

Evidence and Clarification

BY: MADHUDVISA DASA

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Hare Krishna Rocan Prabhu, Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada! Good to hear from you Prabhu.

For your points #1 and #2 if you have a copy Hansadutta's old "Srila Prabhupada, His Movement and You" that has got copies of the cover letter Ramesvara wrote and attached to Prabhupada's will and the July 9th letter and sent to all temples and GBCs and also there are copies of the three letters from Tamil on behalf of Srila Prabhupada and in those he is saying "you should continue to be ritvik..."

I will have a look also, maybe I have the scans and can send.

As far as your third point, what Srila Prabhupada thought should happen in ISKCON in the future when his disciples became gurus... It is getting into speculation. I think we have to stick to the facts.

I have listened to and read everything that we have from Srila Prabhupada many times and my realization is that Srila Prabhupada was not very convinced that ISKCON would go on very well after his disappearance. His mood seems to have been that "I have given you everything in my books. I have tried my best to instruct you in Krishna consciousness..." and he was leaving the future in Krishna's hands. That is my feeling. He has given us everything in his books and wants us to utilize.

But as far as the facts are concerned it is certainly a fact that Prabhupada established a ritvik initiation system in ISKCON in the early 70's where he would appoint representatives to perform the fire yajnas for his disciples on his behalf. And it is a fact that he gave these "ritviks" more power as the years went on and in the July 9th letter he gave them complete power to accept disciples on his behalf and chant on their beads and give them a name, without having any physical involvement in the matter at all.

It is also a provable fact that Srila Prabhupada did not consider that any of his disciples were qualified for the position of acharya. And therefore it is very reasonable to say that Srila Prabhupada did not appoint any successor acharyas. I was just listening to one of the 1977 conversation tapes a couple of days ago and Srila Prabhupada told Tamil that the problem is among his disciples there is no strong man. He said they are all like children and among all Ramesvara may be the best. The same thing is there in other places where Prabhupada is clearly stating that his disciples are immature and not qualified for the post of acharya.

So it is a fact that the system Srila Prabhupada used in ISKCON to accept disciples in his physical presence was ritvik, 100% ritvik in the later years. And we can say it is a fact that he did not appoint any successor acharyas. Even Tamil confirms this in his Topanga Canyon talks. He says clearly that Prabhupada only appointed ritviks.

Also it is a fact that Tamil and Prabhupada were talking about the ritvik idea and clearly this was in regard to how initiations will go on in ISKCON after Srila Prabhupada left our physical vision. This is proved by those letters from Tamil to Hansadutta and Kirtananda where he is saying "you should remain ritvik."

It is also clear that after Srila Prabhupada's disappearance the "chosen 11" did not immediately know what to do. Srila Prabhupada left in November but he did not announce that he had appointed them as his successors until January.

It appears to me that Tamil was quite keen about the ritvik idea. He wrote the July 9th letter from that 11 minute conversation with Srila Prabhupada that I posted a few days ago. The 'henceforward' word is Tamil's. It seems at that time he like the ritvik idea and was pushing it.

I can not say it is a fact but it is my feeling that they all knew that Srila Prabhupada had established a ritvik system and desired the initiations to go on in ISKCON via this ritvik system when Prabhupada left his body but something happened between November and January that changed their minds. And I think that was their conversations with Sridhar Maharaja and I get the feeling that Satsvarupa also was very keen to become acharya...

There is really no alternative. If we accept that Prabhupada did not appoint successor acharyas, and I think practically everyone accepts that now, and if we admit the system Srila Prabhupada was using in ISKCON to accept disciples was 100% ritvik, and he had organized in the July 9th letter that this could go on without requiring his physical presence in any way at all, and we can consider that Prabhupada did instruct that things should go on without any change after his departure then it is quite clear it would seem that the ritvik initiation system should have continued.

It was clearly a great mistake for these children as Prabhupada called them to elevate themselves falsely to the position of acharya...

I think to this point these are all reasonable points that can be established and proven from facts.

As far as your question as to what Srila Prabhupada would want if his disciples became qualified gurus. At the time they were not qualified, he called them children. So the question did not come up at the time.

The thing is that ISKCON as Prabhupada created it is designed for his disciples. There is no room in the ISKCON structure for any other gurus. Prabhupada has given all authority to the Temple Presidents and the GBC's so there is no authority left for other gurus. And that is the problem ISKCON is facing always at the moment. They are always discussing how do deal with these "parallel lines of authority." They have created a disastrous organization. There can not be parallel lines of authority in any properly functioning organization. There has to be a clear "chain of command" so to speak. And because ISKCON have introduced more gurus into an organization that was only designed to have one guru they have destroyed the chain of authority. Now the disciples are supposed to be surrendered to the Temple President and the GBC who generally are not disciples of their guru and may not even like their guru... It is an intolerable situation for both the disciples and the guru.

What is actually happening now in ISKCON is the gurus are creating their own branches of ISKCON with their own disciples and that is the natural thing actually. Radhanatha has his own temple and only his disciples are there, Bhakti Charu has built his own temple and only has his disciples there, Giriraja has his own temple near LA with only his own disciples there, Lokanatha Swami has his own temple with only his disciples there, etc... So it means they have found the ISKCON structure does not work for multiple gurus. The gurus don't like it and the disciples don't like it either...

Prabhupada does mention his disciples going on to create branches of the ISKCON tree and as far as I can see that is the logical way forward for Prabhupada's disciples who become gurus and accept their own disciples. This is the way it has always been. A guru has a temple and some disciples. He does not live in someone else's temple with his disciples. And that is the way the current ISKCON gurus are going also.

Srila Prabhupada created ISKCON for his disciples and it is really only going to work for his disciples. There is no history of a group of gurus living together and having all their disciples together. Even the Goswamis in Vrindavan, they were coming together for kirtans but they all had their own separate temples and disciples. That is the way it has always been and that is the way ISKCON is going now and that is the way it will always be.

Ultimately this guru-disciple relationship is a personal relationship between the guru and the disciple and you can not have a system like they have in ISKCON where the disciples of a guru also have to surrender to a Temple President and the whole GBC body as well as their guru and all three "parallel lines of authority" probably disagree with each other and are giving different orders.... It is an impossible organizational model...

I will look for the scans of those letters and forward them to you if I can find.

All glories to your service!

Chant Hare Krishna and be happy!

Your servant

Madhudvisa dasa