
Original Letter Of July 9, 1977

Letter to: All G.B.C., All Temple Presidents

Vrindaban

9 July, 1977

77-07-09

To All G.B.C., and Temple Presidents

Dear Maharajas and Prabhus,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your feet. Recently when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vrindavana, **Srila Prabhupada indicated that soon He would appoint some of His senior disciples to act as ritvik - representative of the acarya**, for the purpose of performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation. His Divine Grace has so far given a list of eleven disciples who will act in that capacity:

His Holiness Kirtanananda Swami
 His Holiness Satsvarupa dasa Gosvami
 His Holiness Jayapataka Swami
 His Holiness Tamala Krsna Gosvami
 His Holiness Hrdayananda Gosvami
 His Holiness Bhavananda Gosvami
 His Holiness Hamsaduta Swami
 His Holiness Ramesvara Swami
 His Holiness Harikesa Swami
 His Grace Bhagavan dasa Adhikari
 His Grace Jayatirtha dasa Adhikari

In the past Temple Presidents have written to Srila Prabhupada recommending a particular devotee's initiation. Now that Srila Prabhupada has named these representatives, Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation for first and second initiation to whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple. After considering the recommendation, these representatives may accept the devotee as an initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada by giving a spiritual name, or in the case of second initiation, by chanting on the Gayatri thread, just as Srila Prabhupada has done.

The newly initiated devotees are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad, the above eleven senior devotees acting as His representative. After the Temple President receives a letter from these representatives giving the spiritual name or the thread, he can perform the fire yajna in the temple as was being done before. **The name of a newly initiated disciple should be sent by the**

representative who has acceted him or her to Srila Prabhupada, to be included in His Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book.

Hoping this finds you all well.

Your servant, Tamala Krsna Gosvami
Secretary to Srila Prabhupada

Approved:(signed) A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
(Prabhupada signature appears on the original)



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The above is the Original Letter Of July 9, 1977 of His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada, his originally signed and approved paper for appointing some of His senior disciples to act as ritvik - representative of the acarya

Analysis of Srila Prabhupada's Ritvik Appointment

This is the conclusory communique to all temples presidents and GBC's on the subject of future initiations/gurus in ISKCON after Prabhupada leaves his body. These instructions were sent after several GBC meetings during the previous month specifically on this subject.

Let us now summarize, point for point, Srila Prabhupada's last instructions on how to carry on **the process of ritvik initiation, as documented in His letter of July 9th, 1977, to all GBC and Temple Presidents.**

1. " Recently when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vrndavana, Srila Prabhupada indicated that soon He would appoint some of His senior disciples to act as " ritvik,- representative of the acarya, for the purpose of performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation."

(N.B. In the presence of the full GBC Body, some senior disciples were appointed, "to act as 'ritvik'- representative of Srila Prabhupada the acarya," for performing first and second initiations.)

2. "His Divine Grace has so far given a list of eleven disciples who will act in that capacity:

His Holiness Kirtanananda Swami
His Holiness Satsvarupa dasa Gosvami
His Holiness Jayapataka Swami
His Holiness Tamala Krsna Gosvami
His Holiness Hrdayananda Gosvami
His Holiness Bhavananda Gosvami

His Holiness Hamsaduta Swami
 His Holiness Ramesvara Swami
 His Holiness Harikesa Swami
 His Grace Bhagavan dasa Adhikari
 His Grace Jayatirtha dasa Adhikari

(N.B. So far eleven senior disciples names are given by Srila Prabhupada "to act as 'ritvik'- representative of [Srila Prabhupada] the acarya.")

3. "Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation for first and second initiation to whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple."

(N.B. Instead of the previous practice of writing to Srila Prabhupada, the Temple Presidents should "henceforward" write to the "**ritvik**" **representative of [Srila Prabhupada]** the acarya nearest to their temple, with their recommendations for initiations.)

The specific word "henceforward" has only one meaning, viz. "from now onwards" or "from this time forward". This is both according to Srila Prabhupada's own previous usage of the word and the meaning ascribed to it by the English Language. Unlike other words, the word henceforward is unambiguous since it only possesses one dictionary definition.

Because the ritvik system initiates new Prabhupada disciples without he being bodily present, the word "henceforward" does not mean "from now onwards until I depart". It simply means "from now onwards". There is no mention in the letter that the system should stop on Srila Prabhupada's departure, neither does it state that the system was to only be operational during his presence.

4. " After considering the recommendation, **these representatives may accept the devotee as an initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada** by giving a spiritual name, or in the case of second initiation, by chanting on the Gayatri thread, just as Srila Prabhupada has done. **The newly initiated devotees are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the above eleven senior devotees acting as His representative.**"

(N.B. The closest "**ritvik' representative of [Srila Prabhupada] the acarya**", after considering the recommendation for initiation, the 'ritvik' is authorized by Srila Prabhupada to give a spiritual name, and **accept the person as a disciple of Srila Prabhupada's**. In the case of second initiation the "'ritvik' representative of [Srila Prabhupada] the acarya", can chant gayatri on the person's new brahmana thread.

Again it is mentioned that the newly initiated disciple is a disciple of Srila Prabhupada, and not of the " 'ritvik' representative of [Srila Prabhupada] the acarya", who it is again mentioned, is only acting as a representative of Srila Prabhupada

5. " After the Temple President receives a letter from these representatives giving the spiritual name or the thread, he can perform the fire yajna in the temple as was being done before."

(N.B. As previously done the Temple President can perform the fire yajna when he receives the spiritual name or brahmana thread from the "**ritvik' -representative of [Srila Prabhupada] the acarya**".)

6. "The name of a newly initiated disciple should be sent by the representative who has accepted him or her to Srila Prabhupada, to be included in His Divine Grace's Initiated Disciples book."

(N.B. The name of the newly initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada should be sent by the "ritvik"- representative of [Srila Prabhupada] the acarya," to be included in Srila Prabhupada's "Initiated Disciples" book.)

In this letter it is mentioned that Srila Prabhupada instituted this local "ritvik" -representative of [Srila Prabhupada] the acarya" system, "when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vrndavana", and then specifically communicated the system to the entire GBC and Temple Presidents in a letter clearly indicating the following:

1. The persons listed were only authorized to act as "ritvik" -representative of [Srila Prabhupada] the acarya".
2. The eleven names given were Srila Prabhupada's "His [Srila Prabhupada's] senior disciples".
3. These were the names given, quote "**so far**" indicating **that more might be given at a later date**.
4. The Temple President was to "henceforward" (N.B. The American Heritage Dictionary defines henceforward as henceforth or from this time forth or from now on) send the name of the recommended person to the, quote "whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple." (ie: the ritvik -representative of [Srila Prabhupada] the acarya" who is located physically closest to the President's temple.)

Furthermore the argument that the whole ritvik system "hangs" on one word - henceforward - is untenable, since even if we take the word out of the letter, nothing has changed. One still has a system set up by Srila Prabhupada four months before his departure, with no subsequent instruction to terminate it. Without such a counter instruction, this letter would still remain intact as Srila Prabhupada's final instruction on initiation.

5. That the new disciples name must be sent by the local "ritvik" -representative of [Srila Prabhupada] the acarya" to be included in "His Divine Grace's Srila Prabhupada's Initiated Disciples' book".

From the above statements it is clear that "henceforward" this was the system of "first and second initiation". Srila Prabhupada approved this system, after consulting with the whole GBC in Vrndavana. Srila Prabhupada never consulted with the whole GBC on this matter again, and never issued any other official approved document or order changing the system. Srila Prabhupada never appointed anyone anything more than just "ritvik" -representative of the acarya Srila Prabhupada". Srila Prabhupada said clearly that all the disciples so initiated by the local "ritvik" -Representative of Srila Prabhupada the acarya" were to be included in "His Divine Grace's [Srila Prabhupada's] , Initiated Disciples' book" as bona fide disciples.

This legal ISKCON document states ISKCON initiation policy from that time (July 9, 1977) onward. The recording of names cannot refer to the chronological validity of this document because there is no all-important time limitation stated nor is there mention of any time limitation in any of Prabhupada's other written or recorded statements on ritvik initiations. Therefore the word "henceforward" can only mean "from this time

onwards" or until this document is specifically countermanded by him. This of course never took place. Therefore, the appointed successor diksa-guru system in ISKCON today is not authorized by the founder acarya.

Actually something like this system was going on in ISKCON before this time. Many Sannyasis and GBC men had chanted on beads and Srila Prabhupada sometimes instructed other persons to pick out names for his disciples. So all that Srila Prabhupada was doing here was to formalize this system. We should also note **that there was never any talk of a prospective disciple choosing a guru, because the only guru was Srila Prabhupada** and as far as choosing which "ritvik" -representative of the acarya Srila Prabhupada" to write to, Srila Prabhupada makes it clear that the Temple President is to write to the nearest one, with all the initiation recommendations from his temple. The fact that Srila Prabhupada went to all the trouble of sending this letter to all the GBC and Temple Presidents means that he wanted this system implemented. Since he never implemented any other system, and since he did not want the system of management to change after his disappearance, as we have seen from his will, we conclude, that this system should be practiced even today.

Summary

Since all "executive directors" or "GBC committee members" for the properties must be, "my [Srila Prabhupada's] initiated disciple following strictly all the rules and regulations of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness as detailed in my books" and "**the system of management will continue as it is now and there is no need of any change**", the conclusion is that there will always be disciples of Srila Prabhupada in ISKCON. In other words Srila Prabhupada is able to initiate disciples even though he is no longer physically present, just as when he was in India he was able to initiate disciples all over the world by letter and later after July the 9th, 1977 by allowing some of "His senior disciples" in different parts of the world to be his local "ritvik" -representative of [Srila Prabhupada] the acarva" and chant on beads, threads and give names, and by also allowing his Temple Presidents to perform the fire yajnas.

That the system of initiating Srila Prabhupada's disciples continue "henceforward" exactly as outlined by Srila Prabhupada in the letter approved by him and sent to all GBC and Temple Presidents, dated July 9th, 1977.

And that since no other system having been approved by Srila Prabhupada, that the GBC body as the ultimate **managing** authority of ISKCON continue "henceforward". "**The system of management will continue** as it is now and there is no need of any change" and the GBC and local representatives of Srila Prabhupada make sure that all devotees initiated in ISKCON since Srila Prabhupada's disappearance and in the future have their names included in "His Divine Grace's Srila Prabhupada's Initiated Disciples book" as per his authorized instructions. Proving that the GBC are complying.

What is the difference if Srila Prabhupada is in Gokula Vrndavana (India) or Goloka Vrndavana (the spiritual sky) he gave us a simple system to continue the first and second initiations for him. Thus Srila Prabhupada remains the Founder and the Acarva of ISKCON. Thus ISKCON and the devotees of ISKCON, all followers and bona-fide initiated disciples of Srila Prabhupada are united with one purpose, under one acarya, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, Srila Prabhupada.

There were also witnesses to these instructions from [Gauridas Pandit dasa](#) and Yasodanandana Swami.

Also, Tamal Krishna, then Prabhupada's secretary, admitted to the deviation from post samadhi ritvik in 1980. (See [Topanga Canyon Meeting](#))

Prabhupada's Supporting Instructions:

There were other statements made by Srila Prabhupada, and his secretary, in the days following the July 9th letter, which clearly indicate that the ritvik system was intended to continue without cessation:

"...the process for initiation to be followed in the future." (July 11th)

"...continue to become ritvik and act on my charge." (July 19th)

"...continue to become ritvik and act on my behalf." (July 31th)

In these documents we find words such as "continue" and "future" which along with the word "henceforward" all point to the permanency of the ritvik system. There is no statement from Srila Prabhupada that even hints that this system was to terminate on his departure.

JUST A FEW PLACES WHERE RITVIKS IN VEDIC SOCIETY PERFORMED CEREMONIES. SO CALLED GURUS PERFORM INITIATION CEREMONIES TODAY ALSO-- ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THEY DO NOT WANT TO BE CALLED RITVIKS. ALTHOUGH THEY CANNOT COMMUNICATE WITH KRSNA THEY PREFER TO BE CALLED DIKSA GURUS.

SB 9.1.15 adhvaryuna--by the ritvik priest;

SB 4.5.7 rtvijah--the priests;

SB 4.5.18 rtvijah--the priests

SB 4.6.52 rtvijam--of the priests;

SB 4.7.16 rtvik--the priests;

SB 4.7.27 rtvijah--the priests;

SB 4.7.45 rtvijah--the priests;

SB 4.7.56 rtvigbhih--with the priests;

SB 4.13.26 rtvijah--the priests;

SRILA PRABHUPADA GIVES A PERFECT PLAN (KEEPING THE ACARYA AT THE CENTRE): THEY PREFER TO BE IMMEDIATELY HIS DIVINE GRACES-----WITHOUT COMMUNICATION WITH KRSNA!

**The following sets out the facts of the issue,
which are straight-forward and indisputable:**

1) Srila Prabhupada's final, signed, legally binding directives conclusively established that he would remain as the sole initiating Guru for ISKCON.

2) Just after his departure his leading disciples disobeyed these directives, preferring instead to unauthorisedly replace him with themselves as initiating gurus for ISKCON.

3) As early as 1970 Srila Prabhupada established a Governing Body Commission, or GBC, as the means by which the ISKCON society was to be governed. In 1975, he approved the following definition for the GBC, which set out the exact parameters within which the GBC could act:

"The GBC has been established by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada to represent Him in carrying out the responsibility of managing the International Society for Krishna Consciousness of which He is the Founder-Acharya and supreme authority. The GBC accepts as its life and soul His divine instructions and recognises that it is completely dependent on His mercy in all respects. The GBC has no other function or purpose other than to execute the instructions so kindly given by His Divine Grace and preserve and spread His Teachings to the world in their pure form." (Definition of GBC, GBC Resolutions 1975)

Thus far from being a law unto themselves, this governing body was set strict parameters within which it could act.

4) The above resolution makes it clear that:

- a) The GBC can ONLY execute instructions given by Srila Prabhupada
- b) The GBC must maintain without change these instructions

"The GBC has no other function or purpose other than to execute the instructions so kindly given by His Divine Grace and preserve and spread His Teachings to the world in their pure form."

This letter will show that not only did the GBC fail to execute the instructions that Srila Prabhupada gave in regards to his position as Guru, but that it also executed a whole host of instructions that were never issued by Srila Prabhupada.

5) In 1977, in his Last Will and Testament, Srila Prabhupada confirmed that this method of managing the society via the use of the GBC, as described above, would remain the standard for ISKCON:

"The Governing Body Commission (GBC) will be the ultimate managing authority of the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness." (Srila Prabhupada's Last Will and Testament, Registered 7/6/77, Paragraph 1)

Thus it is clear that the GBC are legally bound to continue to act as we have outlined above in paragraph 3, and only implement and preserve those systems and teachings given by Srila Prabhupada, even in Srila Prabhupada's absence.

6) Just before his physical departure from this world, on July 9th 1977, Srila Prabhupada signed the above directive that he requested his secretary to issue to the GBC, and all temple presidents (branch managers), giving specific details for how he would continue to give diksa initiation from that time onwards. This directive, known as the letter of July 9th, 1977, clearly states:

- a) **He would appoint some of His senior disciples to act as ritvik - representative of the acarya,**
- b) **the above eleven senior devotees acting as His (Prabhupadas) representative.**
- c) **The newly initiated devotees are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad,**
- d) **The name of a newly initiated disciple should be included in His Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book.**

In the past Temple Presidents have written to Srila Prabhupada recommending a particular devotee's initiation. Now that Srila Prabhupada has named these representatives, Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation for first and second initiation to whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple. After considering the recommendation, these representatives may accept the devotee as an initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada by giving a spiritual name, or in the case of second initiation, by chanting on the Gayatri thread, just as Srila Prabhupada has done. The newly initiated devotees are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad, the above eleven senior devotees acting as His representative. After the Temple President receives a letter from these representatives giving the spiritual name or the thread, he can perform the fire yajna in the temple as was being done before. The name of a newly initiated disciple should be sent by the representative who has acceted him or her to Srila Prabhupada, to be included in His Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book.

7) The above directive makes it clear that Srila Prabhupada was to remain as the Guru for ISKCON. This fact is stated 3 times in what is itself a short directive. It is clear from this directive that his disciples were simply to act as 'representatives' who would facilitate this process by issuing names to the prospective disciples on behalf of Srila Prabhupada. This directive had specifically been sent to the GBC for it to implement within ISKCON.

8) However on November 15th, 1977, the day after Srila Prabhupada's departure from this world, without any countermanding instruction from Srila Prabhupada, the GBC took it upon themselves to stop the execution of this directive. Thus they were immediately guilty of acting outside their remit as we have set out in their defining parameters as given above in paragraphs 3 and 4, which make it clear they must continue to only execute the instructions given by Srila Prabhupada, even after his departure. By suspending the system of managing initiations that was set out in the directive, whereby all initiates became Srila Prabhupada's disciples, the GBC was also guilty of acting in direct violation of paragraph 2 of his Last Will and Testament, which states:

'The system of management will continue as it is now and there is no need of any change' (Srila Prabhupada's Last Will and Testament, Registered 7/6/77, Paragraph 2)

That Srila Prabhupada was expecting to continue to act as the sole initiator in ISKCON is further evidenced in the Will under paragraph 3. This deals with how new directors of the society's permanent properties such as Mayapur and Vrindavana (which were expected to remain for thousands of years) were to be selected:

'...a successor director or directors may be appointed by the remaining directors, provided the new director is my initiated disciple...' (Srila Prabhupada's Last Will and Testament, Registered 7/6/77, Paragraph 3)

This makes it clear that future directors for properties in ISKCON for thousands of years to come could only be selected from Srila Prabhupada's initiated disciples. Clearly such a provision could only be enacted if Srila Prabhupada had also made a provision for himself to continue initiating new disciples in ISKCON. Otherwise the pool of potential directors would quickly dry up.

9) Instead the 11 disciples who had been appointed in the directive as representatives, issuing names on behalf of Srila Prabhupada, suddenly declared themselves as having being appointed as new successor Gurus:

(GBC Resolutions, 9.30 am, March , 19th, 1978) "The GBC will consider each year at Gour Poornima the appointment of new Spiritual Masters to be approved by a 3/4 vote. However for 1978 no new Spiritual Masters shall be appointed other than the 11 selected by Srila Prabhupada".

Thus with this disobedience to Srila Prabhupada's final orders on who should be the Guru for ISKCON enacted, his replacement as the Guru for ISKCON by his many disciples was effected, with the subsequent seizure of Srila Prabhupada's society and assets by these men. This deviation was expanded in 1985 when it was declared that anyone who is a disciple, and who got the necessary number of votes, could be admitted as a diksa Guru:

(GBC Resolutions, February 27th, 1985) "A GBC vote on adding an initiating guru requires a quorum of 3/4 members of the GBC Body to be present. To be approved, a candidate must receive a vote of 2/3rds of the members present at that meeting."

10). Thus more Gurus were added so that today we have at least 70, with a continuous flow of new gurus being 'voted in' as others leave due to falling down into moral impropriety. This Guru expansion in the mid-80's was led by Ravindra Svarupa Das, who just happens to be the ISKCON Chairman right now, and who also made himself a Guru directly as a result of the changes he instituted. In this way the problems just went from bad to worse, and has merely expanded the deviation and degradation of our societies reputation even further.

11) The GBC have never been able to justify terminating the system of initiation Srila Prabhupada personally put in place with his last institutional directive on this matter. They simply say that the directive must terminate automatically on the departure of Srila Prabhupada from this world, for when Srila Prabhupada departed, the directive died with him. However this reasoning is based on a faulty assumption - that the directive is tied to the physical presence of Srila Prabhupada. However the circumstances of the July 9th directive are that it is issued for, and to be implemented within, and by, an institution. Thus the applicability of the directive is tied to the institution, and therefore only the demise of the INSTITUTION can terminate its applicability. The physical presence of the Founder who authorised the instruction has no relevance to terminating the directive. Thus the directive must remain in force for as long as the institution remains. Arguments based on considerations of 'tradition', the practice of other institutions, etc. have no applicability in determining how Srila Prabhupada intended his institution to be run. We can only decide that from his own institutional directives on the subject. Just like Srila Prabhupada also issued so many other directives to the movement stating that we must read his books, follow his teachings etc. None of these directives became invalidated just because Srila Prabhupada departed - and neither does this one. Srila Prabhupada's position as Guru is not dependent on his physical presence, juts as he taught:

"He lives forever by his divine instructions, and the follower lives with him." (Bhagavata Purana, Preface)

Conclusion

Nine of the original 11 disciples selected as Ritviks in the above-mentioned directive who unauthorisedly took on the role of Diksa Gurus subsequently left the movement in scandalous circumstances, falling down into gross moral debauchery [[Satsvarupa fell down also](#)]. This is itself testament to the fact that the original replacement of Srila Prabhupada by these new Gurus could not have been correct. And many of the dozens of Gurus who were later added have not fared any better, with a resultant huge loss in manpower, properties and prestige for ISKCON. All this trauma, disruption and embarrassment is clear proof that the society could not possibly have been executing the instructions of the infallible Acarya, Srila Prabhupada. Even though not all the gurus have acted outrageously, still even the best of them are not actually following Srila Prabhupada's instructions on this most fundamental issue. Thus much of the bad news we hear in the press is due only to this original disobedience to Srila Prabhupada. Our success in spiritual life, and in particular ISKCON's success, can only come through strict adherence to the order of the Spiritual Master.

As we start to stand up to the gurus they and their supporters are going to increasingly desperate lengths to cling to power. Most recently one of the gurus was named in setting up a false rape case to discredit the IRM which led to an innocent devotee committing suicide. As a result of this the guru in question, [Jayapataka, is on the run, being wanted by the Calcutta police](#). Indeed the Temple President of your own Juhu Temple has stated that he will spend every last penny of the Temple to fight the IRM, even though we are only trying to re-instate Srila Prabhupada as the Guru for ISKCON.

As Temple Presidents we have worked very hard to build and maintain temples such as Bangalore, Vrindavan, Calcutta, Singapore and are very concerned that ISKCON be revived as the glorious institution it once was, united under the one and only original Guru, Srila Prabhupada. Otherwise the disruption and mismanagement will continue, and the most painful thing for all of us is when people blame Srila Prabhupada for all the mess, when in reality he set up as near perfect a system as is possible in the material world. For years we have tried quietly to put things right, but it has not worked, so regrettably we have had to take our fight to the movement's supporters and well-wishers. The situation is serious, but can be rectified quickly as long as we restore Srila Prabhupada as the Guru for ISKCON- just as he instructed.

Comments by the Prabhupadanuga's Austria: only fools, rascals and demons, such as Isk con gurus and GBC's are deriding and misinterpreting Srila Prabhupada's clear order and instruction for a ritvik-system. ([Aruna das](#))

OFFICIATING ACHARYAS

by **Locanananda**

There is an interesting description in the Caitanya Caritamrita of the initiation of Raghunath das. While he was living at home, he was officially initiated by Yadunandana Acarya, a great devotee in his own right, but then he left home and travelled to Puri where he took shelter of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Srila Prabhupada refers to Yadunandana Acarya as the "official initiator spiritual master" of Raghunath dasa. The comparison can be made in Iskcon to a devotee who is accepted by an officiating acarya, but is taking shelter of Srila Prabhupada.

Srila Prabhupada used to criticize the Christian religion, not because they were praying to Jesus, but because the leaders were not authorized representatives of God. The acarya is the representative of God, and the officiating acarya is the authorized representative of the acarya.

If one is authorized, it means he becomes empowered, just as when Srila Prabhupada initially authorized Revatinandana and Kirtanananda Swamis to chant on beads, he told them he was empowering them to assist him. He made it clear that these were still his disciples. Even when Srila Prabhupada sent out the letter of July 9th, 1977 he made it clear that those being initiated were still his disciples.

One should note that when Srila Prabhupada called the GBC to his side in May, 1977 he was very ill and wanted to give instruction with regard to how Iskcon would be managed after his departure. It was at this time that he mentioned the term "officiating acarya". As stated before, one cannot accept disciples in the presence of one's guru and, similarly, one does not accept the title of acarya while one's guru is living. Therefore, the term "officiating acarya" would only have been introduced after the disappearance of Srila Prabhupada, while the term ritvik - representative could be used in his presence.

During Srila Prabhupada's grave illness in the spring of 1977, no initiations were being performed. When he began to recover he decided that his aspiring disciples should not have to wait any longer to be initiated and it was at that time that he prepared a list of ritvik representatives who would initiate on his behalf. They would accept the disciples on behalf of Srila Prabhupada, chant on their beads, give spiritual names and send those names to be included in the book listing Srila Prabhupada's disciples. This system was especially practical for many reasons. It avoided the need to send beads through the mail, it avoided the duplication of names in the same zone, but mainly it relieved Srila Prabhupada of the burden of handling this responsibility so that he could conserve his strength and utilize his valuable time for writing.

During the months that followed, Srila Prabhupada's health was up and down. Doctors were consulted (as were astrologers) and their conclusion was that Srila Prabhupada might continue to live for six or seven years if he could pass through that difficult period. This is important to know when considering the instructions he gave concerning initiations, because the system of having initiations performed on his behalf was meant to continue as long as Srila Prabhupada wanted it to under the prevailing conditions, which could have meant several years or even longer.

His Divine Grace departed this world but he lives still in his instructions. The instruction he gave concerning initiations was that the ritvik system would continue with only small changes in formalities. It was his recommendation that the term "officiating acarya" would be applied, and that those initiated would be known as his granddisciples. That the official initiator must be present and identifiable is in keeping with the statements of scripture and has been followed by all previous acaryas in all bonafide sampradayas.

The departed vaisnava acarya is considered to have entered nitya lila pravistha, and the eternal abode of Radha and Krishna. Though he may be transcendently present to offer his unlimited blessings, he is not considered to be accepting new disciples in the formal sense. Because the process of diksa includes the formalities of initiation, he cannot be properly referred to as the diksa guru of disciples formally initiated after his physical departure. However, and more significantly, Srila Prabhupada is the preceptor of all generations of devotees who follow his teachings and, within Iskcon, the only worshippable guru. Just as Krishna is known throughout the world as the spiritual master of Arjuna, Srila Prabhupada is the spiritual master of all present and future followers of his transcendental teachings. Because initiation is a formality, the official initiator is not as significant as the true deliverer, and that is Srila Prabhupada.

There is no difference between a direct disciple and a granddisciple in the sense that both associate with the founder acarya preceptorially and

live according to his rules and regulations. Because the May 28th discussion dealt only with how Iskcon would be perpetuated after the disappearance of the spiritual master, any reference to his granddisciples must apply within Iskcon, not that granddisciples would exist only when his own disciple would initiate outside of Iskcon. Srila Prabhupada's instruction was that we should never be without Iskcon thought even for a moment, so there was no indication that he was advising anyone to leave the society of devotees.

"As I am puppet of my Guru Maharaja, if you become my puppet, then that is success. Our success is there when we become puppet of the predecessor. To live in the society of devotees and to become puppet of the predecessor acarya, that is success. So we are trying to do that. Krishna consciousness society and serve the predecessor. That's all." (Conversation 4-19-73)

The order is to serve the predecessor, to become the puppet of the predecessor. That means to worship the predecessor and to live according to his rules and regulations. No order was given that the official initiator, or officiating acarya, was to become the object of worship.

For an institution to function properly, there must be one head. In the case of a spiritual institution, there can only be one absolute authority. Srila Prabhupada had already established a chain of authority, and he made no mention of restructuring it before he ended his pastimes with us. Therefore, any changes he would have approved in terms of initiation procedures could only have been in regard to formalities and not in the spirit of the system which was meant to always keep Srila Prabhupada in the center. Again, this is only the point of view of one conditioned soul, but I hope that this presentation will lead to further realizations that our readers will in turn share with this humble servant.

Yours in the service of Srila Prabhupada,
Locanananda dasa

RE: OFFICIATING ACHARYAS

by **Jaya Krsna dasa**

Locananda dasa, in his "Officiating Acaryas," writes the following:

"The departed vaisnava acarya...though he may be transcendently present to offer his unlimited blessings ...is not considered to be accepting new disciples in the formal sense. Because the process of diksa includes the formalities of initiation, he cannot be properly referred to as the diksa guru of disciples formally initiated after his physical departure.

Excuse me, Locanananda prabhu, but I respectfully disagree. The "formalities of initiation" were mostly conducted by priests even when Srila Prabhupada was "physically" present, and BEFORE he "departed" in 1977 Srila Prabhupada established rtviks to perform all the "angas," except, of course, transmitting divya-jnanam.

For Srila Prabhupada (or Lord Jesus Christ) it is COMPLETELY IRRELEVANT whether or not he is "on the planet" when enacting this most essential aspect of initiation. You wrote, "The process of diksa includes the formalities of initiation." Prabhu, do you know what the word "formality" means? Srila Prabhupada says "real" initiation is "accepting the conclusion," "following," "your determination," etc.

How many who underwent the "formalities of initiation" are or were accepting Srila Prabhupada as guru, what to speak of being his disciple? History has borne out that "ulterior motives" propelled many a banana into the fire while "Swaha" was being chanted.

You then attempted to substantiate your theory with the same innappropriate "Vaisnava Tradition" argument routinely employed by those averse to accepting Srila Prabhupada as "The Acarya"--i.e. the "Tradition Setter." Hello? WHATEVER SRILA PRABHUPADA DOES "IS" VAISNAVA TRADITION, prabhu. Why are you trying to "justify" him?

Srila Prabhupada is not just offering "unlimited blessings." He is DIRECTLY PRESENT, LEADING THE SANKIRTANA MOVEMENT IN A WAR AGAINST MAYA FOR THE NEXT 10,000 YEARS. We shall NEVER be "The Guru." By accepting this simple point (and Chanting Hare Krsna) everything becomes crystal clear. Unfortunately, our disease is that, instead of glorifying the worthy person, we want to be special. Then Maya tells us, "Oh, the guru is gone, who will lead everyone?" Then we're finished. Please correct me if I said something wrong.

Your humble servant,
Jaya Krsna dasa