

a response to: '*Diksa* or *Ritvik*'

Danavir Invents A New Philosophy



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“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)



by Krishnakant

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This is in reply to '*Diksa or Ritvik*'

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We present the following as more evidence of the futility of the GBC Gurus in even attempting to try and defeat the IRM's position.

Recently H.H. Danavir Goswami has attempted to deconstruct the so-called '*Ritvik*' position in an article he has written titled '*Diksa or Ritvik*', which was published on CHAKRA. Unfortunately rather than throw any light on this issue, he has simply repeated the standard technique used by the GBC when dealing with the '*ritvik*' issue. This is to invent a philosophy which is not actually put forward by IRM, but is easy to defeat, and to then defeat it and claim that what they have defeated is 'what the *ritviks* say'.

In this way they are able to manufacture a false 'victory'. This is known as defeating a 'straw man' argument, where being unable to defeat the actual arguments presented by one's opponent, one instead addresses **other** arguments that can be defeated, and then falsely attributes these now defeated arguments as belonging to one's opponent.

That this was Danavir Maharaja's aim can be evidenced just by the nonsensical title he has given his article - '*Diksa or Ritvik*'? - where he posits that '*Diksa*' and '*Ritvik*' are alternatives to each other. In fact the use of *ritvik* priests is simply part and parcel of the *Diksa* process itself.

Thus Danavir's title is therefore actually the same as "*Diksa or Diksa*"! ?

Thus from the very start we are given a glimpse of the nonsense which is about to follow. We will now detail these inherent fallacies present in Maharaja's paper. Statements from Maharaja's paper shall be boxed in speech marks thus "", with our comments following underneath, with maharaja referred to as the 'author' throughout. We will demonstrate conclusively that far from 'defeating' the IRM position, Maharaja can not even figure out **what** it is!

We prove below, that from start to finish, in his paper, Danavir Maharaja simply concocted a new philosophy which he calls '*ritvik*', so that he could defeat it. Indeed as will be seen, there is an error in every single paragraph of Maharaja's paper.

1) "Nevertheless, our attempt to eliminate the process of Vaisnava *diksa* (initiation) via a so-called "*ritvik*" jump must be counted among our most preposterous new propositions to date."

The process of Vaisnava *diksa* (initiation) was carried out via the '*ritvik*' system for many initiations performed in ISKCON during Srila Prabhupada's time. Thus not only is the IRM not trying to eliminate Vaisnava *Diksa* via the '*Ritvik*' system, but it is not even possible to do this, since the use of *Ritviks* is merely one possible part of the *Diksa* process. Thus to suggest that *Diksa* is being eliminated by that which actually allows *Diksa* to be conducted, '*must be counted among our most preposterous new propositions to date*'!

2) ""Yes," one may argue, "for philosophical issues that's true, but the initiation process (*diksa*) is a managerial detail which is subject to alteration according to time, place and circumstance." To the contrary, *diksa* is not a managerial detail, but a solid Vaisnava principle."

The IRM does not argue that *Diksa* is a managerial detail. It states that it is a '*solid vaisnava principle*'.

3) "Wily *ritvik* advocates try to prove *diksa* gurus obsolete because, according to them, the Brahma Madhva Gaudiya Sampradaya is a "*siksa* line," not a "*diksa* line."

Again this is not an argument put forward by the IRM.

4) "There is no Vaisnava *acarya* who will say that it is not necessary to take initiation from a bonafide spiritual master."

The IRM do not say this either.

5) "*Siksa*-line proponents point out that Srila Vyasadeva was not the *diksa* guru of Madhvacarya, and that other spiritual masters listed in our disciplic succession were not initiated by the person whose name appears directly above theirs."

Maybe they do. But we thought Maharaja was supposed to be addressing the arguments of the '*Ritvik*' proponents, not '*siksa*-line' proponents, whoever they are.

6) "In other words, the attempt of an initiated disciple to find a *siksa* guru who surpasses or circumvents one's *diksa* guru is offensive and such rascaldom will be disastrous to one's spiritual life."

What an 'initiated' disciple may or may not attempt to do cannot possibly have any relevance to the subject in hand, for the use of '*ritviks*' relates to those who need initiation, not those who have already received it.

7) "By saying that Srila Prabhupada's disciples should not become gurus, the *ritvik* proponents spoil everything because this is the method Lord Krishna has arranged for continuing his teachings down through the ages."

Of course the IRM do not say this. Everyone in ISKCON must become a Guru. We only state that for **Diksa**, one must follow the *Ritvik* system set up by Srila Prabhupada.

8) "This brings us to the real crux of the issue. Some say that none of Srila Prabhupada's disciples should become a spiritual master because none of them are *uttama adhikaris*."

But this '*some*' does not include the IRM.

9) "Fuelled by illusion and envy, the subliminal intention of the *ritvik* theory is to eliminate gurus and disciples altogether as most so-called Christian denominations have done."

Since the IRM position is **based** on accepting Srila Prabhupada as the only Guru initiating disciples, it cannot possibly be about eliminating both Gurus and disciples.

10) "The following is an excerpt from a *Vyasa-puja* lecture delivered by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Maharaja. Read it and you'll understand why Vaisnavas cannot abolish the process of gurus accepting disciples."

And we have seen no one is attempting to abolish the process of Gurus accepting disciples. The GBC however have abolished the process of Srila Prabhupada accepting disciples, as he himself authorised for ISKCON via the July 9th directive.

11) "*Ritvik* theory encourages lower standards by propounding that it isn't possible to attain the high position of becoming a bonafide spiritual master."

It does not. Indeed we state the very opposite in '*The Final Order*'.

12) "It is incorrect to think that only a *nitya-siddha sakyavesa avatara* is eligible to become a bonafide spiritual master."

Again this concept has never been put forward by the IRM.

13) "*Ritvik* theory propounds changing the *parampara* system of initiation, and ushers in the thinking that there is no need for initiation."

Again the IRM never says this. Indeed its whole position is based on the need for initiation - albeit from Srila Prabhupada.

14) "In effect, eliminating the *diksa* guru is tantamount to spiritual abortion."

This is correct, and is exactly what the GBC did when they eliminated the *Diksa* Guru of ISKCON, Srila Prabhupada, by replacing him with themselves.

15) "By trying to eliminate the *diksa* guru, *ritvik* proponents ignore Srila Prabhupada's emphasis on this point."

As already demonstrated, the ones who have factually eliminated the *Diksa* Guru, is the GBC, who eliminated Srila Prabhupada as the *Diksa* for ISKCON.

16) "The present attempt to propound a new theory of *ritvik* initiations is already mischievous enough but by trying to attribute the concoction to His Divine Grace through twisting his words is nothing less than outrageous."

Since the use of *Ritviks* to assist in *Diksa* ceremonies was set up and propounded by Srila Prabhupada, with devotees being authorised to chant on initiates beads, perform the fire *yajna*, and eventually accept the disciples and grant spiritual names on behalf of Srila Prabhupada, it is neither 'new', nor a 'theory'.

17) "Embracing *ritvik* theory means, essentially, that one considers Srila Prabhupada so unfortunate that he could not train even one disciple to carry on the disciplic succession."

No. 'The Final Order' states the opposite.

Srila Prabhupada also stated that:

"Actually amongst my godbrothers no one is qualified to become *acarya*."

(Letter to Rupunuga, 28/4/74)

By the author's warped logic, we would also need to then speculate that Srila Prabhupada considered Srila Bhaktisidhanta so unfortunate that he could not even train two disciples to carry on the disciplic succession.

18) "In fact, their newest word-juggling leader pleads that when Srila Prabhupada says "granddisciple" he doesn't really mean the disciple of his disciple."

No, we never say this. We admit as stated on page 25 of "The Final Order", that Srila Prabhupada **is** speaking of Grand-disciples, but that they will only emerge if and when Srila Prabhupada orders his disciples to become Gurus:

'His Grand-disciple ...When I order you become guru, he becomes regular guru. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple.'

(May 28th, 1977, Room Conversation)

19) "Instead, intending to rid the world of gurus, the juggler wants to make Srila Prabhupada the initiating spiritual master and the grand spiritual master at the same time. Must we accept this nonsense?"

On the contrary it is the GBC who say that the new *Diksa* Gurus are simultaneously the spiritual master and Grand-spiritual master:

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

Srila Prabhupada: They are **his** disciples.

Tamal Krishna: They are his disciples.

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

In the above the GBC insist that the word '**his**' refers to Srila Prabhupada's disciples. This would mean that they would simultaneously have both '**disciples**' and '**grand-disciples**':

Srila Prabhupada: They are **his** disciples ... Who is initiating ... **his** grand-disciple ...

And by the way, the official GBC transcript of the appointment tape as given in 1985 and as given on the official ISKCON.COM website has the correct transcript of '**his disciple**', and not '**he is grand-disciple**', as given by the author.

20) "Even though the *ritvik* proponents wish they could just eliminate the word "granddisciple," it's not so easy because there are other annoying words like "grand spiritual master" and "great-grand spiritual master" and so on in the Vaisnava family tree. [...] Accepting *rtvik* theory means we'll have to throw out Srila Prabhupada's books, lectures, conversations and letters so there won't be any traces of these troublesome words to contend with."

As demonstrated, the IRM make no attempt to eliminate the word '*grand-disciple*'. On the contrary it is the GBC who attempt to eliminate the words '**when I order**' on which the existence of grand-disciples is conditional.

21) "*Ritvik* theory makes it convenient for so-called disciples to maintain an immoral position without the intervention of a physically present guru. This is much like so-called Christians who say that Jesus is in their heart and he died for their sins and therefore they are saved."

The author himself has maintained a position without the 'intervention of a physically present guru' for 23 years now.

22) "*Ritvik* theory is based on faultfinding (*hati mata*) rather than scriptural evidence. For example the recent "poison theory" also emanated from the *ritvik* proponents."

Incorrect. Please note that some of key movers in bringing the poison issue to light, and pushing it:

Isa Das, Mahabhuddi Das, Balavanta Das, Naveen Krishna Das, Madhusevita Das (who as GBC chairman authorised Balavanta's

investigation in 1997), Puru Das, Rocana Das etc. etc., have absolutely nothing to do with the IRM.

Indeed some of them are Narayana Maharaja supporters, and though some 'ritviks' did get involved, the whole thing was kick-started mainly by the tapes presented by Isa Das, a prominent follower of Narayana Maharaja.

Indeed the GBC have relied on the IRM's paper on the poison issue in order to try and rebut the 'poison theory', via their official book on the subject.

23) "While present, Srila Prabhupada personally considered, acknowledged and accepted or rejected each new candidate. It is odd then to expect him, after his departure, to accept new disciples impersonally by the mere imagination of so-called ritvik channellers, who are not even recognized members within ISKCON."

This is incorrect. After July 7th, 1977, this responsibility was delegated entirely to the Ritviks he had appointed:

Srila Prabhupada: So without waiting for me, wherever **you consider** it is right... That will depend on discretion.

Tamala Krishna: On discretion.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.

Tamala Krishna: That's for first and second initiations.

Srila Prabhupada: Hm.

(Conversation, July 7th, 1977)

This is the system that was set up by Srila Prabhupada to be in place for ISKCON, so as to specifically not require his physical presence.

24) "If it were so easy to jump up the ladder and become the direct disciple of Srila Prabhupada, then why couldn't one just as easily double jump up to become Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati's direct disciple."

But this pre-supposes that there is a 'ladder' to jump - i.e. the very question under debate. Therefore the author is merely assuming that which needs to be proven. He needs to first demonstrate that Srila Prabhupada ordered his elimination as the *Diksa* Guru for ISKCON via self-elected disciples. From what we have seen thus far the author has not even come close to addressing this question, less answering it.

25) "Did you know that there is a scriptural injunction for a one-year mutual examination period before taking initiation? Ritvik theory eliminates the mutual testing between guru and disciple. In ritvik theory, the guru has no say in the matter, only the self-appointed ritvik channeller calls the shots."

No. This mutual testing was eliminated by Srila Prabhupada himself, who allowed the Temple President to conduct it on his behalf, since Srila Prabhupada did not spend a whole year personally testing any of his disciples. Indeed most were initiated before they had even been in ISKCON for one year. Incidentally this one year mutual examination period is not practised by most of the Gurus in ISKCON today, especially their leading Guru Jayapataka Swami, who flies in and initiates whoever is around. In this way he has amassed thousands of disciples.

26) "What has been the standard system of initiation (*diksa*) conducted throughout the ages in all bona fide Vaisnava sampradayas, today we neophyte American devotees desire to change."

Indeed many neophyte American devotees did just this in 1978 when they changed the system of initiation which Srila Prabhupada had left us, whereby he was the spiritual master of ISKCON. Now this has been changed to the current system whereby anyone can be the spiritual master in ISKCON **except** Srila Prabhupada, including those who in the future, and as little as 5 years previously, will/did engage in '**sex with men, women and children**'.

27) "There is an entire lecture given by Srila Prabhupada in which he told his disciples, or rather, insisted that his disciples become gurus.

Here's an excerpt:

To become spiritual master is not very difficult thing. You'll have to become spiritual master. You, all my disciples, everyone should become spiritual master.

"I remember hearing this lecture on tape in the seventies and I understood that Srila Prabhupada was training us, his disciples, to carry on the disciplic succession. Not only myself but every devotee that I knew also had the same understanding. I never heard, even once, from any devotee in ISKCON during the period of 1970 to November 1977 that Srila Prabhupada did not expect his disciples to become gurus. Was the whole movement misunderstanding Srila Prabhupada during his physical presence? No, the devotees all understood correctly then, but after Srila Prabhupada's departure some persons affected by the age of *Kali*, concocted a new idea, that new devotees should take initiation directly from Srila Prabhupada via *ritviks*."

But the entire movement must have misunderstood, because instead of 'all becoming gurus', the whole movement, enthusi-

astically supported by the author, affected by the age of *kali*, concocted a new idea that new devotees should take initiation in their 'zone' only via 11 'pure zonal *acharyas*'. So we know for a fact that the devotees had not '*all understood correctly*'

28) "Those who cannot accept Srila Prabhupada's uncompromising teachings will undoubtedly form splinter groups, but the ISKCON caravan should remain firmly fixed and pure in pursuing the path of the *mahajanas*."

Indeed it is ISKCON that is '*polarised and disintegrating*' as admitted by the GBC's own chairman:

"How will we deal with our polarized and disintegrating society."

(Ravindra Svarupa, GBC Chairman, GBC Com, May 2000)

29) "The numerous references where Srila Prabhupada definitively states his desire and that of the disciplic succession for continuing the initiation process are so crystal clear that it is dumbfounding to see them being contended. It is another of Srila Prabhupada's unlimited glories that he reiterated the same instruction so many times, each time etching the message deeper into the stone foundation pillars of ISKCON. Thus he is Founder-*acarya* because he established the immovable laws of the Society."

The numerous references where Srila Prabhupada definitively states his desire for continuing the initiation process via the signed directive of the July 9th directive sent out to every Temple and GBC, the conversation of July 19th, and the conversation on October 21st, are so crystal clear that it is dumbfounding to see them being contended.

30) "*Ritvik* theory disregards Srila Prabhupada's instructions by opposing ISKCON and the GBC."

On the contrary, the GBC disregard Srila Prabhupada's instructions to implement the July 9th directive.

31) "*Ritvik* theory seeks to deprive new devotees the opportunity of following the *parampara* properly and receiving real initiation."

On the contrary the GBC seeks to deprive new devotees the opportunity of following the *parampara* and receiving real initiation from Srila Prabhupada, the current *acarya* of the disciplic succession.

32) "It is devious to try to misinterpret Srila Prabhupada's instructions to mean that his disciples should not become gurus. Consider for yourself the following:

This time I have requested all Nairobi important friends that "Now you take *sannyasa* and become guru. Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu asked everyone to become guru. *amara ajnaya guru hana tara ei desa*. You have come to Africa. Now become their guru and deliver them." "Now, how shall I do it?" *Yare dekha tare kaha krsna upadesa*: "Simply speak. Don't become very big upstart. Simply speak what Krishna has done. That's all. You become guru." (Lecture: December 20, 1975)"

However this quote, along with the others presented by the author, is given in the present tense. That is, Srila Prabhupada is asking his disciples to do it there and then:

"Now become their guru and deliver them."

That is, they are not asked to wait until Srila Prabhupada departs before taking up this responsibility. Thus by the 'law of disciplic succession' which the author also quotes, Srila Prabhupada could not possibly be speaking about his disciples acting as *Diksa* Gurus.

33) "So Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, *amara ajnaya guru hana tara ei desa yare dekha, tare kaha, 'krsna'-upadesa* [...] No, it is those who oppose Srila Prabhupada's instruction to become a bonafide spiritual master who are in error."

It is those who oppose Srila Prabhupada's instructions in the purports to the above verse to:

"best not to accept any disciples"

who are in error.

34) "*Ritvik* theory seeks to deprive Srila Prabhupada's disciples the chance of fulfilling Lord Caitanya's order to become gurus (*guru haya*)."

On the contrary the GBC does not fulfil Lord Caitanya's order to become Gurus (*guru haya*) by deliberately disobeying the '**best not to accept any disciples**' part. The IRM meanwhile encourages everyone to become a Guru on Srila Prabhupada's behalf, and to preach his glories

35) "Since whatever he had to speak, he spoke in his books, let us then try to understand what's in Srila Prabhupada's books in regards to his disciples becoming *diksa* gurus"

In Srila Prabhupada's books, Srila Prabhupada also speaks of the specific authorisation needed from one's spiritual master in order to take up the role of *Diksa* Guru:

“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)

Where is the author's authorisation from Srila Prabhupada to take up the role of *Diksa* Guru? The GBC have never produced any authorisation from Srila Prabhupada to empower them to vote in *Diksa* Gurus in ISKCON.

36) “*Ritvik* theory contorts Srila Prabhupada's words about becoming gurus.”

On the contrary the GBC disobeys Srila Prabhupada words about becoming Gurus, eliminating words such as **‘when I order’, ‘authorised by his predecessor spiritual master’, ‘best not to accept any disciples’** etc.

In the case of the phrase **‘authorised by his predecessor spiritual master’**, this elimination is literal, as reported in IRM newsletter no. 20, where Bhakti Caru Swami omitted this phrase from his Bengali translation of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. (See ‘Bhakti Caru Swami Caught Cheating, Newsletter No. 20).

37) “We can also hear from Srila Narahari Sarakara Thakura about this topic of Vaisnava etiquette:

“Just as a faithful son may go out for earning money and subsequently brings to his father the wealth gained, later the son may ask for some allowance from the father and whatever he receives from the father he is entitled to spend for his own enjoyment. Similarly, a disciple may hear some instructions from another advanced Vaisnava but after gaining that good instruction he must bring it and present it to his own spiritual master.

After presenting them he should hear the same teachings again from his spiritual master with appropriate instructions.”

(Sri Krishna Bhajanamrta 48)”

This is an example of what H.H. Hrdayananda Maharaja calls *‘self-referential incoherence’*, for this very instruction of Narahari Sarakara Thakura, as well as all the other statements that the GBC are fond of quoting from sources other than Srila Prabhupada, have not themselves been brought to, and heard again from, our **‘own spiritual master’**, Srila Prabhupada.

38) “Srila Narahari Sarkara Thakura, the fortieth branch of the Caitanya Tree described in the Caitanya Caritamrta, writes:

“If the spiritual master commits a wrongful act breaking Vaisnava regulative principles, then in that case one should, in a solitary place, confront him for his rectification using logic and appropriate conclusions from sadhu, shastra, and guru references, but one is not to give him up.”

However as proven by the words of Srila Narahari Sarkara Thakura quoted by the author above, unless these teachings are first presented to Srila Prabhupada, and then confirmed by hearing them directly from Srila Prabhupada, the author has no business accepting them. (See *Sri Krishna Bhajanamrta 48*, by Srila Narahari Sarkara Thakura, quoted above by the author).

39) “In this short paper we are only examining a very few of the faults of the *rtvik* theory. Actually it is full of unlimited faults because it opposes the Vedic system of disciplic succession.”

As we have seen, the authors' paper is full of unlimited faults, having not even succeeded in figuring out what it is he is supposed to be answering, though we have been kind enough here to examine only a very few of them.

In summary the moral of the story is that the only way the GBC Gurus will ever defeat the IRM is to defeat what the IRM do NOT say, and then simply imagine that they have defeated the IRM!

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