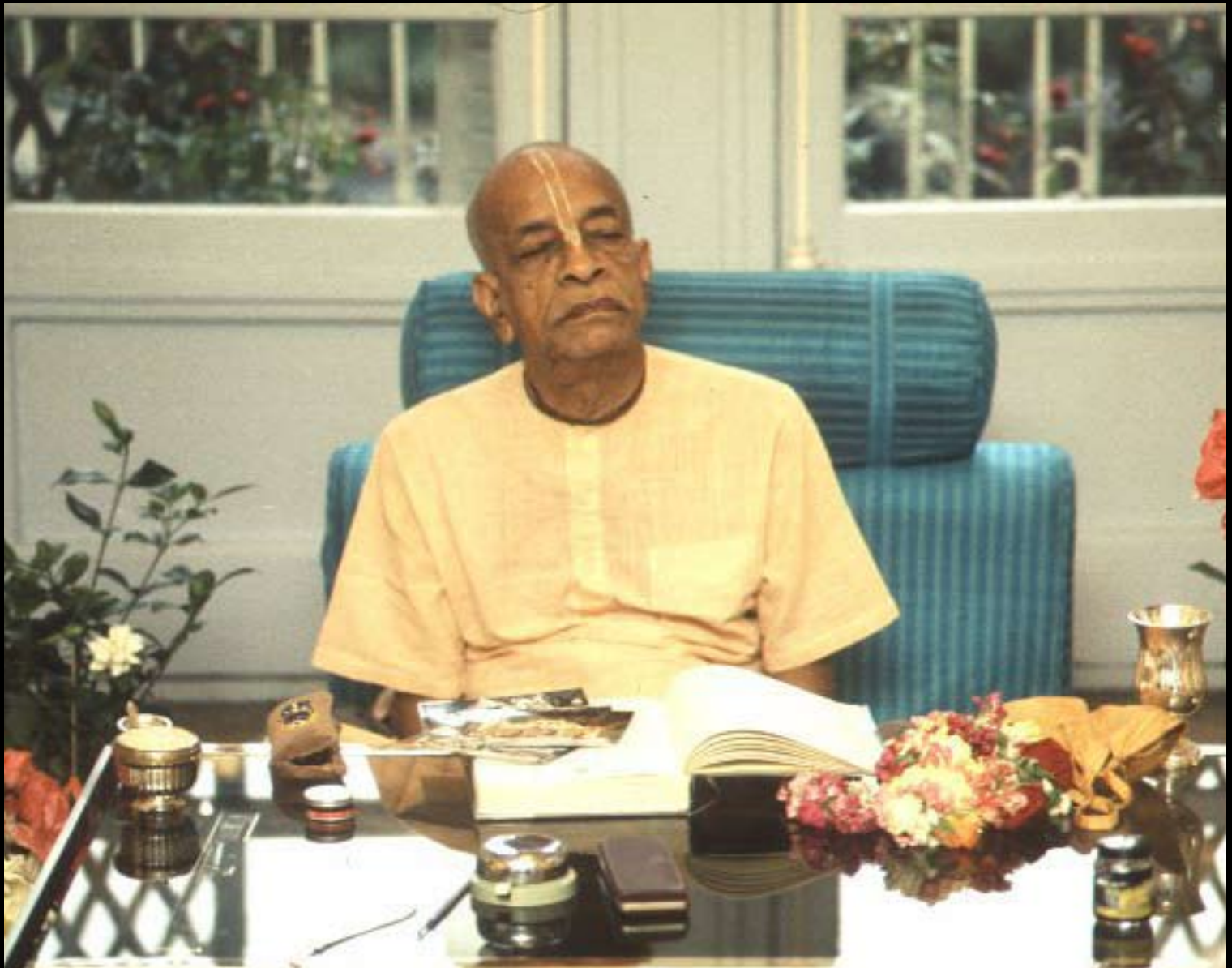
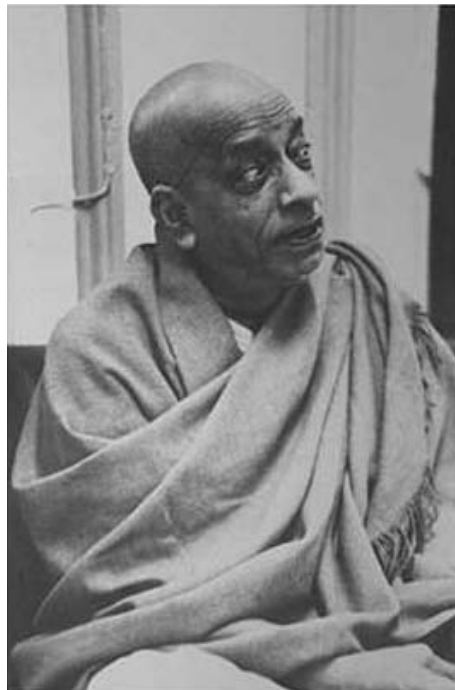


a response to: *"The Reality of Guru-Parampara and The Myth of 'The Final Order'"*

The Truth of Srila Prabhupada's Current *Acharya* Status



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

(Lectures SB, 68/08/18)



by Krishnakant

The Truth of Srila Prabhupada's Current Acharya Status

This is in reply

to "The Reality of Guru-Parampara and The Myth of 'The Final Order'"

Part One

The following is our exposé of Tridandi Swami Bhaktivedanta Nemi's (formerly known as Jnana das and henceforward- for the duration of these exchanges- **TSBN**) inability to substantiate his opposition to Srila Prabhupada's rightful status as the sole *diksa* guru for ISKCON. This is in reply to his paper "The Reality of Guru-Parampara and The Myth of 'The Final Order'"

Part 1: The "henceforward" bluff

The *Ritviks* say that there is no further need for living spiritual masters, because Srila Prabhupada has said that everyone should take initiation from him for the next ten thousand years, and all future devotees will be his direct disciples.

Firstly we say Srila Prabhupada is a 'living spiritual master', and that we *do* need him. In the *Bhagavad-gita* Lord Krishna clearly states that the soul is eternal, therefore Srila Prabhupada must still be living. TSBN is thus in danger of implying an atheistic philosophy; that the Spiritual Master, who is meant to be the eternal guide of the disciple, can die. If the author means 'The Final Order' (henceforward, for the duration of this article to be referred to as TFO) states that we do not need the Guru to always be physically present, then he would be correct, but TFO has many quotes where Srila Prabhupada states this very fact. We would suggest TSBN reads the appendices to TFO where all these quotes are reproduced. Secondly, nowhere in TFO does it say:

Srila Prabhupada has said that everyone should take initiation from him for the next ten thousand years, and all future devotees will be his direct disciples.

TFO presents the following position:

1. Srila Prabhupada clearly and undeniably established himself as the sole, initiating *acharya* for ISKCON. We challenge TSBN to produce an alternative instruction issued by Srila Prabhupada to his movement's leaders that offers any countermending alternative.
2. Srila Prabhupada said that ISKCON was part of the *Sankirtan* Movement.
3. Srila Prabhupada taught that the *Sankirtan* Movement would continue for another 9,500 years.
4. Therefore ISKCON has the potential to last for another 9,500 years.
5. Srila Prabhupada thus established himself as the sole *acharya* for the entire duration of a movement that may go on for up to 9,500 years.

The above is TFO's actual position, so now perhaps TSBN can show where this is wrong, rather than attack the somewhat skewed position he has conjured up.

This directly contradicts everything that Srila Prabhupada has written and taught about disciplic succession. In a gospel called "The Final Order", one of the chief *Ritvik* prophets acknowledges that the alleged *Ritvik* system is "totally unique" (i.e. devoid of *sastric* basis), and then proceeds to explain the *Ritvik* logic in some detail.

Above TSNB makes the bold assertion that in allowing Srila Prabhupada to remain as the sole initiating *acharya* for his own movement (as he directed on July 9th 1977 via a letter from his secretary on which he signed approval) we are somehow contradicting 'everything that Srila Prabhupada has written and taught about disciplic succession'. We shall no doubt need to wait for TSNB's future papers for examples of all this 'contradiction' since there is none to be found in his opening essay. Also TSNB seems to be confusing 'historical precedent' with *sastric* injunctions. Something may be 'totally unique' yet still fall within the allowance of *sastric* injunctions. For example, so far as we know the *ritvik* system was also 'totally unique' as it was set up to run prior to Srila Prabhupada's departure. Yet everyone seems to accept that the system was completely bona fide up until November 14th 1977. Srila Prabhupada did many things that were 'totally unique', is TSNB arguing that for this fact alone they were all 'devoid of *sastric* basis'? We sincerely hope not for his sake.

Ritviks say that this word "henceforward" means that, regardless of Srila Prabhupada's physical departure, the system should be continued indefinitely, for the duration of the Krsna consciousness movement.

As the author later concedes we say our case does not depend on the word "henceforward". Even if one were to 'tippex' out the word 'henceforward' from the July 9th directive it would not change anything. You would still have a system set up to run within ISKCON, by the movement's founder, with no countermanding order for it to ever stop.

Rule 1 is "Tell the truth": "Satyam. This word means that one should not distort the truth for some personal interest." (1) The commonsense understanding of the "henceforward" letter is that the system whereby Srila Prabhupada initiated by proxy should continue "for the time being," but obviously not after his physical departure. It clearly does not make sense to say that the word "henceforward" in this letter means "for the next ten thousand years", because it is nonsense to say, "Temple Presidents may *for the next ten thousand years* send recommendation for first and second initiation to whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple." The "eleven representatives" obviously would not survive for ten thousand years. In fact, two have already passed away and many have already fallen down.

Above TSNB claims Srila Prabhupada must have wanted the *ritvik* system to be stopped on his departure since the eleven *ritviks* would eventually all die. However there is no logic to this. The best he could argue is that the system should run till the last *ritvik* had died or deviated. So even by his own logic: that the system can only operate via the initial eleven disciples named in the letter, there is still no reason why the system should have been stopped on November 15th 1977. So even allowing for his interpretation, the system should have continued for at least another fifty or so years past Srila Prabhupada's departure, at least until all the *ritviks* were dead. But, as is explained in TFO, even this proposition is defeated by the evidence. We now reproduce the arguments from TFO that TSNB should have answered, rather than just rehashing pre-defeated objections:

1. In the [Topanga Canyon transcript](#) Tamal Krsna Goswami relates the following question he asked whilst preparing to type the list of selected *ritviks*:

Tamal Krsna: "Srila Prabhupada, is this all or do you want to add more?"

Srila Prabhupada: "As necessary, others may be added."

(*Pyramid House confessions*, 3/12/80)

Certainly if some or all of the *ritviks* died or seriously deviated that could be deemed a 'necessary' circumstance for more *ritviks* to be 'added'.

2. The July 9th letter defines *ritvik* as: 'representative of the *acarya*'. It is perfectly within the remit of the GBC to select or de-commission anyone to represent Srila Prabhupada, be they *sannyasis*, Temple Presidents or indeed GBC members themselves. At present they approve *diksa* gurus, who are supposedly direct representatives of the Supreme Lord Himself. Thus it should be easily within their capacity to select a few name-giving priests to act responsibly on Srila Prabhupada's behalf.
3. The July 9th letter shows Srila Prabhupada's intention was to run a *ritvik* system 'henceforward'. Srila Prabhupada made the GBC the ultimate managing authority in order that they could maintain and regulate all the systems he put in place. The *ritvik* system was his system for managing initiations. It is the job of the GBC to maintain that system, adding or subtracting personnel as they can do in all other areas over which they are authorised to preside.
4. Letters issued on July 9th, 11th, and 21st all indicate that the list could be added to, with the use of such phrases as 'thus far', 'so far', 'initial list', etc. So a mechanism for adding more *ritviks* must have been put in place, even though it has yet to be exercised.
5. When trying to understand an instruction one will naturally consider the purpose behind it. The letter states that Srila Prabhupada appointed 'some of his senior disciples to act as "*ritvik*" -representative of the *acarya*, for the **purpose** of performing initiations ...' and that at that time Srila Prabhupada had 'so far' given eleven names. The aim of an obedient disciple is to understand and satisfy the purpose of the system. The purpose of *The Final Order* was clearly not to exclusively bind all future initiations to an 'elite' group of individuals ('some [...] so far') who must eventually die, and in so doing end the process of initiation within ISKCON. Rather the purpose was to ensure that initiations could practically continue from that time on. Therefore this system must remain in place as long as there is a need for initiation. Thus the addition of more 'senior disciples' to act as 'representatives of the *acarya*', as and when they are required, would ensure that the purpose of the system continued to be satisfied.

6. Taken together with Srila Prabhupada's will (which indicates all future directors for permanent properties in India could only be selected from amongst his initiated disciples), it is quite clear Srila Prabhupada's intention was for the system to run indefinitely, with the GBC simply managing the whole thing.

Having said this it is always possible that Srila Prabhupada could revoke the order if he wanted to. As stated previously the counter instruction would need to be at least as clear and unequivocal as the personally signed letter which put the *ritvik* system in place in the first place. With Krsna and his pure devotees anything is possible:

Newsday Reporter: You are now the leader and the Spiritual Master. Who will take your place?

Srila Prabhupada: That Krsna will dictate, who will take my place.

(SP Interview, 14/7/76, New York)

However, we feel it is safer to follow the orders we did receive from our *acarya*, rather than speculate about ones that may or may not come in the future, or worse still invent our own.

The *Ritviks* deny this commonsense understanding.

Having said we should act according to *sastra*, TSNB above claims we need to act on the basis of 'commonsense'. He should have stuck with his original assertion that we follow *sastra*:

"But there is no room for common sense in the injunctions of the *sastras*. We must accept the description of the *sastras* and concentrate more on the form of the *virat-rupa* than on common sense. Common sense is always imperfect, whereas the description in the *sastras* is always perfect and complete."

(SB: 2.1.30, purport)

This is a much weaker position than the one promised at the beginning of the article, that the *ritvik* position: "directly contradicts everything that Srila Prabhupada has written and taught about disciplic succession." We shall await the future articles to see if TSNB's position strengthens.

The author of Final Order (henceforward referred to as AFO) says, "There is no example, either in Srila Prabhupada's 86 recorded uses, nor in the entire history of the English language, where the actual word 'henceforward' has ever meant: 'Every time period until the departure of a person who issued the order'".

(2) This statement is quite false, for Srila Prabhupada himself used the word in the limited sense that AFO denies: "Henceforward you send the checks direct to me."

(3) "Please write to me occasionally and as Gopala is not accustomed to reply promptly I shall henceforward write to you."

(4) Srila Prabhupada also uses the word "henceforth" (which is defined as a synonym of "henceforward") in the same way: "Henceforth, all money sent to me should be sent directly to me;"

(5) "[H]enceforth, as long as I am away from America and Canada..."(6)

Above, TSNB has simply misunderstood our position. We say that: "There is no example, either in Srila Prabhupada's 86 recorded uses, nor in the entire history of the English language, where the actual word 'henceforward' has ever meant: 'Every time period until the departure of a person who issued the order'".

We say 'the actual word 'henceforward' has not meant this, not that in the context of an entire letter this meaning could not be arrived at. We refer above only to the word itself, in isolation. Therefore we agree fully with TSNB that sometimes, in some circumstances the word 'henceforward' could indeed apply for just a limited time period. This point is made in TFO, perhaps TSNB should have read it more closely before launching his attack:

"3) "Certain instructions obviously can not continue after Srila Prabhupada's departure, and thus it is understood that they could only have been intended to operate in Srila Prabhupada's presence; e.g. someone may have been appointed 'henceforward' to give Srila Prabhupada his regular massage. Maybe the *ritvik* order is of that type?"

If an instruction is impossible to perform, for example giving Srila Prabhupada his daily massage after his physical departure, then obviously there can be no question of doing it. The duty of a disciple is simply to follow an order until it is impossible to follow any longer, or until the spiritual master changes the order. The question then is whether it is feasible to follow a *ritvik* system without the physical presence of the person who set it up.

In fact, the *ritvik* system was set up specifically to be operational without any physical involvement from Srila Prabhupada whatsoever. Had the *ritvik* system continued after his departure, it would be identical in every respect to how it was practiced whilst Srila Prabhupada was present. After

July 9th, Srila Prabhupada's involvement became non-existent, and so even at that stage it was operating as though he had already left. This being the case, we cannot classify the *ritvik* system dysfunctional, or inoperable, on the grounds of Srila Prabhupada's departure, since his departure does not in any way affect the running of the system. In other words, **since the system was specifically set up to operate as if Srila Prabhupada was not on the planet, his leaving the planet can not in itself render the system invalid.**" ("The Final Order", Page 10)

In less than ¼ of the instances on FOLIO does the word “henceforward” actually refer to an indefinite period into the future.

Maybe so, and the July 9th directive is one such order, whatever TSNB’s ‘commonsense’ may tell him.

With damning inconsistency, AFO himself uses the word “henceforward” in the same sense in FO: “... the GBC’s most recent official handbook on initiation ... (to be referred to henceforward as GII)...”(10) This is in spite of his statement that “henceforward” only implies “for an indefinite period” and has no other meaning.

As can be seen from point 3 taken from TFO, we fully acknowledge that in many instances the word ‘henceforward’ can mean for a limited time. Even with the July 9th directive itself we say it is limited to the duration of ISKCON.

It is clear that the word “henceforward” may mean “from this time onwards WITHIN THE LIMITED CONTEXT IN WHICH IT IS USED”.

The word itself simply means ‘from now onwards’, as we said, and we fully admit that the context in which the word is used can place a time limit. So after TSNB’s irrelevant attack on a position we both share, why does he consider Srila Prabhupada’s physical departure as somehow implied within the word ‘henceforward’ or indeed the rest of the letter.

The idea that it necessarily means “more or less forever” is simply wishful thinking that has grown up in the *Ritvik* community and has never been checked.

Well, luckily TFO never says the word means “more or less forever”. As TSNB himself concedes, it means only for the duration of ISKCON, which is certainly not forever.

AFO denies that his case depends on the word “henceforward”. He says that the “henceforward” letter, being the last written instruction on initiation, supersedes all other letters and teachings.

TFO states that following the *ritvik* system is fully in harmony with Srila Prabhupada’s generally applicable teachings. However there is a principle of logic, mentioned by Srila Prabhupada and confirmed by the GBC themselves:

“I may say many things to you, but when I say something directly to you, you do it. Your first duty is to do that, you cannot argue - ‘Sir you said to me do like this before’, no that is not your duty, what I say to you now you do it, that is obedience you cannot argue.”

(S.B. Lecture, 14/4/75, Hyderabad)

Just as in the *Bhagavad-gita* Lord Krsna gave so many instructions to Arjuna, he spoke of all types of yoga from *Dhyana* to *Jnana*, but all this was superseded by *The Final Order*:

“Always think of Me and become My devotee”-should be taken as The Final Order of the Lord and should be followed.”

(*Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, chapter 11)

The Final Order given by Sankaracarya, ‘*bhaja Govinda*’, was also meant to supersede many of his earlier statements -all of them, in fact. As mentioned in the introduction, the GBC itself recognises this as an axiomatic principle of logic:

“In logic, later statements supersede earlier ones in importance.” (GII, p. 25)

But, as we will see, the actual instruction in the letter is not to develop a new and unprecedented system of disciplic succession that flatly contradicts all of SP’s previous instructions. Nor is there any authority for AFO’s concocted rule that the last instruction cancels out everything else.

You may have an instruction that is the final word on an issue that need not cancel out everything before it. TSNB needs to show which generally applicable teachings are directly contradicted by following the July 9th directive past November 14th 1977. We need specifics, not arguments based on so-called ‘commonsense’. The directive says nothing about stopping on Srila Prabhupada’s departure, so from where does TSNB get the idea that it must? What is so ‘commonsense’ about his position if there is no evidence in the July 9th directive to support it? We shall have to wait for his next installment to see if he actually has anything tangible and relevant to add to this debate. So far, as we have demonstrated above by quoting from TFO, all his arguments were dealt with way back in 1996.

Part 2

The following is the second part of our exposé of Tridandi Swami Bhaktivedanda Nemi's (formerly known as Jnana das & henceforward-for the duration of these exchanges-TSBN) inability to substantiate his opposition to Srila Prabhupada's rightful status as the sole *diksa* guru for ISKCON. This is in reply to his paper "**The 'Henceforward' bluff: Admissions**".

Statements by TSBN shall be boxed with our responses following.

Part 2: Adjustments by IRM

In my previous article I challenged IRM on their misinterpretation of the word "henceforward" in Srila Prabhupada's letter of July 9th. Specifically, they were falsely claiming that the word always and necessarily means 'from now onwards', implying an indefinite period.

The above criticism is utterly absurd. The word 'henceforward' has always meant 'from now onwards'. This is the meaning of the word as given in all the English Dictionaries of the world. The word 'henceforward' indicates only the start of an event, system etc., but gives no indication of when it should stop. Therefore we are correct in saying the actual word itself means 'from now onwards'. The word itself, on its own, implies an indefinite period. Anyone with even a moderate grasp of the English language would appreciate this fact.

This false claim fuelled their propaganda that their *Ritvik* system should be continued after Srila Prabhupada's physical departure, and for the duration of ISKCON.

This is not a 'false claim', the word 'henceforward' really does mean 'from now onwards'. Please do not take our word for it, just look it up in any English dictionary. Since the word means 'from now onwards', and since this word appears in Srila Prabhupada last order on how initiations were to run within ISKCON, the onus will be on TSBN to prove that the order MUST be stopped on November 15th 1977.

Having been challenged on their misinformation about the meaning of the word "henceforward", IRM has now backed away to a more conservative position.

The word means exactly what we say it means, as anyone can check by simply opening any English dictionary anywhere in the world. Since we were correct to assert the word's meaning in the way we did, obviously there is no need for us to back away to a more conservative position. We still say the word means 'from now onwards' just as we did in '*The Final Order*' (TFO) in 1996. We are correct now just as then. TSBN then quotes us:

<<Therefore we agree fully with TSBN [abbreviation for Jnanadasa, my previous name] that sometimes, in some circumstances the word could indeed apply for just a limited time period. [W]e fully acknowledge that in many instances the word 'henceforward' can mean for a limited time.>>

The above has always been our position, just as the word 'henceforward' has always meant 'from now onwards'. The word itself gives no indication of termination. However, the word may well be used within an instruction which is only applicable for a limited duration. For example, since the July 9th directive is only applicable within ISKCON, it can only endure for as long as that institution (at most 9,500 more years). In TFO we give the following example, as we quoted in our first response to TSBN:

"3)"Certain instructions obviously can not continue after Srila Prabhupada's departure, and thus it is understood that they could only have been intended to operate in Srila Prabhupada's presence; e.g. someone may have been appointed 'henceforward' to give Srila Prabhupada his regular massage. Maybe the ritvik order is of that type? ('The Final Order' 1996, and as quoted in our first response to TSBN)

TSBN continues:

As far as I know, this is the first time that they have made such an admission. At any rate, this information is certainly not available in *The Final Order* (TFO).

But point 3 above IS in TFO, we invite anyone to check this for themselves by reading it on our web site, or we can send them a hard copy. We even quoted again the above point 3) in our first response to TSBN just a couple of weeks ago. It is that very response which he is now supposedly addressing. So how can TSBN claim that this is some sort of new '*admission*'?

In other words, IRM was not honest enough to raise this possibility until someone checked their statements and confronted them with the truth.

In other words TSBN has incompetently attacked a position without first properly studying it, and is now trying to save face by pretending that we had never acknowledged something, even though we fully acknowledged it way back in 1996.

We should note that their new statement, <<We FULLY ACKNOWLEDGE that in MANY INSTANCES...>> flatly contradicts the categorical statement in TFO that "henceforward" has "only one meaning", and only ever means "from now onwards".

The word 'henceforward' does only mean 'from now onwards'. Please read any dictionary if you do not believe us. In saying that the word may be used within an instruction that may have limited applicability does not change the fact that the word itself means 'from now onwards'.

Having acknowledged the new perspective on the word "henceforward", IRM still goes back to the position stated in TFO:

As we have conclusively shown, this is not a 'new perspective'.

<<**We say that:** 'There is no example, either in Srila Prabhupada's 86 recorded uses, nor in the entire history of the English language, where the actual word 'henceforward' has ever meant: 'Every time period until the departure of a person who issued the order.'>>

The word 'henceforward' has never been defined by Srila Prabhupada to mean 'Every time period until the departure of a person who issued the order.' If he did define the word itself like this, then perhaps TSNB can quote where he did this.

IRM's position here is false. In the first place, Srila Prabhupada himself used the word "henceforward" in precisely the sense that TFO denies, i.e. in instructions that could only be followed during his own physical lifetime,

We have never denied this (see point 3) above); but that does not change the dictionary definition of the word 'henceforward'. It has always meant 'from now onwards'. The word itself only indicates the beginning of something, not its end. The word itself implies continuation, not termination. In the July 9th order the word 'henceforward' is the only word directly indicative of duration. Therefore the onus is on TSNB to justify why he believes the order was meant to stop on November 15th 1977. He would do well to concentrate on this, rather than pretending we have changed a position when we have demonstrably not done so. The following examples offered by TSNB are irrelevant to this debate since we have always agreed that some instructions containing the word 'henceforward' (including the July 9th directive) will eventually cease to apply.

e.g. "Please write to me occasionally and as Gopala is not accustomed to reply promptly I shall henceforward write to you." [1]

"Henceforward write in [the] English language." [2]

"Henceforward you send the checks direct to me, because most probably I am going to close the account in Montreal." [3]

"Henceforth, all money sent to me should be sent directly to me." [4]

The second reason that IRM's restated position is false is that there is no need for such a tortuous condition as "Every time period until the departure of a person who issued the order". It is enough to show that the word is often used in LIMITED contexts such as a particular person's lifetime. Srila Prabhupada wrote in one letter, "Anyway, rest assured that your son will not be initiated in brahmanhood at least for one year henceforward ..." [5] This and many other statements by Srila Prabhupada obviously invalidate the false claim in TFO that "henceforward" has "only one meaning", and only ever means "from now onwards".

TSNB will need to recall all the dictionaries in the world if he wishes to change the meaning of the word 'henceforward'. It only has one meaning; it just means 'from now onwards' and TSNB's position appears increasingly absurd whenever he denies this plain fact.

In my previous article, I stated, "In less than ¼ of the instances on FOLIO does the word "henceforward" actually refer to an indefinite period into the future." IRM now responds, <<Maybe so, and the July 9th directive is one such order....>> How do they know that? What divine authority do they have for such an assertion?

TSNB chastises us for saying that one of Srila Prabhupada's orders (July 9th) containing the word 'henceforward', was meant to endure into the future, yet he commits exactly the same 'crime' with nearly 25% of Srila Prabhupada's other uses of the word. How does he know that in those other (nearly) 25% of cases the word 'henceforward' refers to an indefinite period? What divine authority does he have for such an assertion? This is a clear case of self-referential incoherence.

Here is strong evidence that "the July 9th directive" is NOT "one such order". In 1972, Srila Prabhupada gave an instruction that was almost identical to the July 9th "henceforward" letter. In this case, he used the word "henceforth" (which according to the *Oxford Dictionary* is synonymous with "henceforward") and made it clear that it was for the LIMITED TIME period that he was not in USA.

TSNB thinks that by talking about an entirely different letter, sent years before the July 9th directive and describing a completely different arrangement, using completely different people who were not even called *ritviks*, he will somehow prove that the July 9th directive was meant to stop on November 15th 1977! Talk about desperate. Still at least TSNB claims he has a dictionary, so we all pray that he will look up the meaning (rather than synonyms) of the word 'henceforward'.

[O]nce before I had empowered you to chant the beads on my behalf, so henceforth, as long as I am away from America and Canada, I am requesting all of the temple presidents in that zone of North America and South America to send the beads of the new devotees to you at New Vrindaban. Similarly, I have appointed Revatinandana Maharaja in England to chant the beads of the new devotees on European Continent. Otherwise, in other parts of the world, I shall chant them as always. [6] What concrete evidence does IRM have that the July 9th letter is NOT for a limited period?

The above letter quoted by TSNB does indeed contain the word 'henceforth' which we accept means the same as the word 'henceforward'; that is 'from now onwards' as we have always maintained. It also says that the system described above was only meant to endure 'for as long as I am away from America and Canada.' So it has a strictly limited application as expressed in the letter. But what has this got to do with the July 9th directive which has no such restrictive application within it (other than that it was only relevant for ISKCON)?

IRM claims, <<...our case does not depend on the word "henceforward". Even if one were to Tipex out the word 'henceforward' from the July 9th directive it would not change anything.>> If this were true, why would they emphasise the word "henceforward" so much?

We don't. We only mention the word 'henceforward' as it appears in the July 9th letter, 22 times in a paper containing nearly 44,000 words (TFO). We would not be discussing it now if TSNB had not brought it up. We will have used the word more times in this series of exchanges with TSNB than we ever used it in TFO. And as we say, the July 9th order still stands even if you take the word 'henceforward' out. Still, the word 'henceforward' as it appeared in the July 9th directive was approved by Srila Prabhupada, and we consider him our sole source of spiritual guidance.

TSNB carries on losing his wicket:

The significance of deliberate deception

IRM concludes that all the arguments in my previous article "were dealt with way back in 1996." However, my previous paper made a very significant point, which IRM has not addressed adequately, and which I will now spell out again. TFO places a great deal of emphasis on the word "henceforward", and claims that this word can only mean "from now onwards".

It is not just our claim, it is the claim of all the English dictionaries of the world.

"On the other 86 occasions that we find on Folio where Srila Prabhupada has used the word 'henceforward', nobody raised even the possibility that the word could mean anything other than 'from now onwards'. 'From now onwards' does not mean 'from now onwards until I depart'. It simply means 'from now onwards'." [7]

Yes, the word itself only means 'from now onwards'.

Now, Krishnakant, the author of TFO, has studied Srila Prabhupada's instructions carefully, and therefore knows that Srila Prabhupada VERY OFTEN used the word to refer to events in the lifetime of a specific personality, e.g. "In case you think your salary insufficient, henceforward it will be doubled." [8] "You can chant on their beads henceforward" [9] and "I pray Krishna that you may live henceforward happily as a householder." [10] Hence, the statement in TFO can only be deliberate deception, as I pointed out in my previous article.

And in point 3 we acknowledge that the word may appear within instructions that will cease to apply at a certain point. But the word itself only has one meaning.

The deliberate deception is indicated by the indirect wording of the denial in TFO. Instead of writing, "THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY that the word could mean anything other than 'from now onwards'", Krishnakant wrote, "NOBODY RAISED EVEN THE POSSIBILITY that the word could mean anything other than 'from now onwards'".

If anyone has ever claimed that Srila Prabhupada defined the actual word 'henceforward' as anything other than 'from now onwards' we would like to see the evidence (prior to TSNB's inept attacks of course).

This could mean, "No one has called our bluff so far, but I won't tell a direct lie in case someone calls our bluff in the future." Twice in TFO, Krishnakant uses the word "henceforward" to refer to a limited context, which again suggests that he knew perfectly well what the word actually means.

TSNB ineptly confuses the meaning of the word 'henceforward' with the 'context' within which it may be used. The word 'henceforward' always means only one thing, 'from now onwards', but there may of course be a terminating factor if we look at the rest of the instruction, or the context in which the word is found.

Elsewhere in TFO Krishnakant has written, "There is no example, either in Srila Prabhupada's 86 recorded uses, nor in the entire history of the English language, where the actual word 'henceforward' has ever meant: 'Every time period until the departure of a person who issued the order'." [11] This must also be deliberate deception, because Krishnakant must know that Srila Prabhupada himself obviously used the word in this sense several times. I pointed this out in my previous article, but IRM is coming back to this position again. This means that they are simply continuing their policy of deliberate deception.

Srila Prabhupada has never, ever, ever defined the actual word 'henceforward' to mean 'Every time period until the departure of a person who issued the order'. You can take that to the bank. He may, however, have used the word 'henceforward' within instructions that were meant to cease at some point in time. July 9th is one such order since the *Sankirtan* Movement (and hence the institution within which the *ritvik* system must run) will only last another 9,500 years. Better we spend what little time ISKCON has left serving Srila Prabhupada and bringing him new disciples, as he ordered us to, rather than perpetu-

ating all kinds of deviations with such baseless arguments as offered by TSBN.

IRM states that there is nothing new in my last paper. That means that they do not think it is significant to point out that they have a policy of deliberate deception.

TSBN accuses us of 'deliberate deception', yet he himself has completely ignored the proof (point 3 above) that we have always accepted that the word 'henceforward' may be used in instructions intended for limited duration. So he is either completely incompetent in debate, having not studied a position he is trying to attack, or he is being deliberately misleading. Let's hope it is just honest incompetence.

Part 3

The following is the third part of our expose of Tridandi Swami Bhaktivedanda Nemi's (formerly known as Jnana das & henceforward-for the duration of these exchanges-TSBN) inability to substantiate his opposition to Srila Prabhupada's rightful status as the sole *diksa* guru for ISKCON.

This is in reply to his paper "***This 'Henceforward' Letter Does Not Propose The 'Ritvik' Process***".

Statements by TSBN shall be boxed with our responses to his main points following.

The story so far: The *Ritvik* community base their philosophy on Srila Prabhupada's now-famous "henceforward" letter of July 9th, 1977. They say that this letters means that Srila Prabhupada will initiate for an indefinite period after his physical departure. The *Ritviks* assert that the word "henceforward" necessarily implies "for an indefinite period". However, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* and Srila Prabhupada's own use of the word, the *Ritviks'* assertion is quite false.

'*The Final Order*' defines the word 'henceforward' to mean 'from now onwards'. This is what the *Oxford English Dictionary* says; so TSBN's accusation is without foundation.

The inclusion of this false assertion in the in *The Final Order* (TFO) appears to be deliberate deception.

TSBN's inability to read correct dictionary definitions of simple words as they appear in TFO appears to indicate some level of incompetence.

Part 2: a provisional arrangement

In the previous part of this series, I pointed out Srila Prabhupada's principle: "Tell the truth". The arguments about the word "henceforward" in TFO do not even pass this first test.

They do since we only give the definition of the word 'henceforward' as is found in all the English Dictionaries of the world. It is TSBN's arguments that have not yet taken off the ground. Let's see if he does any better in this third attempt than he did in the previous 2. So far it is not looking too promising.

Now I want to point out a second principle that Srila Prabhupada emphasized, and that Krishnakant, the author of TFO, repeatedly and systematically disregards: "The direct meaning is primary; indirect meanings are secondary at best."

We agree with TSBN on the above.

The letter did not really introduce any significant change, or introduce anything radical. The direct meaning of the letter is that it describes a system that had been going on for years. *The only new thing* was that letters of recommendation would go direct to the 11 representatives, instead of to Srila Prabhupada. That is all.

We also agree the July 9th letter did not introduce any radical change since Srila Prabhupada was simply perpetuating his status as ISKCON's sole *diksa* guru (though we do not see how this helps TSBN's case).

The *Ritvik* community asserts that the wording of this letter -especially the word "henceforward" -means that the *Ritvik* system should be continued even after Srila Prabhupada's physical departure.

We never say 'especially the word "henceforward"'. This is a subtle misrepresentation of TFO's position. Even without that word you still have a system left in place by our *Acharya*, with no countermanding order for it to cease.

However, as I pointed out in Part 1 of this series, in only a minority of cases does the word "henceforward" actually mean "for an indefinite period into the future", and in a recent paper, IRM has now admitted this.

We 'admitted' that instructions containing the word 'henceforward' may cease to apply at some point, way back in 1996, as TSBN should well know if he had taken the trouble to properly read the position he is trying to attack.

The word "henceforward" in this letter cannot possibly mean "for the next ten thousand years" or "for the duration of ISKCON". If it did, the letter would mean, "Temple Presidents may for *the next ten thousand years* send recommendation ... to whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple." Two of the "eleven representatives" have already passed away and many have fallen down. IRM points out that the GBC could add members afterwards, but this is not stated in the letter itself. If the document is as important as IRM thinks it is, why would such a meticulous manager as Srila Prabhupada leave it in such a woefully incomplete state? The direct meaning of the letter is that this is a temporary and provisional arrangement.

By TSBN's logic, whenever Srila Prabhupada issued any instruction to his disciples he should include within it all the other myriad instructions he has ever issued to the GBC and Temple Presidents in the past (and why not everything in his books too), otherwise he would be issuing documents in a 'woefully incomplete state.' TSBN has thus not answered TFO's arguments,

given in our first reply to him, that defeated the above objection way back in 1996.

The clincher is the last sentence of the letter: "The name of a newly initiated disciple should be sent by the representative who has accepted him or her TO SRILA PRABHUPADA..." The direct meaning here is that Srila Prabhupada must be physically present, otherwise it would not be possible to send the names "to Srila Prabhupada". Of course, Krishnakant, the author of TFO, wants to avoid this obvious discrepancy, and begins an explanation of why we should NOT take the direct meaning of the letter. However, according to Srila Prabhupada's own instruction, the direct meaning of his statement is sufficient for us. There is no good reason to disregard it.

The above objection was also answered in TFO way back in 1996, and it is shoddy scholarship on the part of TSBN that he simply repeats pre-defeated arguments, rather than try to attack our rebuttals. We reproduce below the reasons why TSBN's objection does not prove the *ritvik* system should have stopped on November 15th 1977:

The July 9th letter states that the names of newly initiated disciples were to be sent 'to Srila Prabhupada' - Could this indicate that the system was only to run while Srila Prabhupada was physically present? Some devotees have argued that since we can no longer send these names to Srila Prabhupada, the ritvik system must therefore be invalid.

The first point to note is the stated purpose behind the names being sent to Srila Prabhupada, ie., so they could be included in his "Initiated Disciples" book. We know from the July 7th conversation ([please see Appendices](#)) that Srila Prabhupada had nothing to do with entering the new names into this book, it was done by his secretary. Further evidence that the names should be sent for inclusion in the book, and NOT specifically to Srila Prabhupada is given in the letter written to Hansaduta, the very next day, where Tamala Krishna Goswami explains his new *ritvik* duties to him:

"...you should send their names to be included in Srila Prabhupada's 'Initiated Disciples' book."

(Letter to Hansaduta from Tamala Krishna Goswami, 10/7/77)

There is no mention made here of needing to send the names to Srila Prabhupada. This procedure could easily have continued after Srila Prabhupada's physical departure. Nowhere in *The Final Order* does it state that if the "Initiated Disciples" book becomes physically separated from Srila Prabhupada all initiations must be suspended.

The next point is that the procedure of sending the names of newly initiated disciples to Srila Prabhupada in any case relates to a **post**-initiation activity. The names could only be sent **after** the disciples had already been initiated. Thus an instruction concerning what is to be done after initiation cannot be used to amend or in any way interrupt **pre**-initiation, or indeed initiation procedures (the *ritvik's* role being already fulfilled well before the actual initiation ceremony takes place). Whether or not names can be sent to Srila Prabhupada has no bearing on the system for initiation, since at the point where new names are ready to be sent, the initiation has already occurred.

The last point is that if sending the names to Srila Prabhupada were a vital part of the ceremony, then even before Srila Prabhupada's departure, the system would have been invalid, or at least run the constant risk of being so. It was generally understood that Srila Prabhupada was ready to leave at any time, thus the danger of not having anywhere to send the names was present from day one of the order being issued. In other words, taking the possible scenario that Srila Prabhupada leaves the planet the day after a disciple has been initiated through the *ritvik* system, according to the above proposition, the disciple would not actually have been initiated simply because of the speed by which mail is delivered. We find no mention in Srila Prabhupada's books that the transcendental process of *diksa*, which may take many lifetimes to complete, can be obstructed by the vicissitudes of the postal service. Certainly there would be nothing preventing the names of new initiates being entered into His Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book even now. This book could then be offered to Srila Prabhupada at a fitting time. (*The Final Order*, 1996)

So let us see if TSBN can refute the above rather than simply repeat the objection.

To sum up, the letter clearly describes a provisional arrangement that explicitly addressed the immediate situation while Srila Prabhupada was on the planet.

The words 'provisional' 'immediate situation' and 'while Srila Prabhupada (is) on the planet' never appear anywhere in the July 9th order. These phrases are all hopeful inventions of TSBN. It is highly ironic that TSBN should start off with pious pronouncements about only accepting the direct meaning of Srila Prabhupada's statements, but then feel compelled to invent statements never made by Srila Prabhupada anywhere just in order to buttress his crumbling position.

This is the direct meaning of the letter, and this is what we should accept,

Even though no such 'statements' ever appear in the July 9th letter, nor in any other letter, nor in Srila Prabhupada's books, morning walks, lectures, conversations etc etc, still, according to TSBN we should 'accept' them. No t h a n k s.

And if we accept Srila Prabhupada's principle of taking the direct meaning, it is not possible to arrive at the *Ritviks'* conclusion about this letter. One or the other has to go. I prefer to keep Srila Prabhupada's instructions.

That is why TSBN has decided to invent the following phrases and then assert that this is what the July 9th letter actually

means: 'provisional' 'immediate situation' and 'while Srila Prabhupada (is) on the planet'.

Not only is the meaning clear from the letter itself, but Srila Prabhupada himself clearly stated (on October 18th, 1977) that the arrangement described in the letter was temporary and provisional. The context is as follows. A question had arisen regarding the initiation of a Bengali gentleman, and Srila Prabhupada said, "So I have deputed some of you to initiate." The word "depute" means "to appoint as a substitute, representative, or deputy", so Srila Prabhupada was pointing out here that he had already appointed disciples to initiate on his behalf. He then referred to the list of representatives and said that Jayapataka Maharaja should perform the initiation.

Srila Prabhupada: I stop FOR THE TIME BEING. [emphasis added] Is that all right?

Tamala Krsna Maharaja: Stopped doing what, Srila Prabhupada?

Srila Prabhupada: This initiation. I have deputed my disciples. And if by Krsna's grace I recover from this condition, then I shall begin again, or I may not be pressed in this condition to initiate. It is not good. [3]

Srila Prabhupada's statements, "FOR THE TIME BEING" and "And IF by Krsna's grace I recover from this condition, THEN I shall begin again..." mean explicitly that the arrangement was provisional. Furthermore, he also states explicitly why he has made the arrangement: "... or I may not be pressed in this condition to initiate. It is not good."

The above objection was also addressed long ago. To bring TSBN up to speed, these are the arguments he should have been defeating:

1. In the above conversation Srila Prabhupada instructs H.H. Jayapataka Maharaja to do the initiation instead of him, as per the July 9th letter where the Maharaja's name was listed. So the initiation would still have gone ahead with Srila Prabhupada acting as the *diksa* guru, just as with any other initiation within ISKCON.
2. Srila Prabhupada had already largely 'stopped' performing the initiation ceremony some years before, even prior to the July 9th letter, and was already employing 'local *sannyasis*' to initiate on his behalf. The one thing Srila Prabhupada was still doing occasionally was performing the ceremony himself if he happened to be there personally.
3. It is obviously this sporadic participation (physically sitting in on the *yajna*) that Srila Prabhupada is referring to when he speaks of 'stopping and resuming'. The Indian man had flown all the way from New York to get initiated PERSONALLY by Srila Prabhupada. This physical involvement with the actual fire ceremony was something that was affected by Srila Prabhupada's fluctuating health. It was this local participation by Srila Prabhupada in the global *ritvik* system he had only just set up which he was referring to when he said 'India I am here'.
4. Thus the 'time being' Srila Prabhupada had 'stopped' for does not refer to the *ritvik* system per se, since at that time the only thing he 'stopped' was the practice of dictating names. Neither is he suddenly telling H.H. Jayapataka Maharaja to take all the *karma* by simply asking him to go and do the *yajna*.

Srila Prabhupada was an expert manager. Krishnakant himself acknowledges that the *Ritvik* system he has proposed is "totally unique, (at least as far as we know)."

We say it '**may** be totally unique'. We simply do not know, and neither does TSBN.

Consequently, if Srila Prabhupada had really intended to make such a radical change, he would know that it would be misunderstood by his disciples, and opposed from inside and outside his movement.

Could this be the same TSBN who had earlier stated:

The letter did not really introduce any significant change, or introduce anything radical.

This is a clear contradiction and yet more evidence of TSBN's general incompetence in this debate. He may now like to argue that it only becomes 'radical' if it continues for one day past November 15th, but that is not what he said. If TSBN did take that argumentative option he would then need to explain, on the basis of Srila Prabhupada's teachings, why the order only becomes 'radical' on 15th November. That will be a challenge we can assure him.

He had been saying practically since the beginning of the movement that senior disciples would initiate their own disciples after his departure.

Where is the GBC directive that states the above? Is TSBN seriously suggesting that a 'good manager' would privately promise future *diksa* status to a handful of ambitious individuals (Tusta Krishna etc) in private letters sent in sealed envelopes, but neglect to directly inform the GBC? How absurd. If TSBN has some hitherto unseen evidence in which Srila Prabhupada sets up a successor guru system within ISKCON, we would sure like to see it.

They would want to know why this was no longer the case.

How would 'they' even know, since there is no general order from Srila Prabhupada, nor approved GBC resolution that says 'that senior disciples would initiate their own disciples after his departure'. It is an instruction for ISKCON that TSBN has simply

invented out of thin air.

Furthermore, his Godbrothers and other personalities outside the movement would criticize the supposed change, and create doubt and dissension in ISKCON.

Who cares a jot what Srila Prabhupada's Godbrothers might have thought when, according to Srila Prabhupada, they had completely destroyed their own spiritual master's mission via the operation of an unauthorised initiation system? When did Srila Prabhupada ever base his managerial decisions on the attitude of people who hardly lifted a finger to support his mission? What a terrible argument.

Accordingly, an empowered manager such as Srila Prabhupada would have warned his disciples and made sure they understood what the new process was and why he was introducing it.

TSBN had said previously that 'The letter did not really introduce any significant change, or introduce anything radical.' If something is not new and 'radical', why the need to warn anybody? If it is 'radical' then TSBN needs to explain how. What ISKCON devotees most certainly did find radical was when the 11 *ritviks* suddenly claimed to be the material and spiritual successors to Srila Prabhupada. Thousands of disciples left the movement following that particular 'process', never to return. That was the real radical and unauthorised change, not keeping in place the *diksa* guru who had always been the *diksa* guru for ISKCON. Yet it appears that TSBN is happy with that type of 'radical', unmentioned change.

Actually, he never mentioned anything of the sort.

When directly questioned Srila Prabhupada only made non-radical statements regarding his continued status within ISKCON:

Reporter: What will happen to the movement in the United States when you die?

Srila Prabhupada: I will never die

Devotees: Jaya! Haribol! (laughter)

Srila Prabhupada: I will live from my books and you will utilise.

(SP Press Conference, 16/7/75, San Francisco)

Reporter: Are you training a successor?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, my Guru Maharaja is there.

(SP Press conference, 16/7/75, San Francisco)

"Only Lord Caitanya can take my place. He will take care of the Movement."

(SP Room conversation, 2/11/77)

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

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

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

Interviewer: Will there be one spiritual leader though?

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

(SP Interview, 10/6/76, Los Angeles)

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

Srila Prabhupada: That I am not contemplating now. But there is no need of one person.

(SP Interview, 4/6/76, Los Angeles)

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

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

Interviewer: So what process? Would the Hare Krsnas...

Srila Prabhupada: We have got secretaries. They are managing.

(SP Interview, 14/7/76, New York)

Above Srila Prabhupada is directly asked about his successor, and not once does he ever say his disciples will succeed him as initiating gurus.

Nor FOR SEVERAL YEARS did anyone suggest that this letter meant what the *Ritvik* community now says it means.

This is an irrelevant argument. Whether or not it occurred to anyone before has no logical bearing on its truth.

Given the radical nature of the alleged change, Srila Prabhupada would certainly have mentioned the *Ritvik* process in his will. He would have understood that there would all sorts of questions, and he would have clarified the issue for future generations. However, the *Ritvik* process is not mentioned in his will.

The Will says that the system of management within ISKCON must not change. The *ritvik* system was one such system, and therefore should not have been changed.

Another important point is that Srila Prabhupada's will states that the GBC will be "the ultimate managing authority", but the GBC has not accepted the *Ritvik* theory. Why not? Because he never explained it to them.

He did explain it to them, in the July 9th letter. And TSNB is on very shaky ground if he is trying to say we are wrong just because the current GBC do not accept it, since they also do not accept his legitimacy, nor that of his newfound spiritual guide.

This means that, according to the *Ritviks*, Srila Prabhupada did not manage to establish the basic principle of disciplic succession in his movement.

Yes he did, since he is the current representative of that disciplic succession, and is still fully available to give guidance for anyone who still accepts him.

In fact, according to them, he did not take even minimal steps to ensure that it was understood, accepted and established.

He did, he sent orders that were disobeyed.

In other words, the *Ritvik* party is indirectly accusing Srila Prabhupada of being an incompetent manager.

The above is a nothing but a baseless slur. Even the best manager cannot stop people from deviating if they are really set on it.

In conclusion:

1. TSNB falsely claims that TFO gives the wrong definition of the word 'henceforward'.
2. TSNB falsely claims that TFO denies the possibility that instructions containing that word may be temporary.
3. He claims the July 9th letter was not radical since it essentially did not change anything.
4. He then says that Srila Prabhupada should have warned everyone of such a radical change.
5. TSNB simply repeats numerous arguments that were defeated in TFO way back in 1996, rather than try to counter our counter arguments.

Part 4

The following is the fourth part of our exposé of Tridandi Swami Bhaktivedanta Nemi's (formerly known as Jnana das & henceforward -for the duration of these Exchanges -TSBN) inability to substantiate his opposition to Srila Prabhupada's rightful status as the sole *diksa* guru for ISKCON. This is in reply to his paper "**The IRM's Physical Presence Phobia**".

Statements by TSBN shall be boxed with our responses to his main points following.

The *Ritvik* system prescribed by IRM in *The Final Order* is based on the supposed evidence of the "henceforward" letter of July 9th. IRM claim that this letter instructs us that the *Ritvik* system should be continued after Srila Prabhupada's physical departure. However, this is quite untrue, because the direct meaning of the letter is quite different from IRM's artificial interpretation. (See [Part Two](#)).

Our reply to TSBN's paper (part two) exposed the fact that he falsely accused *The Final Order* (TFO) of giving an incorrect definition of the word 'henceforward', when in fact it defined the word as meaning-'from now onwards', which is correct according to all the English dictionaries of the world. He has not withdrawn this accusation in the current paper, so we assume he still maintains his demonstrably false accusation. TSBN also falsely claimed that TFO denied the word 'henceforward' could be used within instructions that may be time limited. This last claim was particularly inept since even TSBN himself acknowledged that, according to TFO, the July 9th directive will only have relevance for the duration of ISKCON, which is at most another 9,500 years. We note he has also failed to withdraw this second false accusation too. So, not an auspicious start.

IRM are ignoring the rules for understanding evidence. In a court of law the first rule for interpreting evidence is that one accepts the direct meaning. Srila Prabhupada and our *acaryas* have also instructed us that we should take the direct meaning of *sastric* statements, and that we should avoid indirect interpretations wherever possible. IRM have said that we should not deviate from Srila Prabhupada's guidelines by even a millionth of a hairsbreadth, so they should accept this principle: "Accept the direct meaning of *sastric* statements." We have to choose between on the one hand this principle that Srila Prabhupada gave us and on the other hand the *Ritvik* conclusion. To accept one is to reject the other.

The above paragraph is based on the assumption that TFO has taken an indirect interpretation of the July 9th directive, and that TSBN has shown as much. Yet TSBN has so far not demonstrated where TFO ever does this. It is he who is claiming the order must cease on Srila Prabhupada's departure, even though this is never once stated anywhere in the letter, nor in any other letter, approved GBC resolution, book, conversation or anywhere else for that matter. Thus it is TSBN who has taken an indirect meaning by artificially imposing his own arbitrary and illogical time constraint on the July 9th management directive. The only time indication given for the *ritvik* system in this directive is the word 'henceforward', and the fact that it was directed at all ISKCON leaders, and thus would only apply for the duration of that institution. If TSBN wants to stop the order, then the onus is on him to show precisely when, where and how Srila Prabhupada ever ordered it to terminate. This he has singularly failed to do in his first three efforts, and one gets the impression this pattern will continue in this fourth attempt. Let us see:

IRM try to justify their unprecedented system by saying that it does not conflict with higher *sastric* principles, but this assertion is false.

It is not our 'unprecedented system'. We have no more idea than TSBN whether this system was ever used before by a world *acharya* during the golden age in some previous *Kali-yuga* to spread the *sankirtana* movement. Nor is it of any relevance to this discussion whether or not it is unprecedented. The system was put in place by Srila Prabhupada, and for some strange reason people like TSBN want to stop it, that's all we really need to appreciate.

The key point here is the physical presence of the guru. SP said over and over again that we have to approach a spiritual master. Having approached him, one should inquire from him, and hear from him submissively in order to get a clear understanding.¹ The direct meaning of this is that one comes into his physical proximity, but IRM avoid this direct instruction with remarkable ingenuity: "Srila Prabhupada never taught ... that this physical guru must also be physically present in order to act as guru."² They then say that the purpose of approaching the guru is to get transcendental knowledge, but we can get that from books, so no need for the physical presence of the guru. This is an example of avoiding a direct instruction in favour of an indirect interpretation.

The above argument is ludicrous since Srila Prabhupada never met many thousands of his own disciples physically, even once, as TSBN later goes on to admit. If TSBN was correct then it would mean that Srila Prabhupada, who we may assume knows a great deal more about *sastric* principles than TSBN, was not following the direct meaning of *sastra* (such as Bg. 4.34). Furthermore, Srila Prabhupada taught many, many times that the physical presence of the guru has no relevance to the transmission of transcendental knowledge (the definition of *diksa*). Here are just a few examples, re-produced in the appendices of TFO, which TSBN would have read had he made the effort to actually study the position he is trying to attack:

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

(Lectures SB, 68/08/18)

"There are two conceptions, the physical conception and the vibrational conception. The physical conception is

temporary. The vibrational conception is eternal.[...] When we feel separation from Krsna or the Spiritual Master, we should just try to remember their words or instructions, and we will no longer feel that separation. Such association with Krsna and the Spiritual Master should be association by vibration not physical presence. That is real association.

(*Elevation to Krsna Consciousness*, BBT 1973, Page 57)

“Therefore we should take advantage of the *Vani*, not the physical presence.”

(Letter to Suci Devi Dasi, 4/11/75)

It is sometimes misunderstood that if one has to associate with persons engaged in devotional service, he will not be able to solve the economic problem. To answer this argument, it is described here that one has to associate with liberated persons not directly, physically, but by understanding, through philosophy and logic, the problems of life.

(SB 3:31:48)

According to TSNB in the above quotes Srila Prabhupada is teaching an indirect understanding of the *Bhagavad-gita*. We shall leave the reader to decide who might have the deeper understanding of the direct meaning of *sastra*, TSNB or Srila Prabhupada.

Now, the whole Vedic tradition depends on the direct personal guidance of the guru. Great personalities such as Vidura, Arjuna, Maharaja Pariksit, Sanatana Gosvami, Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Sri Krsna (and what to speak of Srila Prabhupada himself) all physically approached their spiritual masters. Hence, we cannot doubt that the natural and standard process is for disciples to be in physical proximity with their guru. However, IRM have literally rushed in where angels fear to tread, and have tried to abolish this eternal process on the strength of their artificial, indirect interpretation of a single letter.

On reading what Srila Prabhupada actually said many times about the issue of ‘physical presence’ one can see just how far TSNB has strayed from the *siddhanta* of our current *Acharya*. This should be a stark warning for anyone contemplating alternative authorities to Srila Prabhupada. Perhaps it should be born in mind that even the most charismatic ‘physically present’ person will at some point become physically absent, and hence by their own philosophy, redundant as far as transmission of *diksa* (transcendental knowledge) is concerned.

It is true that Srila Prabhupada adjusted the standard process, sometimes dealing through representatives, and even giving the *diksa* mantras by tape recorder. However, he has never instructed or even suggested that we should do the same. Therefore, we should follow the eternal process that he describes in his books, which is that the disciple has the physical association of the guru.

Above he admits, as he does again later, that Srila Prabhupada did not follow what TSNB has just boldly told us is the direct meaning of *sastra*, or the ‘standard process’. This proves that TSNB must be wrong in his understanding of what the direct meaning of *sastra* is with regards physical presence (since he also accepts that Srila Prabhupada always followed *sastric* principles). This is a serious contradiction. Furthermore, his assertion that Srila Prabhupada “never instructed or even suggested that we should do the same”, (in other words bypass the need for the guru’s physical presence) is contradicted by the many quotes (such as those above) where he tells us to do precisely that. Furthermore the July 9th letter left in place a system whereby people could be initiated by a physically absent guru, namely Srila Prabhupada, for as long as ISKCON lasted!

SP often used the expression “go to” the spiritual master, which is a direct translation of the word *abhisecchet*. The direct meaning of this word *abhisecchet* is that one has to physically approach the spiritual master, which naturally requires his physical presence.

TSNB has already admitted that Srila Prabhupada did not follow what he unilaterally terms the ‘standard process’, and has thus torpedoed his own position. Thus the rest of his points on this matter are redundant. We shall reproduce here the section of TFO that dealt with this issue of *pariksa* (personal inquiry and testing between guru and disciple):

“How can *pariksa* (mutual examination between disciple and guru), an essential element of *diksa*, be achieved without physical contact?”

This question arises from the stated requirement that a disciple must ‘approach’, ‘inquire from’ and ‘render service to’ a guru (C.c. (Bg. 4.34), and that the guru must ‘observe’ the disciple 24.330). If we examine these verses carefully the following points become apparent:

- There is no mention that this ‘inquiring’, ‘rendering service to’ and ‘observing’ necessitates direct physical contact.
- The purport speaks of these activities as being essential for a disciple. Thus, if these activities absolutely require the guru to be on the same planet, then **no-one** has been Srila Prabhupada’s disciple since November 14th, 1977.
- The ‘inquiring’ is done so the ‘spiritual master’ can ‘impart knowledge’. However, to ‘impart knowledge’ is also the definition of *siksa*, and it is already accepted that in order to impart *siksa*, or to accept inquiries pertaining to *siksa*, the guru does not

need to be on the planet -(please see Appendices). And as explained above, by the logic of this proposition **no one** had had any 'knowledge imparted' to them since November 14th 1977.

- The 'observing' is simply the agreement by the prospective disciple to follow the regulative principles and can be monitored by representatives of the guru:

"In our Krsna Consciousness Movement the requirement is that one must be prepared to give up the four pillars of sinful life [...] In western countries especially we first observe whether a potential disciple is prepared to follow the regulative principles."

(C.c. Madhya, 24.330, purport)

This facility to use representatives is again repeated a few lines later when discussing the observation required for prospective second initiation candidates:

"In this way the disciple renders devotional service under the guidance of the spiritual master or his representatives for at least six months to a year."

(C.c. Madhya, 24.330, purport)

A few lines later we see how vital the use of representatives really is:

"The spiritual master should study the disciple's inquisitiveness for no less than six months or a year."

(C.c. Madhya, 24.330, purport)

- Bearing in mind the way in which Srila Prabhupada had set up the society, the above stipulation would have been *impossible* to follow. He could not possibly have observed every one of his thousands of disciples for a full 6 months. Thus, the use of representatives was not just a matter of choice, but totally *unavoidable* if the above requirement was to have been fulfilled by Srila Prabhupada. If **personal (as in him being physically involved) pariksa** by the guru was an inviolable *sastric* principle, why would Srila Prabhupada have purposely set up a preaching mission (with disciples and centres all around the world) that rendered such **personal** examination impossible? One is, in effect, arguing that Srila Prabhupada only achieved his preaching success at the expense of violating *sastra*, an argument commonly used by other 'Gaudiya Vaisnava' groups in India.
- All the above points are further substantiated by the strongest evidence possible –extensive practical example from the *acarya* himself: Srila Prabhupada initiated the majority of his disciples without any personal *pariksa*. Thus, Srila Prabhupada instituted a system whereby approaching his representatives for *diksa* was the same as approaching him directly.

If TSNB really wanted to address this guru issue, he would have been better directly challenging points such as those above that were made way back in 1996. TSNB then makes an even weaker argument:

One may say that reading is equivalent to hearing, but SP many times emphasized the specific importance of the ears as receptive senses.¹³ "Therefore one is required to approach the proper spiritual master with receptive ears only, and thus divine existence is gradually realized.¹⁴ "The favor of the spiritual master is not received through any other part of the body but the ears."¹⁵ The word "hearing" literally means that we should actually hear. SP is not just talking about reading transcendental literatures.

To get around the fact that we can all hear audio tapes of Srila Prabhupada giving class, he says:

One may object, "We can use aural reception to hear from tape recorders." However, SP emphasizes over and over again that we have to hear from the spiritual master's mouth from the spiritual master's lips. He said, "From his mouth one has to hear,"¹⁷ but not, "From his tapes we have to hear."

But Srila Prabhupada oversaw the establishment of his own tape ministry, and fully approved of it. On those tapes you can directly hear the words coming from 'the spiritual master's mouth.

SP himself contradicted the idea that the physical recordings of the pure devotee is as spiritually potent as the pure devotee's original sound vibration. "A gramophone machine will not do."¹⁸ "A gramophone will not help. If you want to read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, you must approach a person who is life living Bhagavata."¹⁹ "Gramophone or tape record speaker, that will not be [effective]."²⁰

TSNB paints a highly misleading picture above as we shall show with the following points:

1. None of the quotes given by TSNB directly says what he claims, namely that "physical recordings of the pure devotee" are less "spiritually potent" than the "pure devotee's original sound vibration." He is once again putting words into Srila Prabhupada's mouth.
2. Let us begin with the correct understanding on this issue as given by Srila Prabhupada:

“I have prepared some tape record of my personal Kirtana. When one of this tape record was played the audience became practically charmed by that although not a single word of my language was understandable by them. So I am confident of the statement of Srila Haridasa Thakura that the transcendental sound of Lord Caitanya’s Harinama can do good even to the birds and the beasts.”

(Letter to Tirtha, 4/2/66)

Here Srila Prabhupada makes it clear that the sound from his tape is transcendental.

3. Also hearing the “original sound vibration” requires that the vibrator is physically present. As the following quotes makes clear, the vibration is still as potent even if the vibrator is not physically present:

“Physical presence is immaterial. Presence of the transcendental sound received from the Spiritual Master should be the guidance of life. That will make our spiritual life successful. If you feel very strongly about my absence you may place my pictures on my sitting places and this will be source of inspiration for you.”

(Letter to Brahmananda and other students, 19/1/67)

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

(Lectures SB, 68/08/18)

“There are two conceptions, the physical conception and the vibrational conception. The physical conception is temporary. The vibrational conception is eternal.[...] When we feel separation from Krsna or the Spiritual Master, we should just try to remember their words or instructions, and we will no longer feel that separation. Such association with Krsna and the Spiritual Master should be association by vibration not physical presence. That is real association.”

(Elevation to Krsna Consciousness, BBT 1973, page 57)

“So although a physical body is not present, the vibration should be accepted as the presence of the Spiritual Master, vibration. What we have heard from the Spiritual Master, that is living.”

(General lectures, 69/01/13)

“So we should give more stress on the sound vibration, either of Krsna or Spiritual Master. Never think that I am absent from you, presence by message (or hearing) is the real touch.”

(Letter to students, August 1967)

“Reception of spiritual knowledge is never checked by any material condition.”

(SB 1987 ed. 7.7.1.)

“The potency of transcendental sound is never minimised because the vibrator is apparently absent.”

(SB 2.9.8.)

“Krsna and his representative are the same. 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 place by the principle of relay monitoring.”

(Letter to Malati, 28/5/68)

Thus the Vibration of the spiritual master, however it is delivered, is not affected at all by the Spiritual master’s physical absence.

4. Further the majority of second initiations were given via the sacred Gayatri mantra delivered by a tape recording (as admitted by TSNB) – a procedure Srila Prabhupada would hardly have sanctioned if the spiritual potency of his chanting on tape lacked the proper potency.
5. Now considering all the above, Srila Prabhupada was hardly going to contradict himself and suddenly announce that all recordings of his transcendental voice lacked spiritual potency. And if we look at the 3 quotes supplied by TSNB we find that, sure enough, none of the quotes directly compare the vibration of a physically present pure devotee with that of his recorded voice. Indeed as we can see from the full context of one of the quotes supplied by TSNB, the “gramophone” does not refer to the recording of the pure devotee, but to professional non-devotee *Bhagavatam* reciters, who are well-known for selling such recitations all over India in recorded form:

“So what Sukadeva did? Svanubhavam. He first of all heard from his father, Vyasadeva, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and realized it. Not a professional *Bhagavata* reciter. Just like in India now there are a class of men, especially in Vrndavana, the *gosvamis*. They make a business. Therefore there are many, many very artistic *Bhagavata* reciters, but they could not turn even one man to Krsna consciousness. Because they are not self-realized, svanub-

havam. Of course, we have tried our best; so in few years there are so many Krsṇa conscious persons come out. This is the secret. Unless one is *svanubhavam*, self-realized, life is *bhagavata*, he cannot preach *Bhagavata*. That is not... That will not be effective. A gramophone will not help. Therefore Caitanya Mahaprabhu's secretary, Svarūpa Damodara, recommended, *bhagavata pora giya bhagavata-sthane*, that "If you want to read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, you must approach a person who is life living *Bhagavata*." *Bhagavata pora giya bhagavata-sthane*. Otherwise, there is no question of *Bhagavata* realization."

(Lecture, May 27th, 1974)

We can see from the above just how misleading it was for TSNB to use the quote in the way he did. It has literally no relevance to whether the words of pure devotees lose potency once they are recorded. Similarly, another of the quotes offered by TSNB refers not to the vibration of a pure devotee, but to that of a guest who is visiting! And the remaining quote refers to devotees preaching in Africa. In all cases the "gramophone" never refers to the recording of a PURE DEVOTEE. TSNB must have been praying that no one would bother checking back to see what those quotes were really about.

So in conclusion there is no evidence where Srila Prabhupada has ever stated that the "recording of a pure devotee" is not as "spiritually potent" as his "original sound vibration". Tapes must have sufficient spiritual potency otherwise why would Srila Prabhupada approve their distribution? Also thousands of his disciples never directly heard anything from his physical lips. None of them have heard anything from his physical lips for nearly 30 years. Is TSNB really claiming that for that entire time they were all cruelly cut off from even the possibility of receiving transcendental knowledge from Srila Prabhupada?

SP explained that recorded sound vibration is not as spiritually potent as the sound vibrated directly by the pure devotee because the recording is his "separated energy".²¹ "The separated energy can be understood from a practical example. I compose books by speaking into a Dictaphone, and when the Dictaphone is replayed, it appears that I am speaking personally, but actually I am not."²² SP said directly, "When you play back it will speak just like I am speaking, but I am not there."²³ "And when I speak directly, that is not separated energy."²⁴ Hence, the recording of SP is not as spiritually potent as when SP spoke directly and personally.

TSNB has added the words "Hence, the recording of SP is not as spiritually potent as when SP spoke directly and personally", yet never once does Srila Prabhupada say anything like this. Srila Prabhupada is simply making an analogy.

IRM maintain that it is sufficient to read SP's books and hear his tapes, but the direct meaning of SP's own statements nullifies this idea.

Well let's see if that is true in the following quotes:

"So utilise whatever time you find to make a thorough study of my books. Then all your questions will be answered."

(Letter to Upendra, 7/1/76)

"If it is possible to go to the temple, then take advantage of the temple. A temple is a place where by one is given the opportunity to render direct devotional service to the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. In conjunction with this you should always read my books daily and all your questions will be answered and you will have a firm basis of Krishna Consciousness. In this way your life will be perfect."

(Letter to Hugo Salemon, 22/11/74)

"Every one of you must regularly read our books at least twice, in the morning and evening, and automatically all questions will be answered."

(Letter to Randhira, 24/01/70)

"In my books the philosophy of Krsna Consciousness is explained fully so if there is anything you do not understand, then you simply have to read again and again. By reading daily the knowledge will be revealed to you and by this process your spiritual life will develop."

(Letter to Brahmarupa Dasa, 22/11/74)

Srila Prabhupada: Even a moments association with a pure devotee -all success!

Revatinanda: Does that apply to reading the words of a pure devotee?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.

Revatinanda: Even a little association with your books has the same effect?

Srila Prabhupada: Effect. Of course it requires both things. One must be very eager to take

(Room Conversation, 13/12/70)

Paramahansa: My question is, a pure devotee, when he comments on Bhagavad Gita, someone who never sees him physically, but he just comes in contact w the commentary, explanation, is this the same thing?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. You can associate with Krsna by reading *Bhagavad-gita*. And these saintly persons, they have given their explanations, comments. So where is the difficulty?

(Morning Walk, Paris 11/6/74)

So when TSNB says "IRM maintain that it is sufficient to read SP's books" he should also point out that this opinion was originally expressed by Srila Prabhupada himself.

IRM point out that SP often gave initiation through representatives or by tape. This is true, but SP does not give this in his books as a procedure that we should follow. We have to accept the direct meaning of his statements to find out the process that is meant for us.

The details of how initiation was conducted in ISKCON were never given in Srila Prabhupada's books, but through directives and approved GBC resolutions. Thus TSNB's argument above is irrelevant.

The spiritual master has to give the disciple personal instructions and guidance regarding service, according to the disciple's individual situation and stage of life.²⁵ The spiritual master also has to be expert in engaging different devotees according to their propensities.²⁶ "Every one of us has got a certain amount of good energy derived from Krishna, and when that energy is employed under the expert direction of Spiritual Master, one's life becomes successful. That is the secret of Krishna Consciousness."²⁷

The issue of *pariksa* has been dealt with above, and this *engaging of devotees in devotional service* was fully delegated by Srila Prabhupada to his Temple Presidents and GBC's. We wonder what ISKCON TSNB ever belonged to where Srila Prabhupada was dashing around the entire world telling every single disciple what they should be doing. It is simply a myth. And if Srila Prabhupada did not do this, it cannot be an essential aspect of *diksa*.

It is true that SP gave initiation through tape recordings, but he never describes this process in his books.

So what is the point? As long as he set up such a system then what difference does it make if it is not mentioned in his books? Even TSNB accepts that Srila Prabhupada intended the *ritvik* system to run before his departure, yet this pre-departure *ritvik* system is also never mentioned in Srila Prabhupada's books. Thus it is an utterly irrelevant point, or red herring as it is known in the arena of debate.

SP could use tape recorders when he was physically present, but that does not mean that we can use his tapes to the same effect when he is physically absent.

Why? Who says? When devotees listened to Srila Prabhupada on tape prior to November 15th 1977 the chances are that he was NOT physically present with them when they did. He may have been in a completely different country. And thus he was physically absent from the person listening to the tape. Therefore for TSNB's position to make any sense he would need to locate the following *sastric* principle:

'You can fully benefit from listening to a tape of the spiritual master while he is physically absent, so long as he is within a distance not greater than the earth's circumference.'

Perhaps TSNB can let us all see where this interesting injunction is stated.

SP was empowered to adjust the process for practical purposes when he was present, but he never says in his books (or even in the "henceforward" letter) that we can adjust the process that he has given in his books.

As stated, the detail of the initiation process was never described in his books. We are not 'adjusting' anything at all. We simply wish to carry on the system set up by Srila Prabhupada.

The *guru* has to chastise the disciple, because we cannot see the material attachments that we have to give up. "If we actually want detachment from this material world, we should be prepared to accept such cutting words from the spiritual master. Compromise and flattery have no effect where strong words are required."²⁹ This is the natural position of the teacher,³⁰ and it requires his physical presence and physical communication.

This was dealt with in our points on *pariksa* above. It should be fairly obvious that with thousands of disciples all around the world it was simply physically impossible for Srila Prabhupada to dash around chastising every single errant disciple. He left in place a management structure to do this on his behalf.

IRM points out that many of SP's disciples had little if any direct contact with him. This is true, but they were supposed to get guidance from disciples who had more association, so in any case, the principle of association was being followed. SP was

physically present, and devotees were supposed to cooperate with their authorities, who were supposed to get direct guidance from SP.

Above TSBN finally admits that direct physical association with the spiritual master is not necessary. This will be a relief for all the thousands of his disciples who never met him, both past, present and future. But, having just destroyed his own thesis, TSBN now invents a new *sastric* law to get around his conundrum:

'You do not need to have physical contact with the guru as long as you have physical contact with someone else who has had physical contact with the guru.'

We will be interested to see where TSBN has learned this new *sastric* principle. Of course ISKCON was meant to give association of more senior devotees (some of whom may have physically met Srila Prabhupada) but nowhere does Srila Prabhupada ever say:

'You must have physical association either with myself, or with someone else who has had direct physical association with me, otherwise the process of *diksa* will not work.'

It is yet another hopeful invention by TSBN to buttress his faltering position.

IRM, in a reply to my first article, wrote, "When trying to understand an instruction one will naturally consider the *purpose* behind it." Now, what is the intention behind all these statements that Srila Prabhupada has made? It is clearly that the disciple should have the physical association of the guru.

And yet Srila Prabhupada did the exact opposite by NOT associating physically with many of his disciples as TSBN has just now conceded. He also taught over and over that such physical association was not necessary as we have shown above.

SP instructed us that we should take the direct meaning of *sastric* statements, and reject indirect interpretations. IRM have tried to justify their interpretation of the "henceforward" letter by "proving" that there is no need for a guru who is physically present.

No, we say that the order must be followed unless there is some other countermanding instruction. People like TSBN falsely argue that the *ritvik* system has to be stopped because the guru must be physically present in order for the transcendental process of *diksa* to function. As we have seen this was never taught nor practiced by Srila Prabhupada, though we understand it is an axiomatic principle of TSBN's newfound spiritual guide.

However, their attempt depends on indirect interpretations throughout. Hence, according to SP's instructions, it should be rejected.

The careful reader will have concluded otherwise.

IRM themselves are living proof that their manufactured process does not work. They are using a process that is fundamentally flawed to try to justify an original thesis (their interpretation of the "henceforward" letter) that is fundamentally flawed. Naturally, then, every step of their argument is also flawed, as we will show. Their "logic of *The Final Order*" is invalid, and their conclusions about *diksa* show that they are clueless about the Gaudiya process for passing on the essence of our *sampradaya*. All this can only be rectified by *sadhu-sanga*, but IRM are unwilling to accept either *sadhu-sanga*, or the conclusion that it is necessary. The cause of IRM's confused conclusions is that they have dispensed with the association of living *bhagavatas*.

Srila Prabhupada IS living, and we are happy to have '*sadhu-sanga*' with anyone who accepts and acts on that basis. Sadly that does not appear to include TSBN nor any of his new found associates on current evidence.

My next paper will point out IRM's spectacular misunderstanding of the *diksa* process.

Given the sheer ineptitude, redundancy and irrelevance of TSBN's argumentation thus far, the above promise severely lacks credibility. And indeed, fearing further humiliation, despite his boast here, no such paper was ever written.

In Conclusion:

1. TSBN has failed to apologise for falsely accusing us (in his earlier papers) of dishonesty over the definition and usage of the word 'henceforward'.
2. TSBN continues to re-hash arguments that were dealt with way back in 1996 in TFO, rather than answering the rebuttals as an honest debater would.
3. TSBN argues strongly that the bona fide guru MUST have physical contact with the disciple, but then concedes that Srila Prabhupada (a bona fide spiritual master) did not do this. Thus he seriously contradicts his own thesis.
4. Realising his own contradiction TSBN then desperately invented a new *sastric* injunction to the effect that: **the disciple does not have to physically meet the guru as long as he meets someone else who has.**
5. TSBN offered misleading quotes that did not actually support his philosophy that a pure devotee's words lose potency when heard through electronic devices.
6. TSBN claims that reading Srila Prabhupada's books will not give full knowledge, whereas Srila Prabhupada says the opposite.
7. TSBN arguments were so badly exposed, that despite boasting that his "next paper will point out IRM's spectacular misunderstanding of the diksa process", due to being so spectacularly defeated thus far, he wisely abandoned writing anymore and was not heard of again on the subject.

It is actually quite scary just how far TSBN has strayed from Srila Prabhupada and his teachings in just a few years of association with his new spiritual guide. Let this be a warning to anyone else who may be considering such an experiment.

Stick with Srila Prabhupada -accept no substitutes.

www.iskconirm.com
irm@iskconirm.com