a) is: The *ritvik* system must stop on the departure of Srila Prabhupada. &
Modification b) At this point the *ritviks* must transform into *diksa* gurus, and thereby initiate on their own behalf, not Srila Prabhupada's.

These are referred to as modifications since they are not stated in the final July 9th order, nor anywhere else for that matter)

There are two principal premises put forward in DD which are absolutely vital to the paper's central argument:

Premise 1) The word *ritvik* cannot, in the May 28th conversation, be defined as meaning proxy, (one who acts on anothers behalf).
Premise 2) Srila Prabhupada ordered his disciples to become *diksa* gurus on May 28th 1977.

If either or both of these premises is proven to be false then DD's attempt to show that Srila Prabhupada authorised *diksha* gurus on May 28th will not have succeeded.

This paper is divided into two parts. For reference, Part 1 presents the evidence that proves how both of these premises are contradicted by the most recent GBC position, thus illustrating how the GBC have been forced to come up with yet another 'official' interpretation in trying to answer the *'The Final Order'*.

In Part 2 we will show how these two premises along with all the other arguments presented in DD are incorrect in their own right. We will demonstrate how from start to finish DD is filled with false claims, philosophical errors and contradictions. (All statements from DD shall be boxed.)

Part 1

Most recent GBC philosophy contradicts DD

Premise 1) The word *ritvik* cannot, in the May 28th conversation, be defined as meaning proxy, (one who acts on anothers behalf).

> "The proxy-initiation adherents base much of their argument on a false definition of '*ritvik*'. [...] The definition of '*ritvik*' in the Sanskrit dictionaries and in Srila Prabhupada's books is not "proxy" or "non-initiator" or anything of the sort". [...] Thus, Srila Prabhupada does not give any weight to the idea that '*ritvik*' means 'proxy'. [...] In the present conversation, Srila Prabhupada does not refer to proxy initiations at all, not even in connection with the word '*ritvik*'."
> **(DD, p5)**

The above contradicts evidence given by: The entire GBC body in GII

> "When Srila Prabhupada was asked who would initiate after his physical departure he stated he would "recommend" and "give" his "order" to some of his disciples who would initiate on his behalf during his lifetime ... [...]
> Subsequently Srila Prabhupada named some disciples to initiate on his behalf, as he had previously stated."
> **(GII, P14)**

Here we clearly see the proxy arrangement made in July being exactly the same as the "officiating *acarya* - is that *ritvik-acarya* - *ritvik* yes" recommendation Srila Prabhupada spoke about on May 28th.

His Holiness Bhakti Caru Swami Maharaja

> "In the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Srila Prabhupada explained the word *ritvik* means priests who perform a sacrifice on behalf of somebody. It is a vedic expression that means *yajna purahit*. They perform the sacrifice for the *hota*, the person who organises the sacrifice."

(*Spiritual Connections*, Page 6, Bhakti Caru Swami)

His Grace Ravindra Svarupa Dasa prabhu

> "First of all, I'm going to appoint some people to act as officiating *acaryas*, around the world, to initiate on my behalf as long as I'm here, because that is the etiquette."

(ISKCON Journal, p34, Ravindra Svarupa Dasa)

His Holiness Tamala Krishna Goswami Maharaja

> "He was physically incapable of performing the function of initiation physically, therefore he appointed officiating priests to initiate on his behalf."

(Topanga Canyon Confessions)

Looking now at the second premise underpinning DD.

Premise 2) Srila Prabhupada ordered his disciples to become *diksa* gurus on May 28th 1977.

> "The present paper will show that on May 28th, 1977, Srila Prabhupada ordered his disciples to become initiating spiritual masters."
> **(DD, P2)**
>
> When Srila Prabhupada says, "on my behalf, on my order ...," the proxy-initiation adherents say that he is speaking of an order to come in the future ..."
> **(DD, p8)**
>
> "The words "on My order" themselves point to the order."
> **(DD, p8)**
>
> (This refers to line 12 (as given in "The Final Order") of the Appt Tape)

The above contradicts evidence given by:

The entire GBC body in GII

> "When Srila Prabhupada was asked who would initiate after his physical departure he stated he would "recommend" and "give" his "order" to some of his disciples who would initiate on his behalf during his lifetime and afterwards as "regular gurus", whose disciples would be Srila Prabhupada's grand-disciples. Srila Prabhupada repeatedly cited Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's statement "amar ajna guru hoiya" and stated that one would be eligible to act as an initiating

guru based "on my order", i.e. on the "order" of Srila Prabhupada as the representative of Lord Caitanya. Subsequently Srila Prabhupada named some disciples to initiate on his behalf, as he had previously stated."

(GII, P14)

In the above passage it is clearly stated that the order for Guru was given at the same time as the order for devotees to act on Srila Prabhupada's behalf, which GII says occurred on July 7th 1977. The word 'would' (underlined above) proves the orders were not given on May 28th 1977 as asserted in DD.

In DD it is claimed the two orders (to act as *ritvik*, and act as *diksa* guru) are separate, and that the order for Guru-ship occurred earlier, on May 28th 1977:

"But a recommendation from the spiritual master is as good as an order, and the recommendation of certain devotees in the July 9th letter is a follow-up to the order that Srila Prabhupada's disciples should take up the work of spiritual master after his departure."
(DD, P4)

His Grace Ravindra Svarupa Dasa Adhikari:

"And after my departure, if you are actually qualified, if you actually understand my instruction, then you may become a regular guru and initiate your own disciples who become my grand-disciples. That's what Prabhupada said."

(ISKCON Journal, p34)

His Holiness Siva Rama Swami Maharaja:

"Satsvarupa Maharaja asks an unclear question. On whose behalf is the initiation. This should refer to Prabhupada's absence. In any case Prabhupada answers. The formality is that in his presence (here he uses the word "my", not "his") one should not become guru, but act on his behalf. But still when Prabhupada gives the order to take on the responsibility, that person is "actually" guru, but will only act so in his absence as Prabhupada confirms in many previous instances. [...] "Become" says the "order" was never given. But it was. On July 7th. Prabhupada gave the list of those he "chose". The process was already clear. First on his behalf, then regular guru.

(*Continuing the Parampara,* Siva Rama Swami, p20)

The GBC minutes book

"The conversation was taped for future reference, and the results of the conversation were recorded in the official GBC minutes book, with all the GBC's present signing as witnesses."
(DD, p3)

"Srila Prabhupada said he will appoint several devotees who shall perform initiations in the future, even after his departure."

(GBC minutes book)

His Holiness Tamala Krishna Goswami Maharaja:

"After Srila Prabhupada's departure, what is the position of these eleven people? Obviously, Srila Prabhupada felt that of all the people, these people are particularly qualified. So it stands to reason, that after Prabhupada's departure, they would go on, if they so desired, to initiate."

(Topanga Canyon Confessions)

"Actually, Prabhupada never appointed any gurus. He didn't appoint eleven gurus. He appointed eleven *ritviks*. He never appointed them gurus. [...] You can't show me anything on tape or in writing where Srila Prabhupada says, 'I appoint these 11 as gurus.' It doesn't exist because he never appointed any gurus. This is a myth."

(Topanga Canyon Confessions)

(N:B Oxford dictionary defines the word APPOINT as 'to ordain'. It defines the word ORDER as 'to ordain'.)

The authors must accept this evidence from Tamal Krishna Goswami since in DD it says:

"But Tamal Krishna Maharaja has already shown the willingness of the GBC to accept any answer Srila Prabhupada gave."
(DD, p5)

His Holiness Jayadvaita Swami Maharaja:

"Srila Prabhupada did not appoint anyone to be guru for the future, he appointed *ritviks* to continue in his presence."

(San Diego Debate, 1990)

Other Contradictions:

"There is no appointment of gurus or successors, only a recommendation that certain disciples start the natural process."
(DD, p4)

"Srila Prabhupada said he will appoint several devotees who shall perform initiations in the future, even after his departure."

(GBC minutes book)

Leaving aside when the 'order' came, there also appears to be no agreement over whether or not it was even an 'appointment'. Also, as shown earlier, the word 'order' and 'appoint' share the same definition. Thus the author of DD even contradicts himself.

It is interesting to note at this point that as well as contradicting DD, all the pieces of evidence given so far from 'official' sources frequently contradict each other too. All the quotes above are from so-called 'current *siddhanta*' position papers; (they have yet to be officially withdrawn in the wake of DD). We did not quote from papers issued before 1986 where an officially recognised evolutionary jump in understanding did indeed take place. No, the sources we quote are all currently accepted as bona fide. Let's just run through them quickly here:

GII (1995): This is the 'official GBC position', the 'Final *siddhanta*' as of 1995. (GII, p1 & p14).

ISKCON JOURNAL (1990): This journal is considered so currently Bona Fide that in this year's GBC resolutions it was decided to use sections of it, along with DD in a booklet to be released very shortly.

H.H. SIVARAMA SWAMI (1994): His understanding of this issue is so respected and admired that he was this year selected to the committee which will produce a book on this entire issue. He has never officially retracted one single word that we have quoted.

H.H. JAYADVAITA SWAMI (1996): An up-dated version of his paper on *ritvik* will also be included in the upcoming booklet. He has never retracted his statement, which we quoted, that Srila Prabhupada definitely did not select gurus for the future.

H.H. BHAKTI CARU SWAMI (1996): This devotee, of exceptional standing, gave a definition of *ritvik* as meaning proxy only last year. He also appeared in the ISKCON JOURNAL in 1990, and to our knowledge not a single word of that document has ever been retracted by the GBC body.

PART 2

Analysis of DD

Premise 1) The word *ritvik* cannot, in the May 28th conversation, be defined as meaning proxy, (one who acts on anothers behalf).

> "The proxy-initiation adherents base much of their argument on a false definition of '*ritvik*'. [...] The definition of '*ritvik*' in the Sanskrit dictionaries and in Srila Prabhupada's books is not "proxy" or "non-initiator" or anything of the sort". [...] Thus, Srila Prabhupada does not give any weight to the idea that '*ritvik*' means 'proxy'. [...] In the present conversation, Srila Prabhupada does not refer to proxy initiations at all, not even in connection with the word '*ritvik*'."
> **(DD, p5)**

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

(July 9th letter)

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

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

> "The July 9th letter can only be the recommendation of proxies ..."
> **(DD, p13)**

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

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

Further this linkage is also acknowledged by DD:

> "There is a link between the July 9th letter and the May 28th conversation. The July 9th letter, issued through the GBC, is a follow-up to May 28th conversation, ..."
> **(DD, p3)**

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

Further the general meaning of the word *ritvik* has never been an issue of contention. DD's use of their Holinesses Hrdayananda Dasa Goswami and Suhotra Dasa Goswami to show that '*ritvik*' means priest is totally redundant since in *'The Final Order'* the word *ritvik* is clearly defined as meaning "priest" (p.52 point b). References are given for every one of the 32 times the word *ritvik* or its derivative is used in Srila Prabhupada's books, and on every occasion it means priest. The issue is - in what capacity were the *ritviks* (priests) that Srila Prabhupada appointed meant to act. It is clear that Srila Prabhupada set them up specifically to act as his proxies. There is no instruction for them to act on their own behalf. For thousands of years *ritviks* have been used in all types of ceremonies and functions. We are only concerned with what Srila Prabhupada wanted his particular *ritviks* to do. Some other *acarya*'s use of a *ritvik* 5000 years ago is totally irrelevant, (though according to His Holiness Bhakti Caru Swami Maharaja, even then they would have been acting as some type of proxy).

Furthermore, the fact that a *ritvik* is only a priest and nothing else proves that they are NOT *diksa* gurus who take their own disciples. They have never been defined as *diksa* gurus and, more importantly, Srila Prabhupada never used the word rtvik when referring to a *diksha* guru.

Thus as evidence the appointment tape offers only two choices:

1. The disciples belong to a priest, who by definition is not a *diksa* guru, and who has been set up to be a proxy.

or

2. They belong to the *diksa* guru, Srila Prabhupada.

The *ritviks* function was defined by Srila Prabhupada. He set them up specifically as proxies. They were not existing independently as *yajna* priests before Srila Prabhupada created them. Thus, since Srila Prabhupada manifested them only and specifically as proxies, this is the only definition that counts - and is the definition that Srila Prabhupada would have had in mind when he firsts mentions appointing them on the May 28th 'Appt Tape'. This is the definition which is used and accepted in *'The Final Order'*.

"What is an 'officiating *acarya*'? An officiating *acarya* must be a certain kind of *acarya*: an *acarya* who officiates. But he is an *acarya*. Srila Prabhupada does not say 'priest' or 'proxy'."
(DD, p4)

In the following Srila Prabhupada contradicts the above assertion by equating the term 'priest' (*ritvik*) with the term '*ritvik-acarya*' which in turn is equated with the term "officiating *acarya*":

Srila Prabhupada: ...I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating *acarya*(s).
Tamala Krishna Maharaja: Is that called *ritvik-acarya*?
Srila Prabhupada: *Ritvik*, yes.

Thus the term 'officiating *acarya*' refers to a 'priest'.

Also the main definition of the word "officiate" is to 'discharge priestly service' (Oxford Dictionary). Thus an officiating *acarya* is an *acarya* that discharges priestly service. Not a *diksa* guru. (The term '*acarya*' can simply mean 'one who teaches by example'- it does not necessarily refer to *diksa* guru). Notice how Srila Prabhupada states he will recommend 'officiating *acaryas*', agrees that they are the same as '*ritvik*' and then uses only the term '*ritvik*' in the 'recommendation' letter of July 9th.

The author of DD himself admits that a *ritvik* can act as proxy:

"Of course a priest may act as proxy at times like anyone else ..."
(DD, p5)

Only in this case they were not intended to act as proxies 'at times', they were created specifically and only for that purpose. There is no question of them already being *ritviks* who were asked to act as proxies 'at times'. They were set up solely to act as proxies and then simply referred to as *ritviks*.

"The definition of "*ritvik*" in the Sanskrit dictionaries and in Srila Prabhupada's books is not "proxy" or "non-initiator" or anything of the sort".
(p.5)

Everyone is agreed that the definition of '*ritvik*' is 'priest'. Priests do not initiate, they officiate over various types of ceremony. This is explained by H. H. Hrdayananda Goswami and H. H. Suhotra Maharaja in the appendixes of DD. This is also confirmed by Dr. V.S. Apte's Practical Sanskrit Dictionary, which was quoted by Srila Prabhupada in the Adi-lila of *Caitanya Caritamrta*. There it states that the word means a "priest who officiates at a sacrifice".

Thus our statement that "*ritviks*, by definition, are not the initiators" is correct since:

***Ritvik* = Priest who officiates** ....Officiator is not a *Diksa* guru

***Diksa* guru = Initiator** ------Therefore *Ritvik* is non-initiator, as we said.

"Many times Srila Prabhupada himself performed the fire sacrifice, and on those occasions, Srila Prabhupada acted both as *ritvik* (officiating priest) and as initiating guru but not as proxy".
(DD p.5)

The issue here is that the authors of DD are confusing the ceremonial formalisation of *diksa*, with the concept of disciple ownership. As we established in the previous point, *ritviks* cannot be the initiators within the system mentioned on May 28th. In Srila Prabhupada's books and July 9th letter, *ritviks* are only ever described as 'priests' or 'representative of the *acarya*', never as *diksa* gurus, or latent *diksa* gurus. Whenever Srila Prabhupada performed the initiation ceremony, gave a name, chanted on beads or thread etc, he was undoubtedly performing priestly functions. The difference between this situation, and the system Srila Prabhupada sets up on July 9th, is that in the first example Srila Prabhupada is not only performing ceremonial functions, he is also the *diksa* guru. Clearly he was not acting as a proxy for himself; on that we would agree with DD. In the system mentioned in May, and then formally put in place in July 1977, the *ritviks* were selected to perform these very same priestly functions, but on behalf of Srila Prabhupada. This is made extremely clear in the final July 9th order itself, and through the common sense point that if *ritviks* are performing initiation ceremonies, the disciples thus generated can only belong to them if they happen already to be *diksa* gurus- (as was the case when Srila Prabhupada acted in a priestly capacity)- if they are not, then the disciples must belong to somebody else, and the *ritviks* will be acting in that instance in some type of proxy capacity.

"They say that when Srila Prabhupada would want to say "I am your guru", he would invariably say, "He is your guru" (...) But their argument is too easy. They take any word they want, give it any meaning they want, and make Srila Prabhupada appear to say anything they want".
(DD p.7)

is true we do make an indirect interpretation at this point in so far as we assert that Srila Prabhupada is speaking of himself in the third person. We cannot absolutely prove that our interpretation is correct. However, the GBC had the duty on May 28th to ask clear questions of Srila Prabhupada. It is a fair observation that their questioning, albeit for understandable emotional

reasons, was far from professional, and as a result the interpretation of this conversation has been fraught with difficulty ever since. We feel our own interpretation is justified for the following reasons:

1. Satsvarupa dasa Goswami's question is posed in the third person- "What is the relationship of that person who gives the initiation and..." So it is not unreasonable that Srila Prabhupada might answer in the third person - "He's guru"... etc.

2. He is being asked about certain principles relating to the setting up of the *ritvik* system- namely the relationships between the various parties, the *ritviks*, the initiates and the initiator.

DD admits that when speaking generally about principles Srila Prabhupada would speak of the spiritual master in the third person:

> "When he spoke about the spiritual master in general, he would use the third person..."
> **(DD p.7)**

Thus we are in agreement that when speaking about general principles concerning the spiritual master Srila Prabhupada would often speak in the third person. He gave numerous lectures, for example, about the importance of surrendering to a spiritual master, always in the third person; and yet when he gave such discourses he was in fact the only *diksa* guru in ISKCON, so we know he was most likely referring to himself.

One may object when we understand -"They are his disciples" to mean "They are my disciples", but who else's disciples could they be apart from Srila Prabhupada's. Which is the most likely:

1. Srila Prabhupada is the *diksa* guru being referred to.

or

2. The *ritvik-acaryas* are the *diksa* gurus being referred to?

According to H.H. Hrdayananda Dasa Goswami in DD there is no such entity as a *ritvik-acarya*, (even though Srila Prabhupada did not correct Tamal Krishna Goswami on this point).

> " ... terms such as *rtvig-guru* and *rtvig-acarya* simply do not exist. [...] In other words our friends are proposing something that does not exist in vedic culture."
> **(Hrdayananda Dasa Goswami, DD, Appendix D)**

So let's just take the term *ritvik*. Since everyone is agreed that a *ritvik* is just a priest, then how can he be the *diksa* guru within the system which Srila Prabhupada is outlining? By DD's own definition, as given by Hrdayananda Dasa Goswami and Suhotra Maharaja, a *ritvik* is definitely not a *diksa* guru. Therefore Srila Prabhupada can only have been speaking of himself as the guru, albeit in the third person. Since we are all agreed that he often did this on such occasions it should not be too difficult to accept our interpretation. It is well nigh impossible for any sane person to accept the interpretation offered in DD, since it means that ceremonial officiating priests are non-different to *Diksa* gurus.

To further clarify this issue, let us examine all the points on which we agree with DD (leaving aside the fact that DD is sometimes self-contradictory)

The following are accepted within DD:

1. A *diksa* guru has disciples.

2. Srila Prabhupada is a *diksa* guru, (at least he was on May 28th 1977).

3. The term *ritvik* in Srila Prabhupada's books was never used to mean *Diksa* Guru, per se. (*Ritvik acaryas* or *ritvik* gurus do not even exist apparently)

4. A *ritvik* is only a priest.

5. The term *ritvik* throughout Srila Prabhupada's books refers to someone who is not in the process of initiating his own disciples, but performing a fire or other sacrifice.

6. A *ritvik* can act as a proxy.

7. *Ritviks* were meant to act as proxies in the July 9th order, which is directly linked to the May 28th conversation.

The above points are all agreed by the GBC in DD. We are therefore presented with just two clear choices when interpreting the conversation:

New disciples were to belong to:

1. A *diksa* guru.

or

2. A person with a title that had never once been used by Srila Prabhupada to refer to a *diksha* guru either before, on or after May 28th.

We shall leave the reader to decide for himself, but should he choose option 1) then he will be agreeing that Srila Prabhupada must have been referring to himself as the guru in the May conversation.

If a *ritvik* is identical to a *diksa* guru then why did Srila Prabhupada need to use the terms officiating *acarya*/*ritvik* at all? He could have just said: "I shall be appointing some of you to be *diksa* gurus, who will initiate their own disciples on my departure".

The argument that Srila Prabhupada is only talking about during his physical presence when he speaks of *ritviks* is contradicted by DD when it states that the conversation only relates to after his departure. DD does not even accept that on May 28th Srila Prabhupada makes any reference to proxies at all, therefore according to DD the whole conversation was only talking about after departure.

> "In either case, the main concern is initiations after the departure of Srila Prabhupada. Therefore Satsvarupa Maharaja says 'particularly."
> **(DD p.4)**
>
> "In the present conversation, Srila Prabhupada does not refer to proxy initiations at all, not even in connection with word "*ritvik*".
> **(DD p. 5)**

Therefore *ritviks* were intended for after departure. And since *ritviks* do not initiate it is clear Srila Prabhupada wanted to continue being the *diksa* guru - after his departure.

> "Tamal Krishna Maharaja, however, does seem to think that "*ritvik*" means "proxy", and his question shows that the GBCs were ready to accept whatever Srila Prabhupada said (...) it is they, not Srila Prabhupada, who bring up the idea of proxy initiation."
> **(p.5)**

There is a perfectly simple explanation as to why both Tamal Krishna Goswami and Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami have the idea that the *ritviks* Srila Prabhupada was shortly to select were to be proxies. As Tamal Krishna Goswami himself explains:

> "What actually happened was that Prabhupada mentioned that he might be appointing some *ritviks*, so the GBC met for various reasons and they went to Prabhupada-five or six of us"
>
> **(Topanga Canyon)**

Thus we see that Srila Prabhupada had already discussed the use of *ritviks* prior to the May 28th meeting. It was obviously during these prior meetings that Tamal Krishna Goswami and Satsvarupa Goswami gained their impression that these future *ritviks* were to be proxies; (it also shows that Tamal Krishna Goswami contradicted himself when he said in the ISKCON journal that no such meetings were ever held and that he got the term *ritvik* from Pradyumna. p.9). This is further evidenced by the fact that in preparing questions for the May 28th meeting, the GBC already had an idea that some type of proxy system may be in the offing:

> "4) What is the relationship of the person who gets this initiation to the person who gives it."
>
> **(From list of questions to be asked by GBC before May 28th meeting, reproduced in ISKCON JOURNAL)**

No-one has ever explained what induced the GBC to draft the above question in late 1977. It's very existence forces one to seriously question the GBC's claim that they possess no other material evidence of Srila Prabhupada's expressions, from that late 1977 period, concerning the future of initiations. If Srila Prabhupada had never, in 12 long years, given any hint of a proxy system for after his departure, but had only taught the "law of disciplic succession" whereby his disciples would all be *diksa* gurus immediately on his departure, then why would the GBC feel the urge to ask the above question? Remember the above question was asked specifically in relation to initiations after Srila Prabhupada's departure.

Even without understanding their proxy nature, just the fact that '*ritvik*' has never been defined as meaning '*diksa* guru', is enough to prove DD's interpretation- that they may initiate their own disciples- as false. The author's inability to grasp even this simple point is what has lead them to a false conclusion:

> "In fact, in the next passage Srila Prabhupada will say that the person called '*ritvik*' is the guru".
> **(DD, p5)**
>
> "There is nothing in this conversation to indicate that people initiated after the departure of Srila Prabhupada would be the disciples of anyone other than the person who gives the initiation, call him *ritvik* or not."
> **(DD, p12)**

Whether these appointees were *ritviks* or *diksa* guru is precisely what the whole argument is about. If we call them *ritviks* then they cannot, by definition, be *diksa* gurus as well.

DD's Evidence for modifications a) & b).

Premise 2) Srila Prabhupada ordered his disciples to become *diksa* gurus on May 28th 1977.

> "The words "on my order" themselves point to the order.
> **(DD p.9)**

So this is the GBC's amazing clear evidence, the three words "on my order". On the basis of these three words the GBC are saying they were perfectly justified to terminate the *ritvik* system of initiation, which Srila Prabhupada personally set up just four months before his departure, and ordered to be continued 'henceforward'. On the basis of the three words "on my order" the GBC believe they can ignore all the evidence presented in *'The Final Order'* such as the July 9th policy document, Srila Prabhupada's final will and testament, the letters to Hamsadutta and Kirtanananda all confirming the intended longevity of the *ritvik* system. All this can be thrown out of the window on the basis of these three words. From these three words, "on my order", we are supposed to deduce that Srila Prabhupada meant the following modifications to be superimposed over his final policy statement on initiation which was personally signed and sent to the entire movement:

a. The *ritvik* system of initiation, which I have yet to set up, must be stopped on my departure.

&

b. The *ritviks* must then immediately metamorphose into fully fledged *diksa* gurus and initiate their own disciples.

The GBC is asserting that these three words alone must now supplant a clear explicit instruction to operate a *ritvik* system, and replace it with the M.A.S.S., in which scores of *diksa* gurus initiate their own disciples! At best this is an unsubstantiated interpretation, not in any way unequivocal clear evidence. There are many serious weaknesses with this brand new GBC interpretation:

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

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

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

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

There is yet another interpretation of this tape, which has been suggested, which also contradicts the idea that *diksa* gurus were being authorised right there on the spot. This interpretation is arrived at by noting that the phrase "on my order" is derived from the verse in the C.C. *'amara ajnana guru hana',* (originally spoken five hundred years ago by Lord Caitanya, and cited by Srila Prabhupada after the words 'On My Order' in the May conversation). Both the verse and the phrase were repeated on many occasions previous to May 28th 1977 by Srila Prabhupada. As is explained in *'The Final Order'*, this verse encourages eve-

ryone to become instructing spiritual masters (*vartma-pradasaka* and *siksa*) there & then, not *diksa* gurus post-*samadhi*. This is made abundantly clear in the detailed purports following this verse- "It is best not to accept disciples" (*C.c. Madhya*, 7.130, purport). Thus, according to this interpretation, throughout Srila Prabhupada is only referring to an order for them to act as *siksa* gurus.

Should the reader conclude that this section of the tape lends itself to so many possible interpretations that it cannot justifiably be used as evidence to clearly establish any position, we would be happy to accept that. It should be noted that we have never offered this tape up as any sort of principal evidence. Rather we are only discussing it since it appears to be the only piece of evidence offered by the GBC, who now claim that their latest interpretation is also the only possible interpretation.

DD proves 'post-*samadhi* proxy' theory:

> Prabhupada: Yes. I shall recommend some of you. After this is settled up, I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating *acaryas*.
> Analysis:
> [...]
> But a recommendation from the spiritual master is as good as an order, and the recommendation of certain devotees in the July 9th letter is a follow up to the order that Srila Prabhupada's disciples should take up the work of spiritual master after his departure. Srila Prabhupada is promising to do something. He will do it in the July 9th letter, ..."
> **(DD, p4)**
>
> "The July 9th letter can only be the recommendation of proxies ..."
> **(DD, p13)**

In the above it has been demonstrated that the authors of DD admit Srila Prabhupada was going to recommend 'proxies', when he used the term 'officiating *acarya*' at the beginning of the May 28th 'appointment tape'. DD has also admitted that this promised appointment of 'officiating *acaryas*' is the direct answer to the question where:

> "The main concern is initiations after the departure of Srila Prabhupada."
> **(DD, p4)**

(This is also evidenced by DD's claim that Srila Prabhupada orders them on the tape to become *Diksa* Gurus, an order that would only be relevant if we were dealing with 'initiations after the departure of Srila Prabhupada')

> "In the present conversation, Srila Prabhupada does not refer to proxy initiations at all, not even in connection with word "*ritvik*".
> **(DD p. 5)**

Thus the authors, in falsely assuming that an officiating *acarya* is not a *ritvik*, (which in turn is not a proxy), but in actuality a *diksa* guru, have unwittingly proved that Srila Prabhupada set up proxies for after his departure. (We have already demonstrated that Srila Prabhupada accepted that the term *ritvik* was the same as 'officiating *acarya*'.)

Furthermore, having accepted that the tape deals with the situation for 'initiations after the departure of Srila Prabhupada', the authors are further forced to accept the Post-*samadhi* proxy theory by the following exchange:

> Satsvarupa: So they may also be considered your disciples.
> Prabhupada: **Yes**, they are disciples. Why consider? Who?
>
> **ANALYSIS:**
>
> Satsvarupa Maharaja again suggests the possibility of proxy initiation. Srila Prabhupada could say yes, but he does not. On the contrary, Srila Prabhupada suggests that the question does not make sense."
> **(DD, p7)**

Even though Srila Prabhupada clearly says "yes", the authors pretend he does not, otherwise they will again end up proving the post-*samadhi* proxy theory. Rather they hope that the next three words : 'Why consider? Who?', will somehow:

a. Change the 'yes' to a 'no';

&

b. Suggest that the question does not make sense;

Unfortunately after speaking these three words Srila Prabhupada was actually interrupted by His Holiness Tamala Krishna Goswami Maharaja. Thus we shall never know what Srila Prabhupada was going on to say. To base a theory on what someone

might have gone on to say is called speculation. As His Holiness Jayadvaita Swami Maharaja points out:

> **"Evidence that does not exist, is no evidence at all."**
>
> **(*'Where the ritvik people are wrong',* Jayadvaita Swami)**

The simple fact is that Srila Prabhupada could have said 'no'. He plainly did not. On the contrary he said 'yes'. You can only base a theory on that which exists, not that which does not. The three words 'Why Consider? Who?' tell us nothing except that Srila Prabhupada was going on to say something, which involved considering something, which may have or may not have been a direct reference to the question asked, and which may or may not have raised the possibility that the question did not make sense. One thing we can be quite certain of is that Srila Prabhupada was not going to contradict himself after having just said 'Yes, they are disciples'., and say 'no, they are not disciples'. You cannot modify something which is stated by that which is not stated.

It is also interesting to note that by the time the authors reach the end of their paper they may have realised that the opening exchange actually proves 'post-*samadhi ritvik*', and that is why they fabricate a new version of the tape:

> "This conversation is Srila Prabhupada's last official response to the question, How will initiations go on after your departure? Srila Prabhupada answers with terms such as 'regular guru', 'disciple of my disciple', and 'grand-disciple.'
> **(DD, p12)**

The authors have already admitted that the opening question concerns 'How initiations go on after your departure'. They have also admitted that the answer to that question was answered with the words "officiating *acaryas* -is that *ritvik acarya - ritvik*, yes." The terms 'regular guru', 'disciple of my disciple', and 'grand-disciple' come at the end of the conversation. In other words the authors will have us believe that a question in lines 1-3 is answered on lines 20-26. Thus the first words of the conversation are answered by the last words! The authors have admitted earlier that the question on lines 1-3 was answered by the next lines 4-6. However, as has already been shown, lines 4-6 only mention the recommendation of 'officiating *acaryas*', '*ritvik acaryas*' and '*ritviks*' - which the authors say were recommended as proxies - and not *Diksa* Gurus. Unfortunately cutting and pasting lines 20-26 up to line 4 is not evidence. Better we stick with the answer Srila Prabhupada actually gave to the initial question, especially since it is something on which we all apparently agree; i.e., *ritviks* for after his departure.

We feel that the arguments given above are sufficiently strong to persuade most sensible people that the GBC's latest position paper is fundamentally flawed, and should be withdrawn. For completeness however we shall now look in more detail at all the other points made in DD, and in so doing show that the paper fails on every conceivable level.

FALSE CLAIMS & STRAW MAN

The following are a collection of false claims and straw man arguments that liberally fill up a large portion of DD (at least one per page). 'Straw Man' arguments are a tactic, often used in argumentation where one is unable to defeat an opponent's actual position, and so instead invents a false one which he feels more capable of tackling. This approach ends up being counter-productive for the protagonist since he loses credibility the instant his reader realises what's going on.

> "...the proxy-initiation adherents have fallen into the trap of backward thinking:first looking at the problems and then trying to ascertain, through reverse logic, what they think Srila Prabhupada should have wanted".
> **(DD p.2)**

The above is completely false. *'The Final Order'* only deals with evidence and statements from Srila Prabhupada which actually exist. Our position is not based on what we 'think', but solely on instructions issued by Srila Prabhupada in documents accepted as authentic by the GBC.

> "The proxy-initiation adherents say that the falldowns of the gurus prove that the present system in ISKCON is imperfect and cannot be what Srila Prabhupada wanted".
> **(DD p.2)**

DD is supposed to be a response to *'The Final Order'*, yet the above assertion is never once made in that paper. Our proof comes solely from signed directives issued personally by Srila Prabhupada, not through examining the spiritual difficulties of individuals. In fact in the introduction to *'The Final Order'* we explicitly state that we had no interest in such matters. The falldowns of gurus are in no way central to our argument that Srila Prabhupada set up a proxy initiation system to run on indefinitely. Nevertheless if DD is asserting that authorised *diksa* gurus in disciplic succession can fall down, we suggest its authors urgently read pages 44-46 of *'The Final Order'*, since this is a serious deviation from *Bhagavat* philosophy.

> "The proxy-initiation adherents, however, say that the words Srila Prabhupada spoke on that day (May 28th) have little importance..."
> **(DD p.2)**

We have never stated the above. In fact we are happy to quote from this conversation in support of our position. Nevertheless, in our view the July 9th order is complete in itself, and nothing in the May conversation contradicts our understanding of this final order on the future of initiation. Everything Srila Prabhupada said was of great importance, and it is simply a groundless slur to suggest we have ever stated otherwise.

> "Old taped conversations"? ...It seems that the proxy-initiation adherents are dismissing the words of their spiritual master as some old relic hardly worth listening to"
> **(DD p.3)**

The above accusation is completely outrageous. By 'old taped conversation' we clearly meant 'previously recorded' not old in the sense of decrepit or not worth hearing.

> "...saying that the July 9th letter must be understood with no link to past conversations goes against Srila Prabhupada's normal way."
> **(DD p.3)**

We never state the above.

We simply say that if the July 9th order was not complete, and needed modifying in conjunction with a previous conversation, then it would say so in the letter itself , or in some accompanying document. This is a perfectly reasonable position. Otherwise we could try to modify other final instructions, such as Srila Prabhupada's final will, merely by searching through the tape archives, identifying a conversation where Srila Prabhupada speaks somewhere about wills, and then amend the will according to our dubious interpretations of this previously taped conversation. Unless the final will stated that it needed modifying, we should leave it alone. The same goes for the July 9th letter. Unless it states that it is incomplete, then why should we assume that it is. DD even admits:

> "The GBC's do not think the July 9th letter is incomplete..."
> **(DD p.3)**

So if it is not incomplete, that must mean it is complete, so why are the GBC telling us we must modify it in accordance with a previous conversation in order to make it complete? This is just plain silly. DD asserts that:

> "There is a link between the July 9th letter and the May conversation"
> **(DD p.3)**

And yet we are being told to accept that the two most important points which were allegedly made in the May conversation are not even hinted at in the final July 9th policy statement: namely that the *ritvik* system must stop on the departure of Srila Prabhupada, and that the *ritviks* must then transmogrify into fully fledged *diksa* gurus (modifications a) and b) in *'The Final Order'*). Since we all agree that the final order is complete, then certainly any relevant information pertinent to its implementation would be contained within it. You cannot say something is complete, and then argue that it is totally dependent on something else in order to be complete. This is illogical.

Certainly the July 9th letter would be incomplete if it made no reference to its needing to be modified, if indeed it should have been. If DD wants to maintain it's position on modifications a) & b), and at the same time assert that the July 9th order is complete, it needs to explain how a recipient of the letter would:

a. Know it needed to be modified in the first place.

b. Know exactly which conversation to go to in order to modify it correctly.

c. Be able to modify the order in accordance with at least one of the GBC's many dubious interpretations of the May 28th conversation.

The GBC does not even attempt to answer such points in DD.

> "But it was not 'the normal way in which Srila Prabhupada issued instructions' to change what he had been saying for twelve years about disciplic succession by inserting one adverb ("Henceforward") in a sentence".
> **(DD p.3)**

The above is totally baseless. The GBC have never produced one single statement from Srila Prabhupada's books or letters to the whole society, on the subject of succession, which is in any way contravened by the post-*samadhi* proxy-initiation system (*ritvik*). *'The Final Order'* has actually demonstrated this point in depth.

> "..the proxy-initiation adherents have imposed their own definition on the word "henceforward"
> **(DD p.3)**

The above claim is ludicrous since we quote the definition given in a standard English Dictionary (Collins). Perhaps the GBC will next try to ban all dictionaries as being philosophically deviant and dangerous. We shall return to this point later, but it

was already extensively covered in *'The Final Order'* (p.6-7), and again it does not seem as though the authors have read the very paper they were supposed to be responding to.

> "The July 9th letter is a temporary order."..
> **(DD p.4)**
>
> "In another sense the July 9th letter does stand on its own. It is a clearly worded letter stating procedures to be followed at a certain time".
> **(DD p.3)**
>
> "The July 9th letter, issued through the GBC, is a follow up to the May 28th conversation, as the present paper will show, and deals only with the question of how to initiate during the last days of Srila Prabhupada's presence".
> **(DD p.3)**

The above are totally groundless assertions. Since it is admitted that the July 9th order is complete, and since the order does not state that it is make-shift, stop-gap, or in any way temporary or dependent on Srila Prabhupada's physical presence, or that it should ever be stopped, or that it is only for the last days, or restricted to a certain time; we are forced to conclude that in making the above assertion the authors of DD are speculating.

> "How, then, can the proxy-initiation adherents say that the July 9th letter can be understood only without reference to this conversation?"
> **(DD p.5)**

We do not say the final order can be understood only without reference to the May conversation. We say it can be understood with or without reference- since the July 9th letter is a complete instruction in and of itself (as agreed in DD).

> "The proxy-initiation adherents say that Srila Prabhupada should stop speaking at this point..."
> **(DD p.5)**

Yet another rather distasteful straw man argument. We never said any such thing.

> "In other words, the proxy-initiation adherents say that the conversation continues because the GBC's are trying to prompt Srila Prabhupada into giving them the answer they want".
> **(DD p.6)**

We never state the above. It is pure invention.

> "The Controversy Paper says that something is wrong if "the full answer is only properly revealed, piecemeal as it were, throughout the rest of the conversation". But how else is knowledge revealed? Is everything revealed in *Bhagavad-gita* 2.11? (...)
> The proxy adherents thus go against Srila Prabhupada's teachings: "Not only should one hear submissively from the spiritual master, but one must also get a clear understanding from him, in submission and service and inquiries." Bg 4.34"
> **(DD p.6)**

We never said there is anything wrong with submissive hearing from the spiritual master. In fact we think it is a good idea. The example of the Bg is somewhat misleading since Arjuna does not ask just one question, he asks many, on numerous differing aspects of vaisnava philosophy. In the relevant section of the May 28th conversation Satsvarupa das Goswami asks just one very clear, and self-contained question. Srila Prabhupada answers the question and then remains silent. Other things are revealed to other questions, but the initial answer to the first question is clear, emphatic and undeniable. We accept this as Srila Prabhupada's clear answer to what was supposed to happen after his departure. And so, in a strangely distorted way, do the authors of DD. They however go on to speculate that a *ritvik* can also be a *diksa* guru since the word *ritvik* does not mean non-initiator. As we have shown this argument is false, and so therefore is their interpretation of the conversation.

> They say (...) the words of this conversation should never have been spoken...
> **(DD p.6)**

The above is just childish nonsense; we say no such thing.

> "...to reject this conversation is the same as rejecting a chapter of *Bhagavad-gita*".
> **(DD p.6)**

One might ask then why the authors themselves have rejected Srila Prabhupada's answer to the first question, in favour of their speculative and entirely spurious notion that a *ritvik* is the same as a *diksa* guru. Yet another straw man argument

"In short, Srila Prabhupada has stated the principles of post-*samadhi* initiations, and he will confirm his order by naming some people to begin the process."
(DD p.12)

But the only naming he does is of proxies:

"There is no appointment of gurus or successors, only a recommendation that certain disciples start the natural process [...] Srila Prabhupada is promising to do something. He will do it in the July 9th letter."
(DD p.5)

(DD's explanation of the opening exchange of the conversation.)

"The July 9th letter can only be the recommendation of proxies ..."
(DD p.12)

How or why is the naming of proxies the confirmation of an order to be *Diksa* Gurus, especially when the notion of naming proxies is mentioned way before, and independently of, ordering *Diksa* Gurus? How is acting as proxies the beginning of the process to become *Diksa* Guru? This assertion is the very thing that is under debate - DD has merely stated it, not proved it.

"It would seem, then, that Srila Prabhupada is not answering the question at all. He would simply be declaring himself guru and giving no information about "that person who gives initiation." The proxy adherents may argue that the "person who gives the initiation" is really Srila Prabhupada, but then Srila Prabhupada would simply be saying that he is the guru of the people he initiates, something Satsvarupa Maharaja already knows.
(...)
Srila Prabhupada did not call the GBC's to his side just to tell them that he is the guru of the people he initiates".
(DD p.7 & 8)

In their eagerness to discredit our position the authors of DD forget that in the July 9th letter Srila Prabhupada mentions three times that new initiates were to be his. Why would he do this if, as DD asserts, this was already so painfully obvious to everyone. Could it be because Srila Prabhupada's order was meant to carry on into a time frame wherein disciple ownership could even be an issue, namely after his departure? Otherwise how else can you explain the fact that Srila Prabhupada sent a letter to the entire movement telling them that future initiates were to be his. If this was too obvious a fact to be brought up before a small group of devotees- then what to speak of broadcasting the same message all over the planet. Clearly the final July 9th order was meant to continue after Srila Prabhupada's departure. That is why he made such a big issue out of who would own the future disciples. An obvious point no doubt, but one which appears to have totally eluded DD.

"Satsvarupa Maharaja is certainly not prompting Srila Prabhupada, or trying to trick Srila Prabhupada into giving one answer or another."
(DD p.8)

The above accusation was not made in "The Final Order", so we are at a loss to know why the authors of DD bring it up here.

"The statement 'India, I am here' shows that Srila Prabhupada is talking about a system for use during his physical presence".
(DD p.8)

However the words 'India, I am here' definitely do not show that it was ONLY a system for use during Srila Prabhupada's presence - the main point of contention, as the authors go on to concede:

"One may argue that there is no order for the disciples to stop the proxy initiation and become initiating gurus after Srila Prabhupada's departure, but that order had already been given on May 28". (DD p.8) "by inserting words in brackets one could make Srila Prabhupada appear to speak any words one might want, even Mayavadi philosophy"
(DD p.11)

If the authors so much detest the technique of testing a theory through substitution, why do they do the same thing themselves:

"To further test the proxy-initiation adherents premise, let us take this segment of the conversation and substitute "I" for "he", as well as "proxy" for "*acarya*".
(DD p.7)

It is somewhat hypocritical for the authors of DD to lambaste us, make some snide innuendo about making Srila Prabhupada speak Mayavadi philosophy, and then do exactly the same thing themselves.

"But their logic goes in circles because they assume beforehand that their parenthetical insertions are correct: The insertions are correct because this is what Srila Prabhupada must have meant, and Srila Prabhupada must have meant this because of the inserted words. Here is the "classic circular argument"...
(DD p.11)

There is nothing circular in our reasoning here. Either Srila Prabhupada does say "his", in which case we are correct, or he says something else. The authors of DD admit they themselves do not know for sure whether Srila Prabhupada says "his", "he is" or "he's", and therefore cannot say for sure if we are wrong or right in our assumption. If the GBC feel their own principal evidence is inaudible in key sections, we are happy to eliminate it from the discussion, and just focus on clearly written signed evidence such as the July 9th policy document. For some reason the GBC are reluctant to do this, and so we are back to quibbling over "his", "he is" and "he's".

"But whatever the reading, whatever the insertion, the fact remains that the new disciple is the grand-disciple of Srila Prabhupada and cannot be the godbrother of the pre-*samadhi* disciples. No amount of word-twisting can change it"...
(DD p.11)

The above is yet another straw man argument. We have never denied the possibility of grand-disciples. We simply point out that this could only happen if Srila Prabhupada gives the order to one of his disciples to initiate ("when I order"). We also point out that that order was never given.

"Although the proxy-initiation adherents say that Srila Prabhupada should have stopped speaking at the beginning of the discussion, Srila Prabhupada himself wants to continue".
(DD p.12)

Another spiteful and wholly gratuitous jibe. At this point one begins to question the integrity of the authors, since they must know we made no such comment, nor even remotely implied any such thing. We do not say Srila Prabhupada should have stopped speaking after answering Satsvarupa Maharaja's opening question, we simply observe that he did stop speaking. From this we understand he had given the answer to the question to his satisfaction- namely *ritviks* for after his departure. An answer DD appears to accept in its own peculiar way.

"That's all"
(DD p.12)

DD's speculation that this phrase means Srila Prabhupada has just appointed initiating gurus is just that, speculation. He could have meant "that's all" there is to the principle he has just outlined: that when he orders, you become guru. This is a principle in Srila Prabhupada's books, that one becomes *diksa* guru only when one has been authorised by one's predecessor *acarya* (S.B. 4.8.54, purport). It is a desperate man who would try to extrapolate from the phrase "that's all", the notion that Srila Prabhupada had just given a blanket authorisation for all his disciples to initiate. The use of such phrases as 'grand-disciple' 'disciple of my disciple' 'regular guru' on the next line of the conversation, can be seen as illustrating the principle of how future grand-disciples may emerge; namely through his ordering his disciples to become *diksa* guru.

"In fact, no standard dictionary defines "henceforward" as "starting from now and continuing forever."
(DD p13)
"Thus "henceforward" does not necessarily mean "continuing forever"...
(DDp.13)
"It is unreasonable to impose one's own definition on a word and then use that imposed definition as proof of what Srila Prabhupada must have wanted."
(DD p.13)

More straw man arguments. If the authors had taken the trouble to read our paper they would see we give the standard dictionary definition of the word: 'from now onwards'. Further the examples of Srila Prabhupada's use of 'henceforward' offered in DD merely illustrate our point. One must diligently carry out the order of the spiritual master until one of three things happen:

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

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

1. The task is not completed, there are still billions more people who need to be initiated by Srila Prabhupada.
2. Srila Prabhupada never changed or revoked his final order, therefore it still stands.
3. It is still possible to follow, we just need the GBC to agree, and the rest will be plain sailing.

In any case, even if we leave out the word 'henceforward' from the July 9th letter, you are still left with a system of initiation,

put in place personally by our *acarya*, with no direct order to terminate it. Thus if the word 'henceforward' had been left out of the final order altogether, the system still should not have been dismantled.

Quality of Evidence

DD's two main premises both involve accepting parts of a tape where the relevant portions of the transcripts are disputed by other members of the GBC. This in itself is enough to make the author's case collapse since they only have evidence that is disputed by members of the body that deputed them in the first place to defend their position. The disputed words are in parenthesis below:

> **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*. (he is) (Be) actually guru, but by my order.**

> **Srila Prabhupada: Who is initiating. (His) (He is) grand disciple.**

In regards to the quote directly above, the authors of DD mention problems with 'clarity of the recording' (we touched on this earlier). Clarity of the recording may distort a particular word but it should not make one word appear as two. In fact the author's themselves do not even seem sure whether one or two words were spoken:

> "But Srila Prabhupada may have said "He's grand disciple," in which case "His grand disciple" would not resemble the tape more closely"
> **(DD p.10)**

Please note that no previous version of the transcript has ever claimed Srila Prabhupada said "He's" in the section above. In previous GBC papers it has either been "his" or "he is". It casts a very poor light on the evidence being proffered if two words might sound like one word.

There is an even more fundamental problem here however, directly concerning the material evidence which is being used to support the GBC's position. Unless the GBC are able to bring to the table the ORIGINAL recording of the tape, it can neither be offered nor accepted as any type of evidence at all. This is a simple point of law, and is applicable in this case particularly since both sides, even and including different GBC's themselves, have been unable to agree on an authentic transcript of the same conversation. We await with great interest the outcome of Dr. Burke Rochford's examination of this original evidence, if and when it is produced.

(One can also at this point legitimately ask why for the last 6 months of Srila Prabhupada's manifest existence the archives have hardly any tapes, despite the fact that for other similar (though possibly less significant) periods of time they have many more tapes, especially in light of the following quote:

> **Tamal Krishna:** We tape everything Prabhupada says. Everything he says, we tape, whether you are here or not here. [...] We're not taping for any other purpose, but our guru maharaja's words are very sacred to us, so we tape all the time, whether you're here or not here.
>
> **(Discussion, Vrindavana, 24/5/77)**

Sadly the authors can not even offer a definite interpretation, never mind a definite transcript:

> "Satsvarupa Maharaja's question can be taken as either one question or two. [...] it is not certain whether the question also includes the subject of initiations during Srila Prabhupada's presence."
> **(DD p.4)**

In summary, DD is attempting to modify a signed undisputed instruction, sent to the whole society, with a tape recording, of which there are at least 4 official differing transcripts, and at least four official different interpretations. We gave the 4 official transcripts in *'The Final Order'*. Let us now briefly run through four 'official' interpretations of this May conversation, on which DD's whole thesis rests:

1. That Srila Prabhupada WILL in the near future, order the 11 to be gurus. *This interpretation formed the basis of the zonal acarya system, lost favour around the mid 80's, and has since been resurrected in GII.*

2. That Srila Prabhupada actually ordered the 11 there and then on the May 28th tape to be Gurus. *This is the interpretation offered in 'D D.'.*

3. That no specific order or appointment was given to anyone in particular to be guru, since the order had already been given many times to everyone. *This interpretation led to the reforms in the mid 80's which led to the current M.A.S.S. (multiple acarya successor system).*

4. Only the principle of Srila Prabhupada's disciples at some point going onto become Gurus is given. Srila Prabhupada did not need to give any specific order to any specific individuals since guruship arises simply through qualification. The '11' it was 'felt' were the most suitably qualified to make an attempt at taking up guruship by simple dint of their qualifications.

This interpretation was offered by Tamala Krishna Goswami in the 'Topanaga Canyon confessions' (printed in ISKCON JOURNAL).

In essence the GBC has admitted that even though for the last 20 years they have not really understood precisely how Srila Prabhupada authorised *diksa* gurus to operate after his departure, still they are absolutely certain that he did. But how can you be certain and unsure at the same time? And if you are unsure, then how can you be absolutely certain that he did not order *ritviks* for the future? The main aim of DD is:

> "to show that Srila Prabhupada unequivocally stated that after his departure his disciples should take up the responsibility of full-fledged initiating spiritual masters."
> **(DD p.1)**

No free-thinking devotee, nor indeed any sensible person, will accept yet another interpretation of a transcript (of which there are conflicting versions) of this tape as either 'unequivocal' or even proper 'evidence'. And neither, for that matter, would a court of law.

Conclusion

1. We have proven that in attempting to rebut *'The Final Order'*, which itself is a rebuttal of GII, the authors also rebut GII (along with other GBC statements). But GII was supposed to offer the GBC's 'Final *Siddhanta*' on this whole subject, and the GBC is the very same body which commissioned the authors to defend its position in the first place.

2. The two main premises on which the paper rests are invalid, thus causing its entire position to collapse.

3. We have also shown that the authors of DD have made assertions that prove the central thesis of *'The Final Order'*, the very thesis the authors were attempting to disprove.

4. We have also shown that the only piece of evidence that the authors have brought to the table is unreliable. (the May 28th conversation).

5. We have also shown that in every respect the argumentation in DD is seriously flawed, and most seriously offers no evidence in support of modifications a) & b). These modifications are absolutely crucial to the abandonment of Srila Prabhupada's Final Order and the current M.A.S.S. within ISKCON.

We humbly beg the GBC to re-consider their position on this crucial issue. Since the GBC have said they are in a mood to take a fresh look at things, and not remain stuck in cement, we pray they will take the time and trouble to properly study this issue.

Please forgive our offences.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

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