

## Kailasa Candra's Ritvik Concoction



It is extremely poor 'scholarship' to not even know the position one is supposed to be challenging (if such lazy work can be deemed 'scholarship' at all). A challenge based on such ignorance would simply mean the position being challenged never actually gets challenged, since the challenger does not even know what it is he is supposed to be challenging! And this has almost universally been the case whenever Srila Prabhupada's 'ritvik' order is challenged. Instead of reading, quoting from, and then addressing, the IRM's definitive 'ritvik' position paper "The Final Order" (TFO), such lazy 'challenge' papers merely invent mythical 'ritvik' arguments which some mythical 'ritviks' are supposed to promote. Kailasa Chandra Dasa, has written one such paper called "Flaws in the Rittvik Concoction" (FRC), which can now be added to the long list of papers by the GBC and others, which consist of nothing more than 'straw-man' arguments, or challenges against a phantom position rather than that actually put forward by the TFO and the IRM. Consequently these papers spectacularly fail in challenging the actual ritvik position.

Another characteristic of such non-existent 'challenges' to the IRM's position is that in the main they do not even attempt to substantiate their assertions by quotes from Srila Prabhupada. Rather they simply wave the magic wand of stating terms such as 'sastra', 'tradition' etc., and claim their conclusions are proven simply by the mere utterances of these words. The IRM however supports all its conclusions directly with orders from Srila Prabhupada, and thus adheres to the following principle to establish any conclusion:

**"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)**

This means that before we act we must have an order from Srila Prabhupada to do so. Attacks on the phantom 'ritvik' position however involve appealing to some undefined and unquoted notion of 'sastra' or 'tradition', rather than orders from Srila Prabhupada. In the following rebuttal to Kailash Chandra's FRC paper we will see how his paper consists basically of nothing but the use of these two techniques - the use of lazy mythical 'ritvik straw man' arguments, and the use of the 'sastra/tradition' magic wand instead of orders from Srila Prabhupada to support his assertions. Quotes from FRC will be quoted in speech marks thus " ", with my responses following in **bold**. Kailash Chandra will be known as the 'author' throughout.

"The rittviks--although they may, for their own purposes, say that a spiritual master could emerge in the future--in fact consider that all of Srila Prabhupada's disciples are only, at most, capable of being rittviks. Such "stand-ins" cannot be advanced devotees, obviously. In practical terms, the rittviks consider all others to be, more or less, perpetual kanishta-adhikaris, like themselves."

**So the very first statement from FRC starts with a classic 'straw man' argument. TFO does not state anything like this. We state that we all should and can become pure devotees, providing we follow, rather than disobey, the orders of Srila Prabhupada, regardless of what these orders are.**

"A madhyama-adhikari can be a diksa-guru or regular guru and can initiate his own disciples."

**Srila Prabhupada states this should NOT be done, and gives the reason why:**

**"One should not become a spiritual master unless he has attained the platform of uttama-adhikārī. A neophyte Vaiṣṇava or a Vaiṣṇava situated on the intermediate platform can**

**also accept disciples, but such disciples must be on the same platform, and it should be understood that they cannot advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life under his insufficient guidance.”**

**(NOI, Text 5, purport)**

“Now, the rittviks obviously believe that there are no madhyama-adhikaris amongst Srila Prabhupada's remaining disciples. Or they think that madhyama-adhikari is attained at a level that is still below the threshold of diksa-guru qualification, or that it's the (so-called) madhyama-adhikari that automatically converts to a rittvik (rittvik-for-perpetuity?) after the mahabhagavat enters nitya-lila pravishtha.”

**More mythical 'ritvik' beliefs. Why not actually QUOTE what the 'ritviks' (TFO) states, and then one will know what they believe, instead of needing to just make up what they supposedly believe. The qualification of the disciples is not the issue. The orders they received are. They received an order to act as ritvik. But they did not receive an order to transmogrify from being ritvik into Diksa Gurus, and therefore should have remained ritviks, since as quoted earlier, it is the order of the spiritual master which is the 'active principle' in spiritual life. Not our desires to occupy the Guru post.**

“None of Srila Prabhupada's directly initiated disciples is obligated to believe that there was even one legitimate madhyama-adhikari amongst his flock after he departed. The track record strongly indicates otherwise. But, if there was one--or even more than one--that devotee or those devotees could become diksa-guru (and not merely a rittvik) after Prabhupada departed. This, of course, would be contingent upon their having received the order from Srila Prabhupada to initiate new disciples, and those new disciples would then become "the disciples of my disciple.”

**Finally FRC states something approaching the truth. The author admits that:**

- a) **We do not need to accept that any of Srila Prabhupada's disciples was qualified to act as Diksa Guru.**
- b) **That the track record indicates that none of them were thus qualified.**
- c) **But if some rare soul did exist who was qualified, he could act as Diksa Guru only provided he received the order to do the same from Srila Prabhupada.**

**Here the author states the IRM's position and agrees with it. Since he never produces in the rest of his paper, or elsewhere, the 'order' from Srila Prabhupada to his disciple or disciples that they initiate new disciples, who would become 'disciples of my disciple', then according to the author, there was no order from Srila Prabhupada which necessitated the ritviks to change their position into Diksa Gurus.**

“For the many of Prabhupada's disciples who have concluded that no one was qualified to even be a regular or monitor guru, your conviction looks more accurate every passing year. [...] After so many guru falldowns and "re-initiation" ceremonies, these new people have concluded that all of Srila Prabhupada's disciples must be nothing better than kanishtha-adhikaris. Actually, that's a liberal perspective. There's very possibly any number of sahajiyas, covert impersonalists, atheists, and non-devotees in the mix as well.”

**The author again basically dismisses every one of Srila Prabhupada's disciples as not being qualified to receive the order to become Diksa Guru. And if they never received the order to become Diksa Guru, then Srila Prabhupada remains as the Diksa Guru, which is the IRM's position, since he does not get succeeded as the 'current link' in the disciplic succession.**

“But those in this category who then jumped the gun and changed the philosophy and the initiation procedure get no such kudos.”

**This refers to the 'ritviks', and the author only offers his opinion, but no order from Srila Prabhupada, that we have 'changed the philosophy'. He obviously believes, that like Srila Prabhupada, he is the authority, and if he simply states something, it must be so, as he does not even attempt to offer any evidence from Srila Prabhupada to substantiate his opinion.**

"On one side, you have the camp with cheap gurus and cheap disciples. On the other side, you have the faction that grants mass initiations on behalf of a non-manifest acharya, more or less automatically to anybody who wants one."

**The IRM does not even grant ritvik initiations, so it can hardly be accused of granting 'mass initiations', 'more or less automatically to anybody who wants one'?**

"Except at the very end, all such rittvik rites were only conducted after he first sanctioned them. At the very end, he gave a blanket sanction and empowered his re-constituted rittvik contingent to conduct the ceremonies with whomsoever they deemed fit at whatever location and time they chose."

**The author here accepts that ritviks were set up to operate by Srila Prabhupada in a manner which would be identical to how they would also function after Srila Prabhupada's disappearance. Yet we are to believe that an activity whose functioning would not change after Srila Prabhupada's disappearance somehow constitutes 'changing the philosophy', even though the philosophical principle given by Srila Prabhupada that would now be changed is never stated. In effect we are told that if a system which was set up specifically to operate in Srila Prabhupada's physical absence without any physical involvement from him, operates in Srila Prabhupada's physical absence without Srila Prabhupada being physically involved, it would suddenly constitute a big violation of spiritual principles. And again no evidence for this claim in the form of an order from Srila Prabhupada is given. "Rather the degree of Srila Prabhupada's physical absence is now simply considered 'too much'. But how can a system set up specifically to operate in Srila Prabhupada's physical absence without his physical involvement, be rendered invalid by Srila Prabhupada's physical absence?**

"The sampradaya has never hinged on rittviks. If they were essential to it, they would be mentioned far more often in both the Shastras and Srila Prabhupada's purports. All mention of them is in the context of their conducting Vedic or Vaishnava sacrifices (yajnas). Prabhupada sometimes utilized them. Sometimes he did not. Assistants are never the foundation of anything Absolute."

**Who says they are the foundation of anything absolute? The Guru is the absolute foundation of spiritual life. He, Srila Prabhupada, remains. Initiation ceremonies are performed as a formality. And to help conduct these ceremonies, assistants are used. So these assistants are merely one aspect of a formal ceremony. Not the basis for the absolute truth!**

"The rittvik adjustment in his final days with us did not have any shattering ramifications and repercussions. It did not have a secret underlying meaning. It was a pragmatic adjustment, that's all. It was common sense, considering the circumstances, and any sane person will not read anything more than that into it."

**Yet we are expected to believe that if a system set up for the "purpose of performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation" (opening statements of July 9<sup>th</sup> directive, describing the system), for ISKCON, is used to do just that, it *would* result in 'shattering ramifications and repercussions'!**

"Srila Prabhupada was very ill, so he authorized his rittviks to make some decisions that normally he would have made."

**Srila Prabhupada never states this. This is the author's speculation. Srila Prabhupada does not state he is authorising ritviks because he is ill. Indeed his illness would not have affected his ability to dictate initiation letters accepting disciples, as was being done previously, since there is no evidence he lost the use of his vocal chords or hearing. Srila Prabhupada only states, as just mentioned, that ritviks are being authorised for the purpose of conducting initiations in ISKCON. Not that they are a temporary measure specially brought on by Srila Prabhupada's illness.**

"The rittviks have no Shastric evidence to back up a system of rittvik-in-absentia, and they also can't derive it, in any definitive way, from Srila Prabhupada's statements during the last days."

**Srila Prabhupada's directives for ISKCON, unless otherwise stated, were for operation in ISKCON. If all of Srila Prabhupada's directives for ISKCON automatically terminated on his departure, unless individually and especially established 'sastrically' as enduring beyond his departure, then ISKCON itself would have ground to a halt on Srila Prabhupada's departure. Needless to say this principle, that directives for ISKCON self-destruct on Srila Prabhupada's departure, or that only his ritvik order is self-destructing, is not given by Srila Prabhupada, and cannot therefore be assumed. Hence all directives for ISKCON are automatically derived as applying for ISKCON, unless otherwise specifically stated as having a temporary application. Otherwise we would not even have a functioning ISKCON, and this discussion would anyway become irrelevant.**

"He was present and physically manifest then. Ceremonies were conducted while he was manifest. As such, without clear and definitive proof otherwise, all the statements he made concerning ritvik must be interpreted in that context."

**Obviously every order Srila Prabhupada gave, and every action which he executed, happened when Srila Prabhupada was physically manifest! For example, just because some deities were only installed and worshipped by Srila Prabhupada when he was physically manifest, this does not mean such deity worship must cease on his departure. Because the deity worship was established for ISKCON. There is no directive from Srila Prabhupada that 'deity worship should continue after my departure' or indeed that anything should 'continue after my departure'. Yet no one is arguing that ISKCON should have grinded to a halt on Srila Prabhupada's departure. So if one wishes to make a special 'self-extermination on departure' clause just for the ritvik order, let them present an order from Srila Prabhupada stating that. Otherwise there exists as much 'clear and definitive proof' for the ritvik directive to be implemented in ISKCON, as for any other ISKCON practise.**

"The sistacara of all Vaishnava disciplic successions throughout history bear out the tradition that ritvik ceremonies are only authorized when the diksa guru--on whose behalf they are being conducted--is physically manifest. Srila Prabhupada never countermanded this important principle."

**Here we go – the 'tradition' magic wand. We are told Srila Prabhupada never 'countermanded' an 'important principle', but this 'important principle' has never been stated by Srila Prabhupada to begin with! So where does the question of countermanding it arise? We have only the author's magic wand as evidence that such an 'important principle' actually exists. Plus historical events are dictated usually by circumstance as much as principle. For example the fact that previous parampara gurus were all born in India. The author needs to prove with a quote from Srila Prabhupada that 'it is an important spiritual principle that ritvik ceremonies can only be conducted on behalf of**

**someone who is physically manifest.' Until then, we only have the author's magic wand as 'evidence' for this so-called 'important principle'.**

"ARGUMENT: There was obviously no successor named by Prabhupada, so he must have created some kind of rittvik system."

**The author begins to offer a whole list of mythical 'ritvik' arguments, none of which, surprise, surprise, are actually stated by TFO. The above is an example. The actual fact is that Srila Prabhupada created a ritvik system, because he did. That's all we say, and all which needs to be said.**

"ANSWER: This is the psychological projection of a conditioned desire born of flawed and illogical rationalizations. It is indicative of covert resentment against Prabhupada for appearing to have made things so difficult after his departure. Both camps use the emotional and insincere question: "BUT WHO WILL INITIATE THEM?!?" and this is where that argument comes from ultimately."

**No, both these invented 'Arguments and Answers' are the psychological projection of the author's mental speculation, being too lazy to research what TFO actually states. In this way the author lists a whole bunch of his fanciful projections, in the form of 'arguments and answers and counterpoints' which are all 'straw-man' arguments never stated by TFO. To save space we will not waste time listing them all.**

"That the guru must be physically manifest for a rittvik to conduct an initiation on his behalf is a Vedic process, and its practical application is demonstrated by the sistachara of the Vaishnava lines throughout history. It's the standard."

**Here comes the 'Vedic' magic wand again. Does Srila Prabhupada ever state any of the above, as being a 'Vedic standard' which cannot be violated? No. If the author believes his case is strong, and it is what Srila Prabhupada wanted, why is he unable to establish it by reference to Srila Prabhupada's orders?**

"When a spiritual master is physically manifest, he can be specifically consulted about any candidate, who is about to be initiated on his behalf by a rittvik. This was the case up to mid-November of 1977."

**Yes, he could be consulted. But Srila Prabhupada never stated that this consultation was necessary to the system's operation. On the contrary it was set up so he would not be consulted at all, and initiations would be conducted without him even knowing about them. Full power of attorney to decide was given to the ritviks. One can not assert that the mere possibility of being consulted is essential, when being consulted itself is not essential:**

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

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: On discretion.

Prabhupāda: Yes.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: That's for first and second initiations.

Prabhupāda: Hm.

(Room conversation, 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1977)

"ARGUMENT: In Prabhupada's will, it states that the trustees of his properties must only be his "initiated disciples." Who will protect these properties as trustees in the long-term?

COUNTERPOINT: First of all, were all of the trustees for every center initiates of Prabhupada just after his departure? If not, did this cause any kind of problem? Whether it was or was not the case, that wording of "initiated disciples" was grafted on to the document at the very end. It was

not thoroughly considered by those who put it in the document just before Prabhupada signed the will. The two words were added at the end in order to keep certain factions (mundane family relations, as well as previous devotional affiliations that later turned negative) from prevailing in court on any takeover bids. It served its purpose, and such effort(s) were thwarted. Its inclusion was not an obtuse quasi-legal method by Srila Prabhupada to establish the rittvik-in-absentia movement.”

**The author states that wording which does not support his case, even though it has Srila Prabhupada's signature attached, can just be discarded. Why not then discard anything at all which has Srila Prabhupada's signature attached, why only evidence which does not support the author's theory? Also the author's offensive speculation for why Srila Prabhupada signed something which was not correct, makes no sense, since the same effect of keeping mundane family relations at bay could just as easily have been achieved by saying 'initiated in ISKCON'. But the final wording only stated 'my initiated disciple'.**

“ARGUMENT: The spiritual Shastras give some examples of embodied devotees receiving initiation from a spiritual master who is not physically manifest. So, this is possible. Therefore, rittvik-in-absentia has a Shastric basis. COUNTERPOINT: Not really. None of those devotees went on to institutionalize the process of initiation from that non-manifest guru. Also, the initiation itself, in their cases, was always direct, i.e., there were no rittviks involved. Over and above these counterpoints, all of those special initiated devotees were already very advanced souls, much more advanced than the West's disturbed neophytes. Such rare and ancient examples of special initiation do not create a precedent to institutionalize a rittvik-in-absentia movement in the heart of decadent Kali yuga.”

**Having hitherto waved the 'tradition' and historical precedent magic wand, we are now told that previous historical examples are not even applicable to ISKCON, since ISKCON consists of 'western Kali-Yuga disturbed neophytes'. If previous Vedic examples are not applicable to ISKCON, then the author has just destroyed his main argument that we should use Vedic tradition as the guiding principle for what should have happened in ISKCON!**

“There are different degrees of offense. Changing the fundamental principles or processes of the sampradaya would have to rank high on the list.”

**The author would first need to establish, using evidence from Srila Prabhupada, that the Guru needing to be on the planet at the moment of initiation constitutes a fundamental principle of the sampradaya. Otherwise he is simply assuming that which needs to be proven.**

“The rittviks consider the regular guru to equate to the rittvik-acharya, but that's an assumption nowhere substantiated in Srila Prabhupada's preaching or writing.”

**The above assumption about what the 'rittviks consider' is nowhere substantiated in the rittviks' writing! The author clearly has no grasp of the actual debate. The truth is the exact opposite of what he states. The GBC equates 'regular guru' to be a Diksa Guru. The rittviks do not equate a regular guru to be a rittvik!**

“That's indicative of the chief problem with the whole rittvik proposal: Where are the details? If Prabhupada authorized this system, considering how unprecedented it is, why would he have not made everything clear? Why didn't he speak for hours and even days in an unequivocal and unambiguous manner as to why this rittvik-in-absentia was already indicated in his books.”

**The author here states the reverse of the actual situation. For 11 years Srila Prabhupada had only ever established one system – himself as the sole Diksa Guru for ISKCON. All his books and instructions assume that this is the system in ISKCON. They do not speak of**

any multiple successor Gurus other than him existing in ISKCON. The initiation systems he spoke of in his books for ISKCON also referred to the system in place in ISKCON when he was present on the planet, as being the initiation system for ISKCON (see the BTP 'Special Summary Issue' for these quotes). Hence the only reference point, and known system of initiation for ISKCON, was with Srila Prabhupada as Diksa Guru. From the very beginning representatives were used for conducting ceremonies. To continue this system would only have needed for it to be formalised, just as it was via the July 9<sup>th</sup> directive. The system of someone joining a temple, getting recommended by the Temple President and then being initiated without ever even meeting Srila Prabhupada quickly became the standard in ISKCON.

Clearly what Srila Prabhupada needs to speak of for 'hours and even days', is how the only system known in ISKCON would change:

- a) How Srila Prabhupada would suddenly stop being the Diksa Guru for ISKCON even though he never even hinted at this ever happening.
- b) How Srila Prabhupada would be succeeded by others. How those replacing him would continue to be recognised and operate in ISKCON for the next 9,5000 years. How these Diksa Gurus would work together.
- c) How all these Diksa Gurus would work with the GBC. How these parallel lines of authority would function.
- d) What worship etc., would these diksa gurus get viz. a viz to Srila Prabhupada.

And so on, and on.

The fact is that Srila Prabhupada did not even order Diksa Gurus for ISKCON, never mind speaking for hours and days about how the system would work. By the author's own argument therefore, successor Diksa Gurus were never intended for ISKCON, as Srila Prabhupada never spoke about them in detail, which would leave Srila Prabhupada as ISKCON's Diksa Guru. The other alternative is to assert ISKCON was not supposed to have any Diksa Gurus again, ever!

Why wouldn't he have said that a rittvik-acharya is a regular guru or a monitor guru?

**As already pointed out, this is another of the author's fanciful 'straw man' ritvik inventions, and not what the TFO advocates.**

"Here's something he did say: "They did not even consider with common sense that, if Guru Maharaj wanted to appoint somebody as acharya, why did he not say? He said so many things. And this point he missed? The real point? And they insisted on it." If Prabhupada wanted an unprecedented ritvik innovation, why he did not say? He said so many things. And this point he missed? The real point of how to carry out initiations after his departure he missed? But the rittviks keep insisting on it."

**The author is using the example of the acharya needing to be succeeded by another acharya in the Gaudiya Matha as evidence that Srila Prabhupada should have spoken in detail about the acharya NOT being succeeded by anyone else in ISKCON! Talk about getting the evidence back to front! The use of ritviks kept everything the SAME. We are to believe that everything staying the same needed a 'hours and even days' explanation, and the example of the Gaudiya Matha actually needing such an explanation for everything changing, is the evidence for this!!!**

The ritvik newcomer is taught that he can have a connection to Srila Prabhupada. We do not dispute this. Any sincere and faithful devotee can establish a siksa-guru connection with Srila Prabhupada via his books, lectures, etc. The ritvik leaders then teach the newcomers that, if they can have that connection, then Srila Prabhupada can deliver them from nescience both during

their lifetimes and at the end (anta-kale). We do not dispute that faithful viewpoint, either. As such, the rittvik proponents then make the big leap: If you can have a connection to a guru who you hope will be your deliverer, then why not formally connect to him and make him your diksa guru?

**So the author is not disputing that Srila Prabhupada connects with, teaches and delivers a disciple in exactly the same way a Diksa Guru does, even though he is not physically present:**

**“The spiritual master initiates the disciple to deliver him, and if the disciple executes the order of the spiritual master and does not offend other Vaishnavas, his path is clear.” (Madhya 1:128)**

**Yet, according to the author, calling such a Guru who delivers one, a Diksa Guru, is considered such a massive concoction that even Srila Prabhupada does not have the power to institute it, even if he wanted:**

“The uttama-adhikari, with unimpeded access to paramatma, may be able to create a major adjustment or innovation. Frankly, the rittvik concoction may even be beyond what he is empowered to create.”

**The author is thus granting Srila Prabhupada all the power and function of a Diksa Guru, but insists to call him that is the biggest concoction possible!**

“By proclaiming Srila Prabhupada made such a drastic rittvik-in-absentia change to the teachings and processes of Vaishnava initiation, it makes him to be something that he is not.”

**The above statement contains the following unsubstantiated assertions:**

- a) That Srila Prabhupada stated that the Guru needing to be on the planet at the moment of initiation as the ‘teaching and processes of Vaishnava initiation’.
- b) That Srila Prabhupada stated that having a ritvik arrangement would constitute a ‘drastic change’ to this.
- c) That Srila Prabhupada stated that such a ‘drastic change’ is unauthorised.

**Unless the author can produce the above 3 statements from Srila Prabhupada, it is he who is ‘proclaiming’ nothing but speculative nonsense. As mentioned at the outset, whilst the author relies on the magic wand theory to prove his statements, the actual process is to produce the order of the spiritual master to substantiate any statement made.**

“However, the rittvik system does have a couple of precedents, and these can be found in asampradaya sects. The Kartabhaja sect, listed by Srila Bhaktivinoda as one of the thirteen sahajiya cults, was founded by Anukula Candra Thakur. After he died, he was proclaimed to be an incarnation of God. It was also proclaimed that only he could initiate new followers into the line.”

**As indicated by the author, the defining feature of this system was not the aspect of the Diksa Guru initiating after he left the planet, but rather that the Diksa Guru was considered an incarnation of God. The initiation aspect followed simply because one was considered to be initiated by God Himself. The precedent is therefore not applicable to the ritvik system established by Srila Prabhupada.**

“Later on, there was another precedent for rittvik. When Ramakrishna died, his wife Saradia proclaimed that no one would ever be qualified enough to initiate after his death. Entrance into his cult was via a process similar to rittvik.”



This 'precedent' cited by the author is ironic, because the ritvik method the Ramakrishna mission used to keep the acarya as the only central figure in the institution amongst all the branches for all time, with no other successor gurus, was quoted by Srila Prabhupada as that to be followed by ISKCON itself:

**"I wish that each and every Branch shall keep their independent identity and cooperate keeping the Acarya in the centre. On this principle we can open any number of Branches all over the world. The Ramakrishna mission works on this principle and thus as organization they have done wonderfully."  
(Letter to Kirtanananda, 11/2/1967)**

**ISKCON should therefore, like the Ramakrishna mission, only have independent branches with the same Diksa Guru, and not a plethora of changing, different succeeding Diksa Gurus.**

"Srila Prabhupada was sardonic and contemptuous of the concept of Christ taking on the sins of his modern-day so-called disciples ("very good idea"). He considered it nothing more than a convenient rationalization. But the Christians put together congregations based on massive baptisms (initiations). It's an easier gig than facing the hard reality, so the rittviks copy the Christian way, although they don't admit to this."

**Contrary to what the author is claiming here, Srila Prabhupada supported the idea of accepting Christ as an in-absentia acarya who was a 'living guru' that would liberate his present-day followers:**

**Madhudvisa: Is there any way for a Christian to, 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.**

**Tamal Krsna : 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 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 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. 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.  
(SP Lecture, 2/10/68, Seattle )**

**"Regarding the end of devotees of Lord Jesus Christ, they can go to heaven, that is all. That is a planet in the material world. A devotee of Lord Jesus Christ is one who is strictly following the ten commandments. [...] Therefore the conclusion is that the devotees of Lord Jesus Christ are promoted to the heavenly planets which are within this material world."  
(SP Letter to Bhagavan, 2/3/70 )**

**"Actually, one who is guided by Jesus Christ will certainly get liberation."  
(Perfect Questions Perfect Answers, chapter 9 )**

**"...Or the Christians are following Christ, a great personality. mahajano yena gatah sa panthah. You follow some mahajana, great personality [...] You follow one acarya, like**

**Christians, they follow Christ, acarya. The Mohammedans, they follow acarya, Mohammed. That is good. you must follow some acarya [...] evam parampara-praptam."  
(SP Room conversation, 20/5/75, Melbourne )**

**One therefore cannot use Srila Prabhupada's comments about Christianity as evidence that ritvik is flawed.**

"The rittviks have watered down the process. The newcomers will eventually water it down even more."

**Since we are advocating the practise of exactly the same process as was instituted by Srila Prabhupada, how can we be watering it down? We are saying the same should be followed without change. This would mean therefore that it was Srila Prabhupada who actually 'watered down the process', not those who seek to follow the same.**

"Srila Prabhupada had a rittvik system in place when he left us. He said: "No change." Therefore, no changes means just that: Do everything exactly the way it was being done just before he departed. This is the essence of the argument. Simple. The rittviks generally try to keep it simple, also, and they are most successful when they stay on message."

**So far so good. Finally the author actually offers a statement of our position which is accurate.**

"The real issue here is the ACTUAL CRITERION OF NO CHANGE, especially in the context of Srila Prabhupada's statements concerning spiritual master and initiation. Let's look at some of those:

- 1) "I wish that, in my absence, all my disciples become the bona fide spiritual master."
- 2) "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."
- 3) "Every student is expected to become acharya . . . I have given you sannyasa with the great hope, that, in my absence, you will preach the cult."
- 4) "Just adhere yourself to the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Then you become spiritual master. That's all. So, I hope that all of you men, women, boys, and girls become spiritual master and follow this principle."
- 5) " . . . it is distinct that, although he was a conditioned soul in his previous life, there was no impediment of his becoming the spiritual master. This law is applicable not only to the spiritual master, but to every living entity."
- 6) "Maybe, by 1975, all of my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the number of generations. That is my program."
- 7) "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."
- 8) " . . . just like I have got my disciples, so, in the future, these many disciples may have many branches of disciplic succession . . ."
- 9) "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 have to become spiritual masters."

None of these quotes can be considered as working against the principle of no change, because they all came directly from His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada. As such, they also represent the criterion of no change. They represent Prabhupada's perspective, or hopes, for the continuance of his movement after he left the scene. You cannot be selective about what does and does not constitute no change. Anything Prabhupada said about the future of his movement constitutes an essential element of no change. All of the above-mentioned quotes contradict strongly against the concept of no change forwarded by the rittvik concoction."

(I have added numbers to the quotes for ease of reference)

Finally, as we are coming to the end of the author's paper, he offers some words from Srila Prabhupada! Up until now his paper consisted of nothing but magic wand waving, as if throwing around words such as 'tradition' and 'sastra' in and of themselves constituted evidence. However none of these 9 quotes offer a 'change' to the ritvik arrangement left by Srila Prabhupada.

- 1) Firstly none of the quotes constitute an order to anyone in ISKCON to become Diksa Guru, because the author himself admitted earlier, no such people who were even qualified to receive the order existed, and hence no such order was ever issued. We quoted the author extensively stating this earlier. The quotes therefore can not disturb the ritvik arrangement left by Srila Prabhupada for ISKCON by creating successor Diksa Gurus.
- 2) Secondly, out of the 9 quotes, only 1, 3 and 9 make any POSSIBLE reference to the author's contention that the quotes refer to the 'continuance of the movement, after he left the scene'. 2,4,5,6 and 7 make no reference to Srila Prabhupada departing. And 8 is an EXAMPLE Srila Prabhupada uses to answer a question. He does not say there WILL BE branches, but uses the example of branches as a hypothetical situation to answer a question about the disciplic succession:

"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. Narada was the Spiritual Master of Vyasadeva, and Arjuna was Vyasadeva's disciple, not as initiated disciple but there was some blood relation between them. So there is connection in this way, and it is not possible to list all such relationships in the short description given in Bhagavad-gita As It Is. Another point is that disciplic succession does not mean one has to be directly a disciple of a particular person. The conclusions which we have tried to explain in our Bhagavad-gita As It Is is the same as those conclusions of Arjuna. Arjuna accepted Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and we also accept the same truth under the disciplic succession of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Things equal to the same thing are equal to one another. This is an axiomatic truth. So there is no difference of opinion of understanding Krishna between ourselves and Arjuna. Another example is that a tree has many branches, and you will find one leaf here and another leaf there. But if you take this leaf and the other leaf and you press them both, you will see that the taste is the same. The taste is the conclusion, and from the taste you can understand that both leaves are from the same tree."

The underlining I have added proves that Srila Prabhupada is only using a hypothetical example to illustrate a point, and not actually stating what will happen.

3) This leaves only 3 quotes where one could argue that Srila Prabhupada was speaking of his departure. Quote 9 however, as given by the author, is incorrect. The wording is only correct until the actual part of relevance: "you have to become spiritual masters". These words do not appear in the quote. However much later in the same lecture, Srila Prabhupada does say: "You'll have to become spiritual master. You, all my disciples, everyone should become spiritual master. It is not difficult." Lord Caitanya's instruction to Brahmana Kurma from Madhya 7:128 is also cited here, and this refers to becoming a siksa and not Diksa Guru, since the purports state that "it is best not to accept any disciples". Further Srila Prabhupada states his disciples should simply act in exactly the same way they were already acting, which was to simply repeat whatever they knew, and tell everyone they met about Krishna, which means to act as assistant siksa gurus to the Diksa Guru, Srila Prabhupada.

4) This now only leaves quotes 1 and 3, where the word 'absence' is used. Both these quotes are from PRIVATE LETTERS to/about DEVIANTS. They were therefore not intended

for, nor were they made available, to the ISKCON movement. They were sent in sealed envelopes and meant only for the eyes of those who received them. They therefore cannot constitute 'ISKCON directives' which were meant to become ISKCON policy, unlike the ritvik system which was established throughout the movement. Clearly information not made available to the movement, and not intended for the movement, can not be considered a 'platform' of 'no change' on which ISKCON was to be established.

5) Looking at the contents of the letters, we can note that Srila Prabhupada is emphasizing curtailing the ambition of his disciples to become guru EVEN whilst Srila Prabhupada was on the planet:

"I have given you sannyasa with the great hope that in my absence you will preach the cult thruout the world and thus become recognized 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."

(Letter to Tusta Krishna, 2/12/1975)

Srila Prabhupada tells Tusta Krishna that he cannot take taking disciples in his presence, but must at least wait until the guru departed. Similarly in the other quote, the letter also addresses the ambition of a disciple wanting to become Guru in Srila Prabhupada's presence, after just one year!:

"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 Caitanya wanted every one should be a spiritual master provided he follows the order of Lord Caitanya. The Lord's mission was to defeat the Mayavada philosophy and establish in the philosophy of Krishna consciousness because Krishna is the Supreme Lord the Personality of Godhead. Anyone following the order of Lord Caitanya 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. I want it but Kirtanananda was too much puffed up and artificially he took up a certificate from me that he has been awarded the order to a Sannyasi, In the spiritual field nobody can become a bona fide spiritual master by dissatisfying his spiritual master. It is said that one can satisfy the Supreme Lord simply by satisfying the spiritual master and one who dissatisfies the spiritual master has no place in the spiritual world. Kirtanananda wanted to become a spiritual master by dissatisfying his spiritual master and as such he has fallen down. He cannot say anything genuine any more till he has had revival of his pure consciousness in the spiritual world as mentioned above."

(Letter to Kirtanananda, 2/11/1967, underlining added)

To deal with such ambitions of neophytes who had only just joined the movement, but already wanted to become Diksa Gurus, Srila Prabhupada states that he wants that his disciples to become spiritual masters in his absence. But that to do this they must be obedient to the Guru, and even then act under Lord Caitanaya's instruction for everyone to be spiritual master, which we noted earlier Srila Prabhupada describes as referring to a siksa guru – 'best not to accept any disciples'.

In conclusion, these two private letters, one about a deviant (Kirtanananda), and the other issued to a deviant (Tusta Krishna Das - see others letters and remarks from Srila Prabhupada establishing this), addressing the issue of becoming guru in Srila Prabhupada's presence, never released to or intended for the movement, cannot constitute some directives given to the movement that subsequently were meant to 'not be

**changed' for application in ISKCON. They merely constitute private 'warnings', issued to deal with inappropriate guru ambitions.**

**The ritvik system however was instituted throughout the movement in one form or another right from the beginning, and a directive was sent to the whole movement stating that this was to be the initiation system. This was the system which existed in ISKCON, and to which 'no change' can be applied.**

"But Prabhupada said: "I wish, in my absence, all my disciples become bona fide spiritual master." This is a self-evident quote, and this is what he wanted (and still wants). This is what is authorized, and it's not complicated. He said: "Every student is expected to become acharya." Simple. And we should not change this. This constitutes the no change principle."

**As already mentioned, these two sentences were never spoken to ISKCON, or made available for ISKCON, or intended to be made available for ISKCON, as policy to be applied in ISKCON. They were uttered to only two disciples, generated in connection with the need to address a special set of circumstances (disciples wanting to be Gurus even in Srila Prabhupada's presence). And in any case, as the author himself stated earlier, successor diksa gurus can not be enacted unless there is a specific order to the individuals concerned for the same:**

"But, if there was one--or even more than one--that devotee or those devotees could become diksa-guru (and not merely a rittvik) after Prabhupada departed. This, of course, would be contingent upon their having received the order from Srila Prabhupada to initiate new disciples, and those new disciples would then become "the disciples of my disciple."

**And the author is not claiming these 2 sentences constitute such an 'order from Srila Prabhupada to initiate new disciples', and hence there is nothing here constituting a system to be applied in ISKCON, that should then 'not be changed'.**

"If no change meant the continuance of a rittvik process after Prabhupada's departure, why didn't he SPECIFICALLY mention that somewhere. By specific, we are referring to some mention that does not rely on a far-out interpretation of a cryptic utterance. There is certainly no mention of the rittvik concoction in the context of the above-mentioned quotes. Just as an example, Prabhupada could have easily said: "Even if you do not become spiritual master, then continue initiating disciples on my behalf, like now, and they will continue to be my disciples, even after I die."

**We covered this earlier. There is no directive Srila Prabhupada's gives for ISKCON, where he feels the need to add "applicable even after I die". Because if something is applicable for ISKCON, then that is where its applicable, unless otherwise specifically stated. Directives for ISKCON do not automatically self-destruct on Srila Prabhupada's departure, otherwise the whole of ISKCON would have ground to a halt, as disciples terminated every order given for ISKCON since the words "applicable after I die" were not specifically added.**

But he never specifically said anything like that. The so-called appointment tape does not say that, although the rittviks try to wrangle out an interpretation favorable to their arrangement. It involves very convoluted and twisted conclusions along with dubious logic. It is anything but simple.

**Actually it is the author, who, in trying to explain the appointment tape, goes way beyond twisting conclusions and dubious logic, but basically invents a brand new system of answering questions which were never asked! In another paper by the author, entitled, 'The Proof of One Tooth', he analyses the so-called appointment tape (May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1977, conversation), and in regards to the following question to Srila Prabhupada from Satsvarupa Goswami (SDG):**

**SDG: 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.**

**he states:**

"The question contains two mutually exclusive aspects. One of those divisions is in relation to the backlog of potential initiates who have had their initiations delayed due to *Prabhupada's* illness. The other is the touchy and inappropriate topic about an uncertain time when *Prabhupada* will no longer be physically manifest. These two questions should not have been fused into one. At the very least, there is *rasabhasa* present in such (con)fusion. The question appears to be legitimate, but it has an inappropriate and insidious nature to it. As such, *Prabhupada* deals with the appropriate aspect of it--in connection to the backlog:"

**It is very easy to make any argument if you INVENT what is stated. SDG actually states:**

**"in the future" – which means an \*indefinite\* time period theoretically encompassing every time period from then onwards.**

**"particularly at that time when you're no longer with us" – a \*definite\* time period encompassing only all those time periods after Srila Prabhupada has departed, and which is a subset of the "in the future", so it is clear WHICH part of "in the future", SDG is interested in. Therefore SDG does not state two mutually exclusive aspects. He states an indefinite time period, and then defines it by giving a \*subset\* of this time-period. SDG also does not state the words "backlog" or "illness".**

**According to the author, after having been asked PARTICULARLY about the time period after his departure, Srila Prabhupada ignores this, and instead decided to answer about a time period he has NOT BEEN ASKED about at all – the time before his disappearance!**

**Through such fabrication, one can prove anything at all!**

"The rittviks descend into formatory thinking when they preach that "no change" means "continue the rittvik system of initiations." As Prabhupada said, the dull-witted must be cheated."

**The ritvik system of initiations were being continued in ISKCON from July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1977, onwards. What else would 'no change' mean to this situation, except to let it continue? It definitely can not mean to CHANGE the operation in existence by terminating it. How can 'no change' mean to 'change' what is in operation?!**

"Prabhupada remains present in his books (where the ACRONYM's editors have not changed them). The Book Bhagavat is the very means of deliverance. Nevertheless, while he was manifest, his physical presence had meaning. Message to all rittviks: There has been a change-- Prabhupada is no longer physically with us. But he did not leave us entirely, because he left us writings, his tapes, and his hopes and expectations for the movement. All of that constitutes the platform of no change."

**So just as his books, writings, tapes etc did not magically self-destruct on his departure, neither did his July 9<sup>th</sup> directive, or the ritviks he appointed, or the temple presidents who were to recommend candidates, or the temples from which the recommendations were to be made. His physically departure did not affect any of these things, since the ritvik system was specifically set up to operate in his physical absence. The author has already admitted that both Srila Prabhupada, and his books, deliver us, and we quoted delivering as being the function of a Diksa Guru, and Srila Prabhupada specifically gave us an initiation system which would allow persons to be formally initiated by him, even in his absence. Yet, for the author, all this means, Srila Prabhupada cannot possibly be the Diksa Guru!**

"The no change mentality entails sincerity. The sincere devotee must return to square one, abjure the easy but unauthorized alternatives, and confront the difficulties and controversies simply for what they are. In doing so, any sane person will conclude that the rittvik system is actually a change from Srila Prabhupada, the Vedic tradition, and all previous and current Vaishnava lines."

**How can the ritvik system be a 'change from Srila Prabhupada', when he was the one who set it up to be applied in ISKCON, continuously from July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1977 onwards? How can continuing what was given, be changing! As we saw earlier in the author's analysis of the May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1977 conversation, and his use of the lack of the Gaudiya Matha 'no appointed successor acharya' order, he twists everything upside down, so black is white, white is black, continuing is change, and changing is no change!**

"The rittvik system was not in place during the early years of Prabhupada's preaching in the West. Those years were entirely bona fide, and, as such, how things went on then could very easily be considered the platform of no change."

**How can the platform of 'no change' be to change what was happening in ISKCON in 1977 and go back to 1967! Again the author is demonstrating his 'upside down' thinking. So according to him the 'no change' platform for what should have happened in 1977, is to first change what was happening in 1977 by going back 10 years before that?! How about considering the no change platform for when Srila Prabhupada departed, to be what was actually happening in ISKCON when Srila Prabhupada departed!?**

"No doubt, Srila Prabhupada is transcendently available now to the same degree he was while he was manifestly active amongst us. That vani is more important than vapu does not make vapu unimportant, nor does it make it meaningless. Transcend formatory thinking for a moment, and consider these questions:

Can you write Prabhupada a letter and get a written and signed response from him?  
Can you talk with him in a room and have him directly speak in response to you?  
Can you book him for an appearance on a television interview or to speak during a radio interview?"

.....

.....

THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE."

**In this way, as indicated by the '....' lines, the author states more examples of Srila Prabhupada being unable to interact physically with his disciples. Yet the author has already admitted these changes have no affect on Srila Prabhupada's books to deliver us, even though he says Srila Prabhupada physical presence is needed to answer questions. If Srila Prabhupada's physical presence, which the author claims is required for answering interactive questions, is not required to receive the maximum necessary knowledge from Srila Prabhupada to become delivered, it definitely cannot be required to conduct initiations via a ritvik system specifically set up to operate without requiring his physical presence at all!**

"You cannot prove a negative. If someone claims that Prabhupada was a priest in Atlantis seventeen lifetimes previously, how can you disprove that wild speculation? If he never made any statement about it either way, you can't prove that he was not such a priest. Similarly, the rittviks claim that Prabhupada never said rittvik initiations could not proceed after he departed, so you can't prove that he didn't want that system to continue. But that kind of logic turns the argument upside down. The rittvik system cannot be accepted simply because it was not specifically forbidden."

**Again the author presents his own brand of upside down logic. We are not accepting the ritvik system because it 'was not specifically forbidden'. It's the exact opposite. We are accepting it because it was specifically instituted in ISKCON for operation in ISKCON, from July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1977, onwards. Hence it is the author who needs to bring a terminating instruction from Srila Prabhupada if he wishes to suddenly terminate its operation in ISKCON.**

"Instead, the rittvik-in-absentia system is so unprecedented that it requires an unequivocal sanction by the sampradaya acharya before it can be institutionalized."

**The author here has made the following assumptions:**

- a) That the ritvik-in-absentia system is 'unprecedented'.
- b) That because it is unprecedented it requires some 'unequivocal sanction' by Srila Prabhupada.
- c) That the July 9<sup>th</sup> directive does not constitute such 'unequivocal sanction'.
- d) That the author (one presumes) would decide what would constitute such 'unequivocal sanction'.

**As before, we look forward to the author presenting Srila Prabhupada stating the above 4 statements, before we accept his speculative assumptions. As we said at the outset, if the author wishes to offer an assertion, simply waving his magic wand will not do. He must substantiate his assertions with evidence from Srila Prabhupada, since Srila Prabhupada alone is the supreme authority for ISKCON:**

**"The GBC (Governing Body Commissioned) has been established by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada to represent Him in carrying out the responsibility of managing the International Society for Krishna Consciousness of which He is the Founder-Acarya and supreme authority."  
(GBC Resolution 1, 1975)**

"It can't be legitimately institutionalized merely because some devotee concludes "it's still not that far of a stretch." The leap to unprecedented rittvik requires a resolution from the acharya himself, otherwise the leap is a very long one, with a dangerous chasm below."

**The ritvik system was already instituted for operation in ISKCON, for "purpose of performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation" (opening statements of July 9<sup>th</sup> directive, describing the system). The actual 'leap' would be to suddenly decide the exact opposite, that the ritvik system was NOT meant for ISKCON, for the purpose of performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation, with no authority for this 'leap' other than the author's magic wand stating 'tradition'.**

"The rittviks say that there's no proof that Prabhupada did not establish the system, i.e., there's no unequivocal statement from him in that context. However, there is an overwhelming body of Shastric evidence and his own statements that logically and practically indicate that it should never have been instituted after his departure."

**The author admits here that he has NO EVIDENCE from Srila Prabhupada terminating the ritvik system, since he claims his 'evidence' actually comes from his magic wand, stating 'shastric evidence'. If such shastric evidence did indeed exist, then he should also be able to present it from Srila Prabhupada, since Srila Prabhupada does not teach anything different from Shastra. But he can not and does not do this.**

"Over and above that, there's no proof that he did want it to be institutionalized."



**A directive was sent to the whole institution, all GBCs and Temple Presidents, that the system was to be implemented in the institution. That's solid proof it was meant to be institutionalised!**

### **Conclusion**

**We have demonstrated conclusively:**

- a) Half of the author's pronouncements about so-called 'flaws in the ritvik concoction', are simply his own concoctions about ritvik, having no bearing to what the ritvik position actually is.**
- b) The other half of his pronouncements are simply speculations, whose proof is based not on a single statement from Srila Prabhupada, but his waving the magic wand of using the words 'sastra' and 'tradition'. Just as magicians say 'abacadabra', the author expects us to accept his speculations as being true simply because he utters some words. The actual process for establishing any assertion however is not via magic wands, but by giving evidence from Srila Prabhupada's statements.**
- c) The quotes he does provide from Srila Prabhupada, constitute 2 sentences which were not even intended as policy for ISKCON, and thus are not relevant to establishing what platform existed in ISKCON in 1977, on which there was to be 'no change'. This platform was the ritvik system, which was THE system for performing all initiations, without the requirement for Srila Prabhupada's physical presence. These 2 sentences cannot therefore dislodge the ritvik system as the 'no change' platform for ISKCON.**
- d) Ironically, the author also accepts that no Diksa Gurus were ordered for ISKCON by Srila Prabhupada. Thus unlike the GBC, who incorrectly argue that the ritvik system in ISKCON was succeeded and terminated by the emergence of successor Diksa Gurus, the author gives no reason for why the ritvik system should have been terminated in ISKCON, other than the magic wand of 'tradition'. Thus he does not argue that the ritviks were supposed to become Diksa Gurus, or the system was to make way for successor Diksa Gurus. The ritvik system was just to stop, period, because, he claims, 'tradition' says so. Not because Srila Prabhupada says so.**