

a response to: 'Timeless Order'

by Vivek Sadananda Pai (GBC approved 1997)

**“...BEST NOT TO
ACCEPT ANY DISCIPLES”**



"...BEST NOT TO ACCEPT ANY DISCIPLES" (C.c. Madhya, 7.130, purport)

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"One may remain a householder, medical practitioner, an engineer or whatever. It doesn't matter. One only has to follow the instruction of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, chant the Hare Krishna maha-mantra and instruct relatives and friends in the teachings of *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* [...]"

It is best not to accept any disciples."

(C.c. Madhya, 7.130, purport)



by Krishnakant



“....BEST NOT TO ACCEPT ANY DISCIPLES”

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Introduction:

This presentation is a response to the most recent GBC approved position paper on the *ritvik* issue entitled ‘Timeless Order’ (T.O.), which was written as a reply to our discussion document entitled ‘The Final Order’. (All quotes from ‘Timeless Order’ shall be boxed). Although ‘Timeless Order’ was not written by members of the GBC, it was fully endorsed by Umapati Maharaja who is one of the select committee empowered by the GBC body to respond to ‘The Final Order’.

“I think the paper (T.O.) is great”

(Umapati Swami, 13/6/97)

The paper has also been on put on ISKCON COM for a number of weeks without any objection being made against it from any GBC member, though it is impossible for us to put ‘The Final Order’ on ISKCON COM for even one day, since it is not currently GBC approved. Also, various GBC members have been distributing T.O. as a response to ‘The Final Order’. More importantly we have learned that the GBC intend to use parts of T.O. in their forthcoming definitive book on the entire *ritvik* issue. The GBC and its representatives would be unlikely to do any of this if they disagreed with the paper. Thus throughout this presentation we shall present views expressed in T.O. as representing the current official GBC position.

Of course H.H. Umapati Maharaja or other official representatives of the GBC may have second thoughts after reading this paper, and decide to recant and withdraw T.O. from ISKCON COM etc. If that happens then we shall consider the purpose of this paper to have been served.

The title- ‘Timeless Order’ alludes to an alleged standing blanket order for everyone to become a *diksa* (initiating) guru, which it’s authors appear to believe has existed from time immemorial, or at least since Lord Caitanya spoke the ‘*amara ajnaya guru hana*’ verse 500 years ago. Although this order is apparently meant to liberally apply to anyone and everyone, the authors of T.O. also contradict the same proposition implied by their paper’s title:

“Of course, this (order) does not imply that everyone can automatically become a (*diksa*) guru.”

(T.O.p.5. words in parenthesis added).

Surely if the order to become *diksa* guru is not automatic, then it must be in some way conditional, and it is precisely what constitutes such conditions which lies at the heart of the whole *ritvik* controversy in the first place. It will be shown that T.O. fails to provide a scripturally supported explanation as to precisely what these conditions might be, giving instead hazy statements about ‘book knowledge’ not being enough (T.O.p.8), and how anyone who follows strictly can be a *diksa* guru. It should be noted that this is in sharp contrast to ‘The Final Order’ (pages 9-10), where it is clearly shown from Srila Prabhupada’s teachings that the two pre-conditions for a disciple becoming a *diksa* guru are that the candidate must have:

First attained the platform of *mahabhagavata* (highest level of God realisation).

&

Been personally authorised to initiate by his own initiating spiritual master.

T.O. wisely shies away from directly challenging the above principles, choosing instead to fudge around the issue of *diksa* qualification and authorisation. We will once more establish that the ‘*amara*’ verse, as presented in Srila Prabhupada’s books, has been misunderstood, and that the original blanket order from Lord Caitanya was actually for instructing (*siksa*) not initiating gurus, (as we already demonstrated in *The Final Order*’ p.10-11). The order in question empowers everyone and anyone to act as instructing guru immediately, regardless of qualification, (much less 2/3 majority votes from a committee in Mayapur). This was certainly the sense in which Srila Prabhupada applied the verse, often delivering it to large crowds of people who were not even initiated- (initiation being of course a vital pre-requisite for *diksa* authorisation to take place).

We shall demonstrate that as a result of this elementary philosophical misconception many of the other assertions, arguments and interpretations in T.O. are fundamentally flawed. We will also show that T.O. provides not one shred of evidence for modifications a & b (as given in ‘*The Final Order*’), thus failing to even tackle that papers central thesis.

We will show that T.O. also seriously contradicts the paper ‘*Disciple of my Disciple*’ which was published by the GBC just two months before the release of T.O.. By demonstrating these and other numerous flaws in T.O. we shall conclusively show that there is no evidence for Srila Prabhupada ever authorising the ‘multiple *acarya* successor system’* (the M.A.S.S.) presently in operation in ISKCON, and that as a result of this his final order on initiation, as enunciated in the July 9th policy document, still stands.

*(In this context we use the term ‘*acarya*’ in its strongest sense, namely ‘initiating spiritual master’, or ‘*diksa* guru’, who is to be worshipped as good as the Supreme Lord Himself.)

Contents of ‘Timeless Order’:

T.O. can be broken down into the following four sections:

1. **Pages 1-5: Introduction.**
2. **Pages 5-14: Ten quotes in support of the theory that Srila Prabhupada had always intended to, and in fact did, appoint *diksa* gurus to continue initiations after his physical departure. Also includes quote from Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Maharaja on the ‘*amara*’ verse to prove it refers to *diksa*.**
3. **Pages 14-20: An attack on the ‘final order’ theory.**
4. **Pages 20-28: An investigation into the motives and methodology of the authors of ‘*The Final Order*’.**

We shall start by showing how T.O. contradicts the GBC position paper ‘*Disciple of my Disciple*’ (DD) in at least two key areas fundamental to its position.

GBC approved paper contradicts GBC:

We have gained the impression of late that GBC members and sympathisers think nothing of contradicting each others statements on fundamental key points relating to how Srila Prabhupada supposedly authorised them to act as *diksa* gurus after his departure; just as long as the conclusion of all such deliberations allows them to carry on acting in that capacity. The most remarkable example of this is Umapati Maharaja’s unconditional acceptance of the paper ‘*Timeless Order*’ (T.O.), even though it completely contradicts two assertions which underpin the paper ‘*Disciple of my Disciple*’ (DD), which he himself co-authored a mere eight weeks previous. As we said, in an E-mail message to us he stated:

“I think the paper (T.O.) is great” (Umapati Swami, 13/6/97)

In the rarefied world of ISKCON guruship this may pass as normal acceptable behaviour; however, outside this elitist atmosphere such antics are looked upon in a much less favourable light.

We shall now present two important assertions made in the paper Umapati Maharaja co-wrote, which are contradicted by T.O. The first assertion is that in the May 28th conversation Srila Prabhupada does not refer to proxy initiations at all, not even in relation to the term *ritvik*. We now quote DD:

“In the present conversation, (May 28th) Srila Prabhupada does not refer to proxy initiations at all, not even in connection with the word “*ritvik*.”

(DD, P5)

Above we see the authors of DD clearly ruling out any possibility that Srila Prabhupada is using the term *ritvik* to mean someone who acts on his behalf, even when he seems to be referring to their use during his physical presence. Below DD once more breaks with Ravindra Svarupa’s 1985/86 interpretation, and ours, of the phrase ‘on my behalf’.

“The May 28th conversation continues:

Satsvarupa: But he does it on your behalf.

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

ANALYSIS:

But Srila Prabhupada answers here that “on my behalf” does not mean acting as a post-*samadhi* proxy but means becoming an actual guru.”

(DD, p8)

This is the first time anyone in the GBC has ever claimed that the phrase ‘on my behalf’ is not referring to pre-*samadhi* proxy initiations. In this DD is unique, and stands totally alone and at odds with all previous interpretations up to and including T.O.. DD further hammers home its point in the following excerpts:

“Here, Srila Prabhupada says “on my order” as a clarification of “on my behalf:”

(DD, p8)

“So on my behalf, on my order... *Amara ajnaya guru hana*. Be actually guru, but by my order.”

(DD, P8)

So according to DD the phrase ‘on my behalf’ does not refer to disciples initiating on Srila Prabhupada’s behalf, but initiating on their own behalf on Srila Prabhupada’s behalf ! Now let us contrast this with the interpretation offered by the authors of T.O.:

“So, let’s look at the “on my order” statements again, which are something of a last line of defence for the *ritvig-vaadis*. Srila Prabhupada says “Yes. That is formality. Because in my presence one should not become guru, so on my behalf. On my order, *amara ajnaya guru hana*, be actually guru. But on my order.” He makes two things clear - that the disciples are acting on his behalf as a formality because he’s still physically present, and also, that they derive their authority to initiate from Srila Prabhupada.”

(T0, p13)

Thus in T.O. we are presented with the more classical interpretation a la Ravindra Svarupa 85/86, whereby we are back with the idea that Srila Prabhupada is indeed discussing the use of proxies on May 28th, albeit for a limited period. This clearly contradicts ‘Disciple of my Disciple’. Such obvious contradictions as this will need to be addressed if the GBC and its apologists have any hope of being taken seriously.

Let us now look at the second assertion made in DD which is contradicted by T.O.. This relates to whether gurus were actually appointed by Srila Prabhupada or not. Again one would have thought that after twenty years the GBC might have reached some sort of consensus on this most basic question. We first quote from DD:

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

(DD, p4)

So DD, co-authored by Umapati Maharaja, makes it very clear above that Srila Prabhupada definitely did not appoint gurus. Why then does he accept T.O. when the authors of that paper clearly disagree with him:

“The *ritvig-vaadis* claim that Srila Prabhupada never decided on who to appoint, and that as a result, their interpretation will rule forever. However, such a statement is an insult to Srila Prabhupada [...]

We propose a much simpler answer that makes more sense - Srila Prabhupada followed through on his plans.

(T.O., p12)

It would seem to an outside observer that Satsvarupa Maharaja is speaking about the appointee and the new disciple, and when Srila Prabhupada says “he’s guru,” that Srila Prabhupada is talking about the people he is appointing.

(T0, p13)

Thus, according to T.O., not only is Umapati Maharaja wrong in suggesting that Srila Prabhupada did not appoint anyone to be guru, he is actually insulting his Guru Maharaja into the bargain by even suggesting such a thing. And Umapati Maharaja thinks this is all ‘great’! (It should be noted that several other senior ISKCON leaders, such as Jayadvaita Maharaja and Ravindra Svarupa prabhu, have gone on record as categorically stating that there was no appointment of gurus by Srila Prabhupada).

In summary:

Either Srila Prabhupada does mention proxy-initiations on the May 28th tape, or he does not. Which is it?

Either Srila Prabhupada did appoint gurus, or he did not. Which is it?

Perhaps the GBC and its apologists could get together and make up their minds on the above.

When they have come to a decision it will then be possible to take the discussions onto the next level and examine the evidence for whichever of the above options they decide to select. In the meantime, since they are obviously very confused, it might be prudent for the GBC to stop banning, bullying and intimidating devotees who believe that Srila Prabhupada wanted the *ritvik* system to continue indefinitely.

We shall now go systematically through T.O., one section at a time.

Section 1 (pages 1-5)

The first 'contentious' point addressed in T.O. is that the *ritvik* system did not occur to anyone until years after Srila Prabhupada's departure, and therefore is most likely invalid:

"...the structure proposed by the *ritvig-vaadis* simply did not arise until many years after Srila Prabhupada's disappearance. The fact that this system did not occur to many of its current proponents until many years after Srila Prabhupada's departure should be a sign that perhaps the post-*samadhi ritvik* theory is not as solid and self-evident as they would like to suggest. Had that been the case, it should have existed and had a following immediately after Srila Prabhupada's departure. That it did not already casts a doubt over the validity of such a system."

This argument is weak for the following reasons:

The M.A.S.S., currently in operation within ISKCON, did not fully occur to the GBC until the mid-eighties, and thus by their own reasoning must be invalid.

Just because an instruction is not followed, or misunderstood, does not mean the instruction itself is invalid. This principle is not stated in any scripture or system of logic and philosophy that we are aware of. (It is ironic that the very next point in T.O. extols the virtues of using logic - see below).

From the very beginning devotees did question the validity of the zonal *acarya* system. Some of these dissenters were post-*samadhi ritvik* adherents. For their troubles they were ruthlessly hounded from the society, just as devotees are today if they question the M.A.S.S.

Documents such as personal letters and Srila Prabhupada's final will were deliberately suppressed for many years after his departure. Although the July 9th letter was released generally, we feel its significance was misrepresented to the movement by the GBC. Until that point most devotees trusted the GBC to correctly represent Srila Prabhupada's desires. Whether this misrepresentation was deliberate or not is not strictly relevant to our argument at this point. (See Jayadvaita Swami's paper "*Several Grievances Against The Members Of The GBC*" 1987 for more details of GBC misbehaviour).

The authors of T.O. next make a bizarre point about how some people have said that the word *ritvik* does not appear in Srila Prabhupada's books but that...

"...with the advent of computer programs like Folio, a new class of "Folio devotees" has arisen that can attempt to challenge every claim, and this one has been challenged as well. While computerised searching can be a valuable tool in debate, it should not take the place of logic, and unfortunately, we find that such is often the case.

(T.O.p.1)

Folio is simply a sophisticated indexing system. By using this index we have indeed found references to the term *ritvik* in Srila Prabhupada's books (31 to be precise - including derivatives), a term which some senior devotees initially told us did not exist in Vaisnava vocabulary (*ISKCON Journal* 1990 p.23). What is wrong in using an index to check assertions made in GBC literature. It is lucky that we did since the assertion in question turned out to be completely false. In what way have we become illogical merely by using this 'valuable tool' to uncover incorrect GBC backed assertions?

"...if the word "ritvik" were so important to the future of Srila Prabhupada's mission, why does it not appear in the indices of his books? Such a supposedly important term should have been so prominent that it should not have required a computer program to find its occurrences.

(T.O.p.2)

We have never said 'ritvik' is a really important word. It just means 'priest'. Srila Prabhupada defined the word *ritvik* in the July 9th letter as meaning: 'representative of the *acarya*.' Although the word 'representative' may not have been separately indexed in all of Srila Prabhupada's books, we know the concept is absolutely central to vaisnava philosophy, *guru-tattva* in particular, since the guru is the 'representative' of the Supreme Lord. The really important person in the *ritvik* system is not the *ritvik*, but the *acarya* he represents, and the subject of bona fide *acaryas* is certainly covered extensively in Srila Prabhupada's books.

T.O. next claims the reason we have not reproduced the purports to verses in which the term *ritvik* appears is because...

"...they do not support the idea that the word "ritvik" had any significance to either Srila Prabhupada or to any previous *acarya* in the *parampara*.

(T.O.p.2)

Ritviks are used in some very important sacrifices in the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, thus to say they did not have 'any' significance to previous *acaryas* is perhaps being a little unfair to them. Still they are only priests, and if the GBC insist that the service they render is not particularly significant, we shall not argue with them. In fact in 'The Final Order' we sum up their role in the following way:

‘Thus to put into perspective the use of *ritviks*, it has been shown that we are dealing with details of a formalisation ceremony; a ceremony which itself constitutes but one element, and an unnecessary element at that, of the transcendental process of *diksa*.’

(‘*The Final Order*’ p.28)

It is very odd that the GBC seem to accept T.O.’s position on the total insignificance of *ritviks*, since in DD they argue that the *ritviks* Srila Prabhupada appointed were actually non-different to *diksa* gurus, which as we all know are to be considered as good as the Supreme Absolute Personality of Godhead Himself. It would be hard to think of any position more significant than that.

As far as Srila Prabhupada not mentioning the *ritvik* system in his books, this has already been dealt with extensively in ‘*The Final Order*’ (pages 27-29). Our points therein remain un-challenged, what to speak of answered. (The M.A.S.S. is certainly never mentioned in any of Srila Prabhupada’s books, so by T.O.’s reasoning must be bogus.)

“The reason we examine the previous uses of the word is because the *acarya* is not arbitrary - the *acarya* does not invent new ideas and new terms.

(T.O.p.2)

Firstly the term *ritvik*, as we have shown, and as the GBC now belatedly concede, was not invented by Srila Prabhupada or Tamal Krishna Goswami or even Pradyumna. It has been used for thousands of years by bona fide *acaryas*. Secondly it is false to say that *acaryas* do not come up with ‘new ideas’. Srila Prabhupada came up with many ideas (dictated by Krishna of course) for preaching Krishna Consciousness which had never been tried before, and were thus ‘new’. As far as we know the *ritvik* system- both pre and post-*samadhi* -was one of them. Again this is elaborated in ‘*The Final Order*’ (pages 18-19), and once more the GBC fail to even address the points therein.

“...we have often encountered the argument from the *ritvig-vaadis* that anything Srila Prabhupada said is *sastra*. Srila Prabhupada discouraged such deification...

(T.O.p.4)

Certainly everything Srila Prabhupada said was in accordance with *sastra*, and therefore all his statements and instructions would be classified as *sastric*. To imply otherwise, as T.O. seems to do here, is highly blasphemous, and merely adds insult to injury as its authors brazenly argue against following Srila Prabhupada’s clear final orders on initiation. Only a disciple of Kali would dream of arguing that Srila Prabhupada’s teachings and instructions were anything less than *sastric*:

“The statements of Thakura Bhaktivinoda are as good as scriptures because he is a liberated person.”

(Letter to Janaradan, 18/4/68)

Thus we are sure the authors of T.O. could not have meant to imply any such thing. As far as ‘deification’ is concerned the Spiritual Master is not God, but he is to be worshipped as good as God.

“in all the places where *ritvig-vaadis* claim that an order negates all previous orders, there is no supporting evidence for this negation, and most importantly, there is no direct order to ignore everything prior to it.

(T.O.p.4)

We never make the above assertion, it is pure invention.

“some *ritvig-vaadis* have expressed a reluctance to accept Srila Prabhupada’s conversations and personal letters, on the grounds that they were not publicly available at the time of Srila Prabhupada’s disappearance. However, they use excerpts from these same types of materials in their own arguments, which seems somewhat hypocritical.

(T.O.p.4-5)

It is true that we often quote from conversations and letters in support of *The Final Order*. This order was sent to the entire movement, and thus is generally applicable. Any evidence which supports a generally applicable instruction must be deemed valid. What is unacceptable is to try to change or modify a generally applicable instruction on the basis of private correspondence to which the recipients of that general instruction had no access at the time they were expected to act on the general instruction.

To attempt to change the July 9th order on the basis of a handful of private correspondence to ambitious deviant disciples, that no-one else had access to, is pure unadulterated cheating.

“...it is because of the *ritvig-vaadis*’ claim that the *parampara* system changes on Srila Prabhupada’s orders that we must pay special attention to Srila Prabhupada’s orders.

(T.O.p.5)

We make no such claim, it is pure invention. There is no change to the *parampara* system. We must still approach the 'current link' to understand the message of the *Bhagavatam*, just as has been the case for millions of years. Our current link happens to be Srila Prabhupada, who could object to that? (See also p.39 of '*The Final Order*' on whether a 'current link' must be physically present).

Thus ends our examination of the arguments in section one.

SECTION 2 (PAGES 5-14)

In this section there is an attempt to show that the `amara ajnaya guru hana' verse, as spoken by Lord Caitanya five hundred years ago, is actually a blanket order for everyone to become *diksa* guru- (though this assertion is also contradicted in the very same paper, as shown in the introduction). We are also offered ten quotes which are supposed to conclusively prove the papers main `chronological' argument: that on numerous occasions over many years Srila Prabhupada made it perfectly clear he expected all his disciples to become *diksa* gurus immediately after his physical departure.

We shall first deal with T.O.'s interpretation of the `amara' verse, since this colours their reasoning throughout the rest of the paper.

The 'amara' verse

Practically without exception, whenever Srila Prabhupada wrote or spoke about his disciples `becoming guru', somewhere within that instruction would be included all or part of the following verse from the *Caitanya-Caritamrta, Madhya lila*, 7.128:

***"yare dekha, tare kaha 'krsna'-upadesa
amara ajnaya guru hana tara ei desa'***

TRANSLATION

"Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Sri Krishna as they are given in *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land".

According to T.O. the above verse must be a call for everyone to become an initiating *diksa* guru. We disagree with this for the following reasons:

1. Nowhere in the verse, translation or purport is the term *diksa* or `initiation' ever once mentioned. Thus how can it be reasonably asserted that this is the type of guru being specifically referred to?
2. In the purport just two verses on from this verse Srila Prabhupada states: `It is best not to accept disciples'. How then can this section of the *Caitanya Caritamrta* be instructing everyone to become *diksa* gurus and accept disciples? (We note with some interest that T.O. does not even attempt to deal with this point.)
3. There is no mention in the verse, translation or purport that before following the order to be guru one must first wait for ones own guru to depart. It would be absurd if there was, since the majority of persons receiving this order did not even have a formal *diksa* guru, much less have one that had departed. If we are saying that Lord Caitanya was the *diksa* guru, then He had certainly not departed since He was standing there giving the order, so how could He be ordering *diksa* gurus then and there? We know Srila Prabhupada considered this injunction, which he termed: `the law of disciplic succession', an important principle. Indeed it is an injunction which is often quoted by the GBC themselves in support of the M.A.S.S., so how can this order to act immediately as guru refer to *diksa*?
4. Neither the verse, translation nor purport say anything about getting initiated first, before acting as guru. The order must therefore be referring to *siksa*. How can un-initiated people give initiation? Is this what the GBC are suggesting we practise in ISKCON? We think not. Even before any of the people Lord Caitanya was speaking to could be initiated they would have had to have undergone at least six months to a year of *pariksa* (mutual examination between guru and disciple), yet there is no mention of this at all, the order is immediate; more evidence that it is *siksa* not *diksa* gurus being ordered.
5. Neither the verse, translation nor purport state that before acting as guru one must first have attained the platform of *mahabhagavata*. We know this is essential since later on in the *Madhya lila* Srila Prabhupada states:

"When one has attained the topmost position of *maha-bhagavata*, he is to be accepted as a guru and worshipped exactly like Hari, the Personality of Godhead. Only such a person is eligible to occupy the post of guru".

(*Madhya*, 24.330 purport)

Since the gurus being ordered to act immediately are not expected to already have attained the highest platform of devotional service, we assume Lord Caitanya must have been asking for *siksa* not *diksa* gurus to go out and preach whatever they may know about Krishna. Certainly Srila Prabhupada allowed his disciples to go out and preach straight away. He never said they could not instruct others until they had become fully liberated *mahabhagavata*'s. In this way all his disciples could act as spiritual masters immediately; and to the degree to which they followed, they would be effective.

6. In the purport to the `amara' verse it states: `One can remain comfortably in his residence (...) Every person must get married (...) That is one should stay at home, chant the Hare Krishna *mantra* and preach the instructions of Krishna...' Clearly then the type of gurus being encouraged here are local family *siksa* or *vartma-pradasaka* gurus, not world-wide initiating *acaryadevas*.

If the GBC wish to continue asserting that Srila Prabhupada's use of the `amara' verse is conclusive proof that he wanted the

M.A.S.S., wherein potentially unlimited numbers of variably qualified *diksa* gurus could initiate their own disciples, then they really will need to answer all the above points. So far they have answered none of them.

The quote from Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Maharaja

Rather than answer any of the above points T.O. chooses to completely ignore Srila Prabhupada's extensive purports following on from this verse, and instead 'jump over' him entirely to an article written by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Maharaja for the 'Harmonist' magazine. Even this act of blatant cheating cannot save them as we shall now demonstrate.

The article in question is clearly aimed at people who know little about vaisnava philosophy, since its main thrust is a justification for why the spiritual master- in this case Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Maharaja himself- should be worshipped and glorified, and not eyed suspiciously as a '*big animal from the zoo gardens*'. It is not a technical paper on *diksa* or *siksa* gurus, nor does it go into anything like the detail of Srila Prabhupada's purports on the nature of guru being ordered in the '*amara*' verse. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Maharaja never authorised anything like the M.A.S.S. for after his departure, so how can his teachings be used to support yet another invented unauthorised system?- (Srila Prabhupada roundly criticised his Godbrothers for unauthorisedly posing as *acaryas*. This point is covered extensively in '*The Final Order*' pages 39-42. Once more T.O. fails to even address the points made therein.)

This article does not prove that the '*amara*' verse, as quoted by Srila Prabhupada, is a call for *diksa* gurus for the following reasons:

1. The article makes absolutely no mention of either the term *diksa*, nor the word 'initiate', and thus can have no direct bearing on the issue of precisely which type of guru the '*amara*' verse is referring to.
2. In the article Srila Bhaktisiddhanta says that the order to become guru has been passed down to him through the 'chain of preceptorial succession'. We take this to be a reference to the disciplic succession, members of which we know to be fully authorised *mahabhagavatas*. Our current link in this 'succession' of *mahabhagavatas* is Srila Prabhupada, and he says quite clearly that 'It is best not to accept any disciples'. This is the order we must all obey if we wish to call ourselves followers of Srila Prabhupada.
3. The article further supports this understanding where it says: 'That office his Gurudeva has conferred upon him'. In other words we must be mindful of the specific role or 'office' that has been 'conferred' on us by our own predecessor *acarya*. In our case Srila Prabhupada has told us to:- preach, be guru, deliver our neighbourhood, stay in our position, and not accept disciples. This we are told is what is 'best' for us. Would T.O. rather we ignore this and do what is not best? To take the path suggested in T.O. is to actually reject the whole thrust of the article by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Maharaja. We would then be offending not only Srila Prabhupada, but Srila Bhaktisiddhanta too; that certainly would not be for the 'best'. In any event we can only legitimately understand what Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Maharaja taught through our current link, Srila Prabhupada, certainly not the other way round:

"So if you want to understand *Bhagavad-gita*, then we must understand in the same way as the person who directly heard from. This is called *parampara* system. Suppose I have heard something from my spiritual master, so I speak to you the same thing. So this is *parampara* system. YOU CANNOT IMAGINE WHAT MY SPIRITUAL MASTER SAID. OR EVEN IF YOU READ SOME BOOKS, YOU CANNOT UNDERSTAND UNLESS YOU UNDERSTAND IT FROM ME. This is called *parampara* system. You cannot jump over to the superior guru, neglecting the next *acarya*, immediate next *acarya*."

(Class/Lecture S.B. 1.15.30, Los Angeles, December 8th, 1973)

The Ten Quotes

We shall now look at the ten quotes used to support T.O.'s pivotal 'chronological argument'. If this argument can be shown to be false, the entire paper collapses. We shall start by analysing all T.O.'s quotes which were made by Srila Prabhupada in public.

Evidence from public pronouncements

Quote number 1:

"Every one of us should become spiritual master because the world is in blazing fire... Spiritual master is not a new invention. It is simply following the orders of the spiritual master. So all my students present here who are feeling so much obliged... I am also obliged to them because they are helping me in this missionary work. At the same time, I shall request them all to become spiritual master. Every one of you should be spiritual master next. And what is their duty? Whatever you are hearing from me, whatever you are learning from me, you have to distribute the same in toto without any addition or alteration. Then all of you become spiritual master. That is the science of becoming spiritual master."

(*Vyasa-puja* address, Hamburg, 5 September, 1969. T.O. p.9)

The authors of T.O. believe this quote proves beyond any doubt that Srila Prabhupada was ordering his disciples to become *diksa* gurus after his departure. In reality it contributes nothing to T.O.'s thesis for the following reasons:

1. There is no clear mention by Srila Prabhupada of his physical disappearance in relation to his disciples acting as guru; an absolute must in any quote which is supposed to be dealing with initiations after Srila Prabhupada's departure. The dictionary definition of the word 'next' is not 'after my departure'.
2. There is absolutely no mention of the term '*diksa*', or the term '*initiation*', again a vital pre-requisite for any evidence which is supposed to displace the final July 9th order, since that order specifically sets out the system for *diksa* initiation to be followed henceforward within ISKCON.

'...this quote once again must refer to *diksa* gurus and not *siksa* gurus, since Srila Prabhupada had already explicitly mentioned the help he was receiving from his disciples in "missionary work".

(T.O.p.9)

3. The above argument is quite irrational. When outlining the activities of these 'spiritual masters' Srila Prabhupada says:

'And what is their duty? Whatever you are hearing from me, whatever you are learning from me, you have to distribute the same in toto without addition or alteration. Then all of you become spiritual master.'

(Vyasa-puja address, Hamburg, 5 September, 1969. T.O. p.9)

Since the above also comes after his reference to 'missionary work', are we also to take it that the above activities cannot in any way apply to *siksa* gurus, but only to *diksa*? Let us break this argument down further. There are two choices on offer here. Either-

- a) The above activities can not apply to missionary activities (since these refer to *siksa* and have already been mentioned).

Or

- b) They do apply to missionary activities.

If we choose option a) then one might ask what sort of preaching these so-called spiritual masters, are doing, if not giving in 'toto' that which they have received from their own spiritual master?

If we go for option b) then Srila Prabhupada may still be describing the activities of *siksa* gurus, even though- heaven help us- such elucidation occurs after he mentions the term 'missionary work'. The activities described are, after all, quite typical of a *siksa* guru.

Clearly a) must be false, in which case Srila Prabhupada can be seen to be outlining for these aspiring *siksa* gurus how they will most effectively carry out their missionary activities, namely by repeating what they have been taught without addition or alteration.

Certainly there is no logic in T.O.'s assertion that Srila Prabhupada must be talking only about *diksa* gurus in the latter half of the quote, purely by dint of the fact that he had already mentioned missionary work in the first half!

Quote number 2:

"...I am very much hopeful that my disciples who are now participating today, even if I die, my movement will not stop. I am very much hopeful, yes. All these nice boys and girls who have taken so seriously... You will have to become spiritual master... you... all my disciples... So it is not very difficult. One may not think that, 'I am not qualified to become guru. 'no! You are qualified! If you follow strictly the *parampara* system, then you are qualified. That's all. *Amara ajnaya* guru. And what is the difficulty. Caitanya Mahaprabhu says don't feel any difficulty. Because as spiritual master what you have to do? *Yare dekha, tare kaha 'Krishna' upadesa*. Whomever you meet you simply speak to him the instruction which Krishna gives."

(Vyasa-Puja address, London, 22 August, 73. T.O.p.9)

The above quote cannot be used to supplant or modify *The Final Order* for the following reasons:

1. There is absolutely no mention of the terms '*diksa*' or '*initiation*'. These are essential elements since that is what is under debate, namely who is supposed to be the *diksa*, or initiating spiritual master within ISKCON. We all accept that everyone should be a 'spiritual master', that is not what is at issue.
2. In relation to the type of spiritual master Srila Prabhupada is referring to, we note that once again he uses the famous '*amara*' verse which, as previously demonstrated, he taught us refers only to instructing guru, not initiating: '*It is best not to accept any disciples*'.
3. Srila Prabhupada does make reference to his physical departure where he says 'even I die', but this does not prove that

he could only be referring to *diksa*, since it is also possible to continue as an instructing guru when the spiritual master leaves. In fact the vast majority of Srila Prabhupada's disciples are doing precisely that. No-one is suggesting that their activities as instructing gurus is in any way a violation of the above quote, or somehow only second-rate, so presumably our interpretation is correct. (As an aside we see Srila Prabhupada is ordering his boys and girls to act as spiritual master. If this can only mean *diksa*, how is it that after twenty years we do not have even one single female *diksa* guru? The GBC do not seem to have the courage of their convictions on this point).

To clarify this point on references to disappearance in relationship with guruhood, we would like to make the following points:

- The mention of disappearance does not only imply *diksa* guru.
- *Siksa* gurus can operate during the appearance and disappearance of the initiating *acarya*.
- Srila Prabhupada stated that *diksa* gurus could only operate after the disappearance of the initiating *acarya*.

Thus the only definite principle in all this is that *diksa* gurus cannot operate during the physical presence of their own *diksa* guru, (at least as far as Srila Prabhupada was concerned).

Quote number 3:

Srila Prabhupada: Everyone of us (is) messiah. Anyone Krishna conscious, he's the messiah. Everyone. Why...? All of us Gaurangera bhakta-gane, jane jane sakti dhari, brahmando tari sakti: 'The devotee of Lord Caitanya, everyone has so immense power that everyone, they can deliver the whole universe. 'Gaurangera bhakta -gane, jane jane sakti..., brahmando tari... That is Gauranga's men.

Devotee: Only you are that powerful, Srila Prabhupada. We're like...

Srila Prabhupada: Why are you not? You are my disciples.

Devotee: We're like bugs.

Srila Prabhupada: 'Like father, like son.' You should be. *Gaurangera-bhakta...jane*. Everyone. Therefore, Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, *amara ajnaya guru hana tara ei desa*. He asked everyone, 'Just become guru.' Follow his instruction. You become guru. *Amara ajnaya*. 'What I say, you do. You become guru.' Where is the difficulty?

(Morning Walk, 13 April 1977, Bombay. T.O. p.11.)

The above quote cannot be used to supplant or modify *The Final Order* for the following reasons:

1. Srila Prabhupada once more defines the type of guru by using the '*amara*' verse. As we have shown this can only refer to *siksa*.
2. There is absolutely no mention of the term *diksa* nor the word 'initiation', so once more the quote can have no direct relevance to the central issue of contention, namely the intended process for *diksa* initiation within ISKCON.
3. There is no mention of Srila Prabhupada's disappearance needing to occur before guru activities commence- the order being immediate- therefore he can only be referring to *siksa*.
4. 'Messiah' is a Hebrew word- meaning 'deliverer of Jews' (Oxford English Dictionary) - not a scientific Sanskrit term, so it is pushing it a bit for T.O. to state categorically that '*messiah* must mean *diksa* guru' (T.O.p.12). Certainly such a definition is never given by Srila Prabhupada. It would also severely contradict their own position if it did mean this since, according to Christian scholars expert in the Hebrew scriptures, Jesus is still the messiah, and therefore by the GBC's own argument still a *diksa* guru, even though he is no longer on the planet! Srila Prabhupada also taught that Jesus can deliver his disciples even now (quotes given in '*The Final Order*' p.32). Either way our position is only strengthened and the GBC's weakened through this assertion since in any case *siksa* gurus can also help deliver conditioned souls through relevant instruction. To summarise this point, either:
 - a) The word '*messiah*' means *diksa* guru, in which case it is possible to accept a departed *acarya* as ones *diksa* guru since Srila Prabhupada taught that Jesus is still delivering disciples. Therefore the essence of *ritvik* philosophy is bona fide.

or

- b) The word '*messiah*' just means preaching what you have been taught, and in that way deliver your friends family and neighbours (though remember it's '*best not to accept any disciples*'), in other words *siksa* guru. Therefore *ritvik* conclusion is correct.

Either way *The Final Order* still stands.

Quote number 4:

Srila Prabhupada: You become guru, but you must be qualified first of all. Then you become.(...) Yes. I shall produce some gurus. I shall say who is guru, 'Now you become *acarya*. You become authorised.' You become, all, *acarya*. I retire

completely. But the training must be complete.

Tamala Krishna: "The process of purification must be there."

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

(Room conversation-22 April, 1977, Bombay. T.O.p.12)

The above quote cannot be used to supplant or modify *The Final Order* for the following reasons:

1. Once again we have the 'amara' verse which encourages *siksa* not *diksa* activity, (unless the GBC can satisfactorily answer all of our six points under the section 'The 'amara' verse' above).
2. There is no mention of the word *diksa*, nor the term 'initiate', at least one of which would be essential elements in any evidence purporting to relate directly to Srila Prabhupada's intended system for the continuation of initiation within ISKCON.
3. There is no mention of Srila Prabhupada's physical disappearance, only 'retirement'. Therefore conversation most likely referring to *siksa* gurus or instructing *acaryas*.
4. Never mind mention of departure, the order to become guru is immediate, 'you become guru', therefore it must be *siksa* since Srila Prabhupada was still present.

The argument that Srila Prabhupada must have followed through with his 'promise' is not strong either, for at least two reasons:

- a) Srila Prabhupada mentioned other things which he eventually did not put in place, such as the setting up of the *bhakti-vedanta* examination system in 1975 as suggested in his letter to Kirtanananda 12/1/69 (quoted in 'The Final Order' p.13).
- b) Srila Prabhupada can still give a *diksa* order at any time on any planet to any disciple he deems fit. The relationship between spiritual master and disciple is eternal once formed, and once a disciple has reached the platform of *mahabhagavata* he will be more than capable of direct communication with his predecessor *acarya*.

Furthermore if Srila Prabhupada were referring to *diksa* gurus the GBC would still need to abandon its present M.A.S.S., since he clearly says 'I shall say who is guru'. Nowhere does he state that the GBC can 'say who is guru', so why have they been doing this since the mid-eighties? And if Srila Prabhupada was talking about *siksa*, then what he was basically saying was that in April 1977 none of his disciples were even proper *siksa* gurus. If that were the case then how are we to believe the GBC when they tell us that only one month later, on May 28th, suddenly, miraculously Srila Prabhupada discovered that there were in fact eleven fully qualified *diksa* gurus all along, including Tamal Krishna himself, the very devotee he had just been expressing his doubts to just one month previous!?

One final point here is that the concept of Srila Prabhupada needing to 'say who is guru' runs entirely counter to the concept of a 'Timeless Order' wafting around in the ether for anyone to just start initiating. It confirms our position that a disciple must receive personal authorisation from the predecessor *acarya* in order to be a *diksa* guru. T.O. not only contradicts its own underlying assumption, it also singularly fails to show where such authorisation ever occurred.

Quote number 5:

The last public pronouncement made by Srila Prabhupada, which is offered as evidence for the M.A.S.S. in T.O., is the conversation of May 28th. This has been extensively dealt with in both 'The Final Order' and 'The Final Order Still Stands'. The only new point worthy of note, which we made in the first section of our response, is that T.O. contradicts another GBC position paper which was released just two months prior.

The one thing that is clear about the GBC's stance on the May 28th conversation is that there are practically as many interpretations of the transcript as there are GBC members. (Not forgetting that there are at least four different transcripts, or five if you include the Lilamrta, of this same conversation as well).

Also, as we point out in 'The Final Order Still Stands', we shall need to see the original tapes of this conversation before it can even be considered as any type of evidence at all, as would be standard legal practise.

To conclude our analysis of public pronouncements:

- In all T.O. offers us four public quotes which can only relate to *siksa*. The terms *diksa* or initiating guru are never once used in any of them, thus rendering them irrelevant to the issue at hand. Only one of the quotes even mentions departure, but then links the type of gurus who will carry things on to the 'amara' verse.
- When in the May 28th conversation - the fifth public quote- Srila Prabhupada is directly asked what will be the system of initiation 'particularly' for after his departure his immediate answer was that he would soon be appointing *ritviks*, a response which totally endorses our position, (unless you come to the absurd conclusion that *ritvik* can mean *diksa* guru). Srila Prabhupada then answers questions about guru disciple relationships within the *ritvik* system, and finishes by re-

enforcing the principle found in his books, that grand-disciples can only come about when and if he orders his disciples to become guru.

We assume that T.O. would offer the strongest possible evidence to support its claim that Srila Prabhupada made repeated public references to the M.A.S.S, it would make no sense to do otherwise given the current intense pressure for the GBC and its apologists to come up with a coherent self-consistent position. Thus we can only conclude that its central '*chronological*' argument is entirely without foundation.

Although we have defeated T.O.'s crucial '*chronological*' argument, for completeness we shall now go through once more the evidence offered from private correspondence. For the record we have already dealt with this form of evidence in '*The Final Order*' (pages 12-15), and our main points have not even been challenged in T.O., what to speak of answered.

Evidence from personal correspondence

As we point out in '*The Final Order*' (pages 12-13) none of Srila Prabhupada's private correspondence was publicly available, in anything resembling an authorised form, until 1986, some seven years after his departure. Srila Prabhupada never ordered his private letters to individuals to be published, nor did he ever state that they were vital appendages to the final July 9th policy document. At best then such evidence could only be used to support a document to the entire society outlining the M.A.S.S. It will be obvious to everyone by now that such a document does not exist, and hence there is nothing for these letters to support. In and of themselves private letters to individuals, which nobody else had even seen cannot be used to modify an order which was directed at the whole society. This is just plain common sense. Let us nevertheless examine the evidence proffered in T.O. in support of their claims.

Quote number 6:

Anyone following the order of Lord Caitanya under the guidance of His bona fide representative can become a spiritual master and I wish that in my absence all my disciples become the bona fide spiritual master to spread Krishna Consciousness throughout the whole world.

(SPL to Madhusudana, 2 November, 1967 T.O.p.7)

This cannot be used to replace, supplant or modify the July 9th policy document since the recipients of that directive would not necessarily even have known of the existence of the above letter. We offer further reasons below as to why this evidence also fails to support T.O.'s thesis, in and of itself:

1. There is absolutely no mention of the term *diksa*, nor the word '*initiate*' in the above quote, and hence it cannot be asserted to have any direct bearing on the future of *diksa* initiation within ISKCON.
2. As explained previously, (bullet points under quote 2), the mention of absence does not have to refer to *diksa*, it can also refer to *siksa*. Therefore it is not conclusive that Srila Prabhupada must be writing about *diksa* here.
3. The point that Srila Prabhupada must mean *diksa* since his disciples were already acting as *siksa* is answered in the following:

'*All my disciples*' could mean, including '*all those who are yet to come*'.

The statement could be encouraging his disciples to become proficient at giving proper instruction. At that time his disciples were very new to spiritual life, and hence there was plenty of room for them to improve in their performance as *siksa* spiritual masters and become bona fide representatives of the initiating *acarya*. This was a process Srila Prabhupada wanted continued in his absence.

There are different grades of *siksa*, from *vartma-pradasaka* on up to a fully liberated souls. All can still be *siksa* gurus. Obviously the more pure they become the more effective instructing spiritual masters they will make.

If we take the above GBC assertion literally, then it would mean that every time Srila Prabhupada used the term '*guru*', he must always be referring to *diksa*, since his disciples were always already acting as *siksa*. But this premise must be wrong since there are many quotes where Srila Prabhupada is clearly ordering his disciples to become guru straight away, even in his presence. We know that in those circumstances he was definitely talking about *siksa*, so why not in quote number 6?

Quote number 7:

This quote is taken from the Lilamrta, and hence is not proper evidence. If the GBC can produce the original recordings of this conversation we shall consider it. The Lilamrta frequently alters and paraphrases conversations, no doubt for literary reasons, and thus these exact words may never have been spoken.

Quote number 8 & 9:

By 1975, all of those who have passed all of the above examinations will be specifically empowered to initiate and increase the number of the Krishna Conscious population.

(SPL to Kirtanananda, 12 January, 1968. T.O.p.7)

I want that all of my spiritual sons and daughters will inherit this title of Bhaktivedanta, so that the family transcendental diploma will continue through the generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate disciples. Maybe by 1975 all of my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the number of generations. That is my program.

(SPL to Hansadutta, 3rd December, 1968. T.O.p.8)

The above two quotes cannot be used to replace, supplant or modify the July 9th policy document since the vast majority of the recipients of that directive would not even have known of the existence of the above letters. We offer further reasons below as to why this evidence also fails to support T.O.'s thesis, in and of itself:

1. Srila Prabhupada was still physically present in 1975, therefore he could only be referring to some type of representational system like *ritvik*. There is no evidence that Srila Prabhupada had serious plans to leave the planet before 1975. Otherwise Srila Prabhupada would be proposing to set up a system that violates the 'Law of Disciplic Succession'.
2. T.O. states:

"The *ritvig-vaadis* have attempted to minimise the importance of these quotes in two ways - first by suggesting that Srila Prabhupada was trying to soothe envious disciples...

(T.O.p.8)

The above is a misrepresentation of our position, as stated in 'The Final Order'. We made no such assertion in relation to the above two quotes.

"...and second by suggesting that an examination to determine qualification is such an absurd idea that Srila Prabhupada could not have been talking about *diksa* gurus.

(T.O.p.8)

We never said examinations to determine qualification was in itself absurd. If they are used to select *ritviks* that is fine by us, since *ritviks* do not need to be *mahabhagavatas*, authorised to initiate their own disciples by their predecessor *acarya*. But is T.O. seriously proposing that anyone who passes said examinations is automatically qualified to become an initiating *acarya*, eternal member of the disciplic succession. Apparently not since T.O. also states:

"...nothing in the letters states that "book knowledge" alone is sole quantity to be examined.

(T.O.p.8)

So then we are in agreement that *bhakti-shastri* examinations alone are not the proper way to select *diksa* gurus.

T.O. makes the following point:

"Srila Prabhupada talks not only about initiating disciples, but more importantly, about increasing the number of generations. Had Srila Prabhupada been talking about some system where all disciples in the future would have been his, then there would not have been the concept of generations - all disciples would belong to the same generation.

(T.O.p.8)

T.O. overlooks the possibility that by '*generations*' Srila Prabhupada may have been talking in a physical sense, i.e., future generations of humanity. This is supported by the fact that in the first quote above, the phrase 'Krishna Conscious population' is used instead of 'generations'. 'Krishna Conscious population' merely means all future participants of the Krishna Consciousness movement - not only future members of the disciplic succession. The dictionary definition of the word 'generations' is not 'disciplic succession'. In any case the whole argument falls flat since nothing even approaching a M.A.S.S. type system was ever set up by Srila Prabhupada either before, during or after 1975.

What did happen by 1975 is that Srila Prabhupada had empowered various individuals to carry out initiations and chant on beads etc., but on his behalf. This system was later formalised on July 9th 1977 and left to run henceforward. Perhaps it was this system that he was alluding to in the above two letters. In an attempt to re-enforce their 'generations' argument T.O. quotes from another letter to Kirtanananda:

Regarding your question about the disciplic succession coming down from Arjuna, it is just like I have got my disciples, so in the future these many disciples may have many branches of disciplic succession. So in one line of disciples we may not see another name coming from a different line. But this does not mean that person whose name does not appear was not in the disciplic succession.

(SPL to Kirtanananda, 25 January, 1969. T.O.p.8).

The above is obviously just an analogy to illustrate a point. Srila Prabhupada is merely giving an example to clear up a question raised by one of his disciples, (one whom he later appoints to act as a *ritvik* only, not a *diksa* guru). He is not saying that this will happen or should happen. In fact he uses the word '*may*'. One thing is for certain, it can not be used to displace *The Final Order* since, barring one, the recipients of the order never saw the above letter.

Quote number 10:

Every student is expected to become *acarya*. *Acarya* means one who knows the scriptural injunctions and follows them practically in life, and teaches them to his disciples. I have given you sannyasa with the great hope that in my absence you will preach the cult throughout the world and thus become recognised by Krishna as the most sincere servant of the Lord (...) Keep trained up very rigidly and then you are bona fide guru, and you can accept disciples on the same principle. But as a matter of etiquette it is the custom that during the lifetime of your spiritual master you bring the prospective disciples to him, and in his absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without any limitation. This is the law of disciplic succession.

(SPL to Tusta Krishna Swami, 2 December, 1975. T.O p.10)

Commenting on the above quote T.O. asserts:

"Srila Prabhupada talks not only about initiating disciples, but more importantly, about increasing the number of generations. Had Srila Prabhupada been talking about some system where all disciples in the future would have been his, then there would not have been the concept of generations - all disciples would belong to the same generation.

(T.O.p.10)

The so-called public confirmation referred to above has been dealt with already, it is quote number 2 above, and was shown to be non-existent. Furthermore the above quote cannot be used to replace, supplant or modify the July 9th policy document since the vast majority of the recipients of that directive would not even have known of the existence of the above letter.

For some reason the authors of T.O. seem to be oblivious here of the material facts surrounding the case of Tusta Krishna. It is not that we are unfairly painting a meek humble devotee as un-submissive and anxious for followers. It is peculiar that we should need to give a history lesson to the GBC, and going into the details of individuals spiritual anarthas is not something we like to make a habit of, (we have enough of our own to deal with). However the following evidence will show that our judgement on Tusta Krishna is not without justification - and that Srila Prabhupada was continually trying to keep him 'in line':

"Do not try to make a faction."

(SPL to Tusta Krishna, 72-12-14)

"I have heard that you are having some difficulties [...] Of course, our serving Krishna is voluntary affair, so what can I say? If you think that is the best choice, I must agree, otherwise you might go away altogether."

(SPL to Tusta Krishna, 72-12-14)

"News has come to me that you want to sell our temple to somebody else which I cannot believe. Even that you have been in charge of the New Zealand centre, now you have taken it as your personal property and you have demanded from Madhudvisa Swami the price of the temple. This is all amazing to me. I do not know what is your decision. Tusta Krishna has already left and is in Hawaii with Siddha Svarupananda Maharaja. I never believed that again you would go back to your old habits, giving up the Krishna Consciousness Movement in a whimsical way. Please do not do this mistake [...] Now all of a sudden you have changed that program and taken to your original ways? I am so much aggrieved to receive all this news. For Krishna's sake, do not do these things. I request Tusta Krishna to go back to New Zealand and take charge of your duties. Please do not leave Krishna. You will not be happy. That is my request."

(SPL to Tusta Krishna and Beharilal, 73-10-15)

"I may inform you that I have today sent the following cable to Tusta Krishna Maharaja: 'DO NOT SELL NEW ZEALAND TEMPLE TO OTHERS. IF YOU WANT MONEY I SHALL PAY TO YOU. REST ASSURED - BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI.'"

(SPL to Madhudvisa, 73-10-22)

"I have not heard from Tusta Krishna or Siddha-Svarupa Goswamis nor do I know anything of their plans to return to New Zealand. Try to convince them to return to our Society and work co-operatively. That they have gone away is not good thing and it is a deviation from our line of *parampara*. Rather, avoiding faultfinding and anarchy, they should keep our standard and work maturely and not cause factions and splitting. I am not at all pleased at what they have done."

(SPL to Madhudvisa, 73-12-15)

“So far I have studied Siddhasvarupa, he is not a bad boy, but he has his own philosophy, from the very beginning.”

(SPL to Paramahansa, 75-07-16) (All emphasis added)

Please note that Tusta Krishna was a follower of Siddhasvarupa who already had disciples even whilst Srila Prabhupada was present. Taking all the above into account it is clear that the above private letter (quote number 10) is simply urging an ambitious deviant disciple to at least wait until the spiritual master has left the planet before taking his own disciples. That some devotees would seek to promote this letter as generally applicable beggars belief.

18 GBC

The last argument in section 2 of T.O. that we shall address arises from the following exchange:

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

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

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

Interviewer: Will there be one spiritual leader though?

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

(SP Interview, 6 October, 1976, Los Angeles. T.O. p.11.)

Commenting on the above T.O. states:

“To see the relevance of this quote to our chronological argument, note that it took place in 1976. The next year, Srila Prabhupada would follow through with the plans he mentioned in this quote.

(T.O.p.11)

T.O. seems to believe that the above interview shows Srila Prabhupada giving a hint about his future appointment (if we may use such a term) of his 11 successor *acaryas*. This assertion is un-sustainable for the following rather obvious reasons:

The quote makes no mention of the term *diksa*, nor the word initiate, and thus can have no direct relevance to the issue at hand.

Srila Prabhupada speaks of future guidance only in relation to the GBC whom he was training. There is no mention that these GBC's were to be initiating *diksa* gurus as well as GBC's, or instead of.

How are we supposed to see that in the following year 'Srila Prabhupada would follow through with his plans' to appoint *diksa* gurus, when what actually occurred in 1977 was the appointment of just 11- (not 18)- *ritviks*, not *diksa* gurus? Just for the record we also cannot for the life of us see how this quote in any way contradicts our position, as is asserted in T.O.p.11.

In Summary:

T.O. offers ten quotes in support of the M.A.S.S., 5 public and 5 private correspondence. As far as public pronouncements go it should be noted that:

- Not one mentions the term *diksa* nor the word initiate, and are thus irrelevant.
- Every one can be shown to apply to *siksa* guru.

As far as private correspondence goes:

- a) None of these letters can be used as principal evidence since they were not made generally available until the mid-eighties. The letters were only ever published because someone was bribed into releasing them. Thus even the belated publication of these letters was more by default than careful authorised planning.
- b) Private correspondence can be used legitimately as supportive evidence, as we have done in 'The Final Order', but unfortunately there is nothing here for it to support since Srila Prabhupada never mentioned the M.A.S.S. in any of his books, conversations, morning walks, lectures or signed directives to the whole society.
- c) Only three of these letters actually refer to *diksa* anyway. Two of these must have been referring to some type of officiating system since Srila Prabhupada was still present when the systems mentioned were supposed to come into effect. Thus we are left with only one relevant quote.

So this is the GBC's clear and unequivocal evidence supporting the M.A.S.S., just the one private letter- quote number 10. This appears to be the only evidence the authors of T.O. are able to bring to the table which has any direct relevance to the case they are trying to construct. And yet this one private letter was issued in reaction to an extreme circumstance, as explained

above, and was seen by hardly anyone but Tusta Krishna until seven years after Srila Prabhupada's departure. As demonstrated above, we were dealing with someone who wanted to initiate whilst Srila Prabhupada was still present - thus this letter to Tusta Krishna was not being sent to a regular devotee in a normal situation. This being so it cannot possibly be viewed as generally applicable instruction. It seems that on the basis of this one letter to an ambitious deviant disciple, that at the time was generally unseen, we are being asked by the GBC to ignore Srila Prabhupada's clear July 9th directive on initiation which was sent specifically to all the societies leaders with the instruction that it be continued henceforward!

T.O. states:

"We believe that a chronological examination of quotes on the issue of *diksa* gurus can establish beyond a doubt that Srila Prabhupada not only wanted his disciples to become *diksa* gurus, but that he repeatedly made this point over many years, both in private letters and in public. The *ritvig-vaadis* suggest that Srila Prabhupada only mentioned this to "envious disciples" in a few private letters, but the evidence clearly shows that not only did Srila Prabhupada state his desires publicly, but that he did so consistently.

(T.O.p.6)

If Srila Prabhupada 'repeatedly made this point over many years, both in private letters and in public', how is it that the GBC are only able to produce one very poor example which no-one even knew about until the mid-eighties? Where is this 'consistent', 'regular' 'public' evidence that Srila Prabhupada wanted anything remotely resembling the M.A.S.S. to come into force the minute he left the planet? There is not one public statement presented in T.O. which even mentions '*diksa* gurus', what to speak of authorising disciples to become such.

We submit that the GBC have not presented this evidence because it simply does not exist.

Instead we have one letter to one ambitious deviant disciple who left the movement shortly after he received his so-called '*diksa* authorisation'; a letter which nobody who received *The Final Order* even knew about, (there were three other similarly ambitious disciples who received similar letters). How is this evidence 'clear' and 'beyond doubt'? We believe that most honest devotees will come to the conclusion that the GBC should re-institute Srila Prabhupada's final order on initiation immediately, since there is insufficient grounds for suspending its operation any longer.

Section 3 (pages 14-20)

The Final Order Theory

In this section of T.O. its authors attempt to disprove our papers main theme. To do this they misrepresent and distort our actual position, whilst simultaneously presenting fallacious and inept argumentation to support their own, as we shall demonstrate.

"Part and parcel of the post-samadhi ritvik theory is something that can appropriately be dubbed the "final order" theory. In short, this theory suggests that Srila Prabhupada's instructions in his July 9th letter constitute a "final order" that is to be taken in isolation of everything else.

(T.O.p.14)

In the above the authors of T.O. are trying to construct a straw man argument. In 'The Final Order' we never say that the July 9th letter is to be 'taken in isolation of everything else'. How can it be taken in isolation of the *Bhagavad Gita*, chanting sixteen rounds, following the regulative principles etc? Obviously such an assertion would be absurd, and we certainly never make it. The sole evidence offered by the GBC for modifications a) & b) is the May 28th conversation. In 'The Final Order' we clearly state that there is nothing in this conversation that contradicts the July 9th letter. We simply make a general point about 'later' instructions, and show how the GBC completely agrees with us (or at least they used to):

'As will be seen later, the May conversation has nothing in it to contradict *The Final Order*. As a general point, later instructions from the guru will always supersede previous instructions [...]

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)

(*The Final Order*, p14)

The authors then go on to build their case around this initial misrepresentation:

"The natural question to ask, therefore, is: "other than the claims of the *ritvig-vaadis*, is there any evidence of such a final order that implicitly negates everything said before it?"

(T.O.p.14)

We have never stated that *The Final Order* implicitly or explicitly 'negates everything said before it'. In fact, as we demonstrated in section 2, the GBC have so far been unable to show even one generally applicable instruction or teaching that *The Final Order* contradicts or 'negates'. Our point is that the July 9th order is the final instruction on how initiations were to run within ISKCON, so even if there were some perception amongst a few ambitious individuals (for example Tusta Krishna) that they might be able to initiate, *The Final Order* is *The Final Order* and must be followed. Hamsaduta for example received a similar letter to Tusta Krishna at one point. Later however he received the July 9th order, and a separate letter from Srila Prabhupada encouraging him to just 'continue to be *ritvik*'. Hamsadutta prabhu apparently now admits that that is what he should have done, since it was the last instruction he directly received from his spiritual master.

"The *Final Order* theory becomes a simple tool by which to ignore the overwhelming evidence that suggests that the *ritvig-vaadis* are wrong. We have shown how Srila Prabhupada's statements over ten years show consistency on the topic of *diksa* gurus.

(T.O.p.14)

What overwhelming evidence? What consistent statements over ten years on the topic of *diksa* gurus? Let us see these numerous general instructions for everyone to start initiating their own disciples the minute Srila Prabhupada left the planet. So far they have produced none.

"...we have shown how Lord Caitanya and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta have given the order to continue the *parampara* by making *diksa* gurus.

(T.O.p.14)

The authors have shown no such thing. In order to accomplish the above they will need to satisfactorily answer all six points under the 'amara' section without jumping over our current link. We have also shown that even when they do unauthorisedly jump over Srila Prabhupada it gets them nowhere, (see section 'Srila Bhaktisiddhanta quote').

"...we have shown how the May 28th conversation clearly supports the idea of Srila Prabhupada's disciples becoming *diksa* gurus...

(T.O.p.14)

Yes but only when he orders. The actual order his disciples did receive was to act as "ritvik"-representative of the *acarya* (July 9th letter). And as the May 28th conversation shows, these representatives were meant to act after Srila Prabhupada's departure. (This is dealt with extensively in both *'The Final Order'* and *'The Final Order Still Stands'*).

"- however, by introducing *The Final Order* theory, the *ritvik*-vaadis can try to set aside all of that evidence and instead focus only on one letter, which they then misinterpret.

(T.O.p.15)

All of what evidence? As we have consistently shown there is none. It is the authors of T.O. who are 'misinterpreting' or modifying *The Final Order* on the basis of non-existent phantom evidence. The authors next try to question our examples of final orders starting with *Bhagavad Gita* 18.66. They quote Srila Prabhupada:

"Now, in summarising *Bhagavad-gita*, the Lord says that Arjuna should give up all the processes that have been explained to him; he should simply surrender to Krishna.

(*Bhagavad-Gita As It Is* 18.66 purport. T.O.p.15)

This is yet another 'straw man' argument from T.O. since we do not even mention Bg 18.66. We simply say that though many different systems of Yoga were spoken about, they are superseded by a final order. We then substantiate this with the following quote:

"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 authors then audaciously dare to question Srila Prabhupada's own conclusion.

"However, the question you must ask yourself is whether the above constitutes a final order...

(T.O.p.15)

The authors try to justify their impudence by arguing that this instruction does not directly contradict others given in the *Bhagavad Gita*- such as 'stand and fight', and therefore cannot be a final order. But surely if Srila Prabhupada says that it is a 'final Order' then it is. Of course Srila Prabhupada no more suggests that this final order actually contradicts what Krishna had said previously, than we are suggesting that the final July 9th order actually contradicts previous general instructions Srila Prabhupada may have issued to ISKCON. Any perceived contradictions are imagined, not real.

T.O. then claims that Sripada Sankaracarya's final order to his disciples to chant the name of Govinda did not contradict all his earlier instructions. Since we are not arguing that Srila Prabhupada contradicted all his previous instructions to the Movement in *The Final Order*, or indeed any of them, this argument is not really relevant. (Nevertheless we are sure Sankaracarya's disciples would have been more than a little surprised at being called fools by their guru just before he left the planet, and told to simply chant the name of Govinda). As we have said the July 9th order does not contradict any instruction or teaching that was ever issued to the whole society.

Those devotees who were ambitious, or who had not properly read the purports to the '*amara*' verse may have seen *The Final Order* as contradictory, had they bothered to read that properly (which it seems none of them did). In any event, as the GBC themselves stated on page 25 of their 'final *siddhanta*' handbook '*Gurus and Initiation in ISKCON*'

(GBC 1995): "In logic, later statements supersede earlier ones in importance."

We quoted the above axiom in '*The Final Order*', yet for some reason T.O. makes no reference to it whatsoever. What to speak of signed directives, it appears that even their own principles of logic can be ignored when it suits the GBC. You cannot have a later statement than the last one, therefore by their own logic the GBC must follow the *ritvik* system.

"They claim that the July 9th letter instructs that there are to be *ritviks* forever (...) The claim that there are to be *ritviks* forever rests on Srila Prabhupada's use of the word "henceforward" in the letter.

(T.O.p.16)

We have never said there will be *ritviks* 'forever', or that our whole case hinges on one word. Both assertions are pure phantasmagoria. What we do say is:

1. The order to run a *ritvik* system in ISKCON was the last directive issued on the future of initiation by Srila Prabhupada. ISKCON is the *sankirtan* movement, and is destined to last for the next nine and a half thousand years. Thus logically the order must remain intact for this period unless it is changed or revoked by Srila Prabhupada or Lord Krishna, or becomes impossible to follow. Even if it runs the full nine and a half thousand years, that is not 'forever'.
2. Our case does not rest on the word '*henceforward*'. Take out the word '*henceforward*' and you still have a system put in

place personally by Srila Prabhupada with no countermanding instruction to stop it. Thus even without this word the GBC still had no right to suspend its operation.

“...the *ritvig-vaadis* propose that it's fully in the role of the GBC to add or remove *ritviks* as necessary. However, consider the following - the role of the GBC is not set forth in this letter, so according to *The Final Order* theory, the GBC would have no authority to change these 11 names. In order to claim that the GBC have authority, the *ritvig-vaadis* are admitting that evidence other than the July 9th letter must be used. This fact alone should be enough to cast doubt on the “final order” theory...

(T.O.p.16)

Here the authors of T.O. attempt to construct yet another straw man argument. We have never said that the only relevant evidence is confined to the one page July 9th policy document. We have always been open to the possibility that some other information may exist which might legitimately be used to support it, or even modify it. Let us quote from our own paper to demonstrate our acceptance even of the possibility of indirect evidence being used in this way:

‘Indirect evidence may arise out of special circumstances surrounding the literal direct instruction. These extenuating circumstances, should they exist, may be used to provide grounds for interpreting the literal instruction. We will now examine the circumstances surrounding the July 9th order, to see if such modifying circumstances might indeed have been present, and whether there is inferentially anything to support assumptions a) and b).’

(*The Final Order* p.5)

In fact the whole paper was written seeking evidence for 2 specific modifications. This was stated right at the beginning of ‘*The Final Order*’ on page 2. Thus for T.O. to state that we are opposed to the July 9th letter being modified in principle is clearly a gross miss-representation. We simply want EVIDENCE for the modifications that's all. We then add as an aside that this modifying evidence, should it exist, must have been available to those who had to carry out the modifying if it is to be considered as genuinely modifying information. This is just a very simple logistical point, nothing to do with philosophy.

For example, if Srila Prabhupada had stated in his final will that the *ritvik* system should change into the M.A.S.S. on his departure, then we would not be having this debate. Clearly such direct evidence could legitimately be used to modify the July 9th order. In such circumstances we could not call the July 9th letter the ‘final order’ at all; the will would be *The Final Order* on initiations. If such a clear piece of modifying evidence does exist then it's about time the GBC presented it. All we see are quotes that make no mention of initiation of any kind, or letters that no-one who received the order even knew about, (and a will that states the system of management should not be changed). Clearly that sort of evidence cannot be used to modify or terminate an instruction concerning all future initiations, which was sent to the entire movement.

With regards to the specifics of the above objection, we would like to make the following points:

- We do not state that the only relevant information pertinent to the running of the *ritvik* system is contained within the July 9th letter. This would be an absurd assertion. For example the letter does not give the addresses of the *ritviks* to whom the recommendations were to be sent. Thus if we were only to allow information contained in the letter itself the *ritvik* system could never have worked - even before departure.
- We do say that if Srila Prabhupada had wanted the July 9th order modified in some way he would have made sure the relevant information was available to the persons who had to operate the system, namely the Temple Presidents and GBC's.
- If Temple Presidents were supposed to stop sending the names of prospective disciples on his physical departure, then Srila Prabhupada would have told them this in the order itself, or in some supplementary document. No such document exists.
- The Temple Presidents already knew that personnel could be selected by the GBC, thus such information as this did not need to be stated in the letter.
- We do not deny that the GBC could have issued a follow up letter, just prior to departure, stating that Srila Prabhupada had asked them to stop the system on his departure. They did not do this since Srila Prabhupada never asked them to; presumably because he did not want the system to stop.

Our position is thus quite simple and logical:

Anyone receiving an order which requires modification must have authorised access to that modifying information at, or before the time they need to act on it.

If it was true that the May 28th conversation did have some modifying information, vital to the implementation of *The Final Order*, why is it that the Temple Presidents had no access to it for many years after Srila Prabhupada's departure? That they did not is just historical fact.

The following are what the recipients of the order did already know:

- a) The Temple Presidents knew that the role of the GBC was to carry out and maintain Srila Prabhupada's orders.

- b) They also knew from the letter that the system could be expanded - 'thus far'.
- c) They also knew that the GBC were overall responsible for selecting senior personnel to keep ISKCON functioning properly in accordance with Srila Prabhupada's directives.

The above points did not need to be included in the July 9th letter since they were already established ISKCON protocol. If we are to seriously consider as evidence modifying or supplementary information, vital to the running of the *ritvik* system, it must satisfy the following two criteria:

1. It must actually be modifying information, i.e., directly relevant to the implementation or running of the July 9th order. (So much of T.O.'s 'evidence' is just completely irrelevant).

&

2. It must have been accessible in an authorised form to those who needed to act on the modifications, at the time they needed to do the modifying. This is purely a practical logistical point, since otherwise it would be impossible to carry out the order correctly.

Thus far we have seen no evidence which comes even close to satisfying the above two criteria, and whilst we remain open-minded, we suspect that none ever will.

'My initiated disciple' (The Will)

Though we deal with T.O.'s arguments against our interpretation of Srila Prabhupada's final will more fully in section four, the authors make one assertion in section three which is quite misleading. This is in relation to the appointment of successor directors of the properties in India. The will states:

'...a successor director or directors may be appointed by the remaining directors, provided the new director is my initiated disciple...'

(Srila Prabhupada's final will, June 1977)

We make the simple logical point that Srila Prabhupada must have wanted the *ritvik* system to continue or else the pool of future new directors would dry up within about seventy years of his departure (and for a movement destined to last for up to ten thousand years that would be a serious problem). Though the GBC say our 'explanation is contorted', just see the mental gymnastics they undertake to try to weasel out of following a simple order:

"Thakura Bhaktivinoda also wanted to beget a child who could preach the philosophy and teachings of Lord Chaitanya to the fullest extent. By his prayers to the Lord he had as his child Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaja, who at the present moment is preaching the philosophy of Lord Chaitanya throughout the entire world through his bona fide disciples."

Srimad-Bhagavatam, Canto Three, Chapter Twenty-two, Text 19 purport Note that only one of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's direct disciples was preaching throughout the world -- the rest of the preaching was done by Bhaktisiddhanta's grand-disciples, so it is clear that when Srila Prabhupada said "bona fide disciples," the term was transitive, and included all future generations. So, the requirement that all directors be initiated disciples of Srila Prabhupada does not require a post-samadhi *ritvik* system, since we have seen that Srila Prabhupada's own use of the term included future generations of disciples.

(T.O. p.17 -our underlining)

Thus T.O. seems to be arguing that the phrase 'his bona fide disciples' in the above quote from the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, is identical in context and meaning to the term, 'my initiated disciple' in Srila Prabhupada's final will. How is this so? Must we simply take their word for it? They say: 'Srila Prabhupada's own use of the term included future generations of disciples'. What are they talking about? Srila Prabhupada does not use the phrase 'my initiated disciple' anywhere in the above quote, so how can they make such an assertion? This argument makes no sense at all.

We all agree that everyone is a *siksa* disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, so in that sense the quote might be applicable to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta grand disciples. But the word '**initiated**' precludes any such an interpretation of the will.

An '**initiated disciple**' of a current link is not identical to a *siksa* disciple of a previous *acarya*.

And it is precisely the issue of '*initiation*' in relation to Srila Prabhupada that is under the microscope here, not *siksa* relationships with previous *acaryas*. So once more the quote being used to defeat our position is completely irrelevant to the issue at hand.

They'll become leaders

T.O. next quotes from a conversation which we shall excerpt:

Srila Prabhupada: "Yes. Everyone. All my disciples they're leaders. As purely as they follow, they'll become leaders. If you want to follow, you can become leader. But you don't follow. I told that."

(Room Conversation- Vrindavana, 2 November, 1977 (T.O.p.18)

T.O. confuses the word 'leader' with the phrase 'diksa guru':

"So, it's clear that Srila Prabhupada used a qualification-based system to decide leadership, and that he had not instituted a post-samadhi ritvik theory.

(T.O. p.18)

The conversation says nothing at all about the ritvik system, either post or pre-samadhi. Neither are the terms 'initiate', nor 'diksa' mentioned once. Thus the above assertion is entirely without foundation.

'India, I am here'

Just as in DD, T.O. also makes a big issue out of Srila Prabhupada's use of the above phrase:

Tamala Krishna Maharaja: So if someone gives initiations like Harikesa Maharaja, he should send the persons name to us here, and I'll enter it into the book. OK. Is there someone else in India that you want to do this?

Srila Prabhupada: India? I am here. We shall see. In India - Jayapataka.

Tamala Krishna Maharaja: Jayapataka Maharaja?

Srila Prabhupada: You are also in India. You can note down these names.

(Room Conversation - 8 July, 1977, Vrindavana)

If the July 9th letter was to serve as some sort of instruction for all time in the future, why was Srila Prabhupada talking about performing initiations? We have seen how Srila Prabhupada was naming disciples to perform initiations in various parts of the world, and if he was talking about the time after his physical departure, why does Srila Prabhupada state that he's in India? Clearly, this suggests that Srila Prabhupada was discussing a system to be in place during his physical presence.

(T.O. p.18)

We have underlined the two points the authors of T.O. seem to feel solidify their case. Let us try to answer them:

1. Why was Srila Prabhupada talking about performing initiations?

Answer: Because whilst he was still on the planet, and had the physical strength, he was willing to personally perform the initiation ceremony.

2. Why does Srila Prabhupada state that he's in India?

Answer: Because that was where Srila Prabhupada intended to spend his remaining days, and so could theoretically perform the ceremony in that country whilst physically present. Thus the statement:

"Clearly, this suggests that Srila Prabhupada was discussing a system to be in place during his physical presence."

(T.O. p.19)

-is correct. We have never disputed that Srila Prabhupada was setting up a system that was to run during his presence. The issue is: was he setting the system up to only operate during his presence.

The reader will note that neither point 1 nor 2 above in any way prove that Srila Prabhupada:

a) wanted the ritvik system to stop on his departure.

or

b) that the ritviks could then immediately transmogrify into fully fledged diksa gurus.

(modifications a) & b) from 'The Final Order')

These are the two modifications to *The Final Order* that T.O. should really be trying to support with solid incontrovertible evidence. The above points 1 and 2, and indeed everything else thus far in T.O., self-evidently fall many *yojanas* short of doing that.

T.O. also fails to notice that straight after saying: 'India? I am here', Srila Prabhupada went on to say: 'We shall see. In India - Jayapataka.' Our question then is- if this system was only meant to operate during his presence, why then did Srila Prabhupada go on to state who would be performing initiations (as a ritvik)* in India? Srila Prabhupada had only just said he would initiate in

India, so why mention Jayapataka Maharaja unless the system was meant to continue past his departure?

Actually, as can be seen by reading the July 9th letter, the *ritvik* system was set up to run '**henceforward**'. For the first four months of its operation Srila Prabhupada was still present, and could thus still theoretically perform the ceremony, health willing of course. So the system was set up to run both during, and after departure. That is why Srila Prabhupada nominated someone to continue in India, so the *ritvik* system could carry on without being interrupted by his leaving the planet.

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*We know that Jayapataka Maharaja was being nominated as a *ritvik* only, since in the same conversation Tamal Krishna Goswami asks of those appointed:

Tamal Krishna Goswami: Anybody who gives initiation is doing so on your behalf.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.

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On this same point the authors further argue:

"They try to deny the possibility that the system described in the July 9th letter was temporary, but even Srila Prabhupada acknowledged that the system was temporary:

Srila Prabhupada: "You have got a list of names? And if by Krishna's grace I recover from this condition then I shall begin or I may not but in this condition to initiate is not good".

(Room Conversation - 22 October 1977, Vrindavana. T.O.p.19)

Where does Srila Prabhupada say anything to the effect that 'this *ritvik* system is only temporary'? Plainly if he had we would not be so foolish as to promote the system now, some twenty years later. In the above quote Srila Prabhupada is linking his physical health to the activity of performing the initiation ceremony, not to the *ritvik* system which had just been set up to operate all over the world. When he says '*I shall begin or I may not*', he is speaking purely personally. Nowhere does he say 'the *ritvik* system may begin or it may not'. Srila Prabhupada's physical involvement with initiation procedures is entirely an independent and separate issue to the running of the world wide *ritvik* system.

The *ritvik* system was set up to run globally without any reference or relationship with the physical condition of Srila Prabhupada's body.

Again in relation to the above snippet of conversation the authors of T.O. deduce:

"Here again, it's clear that Srila Prabhupada's disciples are qualified to initiate, because Srila Prabhupada mentions the idea once again of all initiations done by his disciples, even if he recovers.

(T.O.p.19)

The above is unalloyed nonsense for the following reasons:

- Srila Prabhupada had just set up a *ritvik* system whereby all future disciples would be his. How could he then be talking about his disciples initiating their own disciples?
- The 'list of names' referred to in the above conversation was a list of *ritviks* (deputies) not *diksa* gurus, so any initiations undertaken within ISKCON could only have been on Srila Prabhupada's behalf.
- Srila Prabhupada could not be saying that his disciples could initiate on their own behalf 'even if he recovers' because this would violate the '*law of disciplic succession*' whereby disciples must bring new initiates to the guru whilst he is present. The GBC accept this as a very important principle.
- Srila Prabhupada never once mentions that his disciples are qualified to initiate their own disciples in the above conversation.
- Srila Prabhupada never says that the *ritvik* system will ever stop, or that it is only because he is sick, or that it is only temporary.

T.O. then quotes the following conversation:

Srila Prabhupada: "Yes. I shall produce some gurus. I shall say who is guru, 'Now you become *acarya*. You become authorised.' I am waiting for that. You become, all, *acarya*. I retire completely. But the training must be complete."

(room conv 22.4.77. T.O.p.19)

In the above Srila Prabhupada says '*I will say who is guru*', but to that he added '*I am waiting for that*' (April 22nd). To say you are waiting to do something is not the same as actually doing it. We need to see evidence for the latter. Also there is no men-

tion of the term *diksa* nor the term *'initiate'*, so the quote is not really relevant on any level. A *siksa* guru is also a type of *acarya*. *Ritviks* were supposed to be strict followers, thus the above may simply be a reference to the appointment of *ritvik-acaryas* for all we know.

One thing is for sure, the above cannot be used to support the M.A.S.S. since Srila Prabhupada says *'I shall say who is guru'*; he never once said *'the GBC can say who is guru'*, which is unfortunately what they are now doing. In the end he only appointed eleven *ritviks* to initiate on his behalf. This was a system of management, and like all other such systems within ISKCON was meant to be maintained by the GBC, not dismantled.

Finally T.O. mentions an objection that has already been covered in *'The Final Order'* - that since the July 9th letter mentions the names of the new in

itiates being sent to Srila Prabhupada for inclusion in the *'Initiated Disciples Book'*, the letter cannot be describing a system that was supposed to operate in Srila Prabhupada's absence:

"After all, if this system is going to be used to initiate disciples for at least 10,000 years, why does it describe a process that could only be carried out when Srila Prabhupada is physically present.

(T.O., p19. our underlining)

Firstly, as is admitted by T.O., the *'process'* in question is not part of the system required to initiate disciples, but relates to a clerical procedure that must occur after initiation has taken place. Thus, as explained in the *'Final Order'*, the issue is why the names were being sent to Srila Prabhupada - namely for inclusion in the *'Initiated disciples'* book - a process that Srila Prabhupada was not involved with- (it was carried out by his secretary, as explained in the July 7th conversation). The letter mentions names being sent to Srila Prabhupada since the book at that time was kept by him, and maintained by his secretary. That the purpose was to send the names for inclusion in the book, rather than to Srila Prabhupada per se, is proven by the letter that Srila Prabhupada's secretary sent to one of the *ritviks* the day after the July 9th letter was released:

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

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

Here there is no mention made of needing to send the names to Srila Prabhupada, only the purpose for sending them. This procedure could easily have continued after Srila Prabhupada's physical departure.

T.O. tries to disregard the above explanations by producing another *'straw man'* argument:

"It very much seems that they are trying to modify the same *'Final Order'* that they claim cannot be modified - they fail on consistency.

(T.O., p19)

We have never stated that the July 9th letter cannot be modified - we have dealt extensively with this subject already at the beginning of this section. Thus the objection to our explanation has no validity, and the explanation itself still stands.

Section 4 (pages 20-28):

In this section entitled 'Analysing the ritvig-vaadis' the authors of T.O. claim that we dishonestly misrepresent and selectively quote material to support our position. The first example they give is where we quote Jayadvaita Swami's paper 'where the ritvik people are wrong'. They claim that we try to make it appear that Jayadvaita Maharaja agreed with us where he says in regard to the July 9th letter-

"Its authority is beyond question [...] Clearly, this letter establishes a ritvig-guru system."

(As quoted in 'The Final Order')

We are accused of being dishonest since Jayadvaita Maharaja says straight after:

"But one may ask where it says that such a system should continue even after Srila Prabhupada's departure."

(Jayadvaita Swami, *Where the Rttvik People are Wrong*, 1996. T.O. p.21)

T.O. then goes on to say:

"The sentence immediately following their quote shows the question at hand - whether the system should continue after Srila Prabhupada's departure. This sentence, however, gets conveniently ignored in their quote, and the only reason for such an obvious omission is to give the reader an impression other than what Jayadvaita Swami intended."

(T.O., p21)

What the authors of T.O. fail to point out is that straight after we quote Jayadvaita Maharaja we state the very same 'question at hand'. We present the 'question at hand' in the form of two modifications to *The Final Order*; namely that the appointees should stop acting as *ritviks* on departure (*modification a*), and that they should then become *diksa* gurus, (*modification b*). We say that it is the imposition of these modifications which lie at the heart of the controversy. Jayadvaita Maharaja chooses to present the 'question at hand' in a different way, as is his prerogative. (It is strange T.O. does not mention this since they quote this very section just one paragraph later).

At no point do we in any way suggest that Jayadvaita Maharaja agrees with our conclusion- that the *ritvik* system should have continued past the departure of Srila Prabhupada, or even that he approves of the way we formulate the 'question at hand'. We quoted him simply to establish that everyone on both sides of the controversy agrees that the July 9th policy document is authentic and was authorised by Srila Prabhupada. Surely if commonality does exist, even if only on a minor point, it is still good to point it out.

"They then add in their own conspiracy theory (which they said they would avoid), rather than giving others the benefit of the doubt."

(T.O., p21)

This is in relation to where we say:

"The source of the controversy arises from two modifications which were subsequently superimposed over this otherwise clear and authoritative directive."

(T.O., p21)

We describe a) and b) as modifications since they do not appear in any signed document issued by Srila Prabhupada to the society. That they do not is just a plain simple fact. We say these modifications were '*super-imposed*' since that is exactly what happened. Whether this super-imposition was through conspiracy, or by genuine miss-understanding is not directly relevant to our argument, we certainly never once mention the word 'conspiracy' in '*The Final Order*', nor did we once directly nor implicitly assert that this super-imposition was a deliberate act of disobedience.

The degree of individual or collective culpability may however become an issue of discussion if the GBC insist on using the May 28th transcript as principal evidence. As we mention in '*The Final Order Still Stands*' (p.8,16) there are some rather tricky questions that will need to be answered by some senior devotees should the GBC insist on that line of argument, (they will also, of course, first need to find the original recording of the conversation). If the GBC have a change of heart and re-institute *The Final Order* then the relevance of such enquiries will evaporate.

'*The Final Order*' was offered in good faith as an olive branch to the societies leaders to rectify any mistakes that may have been made, without emphasis on blame or recrimination. Sadly that olive branch was rudely slapped back in our faces with a paper full of straw-man arguments (DD) and one of unpleasant and unjustified innuendo (T.O). Even still we remain optimistic, and hope the situation can be resolved amicably.

The next accusation levelled at us is that we 'wilfully' selectively misrepresent Srila Prabhupada's actual instructions in his final will:

"To make matters worse, the *ritvik*-vaadis tactic of selective, out-of-context excerpting is not limited to the writings of Jayad-vaitsa Swami; the *ritvig*-vaadis use the same practice even on Srila Prabhupada's Last Will.

(T.O., p22)

This is an extremely serious allegation, and one which is quite absurd since we reproduced a complete copy of the will in the appendices of 'The Final Order'. Perhaps the authors of T.O. did not receive a hard copy, though one was definitely supplied to the GBC who did not object to such an unfair allegation being made. T.O. quotes the following section of Srila Prabhupada's final will:

1. The Governing Body Commission (GBC) will be the ultimate managing authority of the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

2. Each temple will be an ISKCON property and will be managed by three executive directors. The system of management will continue as it is now and there is no need of any change.

(Srila Prabhupada's Last Will -- 5 June, 1977. T.O.p.22)

The authors then make the following observation:

"Note that the statement often cited by the *ritviks* 'The system of management will continue as it is now and there is no need of any change' appears not in the item referring to the managing authority of ISKCON, but rather to the status of ISKCON temples as ISKCON properties and their management by three executive directors. In other words, the *ritvig*-vaadis have selectively excerpted a straightforward statement by Srila Prabhupada that refers to the way temples should be organised and have misrepresented it as a statement about ISKCON management in general.

(T.O. p.22, emphasis added)

Thus we are told the line: 'The system of management will continue as it is now and there is no need of any change' is only a 'straightforward statement' that 'refers to the way temples should be organised'. But that is precisely our point. Part of the way Temples were organised was that when candidates emerged who were suitable for initiation, their names would be sent to the respective *ritvik*. Thus the *ritvik* system was part and parcel of the way temples were organised. In one sense the primary purpose for Temples even existing in the first place was to train devotees up to the standard required for initiation, not just to be able to boast 'three executive directors'.

It seems the authors are making the absurd assertion that the only aspect of temple organisation that Srila Prabhupada did not want changed was the principle of having 'three executive directors'. In other words you could scrap everything else, such as having a Temple President or a Treasurer, or donating proceeds of book sales to the BBT or maintaining the Deities, just as long as you proudly keep 'three executive directors' somewhere in the temple building !

From a purely legal angle:

- The clause concerning 'three executive directors' could only be exclusively linked to the '**no change clause**' if the latter were preceded by the word '*this*'.
- In legal documents only words in the form of clauses have significance, not necessarily the juxtaposition of one sentence with another, unless a word such as '*this*' is used to exclusively link one sentence to another.
- Even if one tries to argue a linkage to 'system of management' based on the occurrence of the word 'managed' i.e.- 'managed by three executive directors' - we are still left with the problem that no linkage can be established to the first part - that 'each temple will be an ISKCON temple' - since there is no mention of management here.
- In this instance the two sentences in section 2 are not exclusively linked. Therefore the '**no change**' clause must apply to the will as a whole.

If the above were not the case then the following point would need careful consideration by the GBC:

The 'no change' clause only comes in section 2 of the will, not in section 1 which mentions the GBC, so unless it can be applied to the entire will the GBC could legitimately be disbanded.

However tempting the above scenario might sound to some, we could not support such an interpretation of the will since we know it is not what Srila Prabhupada wanted. We might even muster the support of the GBC itself on this point.

In any event T.O. contradicts its own point by accepting that the '**no change**' clause can in fact be applied to section 1 of the will:

Therefore, Srila Prabhupada did not want his system of management (the GBC) to be changed or abandoned...

(T.O.p.17)

Just another example of the obvious double standards and contradiction that plagues the current GBC position. Perhaps the GBC should address such serious inconsistencies in their own reasoning before they accuse us of 'wilful misrepresentation'.

Certainly the *ritvik* system was a system of management. It was the way in which Srila Prabhupada wanted Temple Presidents to manage initiations within ISKCON. And as the will attests the GBC had no authority to stop it. As the 'ultimate managing authority' it was their duty to maintain it, not destroy it and invent the M.A.S.S:

"The standards I have already given you, now try to maintain them at all times under standard procedure. Do not try to innovate or create anything or manufacture anything, that will ruin everything".

(SP letter to Bali Mardan and Pusta Krishna who were acting GBC's 18/9/72 as quoted in 'The Final Order' p.50)

It is a shame these clear emphatic orders were disobeyed, and even sadder that some people today have got nothing better to do than vehemently and enthusiastically defend such insubordination.

The next attack is on our definition of the word '*henceforward*':

'the GBC paper "*Disciple of my Disciple*" shows cases where Srila Prabhupada used the word "*henceforward*" in a very limited sense. Even the standard definition of the word does not state the "until eternity" belief the *ritviks* propose...

(T.O.p.22)

Firstly we have extensively dealt with the GBC paper '*Disciple of my Disciple*' (DD) in our paper '*The Final Order Still Stands*'. Of course the word '*henceforward*' can mean for a limited time, we have always made that clear (see '*The Final Order*' point 3 page7).

Secondly we have never defined the word '*henceforward*' as meaning "until eternity". This is nothing short of a lie. The authors of T.O. display remarkable sloppiness even when propagating falsehoods since, just before making this accusation, they themselves quote us from '*The Final Order*':

"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'.

('*The Final Order*' as quoted in T.O.p.22)

The reader will note that in the above passage we define the word correctly according to the dictionary definition, not as accused by the authors of T.O.

The GBC minutes

T.O. quotes us:

"Suffice to say it was not referred to in the July 9th letter, nor did Srila Prabhupada demand that a copy of the taped conversation be sent out with *The Final Order*. From this we can deduce, with absolute confidence, that it cannot contain a scrap of modifying information vital to the understanding of *The Final Order*."

(*The Final Order*)

It then comments:

The fact that the May 28th conversation was taped and its summary was entered into the GBC minutes book should suggest that it was not just a casual conversation. We know that it was not just done on a whim, yet the *ritvig-vaadis* deny that it contains even a scrap of vital information.

(T.O.p.22)

If the claimed minutes in the GBC minutes book were actually a true record of what transpired in the meeting of May 28th then we would need to ask the following rather awkward questions:

1. Why did Srila Prabhupada not incorporate the most important point, (which allegedly arose out of the May 28th meeting), namely the handing over of *diksa* guruhood to his disciples on departure, in the July 9th letter itself?
2. Why send a letter out to the entire movement explaining something which was not even mentioned in the minutes of the very meeting out of which the letter supposedly emerged?
3. Why send out a letter which would be directly influenced and altered beyond recognition by the minutes of a meeting that was held prior to the issuing of the letter?
4. Why does the typed version of these very same minutes differ in key areas from the hand-written notes - in particular the handing over of *Diksa* guruhood to his disciples on departure?

We look forward to some sensible answers to the above.

TOPANGA CANYON

The authors of T.O. firstly criticise us for calling the talk given by Tamal Krishna in 1980 '*Pyramid House Confessions*'. They say it implies something sinister. Of course the word 'confessions' can be said to carry with it certain negative connotations. Yet within the talk Tamal Krishna Goswami himself makes the following admission:

'Myself and the other GBC have done the greatest disservice to this movement the last three years because we interpreted the appointment of *ritviks* as the appointment of gurus'

Now if the above does not constitute a confession, we don't know what would. It is also interesting to note that the authors of T.O. are once more performing precisely the same disservice, since they also interpret Srila Prabhupada's appointment of *ritviks* as the appointment of gurus. (see section entitled '*GBC approved paper contradicts GBC*').

The authors then accuse us of selective quoting. Of this we are also guilty. In a court of law the prosecution will often take statements of the accused to support their own case. There is nothing wrong in that. Everyone knows that devotees such as Tamal Krishna Goswami and Jayadvaita Maharaja believe that the M.A.S.S. was authorised by Srila Prabhupada. We never imply otherwise. There is no point in simply repeating entire tracts of a talk when only certain parts are relevant. Tamal Krishna Goswami is perfectly entitled to give his personal views, for example on who is and who is not qualified to be a *diksa* guru. Should these or other statements support *The Final Order* we are more than happy to quote him. Selective quoting can only be dishonest if we use the quotes to try and prove something other than what is actually said by the whole text. This we have never done. We never claimed that anything Jayadwaita or Tamala Krishna Maharaja's said supported the post-*samadhi ritvik* proposition. We simply stated that they did agree on certain subsidiary points: that the July 9th letter sets up a *ritvik* system - **Jayadvaita Swami**; that no *Diksa* Gurus were appointed - **Tamala Krishna Goswami**; nothing more and nothing less.

Much of the rest of section 4 is irrelevant. There is no further evidence offered to support the M.A.S.S. theory, nor to prove modifications a) & b). Mostly it offers further 'examples' of how we willfully, offensively and dishonestly misrepresent things. Having read this far the reader will no doubt already have made their own judgement on who is misrepresenting the truth.

This completes our analysis of T.O. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

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