

Same wine in a new bottle – The position of Hansadutta Das



The great guru hoax part 1 – the zonal acharya system - had arisen immediately following the departure of Srila Prabhupada due to the false assertion that Srila Prabhupada appointed 11 Diksa Gurus via appointing them as ritviks. Srila Prabhupada's Godbrother HH Sridhara Maharaja was also approached at the time to get some 'higher authority' approval for this guru hoax. However, by the mid-1980s, this zonal acarya guru hoax had fallen into disrepute even in the eyes of the ISKCON managers who had until then supported it, and HG Ravindra Svarupa Das (RSD) was called in to 'reform' ISKCON's failing guru system. His response was to re-package the false idea that the 11 ritviks turned into Diksa Gurus via the ritvik appointment, with another false idea:

“it is reasonable to conclude that Prabhupada expected those who officiate as ritviks in his presence would continue after his disappearance as diksa-gurus under his order. [...] This final statement makes it more clear that Prabhupada intended to “select” or “recommend” some as ritvik-gurus with the expectation that after his departure they would continue as diksa-gurus. [...] Prabhupada’s rtvik appointment, therefore, indicated those whom he hoped would be able to become actual gurus; but he did not appoint them gurus.”

(Under My Order, HG Ravindra Svarupa Das, 1985)

With this sleight of hand the 'appointment' idea was discarded but those appointed ritviks could still claim that they were meant to turn into Diksa Gurus (by assuming that this was the 'expectation'). They in turn obliged being allowed to hold on to their Diksa Guru positions by authorising many more gurus via a voting system (including RSD himself and many of those who had called for him to author the above paper), and everyone was happy. And thus the great guru hoax part 2 was born.

One of the participants of the zonal acarya guru hoax part 1, which had to subsequently be slightly modified as above into the great guru hoax part 2, was His Holiness Hansadutta Swami (now dasa). However, by the time of the creation of the great guru hoax part 2, he had already fallen down into gross sense gratification and thus had been removed from his Guru position, and so was unable to continue participating in the new guru hoax. HG Hansadutta Das (HD) therefore later came up with his own adaptation of the original zonal acharya guru hoax part 1, where he effectively agreed with RSD that even though there had not been any Diksa Guru 'appointment', the original ritviks were still expected to go on to become Diksa Gurus. The only difference in HD's concoction was that there was now to be a time delay before the ritviks assumed the role of Diksa Guru, during which they would continue initiating as ritviks. However, HD's guru programme additionally re-defined the ritvik as a spiritual leader with all the effective authority of a Diksa Guru, thus ensuring that this delay in assuming full Diksa Guru status did not entail too much hardship and loss of privilege. HD's concoction was thus much more elaborate than that crafted by RSD, for now even if the 'ritvik' did not succeed in becoming a diksa guru it would not matter since a ritvik was now set up to act like a Diksa Guru anyway. It was a 'win-win' situation for a guru hoaxer. And indeed HD currently functions and initiates as such a ritvik-Diksa Guru hybrid. We can christen this variation of the original part 1 zonal acharya guru hoax, which relies on the use of the 'ritvik' position as merely a front and for Diksa Guruship, the great guru hoax part 3. Below we document HD's setting out this great guru hoax part 3. All quotes from HD will be enclosed in speech marks “ “ thus, with my comments in **bold**.

Ritvik re-defined as a Diksa Guru in waiting

“Why did Srila Prabhupada appoint *ritviks*? Because he saw his disciples unfit, immature. So like a master may give an apprentice some limited responsibility, Srila Prabhupada made some *gurus* (*ritviks*) with limited responsibility. In due course, the apprentice may become a master himself by obediently acting under his guidance.”

(Srila Prabhupada, His Movement and You, Hansadutta Das, 1994)

“The answer is that one is designated as *ritvik* because it is understood the person in question is still immature and subject to fall under the influence of the material nature. But he is being prepared or trained for perfection by giving him the office of deputy of the *acharya*, so he can gradually mature and become perfect.”

(Hansadutta Das letter to Kaliya-Krishna Das, 8th October, 1993)

“When the *ritvik* matures and understands his everlasting subordination to his spiritual master, then he is seen as a full *guru*.”

(Hansadutta Das letter to Kaliya-Krishna Das, 8th October, 1993)

“Only a pure devotee can act as a *guru*, or that is to say, Krishna reveals Himself through the pure devotee. Others are pure in that degree that they act under the direction of such a pure devotee *guru*. I think it is for this reason Prabhupada indicated his disciples “act as *ritvik*,” expecting if they would do so, in due course of time the ambition to be “*guru*” would be dissolved and thereby be fit instruments for Krishna and the *parampara* as “full *gurus* or pure devotees.”

(Hansadutta Das letter to Rahugana Prabhu: Singapore, 4th November 1993)

“I know that Prabhupada wanted his disciples to be *gurus*. He once said precisely that to me in Sweden. “I am training you to be perfect, I’m training you to be *guru*.” But on his departing, he saw the training was incomplete, so he made some conditional *gurus*, “*ritviks*,” like apprentices or on-the-job training. In fact, I used to think of it in that way, even then.”

(Hansadutta Das letter to Rahugana Das, 5th November 1993)

Just as HD originally interpreted his appointment as a ritvik as merely being a stepping stone to becoming Diksa Guru as part of the great guru hoax part 1, he has done exactly the same again as part of the great guru hoax part 3, since, as can be seen above, he still assumes he is meant to go on to become a Diksa Guru. This time he just has to wait longer, that’s all.

The Reality

Srila Prabhupada only appointed ritviks as ritviks, who would always accept disciples only for him, thus ensuring that HE alone would remain the Diksa Guru of ISKCON, and hence he did not authorise anyone, whether the ritviks or his other disciples, to replace him as the Diksa Guru for ISKCON. This lack of an order for Guruship, is conceded in both RSD’s and HD’s modified guru hoaxes, since they both rest on the speculation that it can be assumed that Srila Prabhupada ‘expected’ (as documented above) the ritviks (and others) to go on and become Diksa Gurus. However any action taken without the explicit authority of the order of the spiritual master is simply disobedience and therefore useless:

“The order of the spiritual master is the active principle in spiritual life. Anyone who disobeys the order of the spiritual master immediately becomes useless.”

(CC, Adi, 12:10)

Thus the great guru hoax part 3 is no less a hoax than the first 2 parts, since they all rest on assuming the ritvik turns into a Diksa Guru without any order from Srila Prabhupada stating this. The only difference now is that whilst the ritvik completes his Diksa Guru

'apprenticeship' he continues to initiate, as a 'ritvik' that has been re-defined to practically have the same status as a Diksa Guru, as we will see in the next section.

Ritvik re-defined as being similar to a Diksa Guru

a) Ritvik is a liberated living guru:

"Srila Prabhupada said: I don't say I am liberated. I am conditioned. But because I am following the instructions of Bhaktisiddhanta, I am liberated. This is the distinction between conditioned and liberated: when one is under the direction of a liberated person. So Srila Prabhupada's direction was: "Act as representative of the Acharya, act as *ritvik* ." We should follow that order and be liberated and thus continue the disciplic succession. The *ritvik* is also a living *guru* ." (Srila Prabhupada, His Movement and You, Hansadutta Das, 1994)

HD compares the ritvik to Srila Prabhupada. He says Srila Prabhupada is a liberated guru only because he was following his guru who was liberated. And similarly he says the ritvik is liberated because the ritvik also follows Srila Prabhupada. In this way the ritvik functions as a liberated living guru.

b) Ritvik is the person Bhagavata alternative to the Book Bhagavata:

"Direct communication is possible with the Acharya by following the guidance of his empowered representative, the *ritvik acharya* (he is the link to the disciplic succession) or simply by reading Srila Prabhupada's books. In the *Bhagavatam* Srila Prabhupada writes: There are two types of Bhagavatas, namely the book Bhagavata and the devotee Bhagavata. Both the Bhagavatas are competent remedies, and both or them or either of them can be good enough to eliminate the obstacles." (Srila Prabhupada, His Movement and You, Hansadutta Das, 1994)

HD states that a ritvik is an alternative to the books as the means to have direct communication with the acharya, and quotes the Srimad Bhagavatam referring to the person Bhagavata being the alternative to the book bhagavata. Therefore, HD is saying, that the ritvik acts in the same capacity as the person Bhagavata, which is actually the Diksa Guru.

c) Ritvik is the spiritual leader for all ISKCON members:

"But on the other hand, unqualified (not liberated) men posing as guru-acharyas is simply pretension or misrepresentation-- so how is it better? At least in the former system (*ritvik*), the neophyte follower has a standard (the Acharya and his commentaries) by which to judge the actual spiritual substance of his spiritual leader or representative of the Acharya. (Hansadutta Das letter to Rahugana Das, 4 November 1993)

"... the SAMPRADAYA ACHARYA, under whose divine lotus feet all the Vaishnava leaders (*ritvik* representatives of the *acharya*) can work harmoniously, and all the disciples in the various camps under diverse *ritvik* leadership can be as brothers and sisters of one family..." (Srila Prabhupada, His Movement and You, Hansadutta Das, 1994)

HD states ritviks will be the spiritual leaders for the movement rather than ISKCON's unauthorized diksa gurus. These new ritvik spiritual leaders will act just as the previous zonal acharya gurus did, since each ritvik will now be the spiritual leader for all the

disciples in his zone, whereas previously it was the zonal acharya (which HD was) who had this position. And similarly all these zonal ritvik leaders will combine the “disciples” to make one movement, just as the zonal acharyas did.

d) Ritvik is a guru who acts the same as a Diksa Guru, since both act as ritvik for an acharya:

“Therefore, every Guru, every Acharya would technically be a Rittvik representative of the Great Acharya Srila Vyasadeva. The Vyasa-puja day is the day the representative of Vyasa is honored by the disciples, and that representative, the Guru Acharya, sits on “the seat of Vyasa.” So under all circumstances, every devotee is a representative of the Acharya, and thus our line is a Rittvik line. Specifically, one who accepts the responsibility of initiating new disciples is therefore referred to as the “Rittvik representative of the Acharya.” He is definitely a guru, but his job description “Rittvik representative of the Acharya” helps us to remember the actual relationship and principle of the Guru parampara. Everything depends on transparency. “Things equal to the same thing are equal to one another.”

(Role of Ritvik Representatives of The Acharya, 7/1/99, Hansadutta Das)

HD states that all Diksa gurus merely act as ritviks on behalf of the acharya, Vyasadeva. Therefore everyone is a ritvik representative, and our whole parampara is just a ritvik line. HD thus creates an equivalency between the function of the ritvik and a Diksa Guru, since a ritvik similarly is also a guru that acts as a ritvik representative of behalf of the acharya, and they are ‘equal’ to the ‘same thing’, and thus ‘equal’ to one another.

e) Ritvik is a substitute guru for Srila Prabhupada; those ‘initiated’ surrender to him as ‘disciple’:

“Certainly Prabhupada made *gurus!* But seeing their immaturity, he qualified them as *ritvik* representatives of the Acharya. One certainly must have a *guru*, but to understand the calibre of one’s *guru*, the standard for judgment of measure is there in the person of the Acharya, Srila Prabhupada.”

(Srila Prabhupada, His Movement and You, Hansadutta Das, 1994)

“Now we have eccentric gurus instead of concentric gurus. That is the meaning of rittvik-guru-concentric. At the present moment we are experiencing anarchy, not hierarchy, on account of leading disciples mistakenly wanting to assume the position of the Hierarch, Srila Prabhupada, instead of acting in the concentric position-ritvik acharya-which was given to them to occupy in the hierarchy created by the Hierarch.”

(Hiearch, Hierarchy and You, Hansadutta Das, 1994)

“We want and we need a perfect person to follow: the ACHARYA, then others acting under his charge can be accepted as guides in as much as they are submissive and experienced under the authority of the ACHARYA.”

(Srila Prabhupada, His Movement and You, Hansadutta Das, 1994)

“And I am just like a monitor in the class. While the teacher is away, the senior student becomes the monitor in the class and conducts the class, gives advice. It should be understood in that way.”

(Srila Prabhupada, His Movement and You, Hansadutta Das, 1994)

“So there must be actual love and trust amongst the Rittvik representatives and their supporters or followers; otherwise there is something wrong.”

(Role of Ritvik Representatives of The Acharya, 7/1/99, Hansadutta Das)

“One may ask, "Then why *ritvik*?--It all comes down to the same principle of surrender, service and DISCIPLINE to the *ritvik* representative."
(Hansadutta Das letter to Kaliya-Krishna Das, 8th October, 1993)

HD states that the ritvik was created to be a substitute ‘ritvik-guru’ to take the place of the Diksa Guru, Srila Prabhupada, and acts as a guide with the ‘ritvik-guru’ having his own ‘followers’. These ‘followers’ would presumably be those whom the ritvik initiates supposedly on ‘behalf’ of Srila Prabhupada, and these followers would have to submit to him in ‘discipline’ (which is what a DISCIPLE does, and HD has capitalised the word so the point is clear), with surrender and service. If those whom the ritvik ‘initiates’ become his ‘followers’, who then have to submit themselves with surrender and service in discipline to him and take all guidance from him as the substitute for Srila Prabhupada, then it is the same as becoming a disciple of the ritvik. And indeed this is exactly the same role the ISKCON GBC ‘gurus’ claim they are fulfilling!

f) Ritvik has ALL the authority and responsibility as Diksa Guru:

“The eleven men selected as "Ritvik Representatives of the Acharya" were given the freedom to initiate (first and second) and give the spiritual name without first having to consult Srila Prabhupada by letter and have an appropriate name sent by Srila Prabhupada. This was new. This in effect gave these eleven "Ritvik representative of the Acharya" all the responsibilities and authority of a GURU,”
(Role of Ritvik Representatives of The Acharya, 7/1/99, Hansadutta Das)

All the responsibilities, functions and characteristics which HD has assigned to the ritvik thus far mentioned, put together would constitute the functioning of a Diksa Guru. And indeed in each section we have seen how HD has made a point of showing some sort of equivalency between the ritvik and the Diksa Guru, Srila Prabhupada. And here HD does indeed say that this is in fact the case, clearly stating that in practice the ritvik has ‘all the responsibilities and authority’ of a Diksa Guru.

The Reality

The July 9th directive, which HD claims to be following, defines the duty of a ritvik as being nothing more than formally accepting a disciple on behalf of Srila Prabhupada. This itself is merely one element in what is only the initiation ceremony, with Temple Presidents and others performing other functions of the ceremony as such recommending a candidate, performing the fire yagna etc. Even the responsibility of being a guide to new initiates was given specifically to their temple authorities. It was not a responsibility tagged on to the duty of a ritvik. HD however has invented a whole raft of powers for the ritvik not mentioned in the July 9th directive, so that he is now defined in a manner similar to how ISKCON’s diksa gurus present themselves – as the transparent via medium required to connect, guide and bring people to Srila Prabhupada. And just as with the ISKCON diksa gurus, this ‘representing’ is done by manufacturing a type of guru-disciple relationship between the ritvik and the person whom he accepts on behalf of Srila Prabhupada. The only difference between HD’s concocted ritvik-Diksa Guru hybrid and ISKCON’s Diksa gurus would appear to be the fact that HD has not revealed the type and extent of personal service/worship he may be accepting from his acolytes. In any event, there is more than enough here to keep any would-be guru hoaxer’s ego and need for honour and distinction satisfied until he completes his ‘diksa-guru apprenticeship’, which is all a far cry from Srila Prabhupada’s July 9th directive’s actual definition of a ritvik as an officiator for one part of the initiation ceremony.

Guru Hoax Approval Again Sought From Gaudiya Matha

“We have spoken with senior devotees, especially Puri Maharaja, and he has confirmed this essential point and encouraged us to broadcast it to the best of our ability, within and without ISKCON.”

(Hansadutta Das, Letter to Rahugana Das, 1/12/93)

History repeats itself, for whenever ISKCON guru hoaxers need to perpetuate a guru hoax, they go to senior Gaudiya Matha figures to get sanction for the same! This time instead of His Holiness Sridhara Maharaja (approached for the great guru hoax part 1), who had already departed, it was another Godbrother of Srila Prabhupada, HH Puri Maharaja, that HD approached to get a rubber stamp for this great guru hoax, part 3.

Appointed For Eternity

As mentioned, HD was one of the original guru hoaxers, whose actions led to the destruction of the movement, as he himself readily admits:

“I wanted to fathom the actual depth and cause of my complete degradation and disgraceful behaviour after the disappearance of Srila Prabhupada, especially in connection with illegal assumption of the initiating zonal Guru Acharya activities in which I played such a destructive role. [...] For years since, falling down from the standard of devotional service, I have suffered grievously, knowing I caused the spiritual ruin of hundreds and thousands of sincere, aspiring devotees, whom I stole away (kidnapped) from Srila Prabhupada (the Founder-*acharya*) by presenting myself as a bonafide *acharya*, spiritual master, when in fact I was not even able to control my senses any more than an ordinary *karmi*.”

(Srila Prabhupada, His Movement and You, Hansadutta Das, 1994)

It is thus patently clear that HD (and the other guru hoaxers) fell down from and abdicated his ritvik post due to the grossest misconduct possible. Indeed HD fell not only from his ritvik post, but subsequently also from his other posts as sannyasa and GBC, as he instead took part in the monstrous guru hoax. But in order for HD to perpetuate the great guru hoax part 3, he needed to first somehow reclaim his original ritvik post, now long abandoned, since this is the tool he needs to use as the cover to perpetuate the new guru hoax. This he attempts to achieve by concocting the crazy idea that whatever appointments Srila Prabhupada once made, were made for all eternity!:

“Therefore, at any time, any person who wants to engage in the hierarchy of Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON can immediately be restored to his original spiritual life by simply embracing the place he was originally assigned by Srila Prabhupada's divine hierarchy in ISKCON. [...] Our place in the hierarchy of Srila Prabhupada is eternal, and no one-NO ONE-has the authority to interfere with another's place in the divine hierarchy of Srila Prabhupada.”

(Hierach, Hierarchy and You, Hansadutta Das, 1994)

It was bad enough that HD originally mistakenly thought the ritvik appointment was a Diksa Guru appointment. He has now gone a step further and claimed all appointments made for anyone, were made for eternity, and thus can never be lost regardless of how badly one falls from one's position. Of course this crazy idea is not sanctioned by Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada never stated that disciples who fall down from their posts retain these posts for eternity even after having fallen most egregiously from them, and thus be able to reclaim them at some time in the future whenever they feel like doing so. Rather the general principle instituted by Srila Prabhupada was that all ISKCON officials, whether GBCs, sannyasis, temple presidents etc., who engaged in gross mis-conduct

were removed from their posts, and it is hard to imagine gross misconduct worse than that which HD has confessed to. Even HD accepts this principle when it suits him, for instance when he wants to bash every *other* ISKCON official whose authority he does not accept:

“The authorities Srila Prabhupada created are meant to obey and support the orders he gave. When the authorities fail in that function, no excuses, benefits of the doubt (as we gave in the case of so many *gurus* before) or word jugglery should be accepted to justify their deviation. They must immediately be brought to account for their discrepancies, in harmony with the teachings of the Founder-*acharya*, Srila Prabhupada.”

(Srila Prabhupada, His Movement and You, Hansadutta Das, 1994)

And yet HD expects his ritvik post to be insulated from his gross deviation and instead retained eternally!

Of course everyone is welcome to *correctly* take up the service they once had, whether as a sannyasi, GBC, Temple President or ritvik, but it would necessitate once again becoming qualified and authorized for the same. For only if one is never able to be removed from a position can one claim to be able to be ‘restored’ to it whenever one feels like it. However this assumption of ‘eternal appointment’ to any post, as asserted here by HD, does not exist. It is not that having once been appointed into a post one has a claim on that post as an eternal birthright regardless of one’s conduct, but rather these posts would once again have to be earned. Otherwise it would mean that once anyone took up any position in ISKCON, they could never be removed from the same, and even if they abandoned the position they could take it up again any time in the eternal future as and when they desired. Even banana republics only designate their dictators ‘President for Life’. Not for all eternity!

The need for the re-qualification and re-authorisation for all posts for former disgraced occupants (rather than eternal retention), is highlighted no better than in the case of HD himself, for as we have just copiously documented, he has still not given up his original guru hoaxer programme.

Conclusion

ISKCON’s great guru hoaxes parts 1 and 2 were based on abandoning the position of ritvik and falsely assuming the position of Diksa Guru (whether by ‘appointment’ or not) even though Srila Prabhupada had not given any order for the same. HD’s great guru hoax part 3 similarly assumes the ritvik post can be given up for the Diksa Guru position without having any order for the same. The great guru hoax part 3 goes further and also re-defines the post of ritvik as having a comparable status to the Diksa Guru position. Hence the concession HD appears to give to following Srila Prabhupada’s ritvik order by agreeing to continue to act as a ritvik at least until the Diksa Guru position is taken up by the ritvik, is not a concession but just another route by which HD can reclaim some of the Diksa Guru position which he once held, and which he claims to have now given up.

Having failed miserably in attempting to become a Diksa Guru through the front door in the first great guru hoax, being one of the first guru hoaxers to fall and be thrown out of his position by the other guru hoaxers, he is now trying to become a diksa guru via the back door, through the great guru hoax part 3, which relies on overtly utilising the position of ritvik rather than that of Diksa Guru. This illustrates the principle that if we want to understand how to correctly follow Srila Prabhupada, those who had continually got it wrong earlier are not the best authorities whom to consult, as HD himself ironically admits:

“Why not accept the final dictation and order as per the July 9, 1977 letter sent by Prabhupada to his senior disciples, stating his desire for them to act as *ritviks*? Do we have to accept the word of irreputable authorities, some of whom have long ago proven their disqualifications by obvious disgraceful behaviour, and others who are strong supporters of the now fallen *gurus*?”
(Srila Prabhupada, His Movement and You, Hansadutta Das, 1994)

HD perfectly demonstrates this, since he was one of those who had “long ago proven their disqualifications by obvious disgraceful behaviour” via the great guru hoax part 1, and who now wishes to resurrect the same, albeit in a ‘different bottle’, via the great guru hoax part 3!