

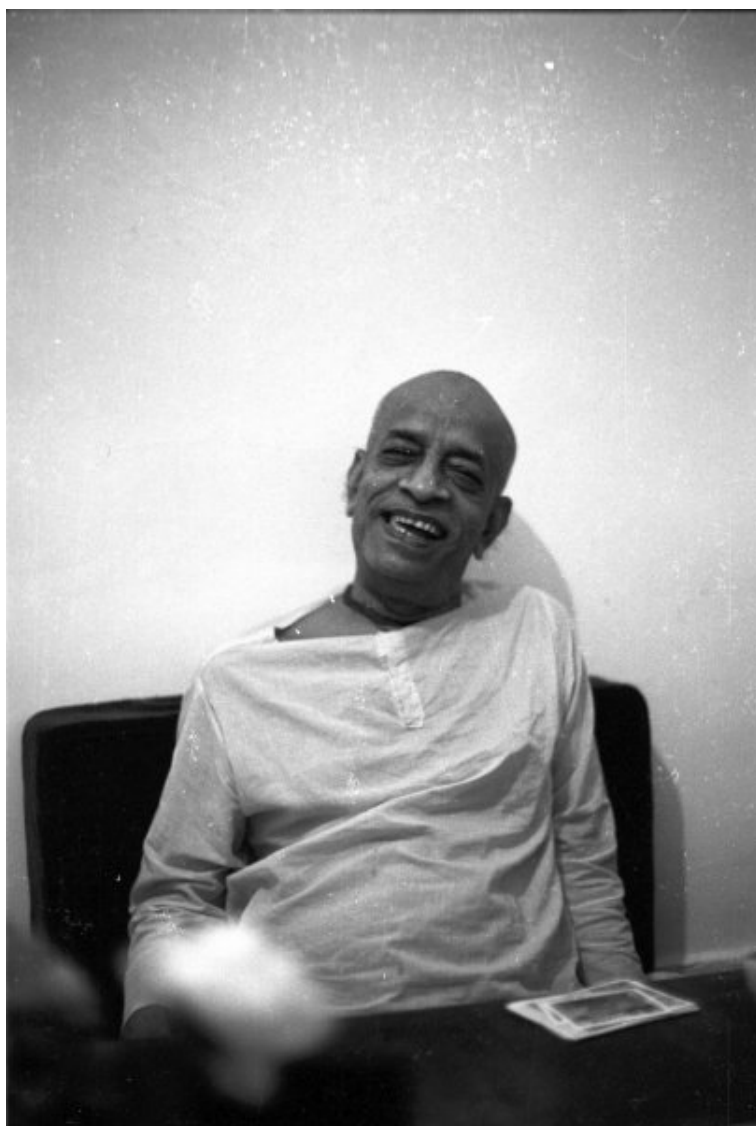
Exchanges between Krishnakant and
His Holiness Hridayananda Maharaja

Hridayananda

Master of Evasion



Hridayananda-Master of Evasion



“You have asked if it is true that the spiritual master remains in the universe until all his disciples are transferred to the spiritual sky. The answer is yes, this is the rule”.

(SPL Jayapataka 11.7.69).



by Krishnakant

Hridayananda-Master of Evasion

Introduction: Over the course of a year, from June 1997 to July 1998, the following e-mail exchange took place between H.H. Hridayananda Maharaja and Krishnakant. The conversation was prompted by a lecture Maharaja had given in Alachua on May 19th, 1997. In this lecture he claimed Srila Prabhupada had stated in '*many dozens*' of places that after '*his departure*' his disciples should become '*Gurus & acharyas*'. Krishnakant challenged Maharaja to produce all these 'many dozens' of quotes, reminding him that '*many*' meant at least 2, and 'dozens' also meant at least 2 dozen, and therefore 'many dozens' would mean there were at least 4 dozen i.e: 48 such quotes hidden on folio. The need for this evidence is highly significant since this bold claim is continually made by many members of the GBC. Clearly if Srila Prabhupada really had ordered all his disciples to become initiating *acharyas* on his departure over 48 times the case for *ritvik* would be severely weakened, if not terminally. The following exchanges ensued.

We reproduce all the exchanges under the date they were sent, in the order they were sent and received with a line dividing each new exchange Any explanatory comments will be under the exchanges in bold and enclosed in parenthesis, thus ().

Following Krishnakant's initial request for the 48 quotes Maharaja responded as follows:

June 26th, 1997

Dear Krishna Kant,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada. Thank you for your letter. I'm glad you have raised these points. In reply:

1. I may have exaggerated the number of quotations, however I stick by my basic point that Prabhupada's teaching, consistently, was that in his physical absence, his disciples will become gurus and *acharyas*.
2. I am reluctant to enter into a highly technical, legalistic discussion of the *rtvik* issue precisely because I am convinced that the real point is much more simple: Prabhupada explicitly stated on many occasions that his disciples would be gurus in his physical absence, and he never explicitly stated the opposite. The latest GBC paper elaborately discusses the terms *rtvik*, proxy etc. I personally found that discussion to be reasonable and have little to add.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisance's.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Could you still produce these quotes, of which you now admit there are not 'many dozens', but which you still say there are 'many' of. Please reproduce these 'many' quotes that **SPECIFICALLY** state what you have claimed i.e that Srila Prabhupada's disciples should become *diksa* gurus when Srila Prabhupada departs. Also the paper '*Disciple of My Disciple*' that you mention has already been extensively replied to by us, and the GBC have been unable to respond. Its seems they are '**running out of steam**'. Thank you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

Dear Krishna Kant,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you for your reply. I will request a devotee to go through folio to find the appropriate quotes. I am not sure that the GBC has "run out of steam". Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

June 28th

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

As you know, your disciple Hari Dasi had arranged a meeting between us, since you had expressed your desire to meet with myself when you came to London in July. Can you now confirm when that meeting will be? Look forward to seeing you.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

Dear Krishna Kanta,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you for your letter. Unfortunately, after several months of travelling, my strength has run out and so in order to avoid any health problem, I am cutting short my stay in Europe and will not be able to go to England. However, I hope that we can continue our conversation by e-mail. As it stands, I owe you a reply to your letter and hope to send it within several days.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

June 30th, 1997

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I am sorry to hear about your health. I hope you will soon make a full recovery and be back to full strength. In the meantime, I will await those quotes.

Thank you.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

Dear Krishna Kant,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you for your good wishes. My schedule is a little hectic now, but I hope to write to you in the near future.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

The evasion begins.

July 22nd, 1997

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisance's.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Hope your health has improved and you are back to fighting best. You are a great example to all of us with your tireless preaching despite your health and age. One month ago you sent me the message below:

Date: Thu, 26 Jun 1997 09:52:29 -0400 (EDT)

From: Hrid@aol.com

<Dear Krishna Kant,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you for your reply. I will request a devotee to go through folio to find the appropriate quotes. I am not sure that the GBC has "run out of steam".

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami>

I hope you have not forgotten me. I know you are busy but since you were having someone else find the quotes for you, and you promised me a reply subsequently in a 'few' days I thought I may have heard from you by now. I am further surprised since as I had previously mentioned I have not come across anyone else who answers their mail so promptly.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

Dear Krishnakantaji,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Sorry for the delay. I just returned a week ago to Los Angeles, and was quite fatigued.

But I hope to resume our discussion very soon.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

- **Since Maharaja had requested somebody else to find the 'many' quotes for him on folio, what relevance does the fact that he was 'fatigued' have to the delay in sending them?**

Maybe the delay is because they do not exist!

July 23rd, 1997

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisance's.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I hope you have now recovered from your fatigue. I look forward to resuming our conversation, and in particular in receiving the quotes you promised me, that would substantiate EXACTLY what you initially claimed. Remember their must be EXPLICIT mention of BOTH *diksa*/initiate and Physical absence/disappearance. I look forward to hearing from you.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

2nd, August, 1997

Dear Krishnakantaji,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I am somewhat rested now. Regarding your statement:

“Please remember there must be EXPLICIT mention of BOTH diksa/initiate and Physical absence/disappearance.”

I do not agree. Srila Prabhupada often said that he wanted his disciples to be gurus, without explicitly limiting this concept to *siksha* guru. He said that he would be very happy for his disciples to become *acharyas*. There is no question that Srila Prabhupada consistently taught normal Vedic culture.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

[Having been unable to produce the ‘many’ quotes of the specific type initially promised, Maharaja suddenly moves the goal-posts and states that the quotes do not actually need to say what he originally claimed they said. Any quotes where Srila Prabhupada requests generally that his disciples should become ‘gurus’ will now apparently suffice. Now there is no need for any mention of departure or diksa etc.]

4th, August, 1997

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisance’s.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you for your reply below.

It is common in both academic and scientific circles, that the evidence provided to substantiate any claim corresponds to the claim. I stated the condition given below because it merely mirrored the exact claim, which you made on May 19th in Alachua. If you wish to introduce evidence, that is less conclusive then you must alter your claim correspondingly. Thus you will need to retract the emphatic statement you originally made, for which after 6 weeks you have still not provided a single piece of evidence. It would be much more accurate for you to say something along the following lines:

“Srila Prabhupada stated many times he wanted his disciples to be gurus. However, there is no direct evidence to indicate that he was speaking about *diksa* gurus, nor did he link these gurus emerging to his disappearance, I believe that the statements are equally applicable to both *siksa* and *diksa* gurus, for the following reasons :”

You should then provide both the quotes and the reasons.

We however have analysed all these statements and can show that virtually everyone can apply to *siksa*, and nearly all can **ONLY** apply to *siksa*. You are then left with a handful of statements that **MAY** apply to *diksa*. This is the sum and substance of your evidence. This hardly tallies with the emphatic claims that are made to discard **DIRECT** pieces of evidence for the establishment of a *ritvik* system. I still invite you to present even one piece of **DIRECT, CLEAR**, evidence that Srila Prabhupada ordered his disciples to initiate as soon as he left the planet - what to speak of ‘many’.

If you cannot then at least be accurate with your claims, as to why you are sure Srila Prabhupada did not authorise a *ritvik* system.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

9th, August, 1997

Dear Krishnakant,

Regarding your statements, your basic misunderstanding can be explained as follows: Srila Prabhupada did not generally preach that there is any significant difference between *siksa* guru and *diksa* guru. Indeed he says they are one. He does mention a point of etiquette that we should only accept one *diksa* guru. Thus, once one has been initiated by a bona-fide guru, one is not reinitiated.

“We however have analysed all these statements and can show that nearly all can ONLY apply to siksa.”

I find this statement to be absurd. In fact, it is wrong to assume, as you do, that whenever Prabhupada speaks of Guru, he is necessarily speaking of *siksa* OR *diksa* guru, or that if he is speaking of both, he must say so. You have imposed here a rule that Prabhupada never recognized or enunciated. Prabhupada has often stated that the guru is one, which you do not, and thus he speaks of the guru in general, with the etiquette-observation that one formally takes *diksa* from only one bona-fide guru. Thus, Prabhupada’s many statements about his disciples becoming guru indeed refer, in a general sense, to guru, reflecting Prabhupada’s language. This is quite clear in statements of Prabhupada like the following one:

“Now, they’re competent. They can, not only the swamis, even the grhastas, they are called dasa adhikaris, 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.”

Hridayananda das Goswami

[By now Maharaja realises this is not going to be so easy as he had first thought, notice how he suddenly drops the affectionate Krsnakantji, and also stops ending his letters with ‘hoping you are well!:]

August 13th, 1997

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you for your reply below.

1. Before I respond to that, please note that my **ORIGINAL** point still stands - that the statement you made on May 19th was incorrect - you stated that the **ACTUAL QUOTES** included the words ‘make disciples’ and ‘when I leave’. What you are now saying is that this is the **CONCLUSION** of the quotes, and you have very nicely given the explanation for that below. This was simply my point - that it would have been more accurate to have stated what you have **NOW** done below, and presented that as the evidence, than to have said that the evidence actually consists of ‘many’ quotes where Srila Prabhupada **DIRECTLY** states that his disciples should take disciples on his disappearance. This is simply not true. Period. Now we shall move onto your interpretation below of the evidence which does **ACTUALLY** exist.

“In fact, it is wrong to assume, as you do, that whenever Prabhupada speaks of Guru, he is necessarily speaking of siksa OR diksa guru, or that if he is speaking of both, he must say so.”

2. What you have stated above is a ‘straw man’ argument since I fully agree with what you have said here and have never claimed different - since I have never **ASSUMED** anything. I merely asked you to give quotes that actually mirrored your claims - that’s all. What I **DID** say is that when I ‘analysed’ the quotes I came to a certain conclusion. You yourself have quoted this statement. Thus I am surprised that you have represented my statement that ‘I analysed’ something as ‘I assumed’ something.
3. What my **ANALYSIS** shows is that there **ARE** instances where Srila Prabhupada talks of either *Siksa* OR *Diksa*. I agree it is wrong to **ASSUME** anything. Specifically there are occasions where Srila Prabhupada can **ONLY** be referring to *Siksa*. I will state four of these circumstances:
 - a) Where the order for guruship is given in the present tense - Srila Prabhupada has clearly stated that one should not become a *diksa* unless he has left the planet.
 - b) When the order for guruship is given to persons who are not yet initiated - Srila Prabhupada states that one would at least need to be his initiated disciple to become a *diksa* guru.
 - c) When the order for guruship is given in conjunction with the ‘amara ajnaya’ verse since a relevant purport states ‘It is best not accept disciples’ - this is counter to the whole purpose of being a *diksa* guru.
 - d) When the order for guruship requires a very minimal level of advancement, such as stating that even children can do it etc., since Srila Prabhupada has stated that **ONLY** a maha-bhagavata can become a *Diksa* GURU - this quote is given in *The Final Order*.

It is as a result of these 4 reasons that the references must refer to *Siksa* only, not because of any assumptions. If on these 4 occasions you are still going to argue that there is still a possibility that *Diksa* is also a possibility then Srila Prabhupada would be giving contradictory instructions.

“You have imposed here a rule that Prabhupada never recognized or enunciated.”

1. Thus we have not imposed any such rule on Srila Prabhupada. Another straw man argument. All we are saying is that IF from the context it can be deduced what is being referred to, then we are quite entitled to draw that conclusion. What is absurd is to assume that **EVERY** time Srila Prabhupada used the term guru it **MUST** refer to both. It may or may not. We have to see the context. For instance the words *Siksa* or *Diksa* maybe mentioned, or one or more of the above 4 circumstances maybe present, etc. or it maybe spoken in the general sense and thus equally applicable to both.
2. Our point is that we should not simply make vague generalisations - just like you made the good point about '90% of marriages in ISKCON end in divorce.' - and how no one has really made serious scientific study.

Thus your latest claim is that:

"Thus Prabhupada's many statements about his disciples becoming guru indeed refer, in a general sense, to guru, reflecting Prabhupada's language."

To substantiate this claim you then produce one example, which ironically is not used in a general sense at all but refers specifically to *diksa* - from the context - making disciples, what happens after Prabhupada leaves, the etiquette etc. (This etiquette is **NOT** applicable to *siksa*) This would be a perfect example of the sort of quote which would have backed up your **EARLIER** claim on which you were originally challenged!

Thus having made this claim you now need to demonstrate that there are indeed 'many' quotes from Srila Prabhupada about his disciples becoming guru that do **NOT** fall under one or more of 4 categories listed above. If you cannot then my original statement, which was based on such an analysis still stands. (In your original note to me I assume by 'general' you mean it refers to **BOTH** *siksa* **AND** *diksa*, with no specific emphasis on either.)

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

Dear Krishnakant,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

1.) Before I respond to that, please note that my ORIGINAL point still stands - that the statement you made on May 19th was incorrect - you stated that the ACTUAL QUOTES included the words 'make disciples' and 'when I leave'. What you are now saying is that this is the CONCLUSION of the quotes.

There are in fact many, and sufficient quotes, in which Srila Prabhupada expresses his clear desire, his basic teaching, which is the Vedic culture, that in his absence, his fixed-up disciples should become gurus and take students.

Specifically there are occasions where Srila Prabhupada can ONLY be referring to *Siksa*. I will state four of these circumstances:

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

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

[Bingo! In the last sentence, without realising it, Maharaja has destroyed his own case by admitting that such 'general' quotes do not refer to *siksa* or *diksa*.]

August 15th, 1997

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada. Thank you for your reply below.

"There are in fact many, and sufficient quotes, in which Srila Prabhupada expresses his clear desire, his basic teaching, which is

the Vedic culture, that in his absence, his fixed-up disciples should become gurus and take students.”

It was this claim, which you made on May 19th in Florida, that began our exchange in the first place. After you made that claim this is what happened:

1. I asked you on 25/6/97 to substantiate this claim by producing these quotes which you said there were ‘dozens’ of.
2. On 26/6/97 you admitted that you may have exaggerated the numbers but that there were still ‘many’
3. On 26/6/97 I again asked you to produce the ‘many’ quotes, pointing out that the text of the quotes must correspond with the claim you make about them - i.e. that they must mention Srila Prabhupada’s absence and his disciples initiating.
4. On 26/6/97, later on, you accepted this challenge and said a devotee was going to find these quotes out for you from the Folio.
5. On 28/6 and 30/6 you stated that these quotes would be sent in ‘several days’ and the ‘near future’.
6. By the 22/8 your devotee still had not produced these quotes from the folio, but you assured me that you would be in touch soon.
7. By 2/8 the quotes still had not been produced. Instead, you now challenged my original request that the quotes produced must match the claims made. This was a request, which you had not earlier challenged, before you started looking for the quotes, but had implicitly agreed with by indicating that you were going to request a devotee to search them out for me. Instead you now insisted that whenever Srila Prabhupada stated that he wanted his disciples ‘to be gurus’ would be sufficient as evidence since such statements were not limited to *siksa*. You repeated this understanding on 9/8/97.
8. I however pointed out that analysis of these ‘general’ quotes indicated that they mostly fell under one of 4 categories which precluded *diksa*.
9. You have now however repeated your original assertion that there are ‘many’ quotes where the actual TEXT corresponds with your claim. These were the very same quotes you were unable to produce earlier. You have also further admitted however that the many occasions where Srila Prabhupada maybe talking about becoming guru in a general sense do NOT apply to *diksa* if they fall within one of the four categories I mentioned - which in any case is nearly all of them. Which means we have now gone full circle and you are now back to having to produce the quotes I originally asked for - where the actual wording of the quotes corresponds to your claims i.e. mentions: **absence/initiates/takes disciples, become/gurus/acaryas.**

I WOULD THEREFORE HUMBLY REQUEST AGAIN MAHARAJA, THAT YOU PRODUCE THESE ‘MANY’ QUOTES.

“What you would have to show here is that in these 4 circumstances, Srila Prabhupada states that one can or should become a *siksha guru*...”

Here you have very correctly pointed out that I have been using the term ‘*siksa*’ in a very loose sense. However please note that the term *siksa*/instructing guru is not **ONLY** limited to the formal role you mention. In the CC it mentions that there are two types of instructing gurus - ‘one who awakens by relevant instructions - *vartma pradasaka* - and the ‘liberated’ person always ‘meditating’ on the supreme personality of godhead. I assume when you talk of the formal *siksa* guru you are mentioning the latter. Thus in reality you could say that when I used the term ‘*siksa*’ what I really meant was - a *vartma pradaksa siksa* guru and also teacher as you have correctly pointed out. In other words by ‘*siksa* guru’, I mean all possible gurus - teachers, *vartma-pradasaka* etc. **EXCEPT THE Diksa GURU and THE PREDOMINANT LIBERATED Siksa GURU.** Thus in this point I am in agreement with your analysis.

Again thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule for your prompt and detailed reply.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

(It is now over 7 weeks since Maharaja supposedly sent a devotee away to tap a few buttons on Folio to respond to very simple and straightforward request. Having been pinned down again, surely now Maharaja will not be able to escape. How does the Master of Evasion answer the request for evidence? As we shall see he goes A.W.O.L. for an entire month)

9th September, 1997

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I am concerned that I have suddenly not heard from you for a month now. Please reply to let me know what is happening. I hope nothing has happened in regards to your health etc., and that you are well.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

10th September, 1997

Dear Krishna Kanta,

Thank you for your letter. I did not reply because I saw that the tone of our conversation was becoming more that of a debate tournament than a sincere philosophical discussion. In that atmosphere, points are considered superficially, and much that is said is not heard.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

(So now he is finally pinned down to supplying the evidence Maharaja suddenly feigns aversion to a 'debate tournament' atmosphere. Is this really the Hrdyananda we all know and love, suddenly gone all coy and shy about debating.)

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I am very sorry that you feel this way, and apologise for any offences I may have committed. However, I am surprised that you would just suddenly cut someone off and ignore them without warning. After all, we can all make mistakes inadvertently.

Also in my last note, all I did was:

a) Ask you to produce some quotes, which you had already agreed to produce.

b) **AGREED** with one of your major points. Hardly a case of points being "considered superficially, and much that is said is not heard."

In any case what is the harm in debating points if there is a disagreement. Or should I just accept what you say without question.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

11th September, 1997

Dear Krishna Kant,

Thank you for your letter. My intention was not to "cut you off". I must admit that I was saddened by the tone of your letter, and did not reply, because I felt it was best to wait. No, I do not expect you, or anyone else, to blindly accept what I say.

Hridayananda das Goswami

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Sorry my tone saddened you. This was not my intention. I will try and be more careful in future. I am young and immature and so you must excuse my mistakes. Could we please now resume our discussion. I would still very much appreciate the many quotes that we spoke about, since their presence would bring this matter to an amicable conclusion.

Thank You.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

(Having lured Maharaja back into the debating arena, the evasion starts all over again along with the more affectionate ji name ending, and expressions of concern about Krishnakant's health.)

15th September, 1997

Dear Krishnakantaji,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada. Thank you for your letters.

I believe that at this point the crux of our disagreement is as follows:

You have stated, as an interpretative principle, that general statements about becoming a guru cannot be taken to refer to *diksa* guru, unless there is explicit mention of *diksa*, initiation, etc. My reply was that Srila Prabhupada, and the scriptures, state that a formal *siksa* guru and a *diksa* guru have the same qualifications and are one. There are of course other references to becoming guru in the simpler sense of teaching the science of Krishna. One cannot automatically claim that a reference to becoming a guru means *siksa* guru in the absence of a explicit reference to *diksa*, because nowhere does Srila Prabhupada, or the scriptures, acknowledge such an automatic interpretative principle. Therefore, in my view, there are indeed many statements by Prabhupada that his disciples should become "regular gurus".

I think that this is our basic disagreement.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

20th September, 1997

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you for your response. I am grateful that you have forgiven my offences and that we can now resume our discussion. I will try harder in future to make sure my tone does not inadvertently turn adversial again. I am sorry I have taken so long to reply since I have had no access to a computer since 9/16/97. I have only been able to log on for the first time this morning. You have summarised what you feel our disagreement is below. Unfortunately this is not actually the case. You had already stated this understanding on 9/8/97. I replied on 13/8/97 that I have never claimed that any mention of guru must mean *siksa* unless *diksa* is specifically mentioned, and you accepted this. I simply stated that any mention of guru will mean *siksa* only if the '4 circumstances' are present. You stated however that these '4 circumstances' would not actually be representative of either *Diksa* or formal *siksa*. I agreed with this point. Thus the only statements that could even possibly be evidence for Srila Prabhupada authorising *diksa* would be statements that did **NOT** involve the '4' circumstances present. I then asked you to produce these 'many statements'. Thus at this point there is not actually any disagreement. You and I had already agreed on what can NOT be introduced as evidence to substantiate your claims. I had then asked you to present what you DO consider as evidence for *diksa* guru authorisation. Thus I would ask again if I can see, what are, in your view the:

"many statements by Prabhupada that his disciples should become "regular gurus".

Thanking you again, for your time,

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

(Having been pinned down yet again, Maharaja tries to buy time.)

October 2nd, 1997

Dear Krishnakantaji,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you for your clarification of our positions. i am now in brasil, and i will be at the above address only until monday, but you can continue writing to my regular address and it will be forwarded.

could you please resend me the four principles which you feel mark a description of guru as not applying to *diksa*. thank you very much.

hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada. Before I resend the 4 principles that do not mark a description of Guru as not applying to *diksa*, please note this is not something that I feel, but also something that **YOU** have already agreed on:

‘Thus the “four cases” you mentioned would not apply to such a primary guru-disciple relationship, on the level of *siksha* or *diksha*.’

(Your e-mail to me on 13/8/97)

Please find below the 4 principles you asked for:

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

I look forward to receiving the quotes originally requested.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

(So did the quotes arrive? Not quite.)

October 3rd, 1997

Dear Krishnakanta,

all glories to srila prabhupada. thanks for the reply. since i am now in brasil, it will take a little time to find the references, but i will definitely respond.

hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

[Whatever happened to the devotee he had sent away to find these quotes in June? Did he get lost on the way to the computer room? And why will it take him ‘time’ to find the references we thought he was going to get one of his competent disciples to do it. What has being in Brazil got to do with it? Doesn’t he have disciples and computers in Brazil too?]

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you for your response. I look forward to receiving the references. Hope you are in good health.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

Maharaja goes A.W.O.L. yet again.

19th November, 1997

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

It has been some time since I heard from you and I was wondering how you were. On October 3rd you wrote:

“Dear Krishnakanta,

all glories to srila prabhupada.

thanks for the reply. since i am now in brasil, it will take a little time to find the references, but i will definitely respond.

hoping you are well,

hridayananda das goswami”

I assume from the delay that maybe you are still in/have been longer than expected in brasil. I am eager that we keep our discussion going. Please let me know what the situation is. I know you are extremely busy with your teaching and other responsibilities, so I appreciate the time you are taking out on this. Look forward to hearing from you.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

20th Novemeber, 1997

Dear Krishnakantaji,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you for your letter.

I just returned two days ago from a wonderful preaching tour of Latin America. I appreciate your patience. I plan to spend the next several weeks in L.A. and I expect to find the time to continue our dialogue. Thanks for the reminder.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Very enlivened to hear about your preaching. Do you produce a newsletter of your preaching exploits? It would be nice to read how you smash the atheists and mayavadis. I look forward to us continuing our dialogue and to the quotes.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

21st November, 1997

Dear Krishnkantaji,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada. Thank you for your letter.

I asked my secretary to send you a few travelogues. I look forward to corresponding with you again within a few weeks.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

(Yes, what about those quotes then?)

(Please note the incredible efficiency when it comes to retrieving and dispatching elaborate journals glorifying his own activities. Yet when it comes to finding some quotes, which are supposedly liberally sprinkled throughout Srila Prabhupada's teachings, we find that even after five months, with all the hundreds of disciples and computers at his disposal he has still not sent them. Could it be that they do not really exist?)

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I enjoyed reading your travelogues. As it has been 2 months now I am just sending a reminder to continue our correspondence.

Just to remind you, you were going to send me some quotes where Srila Prabhupada speaks of his disciples becoming *Diksa* Gurus after his disappearance. You also agreed that you could not use quotes where Srila Prabhupada is simply using the word 'Guru' in the sense of a 'teacher of Krsna Consciousness' as evidenced by 4 circumstances - but rather we need a specific mention in the quotes of the actual points that you claimed in your class - that **AFTER DISAPPEARANCE**, the disciples will become *Diksa* gurus/ INITIATE their **OWN** disciples.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Hope you are well and are preaching dynamically defeating the atheists and *mayavadis* as I know you are the most expert in our society at doing this.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

New year, new hope.

January 24th, 1998

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Since it has been another 2 months since I last heard from you, I am just dropping you another line to remind you of again of the quotes you were going to send me. Hope you are well.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

Dear Krishnakanta,

Thanks for the note. Sorry again for not writing. It seems the more I try to simplify my life, the more I get blessed with an avalanche of service.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

(He really must be very a very busy guru indeed. But surely he must have one disciple who could perform this simple task. How can they all be too busy to answer such a simple query?)

25th, January, 1998

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you very much for the note below. I am very glad to hear that you are blissfully engaged in the service of Srila Prabhupada. I can appreciate your busy schedule and lack of time. Maybe I can offer a suggestion: Our exchange has so far allowed us to fully agree on what quotes would constitute the evidence for Srila Prabhupada authorising his disciples to give *diksa* after his disappearance. Earlier you had wrote on 26/6/97:

“Thank you for your reply. I will request a devotee to go through folio to find the appropriate quotes.”

Now I know that you are determined to give this matter your personal attention. But perhaps if you went back to the course of action mentioned above it will free you up, and at least give me something to think about in the meantime, by which you may be able to get more time. Hoping you are well,

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

28th, January, 1998

Dear Krishnakantaji,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada. Thanks for your letter. I will try to assign a qualified disciple to work on this in the near future. Thank you for your patience.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

(Goodness, his disciples are obviously just as busy as he is. We wonder if they are all as evasive too.)

Maharaja goes A.W.O.L. once again

21st, February, 1998

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I just thought I would drop a line of reminder. I am very keen for us to continue our discussion. One thing I would like to say is that I really appreciate some of the points you have made thus far. In particular your clear understanding of the difference between a teacher, and a *siksa* and *diksa* guru. I say this because you seem to be the only person from the GBC I have met who has understood this point. So many GBC's are still quoting Lord Caitanya's '*amara ajnaya*' order to teach anyone one meets about Krishna, as evidence that Srila Prabhupada ordered *diksa* gurus for when he departs. Having spent many fruitless hours in conversation with others just discussing this very basic point, I just wanted to say I have found it so refreshing to speak to someone who plays 'fair' and applies the principles of logic and reason expertly.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

Dear Krishnakantji,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada. Thank you for your letter.

I do hope that we can come to some mutual understanding at some level. My hope to continue our discussion is that I am improving my lifestyle. We have rented a nice house for a preaching center in Davis, California, a college town near Berkeley, and I will be going there in a few weeks. Hopefully I will have several months of relative peace so that I can catch up on all the projects I have been neglecting. Thank you again for your patience.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

15th, April 1998

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Just to remind you about our discussion. Hopefully by now you will have settled in Davis since it has been 2 months since our last correspondence. Hope you are in good health and consciousness. By the way, I thought the recent GBC assessment of you was quite unfair, since we need independent-minded and thoughtful devotees like you to speak up when things are not right. And it did not make any sense to say that you cannot '**change the engagements of your disciples without reference to their authorities!**' - you **ARE** their authority according to the GBC's own philosophy - if the Guru cannot engage the disciple how he sees fit, then what is the purpose of the guru-disciple relationship?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

Dear Krishnakantaji,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada. Thank you for your letter and for your encouraging words. Thank you also for reminding me of our much postponed conversation. I hope to get back to you soon, and thank you again for your great patience.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

[After many, many attempts to get Maharaja to produce the 'goods', Maharaja was not heard of again. Silence means acceptance of defeat. It was clear no matter how many times he was asked to produce the quotes he promised back on June 26th, 1997, Maharaja just couldn't, but neither would he be gentlemen enough to admit defeat. Krishnakant then tried to engage him in debate through another tack.]

18th, May, 1998

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I hope you are well and blissfully engaged in your preaching work. I have a short paper that I have written about the historical tradition and how it relates to our *siddhanta*. Please find it attached. I have not published this or passed it round since I wanted you to critique it first, since I know that you are extremely knowledgeable about the history of our vedic culture. So I would like for you to point out the flaws. Thank you very much.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

Dear Krishnakantaji,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you for your letter with attached file. I will try to read it in the next day or so and give you my feedback.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

[The flattery works and Maharaja, thinking he is on safer ground, immediately responds.]

20th, May, 1998

Dear Krishna Kantaji,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada. I am sending back, as an attached file, the document you sent me with some of my observations.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

[Please note how now Maharaja suddenly finds all the time in the world to reply, and he replies almost immediately. Yet when he is asked to find some quotes, even after an entire year he keeps claiming he has no time. Below is the paper that was sent to Maharaja, with his comments interspersed and underlined.)

The 'Unprecedented' Objection

One of the most common objections to the *ritvik* system of initiation being re-instituted within ISKCON is that it is not in line with historical tradition. It is often pointed out that to operate such a system is completely unprecedented, and thus cannot be what Srila Prabhupada had intended. The most obvious problem with this objection is that it is in itself unprecedented. Nowhere in *sastra* is it ever stated that a guru's order can be ignored if it is unprecedented, or that lack of historical precedent somehow invalidates a direct instruction from a guru to his followers. Neither is there any mention in Srila Prabhupada's books of any previous *acarya* who taught such a principle. Therefore the objection itself is unprecedented, and thus by its own logic self-defeating and contradictory.

The following points can be used to defeat this objection:

1. The conclusion that the *ritvik* system is unprecedented follows from an analysis of its properties, i.e. that it appears to be unique. However such an analysis is totally unrelated to the central question- was such a system ordered by Srila Prabhupada? Just because the *ritvik* system may have been previously unheard of, does not in itself prove that Srila Prabhupada did not sanction its continued application within ISKCON. This 'central question' can only be properly addressed by analysing Srila Prabhupada's actual instructions in this regard. These instructions, along with their analysis, have been presented in the "Final Order" wherein it has been clearly demonstrated that Srila Prabhupada DID order such a system. As disciples it is only such orders that have any relevance. Srila Prabhupada did not train up his disciples to evaluate his orders on the basis of historical considerations, nor did he ever teach that such considerations could be used to evaluate the validity of such orders, what to speak of terminate them.
2. Srila Prabhupada taught that our guide is *sastric* injunctions, NOT historical tradition. There are NO *sastric* injunctions preventing a *diksa* guru from initiating just because he is not physically present on the same planet as his prospective disciple.

[The general principle is guru, *sadhu*, and *sastra*. The examples of *sadhus* and the histories in *shastras* are relevant. Even Srila Prabhupada constantly stated, "I have not concocted anything.]

3. It is just plain historical fact that Srila Prabhupada did many things which were unprecedented, such as giving the *Gayatri Mantra* by having a female disciple administer it to her husband, giving initiation through the mail, etc. Every *acarya* in our line set his own precedents, albeit in harmony with *sastric* injunctions. If an *acarya* never set a precedent, then logically nothing could ever be UN-precedented, since no precedents would exist in the first place to act as a comparative standard. Thus to reject something based on lack of precedence is a self-contradictory argument, since something can only be unprecedented if you assume that there already exist precedents set by someone, at some time previous, to act as a standard. But in accepting this possibility we are admitting that an *acarya* can set precedents!

[What is unprecedented is that one of Prabhupada's instructions on a very basic, vital issue is presented in such a way that one must almost be a lawyer to follow the proof. I am not aware of a single case where Prabhupada did that. If we take Prabhupada's simple, direct statements, they all conclude that in his absence, his disciples in good standing should accept their own students according to the normal Vedic culture.]

We learn about Vedic history from *shastra*.

4. Certainly there is no mention in his books that any type of PHYSICAL barrier or consideration can obstruct the transcendental process of *diksa* between guru and disciple. In fact the OPPOSITE is stated:

"Just like Krsna 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. - Please see appendices to *The Final Order*.

[We learn about Vedic history from *shastra*. The basic principle of initiation is that both parties, guru and disciple, explicitly agree. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur states in a Bengali essay that Ekalavya was going to ruin Vedic culture by claiming to be a disciple of a guru that had not explicitly agreed to accept him. Accepting disciples by mail does not violate the basic principle of a guru and disciple accepting each other.]

1. One could argue that there is no mention in Srila Prabhupada’s books of a *ritvik* system being used when the Guru is still on the same planet as the prospective disciple. Yet we know that such a system was used by Srila Prabhupada to initiate the vast majority of his disciples. Thus if we used historical precedent as a guide we would need to discount many of the initiations conducted by Srila Prabhupada as being bogus. This is a clear example of Srila Prabhupada sanctioning the use of a previously unprecedented system. The very same system in fact which is now being objected to on the basis of lack of precedent!

[Prabhupada never called his long-distance initiations a “*ritvik*” system. The term was introduced by Tamal Krishna Goswami and Prabhupada took it in the normal sense of the world, “an officiating priest”, and used the term also to refer to regular gurus. The term *ritvik* is simply not part of Prabhupada’s standard vocabulary for teaching Krishna consciousness. Before TKG introduced it, it does not appear in Prabhupada’s books as a significant term for anything.]

2. Furthermore, what we DO know about the *parampara* supports the *ritvik* system. The most famous example of *diksa* transmission in our *parampara* is given in the *Bhagavata Gita* 4:1:

“The Blessed Lord said: I instructed this imperishable science of yoga to the sun-god, Vivasvan, and Vivasvan instructed it to Manu, the father of mankind, and Manu in turn instructed it to Iksvaku.”

And yet Srila Prabhupada describes this primary example of the *parampara* system as involving inter-planetary *diksa*:

“So there was no difficulty in communicating with Manu or Manu’s son Iksvaku. The communication was there, or the radio system was so nice that communication could be transferred from one planet to another.”

(BG lecture 1968).

The fact that *diksa* can be transmitted from one planet to another proves the viability of the *ritvik* system, since we know Srila Prabhupada is still present in the universe:

“You have asked if it is true that the spiritual master remains in the universe until all his disciples are transferred to the spiritual sky. The answer is yes, this is the rule”.

(SPL Jayapataka 11.7.69).

We also know that as a *mahabhagavat* Srila Prabhupada is at least as powerful as demigods such as Iksvaku. So transferring or transmitting *diksa* to receptive disciples should present him no difficulty at all, from whichever planet he may presently reside.

In this case, there was communication **IN THIS WORLD**, albeit interplanetary, and not someone claiming that an invisible, unheard Srila Prabhupada, by prior technical agreement, has pre-accepted.

3. Also in the Gaudiya *parampara* coming from Lord Caitanya, Srila Prabhupada always presents:

Narottama Dasa Thakura > Visvanatha Cakravati > Jagganatha Dasa Babaji

as the record of the *parampara*, yet there would appear to be hundreds of years separating them. Srila Prabhupada teaches us that **THIS** is the *parampara*, without any additional clarification regarding ‘*siksa/diksa*’, ‘gaps’ or the need for ‘living *diksa*’. Rather he calls it a ‘**clear line of disciplic succession**’ (Lecture 11/6/69). Why would Srila Prabhupada do this if he wanted to emphasize the need for ‘living *diksa*’? One may go and research other books not authored by Srila Prabhupada to present an alternative explanation, but only the above is what Srila Prabhupada taught us.

4. Also it does not make sense to use ‘tradition’ as a benchmark by which to evaluate our *parampara* since it is difficult to identify for our *parampara*, a package of ‘traditional’ standards from which nothing must deviate. For example, a few hundred years ago Madhavendra Puri introduced something completely new - Radha-Krishna worship. Srila Prabhupada states that up until then Krishna had been worshipped on His own. Lord Caitanya then appeared to completely change vaisnava philosophy. Until then the philosophy of our *parampara* had been pure dualism - not simultaneous oneness and difference. With all this in mind it seems odd we should worry unduly about Srila Prabhupada using ceremonial priests in seemingly novel ways. After all, he is not changing any principle of philosophy merely by using priests to give names and accept disciples on his behalf. He is only installing a relatively minor procedural detail with regards to a ceremony which is itself merely a formality, not an essential aspect of *diksa* initiation. The key overriding principle that a disciple should always get initiated by a maha-bhagavata who is in the *parampara*, remains intact. This is the system Srila Prabhupada left

us, whereby potentially unlimited numbers of people in the future can be initiated into the *parampara*, using the same system that was used to initiate large numbers of new disciples when Srila Prabhupada was physically present.

5. Sometimes people bring in books not authored by Srila Prabhupada to prove that the *ritvik* system is a deviation from tradition. This desperate tactic is employed since there is no mention of these so-called vital '**traditional**' principles in Srila Prabhupada's books. The very fact that outside books need to be consulted prove that Srila Prabhupada's books were not intended to be guidebooks for evaluating how '**traditional**' a particular practice maybe. This fact alone should tell us that tradition cannot be an issue. If tradition was supposed to be a vital tool by which to evaluate the validity of any particular practice then Srila Prabhupada would have provided us with the necessary information about '**traditional**' practices with which to make these judgements. We would not need to consult other books, since Srila Prabhupada's teachings are not '**deficient**' in any area of spiritual life. Obviously if we are sincerely trying to follow and understand what Srila Prabhupada wanted we should stick solely to his teachings. If there is some so-called principle of tradition that Srila Prabhupada did not mention, we are not interested in it. Such principles can not be important to our spiritual lives if Srila Prabhupada did not mention them.
6. Finally, the whole process of trying to draw comparisons with the past is entirely meaningless unless you are comparing like with like. Srila Prabhupada was a totally unique *acarya* who came in unique circumstances, and achieved unique results. No previous *acarya* can compare with Srila Prabhupada. Even Jesus Christ only preached to his own local people during his manifest appearance. No-one before has left their own land and spread Krishna Consciousness all over the world. Unless you can find other examples of how initiations were conducted in a **worldwide** religious **institution** during some previous *Kali yuga* just after the appearance of the Golden Avatar, you do not even have a basis for comparison.

Thus in summary:

The July 9th order proves that Srila Prabhupada definitely set up a *ritvik* system of initiation. We also know that he issued no countermanding order for it to be terminated. Therefore it should still be running. This system may not marry up with our speculations about how we think Srila Prabhupada **SHOULD** have done things, or what we might have **expected** him to do; but this is Srila Prabhupada's final order on how initiations were to run within ISKCON. Thus we have no choice but to follow it if we want to follow Srila Prabhupada. That's the bottom line. Therefore, the burden is on the GBC to show why the system that Srila Prabhupada's set up for initiations was supposed to be drastically altered immediately after his passing away.

Furthermore:

The *ritvik* system as used by Srila Prabhupada himself when he was present is unprecedented.

Historical precedent is in itself no basis for determining truth.

We follow *sastra*, which does not give any injunctions against the *ritvik* system.

Srila Prabhupada did many things, which were unprecedented.

Previous *acaryas* all set their own precedents.

Parampara examples and teachings support lack of physicality in guru disciple relationships.

The *parampara* has no standard pattern to be followed.

We do not have enough authorised information to evaluate if the system is 'untraditional'.

The whole situation is too unique to make any valid comparisons.

The very objection itself is unprecedented, and thus by it's own internal logic should be rejected.

The dialogue resumes

20th, May 1998

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you very much for your considered and thoughtful comments. I feel honored that you have taken this time out of your busy schedule to look over carefully what I wrote. What you have written has given me much to think about. Once I have given your comments careful thought, I would like to get back to you. In the meantime, I think this would be a good time to wind up our previous discussion, which has been outstanding for some time now. In being able to give me some of your valuable time I trust that maybe now your hectic workload has settled down somewhat. Our previous discussion relates to some quotes you were going to find me. Infact you allude to this point again though in different words in your comments here:

“If we take Prabhupada’s simple, direct statements, they all conclude that in his absence, his disciples in good standing should accept their own students according to the normal Vedic culture.”

It was of course a similar statement to this, though in much more emphatic terms, that you made in your lecture in Alachua on May 19th, 1997, that kicked off our whole discussion. To recap, you were going to find me direct statements that spoke of taking on the role of Guru after Srila Prabhupada’s departure, and which did not fall under the 4 categories we had both agreed on.

Are you settled in Davis now? How is your program going on there? I hope you are well and I look forward to hearing from you.

Your Servant,
Krishnakant

Dear Krishna Kanta,

In a message dated 5/20/98 4:51:17 PM, you wrote:

“What you have written has given me much to think about. Once I have given your comments careful thought, I would like to get back to you.”

I look forward to your comments. I will try to find time for the old project.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

[Oops! Having thought he had been let off the hook, Maharaja has been drawn back into the dreaded ‘old project’. What can the Master do now?]

21st, May, 1998

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Unfortunately I cannot fully comment on what you have written because one of your main points is repeating the substance of the ‘old project’. Thus in that sense the project is no longer ‘old’ but very much current. Thus your expeditious attention to this matter would be most profitable.

Hope you are well. I look forward to hearing from you.

Your Servant,
Krishnakant

[Two more attempts to engage Maharaja in conversation.]

28th, May, 1998

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I was just writing some feedback on your comments on the paper I sent you, and I was wondering, that half the points you did NOT comment on. Should I therefore not worry so much about altering them, or did you just not comment on those? Thank you very much.

Your Servant,
Krishnakant

Dear Krishna kanta,

In a message dated 5/28/98 8:05:35 PM, you wrote:

"I was just writing some feedback on your comments on the paper I sent you, and I was wondering, that half the points you did NOT comment on. Should I therefore not worry so much about altering them, or did you just not comment on those?"

My comments were not exhaustive. I just commented on those points that most seemed to require comment.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

[Another week passes, and still there is no response to the 'old project' which he knows must be answered since he had repeated those same old claims again in his answer to Krishnakant's paper. Krishnakanta decides to respond to his comments anyway].

7th June, 1998

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I have now fully reviewed your comments and prepared a response. Please find it attached. I hope you are well, and I look forward to hearing your thoughts. Thank you very much.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

(Below are the responses to Maharaja's comments which are boxed in speech marks, with Krishnakant's replies following underneath):

"The general principle is guru, *sadhu*, and *sastra*. The examples of *sadhus* and the histories in *shastras* are relevant. Even Srila Prabhupada constantly stated, "I have not concocted anything.""

We are not saying the examples of *sastra* are not edifying or relevant. We are simply stating that the lack of previous example of some system being utilised does not in itself make such an arrangement a 'concoction' or bogus. By definition many 'histories' and actions of *sadhus* will **INITIALLY** be unprecedented. As you know Srila Prabhupada himself did many things not directly referred to in any *sastra*. The pre-*samadhi ritvik* system may be one such example, yet no-one is currently arguing that it was a 'concoction'. If you are seriously defending the current guru system within ISKCON I believe you would be extremely hard pushed to find anything remotely resembling it in any *sastra* (although I am willing to stand corrected).

"What is unprecedented is that one of Prabhupada's instructions on a very basic, vital issue is presented in such a way that one must almost be a lawyer to follow the proof. I am not aware of a single case where Prabhupada did that. If we take Prabhupada's simple, direct statements, they all conclude that in his absence, his disciples in good standing should accept their own students according to the normal Vedic culture."

Your insinuation that only a lawyer could follow our proof at least appears to half-heartedly concede that there is some sort of legal thread to our argumentation. As far as GBC position papers on this issue go, I am afraid I am unable to return the compliment. In any case your assertion is wholly subjective. There are many devotees I know personally who agree with, and understand 'The Final Order', but have no legal or even academic background at all. (There are also devotees with thorough legal training who also completely agree with us of course).

Your second assertion regarding 'simple, direct statements' I have already questioned over a year ago. I am still anxiously waiting to see these many clear direct calls for *diksa* guruship to occur, en mass, directly after Srila Prabhupada's departure. No doubt, you will soon be putting this entire matter to rest by locating and sending me these numerous quotes. Until you do I humbly pray you will forgive me for not finding your assertion completely convincing.

I am sure you would ultimately agree that as disciples our only concern is to follow the order of the guru to the best of our ability. The *ritvik* order is actually very simple, in essence it is a continuation of the same identical system Srila Prabhupada personally set up just prior to his physical departure. We have seen no evidence that when Temple Presidents initially received the July 9th letter they all sought urgent legal council, or complained the order was too difficult to understand. Where things do become more complicated is when we are forced to unravel the plethora of self-contradictory GBC papers, whose only unifying feature is their apparent eagerness to terminate this simple system.

You will know better than I that Srila Prabhupada did not train up his disciples to evaluate or question his orders on the basis

of their limited understanding of vedic historical considerations, what to speak of terminate them by such means. That was the real point of my paper, I'm sorry it was not clearer.

"We learn about Vedic history from *shastra*."

I would not disagree with your assertion. Vedic history undoubtedly contains within it many important spiritual lessons concerning fundamental principles. It is these principles that are most important since there are many things described in Vedic history which are now impossible for us to emulate, and indeed they may be things that are no longer authorised, such as *ashvamedha* sacrifices etc. Thus *sastric* injunctions, as relayed to us by our current link Srila Prabhupada, must take precedence over raw historical tradition. Do you really think the continued application of the system set out in the July 9th order would actually contravene some stated *sastric* injunction, or fundamental tenet of vaisnava philosophy? If so, I would be very interested to know what these injunctions might be, where they are explicitly stated in Srila Prabhupada's general teachings, and precisely how the *ritvik* system is in contravention of them. As I will explain below, the example of Ekalavya is hardly applicable.

"The basic principle of initiation is that both parties, guru and disciple, explicitly agree. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur states in a Bengali essay that Ekalavya was going to ruin Vedic culture by claiming to be a disciple of a guru that had not explicitly agreed to accept him. Accepting disciples by mail does not violate the basic principle of a guru and disciple accepting each other."

It would seem this explicit agreement **WAS** present within the '*ritvik* system' (if you will forgive my use of this term). This is explained in the July 7th conversation, where Srila Prabhupada says he was handing over full responsibility for accepting disciples to the new appointees. They were to accept disciples on Srila Prabhupada's behalf '*without consulting*' him. You may recall that after July 9th there was no longer any requirement for Srila Prabhupada to be consulted with regards who was being initiated. Thus Srila Prabhupada personally agreed to the setting up of a system in which all future acceptance was delegated to his *ritviks* or representatives. This is what distinguishes the *ritvik* system from the story of Ekalavya, the guru agreed to the arrangement. What the story of Ekalavya does prove is that physical contact with the guru is not essential to the transmission of knowledge (*as you know he was becoming a proficient archer, before he lost his digit, without ever having met Drona*).

"Prabhupada never called his long-distance initiations a "*ritvik*" system. The term was introduced by Tamal Krishna Goswami and Prabhupada took it in the normal sense of the world, "an officiating priest", and used the term also to refer to regular gurus. The term *ritvik* is simply not part of Prabhupada's standard vocabulary for teaching Krishna consciousness. Before TKG introduced it, it does not appear in Prabhupada's books as a significant term for anything."

I would be interested to see where Srila Prabhupada defined the term '*ritvik*' as meaning '**regular guru**'. Would you be kind enough to send me this quote. As far as I know Srila Prabhupada only used the phrase 'regular guru' once, so perhaps you could send me quotes which clearly define this phrase as meaning both "an officiating priest" and "*diksa* guru".

I am not sure how relevant it is to evaluate the significance of the actual word '*ritvik*', or how often Srila Prabhupada used the term. The fact is that Srila Prabhupada set up a system, call it what you will, which we all agree was intended to operate when he was **ON** the planet (from July 9th 1977 onwards). You seem to have no objection that this system was run whilst Srila Prabhupada was still physically present, and yet the details of this system are not described anywhere in his books. Thus lack of specific mention in his books does not necessarily have any direct bearing on whether or not a management directive was meant to be kept in operation. We covered this point already incidentally in '*The Final Order*' pages 27-29. You might like to have another look at that before you respond again.

"In this case, there was communication **IN THIS WORLD**, albeit interplanetary, and not someone claiming that an invisible, unheard Srila Prabhupada, by prior technical agreement, has pre-accepted."

Our example above with regards B.G. 4.1 is to illustrate that it is not, in itself, a violation of *sastra* to obtain *diksa* from a guru who is existing on a different planet to the disciple. Some senior ISKCON leaders have been preaching that it was. We were merely seeking to redress such false propaganda.

We never claimed the above example and '*post-samadhi ritvik*' were identical in all respects. Clearly, there are differences since we are not powerful demigods like Iksvaku. As you will know, *diksa* is a process, which may take many lives to complete, with Srila Prabhupada patiently guiding the sincere disciple through his different transcendental means. Sometimes by revelation in the heart; sometimes through an older '*lined up*' Godbrother; or most commonly via his numerous books, tapes and videos. In this sense Srila Prabhupada is not 'invisible' or 'unheard'. He can still be seen in his *murti* form, photographic images etc.; and guidance and instruction can be had by any one of the above mentioned routes, as I am sure you have experienced. After all, you have not personally had a physically present *diksa* guru for more than twenty years now, and yet I am sure the process of *diksa* is still going on for you without any major problem.

As far as pre-accepting future disciples via technical agreement; have you been able to locate some principal of vaisnava philosophy that such an arrangement would violate? If so I would be most interested to see it.

The dialogue continues.

7th, June, 1998

Dear Krishna Kant,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada. Enclosed are a few simple replies to your points.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

[Maharaja again responds immediately on the same day. Thus it is amazing how he is able to miraculously find the time to do TWO replies immediately, but yet when he asked to find the quotes he claims he has in abundance, he suddenly gets a seizure!]

Please find below, Maharaja's responses to Krishnakant's replies to his replies to the paper originally sent him. Maharaja's original reply to the paper is boxed in speech marks, with responses to this reply following, and Maharaja's responses to those replies following indented.)

"The general principle is guru, *sadhu*, and *sastra*. The examples of *sadhus* and the histories in *shastras* are relevant. Even Srila Prabhupada constantly stated, "I have not concocted anything."

We are not saying the examples of *sastra* are not edifying or relevant. We are simply stating that the lack of previous example of some system being utilised does not in itself make such an arrangement a 'concoction' or bogus.

I am not sure about this. Srila Prabhupada always said: "I have not concocted anything, I am simply repeating what my spiritual master said, and what is in the scriptures.

By definition many 'histories' and actions of *sadhus* will INITIALLY be unprecedented. As you know Srila Prabhupada himself did many things not directly referred to in any *sastra*.

I am not sure about this either.

The pre-*samadhi ritvik* system may be one such example, yet no-one is currently arguing that it was a 'concoction'. If you are seriously defending the current guru system within ISKCON I believe you would be extremely hard pushed to find anything remotely resembling it in any *sastra*.

What in the world are you talking about here? You find nothing in the scriptures REMOTELY RESEMBLING, for instance, the process in which we come to know serious candidates, explain to them the teachings of Krishna and then guide them strictly in the process received from the previous *Acharya*? You find nothing remotely resembling a process in which senior Vaishnavas give their blessings to one who wants to take on that service?

"What is unprecedented is that one of Prabhupada's instructions on a very basic, vital issue is presented in such a way that one must almost be a lawyer to follow the proof. I am not aware of a single case where Prabhupada did that. If we take Prabhupada's simple, direct statements, they all conclude that in his absence, his disciples in good standing should accept their own students according to the normal Vedic culture."

Your insinuation that only a lawyer could follow our proof at least appears to half-heartedly concede that there is some sort of legal thread to our argumentation.

I refer to style, not validity.

As far as GBC position papers on this issue go, I am afraid I am unable to return the compliment.

This dismissive attitude does not reflect the quality of the GBC papers.

In any case your assertion is wholly subjective. Most average citizens can and do read legal documents, such as rent contracts, purchase agreements etc.

The ability of devotees without formal legal or academic training to follow your argument does not change the legalistic style.

We have seen no evidence that when Temple Presidents initially received the July 9th letter they all sought urgent legal council, or complained the order was too difficult to understand.

Srila Prabhupada was still physically present and so a "*rtvik*" system at that point was wholly within normal tradition. Thus no one had any reason to doubt it.

You will know better than I that Srila Prabhupada did not train up his disciples to evaluate or question his orders on the basis of their limited understanding of vedic historical considerations, what to speak of terminate them by such means. That was the real point of my paper, I'm sorry it was not clearer.

Your real point is wrong. Srila Prabhupada always taught us the story of Bali and Sukra and urged us not to accept a Guru blindly or as a fashion, but to apply our reason and judgement to test and see that what he was presenting was sublime and authentic.

"We learn about Vedic history from *shastra*."

Do you really think the continued application of the system set out in the July 9th order would actually contravene some stated *sastric* injunction, or fundamental tenet of vaisnava philosophy?

Yes.

"The basic principle of initiation is that both parties, guru and disciple, explicitly agree. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur states in a Bengali essay that Ekalavya was going to ruin Vedic culture by claiming to be a disciple of a guru that had not explicitly agreed to accept him. Accepting disciples by mail does not violate the basic principle of a guru and disciple accepting each other."

This is what distinguishes the *ritvik* system from the story of Ekalavya, the guru agreed to the arrangement.

Circular reasoning. We don't agree that Prabhupada consented to accept disciples posthumously.

What the story of Ekalavya does prove is that physical contact with the guru is not essential to the transmission of knowledge (as you know he was becoming a proficient archer, before he lost his digit, without ever having met Drona).

The whole point of the story is that Ekalavya became proficient by practice, but that he was, in fact, not a bona fide disciple of Drona.

"Prabhupada never called his long-distance initiations a "*ritvik*" system. The term was introduced by Tamal Krishna Goswami and Prabhupada took it in the normal sense of the world, "an officiating priest", and used the term also to refer to regular gurus. The term *ritvik* is simply not part of Prabhupada's standard vocabulary for teaching Krishna consciousness. Before TKG introduced it, it does not appear in Prabhupada's books as a significant term for anything."

I would be interested to see where Srila Prabhupada defined the term '*ritvik*' as meaning 'regular guru'.

I have seen this point clearly explained in GBC papers.

You seem to have no objection that this system was run whilst Srila Prabhupada was still physically present, and yet the details of this system are not described anywhere in his books.

Prabhupada's books state that a living Guru can accept a disciple, which Prabhupada chose to do through his representatives.

The dialogue resumes, but something sinister creeps in.

9th, June, 1998

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you for your reply. Before I respond, please note that both this file and the last file you sent me were seriously infected with a deadly virus known as WM/CAP. Luckily, I detected them both times. However, I would urge you to find out how the files you sent me became thus infected, since everything I send is automatically virus cleaned, and maybe something on your machine could cause you problems later.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

Dear Krishna Kanta,

Thanks for the information. I have requested a knowledgeable devotee to investigate the cause of the virus.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

(Hope it's not the same devotee who looks up your quotes. It must be since another destructive virus is sent by the Maharaja.)

13th June, 1998

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Please find attached a response to your recent replies. Please try to ensure that your drives and files are all virus checked before you send anything. Thank you.

Thank you again for your continued time and patience. Hope you are well, and that your preaching is flourishing. I look forward to hearing from you.

Your Servant,

Krishnakant

(Below is the response to Maharaja's replies. Maharaja's comments are boxed, with Krishnakant's responses underneath. Krishnakant's original comments that Maharaja has replied to are in semi-bold italics.)

To keep our discussion focused I will deal firstly with your points which appear to directly contradict the conclusion of my paper "The Unprecedented Objection". I shall then go on to address the less significant points which are not so central to our discussion. I hope this is agreeable to you.

Srila Prabhupada was still physically present and so a "rtvik" system at that point was wholly within normal tradition. Thus no one had any reason to doubt it.

1. I would be very interested to know in which previous tradition disciples were accepted and initiated by the *diksa* guru without there being **ANY** direct contact at all between the guru and disciple? Could you please tell me where in *sastra* there are previous examples of a guru delegating the acceptance of disciples to representatives, who did not even need to check with or inform the guru? If this is all 'normal' traditional practice, I am sure you will be able to furnish me with unlimited examples.

Do you really think the continued application of the system set out in the July 9th order would actually contravene some stated sastric injunction, or fundamental tenet of vaisnava philosophy?

Yes.

2. Thank you for your unequivocal response on this point. Please therefore present the specific *sastric* injunctions 'post-*samadhi ritvik*' violates. Please also tell me where these injunctions can be found in Srila Prabhupada's teachings.

I would be interested to see where Srila Prabhupada defined the term 'ritvik' as meaning 'regular guru'.

I have seen this point clearly explained in GBC papers.

3. Although I have carefully read every single GBC paper on this issue, I must confess to never having seen **ANY** evidence supporting the idea that the term '*ritvik*' and 'regular guru' are synonymous. It will take some pretty solid evidence to convince me that 'officiating priests' share the same defining term as 'initiating *diksa* gurus', but if you **DO** have this evidence please by all means send it. I am always ready to be corrected.

Prabhupada's books state that a living Guru can accept a disciple, which Prabhupada chose to do through his representatives.

4. Could you please give me the exact quote where Srila Prabhupada states that a:

"A 'LIVING GURU' can accept a disciple through representatives"

I presume that you must also conversely believe that: **'A 'DEPARTED GURU' cannot accept disciples through representatives.'**

If this **IS** your belief could you also provide an explicit statement from Srila Prabhupada supporting it.

The above 4 points are actually at the heart of the whole issue, and their successful resolution would end the debate. Thus, I

think it makes sense to keep the discussion focused on these few key points. I look forward to your answers.

For completeness, I will now give my response to your other main points below.

"We are not saying the examples of sastra are not edifying or relevant. We are simply stating that the lack of previous example of some system being utilised does not in itself make such an arrangement a 'concoction' or bogus."

I am not sure about this. Srila Prabhupada always said: "I have not concocted anything, I am simply repeating what my spiritual master said, and what is in the scriptures".

Nevertheless Srila Prabhupada initiated women, reduced the number of rounds from 64 to 16, gave *gayatri* by magnetic tape etc. etc. You may argue that Srila Prabhupada has not changed any PRINCIPLE of *sastra* in making the above 'innovations', but then we could argue the same- unless you can supply evidence for 2) above.

"The pre-samadhi ritvik system may be one such example, yet no-one is currently arguing that it was a 'concoction'. If you are seriously defending the current guru system within ISKCON I believe you would be extremely hard pushed to find anything remotely resembling it in any sastra."

What in the world are you talking about here? You find nothing in the scriptures REMOTELY RESEMBLING, for instance, the process in which we come to know serious candidates, explain to them the teachings of Krishna and then guide them strictly in the process received from the previous *Acharya*? You find nothing remotely resembling a process in which senior Vaishnavas give their blessings to one who wants to take on that service?

The point of issue was the 'current guru system'. You respond with statements that are related to the elements common to any guru-disciple relationship - 'the process in which we come to know serious candidates,' 'explain to them the teachings of Krishna' etc. Dealing with the actual issue in hand, can you please tell me where in vedic history a world-wide preaching movement was set up with a committee who could select, suspend, censure and decommission a mass of *diksa* gurus? Also can you show me in Srila Prabhupada's books and instructions to the whole society where it is explicitly sanctioned that initiating *acaryas* can be selected by a majority 'no objection' voting system?

(Also if you read the GBC resolutions on this subject, you will see there is no mention of 'blessings' but rather there is a 'disclaimer' to the effect that the guru is not being 'endorsed', but simply that there is 'no objection').

"As far as GBC position papers on this issue go, I am afraid I am unable to return the compliment."

This dismissive attitude does not reflect the quality of the GBC papers.

Please do not feel I am being merely dismissive here. If you check our 'Back To Prabhupada' web site (Now IRM - www.iskconirm.com) you will find lengthy, painstaking point for point rebuttals of all the relevant GBC position papers. These GBC papers **DO** contradict each other, as was admitted by a member of your own select committee which was set up to specifically deal with the *ritvik* issue! (Please see 'The Final Order Still Stands' for details).

"This is what distinguishes the ritvik system from the story of Ekalavya, the guru agreed to the arrangement."

Circular reasoning. We don't agree that Prabhupada consented to accept disciples posthumously.

This would only be circular reasoning if we were in some way relying on the story of Ekalavya as principal evidence for *ritvik*. You were the one who brought up this example not us. We have already presented evidence clearly demonstrating Srila Prabhupada's agreement to accept all future disciples without being consulted (please see 'The Final Order'). I have yet to see any relevant evidence that this system was meant to be terminated on November 14th 1977,

(though I am sure your 'many' quotes will soon be arriving to destroy my ignorance).

"You will know better than I that Srila Prabhupada did not train up his disciples to evaluate or question his orders on the basis of their limited understanding of vedic historical considerations, what to speak of terminate them by such means. That was the real point of my paper, I'm sorry it was not clearer."

Your real point is wrong. Srila Prabhupada always taught us the story of Bali and Sukra and urged us not to accept a Guru blindly or as a fashion, but to apply our reason and judgement to test and see that what he was presenting was sublime and authentic.

Did Bali reject Sukra purely on the basis that his instruction was without an identical historical precedent; or because he was in violation of a basic tenet of vaisnava philosophy? If it was the latter then the conclusion of my paper still stands.

"What the story of Ekalavya does prove is that physical contact with the guru is not essential to the transmission of knowledge (as you know he was becoming a proficient archer, before he lost his digit, without ever having met Drona)."

The whole point of the story is that Ekalavya became proficient by practice, but that he was, in fact, not a bona fide disciple of Drona.

I have never disagreed that Ekalavya was not a bona fide disciple of Drona.

The dialogue resumes.

15th, June, 1998

Dear Krishna Kanta,

All glories to Srila Prabhupada. I am leaving tomorrow morning for Brasil, and in the meantime, my computer will hopefully be cured of its virus. When I return, I hope to find more time to answer your points. Thank you For your patience.

Hoping you are well,

Hridayananda das Goswami

(After this no more was ever heard from the Maharaja again. Almost a year to the day that the dialogue had began with a simple request for quotes, Maharaja still had not provided any, even though there were supposedly many of them. And having engaged him in responding to Krishnakant's paper, neither did he ever respond to the answers to his last points, even though he said he would. Thus, the Master of Evasion disappeared into the night.)

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