

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare

"..*Sastra* is never changed. And the *sadhu*... *sadhu* means who follows the *sastras*. He is *sadhu*. He also does not change. *Sadhu*, *sastra* and *guru*? *Guru* means who follows the *sastra* and *sadhu*. So there are three, the same."

(S.P. Lecture 30/11/76, Vrindavana)"

GBC Fail To Answer The Final Order



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GBC Fail To Answer The Final Order

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Iskcon Revival Movement

A Reply To 'Prabhupada's Order' (GBC Aug. 98)

Recently when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vrindavana, Srila Prabhupada indicated that soon he would appoint some of his senior disciples to act as "*ritvik* - representative of the *acharya*, for the purpose of performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation. His Divine Grace has so far given a list of eleven disciples who will act in that capacity.

(July 9th, 1977)

A Reply To 'Prabhupada's Order' (GBC Aug. 98)

In heralding the above paper as the "long awaited ISKCON response to the *ritvik* paper 'The Final Order'" (*TFO*) the GBC are not exaggerating. According to our e-mail log it has taken since 26th October 1996 to reply. Despite such a long wait, any hopes that this paper might actually offer a point by point response to *TFO* are speedily shattered in the introduction on page one of this latest GBC paper - 'Prabhupada's Order' (Henceforward *PO*):

"The purpose of this paper is not to refute point by point *TFO*, but to give a general overview of the main claims of this paper, and *ritvik* theories in general, and examine the supporting evidence for these theories compared to the evidence for following the traditional *parampara* system."

(*PO* page 1).

From the very outset then the GBC admit that *PO* does not offer a full and complete answer to *TFO*, as was originally promised, but instead a far more nebulous package. We shall start by making some general points about *PO* and then go through it systematically. Since, in theory at least, this should be the last paper we need to write refuting the GBC on this issue, we have gone into considerable detail. We thus apologise in advance to the reader for the length of this refutation.

Modifications Unaddressed

The main problem with *PO* is that instead of providing evidence in specific support of modifications A and B, which form the very core of the entire controversy and *TFO*. The GBC instead offer a 'general overview' of what they purport to be *TFO*'s main claims, along with '*ritvik* theories in general'. We will show that even this diluted promise is not fulfilled since *PO* is full of counter-arguments to assertions we have never made. It is thus unlikely that this paper will convince anyone who has properly read *TFO*, since as we explain, without explicit evidence for modifications A and B, the GBC have no case. To remind the reader again of these implicitly proposed modifications to the final July 9th policy statement on initiations:

Modification a): That the appointment of representatives or *ritvik*'s was only temporary, specifically to be terminated on the departure of Srila Prabhupada.

Modification b): Having ceased their representational function, the *ritvik*'s would automatically become *diksa* gurus, initiating persons as their own disciples, not Srila Prabhupada's.

There is no clear statement from Srila Prabhupada, given in *PO* that specifically supports these modifications. If statements supporting the above modifications were ever made by Srila Prabhupada then the whole issue could be settled within a few sentences. The GBC would simply need to present these statements and we would concede defeat. It is that simple. We would not be arguing with the GBC if they could present statements from Srila Prabhupada, issued to the entire movement, EXPLICITLY upholding the above modifications to the final order he himself signed and sent to all the leaders of ISKCON. Instead of such clear and unequivocally RELEVANT evidence, we are once more offered a barrage of IRRELEVANT quotes, the likes of which we have already addressed time and time again. In the previous attempt at partially answering *TFO* - '*Disciple of My Disciple*', (henceforward *DOMD*), (GBC, 1997), to their credit the GBC did at least attempt to answer more directly modifications A & B. They did this by stating that the 'appt tape' provided the specific evidence for how the *ritvik*'s turned into *diksa* gurus and in so doing terminated the *ritvik* system on departure (a contention we disproved in '*The Final Order Still Stands*')

In *PO* the GBC take a slightly different tack, (perhaps realising their last attempt failed), in that the authors are now arguing that it was always preached by Srila Prabhupada that it was automatic that all his disciples would become *diksa* gurus upon his departure, and that the 'appt tape' simply CONFIRMS this pre-stated arrangement. In other words, previously the 'appt tape' was offered as the PRIMARY evidence, with the letters to Tusta Krishna, Hansadutta et al. merely used to support the GBC's interpretation of the 'appt tape'. Now these quotes appear to constitute the main thrust of the evidence, with the 'appt tape' simply 'confirming' what was allegedly continually preached by Srila Prabhupada. There are two points to be made here.

1. This approach does not begin to answer modifications A & B since it is still possible that Srila Prabhupada wanted the *ritvik* system to be followed after his departure inspite of anything he may have said earlier. Even if Srila Prabhupada had previously mentioned his disciples initiating after departure, he may have changed his mind in the final months. Maybe he saw that no one was suitably qualified, or maybe Lord Krishna spoke within his heart to set up a *ritvik* system inspite of previous indications. We are not saying this is what happened - (certainly we have yet to see all these many instructions to ALL his disciples specifically stating they should give *diksa* on their own behalf after departure) - all we are saying is that it is still necessary, inspite of whatever else Srila Prabhupada allegedly indicated, that evidence is offered specifically satisfying 'A & B' in order to justify the events of 1978 which led to the complete abandonment of the *ritvik* system. One can not just whimsically abandon the order of the guru, that is an axiom of Vaisnava philosophy.
2. Furthermore, the way in which the May 28th tape is used in *PO* is quite intriguing since, as mentioned, it veers from the approach of past GBC papers. In '*Disciple of My Disciple*', for example, the GBC used ONLY the 'appt tape' to show what Srila Prabhupada wanted for initiations after departure. Thus previously the appointment tape was the principal evidence put forward which allegedly justified both of the GBC's subsequent guru systems. The May 28th conversation, with its alleged sanction of future *diksa* gurus, was always held up as something quite unique and distinct. In *PO* it is now downgraded to just one of many similar instructions. This shift in emphasis leads to some serious contradictions, which we shall show later.

The over-all approach of *PO* is thus something of a departure from the past and goes something like this:

- a. Try and show that Srila Prabhupada many times spoke of his disciples becoming *diksa* gurus and initiating on his departure; (*PO* tries to achieve this by offering many quotes which do not simultaneously mention the words '*diksa*', 'initiate' and 'departure'; the handful of personal letter extracts which could imply such have already been dealt with many times.)
- b. State that the May 28th tape confirms this arrangement; (though the vital question of how the intention to specifically select/appoint just 11 persons as *ritviks* is somehow confirmation of a general standing order for everyone to be *diksa* guru immediately on departure is certainly not addressed, much less explained in *PO*.)
- c. Assert that the '*ritvik*' theory would violate the principle of *parampara* which allegedly requires '*living*' guru links. (A principle never once stated in any of Srila Prabhupada's books. Rather as the appendix of quotes to *TFO* comprehensively demonstrates, the contrary is stated by Srila Prabhupada - that the transmission of knowledge between Guru and disciple in the *parampara* does NOT require the '*living*' presence of the guru.)
- d. Then try and demonstrate that the July 9th letter was clearly ONLY set up for Srila Prabhupada's presence by using the July 7th garden conversation. (In this *PO* only manages to establish that the *ritvik* system was meant to operate during Srila Prabhupada's presence - a point no one disputes - but not that it was ONLY to operate during Srila Prabhupada's presence, with the *ritviks* mysteriously transmogrifying into *diksa* gurus one split second after Srila Prabhupada's departure - the very point of contention).

PO pins a major portion of its strategy of attack by just assuming that the *ritvik* idea is in opposition to the '*traditional parampara* system'; a charge that its authors never actually substantiate, but nevertheless continually repeat like a self-hypnotic *mantra*. If this underpinning premise is incorrect, then presenting loads of quotes mentioning the principle of *parampara* will not actually defeat the pro-*ritvik* position. Since *PO* fails to establish precisely how *ritvik* violates this important principal of *parampara*, much of the paper is just completely irrelevant. *PO* is also unsatisfactory for the following reasons:

1. *TFO* is only quoted directly 4 times in the whole paper. *PO* is thus 'the final insult' to all the many thousands of devotees who wanted to see a full response (on both sides of the fence).
2. *PO* fabricates statements and then falsely attributes them to *TFO*, even descending to using quotation marks to convince the reader that the quotes are genuine!
3. *PO* answers numerous 'straw-man' arguments that have nothing to do with *TFO*. ('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 is going on.)
4. When *PO* does accurately address an assertion made in *TFO*, the paper merely recycles old arguments that have already been used before in other GBC papers and which have already been thoroughly defeated. (On such occasions, we shall quote the relevant passages from our counter rebuttal papers).

Examples of all the above will follow.

There is very little in the way of new argumentation, and certainly none that is relevant to the central issue regarding modifications *A & B*; in the main it is simply a re-hash of previously released and already refuted material (even the first part of the introduction has been lifted from another paper!) Which appears to have been hastily cut and pasted together with little regard for whether all the pieces actually fit (we shall show how they do not). It is almost as though the GBC have given up trying to honestly answer *TFO* (not that they ever really started since *DOMD* was full of straw man arguments). They seem to believe that if they just churn out a load of irrelevant arguments and quotes the majority of devotees will not bother to scratch the surface and study our response.

PO is thus a Merlin's broth of baseless arguments and groundless innuendo, all stirred together in the hope that its magic will prolong the M.A.S.S., or even breath life into yet another new deviant guru system. Whatever the hope, the approach taken in *PO* will certainly back-fire on the GBC, just as their current concocted guru system is clearly beginning to. We hope the GBC will at last see sense so we will no longer need to respond to them in this way. All the devotees want to work co-operatively with the GBC to put ISKCON back on track, but that can only happen when they either agree to follow Srila Prabhupada's final order on initiation, or show that they are justified in interpreting that order as applicable only during his physical presence. If the GBC continue on their present path, there is a strong danger ISKCON will self-destruct.

PO is broken down into 9 sections with 3 appendices as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Definition of *Ritvik*
3. Chronology of Srila Prabhupada's Instructions - (A presentation of 37 quotes claiming to demonstrate the consistent desire of Srila Prabhupada authorising ALL his disciples to become *diksa* gurus on his departure).
4. Srila Prabhupada's teachings on Succession - (A presentation of 13 more additional quotes claiming to further demonstrate that Srila Prabhupada clearly wanted ALL his disciples to succeed him as *diksa* gurus.)

5. Comparison of instructions on *parampara* and *ritvik* - (An explanation of how only the '*parampara* system' and not the '*ritvik* system' is mentioned in Srila Prabhupada's teachings.)
6. The Confirmation of May 28, 1977 - (A presentation of how the May 28th Appointment tape authorises *diksa* gurus.)
7. The Letter of July 9th, 1977 - (An explanation of the temporary nature of the July 9th letter.)
8. Integrity of *TFO*'s reporting methods - (A so-called expose of *TFO*'reporting methods' - borrowed from 'Timeless Order')
9. Conclusion

Appendices

1. GBC Minutes - (A paper about the GBC Minutes book by Hari Sauri Dasa.)
2. My Experiences with a *Ritvik* Temple - (An account of a Bhaktin's bad experiences with a '*ritvik* temple')
3. *The Timeless Order* - (A reply by Hari Sauri Dasa to the rebuttal of his paper in appendix 1 by the authors of *TFO*)

In reference to actual evidence for Modifications A & B, the central theme of *TFO*, only sections 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 could be seen as in any way relevant. Appendices 1 and 3 have been answered and the rebuttals can be found on www.iskconirm.com - please see '*Hari Sauri's Minutes Turn Back the Clock*' and '*Timeout For Hari Sauri's Minutes*' as the answers for appendices 1 and 3 respectively.

Contradictions

As is traditional with many of our replies to GBC paper's we shall start with an examination of contradictions they have made. This time round they have been much more careful. We note that the authors have cautiously avoided the sort of detailed explanations of the 'Appt Tape', which let *DOMD* down for instance. Nevertheless, even in this vacuous 'general overview' they have still managed to slip up a number of times.

PO Contradicts Itself

The following quotes from *PO* seek to establish the fact that even in Srila Prabhupada's presence the *ritviks* were functioning practically as fully fledged *diksa* gurus, even relieving Srila Prabhupada from absorbing the *karma* of new disciples:

QUOTE 1

"Thus the July 9 letter was not, as falsely claimed by the author, a "final order," a "policy statement on how he wanted initiations to run within ISKCON," but merely an interim order which got the named persons functioning as gurus even in his own presence yet while still observing the etiquette".

(P.O., Appendix 3)

QUOTE 2

"We should note that even after giving this letter, which says that the people those 11 men would accept would be his disciples, Prabhupada indicated that the 11 were in fact to all intents and purposes performing the full-fledged function of gurus in his own presence, for on October 18 he was approached for initiation by an Indian man who flew in all the way from New York: [...] From the above conversation it is clear that Prabhupada was not willing to accept the new initiate because of his condition - he didn't want his *karma*. This had already been pointed out by Tamal Krishna Goswami on July 7 - the reason for stopping initiations was so that Prabhupada would not be burdened by the new initiates' *karma*. Therefore he handed the duty of giving initiation to the men he named."

(P.O., Appendix 3)

QUOTE 3

"The salient point is that after saying on May 28 he would select some of his disciples to be gurus and give initiations and their disciples would be his grand-disciples, and then in July actually naming those men, he activated them in their service as full-fledged gurus with the one proviso stated on May 28 and many times before, that the etiquette should be observed."

(P.O., Appendix 3)

QUOTE 4

"It was something different from the previous standard..."

(P.O., Appendix 3)

Having firmly established that the *ritvik* system was a firm break with the past, and that for the first time those initiating were now absorbing *karma* (the function of the *diksa* guru) *PO* then makes assertions which establish quite the opposite:

QUOTE 5

“Thus *rtvik* means, in MW, “sacrificing at the proper time, sacrificing regularly; a priest (usually four are enumerated, viz. Hot.r, Adhvaryu, Brahman, and UdgAt.r etc.” These are the well known priests that officiate at Vedic ritualistic sacrifices. The significant point here is that terms such as *rtvig-guru* and *.rtvig-acharya* simply do not exist. There is no such term in any Sanskrit dictionary, nor in any recognised Vedic literature, to my knowledge. There is no such term because there is no such concept. In other words, our friends are proposing something that does not exist in Vedic culture. This is the main problem with it”

(P.O., Section 2)

Above *PO* establishes with scholastic panache that a *ritvik* is merely a priest who officiates without any guru or *acharya* status—terms such as *rtvig guru* and *rtvig acharya* do not exist! How could a mere priest be compared with a *karma* absorbing *diksa* guru? *PO* has stated in quotes 1-4 above that these *ritviks* were doing something quite out of the ordinary, acting practically as fully-fledged *diksa* gurus. For good measure, *PO* gives another 2 quotes contradicting this idea that it has itself stated

QUOTE 6

“The question then is this; if Srila Prabhupada is not personally present to accept responsibility for his disciples, then who accepts the reactions of the disciples sinful activities. It couldn't be the *ritvik* priest because he is simply officiating at the ceremony, and if Prabhupada accepts the reaction then how is it certain that he actually will if he is not here to personally accept the disciple?

(P.O., Section 4)

QUOTE 7

“The practice of having his disciples perform initiations on his behalf had been instituted by Prabhupada since the early days of the movement. He accepted this as a necessary step to spread Krishna Consciousness world-wide. The only difference now was that devotees could write directly to any of the senior disciples named by Srila Prabhupada, and he would initiate them, give them a spiritual name and send the record of initiation to Prabhupada in Vrindavana.”

(P.O., Section 7)

Thus above we learn that the *ritvik* does NOT accept the *karma* of the disciples, the exact OPPOSITE of what has been stated in quotes 1-4 by *PO*. Further the use of representatives in giving initiation was standard practice, and only a couple of procedural details were added after July 9th. For *ritviks* to act practically as *diksa* gurus, as asserted in the first FOUR quotes above, would be a huge break with past practice, as well as with the very definition of what a *ritvik* is. For a *ritvik* to absorb the new disciple's *karma* would mean he was functioning EXACTLY like a fully-fledged *diksa* guru, not a partial one. Having contradicted itself, *PO* also contradicts other current *siddhanta* GBC position papers and statements made by senior ISKCON leaders.

PO Contradicts GBC

The *ritvik* is a ‘full-fledged *diksa* guru even in Srila Prabhupada's presence’ idea, as set out in quotes 1-4 from *PO* above, is also contradicted by ‘Disciple of My Disciple’ (GBC, 1997) the last attempt at answering *TFO* from the GBC:

QUOTE 8

“the July 9th letter can only be the recommendation of proxies who would later start the process of post-*samadhi* initiation by Srila Prabhupada's disciples.”

(Disciple of My Disciple, GBC, 1997)

It is also contradicted by H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja, a key contributor to *PO*:

QUOTE 9

“In writing this letter, it was an organisational letter to explain the practical matter of how things would be dealt with because nothing was really changing. Prabhupada was still their guru but at least the actual operational method of how Prabhupada would deal with new candidates was changed. It was very clear in my mind at that time that what we were discussing was the process of initiation in Prabhupada's presence, how things would go on after his presence, he had already instructed us when the 5 or 6 of us had met him on May 28th, one had nothing to do with the other.”

(Class give by H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami Maharaja on 6 August 1998, in Hong Kong)

QUOTE 10

“He appointed eleven, and he said very clearly, ‘Whoever is nearest can initiate’. This is very important because when it comes to initiating, it isn't whoever is nearest, it's wherever your heart goes. Who (you) repose your faith on, you take initiation from him. But when it's officiating, it's whoever is nearest, and he was very clear. He named them. They were spread out all over the world, and he said, ‘Whoever you're nearest, you just approach that person, and they'll check you out. Then, on my behalf, they'll initiate.’ It is not a question that you repose your faith in that

person - nothing. That's a function for the guru."

(H.H. Tamala Krishna Goswami, *Topanga Canyon Confessions*, 3rd December, 1980)

So how can the recommendation of 'proxies ONLY' be the same as activating their service as 'functioning as full-fledged gurus' even in Srila Prabhupada's presence? How can the act of giving a name on Srila Prabhupada's behalf ONLY, be identical to the function of fully-fledged *diksa* gurus? No *divya-jnana* is given by the *ritvik*. He is not responsible for annihilating the sinful reactions of the initiate. No sacrifice is performed by them and no physical contact is made between the 'disciple' and these so-called gurus. If someone functions as a 'guru' simply by giving a name, then that would mean that Pradyumna, or anyone else who helped Srila Prabhupada pick a name, was acting as some sort of *diksa* guru also. Where is this theory stated that someone, who does nothing more than give a name on someone else's behalf, is the same as a full-fledged *diksa* guru? Surely he is nothing more than a *ritvik*, or proxy 'to all intents and purposes.' Thus *PO* as well as contradicting itself, and other accepted GBC statements, is also offering just another half-baked theory. We also address this point of the '*ritviks* accepting *karma*' again later on in section 7, p33.

Contradictions on another subject

The authors of *PO* also decides to give an explanation of the 'appt tape' that contradicts again '*Disciple of My Disciple*':

QUOTE 11

He says that he will nominate certain persons to act as officiating-acharyas, and that they will act as gurus, but that as a "formality", they will do so on behalf of Srila Prabhupada in his presence, because it is Vaishnava etiquette that one does not accept disciples in the presence of one's own spiritual master.

(*PO*, Section 6)

But *DOMD* clearly states that on the tape there is NO mention of acting as a *ritvik* on BEHALF of Srila Prabhupada whilst he is present (definition of proxy):

QUOTE 12

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

(*'Disciple of My Disciple'*, GBC 1997)

QUOTE 13

"But Srila Prabhupada answers here that "on my behalf" does not mean acting as a post-samadhi proxy but means becoming an actual guru."

(*'Disciple of My Disciple'*, GBC 1997)

Summary of Contradictions

We have seen *PO* set out one idea - '*ritvik* a full-fledged *diksa* guru' in quotes 1-4 and then contradict this very idea itself in quotes 5-7. Further the idea is also contradicted by other GBC sources in quotes 8-10. Also *PO* gives an explanation of what Srila Prabhupada states on the 'appt tape' in quote 11. We then see this idea also contradicted by official GBC sources in quotes 12-13.

All these contradictions are particularly damaging since *PO* quotes *DOMD* in appendix 3 as an authoritative and accurate explanation for how Srila Prabhupada authorised *diksa* gurus for after his departure. Even more embarrassing is the fact that the authors of *DOMD* - H.G. Badrinarayana prabhu, H.H. Giridhari Maharaja and H.H. Umapati Maharaja are also co-authors of this paper! Further, H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja is also a key contributor to *PO*. Plus the source of these contradictions in *PO* - appendix 3 - is also glorified by *PO*:

"Note: For more detailed discussions on this conversation, and claims attempting to question its validity, see Appendices 1 and 3."

(Section 6, 'The Confirmation of May 28th')

"Please refer to Appendix 3 for more discussions on the validity of Mr. Desai's literary tactics.

(Section 8, 'Integrity of TFO's reporting methods')

Why is it that the GBC are incapable of presenting a self-consistent position? Usually this occurs when the basic premises are fundamentally flawed? Also, as will be seen later, the main thrust of the *PO* - that Srila Prabhupada had authorised everyone to be *diksa* guru continually over eleven years, is actually contradicted by their explanation of the 'Appt Tape'.

We will answer each of the nine sections in turn. The headings of all the sections that follow correspond to the headings for the nine sections that we will be responding to.

(As already mentioned the answers to the appendices can already be found on our website <http://www.iskconirm.com>). The contributors to *PO* will be referred to as the 'authors'.

1. Introduction

In this paper we intend to show the overwhelming evidence to support the acceptance by the GBC that Srila Prabhupada wanted the traditional system of *parampara*; or disciplic succession to continue after his departure from this world. Although Srila Prabhupada stressed that he would always remain the Founder-Acharya and primary instructing spiritual master for the whole society, in the future there would be many initiating spiritual masters who would accept disciples on behalf of Lord Krishna and the disciplic succession."

There is not one single quote in *PO* from Srila Prabhupada to the whole of ISKCON which says anything remotely like:

"in the future there would be many initiating spiritual masters who would accept disciples on behalf of Lord Krishna and the disciplic succession."

This is just wishful fantasy on behalf of the authors. What *PO* in fact offers throughout the paper are the same handful of quotes that are always presented for the so-called authorisation of 'many initiating spiritual masters' (letter to Tusta etc). The same quotes that were already carefully examined in *TFO* and other related rebuttal papers. There has not been any systematic attempt made by the GBC to respond to the points made in *TFO* or any of these other related papers, but simply the recycling of already defeated arguments. The authors bury these old favourites under dozens of other quotes, which do not even remotely relate to the issue at hand, in a desperate bid to give the impression that there is masses of relevant evidence supporting their assertion, when in fact there is none.

"Above all else, however, we will attempt to understand more clearly what is the actual desire of the Founder-Acharya of ISKCON, His Divine Grace A C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. The Vedic system of knowledge stresses the importance of submissive aural reception from authorities as the best way to receive real knowledge. The other two methods, namely direct perception and speculative hypothesis, are fraught with imperfections due to our conditioned nature. Therefore, if we want real knowledge according to the Vedic method, we must simply try to understand what was Srila Prabhupada's desire for the pushing on of his movement, without applying any of our own interpretations or speculations on what he has instructed."

Yet in explaining 'what he has instructed' in the July 9th letter and the 'Appt Tape' the authors use as evidence an explanation by H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja (who we show has changed his story several times - please see section 7 later for evidence of this) and the 'GBC minutes' (which everyone now agrees were not completely accurate). Why do the authors use such indirect and imperfect knowledge acquiring methodologies when we can look directly at what Srila Prabhupada said and approved?

"We begin by presenting a short explanation of the term, and then present a chronology of statements made by Srila Prabhupada in his lectures, letters and conversations between the years 1966-1977. Then we examine his instructions with reference to some of the major claims made by *TFO* and other *ritvik*-theory papers, and give a comparative study of Prabhupada's descriptions of the *ritvik* philosophy with that of the traditional *parampara* understanding."

As we will see, *PO* refers to hardly a single FACTUAL claim from *TFO*. Also by stating that they will give a 'comparative study' of the '*ritvik* philosophy' and the 'traditional *parampara* understanding' the authors have already, at the very outset of the paper, assumed that the '*ritvik* theory' is something that is separate and divorced from the '*parampara* understanding'. As we will show, it is this unproven assumption which is falsely trumpeted throughout the paper as 'evidence'. The so-called 'comparative study' consists of nothing more than offering quotes which everyone agrees with and do not in any way differ from or contradict the *ritvik* position.

"Next we look at two sets of instructions given by Prabhupada in 1977 which *ritvik*-theorists use to support their claims, and then discuss some of the journalistic techniques which have been utilized in the preparation of *TFO*."

To do this the authors have simply lifted arguments from previous GBC papers that have already been defeated. It is obvious that the authors have not been following the very debate they are supposed to be resolving. Future historians will be staggered by the GBC's laziness and ineptitude in dealing with this issue.

"In the appendix, we have presented some articles that have been recently published on the *ritvik* debate, giving more detail on the different arguments, and also a first-hand account of one devotee's experience of living in a *ritvik* temple."

These articles have already been defeated, and as mentioned we will be referring the reader to the comprehensive point for point rebuttals of these articles published on our website.

"We will attempt to present this paper in a format that is concise and easy to understand, so that all devotees can familiarise themselves with the essential arguments without having to wade through hundreds of pages of manuscript."

As we will show, it is the authors who should have familiarised themselves with both *TFO* and the rebuttals to all the other arguments that they recycle here, for if they had done this they would have realised *PO* adds absolutely nothing to the debate. In presenting *PO* as the definitive reply to *TFO* the authors will no doubt confirm in the minds of those devotees who have followed the issue, that the debate is now truly over, and Srila Prabhupada's final order on initiation should be re-instituted without further delay.

2. Definition of *Ritvik*

In this section a definition of the word *ritvik* is given as 'priest', a section that has simply been lifted straight from an already

defeated GBC paper 'Disciple of My Disciple'. This adds absolutely nothing to the debate since coincidentally TFO also defines the word *ritvik* to mean 'priest'. Furthermore this section erroneously adds:

"The significant point here is that terms such as *rtvig-guru* and *rtvig-acharya* simply do not exist. There is no such term in any Sanskrit dictionary, nor in any recognised Vedic literature, to my knowledge. There is no such term because there is no such concept. In other words, our friends are proposing something that does not exist in Vedic culture. This is the main problem with it."

Since TFO does not propose either the term '*rtvik-guru*' or '*ritvik-acharya*', this is just a 'straw-man' argument. As we will see there are many more to come.

3. Chronology of Srila Prabhupada's Instructions

"The proponents of the theory of *ritvik* or proxy initiations claim that an aspiring disciple can approach another devotee and receive initiation from him on behalf of the previous *acharya*."

Another 'straw-man' argument. TFO never claims this. It states the opposite. It states that the CURRENT *acharya* continues to initiate through the use of representatives who assist with initiation ceremonies. If the *acharya* (Srila Prabhupada) was indeed 'PREVIOUS' TFO would already be defeated since it is only permissible to take initiation from the current link (S.B. 2:9:7) as quoted on page 39 of TFO. The authors here have employed a very common tactic- one which we have exposed in many previous rebuttals to GBC backed papers - namely to assume the very point that needs to be proven.

"In contrast to this, Srila Prabhupada often states that a devotee must directly approach a bona-fide spiritual master who is coming in the line of disciplic succession and take initiation from him."

Something we agree with and quote in TFO as shown above.

"In trying to disregard the repeated instructions of Srila Prabhupada and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to become a guru, the author of TFO has given a blanket interpretation that whenever this instruction is given it cannot refer to *diksa guru* but must only mean *siksa guru*."

No, we do not disregard or interpret anything. We have simply repeated sections of Srila Prabhupada's purports to the verse in question - verbatim.

"Trying to minimize the instructions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is certainly a bold stance to take, so let us examine whether the evidence supports this stance."

We have not minimized these instructions, quite the reverse. We quote them verbatim and suggest everyone follows them. We even titled one of our papers with an instruction directly related to Lord Chaitanya's order: (C.c. *Madhya*, 7.130, purport). We notice the authors are very keen to minimize this particular instruction from Srila Prabhupada. The order from Lord Chaitanya to be guru, as it was passed on to us through Srila Prabhupada, has the following clear cut parameters:

1. Do it immediately and not first wait for the spiritual master to depart;
2. Stay in your position, whether that be an engineer or whatever;
3. No special qualification is required, 'simply repeat', 'even rascal can do' etc;
4. And remember, it's '**BEST not to accept ANY disciples**'.

If the authors insist on foolishly arguing that these parameters apply to *diksa gurus*, rather than instructing spiritual masters, then it is they who are minimising the instructions of both the Supreme Personality of Godhead and Srila Prabhupada. We deal with this issue in much more detail later, please see appendix 1 - 'Become Guru'.

"In his purports to Chaitanya Charitamrta, Srila Prabhupada quotes his own spiritual master, who directly refutes the claim that the order to become guru cannot refer to *diksa guru*:"

Here the authors quote a different purport for a different verse that refers to something completely different - the ability for anyone to become a guru of any kind free of SMARTA *Brahmana* considerations. The order to 'become guru' from Lord Chaitanya appears in C.C. *Madhya* 7:128. The authors quote verse *Madhya* 8:128; maybe the similarity in the numbering has confused them.

Since the main argument of the authors rests on their ability to show that all the quotes from Srila Prabhupada urging his disciples to be gurus can also apply equally to being *diksa guru*, we will deal with this thoroughly in a separate appendix. The authors have used this argument again in the next section - that *Madhya* 8:128 proves that the quote of *Madhya* 7:128 is also an order to become *diksa guru*. Please see the section 'Become Guru', appendix 1, at the end.

The authors now produce some 37 quotes from Srila Prabhupada's letters and conversations. In examining these quotes remember we are looking for evidence that relates to 'modifications A & B' given earlier. We need to see quotes where Srila Prabhupada instructs his disciples to take their own disciples IMMEDIATELY on his departure - please note that the 'IMMEDIATE' condition is important, since 'modification b' allowed the *ritviks* to transmogrify into *diksa gurus* immediately upon Srila Prabhupada's departure. Only with such clear statements would we even be approaching evidence relevant to 'modification A & B' as given above.

Sadly, upon examining these 37 quotes we find that most of them are very general statements of principle which have no bear-

ing at all on whether the *ritviks* were supposed to transmogrify into *diksa* gurus on departure - the issue at hand. They either state a general point about the qualification and nature of becoming guru, or they again relate to Lord Chaitanya's order to become gurus who teach Krishna Consciousness. As we have stated already, and as we elaborate in the appendice 'Become Guru', this 'new' evidence from *Madhya* 8:128 that the GBC have introduced does not actually challenge our original argument that Lord Chaitanya's order for everyone to become guru, as relayed to us by Srila Prabhupada, refers only to acting as gurus in the sense of preaching Krishna Consciousness.

In case the reader feels we are merely dismissing perfectly solid evidence we give below a few typical examples from the 37 quotes:

"If you want to understand the transcendental science, then you have to approach to a spiritual master." And who is spiritual master? ... One who is coming into that disciplic succession and by coming from that disciplic succession, he is firmly convinced in the Absolute, he is firmly conversant in the Absolute Truth, he is guru."

New York, August 12, 1966

"So there is no bar for anyone, that one cannot become the spiritual master. Everyone can become spiritual master, provided he knows the science of Krishna. That is the only qualification."

New York, August 17, 1966

"Because in Indian society it is simply taken that the *brahmanas* and the *sannyasi* can be spiritual master. But Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, "No. Anyone can become spiritual master provided he's conversant with the science."

April 5-6, 1967, San Francisco

"Lord Chaitanya says that "Every one of you become the spiritual master, every one of you. Why one, two? Every one of you." "Oh, spiritual master is very difficult job." No. No difficult job. Chaitanya Maha... Amara ajnaya: Just try to carry out My order. That's all. Then you become spiritual master."

Columbus, May 9, 1969

"Our process is *evam parampara* praptam imam rajarsayo viduh. *Parampara*. What Krishna said, the disciplic succession will say the same thing. But they are speaking differently. So therefore we don't take them as bona fide. They are not bona fide."

Paris, August 13, 1973

"Even though you see that he is materially born, his behaviour is like other men. But because he says the same truth as it is spoken in the Vedas or by the Personality of Godhead, therefore he is guru. Because he does not make any change whimsically, therefore he is guru. That is the definition. It is very simple."

Hyderabad, August 19, 1976

By reading, you cannot understand. *Tad-vijnanartham sa gurum evabhigacchet*. That is also vidhilin: "In order to understand that science, he must go to guru."

January 8, 1977, Bombay

For some reason the authors have incorrectly referenced some of the above quotes. Many of them are private letters, but that is not apparent by only giving the location from where the letter was written. This gives the impression that it was spoken publicly. Also another quotation is attributed as being from 'Mayapur GBC meetings 1976':

"You each be guru," he said. "As I have five thousand disciples or ten thousand, so you have ten thousand each. In this way, create branches and branches of the Chaitanya tree."

(Mayapur GBC meetings 1976)

This gives the impression that it was some sort of formal resolution that was passed by or under Srila Prabhupada's sanction. On closer examination we find that the quote actually comes from the 'diary' of one of the authors of this very paper! This is all a subtle form of cheating, and does not in any way enhance the credibility of the GBC's position on this important matter.)

We see nothing above that would shed any light on whether or not the 11 *ritviks* named in the July 9th order were supposed to give up their service as *ritviks* on Srila Prabhupada's departure and transmogrify into *diksa* gurus - the central point of contention of *TFO* - i.e., modifications *A & B*. Most of the 37 quotes are similar to above, except around 5 quotes which do have some allusion to Srila Prabhupada's disciples actually initiating upon his departure, which have, in any case, already been answered.

So as always we are left with the same handful of quotes that do bring up the subject of Srila Prabhupada's disciples going on to initiate. The same quotes that have already been answered in *TFO* and other papers. Of course, the GBC may reject what we have said there - but then they need to present their own solidly reasoned arguments for this rejection, not just recycle the same 'evidence' that has already been answered. For a comprehensive analysis of these quotes please see:

- **The Final Order;**
- **Best Not To Accept Disciples;**
- **Institutional Cataclysm;**
- **Chakra's Army Still Off Target;**

These are all available (& more) at <http://www.iskconirm.com>, the IRM (ISKCON Revival Movement) website. To save time, we have also provided the relevant extracts in APPENDIX 2 - 'Already Answered Quotes' - to be found at the end of this paper.

4. Prabhupada's teachings on succession

In this section, the authors attempt to address a number of issues to try and show the defects with the 'ritvik theory'. Again, there is no attempt to directly answer modifications A & B. They present many quotes in this section, some 24, but on closer examination we find that approximately half are the same as from the previous section! Furthermore all the remainder are irrelevant to the issue at hand - i.e. evidence for Srila Prabhupada authorising his disciples to take their own disciples upon his immediate departure - with the relevant ones merely being repeats from the last section.

"Throughout the recorded works of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, both during his twelve years of preaching in the Western countries and in the years previous, he explains the ancient principle of *parampara* or disciplic succession, whereby the bona-fide spiritual master instructs his disciple in the science of God."

This is not in dispute.

"Those disciples who become qualified then become spiritual masters themselves after the departure of their guru, thus continuing the unbroken transmission of the messages of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Srila Prabhupada not only explained this system in detail, but repeatedly requested his disciples to take up the role of initiating spiritual masters in his absence to push on the movement which he had started."

As we will see, this 'repeatedly requested' will boil down again mainly to one private letter written to Tusta Krishna Dasa. We deal with this quote in depth later.

"Anyone following the order of Lord Chaitanya under the guidance of His bona fide representative can become a spiritual master and I wish that in my absence all my disciples become the bona fide spiritual master to spread Krishna Consciousness throughout the whole world."

(SPL to Madhusudana, 2nd November, 1967)

"Note the date on this letter - 1967. So, even from the early days of his movement, Srila Prabhupada expected that his disciples would become spiritual masters."

This quote has already been answered in *TFO* on page 13 - which is reproduced for convenience in APPENDIX 2 - 'Already Answered Quotes' - to be found at the end of this paper. One other point we omitted to make in *TFO* was the context to the above quote; just before the above sentence Srila Prabhupada states:

"Kirtanananda was awarded the position of a *Sannyasi* because he wanted it although I could understand it that he wanted to be a spiritual master himself. Lord Chaitanya wanted every one should be a spiritual master provided he follows the order of Lord Chaitanya."

The following can be observed:

1. Once more it seems the statement is prompted by having to deal with over-ambitious disciples.
2. And in any case it refers to Lord Chaitanya's order for everyone to be a preacher/*siksa* spiritual master

(Please see Appendix 'Become Guru').

Also this desire of Srila Prabhupada for all his disciples in his ABSENCE to become great preachers to spread Krishna consciousness throughout the whole world is repeated earlier in the year, just 4 months before the letter above was written:

"Therefore I have a great hope to train some of my disciples for preaching work, even in my absence. I am now old man, and attacked with serious disease; I may be overcome by death at any moment. Therefore I wish to leave some trained preachers so that they can do the work of Krishna Consciousness in the western world. That is my ambition. I hope you all pray to Krishna so I may be able to execute my duty properly"

(Letter to Janardan et. Al., 28/6/67)

The aim here, as in the earlier letters, is to have many preacher-gurus as per Lord Chaitanya's instruction; not institutional *diksa* gurus. Here the context in which Srila Prabhupada is talking is about leaving 'at any moment'. Yet how could he be expecting his new disciples who at that time had practised Krishna Consciousness for only MONTHS, to take up the role of anything except preachers. These are the 'spiritual masters' that Srila Prabhupada expected 'even from the early days of his movement'.

"Note also the phrase used by Srila Prabhupada to designate when this would occur - "in my absence." This phrase is significant for two reasons.

The first refers to after his departure from this world, which is what is expected in a standard disciplic succession - some of the disciples take their own disciples after their spiritual master has left this world."

But, as we have seen from the above letter, a spiritual master can also pass on the 'torch' to his disciples to carry on his mission by preaching and just leading persons to Srila Prabhupada. It is not a *sastric* NECESSITY that upon the departure of the Guru the disciple MUST start initiating for himself.

"However, the other level of meaning in the phrase "in my absence" is very significant to the *ritvik* debate. The *ritviks* claim that no future *diksha* gurus are ever needed because Srila Prabhupada is always present in his books."

TFO does not claim this. We simply state that we should all follow Srila Prabhupada's order as given in the July 9th directive. Even if Srila Prabhupada had not written any books, we should still need to follow whatever orders he had given.

"That Srila Prabhupada is present through his books has never been in dispute. However, we see that Srila Prabhupada did also consider his physical presence to have some significant relevance in the issue of disciplic succession, and this aspect is mentioned in many of his other statements."

This is also not disputed, in that, if *diksha* guruship was to occur amongst the disciples, Srila Prabhupada did state that it could only occur after his absence. That is not the same as saying that after his absence *diksha* guruship must or has to occur, or that he was hereby officially authorising such a thing. Next we are presented with a letter to Tusta Krishna Dasa. Please note that the authors do not even attempt to answer the many points we have made in response to this quote in TFO and our other papers, least of all the fact that the letter was not even published by the time of Srila Prabhupada's departure, after which the July 9th instruction was immediately abandoned. Again the response can be found in Appendix 2 - 'Already Answered Quotes'. Tusta Krishna Dasa was an ambitious disciple who was eager to initiate even in Srila Prabhupada's presence. The GBC themselves admit that this is not a desirable quality in a disciple:

"A disciple's only duty is to worship and serve his spiritual master. His mind should not be agitated over how he may become guru. A devotee who sincerely wants to make spiritual advancement should try to become a disciple, not a spiritual master."

(Gurus and initiation in ISKCON, p.25, GBC 1995)

Above we see the GBC, in one of their more lucid moments, answering for themselves why personal letters to such ambitious disciples cannot possibly be used to modify institutional directives meant for the entire movement. Surely, this is an obvious point that should not need continual repetition over and over again. In each case where Srila Prabhupada is dealing with such ambitious disciples he simply instructs them that they CAN in principle initiate only after the departure of the guru, not before.

Further to simply STATE the time-period in which an activity CAN occur, is not the same as AUTHORISING that activity TO occur as soon that time-period begins.

Srila Prabhupada is merely stating a very basic point - that there is a time-period after which the *diksha*-guru CAN be succeeded. If such a 'law' did not exist the *diksha* guru could never change, and the question of anyone else becoming the *diksha* guru would not even arise, for a *diksha* guru would automatically remain *diksha* guru forever by DEFAULT. Thus simply STATING that such an activity is possible by a disciple, is not the authorisation for that disciple to undertake that activity i.e. just the statement of this 'law' by Srila Prabhupada is not in itself the authority that now his disciples MUST become *diksha* guru at a certain time.

And as mentioned, the very fact that this 'law' is only virtually ever mentioned when dealing with PREVENTING disciples from initiating in his presence, merely reinforces the point that we are simply dealing with the statement of when disciples CAN in principle initiate - not when they are now being AUTHORISED TO initiate. The letters deal specifically with trying to PREVENT *diksha* guru activity by the disciple. To state when an activity is POSSIBLE in the context of trying to specifically PREVENT that activity from happening is NOT the same as specifically authorising specific individuals or everyone, to definitely take up that activity as soon as it becomes possible to do so. The issue is that the disciples must be specifically ordered to take on this activity by their 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 *diksha-vidhana*."

(S.B. 4.8.54, purport)

Thus the statement:

'You cannot initiate before I leave since it can only ever be carried out once I have left';

IS NOT THE SAME AS

'I order you to initiate after I leave';

"If Prabhupada refers to 'initiate' and 'become spiritual master' only in the sense of *siksa* instructions or becoming an officiating priest (as the *ritvik* proponents claim), why does he expressly forbid doing this on the one hand, and at the same time gives direct instructions to numerous disciples to act as both *siksa*-gurus and officiating priests to initiate disciples on his behalf? Clearly Srila Prabhupada is talking about something other than the officiating role which was already being performed by his senior disciples; he was talking about his disciples accepting their own

disciples when he was no longer physically present on the planet.

Here the authors themselves are admitting the very point we have continually made - that ONLY in the cases where acting as guru is mentioned with reference to the etiquette forbidding the taking of disciples in Srila Prabhupada's presence, are we dealing with evidence concerning the disciples acting as *diksa* gurus at all. We have no more than a handful of such cases which are answered in depth in *TFO* and our previous papers - reproduced in Appendix 2 - 'Already Answered Quotes' (we only wish the authors had followed their own argumentation, instead of producing dozens and dozens of quotes that are completely irrelevant to the issue at hand). In summary, an explanation of when one can NOT take disciples, is not an endorsement to definitely take disciples in the period when it is ALLOWED. Nor does it in any way justify the destruction of management systems set up for the entire movement.

"This is not surprising since his books and conversations are absolutely full of references to the *parampara* system and how this system, of surrendering to a living bona-fide spiritual master, is imperative to the proper understanding of Vedic knowledge."

We would love to see ONE reference to the system of 'only surrendering to a living spiritual master'. The only time Srila Prabhupada uses this term is to denounce the very concept:

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

Srila Prabhupada: I don't follow.

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

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

Madhudvisa: I was referring to a living Spiritual Master.

Srila Prabhupada: Spiritual Master is not question of ... Spiritual Master is eternal...so your question is 'without Spiritual Master'. Without Spiritual Master you cannot be at any stage of your life. You may accept this Spiritual master or that Spiritual master. That is a different thing. But you have to accept. As you say that "by reading Bible", when you read Bible that means you are following the Spiritual Master represented by some priest or some clergyman in the line of Lord Jesus Christ. (Morning Walk, Seattle, 2/10/68)

We see above that the phrase 'living spiritual master' is redundant since the spiritual master is eternal, and thus always living. In the same sense Srila Prabhupada is living and is thus eminently available since he is also still the current link for ISKCON, as per his final order on initiation. Even one of the key authors of this paper has admitted that:

"Prabhupada is more widely available now than ever before."

(H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami, 'Perils of Succession, 1996)

"This point is made clear in the following quote:

"This is called *parampara* system. Suppose I have heard something from my spiritual master, so I speak to you the same thing. So this is *parampara* system. You cannot imagine what my spiritual master said. Or even if you read some books, you cannot understand unless you understand it from me. This is called *parampara* system. You cannot jump over to the superior guru, neglecting the next *acharya*, immediate next *acharya*."

(Srila Prabhupada lecture December 8th, 1973)

Here Srila Prabhupada specifically mentions the issue of surrendering to the current link in the chain of disciplic succession. He instructs his disciples that, "even if you read some books, you cannot understand unless you understand it from me. This is called "*parampara*". He clearly explains the principal of *parampara*, and even explicitly states that simply to read books is not enough (a corner stone of *ritvik*-theory), but rather the disciple must understand everything through his own spiritual master, and not attempt to independently understand the previous *acharyas*."

Two points:

1. Here the authors have simply assumed that which needs to be proven - that Srila Prabhupada is a 'previous *acharya*'. We agree that one must approach the current link, and as far as we can determine, that person is Srila Prabhupada. The whole challenge of 'modification A & B' is for the GBC to demonstrate from Srila Prabhupada's instructions WHEN, WHY and HOW Srila Prabhupada stopped being CURRENT. So far, instead of answering this challenge the authors simply assume the challenge has been met. They meet this challenge by merely re-stating the GBC view, which everyone already knows only too well. What we need is the EVIDENCE supporting this view!
2. Furthermore if the GBC use this statement in this way they are, in effect, saying that no one can understand Srila Prabhupada's books without a guru. Then, what is the value of distributing millions of these books? Why should devotees be

encouraged to read Srila Prabhupada's books, BEFORE they accept a guru? Are the new devotees in ISKCON 'jumping over' if they read Srila Prabhupada's books without the direct guidance of their guru? What about hearing *Srimad Bhagavatam* class from persons other than their Guru, or even persons who are not 'official current link' gurus at all?

3. This is a strange quote for the GBC to use since it simply confirms what we have said all along - that one must stick ONLY to the teachings of Srila Prabhupada, and not 'jump over' to the works of the previous *acharyas*. How for instance do the GBC justify their consultation of the '*Krishna Bhajanamrta*' and other books from the previous *acharyas*, when Srila Prabhupada clearly says that we cannot understand anything from the previous *acharyas* unless it is understood DIRECTLY from Srila Prabhupada? Thus the quote used by the GBC merely brings to light more misdemeanours perpetrated by themselves on the many thousands of innocent devotees under their charge.

"One should not proudly think that one can understand the transcendental loving service of the Lord simply by reading books. One must become a servant of a Vaisnava. As Narottama dasa Thakura has confirmed, *chadiya vaisnava-seva nistara peyeche keba: one cannot be in a transcendental position unless one very faithfully serves a pure Vaisnava. One must accept a Vaisnava guru (adau gurv-asrayam), and then by questions and answers one should gradually learn what pure devotional service to Krishna is. That is called the parampara system.*"

(C.C. A 7.54p)

Again, this is not in dispute. Anyone surrendering to Srila Prabhupada now would serve and be instructed by Srila Prabhupada in exactly the same manner as the original 10,000 disciples and followers of Srila Prabhupada, the majority of whom never had any direct physical contact with him.

"And again in answering a question from an Indian lady at his lecture:

Indian lady: How does one contact the spiritual master? Through a book can you contact the spiritual master?

Srila Prabhupada: No, you have to associate.

Syamasundara: "Can you associate through a book?" she asked.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, through books, and also personal. Because when you make a spiritual master you have got personal touch. Not that in air you make a spiritual master. You make a spiritual master concrete. So as soon as you make a spiritual master, you should be inquisitive. (London, September 23, 1969).

We have no idea why the GBC are trying to prove that one must contact the spiritual master physically and that the inability to do this is the proof that *ritvik* is wrong, since they admit that vast numbers of Srila Prabhupada's disciples never had any such contact. If lack of physical contact disbars one from getting initiated, then most of the initiations that Srila Prabhupada carried out would thus be bogus. Is this what the GBC are now saying? If it is they will become even more unpopular than they are already, if that is possible.

Srila Prabhupada is 'concrete'; he is not 'in the air'. His 'concreteness' cannot depend on his PHYSICAL PRESENCE since the majority of Srila Prabhupada's disciples accepted Srila Prabhupada 'concretely' without any physical contact with him. Further, Srila Prabhupada has also been 'concrete' for the last 21 years for these same disciples. Thus, anyone now would have the same 'personal' touch that Srila Prabhupada instituted for the many disciples that he never had any physical contact with whatsoever. We dealt with this whole issue of physicality in considerable depth in *TFO* (pages 29, page 30, page 31, page 39, page 49 and appendices) and thus it is profoundly disappointing that the GBC appears not to have read these points before they set out to 'refute' our position. Anyway the world is watching now and they shall not be getting away with this sort of nonsense for much longer.

"In the section of *TFO* entitled 'Other Related Objections', the author attempts to address the very pertinent objection that if there is no more bona-fide *diksa* initiations then the *parampara* will be stopped (at least within ISKCON). He starts his explanation by making the following statement:

***TFO*: "the disciplic succession is eternal, there is no question of it stopping."**

Firstly, this claim is directly denied by Lord Krishna Himself:

"This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way. But in course of time the succession was broken, and therefore the science as it is appears to be lost."

(*Bhagavad-gita* 4.2)"

At last, after ploughing through a third of *PO* we finally come to an actual quote from *TFO*, the paper the authors were meant to be responding to. As far as their objection goes:

We use the words 'stopping' and 'eternal', which if one consults the dictionary, would mean that we are saying that the *parampara* can never come to a halt permanently. (The word 'stop' according to the dictionary means to bring to an 'end'). Since a 'break' occurred but the *parampara* is still here today, this proves that our point is correct - the *parampara* does not 'end'. The authors then simply produce quotes backing up our point, that although some break may occur, still, in due course of time this will get fixed and the *parampara* will continue. Even when the temporary break does occur, the science can only 'appear' to be lost, not be actually lost.

“Mr. Desai then goes on to argue that, “Compared with eternity 9,500 years is just a blip in cosmic time. “and that previous *acharyas* have remained current in the disciplic succession for millions of years, quoting the example of Vyasadeva. However, this example actually supports the standard understanding of *parampara*, i.e. that each disciple must approach and take *diksa* from a living link in the *parampara* system; it is described that Madhvacharya went to the Himalayas where he met Vyasadeva face to face and took initiation from him. It certainly doesn't support the idea that successive generations of devotees should take *diksa* from a previous *acharya* who is no longer physically present.”

This is a 'straw man' argument, since we do not use the above example to prove that 'successive generations of devotees should take *diksa* from a previous *acharya* who is no longer physically present'. Rather we use the example to show that an *acharya* can remain current for a long period of time, a point that is not disputed by the authors. It should come as no surprise that we are not presenting direct evidence for the *ritvik* system in the above mentioned example, since this appears in a section entitled 'Related Objections'. If the authors had cared to turn to the front of *TFO*, they would find another section called 'The Evidence'. Why are the authors incapable of answering the actual points that the *TFO* does make, and instead invent endless straw-man arguments. We are already over a third of the way through, and the authors have yet to say anything of substance that challenges either a single point made in *TFO*, or the main contention of *TFO* regarding 'Modifications A & B'.

“The author then goes on to selectively quote a letter from Srila Prabhupada in 1968. In it he highlights the lines mentioning how Krishna only mentions three names in the *parampara* which extended for millions of years and how Prabhupada instructs that we have to follow the prominent *acharya* of our particular *sampradaya*. Taken in its entirety, however, the letter clearly explains the traditional understanding:

“Regarding *parampara* system: there is nothing to wonder for big gaps. Just like we belong to the *Brahma Sampradaya*, so we accept it from Krishna to Brahma, Brahma to Narada, Narada to Vyasadeva, Vyasadeva to Madhva, and between Vyasadeva and Madhva there is a big gap. But it is sometimes said that Vyasadeva is still living, and Madhva was fortunate enough to meet him directly. In a similar way, we find in the *Bhagavad-gita* that the Gita was taught to the Sungod, some millions of years ago, but Krishna has mentioned only three names in this *parampara* system--namely, Vivasvan, Manu, and Ikshvaku; and so these gaps do not hamper from understanding the *parampara* system. We have to pick up the prominent *acharyas*, and follow from him. There are many branches also from the *parampara* system, and it is not possible to record all the branches and sub-branches in the disciplic succession. We have to pick up from the authority of the *acharya* in whatever *sampradaya* we belong to.”

Prabhupada clearly states that Madhva was fortunate to meet Vyasadeva directly. Also, the reason for the letter is revealed on a full reading. Srila Prabhupada explains: “There are many branches also from the *parampara* system, and it is not possible to record all the branches and sub-branches in the disciplic succession. “Prabhupada is answering the question of whether the *parampara* consists of only the few *acharyas* which are listed. Rather than support Mr. Desai's point, however, Srila Prabhupada gives the correct understanding i.e. that even though only certain *acharyas* are listed, still there are “branches and sub-branches in the disciplic succession”, so many, in fact, that “it is not possible to record all.” Thus rather than supporting the premise of *TFO* that it is normal for a *parampara* to continue for many years without living links under the one previous *acharya*, Prabhupada's letter actually confirms exactly the opposite, that there are branches and branches of the *parampara* which continue, but for the sake of brevity, in a list of the disciplic succession, only the prominent *acharyas* are listed.”

This again is another rather sad 'Straw man' argument. The purpose of our example was not to prove that there are no sub-branches, but simply to highlight the fact that Srila Prabhupada states one may 'pick up' and 'follow' the prominent *acharya*. He does not state that instead one should only follow some 'sub-branch' or other, or scour the entire planet for a qualified 'living link'. Such speculative notions are entirely absent from Srila Prabhupada's teachings.

In any case, Srila Prabhupada never states that there are sub branches in between Vivasvan, Manu and Ikshvaku and thus our point that current links can remain current for vast periods of time remains intact. This example also shows the lack of need for physical contact between gurus and disciples since Srila Prabhupada explains that *diksa* was transferred from one planet to another. We wonder if the reason this point is not addressed by the authors is because it does not fit in with their false theory about 'traditional *parampara*' always needing physical contact between gurus and disciples?

“In fact, even great *acharyas* (and even Krishna Himself) did accept a living guru, just to show the example to the people in general:

“One has to submit. In order to know the solution of life, we have to submit to the proper spiritual master. That is essential. *Tad-vijnanartham sa gurum evabhiyacchet*. This is Vedic injunction. This *abhiyacchet*, this word is used when it is meant “must.” There is no escape. We have seen big, big personalities... Just like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu; He is Krishna Himself, but He accepted Isvara Puri as His guru. Krishna, He also accepted His guru as Sandipani Muni. Lord Ramacandra, He accepted His guru as Vasistha. So it is (not) necessary, Krishna or Rama. They are Supreme Personality of Godhead. They are the supreme instructor, full of knowledge, everything. *Aisvaryasya samagrasya viryasya*. There is nothing short, but still, to show us example, They accepted guru. That is essential” (Washington, D.C., July 5, 1976)

The issue that one must accept a guru is not disputed. Thus, the authors have completely missed our point. The issue is:

Does the *diksa* guru HAVE to be on the same planet as the disciple in order for initiation to occur, or MUST the *diksa* guru possess a physical body at the moment of initiation?

One cannot automatically infer a general principle from the properties of an example, otherwise one could also infer many other principles - such as the fact that the guru must be Indian, say. Why are the authors unable to produce the *sastric* principle that clearly states their imposed restriction regarding the proximity of the disciple and guru at the moment of initiation? If they

could produce such evidence it would settle this matter once and for all.

“The principle is repeated again:

As already stated, Brahma is the original spiritual master for the universe, and since he was initiated by the Lord Himself, the message of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is coming down by disciplic succession, and in order to receive the real message of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* one should approach the current link, or spiritual master, in the chain of disciplic succession. After being initiated by the proper spiritual master in that chain of succession, one should engage himself in the discharge of *tapasya* in the execution of devotional service.”

(*Srimad Bhagavatam*, 2.9.7p)

Again one wonders if the authors have ever actually read *TFO*. This very verse is accepted in *TFO* (p.39) and therein it was thoroughly demonstrated that Srila Prabhupada remains the ‘current link’. The GBC have never bothered to address, what to speak of refute, our points on this matter.

“And again:

“Krishna is the first spiritual master, and when we become more interested, then we have to go to a physical spiritual master. That is enjoined in the next verse. *Tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya, upadeksyanti te jnanam jnaninas tattva- darsinah*. Now, Krishna advises that “If you want to know that transcendental science, then you just try to approach somebody.” *Pranipatena. Pranipatena, pariprasnena and sevaya*. What is *pranipata*? *Pranipata* means surrender. Surrender. You must select a person where you can surrender yourself because nobody likes to surrender to anyone.”

(Srila Prabhupada lecture, August 14th 1966)

Prabhupada here brings up another point along the way, namely the process of surrender. In the traditional *parampara* system, the disciple actually surrenders to a particular person, giving up his independence and accepting the guru’s instructions as his life and soul. In the system proposed by *TFO*, with its hundreds of *siksa* gurus, there is no ultimate authority for each devotees spiritual life. The ‘disciple’ can conveniently follow whichever instruction he likes best. This is completely antithetical to real surrender to a living guru. *Ritvik* proponents argue that this system of *siksa* was being practised successfully during Srila Prabhupada’s presence also. However, each disciple knew that the ultimate authority was Srila Prabhupada himself, and if an issue could not be decided by the different levels of authority then it would ultimately go to Prabhupada for his final adjudication.

1. As mentioned, this argument about the ‘physical’ spiritual master is thoroughly answered in *TFO*. Also the above argument that the ‘living’ guru is necessary to ‘adjudicate’ on issues is ridiculous since it would mean that all the disciples of Srila Prabhupada would have needed to find a new guru as soon as Srila Prabhupada departed. Who have they surrendered to for the last 21 years or have ‘adjudicate’ for them?
2. *diksha* gurus become authorities over the individual students and, in this way, disrupt the system of authority in the institution that Srila Prabhupada has established himself.

Next they produce ‘hearsay’ evidence from the *Lilamrta*, a publication that has already been exposed as fabricating a spurious version of the ‘appt tape’ conversation; the *Lilamrta* gives a version that differs from both the audible spoken words on the tape and also from the GBC’s own transcripts. Why can the authors not just produce evidence from Srila Prabhupada himself? We will see later how they base another key part of their argument on the testimony of one of Srila Prabhupada’s most erratic disciples, but not from Srila Prabhupada himself.

This section then recycles quotes already produced in the last section and answered in *TFO*.

The authors then devote a whole section to try to show that the guru does not need to be an *uttama adbhikari*. They do not answer the points we do make on this subject in *TFO*; but more importantly we only touch on this subject briefly in *TFO* because it is not directly relevant to ‘Modifications A & B’ since:

- Just because a guru may not need to be an *uttama adbhikari* does not mean Srila Prabhupada wanted to stop the *ritvik* system on his departure and have the *ritviks* transmogrify into *diksa* gurus.

And taking it from our viewpoint.

- Just because the guru MUST be a *mahabhagavata* does not prove Srila Prabhupada set up a *ritvik* system.

We notice again how the authors are simply avoiding the issue. They imply that *TFO* states that Srila Prabhupada wanted the *ritvik* system because his disciples were not qualified. We never state this in *TFO*. Thus, we have yet another ‘straw man’ argument.

“Of course, the *ritvik*-theorist will try to discard these verses as being “just to encourage the devotees” etc. and will point to the falldown of ISKCON gurus as evidence that this is not correct. They try to use ‘reverse-logic’ to prove that because a number of ISKCON gurus have fallen down it means that Srila Prabhupada didn’t want his disciples to become gurus. But if we accept this line of reasoning we could list so many instructions that devotees have trouble following. So many devotees have been unable to follow the four regulative principles but that doesn’t mean that Srila Prabhupada didn’t issue the instruction to his disciples to follow.”

If we ever used this 'reverse logic' let the authors quote it verbatim from *TFO* giving the page number. Of course, this would be impossible since even if they had bothered to read the paper they would find such an assertion was never made. It is insult enough to be dealt one misrepresentation of our position after another, but to make it worse they even use the identical 'straw man' arguments which we already exposed and refuted in previous replies to GBC papers (see for example *The Final Order Still Stands*). The above 'reverse logic' straw man argument was used in the last GBC reply to *TFO* - *'Disciple of My Disciple'*. In their desperation to put any sort of paper out, the authors are reduced to recycling misrepresentations which have already been exposed as such. The GBC are simply dragging themselves into disrepute, which is most regrettable since we all want to be proud of our governing body.

"Srla Prabhupada wants that we follow nicely, but if we can't follow it doesn't change his desire that we do. He explains this in the following quote:

"If you are incapable of raising yourself to the standard of becoming spiritual master, that is not your spiritual master's fault, that is your fault. He wants, just like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, *amara ajnaya guru hana*, by My order, every one of you become a guru. If one cannot carry out the order of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, then how he can become a guru? The first qualification is that he must be able to carry out the order of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Then he becomes guru. So that carrying out the order of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu depends on one's personal capacity. *Amara ajnaya guru hana*."

(June 21, 1972, Los Angeles)

Also note how Prabhupada makes the point that "carrying out the order of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu depends on one's own capacity". In other words, become a guru, but if you cannot become *diksa* guru become *siksa* guru or *vartma-pradasaka* guru, but somehow tell people about Krishna."

This is a complete fabrication. Nowhere does the quote state that 'try to first become a *diksa* guru, because the qualification for that is harder than *siksa* guru, and if you can not do that then become *siksa* guru'. This is just the invention of a bewildered mind. If one actually reads the purports to the 'amara' verse one will see that Lord Chaitanya's order to preach (only) can itself be carried out to varying degrees and therefore will depend on personal capacity.

"The understanding that *TFO* puts forward is a blanket one; "because most devotees aren't qualified to become *diksa* gurus it means that Lord Chaitanya's and Srila Prabhupada's order to become guru couldn't refer to this."

This is not only a 'straw man' argument but also a blatant act of cheating since the presence of speech marks falsely indicates that the above statement is found in *TFO*, which it most certainly is not. In fact, nothing approaching the above statement is found in *TFO*. The reasoning for Lord Chaitanya's order being for instructing gurus has nothing to do with qualification or lack of it, but the purports for the verse and the context in which the order is given by Srila Prabhupada. One almost feels pity for the authors that they are so desperate they should actually make up statements and pretend they are directly quoting from *TFO*.

"However, the correct understanding, as given by Prabhupada above, is that the order to become spiritual master is there for every disciple, but the application of what kind of guru one can become will depend on his qualification."

"In his personal letters, Srila Prabhupada confirmed that he wanted his disciples to become qualified in the science of Krishna Consciousness and then become spiritual masters, to "increase the number of generations"

The authors now produce a string of quotes which:

1. Have already been answered in *TFO* and elsewhere;
2. Can NOT refer to *diksa* guru as admitted by the GBC themselves in *'Gurus and Initiations in ISKCON'*, 1995, since they refer to the initiating of disciples being done in Srila Prabhupada's presence.

The authors themselves have used this restriction of not initiating in the presence of Srila Prabhupada earlier as evidence that Srila Prabhupada WAS talking of *diksa* gurus. Now in contradiction to this, they state that initiating in Srila Prabhupada's presence IS evidence of desired *diksa* guruship! We wish the authors had made up their minds before embarking on this 'refutation', and at least attempted to agree with the other official GBC papers which are all still official current ISKCON *siddhanta*. It is unlikely that anyone will be impressed by GBC arguments in *PO* which contradict other arguments also presented in *PO*, the very same paper!! Usually the GBC allow a gap of at least a few weeks before they radically contradict a previous *siddhanta*. By instantaneously contradicting themselves they may end up a complete laughing stock, if they are not careful. In the past we have suggested to the GBC that they run their papers past us before they release them, but as yet they have not taken us up on the offer. The results speak for themselves.

"The question then is this; if Srila Prabhupada is not personally present to accept responsibility for his disciples, then who accepts the reactions of the disciples sinful activities. It couldn't be the *ritvik* priest because he is simply officiating at the ceremony, and if Prabhupada accepts the reaction then how is it certain that he actually will if he is not here to personally accept the disciple? The *ritvik*-theory proponents will argue that Srila Prabhupada had already set in place a system where devotees could be initiated as his disciples without his prior knowledge (in July of 1977 when Srila Prabhupada was very sick in Vrindavana) but in this case Prabhupada had expressly delegated his authority to those 11 disciples to initiate on his behalf."

But the system was not restricted for only when Srila Prabhupada was on the planet - this is the very contention the GBC need to support with irrefutable clear evidence - not simply again assume that which needs to be proven.

“Prior to this, there were many devotees who were performing initiation ceremonies on Prabhupada’s behalf. They would write to Prabhupada recommending a devotee and then Prabhupada would write back to say if he accepted them, give them a spiritual name and the representative would then perform the ceremony. But in 1977, due to the backlog of devotees asking for initiation, Prabhupada gave special authority for 11 of his most senior and trusted devotees to act as ‘officiating *acharyas*, who could give initiations on his behalf without his prior knowledge.”

The above can be counteracted by one of the GBC’s own recent papers. In ‘*Disciple of My Disciple*’ the GBC’s previous failed attempt to reply to *TFO*, it is stated that the ‘officiating *acharyas*’ are to be selected to act for AFTER Srila Prabhupada’s departure - not just to clear some backlog. Indeed ‘*Disciple of My Disciple*’ goes to great lengths to also show how an ‘officiating *acharya*’ is indeed non-different to a *diksa* guru. Indeed we are told that the ‘officiating *acharyas*’ can have nothing to do with ‘proxy initiations’ since on the ‘Appt Tape’, where they are mentioned, there is no reference at all to them acting as ‘proxies’. Now we are told that the ‘officiating *acharyas*’ are set up specifically to act as proxies!

“So he specifically gave that power of attorney to those eleven people, and therefore because they followed his direct order to initiate, they were acting under his authority and therefore the initiations were bona-fide. However, he never gave this authority to any other devotees in the movement, therefore if anyone else tries to initiate devotees on Prabhupada’s behalf they have no authority from Prabhupada to do that, and therefore the initiations they perform are meaningless.”

Unless it can be shown that the system was to be terminated at departure then the above argument does not hold. Further, the GBC has already accepted the truth of H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja’s explanation at Topanga on 3rd December 1980 that more *ritviks* could be added. This position is also hypocritical since the GBC are very happy to authorise ‘good as God’ *diksa* gurus every year at Mayapur even though on May 28th Srila Prabhupada clearly says ‘I shall select’.

“The question of who accepts responsibility for the sinful reactions of the disciple is one of the unanswered questions from the *ritvik* theorists.”

The above criticism is extremely unintelligent. Unless evidence is presented for ‘modifications A & B’, the system remains the same as when Srila Prabhupada was on the planet (i.e. Srila Prabhupada remains responsible for the disciples sinful reactions since he remains the *diksa* guru)- this is the central thesis of *TFO*. How the authors can say that this question is unanswered is utterly mind-boggling. They may disagree with our answer but that is a separate point. This section then finishes with the repetition of two more quotes that have already been answered in *TFO* and elsewhere. Simply recycling already answered arguments is not going to convince anyone.

“In short, the evidence is overwhelming. Srila Prabhupada clearly wanted that his disciples take on the role of initiating spiritual masters in his absence, and the continual repetition of direct requests and instructions to do this over more than a decade is a historical fact.”

In short the evidence is NOT overwhelming but: Falls into the same three categories, which were dealt with already in *TFO* (pages 9-16); Only implies ‘initiating spiritual masters in his absence’ a handful of times, mainly in private correspondence to ambitious deviants; This is historical fact!

5. Comparison of instructions on *parampara* and *ritvik*

“We conducted a search of the Folio program containing Prabhupada’s collected writings, letters and lectures, to make an impartial comparison of his explanations of *ritvik* and initiation by proxy, with his explanations of disciplic succession and the *parampara* system.”

The authors have again assumed that which needs to be proven - that ‘*ritvik*’ is a system that is an alternative to or substitute for the *parampara*. As well as being dishonest, this approach also reveals a complete lack of understanding of the July 9th letter and the very theory the authors are supposed to be defeating. The ‘*ritvik* system’ is merely a device used by our *parampara* guru to assist him with initiations. Thus it is PART of, and indeed FACILITATES the *parampara* system, since it allows potential disciples to connect to the *parampara* through the current link in the *parampara*.

The ‘*ritvik* system’ would only be in opposition to the *parampara* system if it allowed persons to connect to the *parampara* via someone who was NOT the current link in the *parampara*. But then the authors would actually need to produce the very evidence that we have continually asked them for, and which would settle the issues of ‘modifications A & B’ - that a bona fide guru in the *parampara* ceases to be the ‘current link’ the second he departs. It is because the authors do not possess this evidence that they have been, and are still, unable to answer *TFO*. Otherwise whether through representatives or personal contact, as long as one is connecting to the current link in the *parampara* the system is, by definition, in line with the ‘*parampara* system’.

Thus the exercise of ‘comparison’ is flawed even before it has begun.

“The word *ritvik* appears 11 times in the teachings of Srila Prabhupada, 3 of these being in a conversation of May 28, 1977, where Tamal Krishna Maharaja introduces the term to the discussion. Of the other 8 times, (all from the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*), where Prabhupada translates the word as meaning “priests conducting the sacrificial ceremony” or just “priests”, 3 of these have no purport at all. In fact the only time throughout the whole Folio where Prabhupada mentions the term ‘*ritvik*’ in his purports (7.3.30), he simply states that this refers to the four kinds of priests who perform Vedic ceremonies.”

Firstly just focusing on the word ‘*ritvik*’ alone makes no sense, since in the July 9th letter (the ‘order’ in question) the word ‘*ritvik*’ is used just once, and the word ‘representative’ is used *7* times. If the authors look up the word ‘representative’ on folio we are confident they will find plenty of reading matter (1334 times to be precise).

“There is not one single example in any of Prabhupada’s books where he describes a system of successive generations of disciples all taking initia-

tion by proxy from the one departed guru. This point alone should inspire very grave doubts in the minds of sincere followers of Srila Prabhupada that he ever wanted such a system."

1. There are many aspects of initiation which are not illustrated with examples in Srila Prabhupada's books - the use of the *ritvik* system that Srila Prabhupada employed whilst he was present being just one. The issue is that however an initiation system is applied, the principles which are given in Srila Prabhupada's books must be followed. The principle is that one must take initiation from the current link in the *parampara*. Is this being obeyed? Srila Prabhupada was the current link in the *parampara* in 1976. He was also such in 1977. And he will continue to remain so until the authors can answer a very simple question that we have been asking now for years, and which forms the basis of 'modifications A & B' - WHEN, HOW and WHY did Srila Prabhupada stop being 'current'? Unless the authors can answer these questions with evidence from Srila Prabhupada, they must allow everyone to follow what is taught in Srila Prabhupada's books, and take initiation from the 'current' link - Srila Prabhupada. A couple of quotes simply restating the principle that the disciple must not initiate in the presence of the guru, but only when he departs, which is all the authors have so far produced, does not even begin to answer the above questions.
2. Also by the above logic, the GBC should have had 'grave doubts' about their current guru system many years ago, for where do Srila Prabhupada's books give 'examples' of:
 - a. Disciples taking initiation from Americans?
 - b. Gurus having many disciples from many different countries of the world?
 - c. Gurus being authorised, suspended, censured and de-selected by a GBC? etc. etc.

No, the GBC have not had 'grave doubts' because they will argue that their system follows the teachings of Srila Prabhupada, even if his books may not give exact examples of such a system. Similarly, the *ritvik* system follows the *parampara* system of taking initiation from the 'current link' in the disciplic succession. Further evidence that Srila Prabhupada's books only support him as the *diksa* Guru for ISKCON, and not the M.A.S.S. currently operating in ISKCON, can be found in the paper - '*The Sastric Basis For Srila Prabhupada's Continued Diksa Status*'

a) Parampara

"Prabhupada many times stated that everything is in his books (*ritvik*-theory supporters often cite this as a reason not to accept a living guru), and the faithful followers of Srila Prabhupada accept his statements that his books will be the law books for the next ten thousand years. Certainly, all instructions needed to become self-realized are in Prabhupada's books (including the necessity of accepting a living bona-fide guru). It seems everything is there except the system of *ritvik* initiations over succession generations. There is no question, it is simply not there- it doesn't exist anywhere in Prabhupada's teachings."

As we have said, the RELEVANT statements that definitely do NOT exist anywhere in Srila Prabhupada's books are:

- a. The 'current link' ceases to be 'current' once he departs from the planet;
- b. Srila Prabhupada's disciples must initiate the second Srila Prabhupada departs;
- c. One must only surrender to a guru who is 'living';
- d. There is a time limit as to how long a 'current link' can remain 'current'.
- e. Initiations can only be conducted if the guru is within a certain distance of the ceremonial fire pit at the moment the initiation occurs.

If none of these teachings are found in Srila Prabhupada's books, what is the authority for replacing Srila Prabhupada and the system that he set up for ISKCON just before he left? These are simple enough questions, as formulated through 'modifications A & B'. The fact that on a few occasions Srila Prabhupada re-stated the principle that one should not initiate in his presence does not answer the above.

"In conclusion, it is very hard for those who knew Prabhupada and his consistency of teaching, or for that matter anyone who has made a thorough study of his books, to accept that Srila Prabhupada intended his followers to completely overturn all of his voluminous teachings, and those of his predecessor *Acharyas*, on the strength of one conversation, and then introduce a system of proxy-initiations over successive generations of disciples, which is found nowhere either in his teachings, those of his previous *Acharyas* or the scriptures."

As we have demonstrated, accepting Srila Prabhupada as the 'current link' does not 'overturn' anything. The GBC should stop putting the cart before the horse. Let them first present their evidence for 'overturning' Srila Prabhupada as the *diksa* guru for ISKCON as facilitated through his July 9th letter. 'Put up or shut up'. Alternatively, should we more politely say - put up or follow Srila Prabhupada's initiation directive to the society.

6. The Confirmation of May 28, 1977

"He is grand-disciple... He becomes disciple of my disciple. That's it" (Srila Prabhupada, May 28th, 1977)

"In May of 1977, foreseeing his imminent departure from the world. Srila Prabhupada requested his GBC disciples to come to him with any ques-

tions they had, specifically about what would happen after his departure.”

This in itself does not appear to be true according to the conversation itself, which opens as follows:

Satsvarupa: Srila Prabhupada, we were all asked by the rest of the GBC to come to ask some questions.

(May 28th, 1977, Room Conversation, Vrindavan)

“Srila Prabhupada mentioned many times in his writings and his books, how the disciples of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur did not strictly follow his orders after his departure, and therefore failed to successfully continue the dynamic preaching mission that he established. Aware of this, and their grave responsibility, the members of the GBC wanted final confirmation from His Divine Grace on the running of the society in his physical absence.”

Now before we see what Srila Prabhupada goes on to say, let us recall what the authors would have us believe should be the answer. Up until now the authors have attempted to present evidence that they claim proves the following:

- a. That all Srila Prabhupada’s disciples should become *diksa* gurus when he departs;
- b. That all of Srila Prabhupada’s disciples have already been authorised to do this many times;
- c. That according to the authors’ interpretation of the following quote, as early as 1971 they were already ALL qualified to do this, simply by dint of being initiated, but they should simply wait until Srila Prabhupada leaves:

1971

“Everyone can, whoever is initiated, he is competent to make disciples. But as a matter of etiquette they do not do so in the presence of their spiritual master. This is the etiquette. Otherwise, they are competent. They can make disciples and spread... they are competent to make disciples.” Detroit, July 18, 1971

To emphasise their point, the authors have even shortened the actual full quote as above. Also in 1976, according to the following hearsay evidence, the authors are convinced that the only qualification required was already being met by virtually every disciple:

“...You each become guru,” he said. “As I have five thousand disciples or ten thousand, so you have ten thousand each. In this way, create branches and branches of the Chaitanya tree. But you have to be spiritually strong. This means chanting your rounds and following the four rules. It is not an artificial show. It is not a material thing. Chant and follow the four rules and pray to Krishna in helplessness.”

Mayapur GBC Meetings, (SP Lilamrta VI, page 167)

The authors define ‘strictly following’ then as simply chanting 16 rounds and following the 4 regs.

So based on everything that has been presented so far by the authors we would expect Srila Prabhupada simply to tell them to all go ahead - they ALL have ALREADY been ordered, and as long as they are following the basics they are ALL QUALIFIED.

What do the authors claim actually happened:

1. Srila Prabhupada states that he will ‘recommend’ and ‘select’ a few individuals. But the authorisation has already been given according to the authors. So why does Srila Prabhupada need to personally ‘select’ people?
2. Then we find the authors claiming that Srila Prabhupada will not even be naming gurus, but rather ‘officiating *acharyas*’! Thus having tried to convince us how Srila Prabhupada had taught consistently that as soon as he leaves:

ALL his disciples should become *Diksa* Gurus; and that they are all authorised to do this; and also all qualified to do this providing they are strictly following their initiation vows and just repeating verbatim whatever little they know; we are now asked to believe that Srila Prabhupada ‘confirms’ these many consistent and repeated instructions by doing something completely opposite and unique:

He ‘selects/recommends/nominates/picks etc/’ a FEW men to act as *Ritviks* and ‘officiating *acharyas*’ - a term he has never ever used before. Now regardless of whatever actually does happen on the ‘appt tape’, one thing is for sure - it is most transparently NOT the ‘confirmation’ of what the authors have spent most of this paper trying to convince us would naturally occur, based on all their quoted evidence. According to the authors Srila Prabhupada is now doing something he has NEVER spoken about - he wants the disciplic succession to continue by hand-picking a few selected *ritviks*! This goes against both the authors’ carefully constructed principles in that:

- No specific authorisation is required since *diksa* guruship is already given as a ‘standing order’;
- Everyone is supposed to become a *diksa* guru automatically;

Yet we are now told that Srila Prabhupada announces he will do the opposite - Only 11 candidates out of a potential pool of thousands are to become ‘guru’, and further Srila Prabhupada will personally select them! And just to make it completely divorced from what the authors have hitherto claimed, for good measure they will not even be selected as *diksa* gurus, but as *ritviks* or officiating *acharyas* - a previously unused term. Maybe there were only 11 people in the whole movement qualified to act as *diksa* guru, and that is why Srila Prabhupada chose them? Maybe everyone who was allegedly ‘competent’ to be *diksa* gurus back in 1971, suddenly all stopped being competent the more they practised Krishna Consciousness? Maybe also virtu-

ally everyone developed difficulty in following the 4 regs and chanting 16 rounds and how to read and repeat basic teachings in Srila Prabhupada's books verbatim, even though Srila Prabhupada had said time and again that it is 'a very simple thing', that even a 'child can do it' - and through all these difficulties only 11 competent people were left? Does this help the authors out of their contradictory quandary? Unfortunately, not since it does not stack up with what Srila Prabhupada actually states and what actually happened:

1. Firstly, the authors have claimed that the qualification is to be 'strictly following'. Srila Prabhupada does not say he is selecting them because they are 'strictly following' or the 'most qualified', but only that they 'understand the Guru's Order'.
2. In addition, the authors have claimed that 'strictly following' means 'chanting rounds and following 4 regs'. Yet we know that was not the reason that Bhavananada was added for instance. He would not have been an obvious choice for 'strictly following' even at that time, and further it is admitted by the GBC that Bhavananda was chosen simply because of the bravery he had displayed defending Mayapur against the goondas.

Maybe everyone was qualified but Srila Prabhupada only wanted the 'best of the best' to take on the job. Thus, Srila Prabhupada was not so much authorising as intervening to restrict the numbers. Maybe this will help the authors out? Unfortunately this again is contradicted by the GBC's own interpretation of certain quotes:

"Lord Chaitanya says that "Every one of you become the spiritual master, every one of you. Why one, two? Every one of you." "Oh, spiritual master is very difficult job." No. No difficult job. Chaitanya Maha... Amara ajnaya: Just try to carry out My order. That's all. Then you become spiritual master."

Columbus, May 9, 1969

"Because people are in darkness, we require many millions of gurus to enlighten them. Therefore Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's mission is, He said, that "Every one of you become guru." 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. In whichever village, whichever country or town you are, you become a guru. This is Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's mission. Amara ajnaya guru haya tara ei desa. "This country, this place." So, "But I have no qualification. How can I become guru?" There is no need of qualification. "Still I can become guru?" Yes. "How?" Yare dekha tare kaha krsna-upadesa: "Whomever you meet, you simply instruct what Krishna has said. That's all. You become guru.

S.B Lecture, 21/5/76, Honolulu

Why and how did millions wilt down to just eleven? Why only eleven?

Finally the authors may try and escape the trap they have created for themselves by saying that 'more could be added'. Yet this does not change the basic point that according to the authors Srila Prabhupada had consistently stated that 'everyone' MUST be guru, and that they are all qualified as long as they act as a normal initiated devotee. Adding more later does not make any sense unless there really was no one except these 11 who were qualified, since as we have seen from the GBC's own interpretation of certain quotes, there was an urgent and pressing immediate need for millions of gurus, not just eleven *ritviks*. Srila Prabhupada never spoke of this 'phased introduction' program whereby some would have a go first, and then later more would be added in stages. No wonder the GBC felt compelled to visit H.H. Sridhar Swami for help straight after Srila Prabhupada's departure.

It seems that the only ones who are proposing that Srila Prabhupada is 'overturning' all his previous instructions are the authors themselves. They are now saying that after having spent all this time telling everyone to be a *diksa* guru simply by following the basic practices of an initiated disciples, Srila Prabhupada suddenly decided he had been too liberal, and thus he went on to hand-pick a few select men to do it, because no one else is qualified. And even then they only gain access to the mantle of *diksa* guruhood via the obtuse route of being selected as officiating *acharyas/ritviks*. The irony of all this is that it is the authors who are forced to accept the idea that virtually none of Srila Prabhupada disciples were really qualified after all!

Even H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja a leading contributor to this paper hinted at this contradiction in another paper he wrote:

"Indeed Lord Chaitanya had given an open order for all to "become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land". But a succession of "all" is a succession of none."

(The Perils of Succession', 1996, H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja)

Please also note that all the above - Srila Prabhupada picking just a few of his leading manager devotees is totally consistent with what we are proposing - a *ritvik* system.

Thus even before we get to examine what happened on the tape, whatever it was will certainly contradict the authors' case so far. The authors will need to go back again to the drawing board and come up with another story baring in mind the following:

- Do they stick with the tape, and take that as the main principal evidence of Srila Prabhupada's desire, like they have been doing right up till now.

Or

- Do they stick with the letter to Tusta and all the other quotes repeating Lord Chaitanya's order, and just tack the tape on at

the end like they have tried to do here?

Should they attempt the latter they will need to come up with another story as to how the selection and authorisation of 11 men ONLY as *ritviks*, becomes the CONFIRMATION of the ORDER for everyone to all go ahead with very little qualification as *diksa* gurus the moment Srila Prabhupada departs. When and if the authors do come up with another theory we hope they will inform us first before embarrassing themselves before the world's Vaisnava community. We want a strong authoritative GBC we can all be proud of and serve under, as was Srila Prabhupada's wish. In the meantime, we suggest a swift re-instatement of Srila Prabhupada's final order since there is obviously no clear reason for having terminated it 21 years ago.

“Here Srila Prabhupada clearly answers questions 3 and 4 above, which the GBC body had put to him. He says that he will nominate certain persons to act as officiating-acharyas, and that they will act as gurus, but that as a “formality”, they will do so on behalf of Srila Prabhupada in his presence, because it is Vaishnava etiquette that one does not accept disciples in the presence of one’s own spiritual master.”

Leaving aside all the above considerations, the above also has another serious flaw. It completely contradicts the account of what happened on the tape as given in ‘Disciple of My Disciple’, the previous ‘partial’ response to TFO, and authored by 3 of the authors of this paper and endorsed by the GBC! For in there we are told that on the tape there is no mention of the ‘officiating *acharyas*’ officiating in Srila Prabhupada’s presence:

“In the present conversation, Srila Prabhupada does not refer to proxy initiations at all, not even in connection with word “ritvik”. (Disciple of my Disciple, p5)

Yet above the author have stated that Srila Prabhupada will nominate ‘officiating *acharyas*’ (whom Srila Prabhupada states on the tape are the same as *ritvik*) to initiate for after his departure (question 3), but that in his presence these same ‘officiating *acharyas/ritviks*’ will act as proxies!

“So here Srila Prabhupada confirms the exact same thing that he has been explaining in his lectures, writings and letters for the last 12 years without exception, to a select committee of his most senior and trusted disciples, who had been summoned by him, specifically to clarify how the society would be run in his physical absence. The recorded GBC minutes of the conversation confirm what everyone present understood.”

As we have seen, the one thing Srila Prabhupada does NOT do, according to the authors own thesis, is ‘confirm’ what he has been teaching for so many years - i.e., that everyone become *diksa* guru automatically on his departure as long as they are following their initiation vows and know how to do basic preaching. To make this clear for us, the authors themselves present what was written in the GBC minutes book regarding what they believed Srila Prabhupada had instructed:

2) Srila Prabhupada said he will appoint several devotees who shall perform initiation in the future, even after his disappearance. The disciples they accept shall be their disciples and Srila Prabhupada will be their grand spiritual master.

Here we see Srila Prabhupada ‘appointing’ *diksa* gurus according to the authors. Yet this is the exact antithesis of what they have tried to prove up until now regarding what Srila Prabhupada consistently preached -i.e., that everyone was already authorised to act as *diksa* guru as long as they followed their initiation vows and knew how to preach whatever little they knew; and that such *diksa* guruship would automatically be activated by Srila Prabhupada’s departure. After all, the authors are quite assertive that this is the vital ‘law of disciplic succession’. And yet according to the GBC minutes book above, this *diksa* guruship was actually activated by their selection as *ritviks*:

“Srila Prabhupada said he will appoint several devotees who shall perform initiation in the future, even after his disappearance.”

Here we see a ‘seamless’ appointment, whereby the future *diksa* gurus have already been anointed as such EVEN whilst acting in Srila Prabhupada’s presence, for the above quote talks of acting after Srila Prabhupada’s disappearance simply being an addition, and not a rapid departure, as indicated by the word ‘EVEN’. Thus now we are asked to accept another ‘law’ that is totally different - that *diksa* guruship comes about due to specific appointment only, and even then not as gurus, but as *ritviks*!

And that the second law is actually the confirmation of the first!

“Once again, if we simply accept Prabhupada’s instructions, without interpretation, it is very clear what he really wanted.

“Note: For more detailed discussions on this conversation, and claims attempting to question its validity, see Appendices 1 and 3.”

1) Yet INTERPRETATION of the minutes is exactly what the authors do in the ‘appendices 1& 3’ we are directed to, for there it is admitted that TWO MODIFICATIONS - let these be MODIFICATIONS C & D, must be imposed on the GBC minutes as presented:

That the word ‘appoint’ is incorrect, since Gurus are not ‘appointed’ and it is conceded that this part of the minutes is inaccurate. (c)

That though the minutes do not say so, we must impose the etiquette that the disciples initiated in Srila Prabhupada’s presence must belong to Srila Prabhupada. (d)

If the GBC were to accept their own minutes without interpretation then even the disciples initiated in Srila Prabhupada’s PRESENCE must be Srila Prabhupada’s grand-disciples:

“Srila Prabhupada said he will appoint several devotees who shall perform initiation in the future, even after his disappearance. The disciples they accept shall be their disciples and Srila Prabhupada will be their grand spiritual master.”

Note that the second sentence is NOT restricted only to after Srila Prabhupada's departure. Rather the time period after departure is only mentioned with the word 'EVEN' indicating that this period is ALSO included, not that it is the primary time period spoken of.

Please see 'Hari Sauri's Minutes Turn Back the Clock' which already defeated P.O.'s appendix 1. Please also see 'Timeout for Hari Sauri's Minutes' which is a rebuttal of P.O.'s appendix 3'.

Also for a consistent account of what occurred on the tape, the reading given on p21-26 of TFO still remains, as the above has not countered the points made there. Also please see 'The Real Appointment Tape' and the 'Final Order Still Stands'

7. The Letter of July 9th, 1977

"The letter was a response to a conversation of July 7th, where Tamal Krishna Maharaja brings to Srila Prabhupada's attention the dilemma of what to do about all the devotees who wanted to take initiation but had been told to wait due to Prabhupada's sickness. Although this conversation is a follow-on from the one of May 28th in the fact that Prabhupada actually names those devotees who would act as 'officiating acharyas', the reason behind the conversation is significantly different."

Above the authors state that the July 7th conversation is a 'follow-on' to the May 28th conversation in that Srila Prabhupada actually names those devotees who would act as 'officiating acharyas'. But in the May conversation Srila Prabhupada only speaks of those whom he would name to 'act as officiating acharyas', doing so 'particularly' for when he is 'no longer with us':

Satsvarupa: By the votes of the present GBC. Then our next question concerns initiations in the future, particularly at that time when you're no longer with us. We want to know how first and second initiation would be conducted.

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

Tamal Krishna: Is that called *ritvik-acharya*?

Srila Prabhupada: *Ritvik*, yes. (May 28th Conversation)

Now the authors are asserting that the persons whom Srila Prabhupada stated in May he was going to name as 'officiating acharyas' 'particularly' for when he is 'no longer with us', he now names only for when he is 'with us'! Not only is this a contradiction, but how can it also be a 'follow-on' if in May he was talking of naming them 'particularly' for after his departure, and now we are told he names them ONLY for before his departure? This is not a follow up, it is a complete U-turn.

Further the GBC themselves have always told us that the OPENING of July 9th letter itself makes mention of this May 28 conversation, and that therefore any attempt to isolate the letter from the tape is foolish:

"There are obvious flaws with this attempt at trying to isolate the July 9th letter. Notice the first line of the letter states:"

(Srila Prabhupada's Guru System vs. *Ritvikvada*: The Facts Plain And Simple, H.G. Ravindra Svarupa Dasa)

If we take the GBC's argument to its logical conclusion we find that the May 28 conversation is the real reason for the letter; not the July 7 conversation which is not in any way alluded to in the letter:

Recently when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vrindavana, Srila Prabhupada indicated that soon he would appoint some of his senior disciples to act as "*ritvik* - representative of the *acharya*, for the purpose of performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation. His Divine Grace has so far given a list of eleven disciples who will act in that capacity:

(July 9th, Letter)

Then this phrase would have to correspond directly with the opening phrases from the tape we quoted earlier:

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

[...] **Yes. I shall recommend some of you. After this is settled up, I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating acharyas.**

[...] **Is that called *ritvik-acharya*?**

[...] **Ritvik, yes.**

(May 28th Conversation)

Please notice the correspondence between the underlined words above:

<u>May 28th</u>	<u>July 9th</u>
'First and Second Initiations'	'First and Second Initiations'
'Conducted'	'Performing'

<i>'ritvik'</i>	<i>'ritvik'</i>
'I shall'	'He would'
'recommend some of you'	'Appoint some of his senior disciples'
'After this is settled up'	'Soon'

So the GBC yet again need to make up their minds. If the July 9th letter does follow directly from the May conversation, then the letter must be an expression of what occurred in that earlier meeting, and be therefore 'particularly' applicable to when Srila Prabhupada is 'no longer with us'. It is quite absurd to assert that a letter which arises out of a conversation specifically concerning post-departure *diksa* arrangements, ends up only spelling out what is to be done pre-departure. Why mention in the letter a previous conversation (May 28th) that deals 'particularly' with when Srila Prabhupada 'is no longer with us', when the same letter is supposed to ONLY be applicable to BEFORE Srila Prabhupada's departure - and ALSO makes no mention of the July 7th conversation which we are now told is the sole reason for the generation of this letter? The GBC's position is quite absurd.

The GBC are in effect arguing that the letter actually names the *ritviks* mentioned in the May conversation, but with two modifications:

1. Only in the sense as given in the July 7 conversation; (e)
- &
2. That this sense (e) is in complete opposition to the time period the May conversation was meant for; (f)

We can see that the GBC have got themselves into a complete pickle in trying to defeat *TFO*. Having previously pinned everything on the May 28 tape in their last attempt at answering *TFO* - '*Disciple of My Disciple*' (GBC, 1997):

'The present paper deals only with the first question: What was Srila Prabhupada's final order? [...] The present paper will show that on May 28th, 1977, Srila Prabhupada ordered his disciples to become initiating spiritual masters.' (*'Disciple of My Disciple'*, GBC, 1997)

The GBC have now radically altered tack and have for some reason decided to pin everything on the July 7th garden conversation in order to 'deal' with the July 9th letter. But in doing so they have needed to impose TWO MORE MODIFICATIONS to justify their theory - let these be known as modifications E & F as given above.

Thus at this point let us summarise what has happened so far:

- a. Oct 1996 - *TFO* points out that what transpired in 1978 resulted in two modifications 'A & B' being imposed on the July 9th letter. We asked for evidence for these modifications.
- b. April 1997 - The GBC answers in '*Disciple of My Disciple*' that the evidence for these modifications can be found solely on the May 28th tape:

"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." (*'DOMD'*, referring to the July 7th conversation)

1. May 1997 - We immediately defeat this paper in '*The Final Order Still Stands*' pointing out amongst other things, that *DOMD* contradicts the 'final *siddhanta*' of the GBC "*Gurus and Initiation in ISKCON*" (1995), the very position *TFO* had originally challenged, and *DOMD* was supposed to be defending.
2. August 1998 - The GBC now publish 'Prabhupada's Order' to answer *TFO*. In this paper they change tack and state that the order to be *diksa* guru was ALWAYS given to EVERYONE all the time, and that the tape merely CONFIRMED THIS. Further the July 9th letter arose solely from the July 7th conversation. This has now led to:
3. Many more contradictions;
4. More questions than answers e.g. How is a new specific order for *11 *ritviks* only* the confirmation of an already given order for all men, women and children to become *Diksa* GURUS.
5. No attempt to answer 'modifications A & B' - the actual point of *TFO*;
6. The creation of FOUR more new modifications - C, D, E & F to try and sustain the new approach.

So far above we have shown how the GBC's assertions are untenable by their own arguments. We have only used the tape as evidence since they use it. We have not yet needed to offer any arguments or evidence of our own.

Thus according to the GBC we are now supposed to accept that the July 9th letter is supposed to be generated solely from the July 7 garden conversation, even though the letter makes no mention of either the garden conversation or the details in it, but rather only appears to allude to the May conversation which is not even brought up in the garden conversation!

In any case, as we will now demonstrate even if the letter was generated solely from the garden conversation, there is still nothing in the garden conversation which states that the *ritvik* system was only to be operational during Srila Prabhupada's presence. That it was set up to deal with initiations in Srila Prabhupada's presence has never been in dispute. Thus proving that the *ritvik* system was set up to deal with initiations in Srila Prabhupada's presence, as the garden conversation does, merely confirms a fact that has never been disputed and is a basic premise of *TFO* - that between July 9th and Srila Prabhupada's departure a

ritvik system was in place. We are looking for evidence that either limits the system to Srila Prabhupada's presence, or shows that it was set up SPECIFICALLY for Srila Prabhupada's presence ONLY.

"The May 28 conversation deals specifically with the question of what would happen after Srila Prabhupada's departure, and he answers unequivocally that his disciples would accept disciples of their own."

An 'answer' is the response given to a question. The 'answer' given to the question of what would happen after Srila Prabhupada's departure is that Srila Prabhupada would appoint *ritviks*, as we have seen above. The very LAST line of the conversation segment, after a number of different questions have been answered, addresses the circumstances by which Srila Prabhupada's disciples may take their own disciples, and as can be seen from the transcript, this would only occur on receiving an order from him to do so. Thus it is completely misleading to state that the first line of a conversation is 'unequivocally' 'answered' by the last line of the conversation. Are the authors hoping the reader is too lazy to bother checking the conversation in question, and see that their assertion is humbug?

"In contrast, this conversation, from the very beginning, deals with the question of what to do about the backlog of new initiation candidates"

This is another misleading assertion. The backlog had temporarily arisen because H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja had stopped the initiations, which in any case were being conducted through representatives. Srila Prabhupada simply tells H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja to resume the system, and not wait any more, except now the representatives would give the name themselves to the initiate:

Tamal Krishna Goswami: That's what we were doing... I mean, formerly we were... The local GBC, *sannyasis*, were chanting on their beads, and they were writing to Your Divine Grace, and you were giving a spiritual name. So should that process be resumed, or should we...?[...] I just want to know if we should continue to wait some more time.

(July 7th Garden Conversation)

There is no mention here in the conversation, or in the July 9th letter, that this system was being set up JUST to clear a 'backlog'. Rather Srila Prabhupada was rectifying the situation that ever allowed such a needless backlog to occur in the first place. There is no mention that once the backlog is cleared up, the system should be terminated. Thus this was the setting up of a PERMANENT system to handle initiations generally, not just to clear a 'backlog' which should never have been there in the first place.

"The reason for this conversation, as stated above, is that there was a backlog of hundreds of devotees who wanted to take initiation from Srila Prabhupada."

The conversation was about whether or not the system should be 'resumed'. The 'backlog' had only resulted because the system employing representatives had for some speculative reason been stopped (allegedly). It is not that Srila Prabhupada only set up the system to 'fix a backlog'. Merely clearing a backlog would not have required setting up a brand new elaborate system with devotees around the world, who now had the power to carry on without any involvement from Srila Prabhupada. All it would have required was to carry on with the representational system already running, and which was apparently only interrupted on the basis of speculations surrounding Srila Prabhupada's ability to absorb more *karma* whilst sick. Even H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja himself only states that there were around 200 devotees in this 'backlog':

"At that time, there was a build up of people who were waiting to get initiated, about 200 people, so finally I approached Srila Prabhupada and I asked him what should we do because there is more than 200 people needing to be initiated."

(Class given by H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami Maharaja on 6 August 1998, in Hong Kong)

In addition, we know that Srila Prabhupada was initiating regularly until at least May 18th, 1977, only 50 days before this conversation - see letter to Hari Sauri Prabhu, 18/5/77. This account of there being a substantial backlog is further challenged by the following letter:

"We have received one letter from Tamal Krishna Maharaja who discussed the questions of new requests for first and second initiation with Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada told Tamal Krishna that he does not want to consider any requests until his health has returned. Tamal Krishna Maharaja requested that I inform all the GBC members to instruct their temples to hold all requests for initiation until further notice."

(Letter to all GBC secretaries, from Ramesvara Dasa Swami, 20/6/77)

his letter raises more questions:

1. Where is the evidence for the above alleged discussion? According to the above H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja was supposed to have discussed with Srila Prabhupada the 'question of new requests for first and second initiation'. Srila Prabhupada supposedly told the Maharaja that initiations should be stopped. Why is it this discussion has never been mentioned by H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja in the subsequent 21 years since Srila Prabhupada's departure?
2. Also this letter was only issued by H.H. Ramesvara Swami on the 20th June, 1977, just 17 days before the conversation regarding the supposed 'backlog'. This letter then had to be received by all the GBC secretaries, who would then need to communicate the same information to all their temples. This process would take them many more days. Yet we are then to believe that in the few days which were left for this policy to have been operational, by the time H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja went to see Srila Prabhupada on the 7th July, at least 200 people suddenly needed to get initiated.
3. In addition, H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja was subsequently party to a GBC paper issued the following Mayapura where the

new 'zonal gurus' were announced. Here again we get a different version of events:

"The GBC members met together in Vrndavana and prepared a few last questions to put before Srila Prabhupada. [...] Then he said that he would name the initiating gurus later. Srila Prabhupada seemed to recover somewhat in his health and he despatched the GBC men back to their preaching missions around the world. [...] Because of his illness, Srila Prabhupada had not awarded any initiation for months."

- a. We see here that Srila Prabhupada's health seemed to 'recover somewhat' after May 28th, 1977. Yet it was after this time that Srila Prabhupada's health was supposed to have got worse thus causing H.H. Tamala Krishna or Srila Prabhupada - depending on which version of events above we accept - to suspend initiations.
- b. We are then told that because of his health Srila Prabhupada had not awarded any initiation for 'months'. Yet as we have seen above, we know that Srila Prabhupada continued to initiate normally at least until 18/5/77, and that the policy to suspend initiations was not enacted until a couple of weeks before the *ritvik* system was set up.

All this throws doubt on any testimony given by H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja regarding what he claims happened at this time. As we will see later, Maharaja's only consistency over the details of what occurred in 1977 is that he can always be relied upon to give a new version of events every few years.

Whatever the size of the 'backlog' please note that previously Srila Prabhupada would have given names for many devotees in each letter. Furthermore, each initiation letter was quite standardised, giving the names, procedures regarding fire sacrifices etc. Only if there was some other query that needed to be addressed would the letters differ substantially from the standard. In addition, for H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja to know how many initiations were outstanding, he would obviously have kept a record of those he had told to wait. Srila Prabhupada states in the above conversation, without any hesitation or pause, that the system should immediately be resumed with 'senior sannyasis'. If Srila Prabhupada had wanted to just 'clear the backlog' he could have done that in a couple of hours simply by dictating letters with spiritual names to his secretary for those TP's who had been told to wait. Hardly a mammoth task, even for one in poor health, who continued to translate the *Bhagavatam* right up until his last breath. He definitely would not have needed to set up a system of geographically dispersed *ritviks*, who would be able to operate without any assistance from Srila Prabhupada, and then have it announced throughout the movement to every temple and GBC. A couple of hours with his secretary would have been ample to clear a small backlog. Indeed even then it would have made more sense to simply have sent an initiation letter to the temple concerned, rather than send a letter to EVERY temple, most of whom may not have developed pressing backlog problems in the last 50 days. The very fact that the July 9th letter was sent to the whole movement, and not just the temples concerned, in itself strongly supports that this was a general system set up to be applicable permanently throughout the movement, not just some emergency measure.

"However, the initiations had been stopped, as Tamal Krishna Maharaja explains, because the devotees close to Prabhupada were concerned about Prabhupada having to accept the *karma* of his disciples in his weakened condition."

This also destroys the myth that the system was set up because Srila Prabhupada was too 'sick' to accept more *karma*. Above it seems the representational system, already in operation, had been stopped by some devotees because Srila Prabhupada was sick. Srila Prabhupada now states that the system should immediately be resumed. So the one reason that the system could NOT have been set up for was because Srila Prabhupada was 'sick'. On the contrary, Srila Prabhupada indicates to Maharaja that he is happy to resume taking as much *karma* as required.

It could be argued that it was set up because Srila Prabhupada was 'sick' in the sense that he could not 'participate' in the initiations. However, as the conversation states Srila Prabhupada was not 'participating' anyway:

'Tamal Krishna Goswami: That's what we were doing... I mean, formerly we were... The local GBC, sannyasis, were chanting on their beads, and they were writing to Your Divine Grace, and you were giving a spiritual name. So should that process be resumed, or should we...?'

The only 'burden' that Srila Prabhupada had now been relieved of was having to dictate short letters giving names. Yet, we know that at that time at least Srila Prabhupada had not lost the power of his speech, and was conducting lengthy room conversations. Furthermore, in the last months when his health was much worse he was still translating and holding long room conversations. Just nine days before his departure Srila Prabhupada dictated a complex codicil to his final will, so we know he was not too sick to have given verbal approval to a few new disciples each day. Therefore, we know that he still had the ability to dictate names to his secretary.

Maybe it could be argued that Srila Prabhupada was now relieved of the burden of actually having to perform such a task, although he may have been able to do so. But please consider the following - even if Srila Prabhupada was to have now suddenly started receiving a letter every day asking for persons to be initiated, the new system would at the most have only saved him a few minutes. In any case as Maharaja admits, he was handling most of the mail for Srila Prabhupada anyway, and if Maharaja had read out the request to Srila Prabhupada, Srila Prabhupada would just have had to dictate some names.

In any case, by the GBC's own argument, this could not have been such a strong reason to cease initiating since they argue that when Srila Prabhupada says: 'India I am here' in this very conversation, he was indicating his desire to continue 'participating' in India.

Thus there is no evidence in the July 7th conversation or the July 9th letter that the system was set up simply because Srila Prabhupada wanted to 'clear a backlog' or because he was too 'sick' to accept any more *karma*. (We have also addressed other

speculative arguments). Rather it was set up to continue what had been going on anyway. Only now he had handed over the final operations, acceptance of disciples and issuing names, so that the system could continue to operate without his physical presence.

Sometimes devotees get confused by the conversation on October 14th, whereby Srila Prabhupada talks about 'stopping' and 'resuming' his role in giving 'initiations'-

Srila Prabhupada: So I depute him to do this at Mayapura, and you may go with him. I stop for the time being. Is that all right?

Tamal Krishna: Stopped doing what, Srila Prabhupada?

Srila Prabhupada: This initiation. I have deputed the, my disciples. Is it clear or not? [...] And if by Krishna's grace I recover from this condition, then I shall begin again, or I may not be pressed in this condition to initiate. It is not good. (Room Conversation, October 18th, 1977, Vrindavana)

However, some facts are overlooked:

1. Srila Prabhupada still instructs H.H. Jayapataka Maharaja to do it instead as per the July 9th letter where the Maharaja's name was listed. So the initiation would still have gone ahead and he would have taken the *karma* and been the guru just as with any other initiation.
2. Srila Prabhupada had already largely 'stopped' giving initiation some years before, even prior to the July 9th letter, since as we showed earlier he was already employing 'local *sannyasis*' to initiate on his behalf. The one thing Srila Prabhupada was still doing was performing the ceremony himself if he was there personally.
3. It is the above sporadic participation Srila Prabhupada is referring to when he speaks of 'stopping and resuming'. In the above conversation an Indian man had flown all the way from New York to get initiated PERSONALLY by Srila Prabhupada. This physical involvement with the actual fire ceremony was something that was affected by Srila Prabhupada's fluctuating health. And as we have just seen PO admit above, Srila Prabhupada had indicated THIS continued local participation of his in the *ritvik* system when he stated 'India I am here'.
4. Thus for the 'time being' Srila Prabhupada had 'stopped' does not refer to the *ritvik* system he had only just set up on July 9th, since at that time the only thing he 'stopped' was the practice of dictating names. Neither is he suddenly telling H.H. Jayapataka Maharaja to take all the *karma* by asking him to go and do the *yajna*.

Having established what happened on July 7th we now come to the crux of the matter - was the system set up to terminate on Srila Prabhupada's departure.

name to us here and I'll enter it in the book." This quite clearly confirms the context of the conversation, which had been set at the beginning; it was regarding the question of initiations while Srila Prabhupada was sick in Vrindavana."

"There are also two very clear evidences in the conversation that Srila Prabhupada and Tamal Krishna Maharaja were talking specifically about that time, i.e. when Prabhupada was present there in Vrindavana, and not for ever after. The first is where Tamal Krishna Maharaja states, "So if someone gives initiation, like Harikesa Maharaja, he should send the person's

The procedure H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja refers to is his maintenance of the book of disciples' names. He is asking what should happen with regards the book when initiations are resumed. Since the Maharaja was there in Vrindavana at the time, naturally he has to speak of the names of new disciples being sent to him there. Where else would he be suggesting the new disciples' names be sent - to some distant place where the book was not being kept!? Of course, Maharaja is speaking of the system being up and running there and then - it has never been disputed that the system was to run initially in Srila Prabhupada's presence. The above merely proves that Maharaja is speaking of the system as it would then immediately be operational.

"Another confirmation of this comes when Tamal Krishna Maharaja asks Srila Prabhupada, "Is there someone else in India that you want to do this?" and Prabhupada answers, "India, I am here. We shall see. In India, Jayapataka..." this clearly reveals Srila Prabhupada as accepting the context of the matters being discussed related to what should happen at that time, when he was present but not physically fit to perform initiations."

This quote contradicts the authors' assertion on a number of points:

1. If Srila Prabhupada was not 'physically fit to perform initiations' why put himself forward at all?
2. Why also then add that 'we shall see' and then give H.H. Jayapataka Maharaja's name as well?
3. Also in the July 9th letter H.H. Jayapataka Maharaja is named as the representative, with no mention that he is only there as some sort of potential back up to Srila Prabhupada.

Thus the naming of both Srila Prabhupada AND someone else in no way contradicts the position we have always maintained - that the system was for when Srila Prabhupada was able to participate AND for when he was not able to participate. And as we saw in the October conversation above, that direct participation could also be curtailed when he was physically present as well depending on his day to day health.

"The subject of this conversation was then dictated by Tamal Krishna Maharaja as a letter to all Temple Presidents and GBC's, letting them know

that initiations could again be performed, and which devotees Srila Prabhupada had deputed to oversee the giving of names and chanting on beads:"

Another plank of this current GBC paper is the absolute insistence that H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja 'dictated' the letter. Of course we only have Maharaja's word for that. But the issue is not what Maharaja now claims he thought he was writing, or what he claims the letter means - the issue is the words written down in the letter that Srila Prabhupada himself approved. It was not as though Maharaja developed the *ritvik* system out of his own mind, picked the representative names himself, and then decided what was going to be done. Srila Prabhupada instigated the whole procedure. Whatever words were written down, Srila Prabhupada approved them all. Srila Prabhupada never told the Maharaja 'since this letter is not self-explanatory you better travel all over the world and personally tell everyone what it really means'.

Also the letter was sent to every TP and GBC, and specifically 'approved' by Srila Prabhupada. And Maharaja himself accepts that letters written by the secretary but 'approved' by Srila Prabhupada were authored by Srila Prabhupada:

"Prabhupada called his GBC member for the western USA, Karandhara Dasa, to Tokyo to clearly establish the GBC's responsibilities. In a letter issued by Karandhara, but bearing Prabhupada's signature of approval, one can sense Prabhupada's authorship."

(The Perils of Succession, 1996, H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja)

And this was an extremely important letter sent to all GBC's and TP's. A search through folio does not show us other letters that were also sent to every GBC AND TP.

"The fact that this arrangement was not intended to be for all time is again confirmed in the letter resulting from the above conversation, where Tamal Krishna Maharaja says, "The name of a newly initiated disciple should be sent by the representative who has accepted him or her to Srila Prabhupada, to be included in His Divine Grace's 'Initiated Disciples' book.""

This point was answered in *TFO* in October 1996. Again, if the GBC did not agree with our answer they should really have explained why it was unsatisfactory. We could then have seen if their objection had any legitimacy and thus the debate could move forward. The GBC should know they will not satisfy devotees' intelligence if they just keep endlessly repeating already defeated arguments and pretending *TFO* has not dealt with them. In *TFO* we made the point that the name was received by the secretary and entered by him - and that it was stated that it should be sent to Srila Prabhupada since that was where the book was kept. This fact is itself confirmed in the very July 7th conversation that the authors themselves have quoted above:-

Tamal Krishna: You know that book I'm maintaining of all of your disciples' names? Should I continue that?

Srila Prabhupada: Hm.

Tamal Krishna: So if someone gives initiation, like Harikesa Maharaja, he should send the person's name to us here and I'll enter it in the book. Okay"

This fact was then confirmed again by H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja just the other week:

"So I said to Prabhupada that we can list, because Prabhupada.....we had kept.....the secretary kept the book of initiated disciples, so I said that when someone does this initiating on your behalf, then the names can be kept in your book and Prabhupada said yes."

(Class give by H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami Maharaja on 6 August 1998, in Hong Kong)

"Much effort has gone into trying to analyse and make judgements on what is the actual meaning of this letter. Of course, if you want to know what is actually meant by some particular statement, the very best person to ask is the person who made it. As the letter was written by Tamal Krishna Maharaja, we thought it pertinent to allow him to explain what he actually meant by the letter, and particularly the word 'henceforward' which is often highlighted to have special significance."

As stated earlier we are only interested in the words that Srila Prabhupada approved. Thus Maharaja's 'explanation' of what he thought he wrote, whilst gratefully acknowledged, is not relevant unless it can be conclusively demonstrated that this is what Srila Prabhupada also meant. We already know the exact words that Srila Prabhupada did approve.

"On July 31st, 1998, we contacted His Holiness Tamal Krishna Goswami by e-mail, asking him to give some first hand insight about how the word 'henceforward' was used in the letter of July 9th, 1977. As the person who wrote this letter, which was later countersigned by Srila Prabhupada, he is in the best position to know what the intended meaning was."

Since the GBC are using the contents of Maharaja's mind as prime evidence, it is pertinent for us to carefully examine whether his record on this issue is solid and reliable. Below the reader will see for themselves how Maharaja has offered nothing but a mass of confusing and contradictory positions on what should have happened after Srila Prabhupada's departure:

1978

1. Maharaja agrees with the rest of the '11' that the 11 mentioned in the July 9 letter had been exclusively chosen as the 'material and spiritual successors' to Srila Prabhupada. He enthusiastically participated and supported this system, with the big *vyasanas* etc. We can see that at the time, Maharaja did not display any outward signs that, he had any idea what the 'real' meaning or context of the July 9 letter was. In a document he was party to issued at this time, it states:

"The GBC members met together in Vrindavana and prepared a few last questions to put before Srila Prabhupada. [...] Then he said that he would name the initiating gurus later. [...] Then one day in June he gave his secretary the names of eleven disciples who would be initiating the disciples. [...] A delicate situation may arise when in one ISKCON temple there are disciples of different gurus. The natural way to avoid this is for a guru to perform *diksa* in his own zone. Srila Prabhupada deliberately chose gurus in different parts of the world to arrange for this. [...] A second seat, however a little below Srila Prabhupada's *vyasana*, should be given to the initiating guru. [...] Those who are already empowered to initiate will extend the number by their consideration. In this way it will have spiritual characteristics. The eleven picked by His Divine Grace will extend themselves. [...] Now these godbrother's are worshipped by their disciples as genuine spiritual masters. This means for example, that they are to be considered, as stated in the *Guruvastakam, as nikunjo-yuno rati keli siddhyai* - intimate assistants in the pastimes of Krishna."

(The Process For Carrying Out Srila Prabhupada's Desires For Future Initiations; A paper prepared by the GBC in consultation with higher authorities, Mayapur, 1978)

Maharaja offered the following vivid understanding of what exactly he thinks happened at this time:

"The argument that after the departure of the spiritual master anyone of his disciples can give initiation, cannot be applied in the case of Srila Prabhupada who specifically named 11 persons only at first to fulfil this function. These 11 persons were named by Srila Prabhupada in the beginning of July, 1977, in Vrindavana in the back garden of his house. These names were dictated to me as I was serving as his secretary, and now he had me write a letter to all the GBC's and Temple Presidents which he also signed as approved on the 9th of July listing their names and defining their function. [...] Thus, we can understand, that in regard to the third definition of *acharya*, that Srila Prabhupada clearly appointed 11 successors for initiation. Whatever process may have been followed by past *acharyas*, Prabhupada chose to appoint. [...] Even after having these facts clearly explained, if some one continues to blaspheme the 11 gurus, their legitimacy, blasphemes ISKCON, the spiritual vehicle created by Prabhupada to fulfill his will, blasphemes the GBC - the approved driver of the vehicle - [...] he is not a disciple at all. Rather he is the killer of gurudev and his spiritual whereabouts is unknown."

(Letter to Upananda Das, 13/12/78)

As is accepted by everyone now including the GBC, Maharaja's understanding of what the letter meant, and the events that transpired after 1978 based on this understanding of the letter by Maharaja, was an understanding that was absolutely FALSE. Thus from the very beginning Maharaja had misunderstood the meaning and context of the letter by his own later admission.

1980

2. By this time Maharaja's understanding of what Srila Prabhupada's desires for guru-succession were, had become so deviant that even the GBC, who at that time were themselves following a deviated path, suspended him as GBC and guru. At the time Maharaja had become convinced, amongst other things, that (what to speak of his own disciples) even his godbrothers and godsisters could only reach Srila Prabhupada through him!

"Tamala Krishna Goswami, the leader of a large number of *sannyasa* and *brahmachari* preachers, insisted that he was now their via media in relating to Prabhupada and expected that his godbrothers follow HIM ABSOLUTELY!"

(The Perils of Succession, 1996, H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja)

Dec. 3rd 1980

3. Having been suspended Maharaja now gave a new version of events at Topanga Canyon, California. He admits there that:

"Myself and the other GBC have done the greatest disservice to this movement the last three years because we interpreted the appointment of *ritviks* as the appointment of gurus. What actually happened I'll explain. I explained it but the interpretation is wrong."

(Topanga Canyon Confessions, 3/12/80)

Here Maharaja is not only confirming that his understanding of the letter in 1978 was totally wrong, but also that now he has finally properly understood what Srila Prabhupada really wanted.

1982

4. Maharaja now changes his mind again and goes back to the version of events that he had supported in 1978 and rejected in 1980:

"I do not think that there is any problem in accepting the spiritual masters who Srila Prabhupada appointed. The first qualification which you should have before you decide on this issue is to chant sixteen rounds and follow strictly Prabhupada's orders. So far as I seen anyone who is doing this is accepting these *acharyas*, except in a very few instances. The real proof however is to see that they are *acharya*, not simply by appointment, but by actions. Our movement is progressing and growing more and more, at least as much as it was during Srila Prabhupada's time. [...] You have enclosed a clipping from Back To Godhead in which Srila Bhaktipada is advertised as 'Bona fide Spiritual Master'. You say 'this is something that seems a little strange to me'. Would you please explain to me what seems strange?"

(Letter to Gadai Prabhu, 14/6/82)

1984

5. This metamorphosis of Maharaja's version of what happened in 1977 is completed by the publication of his book "*Servant of the Servant*"; in which he states categorically:

"Since the disappearance of our beloved spiritual master, we have seen such disenchanted persons come forward trying to cast doubt on the legacy left by Srila Prabhupada. When SP appointed from among his senior disciples eleven persons to continue the process of initiation, and when after their spiritual master's departure those whom he selected assumed their duties by his command, the critics began to bark their discontent. [...] The critics may argue that appointment alone is not a guarantee that one has actually achieved this perfectional stage of life; Prabhupada might have appointed disciples for lack of anyone better, or hoping that they might one day achieve the desired realization. To such irresponsible criticism we answer a decisive "No!" SP chose them because they merited his confidence. [...] SP conferred his blessings upon these disciples, seeing that they had dedicated themselves heart and soul to assisting him in the preaching mission of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Thus he considered them to be *uttama-adhikari*, all highly advanced devotees worthy to be accepted as spiritual masters. [...] Critics may doubt whether our ISKCON *acharyas* are actually liberated. Do they know their *rasa* (liberated relationship) with Krishna, and will they be able to instruct their disciples similarly? But such questions bring one dangerously near the precipice of spiritual calamity."

(*"Servant of the Servant"*, Tamal Krishna Goswami, Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1984, Pages 361-365)

Post 1987

6. Maharaja again changes his mind and whole-heartedly endorses the new reforms and agrees that what he and the other 11 had been doing and teaching for the last 10 years was wrong. To support this new understanding he agrees that in new versions of his book '*Servant of the Servant*' the above quoted passage should be edited out.

1992-95

7. Maharaja's understanding of *guru-tattva* takes a further twist. He now leads the formation of the '*gopi bhava*' club, preaching that Srila Prabhupada had not given us the 'highest understanding' but rather that he wanted us to consult with a '*rasika guru*', who the chairman of the ministry that has sponsored *PO* considers:

'...a '*crooked*' and '*talented pretender or imposter, who has seduced, beguiled and misled many people.*'

(His Grace Ravindra Svarupa prabhu, '*Taking Srila Prabhupada Straight*', 1998)

1995

8. Maharaja now realises that he was wrong in thinking that Srila Prabhupada had not given us everything and that he had wanted us to consult with the '*rasika guru*', as he had himself done and also persuaded many others to do so, for the previous 4 years.

1996

9. Maharaja again accepts the 'appointment' theory that he had rejected in the post 1987 reforms:

"6 months before his own demise, Prabhupada had announced that he would APPOINT some of his disciples to perform all of the functions of initiating new disciples as he had become too ill to do so. Those so initiated would still be Prabhupada's disciple while those who would be initiated after his demise would become his grand-disciples. Shortly thereafter, Prabhupada selected eleven disciples to begin assisting him, and asked his secretary to communicate their names to the rest of ISKCON. Following Srila Prabhupada's death and the fateful meeting with Prabhupada's godbrother Sridhara Maharaja, the eleven gurus NAMED by Prabhupada assumed the extra-ordinary position above all others."

(*'The Perils of Succession'*, 1996, H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja)

Further it will be noted in the above that Maharaja states that Srila Prabhupada's intention to appoint disciples to assist with initiation, as recorded in the May 28th conversation, (6 Months before his own demise), was motivated by illness EVEN THEN, and that the 'naming of the gurus' done in the July 9th letter flowed directly from the May 28th conversation.

1998

10. Maharaja now tells us that the issue of appointing the '11' as had occurred via the July 7th garden conversation and the July 9th letter was done independently of the May 28th conversation, though above he has just told us the opposite:

"In writing this letter, it was an organisational letter to explain the practical matter of how things would be dealt with because nothing was really changing. Prabhupada was still their guru but at least the actual operational method of how Prabhupada would deal with new candidates was changed. It was very clear in my mind at that time that what we were discussing was the process of initiation in Prabhupada's presence, how things would go on after his presence, he had already instructed us when the 5 or 6 of us had met him on May 28th, one had nothing to do with the other.

(Class given by H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami Maharaja on 6 August 1998, in Hong Kong)

Now we are told, that 21 years later, the best way to understand the July 9 letter and how it arose is to understand it from Maharaja, even though it is accepted that he did not understand it at the time, and that he has been greatly confused on this issue over the last 21 years. Surely most normal sane people would not consider the Maharaja a very reliable witness on this issue, with all due respect. The fact that the GBC have placed such store in his testimony in *PO* proves that they are utterly desperate. Possessing not one scrap of hard evidence, nor even a single sound argument, they are now pinning everything on the testimony of Maharaja. Instead of just reading the letter ourselves, we must for some bizarre reason accept the indirect interpretation of a witness who has merrily bounced from one deviant and contradictory position to another over the last 21 years. So instead of any factual EVIDENCE, Maharaja's mental projections must now become the basis on which to justify 'modifications A & B' to the July 9th letter - the modifications that led to the abandonment of the *ritvik* system and the imposition of the previous, current and possibly a future ISKCON guru system?

Please note the above is NOT an 'ad hominem' attack. An 'ad hominem' attack is when one tries to discredit a philosophy solely by trying to discredit the person who is presenting the philosophy. Here Maharaja is not presenting any philosophy but giving his personal testimony. In evaluating a person's testimony the key criterion will be the credibility of the testifier specifically in relation to the subject at hand.

"2/ If you worded it, what did you mean by this word?"

'Henceforward' means something like, 'in the foreseeable future,' or, 'until further notice.'

Here the informative Maharaja makes a 'Freudian slip,' in that he gives a definition of the word 'henceforward' that forms the whole basis of the *TFO* - 'until further notice'. The very 'further notice' that was NEVER given. This is exactly what *TFO* is claiming. Srila Prabhupada never gave this 'further notice' and thus the system should still be running.

"Therefore, the word 'henceforward,' in fact the entire letter, in no way refers to a situation after Prabhupada's departure, a situation that I was not prepared to normally think of. That situation was already addressed by Prabhupada in the May 28th conversation, which I make brief mention of at the outset of my letter."

Here Maharaja must be praying the reader will not notice the glaring contradiction. He makes a 'brief mention' to a conversation that deals with what to do 'after Prabhupada's departure', at the outset of a letter that is supposed to deal only with what to do before Srila Prabhupada's departure. Furthermore, as we have already covered extensively above, the GBC argues that this brief mention proves the letter resulted from what was stated on the May 28 tape, a tape that deals specifically with what was to be done after Srila Prabhupada's departure. (A tape which is also currently inadmissible as evidence according to the GBC's own investigative expert, incidentally)

"3/ Was there any accompanying explanation to this letter given by you to Srila Prabhupada, when you read it to him for his approval, which may shed more light on Srila Prabhupada's understanding of the term "henceforward" in this context?"

Yes, in the sense that this letter was viewed by Srila Prabhupada as a managerial document for how new disciples could continue to be initiated during His illness, not a blueprint for how the disciplic succession would continue after His departure. Though I have no specific memory about such an accompanying explanation, there undoubtedly would have been some exchange between us along the lines of what we discussed in the garden the previous day."

Maharaja answers 'yes,' there was an 'accompanying explanation' which would 'shed more light' on the 'understanding of the term "henceforward" in this context.' Then he immediately states that he has no 'specific memory' about such an accompanying explanation, but there must 'undoubtedly' have been some exchange between them. If Maharaja has no 'specific memory' how can he be so sure that there was 'undoubtedly' such an exchange, and further what the exact details of that exchange were? As we have seen above, 21 years ago Maharaja was not sure at all what Srila Prabhupada intended status for those 11 persons was. Yet today we are supposed to accept his version of events as being accurate even though he admits he does not even have a 'specific memory' on the topic. Not entirely convincing we are afraid to say. The fact that in Maharaja's diary of his time as secretary in the last year, which he has just released, there is absolutely no mention of any of these elusive conversations surrounding the issuing of this letter adds further doubt to his testimony. Evidence, which does not exist, is no evidence at all. Not only is this evidence entirely missing in any hard form such as tapes or approved documents, it appears to have also slipped out through the gaps in the Maharaja's synaptic junctions.

"Of course, in the face of such overwhelming evidence, the ritvik-theorists take the only possible alternative to attempt to keep to their theory i.e. they try to discredit the evidence of all the most senior devotees in the movement, those whom Prabhupada had personally chosen. However, to write off all of Prabhupada's hand picked men as being ill-motivated is indirectly an offence to Srila Prabhupada himself, implying that he wasn't able to judge the sincerity and motives of his disciples."

Hardly overwhelming. This so-called 'evidence' is nothing more than the testimony of someone who, by his own admission, has not been at all clear on Srila Prabhupada's desires for the past 21 years. Furthermore, the same person also admitted that the 'most senior devotees in the movement' had committed the 'greatest disservice' in the way in which they had understood and executed Srila Prabhupada's instructions for what should occur after his departure. Considering his terrible track record on the issue of spiritual authority, the Maharaja must have been very flattered to even have been asked to contribute to such an important GBC paper.

As far as 'writing off' goes, the GBC themselves have 'written off' a substantial proportion of Srila Prabhupada's 'hand-picked'

men. After all we do not see them rushing to take testimonies from: Hamsaduta, Bhagavan, Ramesvara, Kirtanananda, Harikesa or Bhavananda. We wonder why? It can not be the fact that they had 'fallen', for Hari Sauri also similarly 'fell' and yet they are enthusiastic to distribute his 'diaries' all throughout ISKCON. Indeed they use the contents of those very diaries as one of their main pieces of evidence for *Diksa* authorisation. Yet would the GBC like to publish and distribute the memoirs of Hamsaduta et. al. over what they think happened in 1977. We think not! We will leave it to the reader to figure out the reason for this glaring double standard (in addition to the fact that it is *kali-yuga*, and such hypocrisy is only to be expected).

Furthermore, this is what H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja himself had to say recently about Srila Prabhupada's 'chosen leaders':

'The failure of the attempt at centralization did not mean that Prabhupada's chosen leaders would cease jockeying for position and control, desires that seem at the heart of each heresy'

(*The Perils of Succession*, 1996, H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja)

"A cornerstone of TFO and other ritvik-theory papers is the use of the word 'henceforward' in this letter."

We see yet another 'straw man' argument. Again what is particularly pathetic about these 'straw man' arguments is that they cannot even come up with new ones, but instead keep recycling ones that have already been defeated in our responses to previous GBC papers. We hope the reader will forgive us if we once more reproduce our position as stated in *TFO*:

'Furthermore the argument that the whole *ritvik* system 'hangs' on one word - henceforward - is untenable, since even if we take this word out of the letter, nothing has changed. One still has a system set up by Srila Prabhupada four months before his departure, with no subsequent instruction to terminate it'

(*The Final Order*, p3)

"We have shown that Prabhupada himself didn't use this word, it was in a letter drafted by Tamal Krishna Maharaja."

The authors have 'shown' no such thing. They have simply told us to take Maharaja's word for it. Yet Maharaja himself is happy to accept that letters 'signed' by Srila Prabhupada's secretary were actually 'authored' by Srila Prabhupada:

'Prabhupada called his GBC member for the western USA, Karandhara Dasa, to Tokyo to clearly establish the GBC's responsibilities. In a letter issued by Karandhara, but bearing Prabhupada's signature of approval, one can sense Prabhupada's authorship'

(*The Perils of Succession*, 1996, H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja)

"We have also shown how the context of the conversation was clearly relating to performance of initiations in Prabhupada's presence (there are three examples in both the conversation and the subsequent letter that it related to when Prabhupada was present in Vrindavana)."

As we have seen, the authors have only demonstrated something that was never in dispute - that initiations were to be performed in Srila Prabhupada's presence. The real issue is - were they ONLY to be performed in Srila Prabhupada's presence. The 3 pieces of evidence they have offered for this are:

1. 2 pieces relating to sending the names to Srila Prabhupada's for entry in the 'initiated disciples book' - a POST-initiation activity that we have shown by the GBC's own evidence was not to be carried out by Srila Prabhupada anyway.
2. The other piece relates to the phrase 'India I'm here' in relation to who should perform initiations in India which:
 - presents a contradiction since the authors have also simultaneously assured us that the only reason the system was being set up was because Srila Prabhupada was too sick to participate in initiations!
 - after so saying Srila Prabhupada immediately ADDS 'We shall see. Jayapataka', and in that way appoints someone to take over from him in India.

"However, even if we follow the TFO's logic and pretend for a moment that Prabhupada did use the word 'henceforward', we can easily show examples of where his use of the word didn't necessarily mean for all time/ For example:"

As shown above this is just another 'straw man' argument. We are more than happy to accept the definition of the word 'henceforward' as given by H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja. The same definition the authors have quoted to support their own position, i.e., 'Until further notice'

"However this is the main pillar of supporting proof that the author gives for the *ritvik*-theory."

Please see above.

"Again and again in *ritvik*-papers we read the word 'henceforward', as though it was some grave pronouncement of deep import, which should be stressed over and over again."

Please see above.

"We should remember that Srila Prabhupada himself never stressed this letter as being the last word or final order for all time, those are the words of the *ritvik*-theorists."

The letter was the 'last' instruction sent to the whole society on how future initiations were to run. It was sent just over 100 days

before Srila Prabhupada's departure and set out how initiations were to run 'from that time onwards' or 'until further notice'. This is just a plain old stubborn fact that just will not go away, whoever's shaky 'testimony' the authors may wish to present as 'new evidence'. If any subsequent orders on this subject were ever issued by Srila Prabhupada it would be timely for the authors to produce them.

8. Integrity of *TFO*'s reporting methods

"As stated in the introduction, the purpose of this paper is not to provide a point-by-analysis of *TFO* but rather to present the evidence for and against the *ritvik* theory that it propounds."

Unfortunately it has not come close to achieving even this diluted objective, as we have thus far demonstrated.

"However, upon repeated readings of *TFO* in the course of this work, we were struck at the peculiar style that the author repeatedly employs to make his points."

It has also been pointed out that with the number of 'straw man' arguments presented in *PO*, it is unlikely the authors have read *TFO* properly even once, what to speak of 'repeatedly'.

"On closer examination, one can see that *TFO* contains relatively few long quotes from Srila Prabhupada or *sastra*, where the obvious meaning was simply repeated as is."

Yet the authors are unable to give even one specific example of where we have misrepresented the philosophy through selective quotation in *TFO*. Even the two examples they offer are false (as we shall demonstrate), and in any case do not even relate to quotations from Srila Prabhupada or *sastra*. Further, as we will show in the appendix, in establishing one of the key planks to their whole theory (*kiba vipra*), the authors themselves have quoted very selectively.

"The author's arguments, based on such things as the declaration that Srila Prabhupada "cannot just introduce a pronoun that has no antecedent", seem to be very intelligently analysed and impressively verbose in their explanations, but on closer inspection, it is often found that the primary premise on which the author builds his case is flawed, and therefore all that comes after it is without foundation."

Such an argument is not used in *TFO*. The authors have yet to prove that any 'primary premise' underpinning *TFO* is faulty or in any way flawed. Even with the above quote regarding the use of pronouns, (which is taken from a separate paper), the authors are unable to do anything more than whinge. The above verbiage singularly fails to in any way support the 'primary premise' of the GBC with regards modifications 'A & B' - it is this the authors should be trying to address rather than making sloppy lazy unsupported generalisations employing quotes from papers other than the one they are meant to have read and be currently answering.

"Prabhupada gave the example that if you base your system of mathematics on the principle 'one plus one equals three', then your whole system is wrong, no matter how elaborate and impressive you make it."

Exactly. Two invented modifications - 'A & B' - instituted in 1978 - that led to the abandonment of Srila Prabhupada's order for the continuation of himself as the *diksa* guru for ISKCON, and has led to the madness and chaos seen over the last 21 years.

"In fact, on close examination of 'The Final Order' and other *ritvik*-theory literature, it becomes increasingly clear that while Mr. Desai and his fellow writers claim to present the issue fairly, they do an intentionally poor job of representing the case against them. By ignoring material, selectively quoting other material, and even disingenuously quoting material, they show a disregard for truth and honesty which discredits their claimed motives."

Two points;

1. It is painfully clear that the one thing the authors have not done is 'closely examine' *TFO*, or any other paper on our web site for that matter.
2. They have yet to substantiate any of the above claims.

"And they then very selectively quote part of Jayadvaita Swami's 1996 paper, 'Where the Ritvik People are Wrong', and write:

***TFO*: "Its authority is beyond question [...] Clearly, this letter establishes a *ritvik*-guru system."**

They do not give the full quote, nor do they give the context, and in doing so, they try to suggest that they have the support of Jayadvaita Swami in their claims. However, by going to the original paper, we see what Jayadvaita Swami really said:

"The appointment letter is dated July 9th, 1977. It is signed by Tamal Krishna Goswami and countersigned 'Approved A C Bhaktivedanta Swami'

Its authority is beyond question. The letter explains that Srila Prabhupada has appointed some senior disciples to act as *ritviks*, and it lists eleven disciples Srila Prabhupada has so far named to act in that capacity. The letter then says:

(quote from letter omitted)

Clearly, this letter establishes a *ritvik*-guru system. But one may ask where it says that such a system should continue even after Srila Prabhupada's departure."

Jayadvaita Swami, 'Where the Ritvik People are Wrong', 1996

So, the *ritvik-vadis* have taken 4 paragraphs, selected two sentences, and then ignored all of the other material in the letter. The sentence immediately following their quote shows the question at hand - whether the system should continue after Srila Prabhupada's departure. This sentence, however, gets conveniently ignored in their quote, and the only reason for such an obvious omission is to give the reader an impression other than what Jayadvaita Swami intended."

This is a recycling of exactly the same defeated argument that was used in *'The Timeless Order'*. For convenience we will answer it just once more below:

What the authors fail to point out is that straight after we quote Jayadvaita Maharaja we state the very same 'question at hand'. We present the 'question at hand' in the form of two modifications to the final order; namely that the appointees should stop acting as *ritviks* on departure (modification A), and that they should then become *diksa* gurus, (modification B). We say that it is the imposition of these modifications, which lie at the heart of the controversy. Jayadvaita Maharaja chooses to present the 'question at hand' in a different way, as is his prerogative.

At no point do we in any way suggest that Jayadvaita Maharaja agrees with our conclusion- that the *ritvik* system should have continued past the departure of Srila Prabhupada, or even that he approves of the way we formulate the 'question at hand'. We quoted him simply to establish that everyone on both sides of the controversy agrees that the July 9th policy document is authentic and was authorised by Srila Prabhupada. Surely if commonality does exist, even if only on a minor point, it is still good to point it out.

"Another example of selective quoting to give a different meaning than that actually intended is shown in the author's quoting of Tamal Krishna Goswami. It is also strange that after stating that "we have no interest in conspiracy theories" etc. he uses the term "Pyramid House confessions" to describe the frank and open discussions with Maharaja that took place at Topanga Canyon in 1980. In using this term the author is using not-so-subtle innuendo to infer that Tamal Krishna Goswami has committed some crime (a confession has a very different connotation to an interview or discussion). The selected quote reads as follows:"

Again totally recycled from the *'The Timeless Order'*. Our response again for the last time (hopefully):

The authors firstly criticise us for calling the talk given by H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami in 1980 *'Pyramid House Confessions'*. They say it implies something sinister. Of course, the word 'confessions' can be said to carry with it certain negative connotations. Yet, within the talk H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami himself makes the following admission:

'Myself and the other GBC have done the greatest disservice to this movement the last three years because we interpreted the appointment of ritviks as the appointment of gurus'.

Now if the above does not constitute a confession, we don't know what would.

The authors then accuse us of selective quoting. Of this, we are also guilty. In a court of law the prosecution will often take statements of the accused to support their own case. There is nothing wrong in that. Everyone knows that devotees such as H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami and H.H. Jayadvaita Maharaja believe that the M.A.S.S. was authorised by Srila Prabhupada. We never imply otherwise. There is no point in simply repeating entire tracts of a talk when only certain parts are relevant. H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami is perfectly entitled to give his personal views, for example, on who is and who is not qualified to be a *diksa* guru. Should these or other statements support the final order we are more than happy to quote him. Selective quoting can only be dishonest if we use the quotes to try and prove something other than what is actually said by the whole text. This we have never done. We never claimed that anything H.H. Jayadvaita Maharaja or H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami said supported the post-*samadhi ritvik* proposition. We simply stated that they did agree on certain subsidiary points: that the July 9th letter sets up a *ritvik* system - H.H. Jayadvaita Swami; that no *Diksa* Gurus were appointed - H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami; nothing more and nothing less. Further, in the case of the *'Topanga Canyon Confessions'*, we do not present it in our section called 'Evidence'. We simply produce the sections on their own after the paper in the appendix, to simply make the point that gurus were never 'appointed', and it is not referred to throughout the whole paper to try and support the idea that it is evidence for the post-*samadhi ritvik* system.

We are surprised the authors should employ such false innuendo with regards 'selective quoting', since the very next thing they say is:

"Of course, any synopsis of a conversation has to use 'selective quoting'; to quote each article in full would make it unnecessarily long, in fact we have used selective quoting to highlight certain points in this paper. However, the real criterion for determining whether the selective quoting is proper or improper is to judge whether or not the selected quote, when taken in the full context of the whole letter or conversation, still has the same meaning which is being implied by the quote itself. In other words, if you take a quote in support of a particular point, which has been denied by the author in another part of his presentation, then that is certainly a case of unfair reporting. We assert that this is what Mr. Desai has repeatedly done in his paper, and we have cited two examples above to illustrate our point."

As we have just shown, the authors have failed to provide any real evidence for such misrepresentation. It would be incredibly childish and stupid for us to deliberately pretend that H.H. Jayadvaita Maharaja was really a hard *ritvik*, would it not. The authors have not shown where we have falsely presented quotes from opposition authors in 'support of a particular point' that is then contradicted by the rest of the authors' quote. Where, for example, does H.H. Jayadvaita Maharaja go on to say that the July 9th letter 'has no authority whatsoever, and certainly does not establish any sort of *ritvik* system'?

The authors, of course, can 'assert' whatever they like, in the same way the GBC have asserted for the last 21 years that Srila

Prabhupada authorised them to succeed him as *diksa* gurus. But they never seem to be able to produce any evidence for their assertions, just as they have not done here. Presumably, the authors considered the above two examples best illustrative of our dishonesty, and yet clearly neither accusation holds up. The readers can thus see for themselves just how careful the GBC are to give 'truthful and fair reporting'.

"Aside from the issue of selective quoting, there is another core issue relating to the content of TFO that should be noted. As we have already mentioned, in trying to support his theory, Mr. Desai has relied largely on an interpretative analysis of the conversations and written instructions of Srila Prabhupada. Throughout his teachings, Srila Prabhupada stresses that to understand the Vedic knowledge one must try to understand in a submissive way, without unnecessarily interpreting the statements of the sastras and the pure devotees."

On the contrary the TFO is based on following the July 9th letter until irrefutable relevant evidence to the contrary can be presented. There is no interpretation offered. Only the face meaning of the order is accepted in TFO. The authors meanwhile have never accepted the face meaning of the July 9th order, but rather have offered endless speculations and reinterpretations of this clear directive, culminating in expecting us to accept what H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja currently teaches Srila Prabhupada meant by the letter. Why not be submissive to Srila Prabhupada rather than a self confessed leader of endless deviations?

"As followers of Srila Prabhupada, we follow this principle, and we believe that devotees who also try to simply understand the clear and direct meaning in Prabhupada's words will have no doubt as to what is his desire. On the other hand, if we allow ourselves to speculate on Prabhupada's words, there is every chance that we may miss the real meaning his is trying to give us and thus be misled from the path of pure devotional service."

We would love for the authors to give us the 'direct meanings' of the following words, and show how they mean 'until my departure':

'Henceforward' - July 9th letter

'in the future' - July 11th letter

'Continue' X 2 - July 19th and July 31st

'There is no need for ANY CHANGE' - Last Will and Testament

'My Initiated Disciple' - Last Will and Testament

We would also like to know how the word '*ritvik*' means two different things in the May 28th tape and the July 9th letter.

9. Conclusion

"In this paper we have attempted to bring the *ritvik* debate back to what is the essential question that needs to be answered i.e. What was Srila Prabhupada's instructions on the issue of succession and future initiations within his ISKCON society?"

The 'essential question' that needs to be answered is the evidence for 'modifications A & B'. The authors have ignored this question because they cannot answer it, and instead have simply presented general instructions regarding the *parampara* - instructions which are not violated by the *ritvik* system.

"We have tried to document the teachings of Srila Prabhupada from his books, lectures, letters and recorded conversations to show that he repeatedly stressed the importance of following the *parampara* system and gave his followers direct instructions to become initiating spiritual masters and continue the disciplic succession."

As we have shown, the authors have not produced any direct instructions where Srila Prabhupada has told all his followers that they must become 'INITIATING spiritual masters' immediately on his departure. All they have produced in specific relation to this issue are:

1. Instructions relating to *siksa*/preacher gurus - as our appendix will again prove;
2. One letter to a deviant where Srila Prabhupada states that *diksa* guruship CAN occur after his departure;
3. Other quotes relating to 'initiating' that actually violate the 'law of disciplic succession' that they have used in 2.
4. The 'appt tape' that only speaks of '*ritviks*' for AFTER Srila Prabhupada's departure and *diksa* gurus only emerging on the receipt of a specific order.

"We must say, with all due respect to Krishna Kant Desai, that throughout the arguments presented in TFO, we see a consistent pattern; he selectively quotes from Srila Prabhupada, his followers and scripture, and then expounds verbose speculative arguments to try to establish his point of view based on spurious initial propositions."

Yet the authors have singularly failed in providing even one example of the above - not surprising since they only quoted from TFO four times in the whole of PO.

"However, when carefully analysed, it is often found that he does so at the expense of the essential teachings of the ancient Vedic knowledge, which is coming down through *parampara*. His explanations are often detailed, well-researched and thought-provoking, but in the final analysis, significantly different from those of the sastras and the previous *acharyas*."

See above. Though thanks for the half-compliment - not bad for someone who is more commonly referred to as worse than a 'sahajiya and mayavadi' combined.

"In closing we would like to give the last word to Srila Prabhupada and the ancient teachings of the Vedas which he so painstakingly transplanted into the Western world."

So would we. A synonym for 'last word' could be 'final order'. We wish the GBC really would give the 'last word' to Srila Prabhupada on this issue. This ends our analysis of the paper - 'Prabhupada's Order'. Appendix 1 and 3 of 'Prabhupada's Order' have already been answered and can be found on the ISKCON Revival Movement (IRM) website: Please look for 'Hari Sauri's Minutes Turn Back the Clock', and 'Timeout For Hari Sauri's Minutes'. (Appendix 2 of PO is not a philosophical document but simply a subjective experience of a 'ritvik temple'.)

Appendix 1 "Become Guru"

We demonstrated in TFO that Srila Prabhupada's many uses of Lord Chaitanya's order to 'become guru' - *amara ajnaya* - (C. C. Madhya 7:128) was not an encouragement for all his followers and disciples to become *diksa* gurus, but simply to become preacher/*siksa* gurus. It seems the GBC realised that without these numerous quotes, they would be stripped of anything to support their dubious interpretation of the May 28th conversation, and thus they have attempted to demonstrate that Srila Prabhupada is referring to *diksa* when repeating this order for everyone to become guru. By doing this they presumably hoped to expand their pool of quotes from the usual old chestnuts from a handful of private letters to ambitious deviants (Tusta Krishna etc), to take in many quotes directly from Srila Prabhupada's books and lectures. This they have attempted to accomplish by using a sentence that is found in another purport to a different verse in the C:C - *Madhya* 8:128. We will quote this sentence from the purport in question, see what the verse and whole purport states, and then we will examine in detail if indeed the purport in *Madhya* 8:128 proves once and for all that *Madhya* 7:128 refers to *diksa* gurus.

1. The Evidence

In section 3 of their paper, the authors present the following from the C:C (*Madhya* 8:128) as evidence that the '*amara ajnaya*' verse (*Madhya* 7:128) from Lord Chaitanya refers to *diksa* guru:

"Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura also states that although one is situated as a *brahmana*, *kshatriya*, *vaisya*, *sudra*, *brahmacari*, *vana-prastha*, *grhastha* or *sannyasi*, if he is conversant in the science of Krishna he can become a spiritual master as *varma-pradarsaka* guru, *diksa* guru or *siksa* guru. The spiritual master who first gives information about spiritual life is called the *varma-pradarsaka* guru, the spiritual master who initiates according to the regulations of the *shastras* is called the *diksa* guru, and the spiritual master who gives instructions for elevation is called the *siksa* guru... *kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei 'guru' haya*

The word guru is equally applicable to the *varma-pradarsaka* guru, *siksa* guru and *diksa* guru. Unless we accept the principle enunciated by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, this Krishna consciousness movement cannot spread all over the world. According to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's intentions, *prthivite ache yata nagaradi-grama sarvatra pracara haibe mora nama*. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's cult must be preached all over the world.

(C.C. Madhya, 8:128)

2. Selective Quoting

What is interesting to note is that parts of the purport before the underlined sentence but after the Sanskrit have been omitted, an omission that is not indicated by the authors. This is noteworthy since the sentence before the key quoted sentence might well clarify the context.

Also the quoted part comes right at the end of the purport. What is also interesting is that after the evidence is quoted by the authors there are only 5 more lines to the whole purport. As well as providing the words before the evidence one would also have expected the words after. Thus one might question why the authors only quote the next 3 lines but leave out the final 2.

We will now re-examine the 'evidence' by again looking at this section of the purport but this time including the sections missed out by the authors. (Later on we will take a look at the entire purport as a whole). What follows is the complete section relating to the part of the purport the authors have quoted; the sections which have been omitted by the authors shall be in italics:

"However, a Vaisnava brahmana is not selected on the basis of his birth but according to his qualities. Unfortunately, those who are unintelligent do not know the difference between a brahmana and a Vaisnava. They are under the impression that unless one is a brahmana he cannot be a spiritual master. For this reason only, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu makes the statement in this verse:

*kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya
yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei 'guru' haya*

If one becomes a guru, he is automatically a brahmana. Sometimes a caste guru says that ye krsna-tattva-vetta, sei guru haya means that one who is not a brahmana may become a siksa-guru or a varma-pradarsaka-guru but not an initiator guru.

According to such caste gurus, birth and family ties are considered foremost. However, the hereditary consideration is not acceptable to Vaisnavas. The word guru is equally applicable to the *vartma-pradarsaka-guru*, *siksa-guru* and *diksa-guru*. Unless we accept the principle enunciated by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, this Krishna consciousness movement cannot spread all over the world. According to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's intentions: *prthivite ache yata nagaradi-grama sarvatra pracara haibe mora nama. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's cult must be preached all over the world. This does not mean that people should take to His teachings and remain sudras or candalas. As soon as one is trained as a pure Vaisnava, he must be accepted as a bona fide brahmana. This is the essence of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's instructions in this verse."*

As we can see, significant RELEVANT portions have been omitted which appear both before and after the 'evidence' in question.

1. BEFORE the evidence:

"They are under the impression that unless one is a *brahmana* he cannot be a spiritual master. For this reason only, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu makes the statement in this verse:"

2. AFTER the evidence:

"As soon as one is trained as a pure Vaisnava, he must be accepted as a bona fide *brahmana*. This is the essence of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's instructions in this verse."

So immediately, we have the context for the evidence in question. The statement is made specifically to address *smarta-brahmana* considerations ONLY. Notice Srila Prabhupada states that defeating the *smarta-brahmana* objection is the ONLY reason for the verse, and that this is also the ESSENCE of the verse.

Thus on closer examination of the whole verse it becomes apparent why such selective quoting has been applied. One immediately sees that the whole verse argues against restrictions being placed on becoming a guru being based solely on *smarta-brahmana* considerations. In this sense such bogus *smarta* considerations cannot obstruct gurus emerging from any one of the three mentioned categories - hence the verse applies to the word guru in general, being equally applicable to *vartma-pradarsaka*, *siksa* and *diksa* guru. As we will see in the '*amara ajnaya*' verse, the context is quite different, and the subject has nothing to do with lifting *smarta* restrictions from potential gurus. Rather, the verse is simply ordering everyone to be a specific type of guru. This order is still compatible with the above verse since an order to be a *siksa* guru is not simultaneously restricting any sort of *diksa* activity based purely on bogus *smarta-brahmana* considerations. It is only that the particular order in question, *amara ajnaya*, is simply calling for instructing gurus; if another instruction to also become a *diksa* guru is given then that is also equally applicable- once more devoid of *smarta* considerations. We will also see later that though the word 'guru' is equally applicable to all types of gurus, it can ALSO be used in a restricted sense; it is not that every time the word 'guru' is used in any context or any circumstance one must automatically take the word guru to mean *diksa*, *siksa* and *vartma-pradarsaka* guru. If this were so there would not be the need for three specifically defined types of guru, there would be just one homogenised term GURU which would simultaneously generically apply to all types of guru.

(In section 4, when this section is quoted again, the authors do provide the sentences before the evidence in question, but by this time the analysis has already been done in section 3, which they refer back to.)

3. Now let us go directly to the verses before the evidence:

"Sometimes a caste guru says that ye *krsna-tattva-vetta*, sei guru haya means that one who is not a brahmana may become a *siksa-guru* or a *vartma-pradarsaka-guru* but not an initiator guru. According to such caste gurus, birth and family ties are considered foremost. However, the hereditary consideration is not acceptable to Vaisnavas. The word guru is equally applicable to the *vartma-pradarsaka-guru*, *siksa-guru* and *diksa-guru*."

Thus by examining the parts, which were omitted, the context of the phrase becomes clear. In reference to 'hereditary considerations', the 'word guru is equally applicable'. This of course no one disputes. Thus what is being stated by this verse is not a clarification of the '*amara ajnaya*' verse, nor an elaboration on Srila Prabhupada's many instructions to his disciples to be guru, but simply a very basic tenet of Krishna Consciousness - that one's birth is not in itself a bar to taking up any spiritual role - be it a *pujari* or a *diksa* guru.

Thus by seeing the context, we see that what the sentence is NOT saying is that ANYTIME the word GURU is used, it must automatically mean *siksa* or *diksa* guru, which is what was presented by the authors.

4. Further examination of the whole purport, which is quite long, reveals this theme all the way through:

"In his *Amrta-pravaha-bhasya*, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains that one should not think that because Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was born a *brahmana* and was situated in the topmost spiritual order as a *sannyasi*, it was improper for Him to receive instructions from Srila Ramananda Raya, who belonged to the *sudra* caste. To clarify this matter, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu informed Ramananda Raya that knowledge of Krishna consciousness is more important than caste. [...]

It is stated in the *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* that one should not accept initiation from a person who is not in the *brahminical* order if there is a fit person in the *brahminical* order present. This instruction is meant for those who are overly dependent on the mundane social order and is suitable for those who want to remain in mundane life.. [...]

Factually the qualifications of a spiritual master depend on his knowledge of the science of Krishna. It does not matter

whether he is a *brahmana*, *ksatriya*, *sannyasi* or *sudra*. [...]

One who is actually advanced in spiritual knowledge of Krishna is never a *sudra*, even though he may have been born in a *sudra* family. However, even if a *vipra*, or *brahmana*, is very expert in the six *brahminical* activities (*pathana*, *pathana*, *yajana*, *yajana*, *dana*, *pratigraha*) and is also well versed in the Vedic hymns, he cannot become a spiritual master unless he is a Vaisnava. But if one is born in the family of *candalas* yet is well-versed in Krishna consciousness, he can become a guru. [...]

If a person is born in a *sudra* family but has all the qualities of a spiritual master, he should be accepted not only as a *brahmana* but as a qualified spiritual master also. This is also the instruction of Sri Chaitanya *Mahaprabhu*. [...]

However, a Vaisnava *brahmana* is not selected on the basis of his birth but according to his qualities. Unfortunately, those who are unintelligent do not know the difference between a *brahmana* and a Vaisnava. They are under the impression that unless one is a *brahmana* he cannot be a spiritual master. For this reason only, Sri Chaitanya *Mahaprabhu* makes the statement in this verse:

kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya
yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei 'guru' haya

If one becomes a guru, he is automatically a *brahmana*."

Thus, this purport is simply making the point that one's birth does not bar one from taking up the role of a *diksa* guru. One simply needs to know the science of Krishna. This is completely different from stating as the authors have done in introducing this purport:

"In his purports to Chaitanya Charitamrta, Srila Prabhupada quotes his own spiritual master, who directly refutes the claim that the order to become guru cannot refer to *diksa* guru"

As we have seen this purport makes no reference to the '*amara ajnaya*' ORDER but only to the QUALIFICATION that anyone who knows the science of Krishna can be a guru.

3. The '*amara ajnaya*' Verse

However our evidence for the specific application of the '*amara ajnaya*' verse (C. C. *Madhya* 7:128) as used by Srila Prabhupada, is based on two considerations:

- a. The explanation of the verse itself by Srila Prabhupada.
- b. The usage of the verse by Srila Prabhupada in relation to his disciples.

a) The Verse Itself

The actual verse is as follows:

yare dekha, tare kaha 'krsna'-upadesa
amara ajnaya guru hana tara' ei desa

TRANSLATION

"Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Sri Krishna as they are given in the *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land."

(C:C, *Madhya*, 7:128)

Now let us apply the same sort of analysis as done previously. Let us look directly before and after and also at the purports generally.

Just before this verse in the purport to the last verse - 7:127, Srila Prabhupada states:

"In the next verse Sri Chaitanya *Mahaprabhu* advises everyone to become an ideal householder by offenselessly chanting the Hare Krishna *mantra* and teaching the same principle to everyone he meets."

(Purport, 7:127)

And straight after Srila Prabhupada states:

"This is the sublime mission of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Many people come and inquire whether they have to give up family life to join the Society, but that is not our mission. One can remain comfortably in his residence. We simply request everyone to chant the *maha-mantra*: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare. Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. If one is a little literate and can read the *Bhagavad-gita* As It Is and

Srimad-Bhagavatam, that is so much the better.”

(Purport, 7:128)

Straight away we can see that the context is becoming a PREACHER or *siksa* guru. It should be clear just from this that “to become an ideal householder”, “One can remain comfortably in his residence”, “If one is a LITTLE literate”, are not the phrases that are associated with becoming a *diksa* guru who takes disciples and has a formal guru-disciple relationship with them. Neither is teaching ‘everyone to become an ideal householder’ the sum and substance of acting as a *diksa* guru.

As we look further the nature of the guru being described becomes even clearer:

“Instead of living engrossed in material activities, people throughout the world should take advantage of this movement and chant the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* at home with their families. One should also refrain from sinful activities—illicit sex, meat-eating, gambling and intoxication. Out of these four items, illicit sex is very sinful. Every person must get married. Every woman especially must get married. If the women outnumber the men, some men can accept more than one wife. In that way there will be no prostitution in society. If men can marry more than one wife, illicit sex life will be stopped. One can also produce many nice preparations to offer Krishna—grain, fruit, flowers and milk. Why should one indulge in unnecessary meat-eating and maintain horrible slaughterhouses? What is the use of smoking and drinking tea and coffee? People are already intoxicated by material enjoyment, and if they indulge in further intoxication, what chance is there for self-realization? Similarly, one should not partake in gambling and unnecessarily agitate the mind. The real purpose of human life is to attain the spiritual platform and return to Godhead. That is the summum bonum of spiritual realization. The Krishna consciousness movement is trying to elevate human society to the perfection of life by pursuing the method described by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in His advice to the *brahmana* Kurma. That is, one should stay at home, chant the Hare Krishna *mantra* and preach the instructions of Krishna as they are given in the *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.” (Madhya 7:128, Purport)

Notice how just as in our analysis of *Madhya* 8:128, Srila Prabhupada gave the ‘essence’ of the verse as the last sentence in the purport, again Srila Prabhupada has done that here - ‘pursuing the method described here by Lord Chaitanya,’ ‘becoming Guru,’ involves staying at home, chanting, and preaching. In the next two purports Srila Prabhupada elaborates on this and adds:

“One only has to follow the instruction of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, chant the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* and instruct relatives and friends in the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.”

(Madhya, 7:130)

Thus we can see that staying at home, chanting and instructing whatever little you may know to your close associates is a prescription only for preachers/*siksa* gurus. It is not describing taking up the formal process of *diksa* guru as practised in ISKCON. The whole thrust of the purport should make this clear where Srila Prabhupada speaks favourably about POLYGAMY. He speaks more of this than ‘becoming guru,’ a phrase not even repeated in the purport. Yet, we do not see how everyone taking more than one wife is the normal way to ‘become a *diksa* guru’! Just in case anyone has any doubts that it is PREACHERS only that are being spoken of and NOT *diksa* gurus, Srila Prabhupada states:

“It is best not to accept any disciples.”

(Madhya, 7:130, Purport)

To accept disciples is the very purpose of the *diksa* guru.

And then at the end of this verse Srila Prabhupada gives his conclusion to all the 3 verses:

“To protect His preachers, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has given much clear advice in these verses of Sri Chaitanya-caritamṛta.”

(Madhya, 7:130, Purport)

One point of this ‘clear advice’ is that it is ‘BEST not to accept ANY disciples’. Not SOME, or TOO many, but ANY.

To follow the order to ‘become guru,’ according to Srila Prabhupada means:

1. Stay in your position, and stay at home. Get married, chant, instruct your family and friends in the *Bhagavad Gita*.
2. To not accept any disciples. Further, please note what is NOT said here:
3. One must first get initiated by a spiritual master.
4. Wait till that spiritual master leaves the planet before executing this instruction.

Item 1) would be a very unusual way to describe the process of becoming a *diksa* guru. Items 2, 3 and 4 make it clear that we are NOT talking about *diksa* gurus.

Just the context of the verse should have made it clear that Lord Chaitanya was simply giving an instruction as to how best one can practice Krishna Consciousness at home, and not become a guru that will take disciples. The *brahmin* Kurma wants to leave home and travel with Lord Chaitanya, but Lord Chaitanya tells him not to speak like that but instead to ‘become a guru’ and

TRY and liberate everyone. He never advises the *Brahmin* to first take *diksa* from him, or that he should wait until the Lord has completed his pastime before he can take up this instruction. Nor does he make any reference to the nature of the instruction changing once Lord Chaitanya has left the planet.

b) Srila Prabhupada's Usage of the Order

It may be argued that when Srila Prabhupada repeated the order to his disciples, outside of his books, he may have modified it to mean *diksa* for his disciples. Yet an analysis of Srila Prabhupada's use of this verse merely confirms the above principles, for when he does use it, we often find 3 characteristics:

He will use it when addressing large crowds that invariably contained uninitiated persons. He makes no reference to one needing to first be initiated formally in order to execute the instruction to preach and 'be guru'.

He will use it in the present tense. Further, no reference is ever made when issuing the instruction that they MUST all wait for his departure before acting on the instruction. Rather one is expected to act on the instruction immediately - this is a fatal blow to the GBC's case since they are using the 'law of disciplic succession' as their main evidence. By this very same law, all these uses of Lord Chaitanya's order are also eliminated.

The instruction is given in the context of the most minimal qualification possible, with everyone and anyone exhorted to execute the instruction, even children.

Many examples are there, since the order to 'be guru' in this context was given many times, but just a couple of examples will make this clear:

"That is Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's mission. He said, "Every one of become guru and deliver your surrounding persons, either you are in family or in neighbourhood or in society or in nation, as much as you can." *Amara ajnaya guru hana tara' ei desa*. So whatever limited circle, you just become guru and deliver them. [...] Very simple thing. If I say that "My father said, 'This is a bell,'" I am correct because I have learned it from my father, authority. I may be fool, rascal. It doesn't matter. But because I have learned it from the authority and presenting it that "This is a bell," this is perfect. [...] Similarly, our position is that "We have got a message from Krishna. Take it." So we have no difficulty. Anyone can say. If you study *Bhagavad-gita* nicely, assimilate and repeat it, it will act. Krishna says, *man-mana bhava mad-bhakto mad-yaji mam namaskuru*. We are teaching that "You always think of Krishna. You become a devotee. You worship Him and offer your obeisances." It doesn't require that you become very learned scholar. Anyone can do. A child can do. That's it. We are teaching. Where is the difficulty? Hm? Is there any difficulty? Why don't you do that? Why you are making so big, big program without any effect? Take the simple thing, program, and preach everywhere. That is being done."

(Room Conversation, 11/5/77, Hrisikesh)

"Therefore Chaitanya Mahaprabhu... *Yare dekha tare kaha 'krsna'-upadesa*: "You become guru. No qualification required. Simply you repeat what Krishna has said." Just see how simplified. Don't talk anything nonsense. *Yare dekha tare kaha 'krsna'--bas*. So who cannot do it? Anyone can do it, even a child. (laughs) Our Syamasundara's daughter. She was preaching, "Do you know Krishna?" They said, "No I have got no..." "The Supreme Personality." This is preaching, simply if you say that "Krishna is the Supreme Personality, supreme controller. Just be obedient to Him." Where is the difficulty? Anyone can preach. Chant Hare Krishna. Bas. Three words: Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead; surrender unto Him; and chant Hare Krishna. Your life will be successful. What is the difficulty in preaching these three words? Hm? Is there any difficulty? Even a child like Sarasvati, she can preach. Then what to speak of others? Those who are educated, grown-up, advanced, they can put the matter more nicely, more convincingly, more philosophically. That is another thing. But these three words, that "Krishna is the Supreme Lord; you are servant; and chant Hare Krishna"--bas, preaching complete. Very simple thing and the sublime instruction. Everyone can become guru by simply teaching these three words."

(Room Conversation, 25/1/77)

This is not talking about becoming a *diksa* guru, but simply a preacher.

The authors have tried to use the following quote to demonstrate that Lord Chaitanya's order can also apply to *diksa*:

"The first qualification is that he must be able to carry out the order of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Then he becomes guru. So that carrying out the order of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu depends on one's personal capacity. *Amara ajnaya guru hana*."

(June 21st, 1972, Los Angeles)

The authors argue that the presence of the word 'capacity' must mean that:

"become a guru, but if you cannot become *diksa* guru become *siksa* guru or *vartma-pradasaka* guru, but somehow tell people about Krishna."

(Prabhupada's Order, Section 4)

Apart from the fact that the above is not stated anywhere and is just the invention of the authors, the concept of capacity is just as applicable to preaching, since the quality and quantity of one's preaching will determine to what extent the order has been carried out. For instance in the example above involving the child Sarasvati, the next thing Srila Prabhupada states is that the level to which one has realised those words will determine that person's success. Another example:

"This time I have requested all Nairobi important friends that "Now you take *sannyasa* and become guru. Krishna Chaitanya 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."

(Morning Walk, 3/11/75)

Here Srila Prabhupada is requesting some 'friends' of his to become gurus and 'deliver' the people in Africa. This is something he is asking them to do right away in Srila Prabhupada's presence. He has not told them to wait until he departs before undertaking this task.

4. Confirmation from His Holiness Hrdayananda Goswami Maharaja

That the points made by us above are philosophically correct and self-evident is further corroborated by the fact that even H.H. Hrdayananda Maharaja, one of the authors of this paper, agrees with us on this issue. Though Maharaja does not as yet agree at all with *TFO* (we hasten to add), he nevertheless sees that we need to actually stick with quotes that clearly deal with *diksa*, and not just general quotes dealing with acting as 'guru', which do not refer to either a formal *diksa* or indeed even formal *siksa* relationships.

I had an e-mail exchange with him on the subject of evidence for Srila Prabhupada ordering gurus, and the following exchange transpired:

KRISHNAKANT:

"What my ANALYSIS shows is that there ARE instances where Srila Prabhupada talks of either *Siksa* OR *Diksa*. I agree it is wrong to ASSUME anything. Specifically there are occasions where Srila Prabhupada can ONLY be referring to *Siksa*. I will state four of these circumstances:

- Where the order for guruship is given in the present tense - Srila Prabhupada has clearly stated that one should not become a *diksa* guru unless he has left the planet.
- When the order for guruship is given to persons who are not yet initiated - Srila Prabhupada states that one would at least need to be his initiated disciple to become a *diksa* guru.
- When the order for guruship is given in conjunction with the '*amara ajnaya*' verse since a relevant purport states 'It is best not accept disciples' - this is counter to the whole purpose of being a *diksa* guru.
- When the order for guruship requires a very minimal level of advancement, such as stating that even children can do it etc., since Srila Prabhupada has stated that ONLY a *maha-bhagavata* can become a *Diksa* GURU - this quote is given in the Final Order."

(E-mail sent by myself to Hrdyananda Maharaja on 13/8/97 at 11.09 a.m.)

Maharaja then replied on the same day:

"What you would have to show here is that in these 4 circumstances, Srila Prabhupada states that one can or should become a *siksha* guru. If he says simply "become a guru", then guru can be taken to mean a teacher, the literal sense of the word. In the case of *siksha* and *diksha*, there is a stage in which one formally accepts a guru and enters into a guru-disciple relationship. Followers of Sridhara Swami of the Gaudiya Matha used to quote Prabhupada as saying that Sridhara Swami was his "*siksa* guru". But as we know, Prabhupada never entered into a formal guru-disciple relationship with Sridhara Swami. There are other instances in which we can see the word guru being used to mean a teacher of Krishna consciousness. On the other hand, Bhaktivinoda Thakur accepted Jagannatha Das Babaji as his *siksha* guru, and his main guru. Thus the "four cases" you mentioned would not apply to such a primary guru-disciple relationship, on the level of *siksha* or *diksha*."

(E-mail sent by Hrdayananda Maharaja to myself on 13/8/97 at 16.55p.m.)

I then replied agreeing with Maharaja that I was using '*siksa*' in the loose sense as teacher/preacher/ *vartma-pradaksa* guru and not in the sense of the formal self-realised *siksa* guru:

There are two kinds of instructing spiritual masters. One is the liberated person fully absorbed in meditation in devotional service, and the other is he who invokes the disciple's spiritual consciousness by means of relevant instructions.

(C:C Adi, 1:47)

Nevertheless, as shown, Maharaja fully agreed that the '4' circumstances, which include the '*amara ajnaya*' verse and other quotes, do not refer to *diksa*. In fact once you eliminate the '4' circumstances above, you are indeed left with the handful of quotes from personal letters that mention departure and initiating, which we have already dealt with both here and in the other papers mentioned.

5. Evidence from H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja

PO, as we have seen, relies in part on the understanding of H.H. Tamal Krishna Maharaja regarding what happened in 1977. It is interesting to note that at that time to support his understanding, Maharaja also gave an explanation of the 'amara ajnaya' verse that concurs fully with our view:

"There is a second definition of *acharya* and that is 'one who teaches by his example'. It is with this meaning in mind that Srila Prabhupada stated very often that all of his disciples should be qualified *acharyas*. It is also this meaning in which Sri Chaitanya *Mahaprabhu's* instruction to the householder brahmin was given on his tour of South India:

"Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Krishna as they are given in *Bhagavad Gita* and *Srimad Bhagavatam*. In this way, become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land."

(*Madhya Lila*, 7:128).

These statements by Srila Prabhupada and Sri Chaitanya *Mahaprabhu* certainly cannot be applied to the first meaning of *acharya* as given above. NEITHER CAN IT BE APPLIED TO THE THIRD MEANING (one who INITIATES), since Srila Prabhupada did in fact directly appoint 11 *acharyas* as will clearly be shown."

(Letter to Upananda Das, 13/12/78)

Should the authors of *PO* try to avoid the above damaging testimony (which fully supports our understanding of the 'amara' verse) by arguing that Maharaja's previous understanding of the July 9th letter, and the events that occurred in 1977, were actually awry. They would also be forced to accept the following:

1. Any attempt to use Maharaja's testimony as some type of reliable record of Srila Prabhupada's intentions in 1977 will severely lack credibility, since the authors of *PO* would simultaneously have to concede that even at the time in question the Maharaja had no clear grasp of the facts.
2. It will also undermine the claims of the authors that the '11', of whom Maharaja was one, were 'selected' to be initiating gurus by Srila Prabhupada, since they would now be forced into preaching that Maharaja was not even qualified enough to understand a basic aspect of Krishna Conscious philosophy as found in the *Chaitanya Caritamrta*. Rather he gave the totally OPPOSITE meaning to that which the authors of *PO* allege is the case.

6. Summary

The instruction found in *Madhya* 8:128 refers to the general instruction that one's ability to be a guru is not hindered by one's birth, and thus the word 'guru' is equally applicable to becoming *diksa* guru as long as one knows the science of Krishna Consciousness and is qualified. Whether or not one is a *brahmin* by birth is irrelevant.

This understanding becomes very clear when one actually studies the sections of the quote that were OMITTED by the authors.

The order given by Lord Chaitanya to the *Brahmin* Kurma, often repeated by Srila Prabhupada to his disciples, refer to preaching and spreading Krishna Consciousness. This is proven by both a study of the purports to the verse and by Srila Prabhupada's issuing of the order to his disciples.

Further, TWO of the authors of this very paper - H.H. Hrdayananda and Tamala Krishna Maharajas have also agreed with this understanding.

APPENDIX 2 - "Already Answered Quotes"

Throughout *PO* the authors present many quotes. However most of these quotes have no relevance to the issue at hand - evidence for 'modifications a and b' as presented in *TFO* - which authorise the *ritviks* appointed by Srila Prabhupada to turn into *diksa* gurus immediately upon his departure. They do present around 5-6 quotes which do deal with the issue of Srila Prabhupada's disciples acting as gurus upon his departure, and thus could be said to at least have relevance to the issue under discussion. However, these do not provide the evidence required, and were infact already answered in previous papers. Thus, the authors have merely recycled already defeated arguments. We reproduce here from our previous papers the response to these half dozen quotes, which constitute the principal evidence, offered by the authors in *PO*. Please note that for completeness we answer more quotes than offered by *PO*, and we also offer other quotes presented in *PO* which do not address 'Modifications A & B'.

First, we begin with the evidence from the 'Final Order' itself:

There were a handful of overly confident devotees, anxious to initiate their own disciples in Srila Prabhupada's presence, whom Srila Prabhupada wrote letters to. These letters are sometimes used to support the M.A.S.S.. Srila Prabhupada had a fairly standard approach when dealing with such ambitious individuals. Generally, he told them to keep rigidly trained up, and in the future, after his physical departure, they may accept disciples:

“The first thing, I warn Acyutananda, do not try to initiate. You are not in a proper position now to initiate anyone. [...] Don’t be allured by such maya. I am training you all to become future spiritual masters, but do not be in a hurry.”

(SP Letter to Acyutananda and Jaya Govinda, 21/8/68)

“Sometime ago you asked my permission for accepting some disciples, now the time is approaching very soon when you will have many disciples by your strong preaching work.”

(SP Letter to Acyutananda, 16/5/72)

“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.”

(SP Letter to Hansadutta, 1/10/74)

“Keep trained up very rigidly and then you are bonafide Guru, and you can accept disciples on the same principle. But as a matter of etiquette it is the custom that during the lifetime of your spiritual master you bring the prospective disciples to him, and in his absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without any limitation. This is the law of disciplic succession. I want to see my disciples become bonafide spiritual master and spread Krishna Consciousness very widely, that will make me and Krishna very happy.”

(SP Letter to Tusta Krishna, 2/12/75)

It is interesting to note that whilst GII quotes the above ‘law’ in support of the M.A.S.S. doctrine, in the very SAME document it is asserted that it is actually not a law at all:

“There are many such instances in the scriptures about disciples giving initiation in the presence of the guru, [...] In the scriptures there is no specific instruction about a disciple not giving initiation when his guru is present.”

(GII, p. 23)

Eagerness to accept worship and followers is actually a disqualification for a spiritual master. We can only marvel at the power of the false ego, that even in the presence of the most powerful *acharya* the planet had ever seen, some personalities still felt amply qualified to initiate their own disciples right under Srila Prabhupada’s nose! It is apparent that in writing to these devotees, telling them they could take disciples if they just held on a little longer, Srila Prabhupada was simply trying to keep them in devotional service. In so doing there was at least the possibility that, in time, their ambitious mentalities might become purified:

Humble devotees who diligently performed their service in selfless sacrifice to their spiritual master would never have received a letter describing their glowing future as *diksa* gurus. Why would Srila Prabhupada only seriously promise *diksa* guruship to those who were most ambitious, and hence least qualified?

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.

Another letter which is quoted to support the M.A.S.S. states:

“By 1975, all of those who have passed all of the above examinations will be specifically empowered to initiate and increase the number of the Krishna Consciousness population.”

(SP Letter to Kirtanananda, 12/1/69)

Does the above statement validate the termination of the final order on initiation?

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 *acharya* in his own guru’s physical presence. Since this was the ‘law’, clearly the above letter could not be referring to Srila Prabhupada’s disciples initiating on their own behalf: Srila Prabhupada was still on the planet in 1975. We can therefore only conclude that he was already contemplating some sort of ‘officiating’ initiation system as early as 1969. As it turned out by 1975 Srila Prabhupada had indeed ‘empowered’, or authorised, devotees such as Kirtanananda to chant on beads and conduct initiations on his behalf. The above letter appears then to be predicting the future use of representatives for the purpose of initiation. Later he called these representatives ‘*ritviks*’, and formalised their function in the July 9th order. Again, it would be foolhardy to suggest that Srila Prabhupada was actually authorising Kirtanananda to act as a *sampradaya* initiating *acharya* just as long as he passed a few exams.

“Anyone following the order of Lord Chaitanya under the guidance of His bona fide representative can become a spiritual master, and I wish that in my absence all my disciples become the bona fide spiritual master to spread Krishna Consciousness throughout the whole world.”

(SP Letter to Madhusudana, 2/11/67)

Using the quote above, it has been argued that since Srila Prabhupada mentions his disciples becoming spiritual masters in

his absence, he must have been referring to *diksa*, since they were already *siksa* gurus. However, Srila Prabhupada may simply have been reiterating his general encouragement for all his disciples to become good *siksa* spiritual masters, and that they should continue becoming good *siksa* spiritual masters also in his absence. There is definitely no mention in the above quote of his disciples initiating or accepting their own disciples. The term 'bona fide spiritual master to spread Krishna Consciousness throughout the whole world' is equally applicable to a *siksa* guru.

Even if such letters as these did allude to some other type of guru system, they still could not be used to modify the final July 9th order since these instructions were not repeated to the rest of the Movement. The letters in question were not even published until 1986. It is occasionally alleged that some of these personal letters were leaked out to other members of the Society. This may or may not have been the case, but the important point to note is that the mechanics of such distribution appears never to have been set up or personally approved by Srila Prabhupada. We have seen no evidence that Srila Prabhupada ever ordered his private correspondence to be distributed to all and sundry. He once casually suggested his letters could be published 'if there was time', but he never intimated that without these documents no-one would know how to properly operate the M.A.S.S. on his departure.

To form a case regarding what should have been done in 1977, one can only use evidence that was readily available in an authorised form at that time. If such letters really held the key to how he planned initiations to be run for up to ten thousand years, surely Srila Prabhupada would have made their publication, and mass distribution, a matter of utmost urgency. There was, after all, the reasonable possibility that not all his leaders had read his private correspondence, and as a result gained a clear understanding of precisely how initiations were to run after his departure. We know this to be more than a possibility since the entire GBC still had no idea what Srila Prabhupada was planning as late on as May 28th, 1977. (please see Appendices)

In light of the above, any attempt to modify the July 9th order on the basis of these handful of letters can only be deemed recklessly inappropriate. Had such letters been vital appendices to his final order then Srila Prabhupada would certainly have made that clear in the order itself, or in some accompanying document. In the end, the only position granted to anyone as far as initiations were concerned, was as representatives of the *acharya, ritviks*.

Finally we shall look at category 3)

There are various statements in Srila Prabhupada's books and lectures, which have been extracted to justify the disbanding of the *ritvik* system. We shall now examine this evidence.

In Srila Prabhupada's books, all we find are the qualifications of a *diksa* guru stated in general terms. There is no specific mention of his own disciples continuing to go on to become *diksa* gurus. Rather, the quotes merely reiterate the point that one must be highly qualified and authorised before even attempting to become *diksa* guru:

"One who is now the disciple is the next spiritual master. And one cannot be a bona fide and authorised spiritual master unless one has been strictly obedient to his spiritual master."

(S.B. 2.9.43, purport)

The above injunction hardly gives carte-blanche for anyone to initiate just because their guru has left the planet. The concept of the guru leaving the planet is not even mentioned here. Only the idea that they must be authorised and have been strictly obedient. We also know that they must have first attained the platform of *maha-bhagavata*. There are other occasions, outside of Srila Prabhupada's personal letters, which are quoted as giving authorisation for his disciples to become *diksa* gurus:

"Now, tenth, eleventh, twelfth. My Guru Maharaja is tenth from Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, I am eleventh, you are the twelfth. So distribute this knowledge."

(SP Arrival Lecture, 18/5/72, Los Angeles)

"At the same time, I shall request them all to become spiritual master . Every one of you should be spiritual master next."

(SP Vyasa-Puja address, 5/9/69, Hamburg)

The first quote clearly mentions that Srila Prabhupada's disciples are already the twelfth - 'you ARE the twelfth'. Thus, this is not some authorisation for them to become *diksa* gurus in the future, but merely a statement that they are already carrying on the message of the *parampara*. The second quote is in a similar vein. It undoubtedly mentions that his disciples are next in line. But as the first quote states, that succession had already taken place by dint of the disciple's vigorous preaching. Either way, there is no clear explicit order to take disciples, but simply to preach. Just because he was asking his disciples to become spiritual masters next, does not mean he wanted them to become initiating spiritual masters next. To insist that he did mean this is pure speculation.

To argue that such statements must override the final order is insupportable, and easily counteracted by quoting other statements made by Srila Prabhupada, in relation to what would happen after his departure, which completely contradict the proposition being made:

Reporter: What will happen to the movement in the United States when you die?

Srila Prabhupada: I will never die

Devotees: Jaya! Haribol! (laughter)

Srila Prabhupada: I will live from my books and you will utilise.

(SP Press Conference, 16/7/75, San Francisco)

Here was a clear opportunity for Srila Prabhupada to lay out his plans for the M.A.S.S. were that to be his intention. But instead of stating that his disciples will succeed him as *diksa* gurus, he says he shall never die, and his books will do the necessary. From the above exchange it can be understood Srila Prabhupada is a living spiritual master who continues to impart transcendental knowledge (the main constituent of *diksa*) through his books; and that this will continue for as long as ISKCON exists. The role of his disciples being to facilitate the process.

“Don’t become premature *acharya*. First of all follow the orders of *acharya*, and you become mature. Then it is better to become *acharya*. Because we are interested in preparing *acharya*, but the etiquette is at least for the period the guru is present, one should not become *acharya*. Even if he is complete he should not, because the etiquette is, if somebody comes for becoming initiated, it is the duty of such person to bring that prospective candidate to his *acharya*.”

(SP C.c. Lecture, 6/4/75, Mayapur)

The quote above does mention the principle of his disciples possibly going on to become *acharya*. However, the whole emphasis is that they should not do it now. In fact, Srila Prabhupada only seems to mention the principle of his disciples becoming *acharya*, if he is cautioning them not to do it in his presence. This is in a similar vein to the personal letters mentioned above. This is clearly not a specific order for any particular individuals to take their own disciples, but rather a general statement of principle. As will be seen later, on the ‘Appt. tape’ (p.21), which is used in *GII* as principal evidence for the M.A.S.S. system, Srila Prabhupada still had not given the *diksa* guru order even as late as May, 1977 (“On my order, [...] But by my order, [...] When I order”). And this situation remained unchanged until his departure. Furthermore, later on in the same lecture, he encourages his disciples to channel these *acharya* ambitions in the following manner:

“And to become *acharya* is not very difficult. [...] *amara ajnaya guru hana tara ei desa, yare dekha tare kaha krsna-upadesa*: “By following My order, you become guru.” [...] Then, in future... suppose you have got now ten thousand. We shall expand to hundred thousand. That is required. Then hundred thousand to million; and million to ten million.”

(SP C.c. Lecture, 6/4/75, Mayapur)

It has already been demonstrated that Lord Chaitanya’s instruction was for everyone to preach vigorously, make lots of Krishna conscious followers, but not to take disciples. This point is re-inforced where Srila Prabhupada encourages his disciples to make many more devotees. It is significant that Srila Prabhupada states “suppose you have got now ten thousand...” (i.e. in Srila Prabhupada’s presence). From this, it is clear he is talking about Krishna conscious followers, not ‘disciples of his disciples’, since the main point of the lecture was that they should not initiate in his presence. The implication being then, that just as at that time there may have been around ten thousand followers of Krishna Consciousness, so in the future millions more would be added. The *ritvik* system was to ensure that when these followers became suitably qualified for initiation, they could receive *diksa* from Srila Prabhupada, just as they could when he gave the above lecture. (“**The Final Order**”, p12-15)

Next we quote from

‘Best Not To Accept Disciples’

a reply to ‘Timeless Order (TO):

“Every one of us should become spiritual master because the world is in blazing fire... Spiritual master is not a new invention. It is simply following the orders of the spiritual master. So all my students present here who are feeling so much obliged... I am also obliged to them because they are helping me in this missionary work. At the same time, I shall request them all to become spiritual master. Every one of you should be spiritual master next. And what is their duty? Whatever you are hearing from me, whatever you are learning from me, you have to distribute the same in toto without any addition or alteration. Then all of you become spiritual master. That is the science of becoming spiritual master.”

(Vyasa-puja address, Hamburg, 5 September, 1969. T.O. p.9)

The authors of T.O. believe this quote proves beyond any doubt that Srila Prabhupada was ordering his disciples to become *diksa* gurus after his departure. In reality, it contributes nothing to T.O.’s thesis for the following reasons:

1. There is no clear mention by Srila Prabhupada of his physical disappearance in relation to his disciples acting as guru; an absolute must in any quote which is supposed to be dealing with initiations after Srila Prabhupada’s departure. The dictionary definition of the word ‘next’ is not ‘after my departure’.
2. There is absolutely no mention of the term ‘*diksa*’, or the term ‘initiation’, again a vital pre-requisite for any evidence which is supposed to displace the final July 9th order, since that order specifically sets out the system for *diksa* initiation to be followed henceforward within ISKCON.

‘...this quote once again must refer to *diksa* gurus and not *siksa* gurus, since Srila Prabhupada had already explicitly mentioned the help he was receiving from his disciples in “missionary work”.

(T.O. p.9)

3. The above argument is quite irrational. When outlining the activities of these ‘spiritual masters’ Srila Prabhupada says:

‘And what is their duty? Whatever you are hearing from me, whatever you are learning from me, you have to distribute the same in toto without addition or alteration. Then all of you become spiritual master.’

(Vyasa-puja address, Hamburg, 5 September, 1969. T.O. p.9)

Since the above also comes after his reference to ‘missionary work’, are we also to take it that the above activities cannot in any way apply to *siksa* gurus, but only to *diksa*? Let us break this argument down further. There are two choices on offer here.

Either-

The above activities can not apply to missionary activities (since these refer to *siksa* and have already been mentioned).

Or

They do apply to missionary activities.

If we choose option a) then one might ask what sort of preaching these so-called spiritual masters, are doing, if not giving in ‘toto’ that which they have received from their own spiritual master?

If we go for option b) then Srila Prabhupada may still be describing the activities of *siksa* gurus, even though- heaven help us- such elucidation occurs after he mentions the term ‘missionary work’. The activities described are, after all, quite typical of a *siksa* guru.

Clearly a) must be false, in which case Srila Prabhupada can be seen to be outlining for these aspiring *siksa* gurus how they will most effectively carry out their missionary activities, namely by repeating what they have been taught without addition or alteration.

Certainly, there is no logic in T.O.’s assertion that Srila Prabhupada must be talking only about *diksa* gurus in the latter half of the quote, purely by dint of the fact that he had already mentioned missionary work in the first half!

Quote number 2:

“...I am very much hopeful that my disciples who are now participating today, even if I die, my movement will not stop. I am very much hopeful, yes. All these nice boys and girls who have taken so seriously... You will have to become spiritual master... you... all my disciples... So it is not very difficult. One may not think that, ‘I am not qualified to become guru. ‘no! You are qualified! If you follow strictly the *parampara* system, then you are qualified. That’s all. *Amara ajnaya* guru. And what is the difficulty. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu says don’t feel any difficulty. Because as spiritual master what you have to do? *Yare dekha, tare kaha ‘Krishna’ upadesa. Whomever you meet you simply speak to him the instruction which Krishna gives.”*

(Vyasa-Puja address, London, 22 August, 73. T.O.p.9)

The above quote cannot be used to supplant or modify the final order for the following reasons:

1. There is absolutely no mention of the terms ‘*diksa*’ or ‘initiation’. These are essential elements since that is what is under debate, namely who is supposed to be the *diksa*, or initiating spiritual master within ISKCON. We all accept that everyone should be a ‘spiritual master’, that is not what is at issue.
2. In relation to the type of spiritual master Srila Prabhupada is referring to, we note that once again he uses the famous ‘*amara*’ verse which, as previously demonstrated, he taught us refers only to instructing guru, not initiating: ‘It is best not to accept any disciples.’
3. Srila Prabhupada does make reference to his physical departure where he says ‘even I die’, but this does not prove that he could only be referring to *diksa*, since it is also possible to continue as an instructing guru when the spiritual master leaves. In fact the vast majority of Srila Prabhupada’s disciples are doing precisely that. No-one is suggesting that their activities as instructing gurus is in any way a violation of the above quote, or somehow only second-rate, so presumably our interpretation is correct. (As an aside we see Srila Prabhupada is ordering his boys and girls to act as spiritual master. If this can only mean *diksa*, how is it that after twenty years we do not have even one single female *diksa* guru? The GBC do not seem to have the courage of their convictions on this point).

To clarify this point on references to disappearance in relationship with guruhood, we would like to make the following points:

- The mention of disappearance does not only imply *diksa* guru.
- *Siksa* gurus can operate during the appearance and disappearance of the initiating *acharya*.
- Srila Prabhupada stated that *diksa* gurus could only operate after the disappearance of the initiating *acharya*.

- Thus the only definite principle in all this is that *diksa* gurus cannot operate during the physical presence of their own *diksa* guru, (at least as far as Srila Prabhupada was concerned).

Quote number 3:

Srila Prabhupada: Everyone of us (is) messiah. Anyone Krishna conscious, he's the messiah. Everyone. Why...? All of us *Gaurangera bhakta-gane, jane jane sakti dbari, brahmando tari sakti*: 'The devotee of Lord Chaitanya, everyone has so immense power that everyone, they can deliver the whole universe. *Gaurangera bhakta-gane, jane jane sakti...*, *brahmando tari...* That is Gauranga's men.

Devotee: Only you are that powerful, Srila Prabhupada. We're like...

Srila Prabhupada: Why are you not? You are my disciples.

Devotees: We're like bugs.

Srila Prabhupada: 'Like father, like son.' You should be. *Gaurangera-bhakta...jane*. Everyone. Therefore, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, *amara ajnaya guru hana tara ei desa*. He asked everyone, 'Just become guru.' Follow his instruction. You become guru. *Amara ajnaya*. 'What I say, you do. You become guru.' Where is the difficulty? (Morning Walk, 13 April 1977, Bombay. T.O. p.11.)

The above quote cannot be used to supplant or modify the final order for the following reasons:

Srila Prabhupada once more defines the type of guru by using the 'amara' verse. As we have shown this can only refer to *siksa*.

There is absolutely no mention of the term *diksa* nor the word 'initiation', so once more the quote can have no direct relevance to the central issue of contention, namely the intended process for *diksa* initiation within ISKCON.

There is no mention of Srila Prabhupada's disappearance needing to occur before guru activities commence- the order being immediate- therefore he can only be referring to *siksa*.

'Messiah' is a Hebrew word- meaning 'deliverer of Jews'(Oxford English Dictionary)- not a scientific Sanskrit term, so it is pushing it a bit for T.O. to state categorically that 'messiah must mean *diksa* guru' (T.O.p.12). Certainly such a definition is never given by Srila Prabhupada. It would also severely contradict their own position if it did mean this since, according to Christian scholars expert in the Hebrew scriptures, Jesus is still the messiah, and therefore by the GBC's own argument still a *diksa* guru, even though he is no longer on the planet! Srila Prabhupada also taught that Jesus can deliver his disciples even now (quotes given in 'The Final Order' p.32). Either way our position is only strengthened and the GBC's weakened through this assertion since in any case *siksa* gurus can also help deliver conditioned souls through relevant instruction. To summarise this point, either:

The word 'messiah' means *diksa* guru, in which case it is possible to accept a departed *acharya* as ones *diksa* guru since Srila Prabhupada taught that Jesus is still delivering disciples. Therefore the essence of *ritvik* philosophy is bona fide.

or

The word 'messiah' just means preaching what you have been taught, and in that way deliver your friends family and neighbours (though remember it's 'best not to accept any disciples'), in other words *siksa* guru. Therefore *ritvik* conclusion is correct.

Either way the final order still stands.

Quote number 4:

Srila Prabhupada: You become guru, but you must be qualified first of all. Then you become.(...)Yes. I shall produce some gurus. I shall say who is guru, 'Now you become *acharya*. You become authorised.' You become, all, *acharya*. I retire completely. But the training must be complete.

Devotees: "The process of purification must be there."

Srila Prabhupada: Oh yes, must be there. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu wants. *amara ajnaya guru hana*. You become guru. But be qualified. (laughs) Little thing, strictly follower.

(Room conversation-22 April, 1977, Bombay. T.O.p.12)

The above quote cannot be used to supplant or modify the final order for the following reasons:

1. Once again we have the 'amara' verse which encourages *siksa* not *diksa* activity, (unless the GBC can satisfactorily answer all of our six points under the section 'The 'amara' verse' above).
2. There is no mention of the word *diksa*, nor the term 'initiate', at least one of which would be essential elements in any evidence purporting to relate directly to Srila Prabhupada's intended system for the continuation of initiation within ISKCON.
3. There is no mention of Srila Prabhupada's physical disappearance, only 'retirement'. Therefore conversation most likely referring to *siksa* gurus or instructing *acharyas*.
4. Never mind mention of departure, the order to become guru is immediate, 'you become guru', therefore it must be *siksa* since Srila Prabhupada was still present.

The argument that Srila Prabhupada must have followed through with his 'promise' is not strong either, for at least two reasons:

- a) Srila Prabhupada mentioned other things which he eventually did not put in place, such as the setting up of the bhaktivedanta examination system in 1975 as suggested in his letter to Kirtanananda 12/1/69 (quoted in 'The Final Order' p.13).
- b) Srila Prabhupada can still give a *diksa* order at any time on any planet to any disciple he deems fit. The relationship between spiritual master and disciple is eternal once formed, and once a disciple has reached the platform of *mahabhagavata* he will be more than capable of direct communication with his predecessor *acharya*.

Furthermore, if Srila Prabhupada were referring to *diksa* gurus the GBC would still need to abandon its present M.A.S.S., since he clearly says 'I shall say who is guru'. Nowhere does he state that the GBC can 'say who is guru', so why have they been doing this since the mid-eighties? And if Srila Prabhupada was talking about *siksa*, then what he was basically saying was that in April 1977 none of his disciples were even proper *siksa* gurus. If that were the case then how are we to believe the GBC when they tell us that only one month later, on May 28th, suddenly, miraculously Srila Prabhupada discovered that there were in fact eleven fully qualified *diksa* gurus all along, including Tamal Krishna himself, the very devotee he had just been expressing his doubts to just one month previous!?

One final point here is that the concept of Srila Prabhupada needing to 'say who is guru' runs entirely counter to the concept of a 'timeless order' wafting around in the ether for anyone to just start initiating. It confirms our position that a disciple must receive personal authorisation from the predecessor *acharya* in order to be a *diksa* guru. T.O. not only contradicts its own underlying assumption, it also singularly fails to show where such authorisation ever occurred

"By 1975, all of those who have passed all of the above examinations will be specifically empowered to initiate and increase the number of the Krishna Conscious population."

(SPL to Kirtanananda, 12 January, 1968. T.O.p.7)

"I want that all of my spiritual sons and daughters will inherit this title of Bhaktivedanta, so that the family transcendental diploma will continue through the generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate disciples. Maybe by 1975 all of my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the number of generations. That is my program."

(SPL to Hansadutta, 3rd December, 1968. T.O.p.8)

The above two quotes cannot be used to replace, supplant or modify the July 9th policy document since the vast majority of the recipients of that directive would not even have known of the existence of the above letters. We offer further reasons below as to why this evidence also fails to support T.O.'s thesis, in and of itself:

Srila Prabhupada was still physically present in 1975, therefore he could only be referring to some type of representational system like *ritvik*. There is no evidence that Srila Prabhupada had serious plans to leave the planet before 1975. Otherwise Srila Prabhupada would be proposing to set up a system that violates the 'Law of Disciplic Succession'.

T.O. overlooks the possibility that by 'generations' Srila Prabhupada may have been talking in a physical sense, i.e., future generations of humanity. This is supported by the fact that in the first quote above, the phrase 'Krishna Conscious population' is used instead of 'generations'. 'Krishna Conscious population' merely means all future participants of the Krishna Consciousness movement - not only future members of the disciplic succession. The dictionary definition of the word 'generations' is not 'disciplic succession'. In any case, the whole argument falls flat since nothing even approaching a M.A.S.S. type system was ever set up by Srila Prabhupada either before, during or after 1975. What did happen by 1975 is that Srila Prabhupada had empowered various individuals to carry out initiations and chant on beads etc., but on his behalf. This system was later formalised on July 9th 1977 and left to run henceforward. Perhaps it was this system that he was alluding to in the above two letters. In an attempt to reinforce their 'generations' argument T.O. quotes from another letter to Kirtanananda:

"Regarding your question about the disciplic succession coming down from Arjuna, it is just like I have got my disciples, so in the future these many disciples may have many branches of disciplic succession. So in one line of disciples we may not see another name coming from a different line. But this does not mean that person whose name does not appear was not in the disciplic succession."

(SPL to Kirtanananda, 25 January, 1969. T.O.p.8).

The above is obviously just an analogy to illustrate a point. Srila Prabhupada is merely giving an example to clear up a question raised by one of his disciples, (one whom he later appoints to act as a *ritvik* only, not a *diksa* guru). He is not saying that this will happen or should happen. In fact he uses the word 'may'. One thing is for certain, it can not be used to displace the final order since, barring one, the recipients of the order never saw the above letter.

Every student is expected to become *acharya*. *Acharya* means one who knows the scriptural injunctions and follows them practically in life, and teaches them to his disciples. I have given you *sannyasa* with the great hope that in my absence you will preach the cult throughout the world and thus become recognised by Krishna as the most sincere servant of the Lord (...) Keep trained up very rigidly and then you are *bona fide* guru, and you can accept disciples on the same principle. But as a matter of etiquette it is the custom that during the lifetime of your

spiritual master you bring the prospective disciples to him, and in his absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without any limitation. This is the law of disciplic succession.

(SPL to Tusta Krishna Swami, 2 December, 1975. T.O p.10)

Commenting on the above quote T.O. asserts:

The fact that this letter was written a mere two years after a public confirmation of the same material by Srila Prabhupada should be sufficient to disprove the idea that Srila Prabhupada was writing only to keep a disciple in line.

(T.O p10)

The so-called public confirmation referred to above has been dealt with already, it is quote number 2 above, and was shown to be non-existent. Furthermore the above quote cannot be used to replace, supplant or modify the July 9th policy document since the vast majority of the recipients of that directive would not even have known of the existence of the above letter.

For some reason the authors of T.O. seem to be oblivious here of the material facts surrounding the case of Tusta Krishna. It is not that we are unfairly painting a meek humble devotee as un-submissive and anxious for followers. It is peculiar that we should need to give a history lesson to the GBC, and going into the details of individuals spiritual anarthas is not something we like to make a habit of, (we have enough of our own to deal with). However the following evidence will show that our judgement on Tusta Krishna is not without justification - and that Srila Prabhupada was continually trying to keep him 'in line':

"Do not try to make a faction."

(SPL to Tusta Krishna, 72-12-14)

"I have heard that you are having some difficulties [...] Of course, our serving Krishna is voluntary affair, so what can I say? If you think that is the best choice, I must agree, otherwise you might go away altogether."

(SPL to Tusta Krishna, 72-12-14)

"News has come to me that you want to sell our temple to somebody else which I cannot believe. Even that you have been in charge of the New Zealand centre, now you have taken it as your personal property and you have demanded from Madhudvisa Swami the price of the temple. This is all amazing to me. I do not know what is your decision. Tusta Krishna has already left and is in Hawaii with Siddha Svarupananda Maharaja. I never believed that again you would go back to your old habits, giving up the Krishna Consciousness Movement in a whimsical way. Please do not do this mistake [...] Now all of a sudden you have changed that program and taken to your original ways? I am so much aggrieved to receive all this news. For Krishna's sake, do not do these things. I request Tusta Krishna to go back to New Zealand and take charge of your duties. Please do not leave Krishna. You will not be happy. That is my request."

(SPL to Tusta Krishna and Beharilal, 73-10-15)

"I may inform you that I have today sent the following cable to Tusta Krishna Maharaja:

'DO NOT SELL NEW ZEALAND TEMPLE TO OTHERS. IF YOU WANT MONEY I SHALL PAY TO YOU. REST ASSURED - BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI.'

(SPL to Madhudvisa, 73-10-22)

"I have not heard from Tusta Krishna or Siddha-Svarupa Goswamis nor do I know anything of their plans to return to New Zealand. Try to convince them to return to our Society and work co-operatively. That they have gone away is not good thing and it is a deviation from our line of *parampara*. Rather, avoiding faultfinding and anarchy, they should keep our standard and work maturely and not cause factions and splitting. I am not at all pleased at what they have done."

(SPL to Madhudvisa, 73-12-15)

"So far I have studied Siddhasvarupa, he is not a bad boy, but he has his own philosophy, from the very beginning."

(SPL to Paramahansa, 75-07-16) (All emphasis added)

Please note that Tusta Krishna was a follower of Siddhasvarupa who already had his own disciples before meeting Srila Prabhupada. Taking all the above into account it is clear that the above private letter (quote number 10) is simply urging an ambitious deviant disciple to at least wait until the spiritual master has left the planet before taking his own disciples. That some devotees would seek to promote this letter as generally applicable beggar's belief.

(**'Best Not To Accept Disciples'**, p9-17)

Finally we quote from the paper 'Institutional Cataclysm':

Mohsin Hassan: Yeah, the tenth. After you, is it any decision has been made who will take over?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. All of them will take over. These students, who are initiated from me, all of them will act as I am doing. Just like I have got many initiated from me, all of them will act as I am doing. Just like I have got many Godbrothers, they are all acting. Similarly, all these disciples which I am making, initiating, they are being trained to become future spiritual masters. Now, they're competent. They can, not only the swamis, even the grhasthas, they are called dasa adhikari, and brahmacaris, everyone can, whoever is initiated, he is competent to make disciples. But as a matter of etiquette they do not do so in the presence of their spiritual master. This is the etiquette.

(Detroit room conversation July 18, 1971)

General Points

3. All evidence exists only because some external circumstance prompted their release. In other words the evidence only exists because someone deviated or (in the case of Detroit) personally asked Srila Prabhupada a question. If Srila Prabhupada wanted something enacted by the whole movement, he would either get the GBC to pass a resolution, or send a letter to all his leaders. Thus the July 9th letter is in an entirely different category to the GBC's so-called modifying evidence.
4. None of this evidence was available publicly at the point of Srila Prabhupada's departure. The letters were released by 'unauthorised' behaviour in 1986; the Detroit tape was only available for the first time last year (1997) in either recorded or transcript form.
8. In the case of Room Conversations, they cannot possibly be considered a guaranteed means of relaying important policy decisions to the entire movement since:
 - a) No guarantee that any given recording would come out audibly.
 - b) No guarantee the recording would be transcribed.
 - c) No guarantee that the tapes would be listened to in time to act at the point of Srila Prabhupada's departure.
 - d) Even if the tapes were listened to, the right devotee would need to pick out the one or two relevant sentences from literally hundreds of tapes in order to obtain instructions on how to manage initiations within ISKCON.
 - e) There is no single example of Srila Prabhupada issuing important directives simply through some casual chat with visitors, or private letters to problem disciples.

With such serious unpredictable hurdles, it is unreasonable to assume that information given in private letters or lecture/morning walk/ room conversations, and which is not then repeated in his books or instructions to the whole society, is intended to be used to modify an order which was issued to the entire Movement.

9. It is unbelievable that anyone would direct a massive world-wide organisation by telling a few people something, but omit to ask them to tell everyone else. Would Srila Prabhupada say something to a one time visitor (Detroit), then rely on the tape being audibly recorded; then rely on it being accurately transcribed; then count on all his disciples subscribing to the BBT tape ministry, then hope against hope they all listen to the important bit before he leaves the planet - and as a result develop the correct initiation system. To argue this is pure madness.

To illustrate our point, the Detroit conversation, which is arguably the GBC's best evidence, was not available in either a recorded or transcript form until last year. How can anyone believe it contains information crucial to the running of ISKCON, or which was meant to somehow displace an order which was sent to the entire movement in 1977?

With regards to the Detroit room conversation, had Srila Prabhupada said in 1971 that none of his disciples would ever be *diksa* gurus, the neophyte devotees around him may have been discouraged and left. We have already seen from the letters above that Srila Prabhupada had to write, that some of his disciples were extremely ambitious, trying to initiate after having been in the movement for just a few years; and that Srila Prabhupada was forced to check their ambition by simply encouraging them to at least wait. At that point it is unlikely they had fully grasped just how elevated the *diksa* guru actually needs to be. Even now those that are left are having a hard time understanding. Even now, some 27 years later, many of Srila Prabhupada's original followers still labour under the misconception that anyone can be a *diksa* guru as long as he has been following his initiation vows for the preceding five years. We can also see that in the same room conversation Srila Prabhupada is also endorsing the activities of his god-brothers, even though he said that they none of them were 'qualified to be *acharya*' and one year later he says that they were all 'dead men' and envious. So it is clear here that Srila Prabhupada is just giving general encouragement, since he emphasises the following points:

- a) That his grhastha disciples are just as qualified as his sannyasis.
- b) That ALL of his disciples are 'competent' to become *diksa* gurus.
- c) That anyone who is simply 'initiated' is automatically 'competent' to become a *diksa* guru.

- d) That even at that time - 1971- they were ALL already qualified to become fully-fledged *diksa* gurus - 'NOW, they're competent'.

Otherwise, we have to seriously accept that Srila Prabhupada is stating that:

- That anyone just by being initiated is qualified and authorised to become a *diksa* guru. Thus if the GBC want to take this quote literally then all of Srila Prabhupada's 10,000 disciples, men and women, should all be free regardless of their spiritual standing, to initiate without the need for the elaborate voting and 'no objection' arrangements that occur at present. Since as Srila Prabhupada states, they are 'all competent'. He does not say that they still need to be qualified. Though he does say that his disciples are being "trained to become future spiritual masters", his very next words are: "NOW, they're competent".
- Please remember that as little as one year later Srila Prabhupada had to suspend the whole GBC for gross unauthorised behaviour. Thus we can hardly accept that Srila Prabhupada had such bad judgement that in 1971 he was stating that ALL of his disciples were there and then qualified to be *Diksa* Gurus even though one year later his leading men were not even able to behave as disciples.
- The encouragement given in Detroit was never repeated to the entire movement, nor written into any GBC resolution or directive or published book. Just one mention in a conversation to a one-off visitor to a temple in 1971, and which was not in any case uncovered until twenty years after Srila Prabhupada's departure.

(Institutional Cataclysm, Appendix)

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