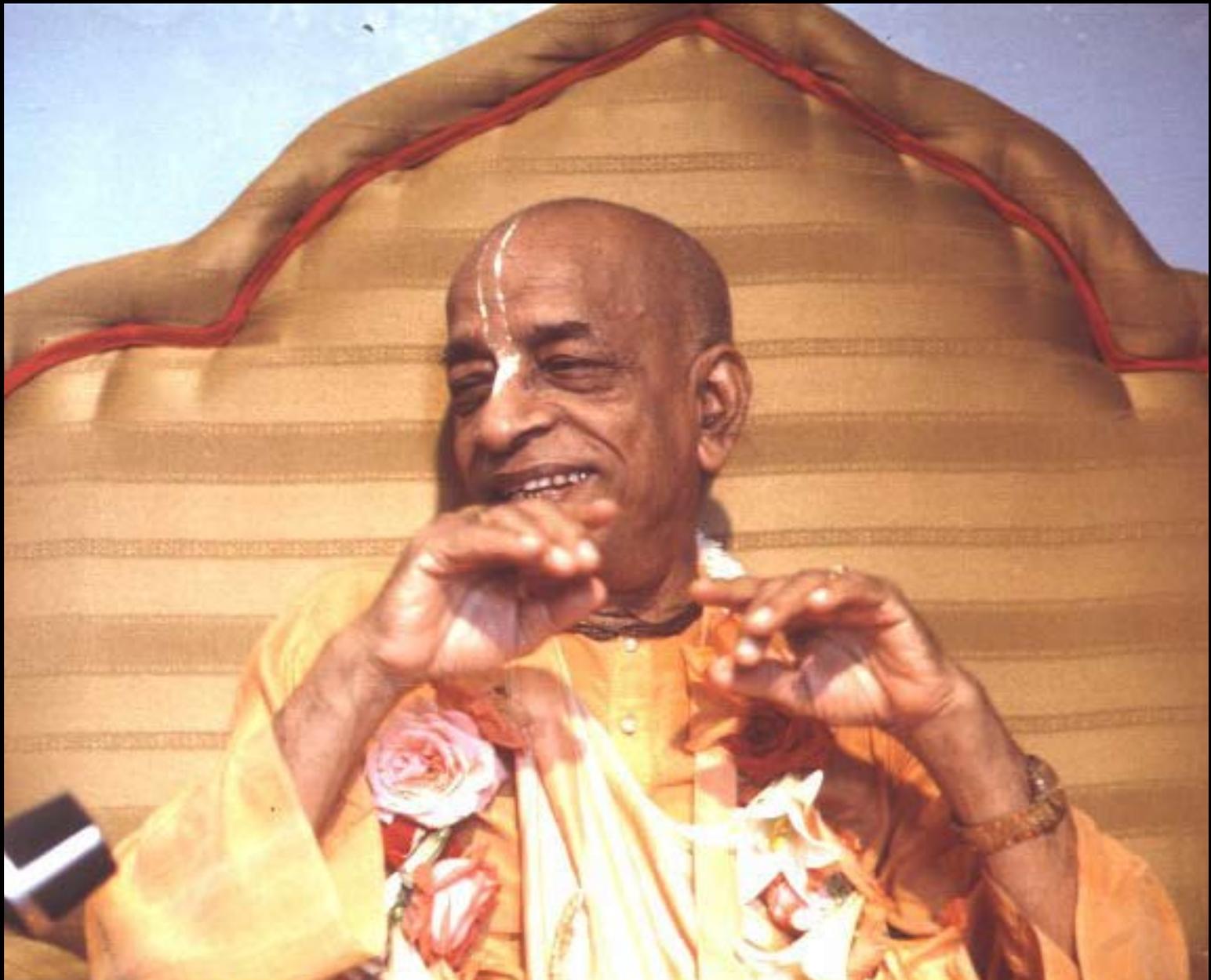


a response to: 'Posthumous Initiation in ISKCON: Is it Sanctioned by Srila Prabhupada?'

# Krishna Kirti Fails

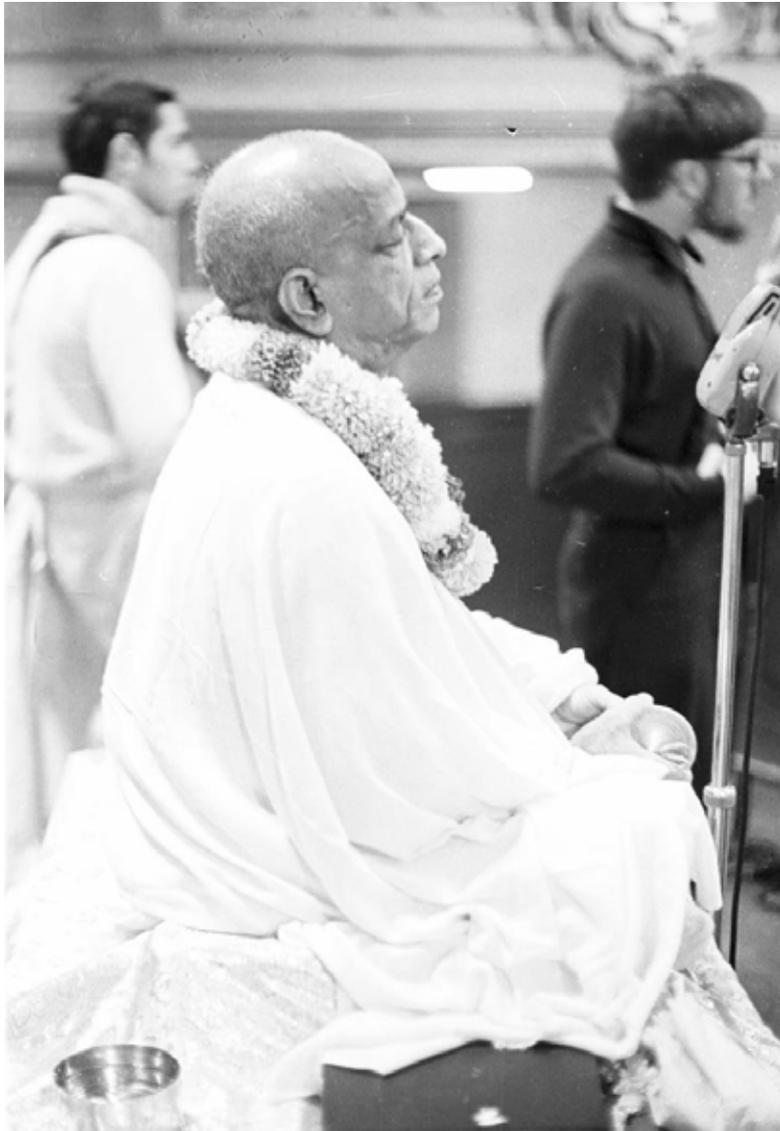
To Answer "The Final Order"



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## **Krishna Kirti Fails To Answer “The Final Order”**

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**“You have asked if it is true that the spiritual master remains in the universe until all his disciples are transferred to the spiritual sky. The answer is yes, this is the rule.”**

**(Letter to Jayapataka, 11/7/69)**



**by Krishnakant**

# Krishna Kirti Fails To Answer “The Final Order”

a reply to ‘Posthumous Initiation in ISKCON: Is it Sanctioned by Srila Prabhupada?’

February 2002

This is the IRM’s reply to Krishna Kirti’s (herein referred to as the ‘Author’) recent paper entitled: ‘*Posthumous Initiation in ISKCON: Is it Sanctioned by Srila Prabhupada?*’

The Author’s paper is the 5th attempt in recent years to try and defeat the IRM position paper, “*The Final Order*” (herein referred to as TFO). So far we have had ‘*Disciple of My Disciple*’ (Badrinarayan Das et.al, 1997), ‘*Timeless Order*’ (Vivek Pai, 1997), ‘*Point For Point Refutation of TFO*’ (Jahnu Das, 1998) and ‘*Prabhupada’s Order*, (GBC, 1998). Each was pushed enthusiastically at the time by the GBC, only to be replaced by the subsequent paper, once our responses had soundly exposed the flaws in each paper. Even though the GBC claim that each one of these papers defeats TFO, the very fact they always felt compelled to subsequently back another paper belies their claim.

- If TFO truly had been defeated as they claimed by each one of their papers, why the need by them and their supporters to always come back with another try?

This itself confirms that the GBC and their supporters themselves tacitly recognize that the papers in question had not done the job, and another attempt was required. So after a gap of over three-and-a-half years, Krishna Kirti has now dared to ‘**have a go**’ against TFO and put something in print. We commend him for his courage. It appears a great deal of thought and effort has gone into the Author’s paper, with him acknowledging the input of at least 4 devotees as well as a whole think tank! Unfortunately for the Author, as we will now demonstrate, his paper has met the same fate as its illustrious predecessors in that it too has been soundly routed!

Most notably, the Author relies heavily on the famous ‘*law of disciplic succession*’, even though the GBC no longer follow it, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta never followed it, nor is it mentioned anywhere in any of Srila Prabhupada’s books. Although the Author offers a special get-out-clause - that the ‘*law*’ need not apply if the guru gives his permission to a disciple to initiate in his presence (no doubt with Sivarama Swami and Mahavishnu Swami in mind) - this is not stated in the private letters from which the ‘*law*’ was extracted. This fact also severely damages the Author’s overall position, since he is meant to be defending the GBC’s position, but relies heavily on a law that they have dumped.

We were initially pleased to note that the Author has taken the trouble to actually quote, verbatim, sections of TFO since most of the other GBC-backed papers were mainly full of ‘*straw man*’ arguments, having not even bothered to quote TFO. (A ‘*straw man*’ argument is the technique of answering arguments **NOT** actually put forward by the opponent, since the actual arguments which are put forward cannot be answered. In this way the illusion of ‘*victory*’ is presented since a bunch of non-relevant arguments are successfully defeated.) Unfortunately, having quoted TFO extensively the Author falls into the same trap, in that instead of answering the TFO quotations he has just produced, he instead proceeds to answer another ‘*argument*’ which he implies is stated in the TFO. Indeed his paper is very neatly structured in the form of 14 such ‘*arguments*’ sandwiched between an Introduction and discussion on the July 9th directive, which he then proceeds to answer by demonstrating the ‘**fallacy**’ of the argument presented, followed by a supporting discussion. However most of these ‘*arguments*’ are also ‘*straw man*’ arguments, having not been put forward by TFO. In this way, the Author also reveals his inability to deal with TFO, taking shelter instead in phantom irrelevant arguments.

In what follows we will quote each of the Author’s **14 ‘arguments’** plus other points boxed, with our responses following.

In his Introduction the Author states:

But TFO contends that the methodology for conducting initiations was a system of management, which they say means that one of the elements of that system, namely the initiator, must fall under the same terms of reference. This would mean that “guru” is a managerial post under such a system.

The only problem is he has mis-stated our position. TFO never says that the Initiator (Srila Prabhupada) himself comes under

the system of management, and hence the Author's extrapolation that we consider the post of 'guru' (*diksa*) as managerial is also incorrect. And thus begins the first of the Author's many 'straw-man' arguments which as we will see form the bedrock of his whole paper. The GBC was set up under the Founder-Acarya, its supreme authority, to manage everything on his behalf. Srila Prabhupada is thus in an executive position, not managerial. The *ritvik* system is Srila Prabhupada's executive order by which his managers could organise and regulate future initiations. From this root mis-representation the Author then goes onto make several similarly incorrect assertions in his Introduction:

Since guru would be a managerial position, the strictures Srila Prabhupada placed on other managerial positions would then apply to the *ritvik* system .....

TFO's Authors further consider that since a guru in the *ritvik* system is a managerial post, Srila Prabhupada's will allows for other *ritvik* gurus to be appointed. etc.

The Author then correctly states:

To further support the idea that Srila Prabhupada wanted a *ritvik* system, they point out the following:

**...a successor director or directors may be appointed by the remaining directors, provided the new director is my initiated disciple,...**

And the Authors of TFO state that such a clause only makes sense under a system wherein Srila Prabhupada posthumously initiates.

But then in the next sentence, rather than refute head on our position over the final Will, he inexplicably jumps to a totally different subject:

At this point, we pose this question: Is TFO based on a comprehensive survey of Srila Prabhupada's teachings?

It seems the Author was unable to explain how future directors would be Srila Prabhupada's disciples without the *ritvik* system remaining in place, and hence he changes the subject:

But TFO contains several statements which attempt to restrict and discredit evidence for which the source is undoubtedly Srila Prabhupada.

- Even if the above were true, how does this explain the clause in Srila Prabhupada's Will?

He goes on to question our point that private letters to awkward disciples, unpublished till the mid-1980s (and only then because someone in the BBT was bribed to release them) cannot by themselves be used to overthrow a signed institutional directive issued to the whole movement by Srila Prabhupada in 1977. A common sense point one would have thought. The Author claims:

We would expect a truly objective paper on any subject would take into account all available and relevant evidence. Why, then, would the Authors of TFO be so anxious to discredit Srila Prabhupada's own words?

We did take full account of these letters, even quoting bits of them, and in no sense did we 'discredit' anything Srila Prabhupada said (as we shall later prove). Indeed, we consider he dealt very expertly with such deviant devotees as Tusta Krishna etc.

Even according to TFO, Srila Prabhupada has not presented anything new-nothing not found in his books. This means that all his conversations and letters, including the July 9th letter, either follow in pursuance of the instructions he gave in his books or that they clarify those instructions. Since Srila Prabhupada's conversations and letters are consistent with his books, the July 9th letter has to be understood in a way that is consistent with Srila Prabhupada's other instructions.

But you cannot direct a whole movement based on private letters that were never intended to be generally available to the movement, and which only became available years after Srila Prabhupada had physically departed.

Surely this is obvious.

And in any case we do take full account of even this type of evidence as we shall go on to explain.

The Author then begins with the first of his key 14 'arguments' (please note the numbering of the arguments has been added by ourselves):

**Argument 1:** Srila Prabhupada's instructions regarding initiations in conversations and letters to individuals but had not been publicly circulated cannot be considered acceptable evidence.

We did 'consider' all such evidence, as we shall see. But the Author fails to explain how such evidence was meant to directly effect the way ISKCON was run just after November 14th 1977, when it was not even intended to be made available to the whole of ISKCON. Not once does the Author offer any explanation for this.

**Fallacy:** TFO itself quotes Srila Prabhupada saying, “So there is nothing to be said new. Whatever I have to speak, I have spoken in my books.” Since this is true, even according to TFO, everything else Srila Prabhupada has said (letters, conversations, lectures, etc.) must necessarily reflect the teachings found in his books. Thus, any one of Srila Prabhupada’s recorded instructions must be consistent with his other instructions.

Yet the ‘*law of disciplic succession*’ which as we shall see the Author relies on heavily was never mentioned in Srila Prabhupada’s books. Rather the books speak of examples of disciplic succession which do not even conform to this ‘*law*’ that was only ever mentioned once in private to a deviant disciple.

The Author again repeats his assertion:

Since Srila Prabhupada has already spoken everything in his books, the instructions found in his conversations, letters, and lectures must be fully based on his books and internally consistent with one another. The July 9th letter must therefore be understood in a way that is consistent with Srila Prabhupada’s books, conversations, lectures, and other letters.

- Well then, why is ‘*the law of disciplic succession*’ not mentioned in his books, and if it is why do the GBC not follow it?

The Author must accept the GBC’s position since his own guru is under their absolute authority, in the present set-up.

The Author concedes:

It is accepted that certain instructions may supersede others, but it does not necessarily follow that all previous instructions are superseded, nor does it automatically follow that former orders are incompatible with later orders.

Here we can only quote the GBC in ‘*Gurus and Initiation in ISKCON*’ (GII) who said:

“*In logic, later statements supercede earlier ones in importance*”

(GII,p25)

We note the Author singularly fails to produce a later or earlier countermanding order on initiation to the July 9th directive. If he wants to dispute this principle he should remember that his own guru, Hridayananda das Goswami, is himself under the authority, and hence the logic, of the same GBC who enunciated this principle.

However, unlike Lord Krishna’s “*final order*”, we never find in the July 9th letter any explicit mention that previous instructions on *guru-tattva* had been superseded. Since there is no explicit indication that previous instructions have been annulled, the instructions of the July 9th letter were therefore meant to be practiced concurrently with Srila Prabhupada’s other related instructions.

And we would assert that there is no previously stated principle of *guru-tattva*, found in Srila Prabhupada’s books, that such a deployment of *ritviks*, post-departure, would contravene or ‘*annul*’.

In his entire paper the Author fails to produce even one such teaching or principle, mentioned in Srila Prabhupada’s books, that the continued application of the *ritvik* system might violate.

The Author then moves on to his favourite evidence:

**Argument 2:** Instructions in letters written to disciples aspiring to be gurus are irrelevant because those disciples were unqualified to be a guru.

This is another ‘*straw-man*’ argument in that the inapplicability of the letters in question in over-turning a signed institutional directive comes from the fact that the letters were not intended to give direction to ISKCON, but were issued only privately to individuals.

- Whether the disciples in question were qualified or not, how can such private, unpublished letters overturn signed institutional directives?

We shall come to the actual content of these letters soon, but whatever they may contain, the Author fails to grasp the simple point that they cannot in themselves counteract the July 9th directive.

It’s so obvious that this is the case since even the GBC have previously argued that they were only ordered to be *diksa* gurus on May 28th (though they also contradict this) when a special delegation was sent to Srila Prabhupada to find out how initiations were to continue.

- If it was already so clear what was to happen from these handful of private letters, how is it the entire GBC were utterly clueless even as late as mid 1977?

It just doesn’t add up. In any case as we will later show, the letters do **NOT** contain any instruction that would overturn the July 9th directive.

TFO's Authors clearly state that these instructions cannot be taken as anything but a diversionary tactic, not having any relevance to the truly qualified. However, this conclusion violates a basic tenet also accepted by the Authors of TFO:

**"Whatever I have to speak, I have spoken in my books."**

Thus the instructions in these letters, even though they may have been written to ambitious disciples, must be clarifying principles found in Srila Prabhupada's own books.

'Whatever' Srila Prabhupada had to tell the whole world was most certainly in his books. But strangely the 'law' is not in there. The Author feels we missed out vital sections of one such private letter, we reproduce just those sections (underlined) relevant to his argument:

**Besides that, the etiquette is that so long the Spiritual Master is present, all prospective disciples should be brought to him. Therefore if anyone is anxious to be initiated, he should first of all hear our philosophy and join chanting at least for three months, and then if required, I shall send chanted beads for him if you recommend. As we are doing here. Don't be allured by such maya. I am training you all to become future Spiritual Masters, but do not be in a hurry. If the family of the boy who is so eager to be initiated certainly, are Vaisnavas, let them offer you some place, because you are in need of a place, first and foremost. In that place hold Kirtana daily, morning and evening, as we do, that will be the sign of their sincerity. So for the time being, hold Kirtana. as I have advised above, and speak from Srimad-Bhagavatam, Bhagavad-gita, and try to serve the cause of the Krishna Consciousness society. You don't be attracted by such cheap disciples immediately. One has to rise gradually by service.**

The Author comments:

One significant instruction here is "One has to rise gradually by service." In other words, Srila Prabhupada is instructing that he should become qualified.

Maybe, but there is no order here for Acyutananda to accept his own disciples. The whole point of the letter is to persuade him not to do this.

Furthermore, Srila Prabhupada himself says, "I am training you all to become future Spiritual Masters." It may be argued that this "future Spiritual Master" is a *siksa*-guru, not a *diksa*-guru, but this is unacceptable because Acyutananda at that time was already giving *siksa* and was, hence, already a *siksa*-guru.

- But what kind of 'siksa-guru' has to be reprimanded by his own Spiritual Master for cunningly maneuvering himself onto his own Guru's *vyasana*?

Acyutananda still had to become an obedient disciple without ambition, and eventually rise to the level of *siksa* guru. The Author then quotes:

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

And comments:

This reference also seems to fit with the idea that Srila Prabhupada was simply trying to keep a disciple in devotional service on the plea of offering guru-ship. But if we see just a little more of the letter Srila Prabhupada wrote, more than what TFO's Authors have shown, we see that Srila Prabhupada is also advising his disciple to be surrendered to his spiritual master and always follow his instructions and example—in other words, that he should become qualified (excluded portion highlighted by underlining):

**Your statements expressing your surrender to your spiritual master is proper. If this principle is followed you will remain pure and always protected by Krishna. Always follow my instructions and my example. This should be your life and soul.**

- But how does this other section of the letter, that we did not include, effect the first part, which even the Author admits 'seems to fit with the idea that Srila Prabhupada was simply trying to keep a disciple in devotional service on the plea of offering guru-ship'?

The Author continues:

The next reference offered but discounted as "diversionary" by TFO is obvious:

**"Keep trained up very rigidly and then you are bonafide Guru, and you can accept disciples on the same principle. . ."**

Srila Prabhupada stresses on the necessity of becoming qualified in order to be a bona fide spiritual master. How could the instruction to be qualified possibly be construed as misguidance on any level?

We never say that to be instructed to become qualified is any sort of *'misguidance'*; so this is yet another straw-man argument. We simply say that this instruction is not in itself an order to accept disciples, rather the reverse, it is an attempt to **STOP** the disciple from doing this. The Author continues:

Since Srila Prabhupada's affirmation that they may become spiritual masters in the future is accompanied by the instruction to become qualified, there is no question that this instruction could be some sort of well-intentioned lie. The obvious point is that if someone becomes qualified, there is no longer the question that he is unqualified. These letters therefore cannot be dismissed as irrelevant.

Even if someone becomes *'qualified'* he must still be **'authorised'**. For Srila Prabhupada to indicate the only time period in which a disciple **'may'** accept disciples, is not the same as saying that this *'will'* or *'should'* or *'ordained'* to happen. In TFO we gave the following example:

"As far as statements to the effect that they would be free to initiate after his departure, that is true. Just as in England one is free to drive a car once he is 17 years old. However, we must not forget those two little provisos. First, one must be qualified to drive, and second one must be authorised by the Driving License Authority. The reader may draw his own parallels."

("The Final Order")

Within ISKCON there is no authority for anyone to initiate apart from Srila Prabhupada. This is clear from the final directive on initiation issued by Srila Prabhupada on July 9th 1977. He is the only *diksa* guru mentioned in this directive.

The Author offers the following argument:

**Argument 3:** Only explicit instructions issued after the July 9th letter can modify it, or countermand it; previous instructions are irrelevant.

This is another straw man argument. TFO never says all previous general instructions are *'irrelevant'*. We say *The Final Order* must take *'precedence'*. But we concede that there could be other evidence that might conceivably countermand this order, and spend a great deal of space examining it (such as the May 28th conversation). Since the premise of this section is wrong, and the Author makes further arguments based on the *'law'* that has already been discussed above, the rest of this section of the Author's paper is irrelevant to TFO, and we can skip mercifully to the next section.

The Author poses the following:

**Argument 4:** Srila Prabhupada is still physically present in his books, magnetic tapes, pictures and murtis. Thus Srila Prabhupada can be approached for initiation, via an officiating priest and at least one or more of Srila Prabhupada's physical representations.

This again is a straw man argument. We never say Srila Prabhupada is still *'physically present'* in his books etc. We say he is **'spiritually present'** and that the books, *murti's* etc are physical manifestations that distinguish Srila Prabhupada from being *'Caitya guru'*. Remember, Srila Prabhupada is a **'Spiritual Master'** not a **'Physical Master'**. So we have external physical manifestations of Srila Prabhupada's *vani*, even though his *vapu* is no longer perceivable. Since again this section is based entirely on a misconception, we shall again skip to the next section of the Author's paper.

The Author poses the following:

**Argument 5:** Different personalities who lived on different planets had guru-disciple relationships. Now that Srila Prabhupada is on another planet (Krishna-loka), there is no reason to suppose that such a relationship could not continue, nor does it mean he could not accept disciples from a remote location.

**Fallacy:** The evidence used by TFO does not at all suggest that the guru on the remote planet was one who had passed away and continued to accept disciples after his disappearance.

The above is yet another straw-man argument. We never say that the example of B.g. 4.1. proves that a departed *Acarya* can accept disciples after his disappearance. We use it to show that a guru and disciple do not need to co-exist on the same planet in order for the process of *diksa* to function. Here is the relevant section of TFO:

"It might be argued that although Srila Prabhupada was not present at these initiations, still he was physically present on the same planet at the time they took place. So is the guru's physical presence on the planet during initiation essential to *diksa*? In order to lend weight to this argument we would need to find an injunction in Srila Prabhupada's books to the effect that:

*'Diksa can only take place if the guru is within a distance, not greater than the earth's diameter, of his disciple during a formal initiation ceremony.'*

To date no one has been able to locate such an injunction. Rather as the quote below shows, a well-known example of *diksa* in our philosophy actually contradicts the above proposition:

**“So there was no difficulty in communicating with Manu or Manu’s son, Ikshvaku. The communication was there, or the radio system was so nice that communication could be transferred from one planet to another.”**

(SP Bg. Lecture, 24/8/68)

So it was misleading of the Author to state: “The evidence used by TFO does not at all suggest that the guru on the remote planet was one who had passed away and continued to accept disciples after his disappearance” since that is not the point we were making. We also note he failed to mention the above quote from Srila Prabhupada that supports our main contention.

We also point out that Srila Prabhupada may still be in this universe (not ‘Krishna Loka’ as the Author speculates):

**“You have asked if it is true that the spiritual master remains in the universe until all his disciples are transferred to the spiritual sky. The answer is yes, this is the rule.”**

(Letter to Jayapataka, 11/7/69)

We never claim that the above is, in and of itself, proof that Srila Prabhupada established a *ritvik* system, merely that it supports various features implied by such a system. Since the rest of this section is based once again on a ‘straw-man’ argument, we will need to skip to where the following is posed:

**Argument 6:** Since ‘guru’ is a managerial post, subject to granting, scrutiny and withdrawal by the GBC, more *ritviks* can be appointed beyond the eleven Srila Prabhupada originally appointed.

**Fallacy:** Guru, or even *ritvik*, is not a managerial position.

This is yet another straw-man argument since, as already pointed out, we never assert or imply, nor is it the case, that ‘guru’ is a managerial post. However the *ritvik* does act within a system of management, as outlined in the July 9th directive. The post itself requires a qualified Brahmin. The Author then makes the following assertion:

The perceived phenomena of the GBC having powers to appoint, scrutinize and restrict gurus is simply an authorized feature of Vedic society wherein some people had the authority to see that everyone else acted according to their social or occupational status. (...) yet TFO’s Authors suggest that there is no basis for it in tradition or in scripture.

- So what examples does the Author give of authorised members of the disciplic succession being hired and fired by a committee?

Formerly, the votes were taken by highly saintly persons, *brahmanas*. Just like Prthu Maharaja’s father Vena Maharaja. He was disapproved by the *brahmanas* and the saintly persons, and immediately he was dethroned and killed.

- But what has the above got to do with initiating members of our disciplic succession being hired and fired by a committee, where is his example that matches his claim?

He never produces one. He then states:

In spite of evidence to the contrary, TFO’s Authors insist that *brahminical* activities like initiation are themselves systems of management.

he also states:

According to the above logic, if initiation is regarded as a system of management, then one element of the initiation “has to fall under the same terms of reference.”

Both the above pose a straw-man argument, since we never say that ‘*initiation*’ itself is system of management, but, as the Author correctly quotes us:

**“the methodology for conducting initiations was deemed a system of management.”**

So it is the ‘*methodology*’ not the transcendental process of *diksa* itself, that comes under the management umbrella. A subtle distinction perhaps, but there is no point in the Author attacking the wrong position. On the basis of this he goes on to launch an argument regarding marriage ceremonies using the wrong point of similarity with the *ritvik* system, causing his analogy to fail. (He attempts to show that the GBC have the authority to pick husbands!) In both an initiation and marriage, you have 2 individuals joined together via a ceremony. And in both cases a priest will conduct the ceremony. And just as no one is suggesting that the GBC will ‘*choose*’ the disciple for the Guru, but that the GBC can pick and manage the priests who conduct such ceremonies, similarly the GBC will not pick the husband for the wife, but the GBC can pick and manage the priests who conduct such ceremonies. Yes the Author is correct in that there is a parallel between marriage and initiation ceremonies, only he wasn’t able to spot what the parallel is!

He goes on:

TFO's Authors have thus failed to prove that a *ritvik* is a managerial position. And since there is ample evidence that Brahmins do not require a managerial structure for their existence or activities, we can conclude that the directives of Srila Prabhupada's will do not apply to *Brahmins*. We can say that Srila Prabhupada wanted everyone to cooperate with the GBC, but not that everyone who cooperates is now a manager.

There were many initiated *Brahmins* in ISKCON when Srila Prabhupada was present, yet he still defined some of them as managers. For example the GBC. The management system for running initiations were meant to be managed by the GBC, who were responsible for making sure everything in ISKCON continued 'without change'. In managing these systems they also engage other *Brahmins* to perform various tasks. Some of these *Brahmins* were engaged by Srila Prabhupada as *ritviks*, and operated (for a short time) within that structure.

- **What is the difficulty if that continues?**

The Author poses the following:

**Argument 7:** The "*amara-ajmaya*" verse only refers to becoming a *siksa-guru* not a *diksa-guru*, because Srila Prabhupada says this verse refers to people who do not have the high qualifications required to become a *diksa-guru*.

This is also a subtle straw-man argument. The verse only means this in relation to us, Srila Prabhupada's followers, since this is how he conveyed the order to us - i.e. "*It is best not to accept any disciples*":

**Fallacy:** TFO's authors neglect to mention other portions of Srila Prabhupada's teachings where Srila Prabhupada clearly uses this verse with regard to highly advanced devotees. TFO's evidence is selective and therefore tries to lead the reader to an unwarranted conclusion.

The subject of TFO is purely how the '*Amara*' verse relates to us, Srila Prabhupada's followers, not how it may relate to other great personalities. The Author continues:

Nowhere in all the times Srila Prabhupada has used the *amara-ajmaya* verse has he said it refers to being a *siksa-guru* and not a *diksa-guru*.

The purports following the verse make it clear that, as far as we are concerned, the verse requests us to act as instructors, not initiators. The instruction '*It is best not to accept any disciples*' could not make this point any clearer. The Author himself quotes from TFO:

**"One may remain a householder, 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 relatives and friends in the teachings of *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* [...] It is best not to accept any disciples."**

(C.c. Madhya, 7.130, purport)

We can see that these instructions do not demand that the gurus in question first attain any particular level of realisation before they act. The request is immediate. From this it is clear everyone is simply encouraged to preach what they may know, and in so doing become *siksa*, or instructing, gurus.

This is further clarified by the stipulation for the *siksa-guru* to remain in that position, and not then go on to become a *diksa-guru*:

**...But I have no qualification. How can I become guru? There is no need of qualification...Whomever you meet, you simply instruct what Krishna has said. That's all. You become guru.**

(Srila Prabhupada Lecture, 21/5/76, Honolulu )"

Clearly unable to refute our point here, the Author tries to divert attention by offering quotes that simply encourage everyone to preach, and in that sense become guru, a point no-one disputes:

However, in other places we see that Srila Prabhupada does also use this verse in reference to advanced devotees.

*Amara ajnaya guru haya tara ei desa*. You haven't got to go foreign countries. Wherever you are, you teach; become guru. It doesn't matter. *Ei desa*. He says, *ei desa*. If you have got power, you can go other country, but it doesn't require.

(the Author gave several other similar quotes)

- Such preachers may well be '*advanced devotees*', but where is there any mention of them initiating their own disciples in all the quotes offered by the Author?

Thus the Author fails to disprove the TFO's position regarding how the '*amara*' verse relates to Srila Prabhupada's followers.

**Argument 8:** The *amara-ajnyaya* verse never refers to the *diksa-guru*.

**Fallacy:** TFO's Authors overlook evidence that indicates the opposite.

This is another 'straw-man' argument. The above statement that "the *amara-ajnyaya* verse never refers to the *diksa-guru*", is never stated in TFO. What we do say is that the application of this verse specifically to ISKCON, where Srila Prabhupada is using it specifically to order his disciples to become Gurus, only refers to *siksa-guru*. The Author is not able to quote a single example of Srila Prabhupada ordering his disciples to become Gurus using the "*amara ajnyaya*" verse where Srila Prabhupada is referring to *Diksa* Gurus. On the contrary in his purports to this verse where he specifically speaks of the application of this verse to ISKCON, Srila Prabhupada makes it clear the verse can only refer to *Siksa* Gurus by stating – "***It is best not to accept any disciples***".

**Argument 9:** One must be explicitly ordered by his spiritual master to accept disciples before one can do so. Since Srila Prabhupada never ordered anyone to accept disciples, no one in Srila Prabhupada's line, even if they are qualified, may accept disciples.

**Fallacy:** TFO's Authors assume that the order to accept disciples must be explicit. This is false because Srila Prabhupada himself never received an explicit order to accept disciples.

Above the Author speculates that Srila Prabhupada did not receive an 'explicit' order from his own Guru to accept disciples.

• **But how can he possibly know this?**

Srila Prabhupada himself has never stated that he did not receive an explicit order from his own Guru maharaja. The Author presents no evidence to support his claim, but simply speculates that Srila Prabhupada was ordered to accept disciples at the same moment he was told to preach by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta:

In the next reference, Srila Prabhupada is speaking with his disciples, and he actually describes the order Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura gave him.

**One does not become spiritual master by his own whims. That is not spiritual master. He must be ordered by superior authority. Then he's spiritual master. *Amara ajnyaya*. Just like in our case. Our superior authority, our spiritual master, he ordered me that "You just try to preach this gospel, whatever you have learned from me, in English." So we have tried it. That's all. It is not that I am very much qualified. The only qualification is that I have tried to execute the order of superior authority. That's all. This is the secret of success.**

So this was the order Srila Prabhupada received – ". . . simply preach whatever you have learned from me, in English." TFO's Authors may object that, "No, there must be some other order. . .". But Srila Prabhupada says, "That's all." And "That's all" means nothing more – no other order.

Firstly "That's all" refers not to the totality of the order he received but to the fact that all he did was execute his spiritual master's order:

**"So we have tried it. That's all. It is not that I am very much qualified. The only qualification is that I have tried to execute the order of superior authority. That's all."**

Secondly we know Srila Prabhupada must have been authorised to accept disciples in addition to just told to preach because this is what Srila Prabhupada taught, as we said in TFO:

**"One should take initiation from a bona fide spiritual master coming in the disciplic succession, who is authorised by his predecessor spiritual master. This is called *diksa-vidhana*."**

(S.B. 4.8.54, purport)

The general instruction from Lord Caitanya to preach had been present for 500 years.

- It is obvious then that Srila Prabhupada did not consider '*amara ajnyaya guru hana*' to refer specifically to *diksa*, otherwise why would we need yet another specific order from our immediate *Acarya*?"

So being told to go and preach is not the same as being specifically ordered to become *diksa* guru.

- If the Author really believed this then why has he not demanded an explanation for why there are only 70 ISKCON *diksa* gurus in the last 24 years, and that each one has had to be separately and laboriously 'authorised' by the GBC?
- Why do the GBC have to authorise them if they are already authorised?

So even the Author's own 'spiritual authorities' do not accept that being told to preach, in and of itself, authorises one to act as a *diksa* guru.

The Author next poses the following:

**Argument 10:** We have seen in Srila Prabhupada's books statements that indicate that one must only accept an *uttama-adhikari* as a guru. We can therefore understand that since many if not all devotees who have assumed the role of guru are not *uttama-adhikaris*, their appointment is a transgression of Srila Prabhupada's teachings.

This is a straw-man argument. We never discuss whether or not some or all of the current gurus are '*uttama-adhikaris*'; we only discuss whether they are authorised to act as *diksa* gurus.

The Author next proposes:

**Argument 11:** Not falling down is a qualification for being a spiritual master. This means only liberated people may become spiritual masters.

This is yet another straw-man argument. TFO never says that not falling down is any sort of qualification.

**Argument 12:** Being an *uttama-adhikari*, or *maha-bhagavata*, is a necessary qualification for being a guru because a guru does not fall down, and only an *uttama-adhikari* is guaranteed not to fall down.

This is another straw-man argument. We never say that a *mahabhagavata* cannot fall down, we say that someone on the topmost platform (*prema*, not *bhava*) who has been authorised by his own guru to initiate, will never fall down. There is no example in all Srila Prabhupada's teachings of an authorised member of our disciplic succession falling down. It simply does not happen since the disciplic succession is infallible. Since this entire section is based on the above misrepresentation we shall move on swiftly to the next section:

**Argument 13:** There are gaps in our disciplic succession. Since the disciplic succession has continued in spite of the gaps, we must therefore conclude that some initiation of disciples by a departed guru had taken place at some points in history.

This is another straw-man argument. TFO never says that because there are gaps, therefore '*some initiation of disciples by a departed guru had taken place at some points in history*'.

- If we had said this then why did the Author not quote us saying it?

We simply pointed out that there are gaps, and that this shows that current links do not always appear back-to-back, but can remain current for long periods until a new *acarya* appears. Our point was thus not that this directly proves gurus can initiate after their departure (departure and appearance have no relevance to the process of *diksa*) merely that current links can remain current for long periods; a point the Author does not challenge. The fact that Srila Prabhupada says that '*also*' some branches are not recorded, does not negate the fact that '*also*' there are gaps.

Since this section again rests on a faulty premise, we shall skip to the next:

**Argument 14:** Chanting Hare Krishna and following Srila Prabhupada's instructions constitute actual initiation. Other official arrangements are superfluous and ultimately unnecessary.

**Fallacy:** TFO's evidence is again selective. Chanting Hare Krishna and following regulative principles is not the only necessary initiation. Initiation must also involve an official promise from the disciple at a point in time. Otherwise, the connection with Krishna does not take place.

Above we see the Author confuses what we agree is an essential: the promise from the disciple to follow; with the non-essential: namely the fire ceremony. In other words, yet another '*straw-man*' argument. We, in any case, also accept that even the non-essential aspects have merit, otherwise Srila Prabhupada would not have established them, and this is why the IRM are fighting to have them re-instated within ISKCON in their original form. Since this section is based on the above misrepresentation of our position we shall go to the next section entitled:

#### The July 9th Letter

With regards the July 9th directive, the Author argues that it:

does not contain any such explicit instruction to abandon previous instructions.

We never said it did. But in logic later statements supersede earlier ones. This is what the GBC says also, and they are the Author's authority. Thus at the point the letter was issued, all previous methods of initiation would become redundant. After July 9th everyone accepts that they were meant to use *ritviks* to give names, chant on beads etc.

The Author claims the order seems to be a type (b) instruction, which he defines as:

"Now you should accept disciples, not on my behalf, but that they are your disciples."

The reason he thinks this is:

because the previous method of Srila Prabhupada accepting disciples at the time of issuing the July 9th letter was ordered to be done in a different way-designated senior disciples would accept disciples on behalf of Srila Prabhupada instead of Srila Prabhupada himself giving the final sanction. Certainly, Srila Prabhupada said this, but the point of contention is the time-frame that this instruction was meant for.

As far as we can see the above is complete gobbledeygook.

- If the final July 9th order on initiation states, as it does, that all future initiates are to be disciples of Srila Prabhupada, how does this resemble in any way, shape or form an order for the 'ritviks' to accept disciples for themselves, on their own behalf?

The Author continues with a discussion of the word 'henceforward', which he then admits is redundant since he points out that:

It should be noted, however, that later arguments formulated in defence of TFO's interpretation of the July 9th letter consider that the inclusion or exclusion of the word "henceforward" makes no difference to their interpretation of the letter. They reason that since there was no explicit instruction in the letter that limited the time-frame of the *ritvik* initiation system, the system must continue indefinitely (...)

The Author then claims:

TFO's Authors and defenders have arrived at this conclusion through a fatal flaw in their reasoning: they argue that the time-frame for this letter is indefinite because of the absence of certain prohibitive instructions. There is no mention in the letter that the system should stop on Srila Prabhupada's departure, neither does it state that the system was to only be operational during his presence. We can also add the following statement, which is also true:

Nor does it mention that previous instructions are no longer applicable.

TFO spends most of its pages examining what evidence could possibly countermand the *ritvik* order, and nothing was found.

- So what has the Author uncovered that is suddenly so convincing?

TFO itself refers to "the law of disciplic succession" to defend their thesis.

Since this is an attempt to terminate the *ritvik* system through the use of personal letters, we shall invoke here Srila Prabhupada's 'law of disciplic succession'. The first part of the 'law' states that a disciple must not act as initiating *acarya* in his own guru's physical presence.

Since this "law" is valid even according to TFO, then it must also be valid vis-à-vis the July 9th letter. The second part of this law states:

**... and in his absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without limitation.**

Yes, it's that 'law' again. The Author misunderstands our use of the 'law'. It is not used in any way as evidence to defend our position. It is used to defeat the GBC who previously used it themselves to defend their position (but have now dumped it). Our point being that if the GBC want to rely on private letters as prime evidence (something we have never done) then it is **THEY** who must take account of the fact that the 'law' negates the use of the letter that says

**"by 1975, all those who have passed all of the above examinations will be specifically empowered to initiate and increase the number of Krishna Consciousness population." We made the same point the GBC had made their position paper**

**("Gurus and Initiation in ISKCON"),**

either Srila Prabhupada was expecting to leave the planet by 1975, or he was talking about some type of representational system. So our point is the GBC cannot use both the 'law' and the 'by 1975' letter at the same time. They cancel each other out. The Author has not grasped this point, and thinks we rely on the 'law' ourselves as some type of generally applicable instruction, when we do not. Since this section is based on this 'straw-man' misunderstanding we shall skip to the end.

The Author finishes with quotes over which there is no dispute such as the following:

**"So Krishna also, as spiritual master of Arjuna, He played. He is the original *acarya*. Then *acarya's* disciple becomes *acarya* when he assimilates the knowledge received from bona fide *acarya*. So he becomes bona fide to act as an *acarya*. *Evam parampara-praptam* [Bg. 4.2]. *Acarya* means one who has become a rigid disciple of his *acarya*. Just like a critical student under a professor, he becomes a first-class professor, similarly, a person who is a very rigid student of bona fide *acarya*, he becomes next *acarya*. That is the... *Evam parampara-praptam*. This is the disciplic succession."**

And the type of '*acarya*' we were meant to be is also described many times. We must simply repeat what we have been told and **'it is best not to accept any disciples'** (C.C: Madhya 7.130, purport). Srila Prabhupada established himself as the sole

initiating *acarya* for ISKCON for as long as the institution exists, and we should simply assist him in his mission as instructors.

## In Conclusion:

We have shown the following:

1. 12 of the 14 key '*arguments*' which the Author makes, and which form the basis of his whole paper are '*straw-man*' arguments. The vast majority of the other supplementary points he makes are also '*straw-man*' arguments. Thus the main thrust of Krishna Kirti prabhu's paper is taken up attacking arguments TFO never makes, rendering his paper irrelevant. This is even more bizarre since the Author is one of the few persons who has actually bothered to quote verbatim from TFO.
  - This simply demonstrates that TFO is an undefeatable paper, otherwise why are its detractors forced to invent arguments that TFO does not make in order to write a response?
  - Why are they unable to even **ADDRESS** what **TFO ACTUALLY** states?
2. In relation to the handful of points the Author has made which do bear some resemblance to what is stated in TFO, please note:
  - i) The paper relies heavily on a 'law' of 'disciplic succession' that:
    - a) The GBC no longer follow (invented get-out clauses notwithstanding);
    - b) Was not followed by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta;
    - c) Was not described in any of Srila Prabhupada's books, but only in one private letter that was not intended to be generally available to guide the ISKCON movement;
    - d) Was used solely to deal with difficult disciples, as practically admitted by the Author, in order to STOP them from acting as *diksa* gurus;
    - e) Indicates only the time period when it is theoretically possible for them to initiate, not that they '*will*' or '*shall*' definitely do it, or are in any way being '*authorised*' to do it.
  - ii) The paper fails to explain how the '*amara*' verse authorises Srila Prabhupada's disciples to accept disciples when it's purports state "*it is best not to accept any disciples*".

In the '**acknowledgements**' section of his paper the Author thanks his wife for making 'sacrifices' so that he had 'time' to work on this 'project'. However due to his failure to address the actual document he is supposed to be responding to, we were able to dismantle his 'project' in under 3 hours. Our sympathies therefore go to his wife for the precious waste of time incurred in producing an irrelevant paper.

Thus TFO remains robustly resilient to yet another attempt to thwart Srila Prabhupada's stated intentions. For the fifth time in as many years, once again, '*The Final Order Still Stands!*'

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