

a response to: 'The Minutes of the Timeless Order.'

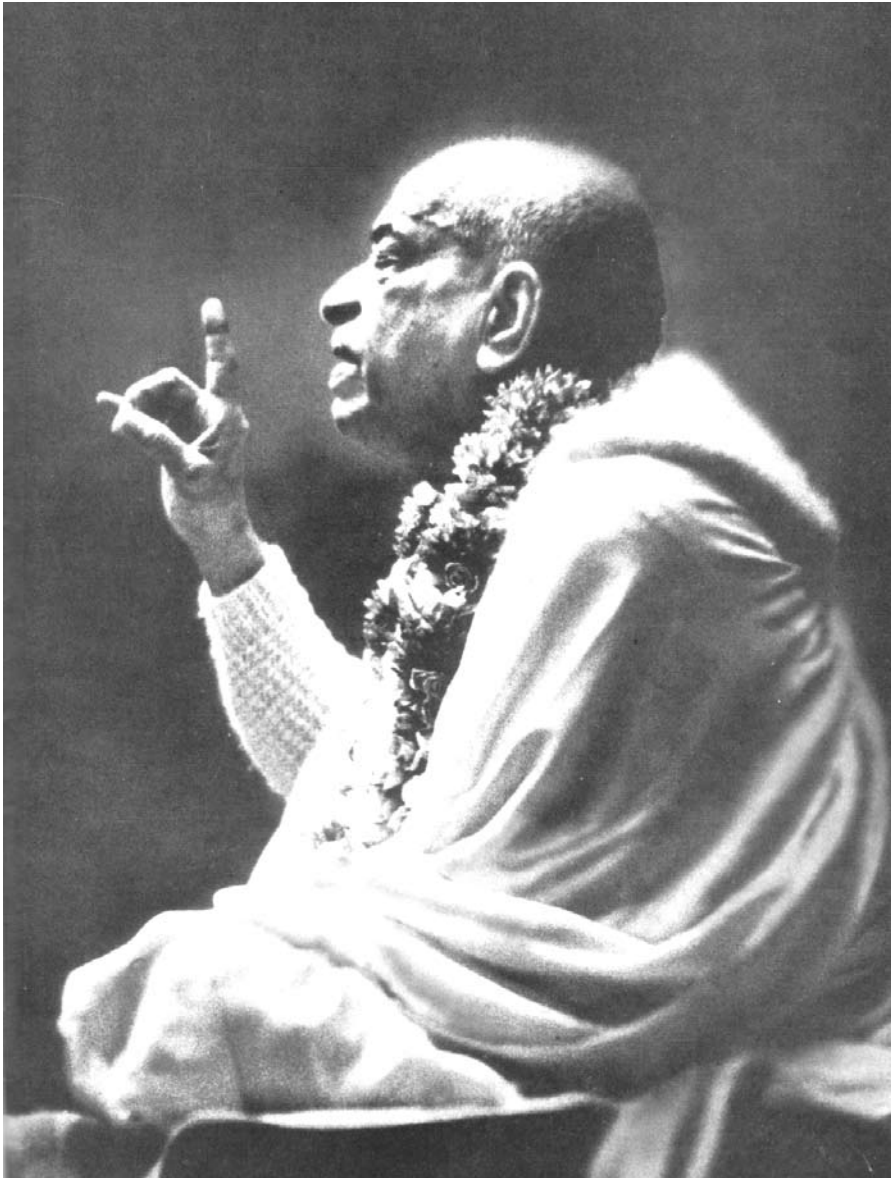
by Hari-sauri dasa which was a reply to Krishna Kant's paper "Hari-sauri's Minutes Turn Back the Clock"

TIME OUT FOR

HARI SAURI'S MINUTES



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“When I order,

“You become guru,” he becomes regular guru. That’s all. He becomes disciple of my disciple. That’s it.”

(SP CONVERSATION 28/05/75)



by Krishnakant

TIME OUT FOR HARI SAURI'S MINUTES

This is a response to: *'The Minutes of the Timeless Order.'*

by Hari-sauri dasa, which was a reply to Krishna Kant's paper *"Hari-sauri's Minutes Turn Back the Clock"*

Firstly we would like to thank H.G. Hari Sauri prabhu (henceforward 'the author') for his time and trouble in attempting to answer our various concerns. It is obvious he has put a lot of thought into his paper, and it does indeed incorporate some insights which we feel make a valuable contribution (though perhaps not to the authors intended conclusion) deserving serious consideration. We would also like to apologise for the length of this reply; this is because we have carefully answered the author's entire paper 'point for point' which itself was quite substantial.

Below we shall reproduce sections of the author's paper with our comments in response following. We shall also state the page number of the author's paper in bold above each relevant section for ease of reference.

Yet More Contradictions:

We shall start by exposing some serious contradictions, which appear in the author's paper, between his position and that of the GBC as expressed in the paper *'Disciple of My Disciple'* (DOMD). This is particularly damaging since the author quotes DOMD within his own paper as an authoritative and accurate explanation for how Srila Prabhupada authorised *diksa* gurus for after his departure. First we quote the author:

'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'...

'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.'

'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.'

In the above the author clearly states that the eleven nominees were 'to all intents and purposes' full-fledged *diksa* gurus even in Srila Prabhupada's presence. Contrast this with the position of DOMD:

"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."

[DOMD]

So our question for the author is - 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 also acting as a type of *diksa* guru. 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 the author seriously contradicts the very body he is supposedly defending.

We shall now go through the author's paper systematically, page by page:

PAGE 1

1) One sentence from the Minutes is pivotal to the GBC's entire position:

According to the author, one sentence from the GBC Minutes is pivotal to the GBC's entire position:

"2) Srila Prabhupada said he will appoint several devotees who shall perform initiation in the future, even after his disappearance." (From the Minutes)

Actually we never said that 'one sentence' is pivotal to the 'GBC's entire position', this is a 'straw man' argument. It is certainly pivotal to the author's original article however.

There are a couple of points to observe in the above; a) the omission of the second sentence of the Minute; b) the stress on the word "appoint"; and c) the author's immediate attempt to link what became known as the zonal *acarya* system as being identical with the naming of disciples who would become *diksa* gurus after Prabhupada's disappearance.

a) Omission

The author significantly misses out the second sentence of the above quoted GBC Minute, which is: "The disciples they accept shall be their disciples and Srila Prabhupada will be their grand spiritual master."

The second sentence of minute 2 IS quoted in full on page 2 of our reply. Even the author quotes us quoting the second sentence in his very same paper later on. We did not quote it right at the beginning since we were merely dealing with the 'appointment' issue. The second sentence does not in any way change the fact that the first sentence was incorrect, since Srila Prabhupada did not 'appoint' *diksa* gurus, as is accepted by the GBC. This is ALL we claimed. We did not try and use the first sentence to 'defeat the GBC's entire position' or anything of such magnitude.

This is a rather slick attempt by selective quoting to isolate one section of a statement, claim that the GBC's entire position depends on it, and then defeat it. It's called the "straw man" argument and the author's papers are replete with them. But to a discerning reader, it doesn't work.

As we have shown above this itself is a 'straw man' argument. The author has thus invented a straw man argument which we never used, falsely attributed it to us, just so he could defeat it.

His whole paper simply hammers on this one central theme of "appointment" again and again thinking that the GBC's position is defeated by this. But as it happens, the GBC's entire position is not pivotal on the first sentence, but on the Minute as a whole, and especially the second sentence.

We only use the first sentence to show that the minutes were not an entirely accurate rendition of the conversation, as is conceded by the author and the GBC themselves. The second sentence only follows as a consequence of the first. It is not independent. The second sentence merely describes the relationships of the initiated to the initiator (on what basis does the author speculate that the second sentence is somehow 'especially' pivotal?) Such relationships could only ever exist IF an order for *diksa* gurus had FIRST been given. How this order was given - whether by 'appointment', 'selection' a 'nod and a wink' or whatever, is central and crucial to the whole debate. We can not just dismiss the question of how EXACTLY *diksa* gurus were authorised into existence simply because the GBC are currently united in their overwhelming belief that somehow or another they were. Without there first being authorised *diksa* gurus the second sentence is meaningless. As we have pointed out over and over again, at the end of the day the only entities Srila Prabhupada actually specifically authorised into existence were *ritviks*, who were only meant to initiate on his behalf (please see July 9th policy directive)

The essence of Srila Prabhupada's answer to the question put to him on May 28 1977 was not the business of "appointment" but that he said he would select some men who would give initiations after his disappearance AND whosoever took initiation from them would be their disciples and Srila Prabhupada's grand-disciples.

The above 'essence' theory has yet to be established. It may or may not have validity. Our paper, which the author is responding to above, ONLY dealt with the 'minutes' the author presented. If the author now wants to present another paper wherein he will modify the minutes in line with his dubious sounding 'essence' theory then we will deal with that instead. We can only deal with what he presented. He never conceded in his original paper that the minutes were not totally accurate and that instead the real 'essence' was such and such. Our original point in response to the author's original paper thus remains intact - the minutes, by the GBC's own admission, are not totally accurate. And that's all we claimed. Not that therefore on the strength of this alone the whole GBC's entire stance is debunked. The full debunking is carried out in detail in a separate paper - 'The Final Order'

PAGE 2

While it is a fact that among ISKCON leaders there is a difference of opinion on whether Srila Prabhupada "appointed" anyone or not, (there are different understandings of what "appoint" means within our ISKCON context) the fact remains that all

of them agree that he wanted his disciples to initiate after his departure.

That the above is a point of agreement amongst all the gurus and GBC's in ISKCON was never challenged by us, only the fact that no 'appointment' took place, which the author admits here anyway. The remainder of this section is designed to answer a claim that we never made, namely- 'that the GBC do NOT agree that Srila Prabhupada wanted his disciples to initiate after his departure'. Thus the rest of this section does not alter the actual point we made - that the GBC now agree that no 'appointment' took place, and thus to hold these minutes up as some sort of irrefutable evidence is perhaps unwise.

Jayadvaita Swami's clarification:

Hari-sauri dasa: What is your understanding of Prabhupada's instructions to the first 11?

JS: I get my first understanding from the paper that names them. There he explicitly appoints them as *rtviks*, to initiate disciples during his presence who would be his disciples, not theirs.

The paper that names them is the July 9th letter which says nothing about the eleven's duties being restricted ONLY to 'during his presence'. Thus H.H. is clearly speculating here, with all due respect.

JS: By reference to other instructions, given many times over, I understand that after his departure his disciples would initiate disciples of their own.

We have never seen these repeated instructions to the entire movement for Srila Prabhupada's disciples to all become *diksa* gurus immediately on his departure, in spite of repeated requests (we look at the author's 'evidence' later).

JS: By reference to the context, and especially the instructions of May 28, I surmise that he wanted the 11 *rtviks* to be the first to do this.

We could very easily replace the word 'surmise' above with the word 'speculate' with no discernible change of meaning.

Hari-sauri dasa: Doesn't the May 28 conversation say clearly that the persons he would name will give *diksa* after his disappearance?

JS: "Clearly" might be overstating the case.

We would agree with H.H. on this point

JS: But I think that 'the persons he would name will give *diksa* after his disappearance' is the most reasonable understanding of what he said.

Reasonable understanding must be based on clear irrefutable evidence. Since it is agreed the May 28 conversation does not fully or 'clearly' provide this, could the author please tell us where we might locate it? We are not very interested in wispy 'essence' theories to be honest, and as we said before we are certainly unwilling to accept minutes which everyone agrees contain inaccuracy, and do not clearly state that which is being proposed.

H.H. just said that in the May conversation it was not 'clear' that the eleven were to give *diksa* after Srila Prabhupada's departure. How can he now say it was 'eminently clear (...)' that Srila Prabhupada expected his disciples to initiate disciples of their own? The famous eleven are the only disciples who were alluded to in the May 28th conversation; if it was not clear that they should initiate, how could it be 'eminently clear' that anyone else should?

Next we can look at Ravindra Svarupa prabhu's statement:

"And it's a fact that Srila Prabhupada never said 'alright here is the next *acarya*, or the next eleven *acaryas* and they are authorised gurus for the movement, for the world.' He did not do that."

(His Grace Ravindra Svarupa prabhu. San Diego 1990)

Ravindra Svarupa prabhu's comments on this quote:

RS: This seems to be something I said during the San Diego debate, for which I have no transcript. I don't remember the specific context.

Perhaps because the video of the debate was outlawed by the GBC in unpublished minutes.

RS: What I meant by that statement is what I have always held: First, that Srila Prabhupada did not appoint select men to be his successor *acaryas*. *Acarya*, in the sense of the head of an institution, is an office, and it is possible to appoint someone to that office, and Prabhupada did not do that.

Where does Srila Prabhupada ever teach that there are two forms of initiating *acarya*, one who is allowed to head up an institution, and one who must not? This would appear to be a Gaudiya Matha type interpolation.

RS: Rather, in the first line of his will, where an *acarya* traditionally names his successor at the head of the institution, Srila Prabhupada named the GBC.

Where does Srila Prabhupada teach this so-called tradition? Also, it should be pointed out that the GBC were only authorised to manage existing systems of management, not disband them and begin unauthorisedly initiating their own disciples.

RS: Then, did Prabhupada appoint some people as gurus? Since guru is not an office, like *acarya*, the idea of appointment is not appropriate.

Why? Where is it stated that an *acarya* can appoint 'acaryas' but not 'gurus'?

RS: It is not that by appointment I can suddenly 'become' a guru. I think Prabhupada made this clear in the May 28th conversation:

(PAGE 3)

Prabhupada: And Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, *amara ajnaya guru hana*. One can understand the order of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, he can become guru. Or one who understands his guru's order, the same *parampara*, he can become guru. And therefore I shall select some of you."

(Srila Prabhupada May 28 1977)

"The condition for being guru is that one understands his guru's order. And Prabhupada said that he would select those he thought the most qualified.

Where does Srila Prabhupada say 'I will select those of you I feel most qualified?' We can not see this sentence above.

RS: He indicated this 'selection' by the appointment of *ritviks*.

How did Srila Prabhupada 'indicate' anything about the selection of *diksa* gurus merely by 'appointing' name-giving *ritvik* priests? This is complete speculation. We have already shown that the order from Lord Chaitanya, as conveyed to us by Srila Prabhupada, is for instructing gurus who follow the orders of their spiritual master, not a blanket endorsement for anyone to become a *diksa* guru (please see '*Best Not to Accept Any Disciples*').

RS: This did not magically turn them into qualified gurus. (This is the danger of the 'appointment' idea.) They had that capacity, but whether they fulfilled it or not was up to them. They were not the exclusive, hand-picked, chosen few. Prabhupada didn't want that. Yet people were expecting him to give some indication of who would initiate after his departure. So he did so when he appointed *ritviks*, who mistakenly thought of themselves as appointed successor *acaryas*.

They WERE initially an hand-picked chosen few. They were specially selected to act as *ritviks*, the question is who told them they could stop, and then become *diksa* gurus?

Clearly Tamal Krishna Maharaja did not reject the essence as stated in the GBC Minutes - that Prabhupada said he wanted his disciples to accept disciples - he only rejected the idea that Prabhupada "appointed" the first 11 men to be gurus and no one else.

This appointment theory arose because of the inaccurate GBC minutes which the author is still stubbornly promoting as solid evidence. His new 'essence' theory has yet to be established. As far as the GBC paper DOMD goes, even in the quote the author supplies, his point is not supported:

"There is no appointment of gurus or successors, only a recommendation that certain disciples start the natural process."

(The entire GBC, in 'Disciple of my Disciple' page 4 which was released only last year)

Whether the word "appointment" or the word "recommendation" is used, the essential understanding recorded in the Minutes is obviously upheld in DOMD, that Prabhupada's disciples were authorized by His Divine Grace to become *diksa* gurus - "the natural process."

If the so-called 'Appointment Tape' is so 'eminently clear' why is it the GBC and their supporters are unable to agree on the important detail of exactly HOW the 'gurus' came into existence - this is the issue - HOW the end product came into being - not the fact that they all agree that the end product must somehow exist. Also where does this 'natural process' concept come from? Where is it stated that to act as *ritviks* first is the 'natural process' by which one goes on to become *Diksa* Guru? How long has this 'process' been 'naturally' going on for, and where does Srila Prabhupada teach about this 'natural process'?

As we see above the different interpretations or even rejection of the idea of "appointment" did not and does not alter the acceptance of the central understanding, as the GBC Minutes record, that on May 28 1977 Prabhupada did state that he would select some of his disciples who would give *diksa* after the time of his departure.

We all agree that the GBC all believe that *diksa* gurus were authorised. It is the specifics and EVIDENCE for this supposed authorisation we would like to see.

The GBC and senior devotees who brought about the “guru reforms” in 1987 all agreed that this was his actual intent, even if they didn’t agree on the idea of “appointment.”

(PAGE 4)

Call it what you will - “selected” “appointed” “recommended” - the simple fact is that Prabhupada categorically confirmed that he wanted his disciples to give initiations and that the persons who they initiate would be their disciples. This is the actual “understanding” of what Srila Prabhupada said on May 28. It was recorded in the Minutes to that meeting, it was recorded on tape, it is confirmed by the persons who directly participated in that meeting and this has never at any point been rejected by the GBC.

If it cannot be decided HOW exactly Srila Prabhupada ‘categorically confirmed’ that his disciples were to be *diksa* gurus, then how can we jump to the next step and be sure that this DID actually occur. The only ‘selection’ that was made was for *ritviks*. This much is accepted by everyone. The author still has not made it clear how exactly the selection of the *ritviks* was the same as the selection of *diksa* gurus as well. To first ‘categorically’ decide whether they were ‘appointed’, ‘selected’, ‘ordered’, ‘expected’ or ‘understood’ to become *diksa* gurus and HOW this was done, would be a good start on the way to convincing us that the entire ISKCON guru edifice is not one massive deviation.

RS: And it’s a fact that Srila Prabhupada never said ‘alright here is the next *acarya*, or the next eleven *acaryas* and they are authorised gurus for the movement, for the world’. He did not do that.”

(San Diego 1990)

I’ll give the final word to Ravindra Svarupa prabhu:

RS: It was clear to everybody that Prabhupada wanted *diksa* gurus after him.

How was it clear? Where is it stated in Srila Prabhupada’s books or in policy directives to the movement or in GBC resolutions approved by Srila Prabhupada that this was what he wanted?

RS: But a *diksa* guru and an appointed successor *acarya* are hardly the same thing.

Where does Srila Prabhupada mention these different types of *diksa* guru? All initiating gurus must be authorised or ‘appointed’ by their predecessor *acarya*, this principle is stated in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (4.8.54); whether they head up an institution or not is completely irrelevant.

RS: All I’m saying is that Prabhupada didn’t appoint one or many successor *acaryas*. That’s quite different from saying that he didn’t want anyone to be *diksa* gurus. Can the distinction between successor *acarya* and *diksa* guru be so subtle that Krishna Kant Desai cannot grasp it?”

In the quote above from the San Diego debate H.G. Ravindra Svarupa prabhu says that Srila Prabhupada never said the eleven were ‘authorised gurus for the movement’. Again if these eleven, who are the only disciples alluded to on May 28th, were not ‘authorised gurus’ then how could anyone else be? And if they were not ‘authorised gurus’ why did they act as such, why are they still acting as such (those who are left) and why did they allow others to do the same in the mid eighties? Also there are serious questions surrounding H.G. Ravindra Svarupa’s triple *acarya* theory which are addressed on pages 40-42 of ‘*The Final Order*’

Now we’ll see why “appoint” is controversial.

c) Linkage of the Minutes with the Zonal *Acarya* system

By trying to link the Minutes with the discredited so-called zonal *acarya* system, the author obviously hopes to discredit the Minutes by association. But we should bear in mind that when the Minutes were written the zonal *acarya* system did not exist nor had even been conceived of. The Minutes stated in simple terms the answers to straight forward questions put directly to Srila Prabhupada. What was given at that time was the PRINCIPLE - that disciples Prabhupada would recommend would give initiations. Much later on, in trying to APPLY that principle, the zonal *acarya* system developed (and it wasn’t called that either until well into the mid-80s). As Ravindra Svarupa and Tamal Krishna Goswami point out above, the term “appoint” had connotations that lead to a misunderstanding of applying the order.

The principle, as it is now understood and taught by the GBC, is not that ONLY those selected by Srila Prabhupada could be guru, or the ones who are selected by those who were selected could become gurus. The current GBC understanding is that everyone - every man, woman and child who is an initiated disciple automatically has the right to be a *diksa* guru on the departure of Srila Prabhupada. Thus the word ‘appointed’ led to both a mistake in the application AND principle, since for so many years devotees were held back from initiating, and not allowed to properly follow the ‘law of disciplic succession’. The author eagerly supported this deviation from principle, just as he today enthusiastically endorses the concocted M.A.S.S.

Further H.H. Jayadwaita Maharaja, whom the author has quoted above, also agrees that the activities of the GBC between 1977-86 constituted a deviation from both application AND spiritual principles:

4. The GBC instituted, encouraged, and for many years belligerently and obstinately defended symbols, rituals, practices, teachings, and structures subversive to the unique importance of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder-*Acarya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

13. After Srila Prabhupada's disappearance, for many years the GBC systematically misrepresented Srila Prabhupada's teachings and instructions about carrying on the disciplic succession.

14. The GBC instituted, encouraged, and for many years belligerently and obstinately defended symbols, rituals, practices, teachings, and structures meant to create and perpetuate for a small group an elite status to which they were never entitled.

(Several Grievances Against the Members of the GBC, H.H. Jayadwaita Swami, March 5, 1987)

Thus here Maharaja admits that there was more than just the 'application' which went astray.

In 1987 when the GBC and reformists dismantled the zonal *acarya* system, they were rejecting a bad application and thus the "appoint" concept took a beating. But they did not reject the principle or the central "understanding", that Prabhupada's disciples should initiate others into Krsna consciousness because he knew it to be the actual desire of Srila Prabhupada, confirmed on May 28. The author has tried establish his case by smudging the line between principle and application and this is a mistake.

NO. As we have explained above, the activities between 1977-1986 also led to the wrong PRINCIPLE being applied since only those who were 'appointed' by Srila Prabhupada or 'appointed' by those who were 'appointed' by Srila Prabhupada were allowed to initiate. This directly violates the GBC's much heralded principle, the 'law of disciplic succession'.

To recap the author's claim:

"Thus the 'understanding' of what Srila Prabhupada supposedly said on May 28th 1977, as recorded in these hand written minutes, has already been rejected long ago by the GBC, the very body the author is using these minutes to defend." As we see from the above, the GBC has never rejected the "understanding" of what Prabhupada said as recorded in the Minutes and it is misleading to claim otherwise.

The 'understanding' which was inspired by the author's cherished GBC minutes, led to a massive deviation from principal and application, as explained above, and the idea of an appointment was the foundation of that 'understanding', which has since been rejected.

2) May 29 - July 9 axis:

Since the GBC, along with its staunchest defenders, no longer accept the GBC's hand written minutes as accurate, we do not see why we should either, particularly since they contradict Srila Prabhupada's signed policy statement on how he wanted initiations to run within ISKCON (the July 9th order).

As I have just pointed out, the Minutes do accurately reflect the "understanding" of Srila Prabhupada's stated desire on May 28.

How can they when they are based on the idea that Srila Prabhupada had only appointed eleven successor acaryas, an idea which has since been completely rejected? The author is continuing to confuse two separate issues - the fact that Srila Prabhupada's disciples were supposedly meant to initiate after Srila Prabhupada leaves; and HOW this was to occur. It is the latter issue which concerns us, and which lies at the very heart of the controversy. Though the minutes may sanction the former idea, they definitely state that the latter comes about only through appointment. This is the idea which was rejected by the GBC. The simple fact therefore remains that the minutes may well support the notion of *diksa* gurus coming into being. No one has challenged the fact that the GBC has always believed that SOMEHOW *diksa* gurus must arise. Further since Ravindra Svarupa, H.H. Jayadwaita Swami and H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami have clearly said that no appointment took place, (Ravindra Svarupa even said the very idea was not 'appropriate') how did this erroneous idea enter into the minds of the GBC in the first place? In Topanga Canyon H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami said that even thinking that they were 'selected' was a mistake.

Nor, as the author claims here, do they contradict the subsequent letter of July 9.

The letter is diametrically opposed to the minutes, since the entities described therein were only authorised as *ritviks* to officiate on Srila Prabhupada's behalf. The minutes wrongly reported that Srila Prabhupada had appointed successor acaryas who would initiate their own disciples. This is all very obvious stuff, surely beneath the author to have to have it pointed out.

Rather the opposite: the exchange of May 28 in which Prabhupada said his disciples would initiate after his departure and have disciples of their own set the scene into which the July 9 letter fits.

Where on the tape does Srila Prabhupada say “my disciples will initiate after my departure and have disciples of their own”? Let us see what he DOES state:

1. He will soon name *ritviks*/officiating acaryas.
2. His disciples will initiate and have disciples of their own IF he orders.

When was the order ever given? DOMD claims it is the words ‘*On My Order*’ on the tape which issues the order. The author claims it is the order to be *ritviks* on July 9th. Others have claimed the order is timeless and was merely re-confirmed on May 28th. Will the GBC and their apologists please make up their minds.

In none of the official transcripts of the May 28th conversation does Srila Prabhupada ever once link the emergence of *diksa* gurus with his departure. He clearly states that such entities could only exist when he ‘ordered’ (‘on my order’ ‘when I order’ ‘but by my order’) It is becoming increasingly clear that this specific order for *Diksa* gurus was never issued. The only order was for *ritviks* and instructing gurus.

Without understanding the May 28 directives the July 9 letter cannot be properly understood. It does not stand alone.

The May 28 conversation does not issue anyone with any specific directives, it merely has Srila Prabhupada making known his intention to appoint *ritviks* at some future time, and that *diksa* gurus would be dependent on his ordering them. A specific ‘directive’ was only issued later on, in the July 9th statement of initiation policy. Over one hundred identical ‘directives’ were sent all over the world indicating the initiation system which was to operate within ISKCON. Once more, why was it stopped?

As I pointed out in brief in my original comments on the GBC Minutes, on May 28 Prabhupada, with phrases such as “grand-disciple” and “disciple of my disciple”, and by stating his intention to recommend some of his disciples to act as “officiating acaryas” who he confirmed when asked would give *diksa*, and by saying he would select some “of you” to be “gurus”, unequivocally answered the question as to what would happen after his departure.

The above is patent falsehood. Terms such as “*grand-disciple*” and “*disciple of my disciple*” are only spoken in connection with the phrases ‘*on my order*’ ‘*when I order*’ and ‘*but by my order*’. To suggest otherwise is tantamount to lying. Once again, where was this order ever issued? The only order we have seen was for *ritviks*. Does the author possess some other directive from Srila Prabhupada that has remained hitherto hidden? If so it would be opportune for him to produce it.

The July 9 letter was born out of another consideration (i.e. not the question of post departure initiations), yet unresolved.

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The enquiry put by Tamal Krishna Goswami on July 7 was as to how initiations would go on while Prabhupada was still present but not willing to accept new disciples himself.

When did Srila Prabhupada ever say he was unwilling to accept new disciples?

Tamal Krishna: Srila Prabhupada? We’re receiving a number of letters now, and these are people who want to get initiated. So up until now, since your becoming ill, we asked them to wait.

Prabhupada: The local, mean, senior *sannyasis* can do that.

Prabhupada had stated 5 weeks previously on May 28 he would select some men to be gurus, and so to solve the current dilemma of July 7, he gave the actual names.

Here we see the author claiming that the selection of the *ritviks* was the selection of gurus. But this is a contradiction. Srila Prabhupada stated in May that he was going to name some *ritviks*. Now the author claims that the naming occurred to resolve the ‘dilemma’ in July. Yet in May he clearly indicated that he was going to name individuals in order to solve the problem of what to do ‘particularly when he was no longer with us’. Now we are told that the naming only occurred because he wanted to resolve a ‘dilemma’ that had nothing to do with when he was ‘no longer with us’, but to solve an alleged problem which was only relevant during his presence. Srila Prabhupada never said in May that the appointment or naming of individuals would be done in order to solve an upcoming ‘dilemma’. Where is the evidence for this?

However since he had also said several times before, and repeated on May 28, that it was the etiquette that in the presence of one’s own guru one could not be guru, he confirmed that the people that were to be accepted by these “*ritviks*” would still be his own disciples.

He does not mention anything about etiquette in the July 7th conversation, thus the author is speculating when he links it to the selection of *ritviks*.

There was no need to restate what would be the status of the new initiates AFTER his departure; he had already established that just five weeks before in response to a direct enquiry on the subject by the whole GBC - “disciple of my disciple.”

Srila Prabhupada only stated that he was going to name *ritviks*. He never said that the *ritviks* he was soon to name were to be

diksa gurus. He clearly states two things:

I shall recommend some of you. (as *ritviks*)
Be actually guru, but by my order.
When I order, "You become guru," he becomes regular guru

1. Something he is definitely going to do - the appointment of *ritviks*.
2. Gurus arising only when he ORDERS them.

The two things are not the same - the definite naming of *Ritviks*; The CONDITIONAL creation of GURUS through an ORDER.

Srila Prabhupada never linked the emergence of *diksa* gurus AUTOMATICALLY with his DEPARTURE in the May 28th conversation, as anyone who reads it can see.

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.

The above is total nonsense. If this was not a 'final order' then presumably the author has one which was issued after July 9th. Could we see it please? Where is it stated by Srila Prabhupada that the *ritvik* system would only be an 'interim order'? How did this order for *ritviks* somehow get those named functioning as gurus even in Srila Prabhupada's presence? All they did was accept persons they had most likely never met, as disciples of Srila Prabhupada, and issue them a name. What has this got to do with being a *diksa* guru who, by definition, accepts and instructs (through his teachings) his own disciples. The author is clearly very confused here about what the *ritvik* system actually entails.

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,

This is complete nonsense. Within the *ritvik* system new disciples all belonged to Srila Prabhupada alone. The author should really sit down and read the final order on initiation instead of trying to speculate around it.

for on October 18 he was approached for initiation by an Indian man who flew in all the way from New York:

Prabhupada: Hare Krsna. One Bengali gentleman has come from New York?

Tamala Krsna: Yes. Mr. Sukamal Roy Chowdury.

Prabhupada: So I have deputed some of you to initiate. Hm?

Tamala Krsna: Yes. Actually... Yes, Srila Prabhupada.

Prabhupada: So I think Jayapataka can do that if he likes. I have already deputed. Tell him.

Tamala Krsna: Yes.

Prabhupada: So, deputies, Jayapataka's name was there?

Bhagavan: It is already on there, Srila Prabhupada. His name was on that list.

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?

Tamala Krsna: Stopped doing what, Srila Prabhupada?

Prabhupada: This initiation. I have deputed the, my disciples. Is it clear or not?

Giriraja: It's clear.

Prabhupada: You have got the list of the names?

Tamala Krsna: Yes, Srila Prabhupada.

Prabhupada: And if by Krsna'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.

Giriraja: We will explain to him so that he will understand properly.

Prabhupada: Hm? Hm?

Giriraja: I said we will explain to the Bengali gentleman just as you have described to us, so that he'll be satisfied with this arrangement..

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*.

Thus we now have a brand new theory - that by giving a name the *ritviks* were also taking the *karma* in Srila Prabhupada's presence! This new theory is so unbelievably silly we can hardly conceive of how the author could have written it. Anyone initiated within the *ritvik* system was automatically accepted as Srila Prabhupada's directly initiated disciple, and hence would be having his sinful reactions directly annihilated by Srila Prabhupada. The fact that above Srila Prabhupada indicated that he may or may not continue personally participating in the system is completely irrelevant. When he says 'I shall begin again, or I may not' he could not be referring to the acceptance of *karma* as he would be doing this anyway since anyone initiated by his 'deputies' or *ritviks* would be his direct disciples. Clearly Srila Prabhupada is simply referring to his sitting in on local initiations.

This had already been pointed out by Tamal Krishna Goswami on July 7

Maybe, but not by Srila Prabhupada.

- 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. He "deputed" Jayapataka Swami to do the initiation and stated "I stop... I may not be pressed in this condition to initiate." Yet as a matter of etiquette the persons the first 11 initiated were still to be considered Prabhupada's disciples during his presence; and afterwards, as he stated on May 28, they would be his grand-disciples.

That means that Srila Prabhupada would accept their *karma*, so why does the author suggest above that Srila Prabhupada did not want to do this? In fact the *ritvik* system allowed him to accept *karma* in vast quantities from all over the world on a greater scale than ever before. How does this demonstrate an unwillingness to accept *karma*?

This etiquette was clearly expressed by Srila Prabhupada on a number of occasions:

"Please accept my blessings. I have received so many letters from both of you and I am replying today summarily, especially your joint letter dated July 27, 1968, and Jaya Govinda's letter dated August 19, 1968. The first thing, I warn Acyutananda, do not try to initiate. You are not in a proper position now to initiate anyone. Besides that, the etiquette is that so long the Spiritual Master is present, all prospective disciples should be brought to him. Therefore if anyone is anxious to be initiated, he should first of all hear our philosophy and join chanting at least for three months,

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and then if required, I shall send chanted beads for him if you recommend. As we are doing here. Don't be allured by such maya. I am training you all to become future Spiritual Masters, but do not be in a hurry."

-- Letter to Acyutananda and Jaya Govinda -- 68-08-21

Above we see Srila Prabhupada's standard method for dealing with ambitious deviants who were allured by the MAYA of becoming unauthorised initiators - they are 'warned' and told the etiquette that PREVENTS them from initiating NOW.

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

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 Godbrothers, they are all acting. Similarly, all these disciples which I am making, initiating, they are being trained to become future spiritual masters.

Mohsin Hassan: How many swamis do you initiated, American? I'm speaking just on...

Prabhupada: About ten.

Mohsin Hassan: You have ten swamis. And outside of swamis, what's the lower...

Prabhupada: Now, they're competent. They can, not only the swamis, even the ghrasthas, 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. Otherwise, they are competent. They can make disciples and spread. They can recruit more members in this. They do, but they are being trained up. Just like here in this meeting, one of my disciples, he is acting as priest. It is not myself; he is acting. So some of my students, they are acting as priests, some of them are swamis, so they are competent to make disciples."

-- Conversation Detroit July 18, 1971

We address this quote later.

"So far as your taking initiation from Brahmananda Maharaja, I have no objection, but it is the etiquette that in the presence of one's Spiritual Master, one does not accept disciples. In this connection, Swami Brahmananda may write me and I will instruct him."

-- Letter to John Milner March 24 1971

Again see how Srila Prabhupada PREVENTS an initiation by stating that it cannot happen now.

"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."

--- Letter to Tusta Krishna, December 2, 1975

Once more we see an example of Srila Prabhupada endeavouring to PREVENT initiations in his presence. Clearly PRIVATE let-

ters like this can not be applied universally. Besides, as mentioned many times previously, none of this evidence was available till long after Srila Prabhupada's departure, and thus cannot be legitimately used to modify the July 9th order.

"So we have to follow the *acarya*. Then, when we are completely, cent per cent follower of *acarya*, then you can also act as *acarya*. This is the process. Don't become premature *acarya*. First of all follow the orders of *acarya*, and you become mature. Then it is better to become *acarya*. Because we are interested in preparing *acarya*, but the etiquette is, at least for the period the guru is present, one should not become *acarya*. 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 *acarya*. Not that "Now people are coming to me, so I can become *acarya*." That is *avamanya*. *Navamanyeta karhicit*. Don't transgress this etiquette. *Navamanyeta*. That will be falldown. Just like during the lifetime of our Guru Maharaja, all our Godbrothers now who are acting as *acarya*, they did not do so. That is not etiquette. *Acaryam mam vijaniyat na avaman...* That is insult. So if you insult your *acarya*, then you are finished."

-- Lecture Adi Lila 1.13, Mayapur April 6 1975

A good warning to any other disciples who might be getting unauthorised ideas to initiate in the presence of Srila Prabhupada. And of course it is not just a question of the *acarya* leaving the planet before the disciples may initiate their own disciples. They must first have attained the level of mahabhagavat and been personally authorised to initiate by their predecessor *acarya* as is stated in Srila Prabhupada's books.

To recap then: 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. Having done that, as he indicated on May 28, it was perfectly natural, and according to his desire that they simply carry on as gurus after his departure.

Firstly Srila Prabhupada NEVER said that 'he will select some of his disciples to be gurus and give initiations', this is a blatant falsehood. At the end of the May 28 tape segment (ignoring the fact that the tape is currently inadmissible as evidence) in a section unrelated to H. H. Satsvarupa Maharaja's first question, Srila Prabhupada simply repeats what is found in the purports surrounding Lord Caitanya's order for everyone to be guru - that one who understands the order of Lord Caitanya or his representative is qualified to be a guru. Srila Prabhupada then says he will 'select' some disciples who are qualified to understand the order of Lord Caitanya and his representative. THIS in itself makes one a guru, as described in the purports to Lord Caitanya's instructions on this subject. But the order ITSELF given by the guru was to be *ritvik* only. Therefore to understand THIS order the recipients should have continued acting as *ritviks*. Srila Prabhupada never 'activated them' as 'full-fledged gurus', and so the whole argument falls down. If this did occur the author should tell us where and how. Srila Prabhupada had 'activated' eleven of them to give names without consulting him. Furthermore, how could they have any role as *diksa* guru since Srila Prabhupada simply said 'whoever is nearest'. As His Holiness Tamal Krishna Goswami Maharaja has so nicely explained:

'Now I understand that what he did was very clear. He was physically incapable of performing the function of initiation; therefore he appointed officiating priests to initiate on his behalf. 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. 'In order for me to manage this movement', Prabhupada said, 'I have to form a GBC and I will appoint the following people. In order to continue the process of people joining our movement and getting initiated, I have to appoint some priests to help me because(...) I cannot physically manage everyone myself.'

'And that's all it was, and it was never any more than that, you can bet your bottom dollar that Prabhupada would have spoken for days and hours and weeks on end about how to set up this thing with the gurus, because he had already said it a million times.'

(Topanga Canyon Confessions, 3/12/80)

The *ritviks* clearly WERE appointed. The Gurus were NOT. How then is the appointment of *ritviks* the creation of *diksa* gurus? Neither were the gurus 'selected':

'Unfortunately the GBC did not recognise this point. They immediately (assumed, decided) that these eleven people are the selected gurus.'

(Topanga Canyon Confessions, 3/12/80)

3) No talk of appointments on May 28:

It should also be pointed out that nowhere in the controversial May 28th tape does Srila Prabhupada say anything about

appointing *diksa* gurus for after his departure.

This is quite an amazing statement to say the least. Here's the relevant parts of that conversation again which speak for themselves:

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Here the author reproduces the May 28th conversation. We have already covered this extensively in such papers as 'The Final Order' and 'The Final Order Still Stands'. The author does not even attempt a point for point rebuttal of these papers, but instead offers his own speculative analysis.

We see here that Tamal Krishna Goswami specifically states that the *ritvik* acaryas, officiating, give *diksa* and asks whose disciples will the new initiates be. Srila Prabhupada does not correct him and say, "No, the *ritviks* don't give *diksa*."

There was no need for any correction since the word 'officiating' is there, which makes it clear that H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami is not talking in an 'initiating' sense, as he explained in Topanga:

'He was physically incapable of performing the function of initiation; therefore he appointed officiating priests to initiate on his behalf. 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.'

Rather he confirms that they do by answering that the new initiates are "his disciple" meaning the disciples of the person "who is initiating." And just to make sure the relationships are clearly understood, after a short pause he states that in relationship to himself they are "grand disciple."

Using H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami's above explanation the who 'who is initiating' is Srila Prabhupada. The *ritviks* were only to be assigned as officiators.

We should note this clearly: that in a single response to Tamal Krishna Goswami's rejoinder, "They are his disciple" Prabhupada in two sentences establishes the new initiates' relationship in two ways showing their link with two separate entities.

Tamala Krsna: They're his disciple.

Prabhupada: Who is initiating. (Short pause) He is grand-disciple.

- a) In the first sentence he indicates their relationship with the initiator - ("They are his disciple") "Who is initiating."
- b) After a short pause indicative of a change in subject, in the second sentence he establishes the relationship of the new initiate to himself - "He is grand disciple."

Now, as is admitted, there is a SUBJECT CHANGE. The disciples are his; grand-disciples will only arise when he 'orders' - "his grand-disciple ... when I order 'you become guru', he becomes regular guru, he becomes disciple of my disciple"

He does this specifically because Satsvarupa dasa Goswami got a little confused about the relationships between the three parties - the initiator, the initiated, and Srila Prabhupada.

Having noted that, we then see Prabhupada immediately repeat exactly the same thing again in his next remarks. Although the GBC are now clear on the point and are ready to move on, he continues on the same subject just to make sure and says:

"When I order, "You become guru," he becomes regular guru. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple. That's it."

So then, where is the order?

Without it the author's case collapses like a house of cards.

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He repeats the technique: he states the position of the initiator by saying "he becomes regular guru," which in the context of the discussion about initiations clearly means the initiated person is the disciple of the initiator (because if it were otherwise there would be no question of them being a "regular guru"); and again he makes his own relationship with the new initiate clear: "he becomes disciple of my disciple."

This is the way that all the persons present understood it, Srila Prabhupada saw that they understood it in this way and was satisfied they had understood properly and thus this is the way we should understand it.

But where and when was this 'order' that leads to regular gurus and disciples? This is the crux of the whole debate. You cannot skate over the VERY point that is at the centre of the entire issue.

The whole question is simply about what will happen regarding initiations particularly after his departure; it begins with Prabhupada immediately responding "Yes. I shall recommend some of you," And ends with "And therefore I shall select some of you."

But only as *ritviks*. Also he is talking here of making a selection for after his departure. Then we are told by the author that he only makes a selection to handle a 'dilemma' that was only relevant before departure. How are the two the same?

So how the author can state "nowhere in the controversial May 28th tape does Srila Prabhupada say anything about appointing *diksa* gurus for after his departure" is a mystery to me; we have already discussed the use of the word "appoint" and we saw that it does not affect the essential understanding that Prabhupada clearly wanted his disciples to be *diksa* gurus after his departure.

Where did Srila Prabhupada ever issue such a blanket authorisation for *diksa* guruhood? It could not be in the May 28 conversation because there Srila Prabhupada only alludes to persons he will personally appoint. Those eleven persons were personally appointed as *ritviks*, not *diksa* gurus. Even H.H. Jayadvaita Goswami Maharaja does not think it is clear the eleven were selected to act as *diksa* gurus, so why on earth should we?

Perhaps the author thinks that by making such a bald statement the sheer blatancy of it will establish the point and no one will bother to read Srila Prabhupada's actual words.

When we read the 'words' in the conversation we do not see any clear statement from Srila Prabhupada that 'his disciples were to be *diksa* gurus' on his departure. We only see a desire to name *ritviks* at some point in the future; and the emergence of 'regular gurus' WHEN the SPECIFIC order is given. And a desire to select some disciples who can 'understand the order of Lord Caitanya' and Srila Prabhupada, and become gurus in that sense.

***Note*:** In another paper by the author entitled "*The Real Appointment Tape*" (TRAP), he points out that there are differences in some transcripts, notably in the statement made by Srila Prabhupada: "Who is initiating. (He's) (He is) (His) grand-disciples."

Since "He's" and "He is" are the same in meaning, the choice lies between "He's" and "His". The author makes the following claim:

5) Also there is no reason to suppose that Srila Prabhupada did say 'He's' as opposed to 'His', since such an interpretation would not make any sense. The pronoun 'He' (from He's) before the term 'grand-disciple' refers to the person BEING initiated, the initiate, or the 'grand-disciple'. However in straight-forward standard English the pronoun usually refers to the immediate ante-cedent (the term that the pronoun follows). In this case that term is 'who is initiating'. It is obvious therefore that in this case the pronoun CANNOT be 'HE' because how can the INITIATE, the person being INITIATED, or 'grand-disciple', simultaneously be the person 'who is initiating'!

6) Even if we allow for the ante-cedent that the pronoun refers to, to not be the most immediate, there is actually NO ante-cedent for the pronoun 'HE' to refer to in the whole conversation, since the speaker Srila Prabhupada has never previously mentioned nor alluded to the initiate, or the person BEING INITIATED, in the singular. The only time previously in the conversation that the speaker or the questioners, ever mention the initiate, it is ALWAYS in the plural. ('Yes, THEY are disciples.') Thus a speaker cannot just introduce a pronoun that has no ante-cedent. It does not make sense. In other words the 'HE' has to REFER to something. But it can not refer to something that has not yet even been mentioned.

7) However the use of 'His', does make sense, since this use CAN be consistent with the most immediate antecedent, 'who is initiating'. In this case the 'HIS' MUST refer to Srila Prabhupada since the '*ritvik*' cannot have grand-disciples. Srila Prabhupada would then also be the person 'who is initiating'.

This logic is flawed for at least two obvious reasons:

In order to justify his distorted interpretation of the May conversation the author, as well as the GBC in DOMD, goes to great trouble analysing the way in which Srila Prabhupada's words are arranged in the conversation. Then the author states:

Firstly, most spoken English is rarely strictly grammatically correct and especially so with Srila Prabhupada. Throughout this very conversation there are numerous instances of violations of grammatical rules in his speech. So to insist on applying strict grammatical rules in this one instance is specious. The author resorts to this because it's his only chance to make the statement appear to fit his own theory.

If the above is true then how will we ever know for sure if anyone's interpretation is correct? (That is leaving aside the issue of key words being in dispute due to inaudibility and alleged falsification). How can the author assume, with absolute certainty, that his interpretation is correct, and ours is not? Why is it that he is allowed to interpret the tape on the basis of his understanding of Srila Prabhupada's use of grammar, but not us?

If we have a scenario whereby: 'especially with Srila Prabhupada his speech is rarely strictly grammatically correct', then we can read almost anything we want into the conversation. According to the author the rules of grammar will only strictly apply 'especially' 'rarely' on this occasion. Furthermore, who is to decide when the rules of grammar do and when they do not apply? The author is more than happy to invoke normal grammatical rules to support his understanding, but happy to reject them when someone else uses them. By his above assertion how can we ever deduce anything with any certainty from Srila Prabhu-

pada's speech, unless we first determine:

- a) When the rules of grammar apply 'strictly';
- b) When they do apply, just HOW 'strictly';
- c) When they do not apply at all 'strictly';

d) Who will decide the above 3, and on what basis?

All the author has succeeded in doing here is support the whole premise of *'The Final Order'*, that the letter is a clear expression of Srila Prabhupada's order, and that many interpretations (and indeed versions) of the tape have been made, and are possible.

Neither have we only picked this ONE instance. We have tried to apply normal grammar rules all the way through. In the circumstances one would have thought it safer to just stick to Srila Prabhupada's books, approved GBC resolutions and official policy directives. Unfortunately the author would rather speculate endlessly around a conversation which he himself, his linguistic experts, H.H. Jayadvaita, Ravindra Svarupa prabhu, and the authors of DOMD, admit is not so clear. This point comes up later on where the author brings in linguistic experts who make some rather interesting observations.

Secondly, in his insistence on being grammatically correct about the pronoun, he renders the subject complement "grand-disciple" grammatically incorrect. Obviously if the new initiates are disciples of "Who is initiating" and that is Srila Prabhupada it would mean that he was calling his own disciples his grand-disciples. This makes no sense whatsoever. The term "grand-disciple" is the spiritual equivalent of "grandson" which according to the American Heritage dictionary means literally "A son of one's son or daughter." Thus "grand-disciple" means "A disciple of one's disciple."

There has never been an instance where Prabhupada has called his own disciples as his grand-disciples. The only time he has referred to them as grand-disciples is when he was referring to their relationship with his own guru, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur. The use of the word "grand-disciple" by Srila Prabhupada in the May 28 conversation was for clarification, not more confusion. It can only mean one thing: that the new initiate is the disciple of his disciple, and this he repeats for emphasis in his follow-up statement:

Prabhupada: When I order, "You become guru," he becomes regular guru. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple. That's it.

Therefore the statement "Who is initiating" can only refer to Prabhupada's disciple, not to himself; and the second sentence is correctly rendered as "He's (He is) grand-disciple" as is found in the above transcript.

[There is further discussion on this topic later in this document under 12) The real Issue?]

This is nonsense. The subject complement has already been given - They're his disciples. The phrase *'his grand disciple'* is connected to the next phrase as the author admits, and follows a 'change of subject' by Srila Prabhupada.

I will discuss this grammatical argument in more detail in another separate response to TRAP. However, because I want to here deal with the current issues contained in the author's response "Hari Sauri's Minutes....." I will not elaborately answer his mistaken claims here.

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4) Strange Questions

The author goes on to comment about the questions the GBC recorded down in the Minutes to be asked to Srila Prabhupada:

- 3) In the absence of Srila Prabhupada what is the procedure for first, second, and sannyasa initiations?
- 4) What is the relationship of the person who gives this initiation to the person he gives it to?

Above are two of the questions the GBC determined should be asked of Srila Prabhupada prior to the May 28th 1977 conversation (as reproduced from the GBC minutes book by the author in his article).

The reader might like to consider question 3) in relation to the picture, often painted by GBC's and their apologists, of how the M.A.S.S. was automatically 'understood' by every devotee since it was 'what Srila Prabhupada always consistently taught for ten long years, and was our tradition for millions of years before that.' We are often quoted the 'law of disciplic succession' as something which was clearly recognised and mentioned hundreds of times by Srila Prabhupada - everyone just becomes a *diksa* guru on the departure of the *acarya*- no question about it. Today, if a devotee even questions the above assumptions, he is labelled an offensive moron, wholly bereft of transcendental insight. So why did the GBC ask this question in May 1977? Note it is not asking about the procedure for creating or selecting these 'inevitable' *diksa* gurus; nor is it seeking to clarify the implementation of this well known and customary 'law of disciplic succession', but rather how initiations would continue AT ALL. Thus we have the most senior devotees in the entire movement, who within a year were being worshipped as though they were as good as Lord God Almighty, all asking the dumbest question imaginable- (according to the current paradigm of intimidation). There are a couple of considerations here;

a) Mood; b) Prabhupada's statements prior to this meeting regarding 'succession'.

a) Mood

Srila Prabhupada had personally requested the GBCs to come to him with questions specifically pertaining to what would happen after his departure.

As a matter of interest is there any evidence that it was Srila Prabhupada who called the meeting and not the GBC. Especially since the conversation opens with H.H. Satsvarupa Maharaja stating the following:

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

The GBC honestly responded to Srila Prabhupada's request and took their duty very seriously. A disciple should never be presumptuous before his spiritual master and the GBC were certainly not in the mood to presume anything, even if they already had a good idea of what their duties were after Prabhupada's departure.

Clearly they did not since they operated a completely bogus zonal *acarya* system for nearly an entire decade, driving away thousands of innocent dissenters in the process.

Prabhupada told them to ask, and they did so.

Where is the evidence for this - see above?

We can understand why such questions were required. Considering what had happened to the Gaudiya Matha, Prabhupada wanted his most trusted disciples to be very clear it about what was to be done after his departure.

Then he would surely not have been satisfied with the May 28 conversation since the author, and his linguistic experts, admit that it is not at all clear since nothing said necessarily obeys grammatical rules. Certainly he would have issued an official declaration, either in the form of an approved GBC resolution, or as a signed policy directive (which the author's linguistic experts say DO obey grammatical rules). Such is the July 9th order.

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Thus questions regarding the GBC body, the process of initiations, some BBT work and the protection and management of ISKCON properties were highly relevant and were all brought up at various stages during those meetings.

It is interesting to note that the answers to all the above questions were put in writing in official approved documents under Srila Prabhupada's direction (such as the final will and the July 9th order). Why does the author not insist that the final will for instance, be superseded by all the possible twisted interpretations of all the conversations which undoubtedly led to its formulation?

Actually, honest questions to the spiritual master, even if one thinks one knows the answer already, are never the "dumbest imaginable" for a submissive disciple can always learn more, even if the subject is repetitive. As Prabhupada was often fond of quoting:

"Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself said, 'My Guru Maharaja, My spiritual master, considered Me a great fool.' He who remains a great fool before his guru is a guru himself. However, if one says, 'I am so advanced that I can speak better than my guru,' he is simply a rascal."

That is why we should accept Srila Prabhupada's *final order* without thinking we know better.

Of course, for a person who has never experienced full surrender to a spiritual master and has never placed submissive enquiries to a spiritual authority for clarification or confirmation, such a process of enquiry or the questions asked, might seem the "dumbest thing imaginable." But spiritual life is not conducted according to one's imagination but according to transcendental principles of submissive service and enquiry. For those of us who had spent many years living and breathing for the satisfaction of Srila Prabhupada, it was a perfectly natural process.

By this same logic why did the GBC not also ask if they should carry on chanting 16 rounds, worshipping Deities, holding kirtan and avoiding sinful activity? Why did they only ask about initiations if Srila Prabhupada really had clearly described the M.A.S.S. over and over again for the 11 years previous, just as he had these other points?

b) Prabhupada's statements prior to this meeting about 'succession.'

Its a fact that throughout the years of his preaching in the West Srila Prabhupada talked openly about his desire to have his disciples initiate their own disciples after his disappearance and gave many statements about the responsibilities of the GBC as managers of the Society. Here are a few of those statements:

Please note that not one of the following quotes simultaneously mentions the terms 'initiate'/'*diksa guru*' and departure or even '*ritvik*', thus how they can be considered directly relevant baffles us.

"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."

(Let. to Hansadutta, 3rd December, 1968)

"From the life of Narada Muni 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."

(Let. to Tamala Krsna, 21 June, 1970)

Prabhupada: Ah, no problem. G.B.C. means now they should travel very extensive. That is the first principle. Not sit down in one place and pass resolution. No, they must be active. They must act like me. As I'm old man travelling all over the world. Now to give me relief the G.B.C. members... I shall expand into twelve more so that they can exactly work like me. Gradually they will be initiators. At least first initiation. You must make advance. That is my motive. So, in that way I want to divide it in twelve zones. And you have to make propoganda throughout the whole world. Now if you think that the world is so big twelve members are insufficient, then you can increase more than that and make the zone similarly divided. It is world affair after all.... [...]

He has to manage so much. So extensively touring means for the mission expanding, that is the point. Simply touring not required. Do something substantial to increase the interest of the society. That is the point. So, Karandhara has got many departments so he can be given to (indistinct). So, his position is like that. Similarly Bali Mardan's position is there. He can be also if he has got many engagements, many departments manager. He may not tour but our only aim is that one must take multi-responsibilities.

(25 May, 1972)

"...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..."

(Vyasa-Puja address, London, 22 August, 1973)

"Every student is expected to become *acarya*. *Acarya* 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 recognized by Krsna 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."

(Let. to Tusta Krsna Swami, 2 December, 1975)

"...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 Caitanya 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 Krsna in helplessness."

(Mayapur meeting with the GBC March 1976 - Satsvarupa Das Goswami, Lilamrta VI, page 167)

Reporter: Do you expect to name one person as your successor or have you already?

Prabhupada: That I am not contemplating now. But there is no need of one person. As other things are managed, but by committee, so this can also be managed, and the committee may elect one person as chief. As, just like in the democracy there are senators and there is president, so it may be I may nominate or they can nominate.

-- June 4 1976 Room conversation with reporter

Interviewer: What happens when that inevitable time comes a successor is needed.

Ramesvara: He is asking about the future, who will guide the Movement in the future.

Srila Prabhupada: They will guide, I am training them.

Interviewer: Will there be one spiritual leader though?

Srila Prabhupada: No. I am training GBC, 18 all over the world.

(SP Interview, 6 June, 1976, Los Angeles)

Interviewer: I was wondering if he had a successor to do... Do you have a successor to take your place when you die?

Prabhupada: Not yet settled up. Not yet settled up.

Interviewer: So what process would the Hare Krsna...?

Prabhupada: We have got secretaries. They are managing.

Ramesvara: He has appointed from all the disciples a group of secretaries. Each one is in charge of a different sector of the world.

Interviewer: How many secretaries?

Ramesvara: Presently there is eighteen.

Interviewer: And so that group of eighteen secretaries will choose another leader?

Prabhupada: I am training each one of them as leader so that they can spread extensively. That is my idea.--

(July 14 1976 Interview with Time)

Srila Prabhupada: Everyone of us [is] messiah. Anyone Krsna conscious, he's the messiah. Everyone. Why...? All of us '*Gaurangera bhakta-gane, jane jane sakti dhari, brahmando tari saksi*': 'The devotee of Lord Caitanya, everyone has so immense power that every one, 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 you are not? You are my disciples.

Devotee: We're like the bugs.

Srila Prabhupada: 'Like father, like son.' You should be. '*Gaurangera-bhakta...jane*'. Everyone. Therefore, Caitanya 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 a guru. Where is the difficulty. --

(Morning Walk, 13 April, 1977, Bombay)

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 *acarya*. You become authorized.' I am waiting for that. You become, all, *acarya*. I retire completely. But the training must be complete.

Tamala Krsna: The process of purification must be there.

Srila Prabhupada: Oh yes, must be there. Caitanya Mahaprabhu wants. '*Amara ajnaya guru hana*.' You become guru. But be qualified. (Laughs) Little thing, strictly follower. --

(Room Conversation - 22 April, 1977, Bombay)

"That night, Srila Prabhupada asked Aksayananda Maharaj, 'Are you ready to initiate disciples? I want to retire now.' Aksayananda replied that with Prabhupada's order came the ability to carry it out; therefore, he was ready." --

(From "TKG'S Diary" by Tamal Krishna Goswami, page 41, May 20th, 1977)

From the above, we can see that Srila Prabhupada talked about all of his disciples becoming gurus in the full sense, of

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not only giving *siksa*, which they were doing anyway, but in the sense of giving *diksa* and accepting disciples of their own.-----

The term *diksa* is not mentioned once in any of the above quotes. Aside from one quote (given on page 6, conversation Detroit July 18, 71), where *diksa* could be implied, it is always in relation to ambitious deviants, in letters which were never seen until the mid-eighties and are thus irrelevant. All the others must only refer to *siksa*. We shall reproduce below a section from our paper '*Institutional Catechism*' which deals with a large proportion of this type of evidence.

Appendix 2: Evaluating the Evidence:

In the '*ritvik* catechism' (as in the authors paper), the GBC present a quote from Srila Prabhupada (Detroit) where he speaks of his disciples being qualified to take on the role of *diksa* guru. We will discuss all such statements made by Srila Prabhupada in the 11 year period that ISKCON was running during his physical presence. There are actually only 6 examples in all. We are only listing those where the issue of Srila Prabhupada's disciples specifically initiating is mentioned, since only this evidence could conceivably be used to support the removal of Srila Prabhupada as the initiating guru for ISKCON, and the subsequent construction of the M.A.S.S. We have not been able to find any other quotes, neither have the GBC ever presented any others, so we shall take as complete the following list which is presented chronologically:

Letter to Acyutananda; X 2
Letter to Hamsaduta;
Letter to Tusta Krishna;

**Letter to John Milner;
Detroit July '71**

[(Letter to Madhusudana) - No mention of taking disciples just preaching. Also only spoken in relationship to Kirtanananda's desire to become a premature spiritual master. Srila Prabhupada simply cautions that he wants to encourage his disciples to preach and become gurus but cautions there is no question of doing so unless the spiritual master is pleased and followed.]

1. All evidence is in the form of private letters (except Detroit) which are not necessarily universally applicable.
2. In all cases the letters were issued as a reaction to some premature attempt at being a *diksa* guru, which needed to be blocked.
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 accident in 1986; the Detroit tape was only available last year (1997) in either recorded or transcript form.
5. Such letters were only ever sent to some of the most ambitious deviants in the society. Why seriously promise *diksa* guru-hood only to those least qualified?
6. Srila Prabhupada never insisted on the letters being published - ONLY "if time". Therefore how could their contents be considered vital appendages to the final order?
7. The whole emphasis of the letters is to stop the devotees concerned from being *diksa* gurus now, and at least waiting until after his departure. Delaying something is not the same as recommending it.
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.

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 (1997). 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?

So why did Srila Prabhupada make such statements in the first place if he did not really mean them? Here are our thoughts on the matter:

The private letters were clearly worded in order to control ambitious, potentially deviant disciples. By offering the guru carrot, there was at least the possibility that they would carry on in devotional service and thus in time become purified. Such letters always tell them to wait, and not to do it now. Hardly enthusiastic encouragement.

With regards Detroit, 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. 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.

The encouragement given in Detroit was never repeated to the entire movement, nor written into any GBC resolution or published book. Just one mention in a conversation to a one-off visitor to a temple in 1971, and which was not uncovered until twenty years after Srila Prabhupada's departure.

Some may wish to reject the above as speculation, but then they will still need to answer the above eight points. The many other calls to become guru have been dealt with in previous papers. In essence they refer to becoming instructing spiritual masters, not *diksa* gurus. This is clear since they will incorporate one or more of the following elements:

- No mention of Srila Prabhupada's physical departure
- No mention of qualification;
- Mention of amara ajnaya verse;
- Word 'guru' used to indicate teacher/instructor - no mention of terms 'initiate' or '*diksa*'.

He specifically mentions a number of times that this will be done after his disappearance or in his absence. From 1968 through 1977 he maintained a steady consistency in this.

As shown above this is simply not the case.

So most GBCs knew this. At the same time, he had, as we see in the later years, sometimes hinted at variations. He talked about all his disciples being gurus;

He most certainly did not talk about his disciples acting as *diksa* gurus. Where is the GBC resolution, approved by Srila Prabhupada, which states any such thing? It is sheer fantasy.

he talked about the GBC members being his successors, each one in charge of a particular zone;

Yes but not acting as *diksa* gurus. We are all acting as successors if we are carrying on Srila Prabhupada's mission, but only in an instructing capacity.

he suggested they might elect one amongst them to be the chief among them; he talked about specifically naming some persons - "I shall say who is guru" - and he asked a particular disciple who was not a GBC if he was ready to initiate disciples.

Thus on May 27-29 when the GBC were called for what could have been, and did turn out to be, a final meeting with His Divine Grace, they were perfectly correct to not assume anything, but to ask Srila Prabhupada for a final confirmation when he specifically asked them to. And we see that he did in fact confirm everything he had so consistently said before.

The author is contradicting himself quite badly when he argues on the one hand that since Srila Prabhupada had hinted at all kinds of possibilities, or 'variations', the GBC had to ask what was going to happen since they were unsure; and then on the other hand argue that Srila Prabhupada's May instructions 'confirmed everything he had so consistently said before'. How can you be simultaneously consistent and variant?

In any event, let it never again be argued that the M.A.S.S is unquestionably correct since it is simply following the normal standard tradition. According to the author the *acarya* can do practically what he wants, and we must simply follow. Of course the author's great open mindedness and humility before his guru's every wish does not seem to extend to the July 9th order.

5) Serious doubts on Question 4:

The author goes on:

Other serious doubts arise when we look at question 4). It is just unbelievable that such a question could ever have been conceived of, unless there had been some prior mention of '*ritviks*' or 'officiators' by Srila Prabhupada. It would be totally unnecessary, what to speak of plain daft, to ask- 'what will be the relationship between those who are *diksa* gurus and those who are their disciples'!! Thus the very fact that question 4) was even asked forces any rational person to conclude that the one thing the GBCs were not expecting to be appointed was straight forward 'regular vanilla' *diksa* gurus. The GBC must have had some idea that *ritviks*, or some similar such entities, were on the cards. If not, perhaps the author can enlighten us as to why such questions were ever asked? (We raised this issue regarding question 4) on page 8 of 'The Final Order Still Stands' and have never received an explanation).

Since the author feels that he has never received an explanation I will try to supply one now (*this is not withstanding that a complete response to the Final Order is currently being drafted and after editing will be released by the GBC later this year*).

It is not "plain daft" to ask what would the relationships be. It was proper to be open to correction by Srila Prabhupada rather than assume an absolute understanding. We can consider two statements made in April and May, just prior to the GBC formulation of their questions on May 28:

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. I shall produce some gurus. I shall say who is guru, 'Now you become *acarya*. You become

authorized! I am waiting for that. You become, all, *acarya*. I retire completely. But the training must be complete."

- April 24 conversation

"That night, Srila Prabhupada asked Aksayananda Maharaj, 'Are you ready to initiate disciples? I want to retire now.' Aksayananda replied that with Prabhupada's order came the ability to carry it out; therefore, he was ready." --

(From "TKG'S Diary" by Tamal Krishna Goswami, page 41, May 20th, 1977)

These comments indicated that it was possible that Prabhupada may start some of his disciples giving initiations even in his own presence. Since it was known that there was an etiquette about disciples not accepting disciples in the presence of their own guru, the GBC therefore felt it pertinent to get a clear statement from Srila Prabhupada just what the relationships would be.

The above paragraph does not make sense since the 'etiquette' only applies whilst the guru is still present. The question on May 28th was posed particularly in relation to after departure when such etiquette was no longer applicable. Thus we ask again, why was this question asked unless there was already some prior notion that proxies were on the cards?

As we see from the July 9 letter, Prabhupada, in responding to the question of how initiations would go on while he was still with us but not willing to do it himself, qualified the appointment of his *ritviks* by saying that the persons they initiate would be his disciples.

The above is called mental speculation. Where did Srila Prabhupada ever state he was setting up the *ritvik* system only for use during his presence since he was not willing to do it himself?

This was to satisfy the etiquette that he mentioned on May 28 in response to the first "plain daft" question put to him by the GBC.

Says who?

It was something different from the previous standard, an interim arrangement that he revealed within the context of stating that after his departure the persons the *ritviks* would initiate would be their disciples and his grand-disciples.

Srila Prabhupada never ever once stated that the *ritviks* would initiate their own disciples. The above is sheer nonsense. The only evidence the author has is a conversation which he concedes obeys no grammatical rules and is not clear.

As it turns out, the GBCs' second question was quite prescient. Even though the relationships were clearly stated by Srila Prabhupada in response to the "plain daft" "dumb" questions, there are those that even now cannot, or will not understand.

The questioning by the GBC on May 28 was handled as incompetently as their response to this issue. If the GBC were so 'prescient' one might ask why, after their clever questioning, they went on to operate a completely bogus zonal *acarya* system and in the process banish, ban and intimidate many innocent dissenters in the process, just as they do today over the M.A.S.S.

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The author says

"Thus the very fact that question 4) was even asked forces any rational person to conclude that the one thing the GBCs were not expecting to be appointed was straight forward 'regular vanilla' *diksa gurus*."

This statement highlights the author's biggest problem. He feels that his own rational thinking and analysis of the facts is better than simply enquiring from the GBC what they were actually expecting and why they asked the questions they did.

Whenever we have enquired from the GBC we have simply been offered a miasma of discordant testimony. This is a problem for everyone who cares about ISKCON and desires a GBC worthy of respect. This does not answer the question, why was question 4 ever asked?

Of course, he has a particular reason for making such conclusions and thus he cannot see the facts in an objective fashion nor hear objectively from those that were there and were directly instructed by Srila Prabhupada. However, the GBC cannot be subjected to his mental projections anymore than Srila Prabhupada was to ours.

Even the GBC might blush at this last sentence - comparing the GBC to Srila Prabhupada

As I have pointed out, honest disciples have to assume nothing about what is in the mind of their spiritual master, but proceed on the basis of real inquiry. The fact was that from all the indications given by Srila Prabhupada over nearly 11 years the GBC would have had every right to expect Srila Prabhupada to confirm that he wanted his disciples to become "regular vanilla *diksa gurus*." But because the opportunity was given, they wanted to get a final confirmation from him that this was so. That is the transcendental system.

As we have shown Srila Prabhupada never once issued a general instruction for his disciples to all initiate after his departure. Honest disciples will eventually decide to stop making up stories and humbly follow Srila Prabhupada's final order, of that we are convinced.

6) Minutes Not an Accurate Record:

We appreciate the author's honest admission on his point of inadvertent misrepresentation.

Anyone who reads all the materials mentioned can see that the Minute clearly states what Srila Prabhupada clearly stated:

"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."

The only possible discrepancy lies in the writing of the word "appoint" rather than "recommend" and "select" which were the two words Srila Prabhupada used.

There is also the small matter of Srila Prabhupada saying nothing about the *ritviks* initiating their own disciples. It is certainly not clear to H.H. Jayadvaita Maharaja that the conversation recommends or selects any future *diksa* gurus. It seems the author is slipping back in time once again to those glorious zonal days of yore.

However, none of the four different transcriptions of the tape vary on the point about Prabhupada saying his disciples would initiate disciples of their own after his departure.

Srila Prabhupada never once links the emergence of *diksa* gurus with his departure, but only with an order, which he never gave.

They only vary on small differences which do not affect the essential understanding and meaning. Again I remind the readers that the author's claims that they do, with his dispute of the phrase "He's (His) grand-disciple" and his attempt to show from this that Prabhupada was speaking about himself in the third person, is completely specious and renders the conversation meaningless.

The author himself states that the conversation does not follow grammatical laws. At least our interpretation is in line with the July 9th letter which is extremely clear and authoritative, employing excellent grammar.

7) A thick plot?

The author goes on:

AUTHOR'S PRINCIPAL EVIDENCE (IN BOLD):

For the purpose of recording information, Srila Prabhupada's answers to the above questions were given as follows:

- 1) GBC members shall remain permanently. If a GBC member leaves, the GBC can appoint new GBC members.**
- 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.**
- 3) New translations of Vedic works can be published in the future, even after Srila Prabhupada's departure, but they can only be done by one who is very expert. At present, Srila Prabhupada acknowledged, there are very few such men.**

THE PLOT THICKENS:

As already stated these minutes are not hard evidence for what Srila Prabhupada intended or stated, since they were neither authored, checked or signed by him, (unlike the July 9th letter).

Whatever the author means by the phrase "hard evidence" (my dictionary says "real or unassailable" as one possible meaning) what appears in the GBC Minutes book as a record of their exchange with Srila Prabhupada is indeed an accurate statement of what Prabhupada intended.

It most certainly is not. Srila Prabhupada never says that *ritviks* own disciples, the very suggestion is absurd. *Ritviks* are by definition not initiators, they are officiators. Is this really so hard to understand?

(the use of "appoint" does not change the intention, which was to select some of his disciples to give initiations).

Srila Prabhupada never selected or appointed disciples to be *diksa* gurus. We thought that had been established. Ask H. H.

Jayadvaita Maharaja. It is not clear to him from the May 28 conversation that the eleven were specially selected to act as *diksa* gurus for the future. Indeed when the final order was issued he asked H.H. Satsvarupa Maharaja to go back and check with Srila Prabhupada whether they had been appointed or selected as gurus. As we all know H.H. Tamal Krishna would not allow H.H. Satsvarupa Maharaja in to see Srila Prabhupada for confirmation - (See memoirs of 1977 by H.H. Satsvarupa Maharaja)

Furthermore, as Prabhupada's duly authorized representatives the GBC were empowered by him to run the affairs of the Society and their records are legal and official evidence of their proceedings. And as we can observe, the July 9th letter, duly signed and authorized by Srila Prabhupada, states what the Minutes state - that at the GBC meeting Prabhupada said he would appoint some of his disciples to give initiations. Thus Prabhupada himself confirmed the statement of the Minute.

The above is just dishonest nonsense. Nowhere does the July 9th letter in any way corroborate the warped understanding promoted by the GBC in their inaccurate rendering of the meeting in their minutes book. The eleven chosen disciples were only authorised to initiate on Srila Prabhupada's behalf. The author must know this.

8) A typed report of the meeting:

"Further we have in our possession a typed version of these very minutes in the form of a GBC report which was allegedly distributed soon after this meeting. This typed report of the meeting is identical in all respects to the hand-written GBC minutes book (as above), except for one important omission, minute 2), the very same minute the author deems pivotal to his entire case. This minute for some reason, has been totally removed."

The existence of a subsequent typed document with Minute 2 missing does not mean it is missing from the original, nor missing from the tape of the conversation, nor missing from the memories of the GBCs who asked the questions. Since I haven't seen it I can't say why the document the author has contains this discrepancy, who typed it, nor whether it is even an official ISKCON document. Furthermore, the author very carefully says "allegedly distributed." Was it distributed or not? If it wasn't then it is valueless. If it was, then let the author produce the document, in its entirety, for all to see. Perhaps we can figure out why this is missing from it or ask the person who produced it. There again, perhaps the document contains other information that the author does not want us to see and that is why he has not reproduced it here. He is very keen to dice and splice every little word and quote away ad infinitum. Why has he not produced this mysterious document? Or perhaps this is simply a red herring, produced for the purpose of creating suspicions in the mind of the innocent. The plot thickens indeed.

If the author would like to see it we can send him a copy.

9) Whiffs of Intrigue :

It seems that whenever the GBC or their apologists bring up the May 28th conversation as a means of modifying the final July 9th order, they simply raise more questions than they answer i.e.,- tapes exhibiting strong signs of falsification, written minutes which do not properly correspond with a contemporaneously typed report, suggested appointments which have long since been rejected etc. Thus the whiff of intrigue merely grows stronger by the day.

a) It seems that whenever those who seek to analyze the May 28 conversation and the July 9th letter without consulting with those that were actually there make a presentation, they seek to conjure up spectres of intrigue and suspicion.

The persons who were actually there drastically misunderstood what Srila Prabhupada wanted with disastrous results, by their own admission. We can hardly do worse than that. We can hear the tape and read all the transcripts and signed documentation for ourselves. Plus we now have folio which was not available then. So it could be argued that we are better positioned now to make a judgment than at any time since Srila Prabhupada was with us physically.

This is of course necessary in order to create inroads into the minds of the innocent to make them receptive to the unlikely and convoluted explanations they put forth; but such whispers of plots, whiffs of intrigue and suggestions of falsifications are

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merely another ploy and also show a duplicity on the part of the author: With the above statement the author goes against his own so-called methodology stated in the beginning of his paper *Final Order*:

"We have no interest in conspiracy theories, nor do we intend to dredge up the gory details of unfortunate individuals' spiritual difficulties. What is done is done. We can certainly learn from previous mistakes, but we would rather help pave the way for a positive future of re-unification and forgiveness, than dwell too long on past scandal. As far as the authors are concerned, the vast majority of devotees in ISKCON are sincerely striving to please Srila Prabhupada; thus we consider it highly unlikely that anyone is deliberately disobeying, or causing others to disobey, a direct order from our Founder-*Acarya*.

In the above we hoped to wipe the slate clean and allow everyone to look afresh at the issue. To establish *ritvik* one does not need to invoke some kind of conspiracy theory. We feel we established our case fully in '*The Final Order*' without once mentioning the word conspiracy (except once in the excepted passage). However since writing this paper we were shocked by the

sheer dishonesty of the select committee who were supposed to answer our concerns. Fifty percent of DOMD comprises of nothing but lies innuendo and straw man arguments, (please see *'The Final Order Still Stands'* for details). Also since then we have had the forensic examiner's report, etc. Even now the author has failed to answer why the GBC asked what the relationship would be between *diksa* gurus and their disciples. With these types of dealings it is hardly surprising suspicions become aroused.

b) As far as the other whiff of intrigue goes - "tapes exhibiting strong signs of falsification" - this is worth examining in more detail, if only to exorcize the ghost and lay it to rest.

Let's look at the introduction and summary of the report from Norman Perle, the forensic expert who examined it [I left out the detailed points given by Perle because of the length of them but they are available]:

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There are three considerations from the above:

1. The 'unexplained' stops and starts on the tape Perle examined.
2. Perle's examination of a copy of the original.
3. The question of "legality" as it applies to ISKCON.

1. "Unexplained" stops and starts on the tape Perle examined.

As it is, there is a simple explanation for the starts and stops on the tape. I personally recorded Srila Prabhupada almost every day for about 10 months. I was the first one to use a cassette recorder rather than the old reel-to-reel. My habit, which was emulated by my successor recordist, Tamal Krishna Goswami, was to use a tape until it was full. Consequently, multiple short conversations may be found on many of the tapes, replete with the necessary stops and starts. Not only that, if there was an extended break in a conversation we had the habit of pausing or stopping the tape recorder and then starting up again when the conversation restarted. Thus it is not surprising that the tape Perle examined has many stops and starts. There are heaps of tapes just like it in the Archives.

The author now seems to feel he is more of an expert than Mr. Perle with regards tape analysis. The report specifically said that until a full forensic analysis was done the entire tape was suspect. The initial analysis was quite superficial and yet even so turned up six points of concern. Until a full forensic is carried out it is not possible for the author to state that it is all fine, just someone turning the tape on and off.

Why they were "unexplained" to Norman Perle is easy to explain. Here's what Badrinarayan prabhu, the Chairman of the commissioning committee has to say:

"[After setting up the committee] The question was the funding. Mrgendra contacted Kalakantha and agreed to pay, if he could be a member of the committee. So we added him. He is the one who found Mr. Perle and it went from there.

We found out later on that Mrgendra had a heavy rtvic bias. He also offered poor instructions as to the history of our taping system, and immediately jumped on the report as soon as it came out from Mr. Perle, putting his conspiracy spin on it - that the tape was 'edited' without any attempt to offer the full explanation that the tape had starts, stops, and re-winds on it, because one tape had multiple conversations on it, as you well know. He also deliberately left out Perle's statement that the full 18+ minutes of the famous 'appointment' conversation has no signs of editing, erasures, starts and stops...rather it is 'virgin' and unadulterated."

In other words, Norman Perle was never advised to expect multiple conversations and the consequent starts and stops on the tape by the person who was dealing with him, Mrgendra dasa.

The above is full of lies and deceit. Mrigendra prabhu writes in response:

'I have been supplied with a draft copy of a paper by Hari Sauri Prabhu in which he quoted: Badrinarayan Prabhu, the Chairman of the commissioning committee has to say:

"[After setting up the committee] The question was the funding. Mrgendra contacted Kalakantha and agreed to pay, if he could be a member of the committee. So we added him. He is the one who found Mr. Perle and it went from there. "

I have reviewed my e-mail log of my correspondence with the Committee and have found, as I believed was the case, that I did not agree to try to obtain funding for the project until many months after I was made a member of the project. On May 23, 1997 I received the following, a copy of which was sent to the other members of the Committee:

From: Kalakantha@compuserve.com (Carl Woodham)

Subject: Message from Internet

To: az284@lafn.org ("INTERNET:az284@lafn.org")

Dear Mrigendra prabhu,

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a special consultant for the Initiation research committee. We all agree that we must get transcripts or tape copies to you. We would like to get your advice on how we can all properly bind ourselves to a kind of confidentiality agreement that will invoke full confidence in those we interview. Is there any standard legal procedure for this?

I only imparted upon the fund raising after 5 months of the GBC and the Committee not getting the money together for the expert tape analysis. At the start of the Committee, the members actually wrote that they thought had enough GBC funding for their mandated work. Only months later did they have an idea how expensive the tape analysis would be. If I had volunteered the funds, why did I receive many messages from the members of the Committee such as the following which was sent to other members of the Committee also:

Date: 12-Aug-97 07:09 PDT

From: Badrinarayan dasa [103471,2315]

Reply to: Tape authentication

I know that the GBC does not have this kind of money [\$850]...it just is not there. Do we tell ... and company what we are doing... tell him this is what we can afford....if they want better, they can pay for it?

Surely, if I had already agreed to pay for the project when I had joined as a "special consultant" I would have seen something directly from the committee to that effect. All of the Communication that I had with the Committee from the period May, 1997 to August, 1997 was through e-mails of which I kept a record. In this age of Kali we cannot trust the memory and that is why I keep a record. But does Badrinarayana Prabhu have any record what he claims I wrote or said. Obviously not, as several months ago I had to, in a different matter, correct his misunderstanding of an exchange by sending him a verbatim copy of the e-mail in question.

Badrinarayan prabhu, the Chairman of the commissioning committee has to say:

The Chairperson of the Committee that I was on was Kalakantha Prabhu.

The Hari Sauri papers also quoted Badrinarayana Prabhu as saying,

"We found out later on that Mrgendra had a heavy rtvic bias."

The dictionary defines bias as, "partiality; prejudice".

I think that *The Final Order* is strong and the GBC position on initiations in ISKCON is very weak and I believed so in August of 1997 and I say so today but is that enough to say that I was biased?

Badrinarayana Prabhu was also quoted as saying:

"He [Mrgendra] also deliberately left out Perle's statement that the full 18+ minutes of the famous 'appointment' conversation has no signs of editing, erasures, starts and stops...rather it is 'virgin' and unadulterated."

Left out where? I did not edit Mr. Perle's report. What else would they expect the readers of the Hari Sauri paper to think that Badrinarayana Prabhu was claiming? In the context of the Hari Sauri paper it just looks like they are alleging something to that effect, but what are they actually referring to? The fact is that I distributed the Perle Report in toto and specifically did not distribute only parts of the Report.

Badrinarayana Prabhu objected to the Perle Report being distributed after the Report came out, but I have a record in my e-mail log of a notice that I sent to all of the Committee members, before we had all of the required funds raised and before Mr. Perle was retained, in which I stated that I would be sending an e-mail to devotees requesting funds and that I would send a copy of the report to anyone who gave at least \$50 donation toward the project. Right after I sent out that message to the members of the Committee I received from Badrinarayana Prabhu an e-mail in which he responded to my particular e-mail and thanked me for the fund-raising effort.

Nonetheless, after the Report came out, he objected to it being distributed. As the report was being distributed widely, there was no need for me to give my report in the matter. Anyone who wanted to know about the Perle Report simply had to read it, and, if someone objects to what I say about the contents of the Report, we should wonder what is the problem, for, even if I did put some *ritvik* spin on the report, which I deny doing, who would care about my opinion of what is in an expert's report when they could easily read directly from the expert? I specifically recall a phone conversation with a GBC member who, very soon after the Report was being circulated, asked me what my opinion was. I told him that I did not want to get involved. He expressed some amazement, but he then said that I was very intelligent after I explained to him that the GBC will want to make me an issue in this tape issue, but I am not the issue -- the expert can speak for himself.

Incidentally, Badrinarayana Prabhu's putting quotation marks around 'virgin' and 'unadulterated' in his section:

"the full 18+ minutes of the famous 'appointment' conversation has no signs of editing, erasures, starts and stops... rather it is 'virgin' and unadulterated"

Only leaves the reader to think that those two words 'virgin' and 'unadulterated' were used by Mr. Perle, but I can find

no point in his report where he uses those words.

Later, in fact, it seems that Badrinaryana Prabhu contradicts himself in this regard by a quote in the Hari Sauri paper:

Apart from this, just to restate it again for emphasis, as we see from Mrgendra's letter to the GBC Committee, Perle found no sign of signs "suggestive of falsification" on the entire length of the section of recording of the May 28 conversation "When I asked him to confirm on the phone whether I was correct that there was no start or stop during the disputed portion of the tape, Mr. Perle did confirm that..."

Thank you and Hare Krishna!

Mrigendra das

ii. Perle's examination of a copy of the original

We note that Perle's concern is that the copy of the tape that he has is suspect because it has what he calls signs suggestive of falsification. He therefore calls for the examination of the Master to see if the two are the same. This has led some devotees to suspect that either the original tape is mysteriously missing, or perhaps the GBC or Archives are hiding the original tape and can only produce a copy that has been doctored for a particular purpose.

The rest of the points raised in this tape section can very easily be answered once the GBC have a full forensic done on the master, as advised by their own expert. Until then the following is nothing but speculative verbiage.

We should first hear from the Archives personnel themselves to clear this "mystery" up:

Are these personnel all forensic experts? If not their opinion is not conclusive.

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(Letter from Sriman Ranjit dasa, Bhaktivedanta Archives, July 14 1998):

"The important and relevant facts about the tape are:

1. The Archives has the original tape.
2. The original tape is made up of various conversations over that time period and whoever was operating the tape recorder switched it on and off at the beginning and end of these conversations.

The relevant facts about the Perle examination are as follows:

The Archives was approached by Mrgendra Prabhu and Sri Svarupa Devi Dasi to have the tape examined by an expert.... The Archives policy is that if someone wants such an original tape to be sent somewhere to be examined, a representative of the Archives must be present to prevent tampering or damage, etc. So we asked Mrgendra whether he wanted the original or would a copy be OK. He got with Perle and Perle said that a copy would be fine. So we took the DAT master (which is the archival digital copy of the tape) and we made a cassette copy of the digital master and sent this to Perle.

Fact 1 is that Perle has never examined the original.

Fact 2 is that Perle in his initial report mistook the devotee operator switching the tape recorder on and off as 'editing.'

Fact 3 is that Perle admits that the section which includes the ENTIRE appointment conversation is not edited and there is no switching on and off of the machine during this period.

Fact 4 is that Perle admits at the end of his report that no decisive conclusion about the tape can be made until the original is examined.

Fact 5 is that there are many tapes from that time period that have the same kind of switching on and off.

Fact 6 is that in brand, appearance and from the writing on the cassette case, the tape matches the others in the Archives from that time period.

Fact 7, the author knows nothing about the science of forensic analysis.

Further to complicate matters, if one were to do a true investigation one would have to resurrect the original tape recorder to see if the stop and start signatures on the tape match the signatures made by the recorder and even if you could find the tape recorder, after 20 years who knows if the mechanism of the recorder can be relied upon.

The real evidence is that the devotees at the meeting remember it taking place and remember that this is what Prabhupada said." [END]

Badrinarayan prabhu, current GBC Executive Committee Member, also stated the following in a letter to Dharmasetu dasa

dated approx. October 1997:

"The setting is that Mrgendra sent Mr. Perle (a forensic expert) the tape he got from the Archives. It had multiple recordings on it, made over several days, because that is how the taping was done in those days..... Srila Prabhupada's secretary waited until the tape was full, and then sent it off.

"Mrgendra, who has a strong bias to the rtvic side, did not give Mr. Perle any background information as to how the recordings were made. Mr. Perle's report noted 'stop' and 'start' signatures....where the tape player was shut off and then started again. As soon as these are there, the tape is considered 'edited.' But most worthy of note is that the section where the GBCs ask Srila Prabhupad about initiations in the future is certified by Mr. Perle to be unedited and uninterrupted."

Mr. Perle has not certified any part of the tape in any way shape or form. This is a lie. In a superficial examination it is possible to miss defects which only show up on a full forensic. Thus until the full forensic is carried out no-one can be sure of any section of the tape. If you do not believe us then write to Perle yourself and ask him - we have an e-mail from him dated 13/10/97 stating this.

(Note: Badrinarayan prabhu included in this letter a report from the Archives responding to every point Norman Perle raised in his analysis. Since it is lengthy I have not included it here).

Is Badrinarayan a world expert in forensic science as well as being an eminent member of the GBC? If not, how is it he is able to tell the tape is fine even before the forensic analysis has been done. He must not only be a world expert examiner, but a psychic one at that.

We see from Ranjit and Badrinarayan prabhu's reports that the decision to examine a copy was made by Norman Perle, not the Archives. And that Perle was not informed by Mrgendra about the standard method of recording Srila Prabhupada's conversations etc.

iii) The question of "legality" as it applies to ISKCON

The forensic analysis deals with the question of the authenticity of the tape that Perle examined from the point of view

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of its acceptability in a modern court of law. Clearly it is not acceptable to the courts. According to the criteria set by Norman Perle "there should be no signs of inappropriate stopping and restarting of the recorder as well as the other classifications of signs suggestive of falsification." Since there are such signs this suggests falsification of the tape and he recommends that further tests be done on the original. Note that he can only say "suggests" - he does not say they are proof.

Even if Perle examines the original, he will find the same stops and starts (Ranjit has certified that the copy and the original are the same). Does this mean the tape is suspect and should be rejected? Or do we accept it along with the scores of other recordings of Srila Prabhupada that show similar methods of recording?

Only a full forensic can show whether the stops and starts are the innocent switching on and off of the tape player, or whether deliberate editing has been done. Why does the author persist in speculating on matters he knows nothing about?

From a spiritual stand point it actually doesn't matter whether the tape is "legally" acceptable, because we know the conversation took place from other sources also - the GBC men who were there, and the GBC Minutes.

The GBC minutes were inaccurate on the key issue of *diksa* authorisation. That is suspicious in itself, and should make the author a little more cautious in his general approach to this issue. Fools rush in as they say.

Thus we do not discount Srila Prabhupada's words simply because of the method of recording them nor because a secular court might not accept them.

We just want to make sure they actually are Srila Prabhupada's words in the exact manner they were spoken at the time, that's all. The GBC investigation has shed some doubt on this, which can be easily remedied by carrying out a full forensic analysis. Why are the GBC so reluctant to do this, yet so keen to palm us off with the 'forensic' opinions of the laymen from the archives.

Apart from this, just to restate it again for emphasis, as we see from Mrgendra's letter to the GBC Committee, Perle found no sign of signs "suggestive of falsification" on the entire length of the section of recording of the May 28 conversation- "When I asked him to confirm on the phone whether I was correct that there was no start or stop during the disputed portion of the tape, Mr. Perle did confirm that..." So whether the rest of the tape "stinks" and "because of the editing ... would not be admissible as evidence in a court of law in the United States" or not, the recording of the conversation we are dealing with was admitted to be OK.

As explained, only a full forensic analysis will show whether the disputed section is clean. We hope it is since it is a good strong

piece of supporting evidence for *ritvik* particularly after departure.

In the whole of the above section we have the most unusual scenario whereby a layman is interpreting and giving a conclusive opinion on the work of an expert! It is usually the other way round! If the work of an expert could so easily be 'explained' by laymen why was he brought in to begin with? Why did not the GBC simply have the author and the archives issue a report on the tape? Why do they refuse to go back to Perle and get him to confirm the simple fact that all the 'irregularities' he detected were simply due to innocent switching on and off of the tape? This would surely settle it? Instead the GBC seem to be insisting that we must accept the words of partial laymen as final in interpreting the work of an expert.

10) The commissioning of the tape analysis:

The one point the author has curiously omitted to mention is the fact that it was the GBC themselves who were responsible for commissioning the analysis in the first place. Thus the assertion that the tape 'would be unacceptable as evidence in a court of law', is not just our 'argument', it is the considered opinion of a world expert forensic analyst (Perle) who was appointed by the GBC themselves to examine the tape! Thus the party responsible for discounting the tape as suitable evidence is not 'us' but the GBC. Of course the GBC may chose to ignore their own expert, but this in itself might appear rather suspicious. (In any event since the conversation only clearly confirms *ritvik* for after departure we are not troubled either way).

It matters little who commissioned the analysis. My point in bringing up the legal question in the first place was in response to foolish claims by others that in the light of the forensic report the May 28 conversation has therefore to be dismissed from consideration in our discussion of Prabhupada's intentions re: the giving of initiations after his departure. This idea was brought up by some *ritvik* advocates to some devotees in the Philippines after a visit I made there in January and I was asked to respond to it. And even before that, when the tape analysis first came out by someone who was involved in getting the analysis done:

"Over the past many years the GBC have used the May 28th 'Appointment Tape' to prove that Prabhupada wanted them to be gurus in their own right. They have used this 'evidence' over the July 9th letter where Prabhupada clearly appoints *Ritviks* to initiate on his behalf.

"The expert says that the tape 'exhibits strong signs suggestive of falsification' (cuts in 6 places) and would not be considered in a court of law because it is not an original unedited tape. The onus is now on the GBC to come up with the original unedited tape. If this tape does not exist then their version of the May 28th conversation cannot be accepted."

(letter sent out by Sri Svarupa devi dasi advertising on behalf of PADA.)

What Sri Svarupa dd. is saying here is that the May 28 conversation "cannot be accepted" unless the "original unedited tape" is produced. But the criteria for "unedited" that she is referring to here is Perle's - "If the preliminary analysis discovers ANY area that is significantly suggestive of falsification, then the ENTIRE recording is in question and a Forensic Analysis should be done." In other words any 'start' or 'stop' signature. That means the originals of most of the taped records we have of Prabhupada speaking "cannot be accepted" since there are very few that have no stops or starts on them. Since the GBC/BBT Archives possess the original of the conversation and it has breaks on it, only the July 9 letter, according to this logic, remains as evidence of Prabhupada's desires.

Very convenient for some, but totally dishonest.

The author's statement "Of course the GBC may chose to ignore their own expert, but this in itself might appear rather suspicious," is simply another of his attempts to rouse the spectre of suspicion and use it as a tool to refute Srila

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Prabhupada's own words. In recognition of the falsity of his own argument the author adds in parentheses,

(In any event since the conversation only clearly confirms *ritvik* for after departure we are not troubled either way).

With this statement he at least gets full marks for hutzpah. As far as reality goes, that's another thing. The conversation is far from confirming *ritvik* i.e. proxy initiations for after Prabhupada's departure. It does quite the opposite.

Ritviks are, by definition, only officiators not initiators. According to the May conversation, these officiators were meant particularly for after Srila Prabhupada's departure. The role of these *ritviks* is clearly outlined in the July 9th letter. Since *ritviks* act on another's behalf they are only proxies, thus it is clear Srila Prabhupada intended proxy initiations to continue past his departure. Srila Prabhupada never once defined the word *ritvik* to mean *diksa* guru.

11) The Whiff evaporates

After trying to predicate the mind of the reader with suspicion about the authenticity of the recording, the author then states: With regards the above minute 2 the author states the following:

First, we find written corroboration of the taped conversation in the official minutes book of the GBC. Since the minutes book would be accepted by any court of law as official evidence of the dealings of the GBC body, there can be no doubt that the said conversation took place and that Srila Prabhupada did in fact state categorically that the disciples whom he would name would accept disciples of their own, who would be his grand disciples after his departure.

The above conclusion is completely groundless. We have never doubted that 'said conversation took place'. This is not an issue of contention, and thus to even mention it is irrelevant.

Any attempt to have the conversation dismissed, (and trying to have the tape dismissed is just such an attempt) is clearly most relevant.

Yes but we have never doubted or ever even implied that the conversation never took place at all. We simply do not accept that the minutes accurately reflect what Srila Prabhupada said, and are concerned that the GBC commissioned report indicates that the tape may have been tampered with in some way

I am glad that the author does acknowledge the conversation and that it needs to be honestly dealt with.

We wish you would, rather than pretend that the word *ritvik* means *diksa* guru in the May conversation. How could anyone be more dishonest than that, and yet this is what DOMD says, and the author appears to fully endorse their position.

After deliberately introducing an element of doubt he now wants to play innocent and say it is all irrelevant. All well and good.

This really is quite pathetic. We have already explained that it was the GBC's own investigation which raised the doubts, not us.

Whether the author himself has ever tried to have the conversation dismissed from consideration due to the so-called suspect tape, is not the point; I wrote my short paper in response to claims by *ritvik* advocates who were saying just that - that the legal unacceptability rules the conversation out. If the author has his own view and wants to jump in now with his own response, that is his prerogative. Perhaps he feels his is the only voice on the *ritvik* issue, but it is not.

No I realise I am far from alone in accepting Srila Prabhupada's final order. If the tape has been tampered with then it would certainly throw the evidence into doubt.

My point was well founded and directed to the foolish attempts to isolate the July 9 letter. It is relevant and it stands.

12) The real issue?

The issue has always revolved around what was the intended outcome or conclusion of this conversation, and whether the tape is a completely faithful record of it. The GBC minutes book would merely be a record of what the GBC thought was the conclusion of the conversation. This also has never been in doubt. We all know only too well what the GBC thought, and are still thinking about what was supposed to happen after Srila Prabhupada's departure; indeed we have expended a great deal of energy in trying to modify and influence these subtly shifting mental distillations. Thus these minutes, by definition, can shed no new light on the issue at hand since they only relate what a group of people thought Srila Prabhupada said or meant, not necessarily what he actually said or meant.

What the author is saying here is that the understanding of what Srila Prabhupada said on May 28 is simply a question of whose opinion we want to believe.

No, anyone who reads the transcript, or listens to the tape can hear that *ritviks* were to be appointed particularly for after departure.

Its either his or the group of men that were in the room with Srila Prabhupada asking the questions.

A group of men who went on to operate a system everyone now accepts was utterly bogus. How can we do worse than that? Even the present system is under serious scrutiny, and may well soon also be rejected for something else.

The neutral observer has two choices.

1) Either they go by the tape, the meaning of which is confirmed by the GBC Minutes recorded just an hour or so after the conversation,

We have already established the minutes are not accurate. Why does the author now pretend they were. He still has to prove his 'essence' theory. The minutes are nothing like the conversation on the key area of *diksa* authorisation, and it is shameless dishonesty to pretend any differently.

and by the vouch-safe of the persons who were actually in the room with Srila Prabhupada asking the questions;

Who went bananas for nearly an entire decade.

or

2) They have to go by the opinion of the author, coming into the picture 15-20 years later, whose whole argument stands on his own hearing of the tape - about which he expresses doubts above as to whether it is a "completely faithful record" of the conversation!

Not my doubts, your own investigative expert, let's not forget that. Also we have access to far more information now than the GBC had then.

Taking the statement made by Srila Prabhupada "Who is initiating. He's (His) grand-disciple." the author in TRAP has produced some clever word-jugglery based on his understanding of English grammar in an attempt to establish that when Prabhupada said the new initiates would be disciples of "Who is initiating," this meant Srila Prabhupada himself.

Let's hear from a couple of devotees who happen to be English language experts just whose understanding of that

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conversation they think we should listen to:

Sriman Bharatasrestha dasa, (William G. Wall, Professor of Vaisnava Literature and Theology; BA (summa cum laude), MA, Ph.D in English) responded to a question I put to him thus:

Hari-sauri dasa: In trying to understand whether Prabhupada said, 'His grand-disciple' or 'He's grand-disciple' is it grammatically correct for the reader to refer first to the antecedent to decide? Surely in a two word sentence 'He's (His) grand-disciple' wouldn't you first look at the rest of the sentence to figure out the first word, a pronoun, rather than look back at the antecedent?"

Bharatasrestha: I would have to say that, while in formal writing a pronoun must refer to the nearest preceding noun, in speech there are few, if any, rules.

We are dealing with complex grammars operating in the 'understood' mode. Noam Chomsky built a career on that. A 2 year old's one syllable sentence is grammatically complete according to the Theory of Innate Grammar, and it is also true according to parents, who do, in fact, understand the child's utterance despite the fact that grammatically necessary ingredients have been omitted, just as those present in the room understood Srila Prabhupada to mean that after Srila Prabhupada's passing new devotees would be disciples of Srila Prabhupada's disciples. See JL Austin, Searle, Strawson, Gricce and Speech Act Theory.

"I'm sure you can find other cases where Srila Prabhupada used clipped speech, denying a pronoun its formal antecedent. If Srila Prabhupada had been writing for publication, it would be a different matter. The authority in this case, according to Speech Act Theory, would be Tamala Krishna Goswami [to whom Prabhupada was speaking]. Srila Prabhupada meant what those in the room say he meant. Period. This is, by the way, Philosophy, not Grammar."

The point about speech being taken in the "understood" mode is important. All of us have experience of gaining an understanding of what another person is saying to us without there necessarily being any real observance of grammatical rules in the exchange. Indeed, sometimes a meaning is conveyed without words at all! A conversational exchange is not just words. The intonation of the voice, the expression of the face, the movement of the eyes and eyebrows, the use of the hands and other bodily parts - body language if you will - are all important in conveying a message, and in understanding what has been conveyed.

In the exchange between Srila Prabhupada and the GBC all of this was at play and is reflected in the conversation:

Prabhupada: They're his disciple.

Tamala Krsna: They're his disciple.

Prabhupada: Who is initiating. He's (He is) grand-disciple.

The author appears to have made a mistake above since the original transcript which was checked by H.H. Jayadvaita Maharaja reads '**his grand disciple**' not 'he's' or 'he is'.

Satsvarupa: Yes.

Tamala Krsna: That's clear.

Satsvarupa: Then we have a question concer...

Prabhupada: When I order, 'You become guru,' he becomes regular guru. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple. That's it.

Satsvarupa: Next we have a question about the BBT.

When Srila Prabhupada clarified the exchange by saying "Who is initiating. He's grand-disciple,"

As mentioned above Srila Prabhupada said '**his grand-disciple**' not '*he's grand-disciple*'.

the GBC men present (not just Tamal Krishna Goswami and Satsvarupa Maharaja) all understood the same thing - that "Who is initiating" referred to Srila Prabhupada's disciple, the person whom he would "recommend" to perform *diksa*; and "He's (He is) grand-disciple" referred to the relationship between Srila Prabhupada and the new initiate. Thus they confirmed their understanding by saying "Yes" and "That's clear."

But even now the author is not clear since he has mis-quoted Srila Prabhupada. Best we stick to the July 9th letter.

They were ready to move on, but Srila Prabhupada wanted to re-iterate the point just to ensure it was well understood. Again he re-stated the same thing, in slightly different terms. About his disciples he says "When I order 'You become guru' he becomes regular guru. That's all." And about the new initiate's relationship with himself he says "He becomes disciple of my disciple." Satisfied that they have understood him clearly, he concludes this question and answer topic with "That's it." They all then move on to another topic, concerning the BBT.

It is interesting that in spite of there apparently being no grammatical rules to speech, the authors seek to establish his case by using them. How hypocritical!

For a second expert opinion I consulted with Sriman Babhru dasa, who is a thirty year disciple of Srila Prabhupada and has many years of experience teaching English at University level:

"As I look at Krishnakant's so-called analysis of this excerpt from the May 28th Conversation, I'm struck by

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how far he has to stretch to make his point. I don't think it's necessarily fruitful to perform the kind of analysis he tries to apply here.

We are happy to put aside the conversation and just stick to clear policy directives, however the GBC and its apologists keep subjecting the conversation to their own grammatical analysis. Perhaps the author should have the expert speak to H.H. Umapati Maharaja and Badrinarayan prabhu.

His assertion that 'in this case the pronoun cannot be he' seems overstated. In his paragraph 6, he also states unequivocally that 'a speaker cannot just introduce a pronoun that has no antecedent.' In fact, in conversation speakers do all sorts of things contrary to formal grammatical rules. This may be particularly so if English is not the speaker's first language. We heard Srila Prabhupada do this all the time on walks, in his room, and even in formal lectures in the temple. Examples are legion. I'm just amazed that devotees who had so much association with Srila Prabhupada would buy such an argument.

We are willing to stand corrected if the author will also desist from trying to impose his own speculative interpretation onto the conversation. If the expert thinks we are overstating and overstretching he should try reading DOMD, which also attempts to interpret the tape based on their concept of 'formal grammatical rules'. Let us just stick with officially approved documentation sent to the entire movement; that has to be the safest policy.

"There are many possible ways to read those two sentences.

Then how can the author present them as irrefutable evidence supporting his favoured M.A.S.S. theory?

Either could be a fragment ('Who is initiating,' if not a question, is a fragment; 'His grand-disciple' would be a fragment.),

At least the expert gives the correct version above- **'His grand-disciple.**

but the meaning must come from the entire conversation, not from some imputed grammatical conventions imposed on a somewhat casual conversation (casual in the sense that he was at ease with his disciples, not that the subject was insignificant). I have some sympathy with many of *ritvik* proponents' practical and spiritual concerns regarding ISKCON's policies on gurus. However, as an English teacher, an editor, and a disciple of almost 30 years' standing, I find Krishnakant's whole exercise here somewhat foolish.

"I think the simplest, most straightforward reading of this is that the two utterances on that line may well be discrete thoughts. They are probably related, but not in the most direct of ways.

It is interesting that the author is willing to entertain such speculative notions as those presented above. Had we said such things he would be down on us like a ton of bricks. At least we have tried to interpret the tape in line with the July 9 order, which after all is supposed to refer back to this conversation and act as a summary of it. Still this is the type of unfair double standards we have come to expect.

We often heard in Srila Prabhupada's conversation that he would tease out an idea with fragments (we all do it). I think that may be what he's doing here. The entire exchange is not a paragon of clarity, with pronouns switching from singular to plural and back. The communication is not the clearest. Therefore, I think that Krishnakant presumes too in

making a big case about inconsistency in number. This passage is rife with such inconsistency. I just don't think he can adequately support his argument with this.

Then how can the GBC support their own argument with it? How can the GBC use a conversation which is 'not the clearest', 'rife with inconsistency' with 'pronouns switching from singular to plural and back' as a means by which to modify a clear signed policy directive sent to the entire movement. It just does not make any sense.

"I think for anyone to interpret these things in the way Krishnakant pretends to, they would need more intimate knowledge of Srila Prabhupada's casual speech and/or some background in linguistics. I presume to make the readings here with some reservations. However, I have been listening to Srila Prabhupada daily for almost 29 years, and I have some academic training in linguistics (at least 4 courses, including psycholinguistics and socio-linguistics)." [end]

I don't think I need to add much to the opinions expressed above.

Except to say it totally undermines the author's claim that this tape can be used as solid irrefutable clear evidence to modify a signed policy directive which was deliberately sent out to the entire movement.

13) Authorship of July 9 letter

As mentioned previously, the minutes cannot be offered as irrefutable evidence for what Srila Prabhupada intended or stated, since they were neither authored, checked nor signed by him, (unlike the July 9th letter).

Once again the author makes a deliberate misrepresentation of the facts. The July 9th letter was not authored by Srila Prabhupada but by his secretary Tamal Krishna Goswami.

But the letter was '**checked and signed**' by him. We say above 'they were neither authored, checked OR signed by him. We do not say 'authored, checked **AND** signed by him.

14) Corroboration of the facts

Under the heading NON-CORROBORATION the author quotes me:

First, we find written corroboration of the taped conversation in the official minutes book of the GBC.

and then goes on to say:

This assertion is totally false since a written statement can only 'corroborate' a taped conversation if the two are the same. As we have already mentioned, the words spoken on the tape are most definitely not the same as what is written in the so-called minutes book.

The author seems to have penchant for making up the rules as he goes along. According to my version of the American Heritage dictionary the meaning of corroboration is as follows:

"To strengthen or support with other evidence; make more certain."

It says nothing about the two being exactly the same.

How can one piece of evidence strengthen or support another if they differ in a fundamental key area. Srila Prabhupada never appointed any gurus who would initiate 'even after his departure'. It is not a question of the two not being identical, they are yojanas apart on this issue. We thought this had been established. It really is '**time out**' for these minutes since no-one accepts the appointment theory however nicely it is dressed up.

Using these authorized criteria we can see that the written Minutes do in fact corroborate the spoken words of Srila Prabhupada by giving written support to the tape and the personal testimony of the GBC.

It only supports the bogus zonal *acarya* system which everyone now rejects. It certainly bares little resemblance to the tape on the key issue of *diksa* authorisation.

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15) Legal acceptance of GBC dealings

The author quotes me as saying:

Since the minutes book would be accepted by any court of law as official evidence of the dealings of the GBC body, there can be no doubt that the said conversation took place and that Srila Prabhupada did in fact state categorically that the disciples whom he would name would accept disciples of their own, who would be his grand disciples after his departure.

He then comments:

The author has asserted that anything which is evidence for the 'dealings of the GBC body' is also cast iron evidence for what Srila Prabhupada actually stated. This does not logically follow, nor would it be seen to logically follow in any court of law. Evidence for what the GBC thought occurred in the conversation is not evidence for what Srila Prabhupada actually stated. The two could coincide. But evidence for one is not ipso facto evidence for the other, unless Srila Prabhupada had checked and signed the above minutes, which he most certainly and emphatically did not. Had Srila Prabhupada signed these minutes our position would surely be much less tenable.

At least the author admits that "the two could coincide."

Why not?

As far as logic goes, Srila Prabhupada was not speaking in a vacuum or to himself. He was having a conversation with the GBC. The conversation included statements by the GBC men. Their testimony as to what the conversation was about is as valuable as the other party involved, in this case Srila Prabhupada. In the absence of Srila Prabhupada, the testimony of the GBCs present at that meeting would indeed be accepted as evidence of what was said since they were the ones it was said to.

As we have repeatedly pointed out, these GBC men completely mis-understood what Srila Prabhupada wanted, that is why they installed huge *vyasanas* for themselves and drove away thousands of their 'envious' Godbrothers and Godsisters. Of those GBC men who are still alive and still reasonably sane, it is debatable whether they would impress anybody in any court of law. The taped conversation would not currently be admissible either. So it might be better if we just stick to clear, legally accepted signed documentation. See how wise Srila Prabhupada was not to leave such an important order just to the faulty ears of a few unreliable men. He deliberately sent the order all over the world in a form which is clear and unequivocal.

The author's position is not tenable, but unfortunately he cannot accept this due to his inability to hear objectively from those that were actually there.

We can hear perfectly well for ourselves what Srila Prabhupada said thank you very much.

16) Telepathic Link:

At this point the author reduces his arguments to absurdity. He says:

Without such signed documentation, the only way evidence for what the GBC body thought could be used to prove what Srila Prabhupada actually stated, would be if it could be irrefutably demonstrated that there existed an infallible telepathic link between Srila Prabhupada and the thoughts of the GBC at all times. The fact that Srila Prabhupada disbanded the GBC, at one time instructing everyone to ignore them, and that the GBC have themselves admitted to running an unauthorised zonal *acarya* system for nearly a decade, might make such a proposition hard to stick in a court of law.

Since we can assume that the author himself does not have an "infallible telepathic link" with Srila Prabhupada, and judging by his arguments, very little of any other kind of understanding of Srila Prabhupada, there is no basis for accepting his mental speculations on the meaning of the May 28 conversation either.

It has already been established by his experts that the best anyone can do is speculate on the conversation. This being the case, and taking into account the fact that none of us are directly telepathically linked, it might be safer to just stick with the clear July 9 order.

His very argument for dismissing the GBC applies also to himself.

Not if we accept the *final order*.

And actually his statement is absurd. As I pointed out previously, the GBC were personally present with Srila Prabhupada and were in a position to establish at least a temporary physical and subtle link with him for understanding his desires, just as any two parties in discussion do.

They clearly did not have any type of link at all because they went on to pose royally as bogus zonal *acaryas* for nearly an entire decade, ejecting thousands of dissenters in the process.

The fact is that Srila Prabhupada obviously did mean something. He was responding to questions put to him by the GBC. He was satisfied that they had understood him. He signed a letter on July 9 confirming that he had said previously on May 28 that he would select some of his disciples to give first and second initiations.

That's right, as *ritviks* on Srila Prabhupada's behalf.

So Srila Prabhupada's statements are being reliably transmitted by the GBC. This is the simple fact.

The above is utter rubbish, since the GBC themselves admit that they entirely misrepresented Srila Prabhupada's statements - a fact that H.H. Jayadwaita Maharaja so nicely presented in his 'grievances against the GBC' paper in 1987 .

As far as the attempt here goes to dredge up old events to try and discredit the GBC, the author is clearly clutching at straws. His method is "give a dog a bad name and hang it." He points to an incident where Srila Prabhupada temporarily suspended them. That was circa 1972 when they were just formed and new to the whole service. But he ignores the obvious that in 1977, at the same time when the May 28 conversation was held, Prabhupada had the same GBC draft a Will for him which stated that the GBC would be the ultimate managing authority for ISKCON. Srila Prabhupada did not share the author's sarcastic and negative feelings towards the GBC; rather the opposite.

What would Srila Prabhupada have said about the bogus zonal *acarya* system we wonder.

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As far as the zonal *acarya* system goes, yes, the GBC made mistakes in implementing the principle of giving initiations.

The GBC did not just make mistakes in implementation, they completely mis-understood what Srila Prabhupada wanted implemented. Also they were wrong in application as well as mistaken over the principle, as mentioned earlier. Unfortunately, as far as we can see, this continues to be the case to this very day.

Whatever the mistakes the GBC may have made, the one mistake they have not made is to abandon Srila Prabhupada's first instruction in his Will that the GBC body is the managerial authority on which his Society stands. The attempts by individuals to usurp that authority have all met with failure due to adherence to this instruction. That's why we still have an ISKCON left.

We are not trying to usurp the authority of the GBC. We are seeking to re-establish it. By re-instituting Srila Prabhupada's directives on initiation the GBC will once again operate with authority. They certainly had no authority to destroy any system of management in the society, as the final will testifies.

17) Going Back in Time:

What makes the above assertion so shaky is not only the omission of minute 2) from the typed version, though this is certainly bad enough, but also the fact that this very notion of appointing gurus had already been completely rejected by the whole GBC in 1985/86.

What makes the author's above assertion so shaky is his own omission in this discussion of the second half of the Minute:

"The disciples they accept shall be their disciples and Srila Prabhupada will be their grand spiritual master." The author says the notion of "appointing gurus" was completely rejected. Again he overstates his case to avoid the core issue. "Appointment" of gurus was rejected, for the reasons pointed out by Ravindra Svarupa prabhu at the beginning of this document, but the notion that Prabhupada's disciples should initiate disciples of their own does not go hand in hand with this and was not thrown out.

We have already covered above the issue of 'omission', and the principle of whether or not how *diksa* gurus came into being at all.

18) Mindset

Not only is the author presumptuous in his understanding of the mind of Srila Prabhupada, his claims as to my mind-set are also way off the mark:

We accept the author will know his own mind better than us.

I was enthusiastic to support the GBC, both in practice and in principle, because I knew that's what Srila Prabhupada wanted. I had spent enough time with him to know that very clearly.

Then the author would also know that Srila Prabhupada would expect the GBC to do what he wanted, not abandon important orders and invent their own speculations. So why was the *ritvik* system stopped?

In my support of the "zonal guru system" as it came later to be called, I was enthusiastic more for the principle of the continuance of the *parampara* as I had heard it directly spoken to me by Srila Prabhupada, than for the application of it.

Both the principle and application were wrong as explained earlier. Srila Prabhupada never instructed only 11 or all of his disciples to become *diksa* gurus on his departure. If he did we shall need to see the evidence,

When the GBC put the system of zonal gurus into place I went along with it with the same enthusiasm. I was present in 1976 when Srila Prabhupada spoke of his GBCs, who had their particular zones to manage, as being his successors:

Interviewer: What happens when that inevitable time comes a successor is needed.

Ramesvara: He is asking about the future, who will guide the Movement in the future.

Srila Prabhupada: They will guide, I am training them.

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Interviewer: Will there be one spiritual leader though?

Srila Prabhupada: No. I am training GBC, 18 all over the world.

(SP Interview, 6 June, 1976, Los Angeles)

Interviewer: I was wondering if he had a successor to do... Do you have a successor to take your place when you die?

Prabhupada: Not yet settled up. Not yet settled up.

Interviewer: So what process would the Hare Krsna...?

Prabhupada: We have got secretaries. They are managing.

Ramesvara: He has appointed from all the disciples a group of secretaries. Each one is in charge of a different sector of the world.

Interviewer: How many secretaries?

Ramesvara: Presently there is eighteen.

Interviewer: And so that group of eighteen secretaries will choose another leader?

Prabhupada: I am training each one of them as leader so that they can spread extensively. That is my idea.

-- (July 14 1976 Interview with Time)

The reader will see that nowhere above does Srila Prabhupada say his disciples will become *diksa* gurus on his departure, or that the *ritvik* system was to be disbanded.

And in the July 9 letter Prabhupada spoke of people approaching "whichever representative is nearest."

In order to be initiated by Srila Prabhupada, not some upstart.

So it wasn't such a great leap of credulity, at least for me, to start off with a zonal concept centered around the first 11 men that Srila Prabhupada selected. That this was abused was as great a source of pain and frustration to me as it was to many others.

It is not just that the system was abused, the system should never have been there in the first place. Does the author not realise that to disobey the order of the guru renders one useless in spiritual life.

Nevertheless, we were married to it by the time the cracks appeared, and at least in my zone, Australia, New Zealand and Indonesia, we had none of the troubles that America and other places were experiencing.

The author was actively supporting the operation of a completely bogus guru system, surely that was trouble enough.

Rather the opposite; we went through an unprecedented period of development and increase in every field during my tenure as GBC (1977- mid 84). With a united and enthusiastic set of leaders who worked hard to spread Krishna consciousness as far and wide as possible, we went from 3 temples to 17; the devotee population boomed from about 90 to over 350; BBT remittances went from under \$200,000 to \$1,300,000 annually; devotees were happy and enthusiastic. We set up two BBT divisions, four farms, a major gurukula and numerous restaurants. My zone had natural geographic barriers so the zonal concept wasn't hard to accept. In our isolation "down under" and our experience of successful preaching, we could be perhaps forgiven for not immediately recognizing the problems elsewhere.

Oh those glorious zonal days. Does the author not realise that large numbers of people following a bogus system is nothing to wax lyrical about? Does he not realise the enormous damage his unquestioning support for a homosexual/paedophile *diksa* guru caused to thousands of people's spiritual lives? How can he believe the problems were only 'elsewhere'? No wonder he sees nothing wrong with the bogus GBC minutes, and is happy to flaunt them as evidence.

Even in America, where the problem was most acute, the leader of the guru reform movement, Ravindra Svarupa prabhu says in his paper "Cleansing hearts....." that it wasn't until 1984 that he hit upon the essence of the problem and then worked out the solutions.

Why then did it take His Grace Ravindra Svarupa prabhu 7 years to hit upon the 'essence' of the problem if Srila Prabhupada's teachings about the current M.A.S.S. system were so clear and self-evident for eleven long years as the author states.

So it wasn't so easy to see everything during that period. Of course, at around the same time, mid-1984, I had my own spiritual problems and resigned my duties as a *sannyasi* and GBC and played no further part in official ISKCON affairs, so I wasn't party to the changes that took place thereafter.

I readily admit that it wasn't until 1986 with the fall of Ramesvara and Bhagavan that I finally woke up to the need for extensive reform. But see it I did, and I accepted it wholeheartedly. But what I will never accept is the fallacy that sprung up around the same time that Srila Prabhupada never wanted his disciples to become gurus. I knew then, as I still know now, that misapplication does not cancel the principle.

The author misunderstood the principle and the application, just as he does today.

19) Point by Point rebuttal

Whatever the author's current mind-set we are certainly not prepared to even contemplate modifying Srila Prabhupada's signed final order on initiations on the basis of an already discredited and uncorroborated 'understanding' of what Srila Prabhupada supposedly said on May 28th 1977. We have given a carefully considered analysis of what we think actually transpired on pages 21-26 of 'The Final Order'. If the author rejects our analysis we humbly suggest he offers a point for point rebuttal. This may be difficult for him, but not as challenging as building a time machine and transporting us all back to the glory days of the zonal acaryas.

The author's statement of intransigence is regrettable, but has been par course so far for his modus operandi in never admitting to any possibility of a mistake in his prejudiced view, nor showing any willingness to accept the eye-witness, personally experienced accounts of what transpired on May 28.

We have the tape and all the transcripts. The eyewitnesses turned out to be extremely unreliable as we have mentioned. If the author were to produce a clear instruction from Srila Prabhupada to all his disciples ordering them all to initiate after his disappearance we would like to see it. Until then his arguments are entirely without foundation.

The suggestion here that I am trying to transport anyone back to the "glory days" of the zonal *acarya* system is of course another of the author's red herrings.

From the above we see the author is still very much basking in the warm glow of those heady days. All that laxmi, all those schools and farms training up Bhavananda's men.

It is yet another attempt to bring discredit by false association. I have never suggested, nor will suggest, a return to the zonal *acarya* system.

Then why is the author promoting the GBC's inaccurate minutes which directly inspired that system.

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Nor will I ever accept the author's apasampradayaic concoction that a diseased *Acarya* continues to give *diksa*.

First the author needs to prove that *ritvik* is apasampradayaic. Can he do that? There are instances of disciples accepting persons not physically present on the same planet as their *diksa* gurus. Srila Prabhupada performed many initiations without being physically present at the ceremony. Where is the injunction that a physically absent or departed *acarya* must not or cannot initiate? This is yet another bogus concoction.

It is not in any of Prabhupada's books, nor any teachings of any of our acaryas.

Try B.g. 4.1.. *Diksa* means the transmission of transcendental knowledge. Is the author saying that Srila Prabhupada can no longer transmit *Divya Jnana* to people on planet earth. If so he should take re-initiation. Unless he feels he is already perfected.

The only basis the author has for this foolish claim is his misinterpretations of the 1977 May 28 conversation and the July 9 letter. As he says, his analysis is what he "thinks" happened in 1977. But what he thinks and the reality experienced by the devotees in attendance with Srila Prabhupada are two different things.

Yes, those devotees went on to lead a massive deviation which they have apparently never fully come to terms with.

The author's claims are not difficult to rebut but only time consuming. When one has to deal with someone who cannot see things objectively but obsessively pushes an obscure argument that flies in the face of everything Srila Prabhupada ever said on the subject, it is never a pleasant task.

This is demonstrable falsehood. The *ritvik* system does not contradict any of Srila Prabhupada's generally applicable teachings or instructions. So far the author has produced no such evidence. Also it is time consuming for us to deal with repetitively ridiculous arguments, but it seems to be having some positive result so we are encouraged to continue as long as necessary.

There are much better things I could be doing with my time, like finishing the remaining volumes of my Diary series and getting on with the business of spreading Krsna consciousness.

Perhaps the author could be more positively engaged writing his diaries, which in the main are immensely enlivening.

I am reminded of the example Srila Prabhupada used about the mundane wranglers who fought over a piece of torn paper. The one who argued that it was cut with scissors was eventually thrown into water and drown. But as he went down still he poked his two fingers up above the water, moving them like a pair of scissors. In the face of such fanaticism what can be done? Some people just cannot accept honest representation and the direct meanings of Srila Prabhupada's words. They are what Srila Prabhupada called "over-intelligent." The author is apparently one of them.

The same could be said of the GBC. The issue is that the GBC are unable to prove their case.

20) July 9 letter

If it is indeed the case that the July 9th letter is specifically referring back to the May 28th conversation, and not some other discussion, then the very fact that the letter does not advise the reader to listen to that conversation tape, or read a transcript of it, would clearly indicate that Srila Prabhupada considered the July 9th letter an accurate and complete summary of the conversation.

Once again the author entertains us with his own version of what he thinks Srila Prabhupada considered. Again he makes up his own rules by which he thinks Srila Prabhupada should operate. "The very fact that the letter does not advise the reader to listen to that conversation tape, or read a transcript of it," does NOT in any way "clearly indicate" that Srila Prabhupada considered the July 9th letter "an accurate and complete summary" of the conversation. Where does Srila Prabhupada say this? He does not say "this is my final statement on initiations in ISKCON,"

He did not need to say it, it factually was, unless the author can produce a later one. According to the GBC

'In logic, later statements always supersede earlier ones in importance.'

(GII, p.25)

The author is here arguing against a principle of logic which is held as axiomatic by the very body he is supposed to be defending.

he does not say, "this letter supersedes everything I said on May 28," he does not say "this letter is my final order." The idea that the letter was a "final order" that superseded whatever else Srila Prabhupada had said five weeks before is a mythical creation of the author and his fellow *ritvik* proxy initiation propounders.

We have never stated the above. It is a straw-man argument. The letter is only supported by the tape, *ritviks* after departure, gurus only when ordered. Still if there were any other apparent contradictions, (letters to Tusta Krishna, Hamsadutta etc.) according to the GBC's own logic the July 9 order would supersede them.

But it was not Srila Prabhupada's.

The author wasn't there but he thinks he understands Srila Prabhupada's mind better than those that were and who were in a position to ask the necessary questions to get things clear.

They never got things clear, and they are still confused to this day. We make no claims as mind readers, we just go by the evidence. False arguments are destroyed through factual ascertainment.

And clear they were. Srila Prabhupada wanted his disciples to initiate after his departure

- "And Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, *amara ajnaya guru hana*. One can understand the order of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, he can become guru. Or one who understands his guru's order, the same *parampara*, he can become guru. And therefore I shall select some of you."

This was his final confirmation.

Notice the above makes no mention of the terms '*diksa*', nor the word 'initiate'. The order was only for *ritviks*, and it seems that the author is unable, even now, to understand his gurus order.

On July 7 he revealed what he wanted as far as continuing initiations during his own presence.

Srila Prabhupada never said that *ritvik* was only for during his presence. This is a fabrication.

The two are inextricably linked, the July 9 letter standing within the context of the May 28 conversation. On October 18 he stated categorically that he would not initiate anymore unless he got better.

Rubbish. He was only speaking of participating personally in the initiation ceremony. The initiation was still to go on through the *ritvik* system he had only recently set up.

For the straight forward person these events are easy to understand.

Then the GBC could not have been very straightforward, since they completely mis-understood these events, just as they do today, (based on the factual evidence- not vague 'essence' theories).

For the sophist they may provide grist for centuries of speculation and argumentation.

Let's hope that will not be necessary.

21) Confusing context?

The author apparently cannot understand the two types of context drawn by me in my comments on the Minutes:

He says: The author then goes on to give his speculation as to what the July 9th letter really meant:

"This remaining question was thus resolved in the conversation Tamal Krishna Goswami had with His Divine Grace on July 7th, which was translated into the letter of July 9th. When we take the correct context it is clear that the conversation and letter was addressing the problem of the continuance of initiations while Srila Prabhupada was still present, with the understanding of what would happen after his disappearance having already been clearly established."

Please note that in the passage above the author is stating that the 'context' for the July 9th letter was the July 7th

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conversation, addressing only the problem of the 'continuance of initiations while Srila Prabhupada was still present'. However just a few lines earlier the author had stated:

"This opening statement establishes without a doubt that the appointment of the 11 *ritviks* stood within the context of the previously established desire of His Divine Grace on May 28 that his disciples would accept disciples of their own after his departure."

Above the author states that the 'context' of the July 9th letter was the matter of initiations for when Srila Prabhupada was not present. Thus the author has clearly contradicted himself. For one who prides himself on his knowledge of English and analytical abilities, its surprising that he cannot understand there are two contexts at work here.

The author's two contexts theory is as much of a concoction as his essence theory. As we explained before it is utterly absurd since the two contexts concern contradictory states, namely presence and departure. The July 9th order gives no credence to the notion that it only sits in the context of what is to be done before Srila Prabhupada's departure.

The July 9 letter was derived from the immediate context of the conversation on July 7. The May 28 conversation provided an overall context in which the subsequent conversation and letter of July 7-9 sit.

There is no contradiction, it simply requires a little brain substance to follow the argument.

The author goes on to say:

And this is only to be expected, for, as we pointed out in our replies to other GBC papers:

How can a conversation held on May 28th, that the GBC claims deals only with what to do after Srila Prabhupada leaves the planet, making no reference to proxies, be legitimately used to modify a letter that the GBC claims deals only with proxies, and only with what was to be done before Srila Prabhupada left ?

The May 28 conversation does not deal exclusively with the questions of initiations after Prabhupada's departure,

Here the author is contradicting DOMD. There it is stated the conversation ONLY deals with after departure. Thus once more the author is contradicting the very body he is supposedly defending.

but particularly with that. Both scenarios come up; after Prabhupada's departure and during his presence. In Satsvarup Maharaja's opening question he states:

"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."

After Prabhupada says he will recommend some of his disciples, Satsvarupa asks what is the relationship of the initiator to the person being initiated. Prabhupada replies "He's guru. He's guru." Then Satsvarupa says, "But he does it on your behalf."

Prabhupada replies "Yes. That is formality. Because in my presence one should not become guru, so on my behalf, on my order... *Amara ajnaya guru hana*. Be actually guru, but by my order."

Why is the author using a conversation as evidence when he has admitted it is not clear, and obeys no grammatical laws?

Here we see that Srila Prabhupada is thinking of both scenarios. The question was particularly about after his departure but Prabhupada mentions about "in my presence" also.

This directly contradicts DOMD which the author himself quotes as authority. Thus the author's position is absurd, to say the least.

After this though there is no further discussion on the present, only about the future with Srila Prabhupada stating that the new initiates will be "grand-disciples" and "disciples of my disciple." The consideration of the present is taken up five weeks later with Tamal Krishna Goswami approaching Srila Prabhupada on July 7:

Tamal Krishna: Srila Prabhupada? We're receiving a number of letters now, and these are people who want to get initiated. So up until now, since your becoming ill, we asked them to wait.

Prabhupada: The local, mean, senior *sannyasis* can do that.

Tamala Krsna: 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 mean one thing is that it's said that the spiritual master takes on the... You know, he takes on the... He has to cleanse the disciple by... So we don't want that you should have to... Your health is not so good, so that should not be... That's why we've been asking everybody to wait. I just want to know if we should continue to wait some more time.

Prabhupada: No, the senior *sannyasis*..."

Srila Prabhupada then gives the first nine names. Consequently, on July 9, he counter-signed a letter written by his secretary which begins by referencing the May 28 meeting: "Recently when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vrndavana,

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Srila Prabhupada indicated that soon He would appoint some of His senior disciples to act as "*ritvik* - representative of the *acarya*, for the purpose of performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation."

So the link between the two is there, Prabhupada on May 28 having stated he would select some men to be gurus for the future after his disappearance,

This is a lie. We have already demonstrated that the selection was only for *ritviks*. Even H.H. Tamala Krishna Maharaja has admitted in the Topanga Canyon confessions that the gurus were not 'selected'.

but at the same time saying they couldn't be gurus in his presence due to etiquette; and then responding on July 7 to the current situation by giving the names, indicating they were to start initiating immediately, but upholding the etiquette that they could not be gurus in his presence by stating that the people they initiate would still be his disciples.

The author has tried to solve this conundrum by stating that the context for the July 9th letter is simultaneously what should be done whilst Srila Prabhupada is present, and what should be done when he is not present! Anyone can see this is an absurd position to take, and certainly impossible to defend.

Obviously the author has gotten himself confused because that is not what I said. I indicated two contexts, a greater one established on May 28, extending to beyond Prabhupada's disappearance, and an immediate one on July 7 dealing with the present concerns. I assumed that this was clear, but apparently every little detail has to be spelled out. This is the problem with nit-picking - the intelligence becomes bewildered and one loses the bigger picture

Unfortunately the author is unable to see that the two contexts are mutually exclusive due to the contradictory time frames in which they are meant to apply, as we explain in the quoted section.

22) Simple and straightforward

The author then expresses his astonishment at my statement that "it does not require anything other a simple, straightforward reading of these conversations to understand this."

He says: We would be very interested to know which 'straightforward' reading of which 'conversation' leads to the conclusion that the 11 *ritviks* named on July 9th were to magically metamorphose into 11 fully-fledged *Diksa* Gurus the very second Srila Prabhupada left his body. Please show us these clear words and sentences explicitly stating that the M.A.S.S., was to occur immediately on Srila Prabhupada's departure. The only words the author has given us in his paper are those jotted down by an inefficient GBC secretary who caused the GBC to wrongly conclude that Srila Prabhupada had 'appointed' 11 zonal *diksa* gurus.

As I have shown throughout this paper the GBC Minutes are not the only words on which Srila Prabhupada's disciples accepted the responsibility of giving initiations after His Divine Grace's departure. Eleven years of preaching and a final confirmation on May 28 were the basis as well as a centuries' old tradition, thoroughly and repeatedly explained in Srila Prabhupada's books.

The above is drivel. Where are all these teachings over eleven years all indicating the M.A.S.S.? If they exist how is it the GBC had to ask about it? And how is it they went completely off for nearly an entire decade? And how is it took H.G. Ravindra Svarupa prabhu *7 years* to arrive at the 'essence' of the problem as the author has admitted above.

On the other hand the *ritviks* cannot show any evidence for their proxy initiation theory other than a single letter, which they take out of context.

The repeated attempts of the author to mix this timeless principle of guru *parampara* with the "zonal" application and act as if they are one and the same thing is the basic defect in his argument. Hopefully the readers of this document can understand better the difference.

This terrible mistake drove away countless sincere souls and took nearly an entire decade to 'rectify'. We wonder if the author has ever fully confronted the role he himself played in that ghastly fiasco.

As I briefly mentioned earlier about my role, and I think as my history shows and as anyone that knows me will testify, I have been trying to fully confront the many aspects of my spiritual life and its defects. I guess that's why I am still around. Shameless I may be, but I fully intend to continue with this process. I have no doubts that some of my difficulties in spiritual life were due to offenses committed during the zonal *acarya* days. I have humbly apologized to the devotees in my former zone for whatever offenses I committed, knowingly or unknowingly and I am happy to have the opportunity to do so again to anyone who still feels offended. Such opportunities are for my own purification and I accept them gladly.

I can't speak for the other leaders who had problems, big or small. But I can say that all of them rendered real service to Srila Prabhupada to the point that he recognized them. To earn that recognition is not a small thing. That some of them faltered along the way and committed offences against their god-brothers and god-sisters is in one sense hardly surprising, although disappointing and distressing. I think all of us realize it is not possible in this world to go through it without committing some kind of offense, great or small. My only respite is my dedication to understanding the desire of my lord and

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master, Srila Prabhupada, and somehow sticking to his lotus feet, come what may. On the way I humbly beg for the forgiveness and mercy of all the Vaisnavas so that I can continue to serve our beloved spiritual master.

At least in one respect the desire of Srila Prabhupada was made very clear to me by His Divine Grace himself:

March 7, 1976, Mayapur

"Srila Prabhupada surprised me when I entered his room at about 11 a.m. this morning to prepare for his massage. For almost half an hour he preached to me, explaining that he wants all his disciples to become gurus. Each of us is to make thousands of disciples just as he has and in this way spread Krsna consciousness all over the world.

"He didn't seem to be speaking in general terms either but directly to me. He seemed very enlivened at the prospect of spreading Krsna consciousness in this way.

"In the evening, when the GBC men filed into his room to make their report about their day's meeting, he brought up the same topic, before discussing their resolutions. He asked me to explain to everyone what he had said earlier. But when I hesitated, he did it himself, repeating in brief this principle of becoming guru.

"He told them that just as he had made thousands of disciples he wants each one of them to make ten thousand each. He encouraged them to become increasingly more qualified and rise to the position of being spiritual masters. He stressed that this can be done only if they maintain spiritual strength by strictly following the four regulative principles and chanting the prescribed number of rounds.

"It is all dependant on enthusiasm, he told us. At seventy years he had left Vrndavana with no money, men, or any facility. He did everything only on this principle of enthusiasm. Without directly saying it, Srila Prabhupada made it clear that all internal arguments and disputes can be resolved by turning our attention to the higher ideal of preaching Krsna consciousness to the world." - (A Transcendental Diary Volume 1)

I hope that one day I will become spiritually fit enough to fulfill his desire and, as he said to Tusta Krsna in 1975, make him happy by spreading his movement in the prescribed way.

Tusta Krsna was an ambitious deviant who caused Srila Prabhupada much grief. Why does the author see such instructions as universally applicable? And why does he constantly assume that the GBC were authorised to make disciples for themselves, and not for Srila Prabhupada as ordered on July 9th?

23) Consistency

The author brings his epistle to a close with the final point:

Please note that in Disciple of My Disciple, the GBC clearly state that the order for guru-ship was made on May 28th itself,

and that NO APPOINTMENT took place. The GBC minutes book states that on May 28th only the FUTURE establishment of guru-ship was mentioned, and further, that guru-ship was to be brought about by an APPOINTMENT:

“Srila Prabhupada said he will appoint several devotees who shall perform initiations in the future, even after his departure.”
(GBC minutes book)

Thus we have a clear contradiction between the author and the very body he is supposedly defending. And this on the most fundamental issue of how Srila Prabhupada supposedly authorised his disciples to initiate after his physical departure. It is clear the GBC and their supporters are in complete confusion and disarray over this whole matter. We suggest it would be much simpler for everyone if we all just accept the July 9th order as Srila Prabhupada’s final word on the issue. Who could possibly object to that?

As I have consistently pointed out, the use of one word, “appoint” does not affect the underlying principle, that Srila Prabhupada wanted his disciples to become regular gurus, having disciples of their own.

The word ‘appoint’ is pivotal since it led to a bogus guru system. If the eleven were not appointed to be gurus after departure then we need to know **WHO** was authorised to be guru, **HOW** they were authorised and **WHEN** they were authorised to be gurus. The May 28th conversation makes it clear that all guru activity must be authorised- ‘when I order’ etc. **WHERE IS THE ORDER??**

There is no confusion and disarray over this point amongst the GBC. The suggestion that there is simply wishful thinking on the part of the author.

The author has already contradicted DOMD which he was supposed to be defending.

What is objectionable is attempts to cleverly manipulate His Divine Grace’s words to mean the opposite of what he intended and make the false assertion that he did not want his disciples to initiate. The GBC’s position does not stand only on the GBC Minutes book, but the GBC Minutes book stands as a written record of Srila Prabhupada’s stated desire

(with the possible exception of the word “appoint”) when he was asked for a final confirmation of how initiations would go on particularly at that time when he would no longer be with us.

Those appointed were the ones who would initiate even after departure according to the minutes. If you take out the word appoint then why did they think they could initiate at all after departure? Where did they get the idea they could stop being *ritviks*? Why does the author keep referring to a conversation which he admits is open to all kinds of interpretations and obeys no laws of grammar?

When Prabhupada finished the conversation on this topic he said “One can understand the order of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, he can become guru. Or one who understands his guru’s order, the same *parampara*, he can become guru. And

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therefore I shall select some of you.”- who could possibly object to that?

He selected only *ritviks*- who could object to that?

24) Summary:

The author closes with a rather arrogant pronunciation:

This has to be the most pitiable attempt so far at providing evidence in support of modifications A & B as given in the ‘Final Order’. The author has been forced to put forward the GBC’s original misunderstanding that led to the establishment of a guru system which everyone had rejected as bogus over 10 years ago. If the GBC and their sympathizers have no evidence it would be far more dignified to just admit the fact. It really will not help them to just present previously discredited speculations.

The author has also added in, for good measure, the usual mixture of contradictions, misrepresentations, and unsupported speculations which VNN readers will know are par for the course with all GBC inspired attacks on ‘The Final Order’.

It appears the author is so self-possessed that he thinks everything revolves around his own particular view of the events of 1977 and his “modifications.” They do not. To present the words and intent of Srila Prabhupada in a direct and honest way is far from pitiable.

But the author has not done this. He has concocted his own notion of what Srila Prabhupada taught for eleven years and what he finally ordered. He is also still clinging to minutes which everyone admits were fundamentally inaccurate on the very issue of guru authorisation.

It is rather, a pity that some present themselves as authorities on Srila Prabhupada’s words and desires simply on the basis of material intelligence, sophistry, word-jugglery and a very evident and abiding contempt for senior devotees that have

sincerely served Srila Prabhupada and his mission for up to 32 years, beginning before the author was even born. Even with the title of his reply the author subtly misrepresents the truth. The Minutes are of course the GBCs' and not mine. Although this seems a small point, it typifies the modus operandi of the author as we have seen by examining his text.

They are the author's in the sense that he has exhumed them in order to support his own theory about how Srila Prabhupada supposedly ordered *diksa* gurus.

Mockery, innuendo, false logic, misrepresentation, partial quoting, red herrings, sarcasm and insults are poor methods on which to establish the desire of Srila Prabhupada. They do not represent him, neither do I find that the author's writing invokes the spirit or intent of His Divine Grace at any stage.

We are not perfect, that is a fact. But so far the author has not shown any of the above.

Maybe this sad attempt to represent previously discarded evidence is a sign that the GBC and its apologists have finally run out of steam. Certainly they must be desperate if they think devotees are willing to go back in time to the old 'guru appointment' mythology of twenty years ago.

Again the author expresses more wishful thinking. Timeless orders never run out but occasionally they can be obscured by misrepresentation. Nobody has or is suggesting a return to the mistakes of 20 years ago. There is clearly a need for on-going reform or refinement of our guru system.

Why, have you still not got it right after all these years of faithfully serving Srila Prabhupada's explicit directives? If after '32 years' of 'sincerely serving', the guru system still needs 'reform', how much longer will we have to wait before you finally get it right, another 32 years perhaps?

ISKCON is a work in progress, a grand experiment the likes of which have not been seen before in the history of Gaudiya Vaisnavism.

Perhaps the GBC should stop experimenting and just follow Srila Prabhupada's orders.

To satisfy the needs of a huge international institution and those of the individuals that comprise it is no easy task. Its going to take some time before we get it right, especially in the turbulent times we currently live in.

At the same time we cannot throw out the essential teachings of His Divine Grace simply because of mistakes made in executing his order or the unfortunate weaknesses of some individual leaders.

What would we need to throw out just by following the *ritvik* system? This is nonsense.

Neither can we do so on the basis of philosophically deviant ideas. Srila Prabhupada was not a word wrangler, nor did he speak in riddles that could only be unravelled years and years later by a clever sophist. The Srila Prabhupada we knew and loved was straight forward and consistent. Had he desired to change the entire *parampara* system with something new, he would certainly have let us know through more than one small letter that was not even authored by him. To suggest that he would shows a complete lack of understanding of His character and qualities.

How does the *ritvik* system change the *parampara* system. What is the author talking about here?

The GBC Minutes, the tape of the May 28 conversation, the testimony of the individuals that shared the conversation with Srila Prabhupada are, altogether, the evidence that Srila Prabhupada gave a final confirmation that he wanted a timeless tradition that he had consistently presented and supported from the beginning to the end of his preaching work to go on. This has never been discarded by the GBC and hopefully in centuries to come, never will be.

The author has not demonstrated the above. This ends our evaluation of '*The Minutes of the Timeless order*'.

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