

a response to: **Respecting the Guru Principle**

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“One should take initiation from a bona fide spiritual master coming in the disciplic succession, who is authorised by his predecessor spiritual master. This is called *diksa-vidhana*.”

(S.B. 4.8.54, purport)



by Krishnakant

Respecting the Guru's Order

A response to Adikarta's Paper: 'Respecting the Guru Principle'

CHAKRA recently posted another paper which attempts to discredit Srila Prabhupada's *Final Order* on initiations within ISKCON. As with all the other attempts recently posted on CHAKRA, we are again offered speculation, opinion and irrelevancy, but unfortunately no evidence. In this offering, Adikarta daś ludicrously implies that the officiating *acarya* system, as enunciated in the July 9th policy document, is actually "*Krishna's Ritvik Trick*". Quite why The Supreme Being would have His pure representative carry out such a prank on His devotees is never answered by the author; though we suspect a more likely scenario is that Adikarta's rejection of his spiritual master's *Final Order* on initiation is actually *Maya's* trick.

Needless to say Adikarta's paper adds nothing to the 'Guru/Ritvik' debate. He makes the following points:

1. The Initiation ceremony is just a formality, the main thing is to follow the discipline. (p1-2)
2. We need *siksa* gurus, who are more advanced than us. (p2-3)
3. The guru does not need to be a *nitya-siddha*. (p3)
4. We should not unnecessarily criticise, fault-find and blaspheme devotees. (p 5-7)
5. One should not judge a devotees' motivation or purity. (p8)
6. The GBC should be prepared to accept criticism. (p8)
7. One should not engage in propaganda that will damage the preaching. (p8)
8. Let us all unite and co-operate to serve Srila Prabhupada. (p 9-10)

The above points, most of which are adequately supported by the author with quotes from Srila Prabhupada, fill over 90% of the paper. They are all points that everyone, *ritviks* and non-*ritviks* alike would agree with. In fact points 1 and 2 are often made in support of the *ritvik* position and appear in their position paper, '*The Final Order*'. Thus it is hard to see how the above 8 points are meant to somehow prove that the whole *ritvik* thing is actually God's trick on his followers!?!

Regarding points 4, 5 and 7 above, maybe some *ritviks* are guilty of blaspheming devotees and trying to harm the preaching. However this gives us no clue as to whether or not the pro-*ritvik* **PHILOSOPHY** is correct, which is the main issue here. There are many supporters of the M.A.S.S. (multiple *acarya* successor system- currently in operation in ISKCON) who on occasion have behaved abominably; still that in itself does not invalidate their favoured system. None of these points can in any case be used against the main *ritvik* discussion document - '*The Final Order*' - (which was commissioned by the GBC) since it is a purely philosophical paper with no personal insults directed at any devotees. So Adikarta prabhu has not really contributed anything with the above, except to state well known and accepted ideals of vaisnava behaviour, and deal with points that are not made by most pro-*ritviks*, or are irrelevant to the issue at hand.

There are, however, certain parts of the paper where Adikarta wafts in and out of the *ritvik* issue, and it is in these sections that he reveals great confusion, self-contradiction and misjudgement. In fairness the author himself does warn us early on:

"I haven't really kept up with all the pro *ritvik* or anti-*ritvik* arguments, so I hope I don't repeat other points" (p1)

Nevertheless he still goes ahead and treats us to an ill-informed anti-*ritvik* diatribe. Unfortunately this has been the approach of many who have attempted to write on the *ritvik* subject. They make little effort to actually find out what the *ritvik* position and supporting philosophy is, and instead base everything on the activities of some *ritviks* they have met or read.

Adikarta really needs to study '*The Final Order*' paper and answer it point for point if he wants to contribute anything of relevance to this issue.

In the beginning of his paper Adikarta states:

"It doesn't seem to matter who initiates". (p1)

This, of course, is an utterly ridiculous statement to have at the beginning of a paper whose sole purpose is to try and denounce a group of people who say that Srila Prabhupada should initiate. If it does not matter who initiates, then why has Adikarta gone to all the trouble to write a paper to try and expose '*ritvik*' as 'Krishna's trick' and a 'hoax by Krishna' (pages 1, 4). It seems he is saying it does not matter who initiates just as long as it isn't his own spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada. To have Srila Prabhupada initiate would be some sort of hoax according to Adikarta. How strange for a '*direct*' disciple to say such a thing.

If it really does not matter then why not let Srila Prabhupada initiate?

Next Adikarta offers arguments on the nature of initiation which completely support the '*ritvik*' position. He says that the real process of initiation is through '**culture, practice, education, and undergoing the required 'spiritual discipline'**'. (p1-2). He agrees the issue is to follow the process. (p1). He then says that everyone must follow and base their lives on the teachings of Srila Prabhupada alone (p2). Thus Adikarta recommends that the '**education, practice, discipline**', etc. is coming from Srila Prabhupada only. Which as Adikarta has just agreed is the real process of initiation anyway. Practically identical arguments to this are used in the '*Final Order*' (p27-30).

Adikarta then argues that Srila Prabhupada has given many instructions for his disciples to become gurus. What Adikarta however does not explain, and it is something he would be aware of if he had read '*The Final Order*', is that these '*many*' instructions are all given to devotees in the present tense; i.e. they are told to do it immediately. Thus they do **NOT** refer to *diksa* and initiating disciples, but to being instructing gurus. Though one should not discriminate between *diksa* and *siksa* gurus, they **DO** act in differing capacities. According to Srila Prabhupada (in his '*law of disciplic succession*') the *diksa* guru can **ONLY** act after his spiritual master has left. Thus these '*many*' instructions cannot be referring to *diksa* gurus.

Adikarta quotes one letter to John Milner where Srila Prabhupada states that he has '*no objection*' to Brahmananda initiating. The reality, according to Tamala Krishna Maharaja's Topanga Canyon confessions, is that Srila Prabhupada did not feel Brahmananda was even qualified to be a '*ritvik*'. Srila Prabhupada is not telling Brahmananda that he should become a *diksa* guru, he is just dealing with John Milner. In addition in any case this letter can have no relevance to '**Modifications A & B**', (from '*The Final Order*' which define the whole controversy), since all the letters only became available after they were published in defiance of the GBC in 1986. Had someone not bribed a devotee to release them Adikarta would not be quoting from them now.

- Thus how can such evidence possibly countermand an instruction issued to the entire movement in 1977?

Adikarta then argues that:

"there are so many instructions like these, that it's hard to accept the idea that Srila Prabhupada reversed everything in just one final letter that wasn't even composed by him. It just doesn't make any sense. And to repeat myself, even if he did mean '*ritvik*' forever, how does it change anything, if the initiator and the *siksa* are identical. It's just a hoax by Krishna" (p4)

The above assertion is completely false:

1. As we have just demonstrated there are actually not '*many* instructions like these'. Adikarta should realise that there is a difference between a guru who is ordered to simply preach in the presence of the spiritual master, and one who is ordered to initiate disciples after the spiritual master leaves; (also we doubt Krishna would try to deliberately cheat his devotees via an instructing emanating from a member of His infallible disciplic succession). Again these are very basic points that are covered in the '*Final Order*'. We really would urge Adikarta to read this definitive '*ritvik*' position paper so he can understand what exactly he is supposed to be refuting. This would certainly save him from the sort of embarrassment he will be feeling as and when he reads this response.
2. He states that the July 9th letter was not composed by Srila Prabhupada. How does he know? Was he there? How does he know that he did not dictate it to Tamala Krishna Maharaja, or at least tell him exactly what he wanted? Even if he did not compose it, if Srila Prabhupada signed it what does it matter? It means he checked it and agreed with every word in it. Or is Adikarta implying that Srila Prabhupada would mistakenly send out a letter he did not completely agree with to the whole movement?
3. If the initiator and *siksa* are the same why does that mean that it must be a '*hoax by Krishna*'. The initiator and *siksa* were also the same from 1966 to 1977.
Was this another '*hoax by Krishna*'?
4. Also if it does not '*change anything*' then why is he so upset that he has to write a paper to stop something that won't '*change anything*'.
Why not just accept it?
Especially when there is an order from Srila Prabhupada to that effect, and Adikarta is apparently bereft of any countermanding evidence.

Next Adikarta offers us some mental concoctions. He says the '*parampara doesn't necessarily mean by initiation, otherwise why are there gaps in it*' (p4) He just assumes that initiation can only be given if the guru and disciple are on the same planet. But

this is the whole basis of the controversy. In other words Adikarta has simply assumed the very thing that needs to be proven. This is circular reasoning:

Initiation requires the guru to be physically present therefore there are 'gaps' in the *parampara*. Since there are 'gaps' in the *parampara* no initiation took place since the guru must be physically present.

Next he says:

"There are two *paramparas*. One is the link between great *acaryas* who are specifically chosen to present and preserve the message and the other is the living touch between the guru and disciple. That could or could not imply initiation. But it does mean guidance from and surrender to the living teacher or more expert devotee of Krishna. Otherwise why did anyone bother to write letters to Prabhupada if the 'presence' of the guru is not required. For a *nitya siddha* it isn't necessary but for everyone else it helps a whole lot, provided the guru is genuine and expert." (p4)

This is another passage bulging with baloney:

1. Where does Srila Prabhupada ever teach that there are "two *paramparas*". We would like to know which *parampara* Adikarta learned this from!
2. He speculates that one of these *paramparas* has the 'great *acharyas*', and this 'could or could not imply initiation'. Again where did Adikarta learn this from?
We would like to see the references from Srila Prabhupada's books on this subject. Having filled his paper with lots of good quotes from Srila Prabhupada on all the other subjects (which everyone already knows and agrees with), as soon as he starts to talk on *guru tattva* he is unable to find any evidence to back up his theories.
3. He then says there is another *parampara* that is the 'living touch between the guru and disciple'. Again where is the evidence for this idea in Srila Prabhupada's teachings?
4. He then says that the presence of the guru must be required since people wrote 'letters to Prabhupada' and since it 'helps a whole lot'.
In which case it begs the question - who has Adikarta been writing his letters to for the last 20 years?
Also who has he got 'help' from in the last 20 years?
Adikarta is very quick to preach a doctrine that he himself has not practised for the last 20 years. Also where is the evidence for this doctrine from Srila Prabhupada?

In fact Srila Prabhupada states the exact opposite:

"Just like Krishna can be present simultaneously in millions of places. Similarly, the Spiritual Master can be present wherever the disciple wants. A Spiritual Master is the principle, not the body. Just like a television can be seen in thousands of places by the principle of relay monitoring."

"Physical presence is immaterial"

"So we should associate by vibration, and not by the physical presence. That is real association."

etc. etc. - See Appendices to 'The Final Order'.

Next Adikarta offers to 'guess' why people take up the *ritvik* cause (p4). These guesses contribute nothing to the discussion at hand since they shed no light on whether or not the *ritvik* idea is **RIGHT**; and in any case as Adikarta admits, he may be totally wrong. Though his speculations are irrelevant, he does offer one which we found quite entertaining, and which perfectly revealed the depth of his ignorance on this subject: - that the Gaudiya Matha may be behind the *ritvik* issue!

This is quite eccentric since:

1. The 'Final Order' quotes Srila Prabhupada criticising members of the Gaudiya Matha.
2. Narayana Maharaja was brought in by the GBC specifically to defeat the *ritvik* issue in the 1990 ISKCON JOURNAL.
3. Most of the Gaudiya Matha have the same 'living guru' philosophy as ISKCON, the very thing *ritvik*-proponents are trying to fight.
4. When the entire GBC went to see Sridhar Maharaja, he told them to carry on with the M.A.S.S.

Adikarta also incidentally mis-quotes one of the letters about the Gaudiya Matha, 70-12. The letter actually says that '*perhaps*' Puri Maharaja is not envious, not that he definitely isn't.

Adikarta stays on neutral territory until page 7, and then says the following:

"Of course the *ritvik* side will say that a real guru never falls down, and of course they're 99% correct". (p7)

What does the above statement mean:

- 1) **That only 1% of real gurus fall down!**
- 2) **That when gurus do fall down only 1% of them falls!**
- 3) **That the bona fide spiritual master is only 99% infallible!**

Who knows!

Either a bona fide guru falls down or he doesn't! Adikarta's problem is that he really needs to check his speculations with Srila Prabhupada's teachings. If he does this he will know that nowhere does Srila Prabhupada ever preach this '**99% doctrine**'. He clearly says a bona fide guru never falls down:

"A bona fide spiritual master is in the disciplic succession from time eternal and he does not deviate at all from the instructions of the Supreme Lord."

(BG 4:42)

"God is always God, Guru is always Guru."

(The Science of Self Realisation, chapter 2)

"Well if he is bad, how can he become a guru?"

(The Science of Self Realisation, chapter 2)

"The pure devotee is always free from the clutches of *Maya* and her influence."

(S.B. 5.3.14)

"There is no possibility that a first class devotee will fall down."

(C.c.Madhya, 22.71)

"A spiritual master is always liberated."

(SP Letter to Tamal Krishna, 21/6/70)

Again if Adikarta had taken the trouble to read '*The Final Order*' his embarrassment might have been avoided since the above quotes are all taken from there.

Next on page 8, Adikarta contradicts himself. First he criticises the '*lumping in mentality*' of devotees who assume all the gurus are corrupt. Then later on in the page he does the same thing when he '*lumps in*' all the *ritviks* together:

"Those embracing the *ritvik* thing may be right or wrong, but one thing they're doing is definitely very wrong, in my humble opinion. It seems at any cost they want to prove their point, even at the expense of the preaching ..." (p8)

Here he accuses all *ritvik* sympathisers of engaging in the same behaviour. Infact he has done this all the way through the paper. Talk about lumping in. And we might question what sort of '*preaching*' is being done any way.

If Adikarta is going out and telling everyone that the bona fide guru is only 99% trustworthy, he might be better off staying at home and reading Srila Prabhupada's books.

Adikarta then states that he wrote his paper to help those who maybe '*confused about this whole issue*'. (p8) Yet his paper so far has been nothing but a mass of confusion. He can not decide if real gurus fall down, he tries to attack the *ritvik* idea by using arguments which support it etc. etc.

Now, having said that *ritvik* was '*Krishna's trick*' and a '*hoax by Krishna*' he then says above that the *ritviks*:

"may be right" (p8)

- If he does not even know for sure if the *ritviks* are wrong, then what is the purpose of this paper?
- To say it does not matter?
- Then why not just accept *ritvik* and stop wasting everyone's time with this paper?

He then immediately says:

"Maybe I'm wrong, but the fact is that this whole thing is based on one word, 'henceforward' in one letter signed, not written, by Srila Prabhupada. It's inconceivable" (p9)

The only thing which is inconceivable is how anyone could possibly write such nonsense:

1. If he had bothered to read the position he is supposed to be attacking - '*The Final Order*' - he would know that it is **NOT** based on '*one word*'.
2. In any case if he '*maybe wrong*', how can he then say - '*the fact is ...*' If these things are 'facts', then he can't be wrong. And if he is not sure then how is he sure they are facts?
3. Again he brings up the nonsense about the letter not being written by Srila Prabhupada. This point has been dealt with earlier.

He then ends his paper with some more muddled thinking and speculation:

"Similarly the standard for being a guru as outlined by Prabhupada is also the highest, and possibly there are some struggling to reach that platform. We should try to help the situation by patience and understanding. Maybe it would help if there was less emphasis on the *diksa* guru and a little more appreciation for the active Godbrothers who also have a lot of valuable input to offer." (p9)

In line with the rest of his paper, instead of accepting Srila Prabhupada's perfect instructions as to how we should operate initiations, even though Adikarta says it '*won't change anything*', he would rather concoct his own ideas. Anything but accept a system that does not even '*matter*'.

It seems as if it matters to 'Adi' a whole deal, since he would do anything rather than accept it, even though he admits he maybe wrong, and even though he cannot offer any evidence as to why it was stopped.

He states above that maybe there should be "*less emphasis on the diksa guru*". Now Srila Prabhupada states that the spiritual master is the '*sum total of the demi-gods*' and that he is as '*good as god*'. This was certainly the case when Srila Prabhupada was the *diksa* guru.

- Now where does Srila Prabhupada support the idea that we can downgrade or de-emphasise the *diksa* guru according to our whim?
- Would anybody have dared suggested such a thing in Srila Prabhupada's presence?
- What gives Adikarta the licence to change the philosophy regarding how the *diksa* Guru is to be respected?

Adikarta also states that there may be some gurus struggling to reach the required platform, and that we should show '*patience and understanding*'. But then he is admitting that these people are not actually gurus at all but pretenders, since if they have not reached the required level then they cannot be qualified to take on the role of *diksa* gurus.

- So why are they pretending to be something they are not?

And all Adikarta can suggest is that we turn a blind eye to this cheating, or worse still change our philosophy on the position of the *diksa* guru to accommodate this state of affairs. More cheating to 'fix' the first level of cheating.

Next Adikarta intimates that Krishna has tricked the whole movement by getting Srila Prabhupada to sign the July 9th letter.

It was all a big ploy set up by Krishna, just as when he arranged to be shot in the foot by the hunter. Thus Krishna trick's His own movement using His own pure devotee. We do not recall Srila Prabhupada teaching anything like this in his books!

Perhaps someone 'tricked' Adikarta into buying a set of someone else's books.

He finishes by asking the *ritviks* to end the '*fratricidal war*' and co-operate to save the world. He then gives us a quote which stresses unity. Adikarta forgets to mention

who it was that drove 95% of Srila Prabhupada's disciples out of the movement;

who it is that currently bans large numbers of devotees who believe a philosophy that coincides with a direct order from Srila Prabhupada;

who it is that even refuses to discuss the issue further.

Co-operation can only be properly achieved when the truth is in the centre. If that truth happens to be *ritvik*, then that's what we must co-operate around.

- Is Adikarta willing to do that?

He should be since he offers not one valid reason why Srila Prabhupada's *Final Order* on initiation should not be followed.

- Will Adikarta respect his Guru's order?

Summary

1. Adikarta's paper is 90% irrelevant to the issue at hand. When he does talk about *ritvik*, he:
2. Offers evidence in it's support;
3. Contradicts himself;
4. Offers no evidence at all for his half-baked theories;
5. Offers not one argument as to why we should not follow the July 9th letter;
6. Cannot work out why Srila Prabhupada should have written the July 9th letter and therefore he concludes it can only be part of '*Krishna's trick*'. The July 9th letter was the '*Trojan horse*' the '*hoax by Krishna*'.
7. Offers nothing in support of **modifications A & B** from '*The Final Order*'.

Thus this paper contributes absolutely nothing to the issue at hand.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

www.iskconirm.com
irm@iskconirm.com