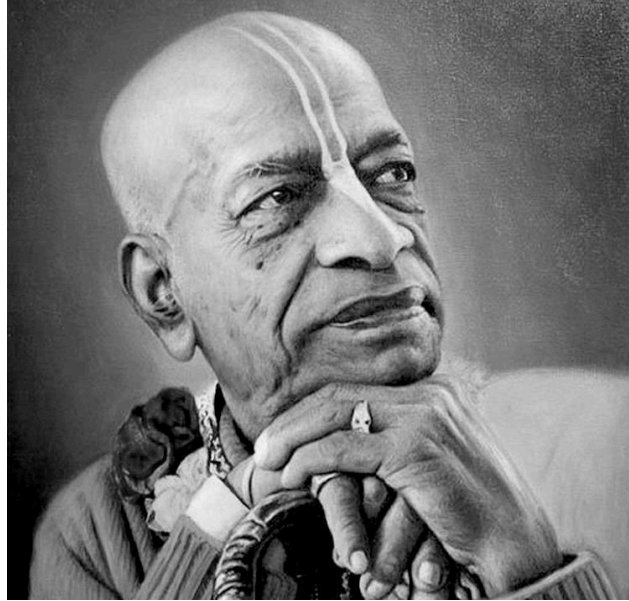


Initiations After 1977



Substantial Documentary & Śāstric Evidence in Support of
Śrīla Prabhupāda's Ṛtvik System of Initiations



A Position Paper by International Sri Krishna Mandir

Version 1.1

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Dedicated to

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Who kindly built a house in which the whole world can live peacefully

Preface

At the time of compilation of this book, it is the year 2016, 39 years since the physical departure of Śrīla Prabhupāda from our mundane vision.

During the last 12 years of Śrīla Prabhupāda's manifest presence, the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, under his transcendental guidance, took off in great earnest and spread far and wide in all six continents, picking up all the fortunate souls and preparing them for the ultimate journey back to Godhead.

The purity of the movement was undeniable. It is not that the movement did not have any issues at that time. Mistakes at all levels have been committed by inexperienced devotees but by his spiritual strength, Śrīla Prabhupāda managed the entire worldwide movement patiently and relentlessly trained his disciples towards perfection.

One of his principal requests to his disciples towards the end of his manifest pastimes was, "Your love for me will be shown by how you cooperate among yourselves after I have gone."

"I wish that each and every Branch shall keep their independent identity and cooperate **keeping the Ācārya in the centre**. On this principle we can open any number of Branches all over the world."

— Śrīla Prabhupāda's letter to Kīrtanānanda, Feb 11th 1967,
San Francisco, California, USA

Keeping the Founder-Ācārya, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in the centre means to keep his instruction in the centre. Then only can we cooperate together to push this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement forward.

The era since 1977, though, has been a history of enormous amounts of deviation, cheating, mistrust, frustration, factions, jealousy and even violence.

It is prudent to objectively identify the cause and implement the solution to these problems. As Śrīla Prabhupāda told us, "There is no external force in this world that can

stop our movement. It can only be destroyed from within.” It all started with disobedience towards the order of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

The instructions of Śrīla Prabhupāda are the thread that holds the beautiful pearl necklace of our movement. If they are disobeyed, the thread would snap and the necklace would be lost. That is exactly what happened especially with regards to initiations after Śrīla Prabhupāda’s departure.

The scope of this book is

1. To study Śrīla Prabhupāda’s final instructions on how initiations should take place after his departure;
2. To fortify the authenticity of his instructions with *sāstric* and historical references;
3. To present *sāstric* references that explain the root cause of all problems within our worldwide Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, its effects and how to solve it.

This book is entirely based on the official documents of Śrīla Prabhupāda and supported by scriptural quotations from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s translations of Bhagavad-gītā, Śrīmad Bhāgavatam and other related literature. We have just attempted to compile it in order to serve his mission and the devotees who are true to his mission.

“The main business of human society is to think of the Supreme Personality of Godhead at all times, to become His devotees, to worship the Supreme Lord and to bow down before Him. The *ācārya*, the authorized representative of the Supreme Lord, establishes these principles, but when he disappears, things once again become disordered. The perfect disciples of the *ācārya* try to relieve the situation by sincerely following the instructions of the spiritual master.”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 4.28.48, Purport

Our special thanks to His Grace Sundar Gopāl Prabhu, the Temple President of Sri Krishna Mandir, Singapore and a senior mentor for the International Sri Krishna Mandir conglomerate of temples. He was initiated directly by Śrīla Prabhupāda in the January of 1977 and has spent more than four decades of his life in the sincere service of Śrīla Prabhupāda and is always engaged in scrutinizingly studying Śrīla Prabhupāda’s transcendental books on a daily basis. He also actively assists those devotees who want to bring Śrīla Prabhupāda back to the centre of the movement and work together

in a cooperative spirit to push the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement forward. He inspired and guided the compilation of this position paper *Initiations After 1977* for the benefit of everyone.

The documentary and *śāstric* references in this book suffice for now. If additional references are found in the future that can substantiate and further solidify the case, they may be added in future releases. Likewise, should newer, worthy arguments to the contents of the book arise, they may also be addressed in future releases. In case of any changes, the book may then be versioned accordingly. The current release is *Initiations After 1977, Version 1.1*.

Your servants,
The Team @ International Sri Krishna Mandir

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Introduction

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, being a truly empowered *ācārya*, stayed loyal to his predecessor *ācāryas* in preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in its purest form and thus took the scale of preaching to an unprecedented level. Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s 500-year-old prophecy that the holy name of Kṛṣṇa would be sung in every town and village of the planet was realized by the single-handed efforts of Śrīla Prabhupāda. He did not invent anything new. As Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say, “Change means rascaldom”.

Nevertheless, it was his sheer spiritual genius that he made various transcendental technical adjustments to suit the current times and circumstances in order to propel the movement of Lord Caitanya forward. We should never confuse such unconventional measures with deviation from disciplic conclusion. One such adjustment was the stipulation of chanting 16 rounds a day, when originally it was 64. Another is the *ṛtvik* system of conducting initiations.

Dīkṣā, or initiation, is the most important reformatory process of human life that marks the formal beginning of one’s spiritual life under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master.

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*

“According to their *karma*, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. ... Out of many millions of wandering living entities, **one who is very fortunate** gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. **By the mercy of both Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master**, such a person **receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service.**”

— Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 19.151

Although the principle of *guru*, or spiritual master, is one, *gurus* are technically divided into four types. All of them help the conditioned soul attain shelter at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.

1. **Vartma-pradarśaka guru** — The spiritual master who first gives information about spiritual life.
2. **Dīkṣā guru** — The spiritual master who initiates according to the regulations of the *śāstras* is called the *dīkṣā guru* (or initiator *guru*). He is also considered the external manifestation of the *caitya guru*. One can have only one *dīkṣā guru*.
3. **Śikṣā guru** — The spiritual master who gives instructions for elevation based on the instructions of the *dīkṣā guru* is called the *śikṣā guru* (one can have many *śikṣā gurus*).
4. **Caitya guru** — The supreme spiritual master Paramātmā, or Supersoul, who guides from within.

The *caitya guru* is the Supersoul, an expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Among the other three types of gurus, the *śikṣā guru* and the *vartma-pradarśaka guru* sincerely carry out their prescribed duty of preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness on the order of the *dīkṣā guru*. They themselves may or may not yet be pure devotees. The *dīkṣā guru* position demands the most responsibility as such a *guru* should be a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa and should be empowered by his spiritual master in order to become a *dīkṣā guru* or the initiator spiritual master.

In order for Śrīla Prabhupāda to accept disciples even after his physical departure, he set up a system of initiation wherein his representatives, called *ṛtviks* (or priests) would officiate the initiation on his behalf and the transcendental movement would thus continue on and on.

But in ISKCON today, the word *ṛtvik* is intolerable. They have completely demonized the word. Anyone who identifies himself as a *ṛtvik* is considered the worst offender. Yet, it was the very word used by our most revered Śrīla Prabhupāda when asked about initiation in the future, particularly when he is no longer with us.

1. **Satsvarūpa:** "Then our next question concerns **initiations** in the future, **particularly** at that time **when you are no longer with us**. We want to know how first and second initiations will be conducted."
2. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "Yes. I shall recommend some of you. After this is settled up. I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating *ācārya*."
3. **Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** "Is that called *ṛtvik-ācārya*?"

4. Śrīla Prabhupāda: "*Ṛtvik*. Yes."

— Room Conversation with Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Vṛndāvana, May 28th, 1977

This *ṛtvik* system of initiations is not a concoction of some disgruntled devotees but is the authorized method so mercifully given to us by Śrīla Prabhupāda for the benefit of all of us.

Chapter 1: Documentary Evidence

For all important managerial issues in ISKCON, Śrīla Prabhupāda released official documents that clearly spelt out his intentions.

In this section, we shall take a look at the conclusive, undeniable evidence of Śrīla Prabhupāda's intentions regarding initiation procedures after his physical presence as found in ISKCON's legal documents and official audio transcripts.

We shall study the following three documents in this section:

1. Audio Transcript of the May 28th 1977 Conversation
2. July 9th 1977 Letter/Directive
3. Śrīla Prabhupāda's Declaration of Will (June 5th 1977)

1.1: The "Appointment Tape" Analysis

We shall start with this direct question that was asked to Śrīla Prabhupāda on the 28th of May, 1977. This recorded conversation is referred to by the unauthorized *gurus* of ISKCON as the "Appointment Tape" implying that Śrīla Prabhupāda appointed his successors as *gurus* in this conversation. Let us look at it now.

ROOM CONVERSATION — Vṛndāvana, May 28th, 1977

1. **Satsvarūpa:** "Then our next question concerns initiations in the future, particularly at that time when you are no longer with us. We want to know how first and second initiations will be conducted."
2. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "Yes. I shall recommend some of you. After this is settled up. I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating *ācārya*."
3. **Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** "Is that called *ṛtvik-ācārya*?"
4. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "*Ṛtvik*. Yes."
5. **Satsvarūpa:** "What is the relationship of that person who gives the initiation and..."
6. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "He's *guru*. He's *guru*."
7. **Satsvarūpa:** "But he does it on your behalf."

8. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "Yes. That is formality. Because in my presence one should not become *guru*, so on my behalf. On my order, *āmāra ājñāya guru hañā*, be actually *guru*. But on my order."
9. **Satsvarūpa:** "So they maybe considered your disciples?"
10. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "Yes, they are disciples but consider... who..."
11. **Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** "No. He is asking that these *ṛtvik-ācāryas*, they are officiating, giving *dīkṣā*, their - the people who they give *dīkṣā* to - whose disciples are they?"
12. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "They are his disciples."
13. **Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** "They are his disciples."
14. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "Who is initiating...His grand-disciple..."
15. **Satsvarūpa:** "Then we have a question concerning..."
16. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "When I order you become *guru*, he becomes regular *guru*. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple. Just see."

The Analysis

The above conversation can be a little bewildering at first. Let us now make an unbiased analytical study of it to gain a better perspective. Let us take it line by line.

1. **Satsvarūpa:** "Then our next question concerns initiations in the future, **particularly at that time when you are no longer with us.** We want to know how first and second initiations will be conducted."
2. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "Yes. I shall recommend some of you. After this is settled up. I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating *ācārya*."
3. **Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** "Is that called *ṛtvik-ācārya*?"
4. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "*Ṛtvik*. Yes."

In point #1 above, the question is direct and plain. Śrīla Prabhupāda answers that plainly in point #2 and point #4 that he is referring to a *ṛtvik* here. Although the conversation gets a little more confusing later on, here Śrīla Prabhupāda gives the clearest answer possible — *ṛtvik*.

What is meant by the word *ṛtvik*, by the way? There are 17 references to this word in the books of Śrīla Prabhupāda and they all always meant only one thing – a priest. A priest officiates a ceremony on somebody's behalf. His role is only to conduct

the ceremony. He is different from the *ācārya* or *guru* who holds far greater qualification as well as responsibility.

An *ācārya*'s qualification is that he must be a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa and he must give transcendental knowledge to dissipate the ignorance of the disciple. A disciple also worships the *guru* as his eternal master as indicated by the words of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura — *cakṣu dāna dila jei janme janme prabhu sei*. But a *ṛtvik* does not hold this position.

5. **Satsvarūpa:** "What is the relationship of that person who gives the initiation and..."
6. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "He's *guru*. He's *guru*."

At point #5, Satsvarūpa is asking about the relationship between the *ṛtvik* and the disciple but he did not phrase his question correctly. He asked the relation between the initiator and the disciple. It is important to note here that the initiator or *guru* is Śrīla Prabhupāda and the *ṛtvik* is only an officiating representative. Therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda answered in point #6 that the initiator (Śrīla Prabhupāda) is the *guru* of the new disciple.

7. **Satsvarūpa:** "But he does it on your behalf."
8. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "Yes. That is formality. Because in my presence one should not become *guru*, so on my behalf. On my order, *āmāra ājñāya guru hañā*, be actually *guru*. But on my order."

In point #7, Satsvarūpa is trying to clarify what he understood. In point #8, Śrīla Prabhupāda implied that it is not etiquette to become a *guru* when one's *guru* is still physically present. But then, he immediately added that just by his disappearance, the *ṛtviks* do not automatically become *gurus* but must wait for his order to be so. "On my order..." It is prudent to note here that Śrīla Prabhupāda is speaking of an order in the future tense. That means this tape cannot be called the "Appointment Tape" as he is not appointing anyone here but pointing to the future.

9. **Satsvarūpa:** "So they maybe considered your disciples?"
10. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "Yes, they are disciples but consider... who..."
11. **Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** "No. He is asking that these *ṛtvik-ācāryas*, they are officiating, giving *dīkṣā*, their — the people who they give *dīkṣā* to — whose disciples are they?"

12. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "They are his disciples."
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14. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "Who is initiating...His grand-disciple..."
15. **Satsvarūpa:** "Then we have a question concerning..."
16. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** "When I order you become *guru*, he becomes regular *guru*. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple. Just see."

In point #10, Śrīla Prabhupāda did not seem to understand the question of Satsvarūpa in point #9. So Tamāla Kṛṣṇa clarifies the question in point #11. Śrīla Prabhupāda's answer to this question is actually the combination of points #12 and #14. That means he said, "They are his disciples who is initiating". That means they are Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples as he is initiating, using the *ṛtviks* as his representatives in the ceremony. But halfway through this reply, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa reiterates Śrīla Prabhupāda's words in point #13. Therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda's words appear separated.

Then, in point #14 again, he is mentioning the word 'grand-disciple'. Satsvarūpa tries to ask another question in point #15 but Śrīla Prabhupāda, in point #16 continues from point #14 that one becomes his grand-disciple only when he orders any of his disciples to become *guru*. Then he clarifies that they must wait for his order to become what Śrīla Prabhupāda terms as 'regular *guru*'. So the order is not there at the time of this conversation. So this is actually not the so-called hyped "Appointment Tape".

1.2: The Official Appointment of Ṛtviks

Śrīla Prabhupāda did not leave the future of ISKCON hanging in the air with an apparently ambiguous conversation (on May 28th, 1977). He actually went on to issue a written directive to all the temples of the world in order to clearly spell out his intention. Now let us take a good look at this directive, which is the next piece of evidence – a letter dated July 9th, 1977.

A snapshot of the original letter is inserted below. It is a little difficult to read. Therefore we have included a full reproduction of the letter right after this snapshot. But for now, we would like to draw your attention to the signatures of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī (Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal secretary at that time) at the end of the document snapshot. With two signatures, it is a legal document. All of ISKCON has to follow this directive without question.

ISKCON

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS
Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



July 9th, 1977

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 Prabhupad indicated that soon He would appoint some of His senior disciples to act as "rittik" - 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 das Goswami
His Holiness Jayapataka Swami
His Holiness Tamal Krsna Goswami
His Holiness Hridayananda Goswami
His Holiness Bhavananda Goswami
His Holiness Namasdutta Swami
His Holiness Ramesvara Swami
His Holiness Marikesa Swami
His Grace Bhagavan das Adhikari
His Grace Jayatirtha das Adhikari

In the past Temple Presidents have written to Srila Prabhupad recommending a particular devotee's initiation. Now that Srila Prabhupad 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 Prabhupad by giving a spiritual name, or in the case of second initiation, by chanting on the Gayatri thread, just as Srila Prabhupad 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 accepted him or her to Srila Prabhupad, to be included in His Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book.

Hoping this finds you all well.

Your servant,

Tamal Krishna Goswami

Tamal Krsna Goswami
Secretary to Srila Prabhupad

Approved

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Below, you will see a full and clear reproduction of the letter so that you can read its contents easily and clearly.

**THE JULY 9TH, 1977 LETTER
(REPRODUCED)**

July 9th, 1977

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

Dear Mahārājas and Prabhus,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your feet. Recently when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Prabhupāda indicated that soon He would appoint some of His senior disciples to act as "*rittik*"—representative of the *ācārya*, 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:

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His Holiness Bhavananda Gosvami
His Holiness Hamsadutta Swami
His Holiness Ramesvara Swami
His Holiness Harikesa Swami
His Grace Bhagavan das Adhikari
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In the past Temple Presidents have written to Śrīla Prabhupāda recommending a particular devotee's initiation. Now that Śrīla Prabhupāda 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 Śrīla Prabhupāda by giving a spiritual name, or in the case of second initiation, by chanting on the Gayatri thread, just as Śrīla Prabhupāda has done. The newly initiated devotees are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, 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 accepted him or her to Śrīla Prabhupāda, to be included in His Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book.

Hoping this finds you all well.

Your servant,

(signature appears on the original document)

Tamala Kṛṣṇa Gosvami

Secretary to Śrīla Prabhupāda

Approved [Śrīla Prabhupāda's signature appears on original document]

Analysis of the July 9th, 1977 Letter

1. It gets crystal clear here. This has been Śrīla Prabhupāda's style of management. Any important directive is written down and issued to all the temples of the world, not given in some haphazard way in a confusing, private room conversation.
2. Please note that in the first paragraph of the above letter, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī was referring to a recent meeting in Vṛndāvana of all GBC members and Śrīla Prabhupāda for the purpose of clarifying the initiation process. This is the exact substance of the May 28th, 1977 conversation. So if you at all feel confused reading that conversation or are somehow still not clear even after going through its analysis above, here is the clarified form of it. This letter is directly pointing to that conversation.
3. Moreover, it is important to remember how that May 28th conversation started. Remember the words, "particularly when you are no longer here with us"? So it

all unquestionably points to the time after Śrīla Prabhupāda’s departure. We should read this entire letter in that context.

4. The letter starts off saying that Śrīla Prabhupāda would appoint *rittik* (Bengali pronunciation of the word *ṛtvik*) representatives of the *ācārya*. He clearly did not appoint any *gurus*. Śrīla Prabhupāda could not have been clearer than this.
5. Next, he clarifies that the 11 names that are to be mentioned will act in the capacity of *ṛtviks* – reiterating that they are not appointed as *gurus*.
6. The next big thing comes after the 11 names have been mentioned. The word ‘henceforward’ indicates an immediate start point but an indefinite end point or at least until another order in the future supersedes this order. And for a fact, Śrīla Prabhupāda never issued any order after this to imply that these 11 persons would automatically become *gurus* after his disappearance. Moreover, this word should be understood in context with the original question of the May 28th, 1977 conversation in which Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvāmī said, “particularly when you are no longer here with us.”
7. Then, it is said that the recommendations for initiations should be sent by the Temple Presidents “to whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple.” The word ‘nearest’ implies convenience, and not a sacred *guru*-disciple relationship which is based on a deep sense of trust. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī himself explains it best in his confession in 1980 (Appendix B) thus: “This is a very important point, because when it comes to initiating, if it isn't whoever is nearest, it's wherever your heart goes. Who (you) repose your faith on, you take initiation from him. But when it's officiating, it's whoever is nearest, and he was very clear. He named them. They were spread out all over the world, and he said, 'Whoever you're nearest, you just approach that person, and they'll check you out. Then, on my behalf, they'll initiate.’”
8. Then, in the next paragraph of the letter, we see the following phrases which undeniably point to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s desire to appoint *ṛtvik* representatives of the *ācārya* (himself) and his undisputed position as the *dīkṣā-guru* of ISKCON:
 - a. “...these representatives may accept the devotee as an initiated disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda”
 - b. “The newly initiated devotees are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda...”

- c. “The name of a newly initiated disciple should be sent by the representative who has accepted him or her to Śrīla Prabhupāda..”
 - d. “to be included in His Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book.”
9. As we can see, the same point was repeated 4 times. In a [lecture on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 6.2.7 in Vrndavana on September 10, 1975](#), Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “The *śāstra* reminding us three times. Just like we stress upon something that "Do this! Do this! Do this!" Thrice. So therefore it is said three times, *harer nāma harer nāma harer nāma*, so that he may not forget. He may not be misguided by the so-called Māyāvādīs that any name... No. *Harer nāma, three times. Harer nāma harer nāma harer nāma eva* [Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā 17.21], again *eva*. Then again three times: *kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*. You cannot deviate from this process. There is no other alternative process. You cannot say that ‘I will be liberated by this process or that process,’ no.” If repeating thrice makes something so important, what about 4 times then?
10. One may ask as to what would happen after these eleven have passed away or fallen from grace for any reason.
- a. The sentence prior to the list of eleven representatives reads “His Divine Grace has **so far** given a list of eleven disciples who will act in that capacity:” The words “so far” indicate that there is no intention to make them the final list and that is exactly what was confirmed in point b below.
 - b. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī, in [his confession in 1980](#), quoted Śrīla Prabhupāda as saying, “As is necessary, others may be added.”

This letter/directive is rock-solid evidence to show that Śrīla Prabhupāda set up the *ṛtvik* system of initiations and is thus forcefully driving the point home that all future disciples of this movement are his disciples.

1.3: The Analysis of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Declaration of Will

Further evidence comes from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Declaration of Will. The Will is quite lengthy to reproduce here, so we shall only look upon those points which highlight the position of Śrīla Prabhupāda as the initiating spiritual master (*dīkṣā-guru*) of ISKCON. To view the entire Will of Śrīla Prabhupāda, please refer to [Appendix A](#).

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

- a. Now suppose in a temple, Mr. A is the Temple President, Mr. B the GBC representative of the geographical zone in which the temple exists and Mr. C the *guru* of the Temple President. Now Mr. A will want to be a loyal disciple of Mr. C and if at all an instruction of the GBC representative Mr. B does not coincide with his *guru* Mr. C's instruction, he would choose to be loyal to his *guru* Mr. C rather than the GBC representative Mr. B. But this constitutes a disobedience to Śrīla Prabhupāda because according to Śrīla Prabhupāda, the GBC has to be the ultimate managing authority, not anyone else.
- b. The above consideration shows that by following the current *guru* system, one is forced to offend either one's *guru* or Śrīla Prabhupāda in such conflicting situations. But by following the *ṛtvik* system of initiations, there would be no such contradiction.

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.**

- a. By introducing the *guru* figure into the scene, the system of management is put through a change, which is against the order of Śrīla Prabhupāda.
- b. Due to this unauthorized change, ISKCON history has repeatedly shown that there have been many managerial problems because the less-than-perfect *gurus* tried to wield their influence over their disciples while the Temple Management could not have any control over them. The Temple management is put under enormous strain in this way.

c. Moreover such a change is against the very definition of GBC as per the minutes of GBC meeting in 1975:

"Resolved: The GBC (Governing Body Commissioned) 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-Ācārya and supreme authority. The GBC accepts as its life and

soul His divine instructions and recognizes 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, Resolution 1, GBC minutes 1975

3. In point #3 of the Will, each ISKCON property in India was entrusted to 3 executive directors and the names of the properties and their executive directors have been named. Then Śrīla Prabhupāda says this: **The executive directors who have herein been designated are appointed for life. In the event of the death or failure to act for any reason of any of the said directors, a successor director or directors may be appointed by the remaining directors, provided the new director is my initiated disciple** following strictly all the rules and regulations of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness as detailed in my books, and provided that there are never less than three (3) or more than five (5) executive directors acting at one time.
 - a. Theoretically, say by 2050, all of the disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda during his physical presence will have passed away. Who will be the directors of these properties then? The only deduction should be that all the future disciples of this movement are Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples initiated through the *ṛtvik* system of initiations set up by Śrīla Prabhupāda himself.
 - b. When the draft of the Will was being read out by Girirāja Svāmī on June 2, 1977 to Śrīla Prabhupāda, the highlighted words (in bold) above were "**an initiated disciple**" but in the final document, we see that it has been changed to "**my initiated disciple**". This shows that it was a deliberate move by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's intentions in the declaration of his Will are consistent with the July 9th, 1977 letter/directive and the May 28th, 1977 conversation. He clearly pointed to the *ṛtvik* system of initiations thus willing to retain his position of the *dīkṣā guru* of ISKCON even after his physical departure from this world.

1.4: Principal Confessions of Tamāla Kṛṣṇa (Srila Prabhupada's Secretary and Witness to the July 9th, 1977 Order)

1. On April 22nd, 1977, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī had this to say to Śrīla Prabhupāda: "Well, I have studied myself and all of your disciples, and it's clear fact that we are all conditioned souls, so we cannot be *guru*."

2. On December 3rd, 1980, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī confessed as follows: "Actually, Prabhupāda never appointed any *gurus*. [...] He appointed eleven *ṛtviks*. He never appointed them *gurus*. Myself and the other GBC have done the greatest disservice to this movement the last three years because we interpreted the appointment of *ṛtviks* as the appointment of *gurus*." It is actually worth reading this entire confession ([Appendix B](#)) where he stresses the point that Śrīla Prabhupāda never appointed any *gurus*.

Chapter 2: Philosophical Evidence

Until now, we have looked at the documentary evidence from the legal documents and official audio transcriptions whose veracity is beyond any doubt. Now, we shall visit the principle of *guru-tattva* from the philosophical or scriptural point of view to understand who can be a bona fide *guru*, who cannot be so, and also to further solidify our understanding of Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions regarding initiations in ISKCON after 1977.

2.1: Definition of Dīkṣā (Initiation)

Dīkṣā is a combination of two words — ‘*Dī*’ and ‘*kṣa*’. ‘*Dī*’ stands for *divya-jñānam*, transcendental knowledge, and ‘*kṣa*’ stands for *kṣapayati*, annihilates or eradicates (sinful reactions). (According to word-to-word translations in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 4.24.61 and Caitanya-caritāmṛta Antya-līlā 3.62). Therefore, *dīkṣā* means the injection of transcendental knowledge and the consequent annihilation of sinful reactions. The following verses point to this definition of the word ‘*dīkṣā*’.

*divyaṁ jñānaṁ yato dadyāt kuryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam
tasmāt dīkṣeti sā proktā deśikais tattva-kovidaiḥ*

“*Dīkṣā* is the process by which one can awaken his transcendental knowledge and vanquish all reactions caused by sinful activity. A person expert in the study of the revealed scriptures knows this process as *dīkṣā*.”

— Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's *Bhakti-sandarbhā* (283), as quoted in the purport of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 15.108

*tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

*yathaidhāṁsi samiddho 'gnir bhasma-sāt kurute 'rjuna
jñānāgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi bhasma-sāt kurute tathā*

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. **The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you** because he has seen the truth. ... As the blazing fire turns firewood to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge **burn to ashes all reactions**

to material activities.”

— *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.34 & 4.37

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmlītaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

“I was born in the **darkest ignorance**, and **my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge**. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him.”

— Introduction to *Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is

*cakṣu-dān dilo jei, janme janme prabhu sei,
divya-jñān hṛde prokāśito
prema-bhakti jāhā hoite, avidyā vināśa jāte*

“He opens my darkened eyes and **fills my heart with transcendental knowledge**. He is my lord birth after birth. From him ecstatic *prema* emanates; by him **ignorance is destroyed**.”

— *Śrī Guru-vandanā* song of Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Stanza 3

So *dīkṣā* happens when transcendental knowledge is transmitted from the self-realized *guru* to disciple and the disciples’ sinful reactions are thus completely annihilated. The name-giving ceremony is a necessary formality but that can be performed by other *ṛtviks* (priests) on behalf of the *guru*. In ISKCON, all devotees receive transcendental knowledge from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books. Therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda is the *dīkṣā guru* for everyone.

2.2: Who Can Be A Dīkṣā Guru?

There are two criteria for a person to become an initiating spiritual master —

1. Possessing the qualification of a first-class devotee
2. Authorization by his spiritual master.

Being a pure devotee is the preliminary qualification to become a *guru*. But that alone does not automatically mean that he becomes a *dīkṣā guru*. He still needs the authorization of his *guru* to become a regular *dīkṣā guru*. Of course, if one is authorized by his *guru* to become a *guru*, it is to be understood that he is already a pure devotee

because that is the preliminary qualification to become a *guru*.

Let us now revisit the above criteria from the philosophical or scriptural viewpoint. For this we refer to texts from the Vedic literature and the quotes of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

2.2.1: Qualification of a Dīkṣā Guru

A bona fide spiritual master is a pure, first-class devotee. There are 3 classes of devotees and the spiritual master should be a first-class devotee. The qualifications of first-class devotees are as follows:

*sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ
bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ*

“The most advanced devotee sees within everything the soul of all souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Consequently he sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord and understands that everything that exists is eternally situated within the Lord.”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.2.45

*sarva-bhūta-stham ātmānaṁ sarva-bhūtāni cātmani
īkṣate yoga-yuktātmā sarvatra sama-darśanaḥ*

“A true *yogī* observes Me in all beings, and also sees every being in Me. Indeed, the self-realized man sees Me everywhere.”

— Bhagavad-gītā 6.29

“As far as the development of faith is concerned, one who is well versed in the literatures of devotional service and has attained the stage of firm faith is called a first-class person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And in the second class are those who are not very advanced in understanding the devotional scriptures but who automatically have firm faith that Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* or service to Kṛṣṇa is the best course and so in good faith have taken it up. Thus they are superior to the third class who have neither perfect knowledge of the scriptures nor good faith but by association and simplicity are trying to follow. **The third-class person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness may fall down, but when one is in the second class or first class, he does not fall down.**”

— Bhagavad-gītā 9.3, Purport

A bona fide *guru* never falls down from his devotional position to engage in non-devotional or sinful or materialistic activity.

*vāco vegam manasaḥ krodha-vegam
jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etān vegān yo viṣaheta dhīraḥ
sarvām apīmām pṛthivīm sa śiṣyāt*

“A sober person who can tolerate the urge to speak, the mind’s demands, the actions of anger and the urges of the tongue, belly and genitals is qualified to make disciples all over the world.”

— *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* 1 (Nectar of Instruction 1)

*mahā-bhāgavata-śreṣṭho
brāhmaṇo vai gurur nṛṇām*

“The *guru* must be situated on the topmost platform of devotional service. There are three classes of devotees, and the *guru* must be accepted from the topmost class. The first-class devotee is the spiritual master for all kinds of people.”

— *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 24.330, Purport;
Quoted from *Padma Purāṇa*

“When one has attained the topmost position of *mahā-bhāgavata*, he is to be accepted as a *guru* and worshiped exactly like Hari, the Personality of Godhead. Only such a person is eligible to occupy the post of a *guru*.”

— *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 24.330, Purport

“Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has given some practical hints to the effect that an *uttama-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇava can be recognized by his ability to convert many fallen souls to Vaiṣṇavism. **One should not become a spiritual master unless he has attained the platform of *uttama-adhikārī*.** A neophyte Vaiṣṇava or a Vaiṣṇava situated on the intermediate platform can also accept disciples, but such disciples must be on the same platform, and it should be understood that they cannot advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life under his insufficient guidance. **Therefore a disciple should be careful to accept an *uttama-adhikārī* as a spiritual master.**”

— Nectar of Instruction 5, Purport

2.2.2: Authorization of Dīkṣā Guru

Although the spiritual master should be a first-class devotee, it is not that every first-class devotee automatically becomes a spiritual master. He still needs to meet the second criterion — authorization. There are many examples throughout Vedic history of pure devotees who did not become spiritual masters. So a pure devotee is not synonymous with a spiritual master but a bona fide spiritual master should be a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

"On the whole, you may know that he is not a liberated person, and therefore, he cannot initiate any person to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. **It requires special spiritual benediction from higher authorities.**"

— Śrīla Prabhupāda's Letter to Janardāna, Apr 26, 1968

"One should take initiation from a bona fide spiritual master coming in the disciplic succession who is **authorized by his predecessor spiritual master**. This is called *dīkṣā-vidhāna*."

— *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 4.8.54, Purport

Indian man (1): When did you begin to become the spiritual leader of Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

...

Prabhupāda: When my *Guru Mahārāja* ordered me. This is the *guru-paramparā*.

Indian man (1): Did he just...

Prabhupāda: Try to understand. Don't go very speedily. A *guru* can become *guru* when he's ordered by his *guru*. That's all. Otherwise nobody can become *guru*.

— Q&A session of Śrīla Prabhupāda's lecture on Bhagavad-gītā 7.2 on October 28, 1975, in Nairobi, Kenya

2.3: The Paramparā Puzzle

In this chapter, we shall study how Śrīla Prabhupāda's *ṛtvik* system of initiations, though unconventional, is perfectly in line with scriptural conclusions and disciplic tradition.

2.3.1: Should The Dīkṣā Guru Be Physically Alive In Order To Accept Disciples?

Sometimes, the contention is offered that with no successor to Śrīla Prabhupāda, the *paramparā*, or the disciplic succession, is being forcibly stopped by the followers of the *ṛtvik* system. So, they say that there has to be somebody living in order to keep the succession unbroken and continuous. Moreover, they feel that one cannot get the personal guidance from books as is possible by physical presence. Does a *guru* require to be physically present on the planet to accept disciples or to disseminate transcendental knowledge? We shall now address this question from the quotes of Śrīla Prabhupāda and from scriptural references to gain proper perspective.

Madhudviṣa: "Is there any way for a Christian to, without the help of a spiritual master, to reach the spiritual sky through believing in the words of Jesus Christ and trying to follow his teachings?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "I don't follow."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: "Can a Christian in this age, without a spiritual master, but by reading the Bible and following Jesus's words, reach the..."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "When you read Bible, you follow spiritual master. How can you say without? As soon as you read Bible, that means you are following the instruction of Lord Jesus Christ, that means you are following spiritual master. So where is the opportunity of being without spiritual master?"

Madhudviṣa: "I was referring to a living spiritual master."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "Spiritual master is not the question of... **Spiritual master is eternal.** Spiritual master is eternal. So your question is without spiritual master. Without spiritual master you cannot be, at any stage of your life. You may accept this spiritual

master or that spiritual master. That is a different thing. But you have to accept. As you say that "by reading Bible," **when you read Bible that means you are following the spiritual master represented by some priest or some clergyman in the line of Lord Jesus Christ.**"

— Śrīla Prabhupāda's Morning Walk, October 2, Seattle

Devotee: "Śrīla Prabhupāda, when you are not present with us, how is it possible to receive instructions, for example, on questions that may arise?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "Well, the questions... Answers are there in my books."

— Śrīla Prabhupāda's Morning Walk, May 13th 1973, Los Angeles, USA

"He reasons ill who tells that Vaiṣṇavas die, when thou art living still in sound."

— Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

"Kṛṣṇa and His representative is the same. Just like Kṛṣṇa can be present simultaneously in millions of places. Similarly, the spiritual master also can be present wherever the disciple wants. A spiritual master is the principle, not the body. Just like a television can be seen in thousands of places by the principle of relay monitoring."

— Śrīla Prabhupāda's Letter to Mālatī, May 28, 1968

There are many other quotes of Śrīla Prabhupāda to this effect but the point here is very clear. It is not necessary for the body of the spiritual master to be physically present to disseminate knowledge, especially when his books are doing the job.

Even when Śrīla Prabhupāda was physically around, he did not personally initiate many of his disciples and neither did they get much personal association, if any, with Śrīla Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda set up the system of management in such a way that the devotees involved in temple management and the GBC are his representatives and they act as the *śikṣā guru* and they would instruct other devotees as per Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings and everyone would become Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples. They would also conduct initiations based on the very same ṛtvik system which is now under contention.

*evam paramparā-prāptam imam rājarṣayo viduḥ
sa kāleneha mahatā yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa*

evam—thus; *paramparā*—disciplic succession; *prāptam*—received; *imam*—this science; *rājarṣayaḥ*—the saintly kings; *viduḥ*—understood; *saḥ*—that knowledge; *kālena*—in the

course of time; *iha*—in this world; *mahatā*—by great; ***yogaḥ*—the science of one's relationship with the Supreme; *naṣṭaḥ*—scattered; *parantapa*—O Arjuna, subduer of the enemies.**

“This supreme science was thus received through the chain of **disciplic succession**, and the saintly kings understood it in that way. But in course of time the succession **was broken**, and therefore the **science as it is appears to be lost.**”

— *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.2

From this verse, we can clearly understand that a *paramparā*, or disciplic succession, is considered broken when the science of one's relationship with the Supreme is lost. The exact words used here are *yogaḥ naṣṭaḥ*, which means the science being lost; it is not mentioned *śarīra naṣṭaḥ*, or the body of the *guru* being lost. So the *paramparā* is considered broken when the science of *bhakti-yoga* is lost, not when the body of the spiritual master is lost.

In the context of ISKCON, the books of Śrīla Prabhupāda are very much there and thousands of people are becoming devotees by reading these books. So the science of devotional service is not lost. Therefore, the *paramparā* is not broken.

"These are not ordinary books. It is recorded chanting. Anyone who reads, he is hearing."

— Śrīla Prabhupāda's letter to Rūpānuga dāsa,
Oct 19, 1974

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

— *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 2.9.8, Purport

“When we feel separation from Kṛṣṇa or the spiritual master, we should just try to remember their words of instructions, and we will no longer feel that separation. Such association with Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master should be association by vibration, not physical presence. That is real association. We put so much stress on seeing, but when Kṛṣṇa was present on this earth, so many people saw Him and did not realize that He is God; so what is the advantage of seeing? By seeing Kṛṣṇa, we will not understand Him, but by listening carefully to His teachings, we can come to the platform of understanding. We can touch Kṛṣṇa immediately by sound vibration; therefore we should give more stress to the sound vibration of Kṛṣṇa and of the spiritual master—

then we'll feel happy and won't feel separation.”

— excerpt from the book
Elevation to Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, Pages 57-58

All these quotes point to the fact that by reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, we can directly be initiated by him by receiving transcendental knowledge.

How can we be sure that Śrīla Prabhupāda is pleased with our service since he does not physically reciprocate with us? The answer is that if the spiritual master is pleased, then the Supreme Lord is pleased. *Yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādaḥ*. And once the Lord is pleased, he will bestow the disciple with genuine spiritual advancement.

*bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir
anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālah
prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus
tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo 'nu-ghāsam*

“Devotion, direct experience of the Supreme Lord, and detachment from other things — these three occur simultaneously for one who has taken shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in the same way that pleasure, nourishment and relief from hunger come simultaneously and increasingly, with each bite, for a person engaged in eating.”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.2.42

Genuine spiritual advancement means these three things. If one progressively feels genuine unmotivated devotion, has direct realizations of the Supreme Lord and especially feels progressive detachment from sinful life, it is to be understood that Śrīla Prabhupāda is pleased.

Śrīla Prabhupāda further explains this point:

“The spiritual master is certainly very merciful to his disciples, and consequently by satisfying him a devotee gets strength from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu therefore says, *guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*: one must first please the spiritual master, and then one automatically pleases Kṛṣṇa and gets the strength with which to cross the ocean of nescience. If one seriously desires to return home, back to Godhead, one must therefore become strong enough by pleasing the spiritual master, for thus one gets the weapon with which to conquer the enemy, and

one also gets the grace of Kṛṣṇa. Simply getting the weapon of *jñāna* is insufficient. One must sharpen the weapon by serving the spiritual master and adhering to his instructions. Then the candidate will get the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 7.15.45, Purport

2.3.2: Can We Take Instructions from Predecessor Ācāryas?

A question may be raised thus — If we can associate and take initiation from an *ācārya* just by reading his books, then why can't we jump the disciplic succession and take instruction directly from, say, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura or even Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, or any predecessor *ācārya* higher up in the disciplic succession? The answer is given in the following quote by Śrīla Prabhupāda:

“... in order to receive the real message of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam **one should approach the current link**, or spiritual master, **in the chain of disciplic succession**. After being initiated by the proper spiritual master in that chain of succession, one should engage himself in the discharge of *tapasya* in the execution of devotional service.”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 2.9.7, Purport

The current link in the disciplic succession is that spiritual master who is actively disseminating the transcendental disciplic conclusion to the public at large. Śrīla Prabhupāda is doing that by way of his books. Therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda is the authorized *dīkṣā guru* of ISKCON.

2.3.3: Is Śrīla Prabhupāda Breaking The Disciplic Tradition?

There is a contention offered that Śrīla Prabhupāda came into this world to present the authorized disciplic conclusion of the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava sampradāya*. But never before was a *ṛtvik* system of initiation set up by any predecessor *ācārya* in our *sampradāya*. How can Śrīla Prabhupāda do something that is against the tradition of our *sampradāya*? Therefore, they say that the *ṛtvik* system, particularly after his manifest presence, is not authorized by Śrīla Prabhupāda as he would never do anything that is against the disciplic tradition.

Now, it is prudent to note that the tradition of disciplic succession is to preach the pure

Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy to the conditioned souls. How a particular spiritual master does it as per the time, place and circumstances that he is in, is a transcendental technical detail that may vary from one spiritual master to another but the principle of preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness remains intact. The spreading of Kṛṣṇa consciousness constitutes the disciplic tradition, not the nitty-gritty.

As a matter of fact, Śrīla Prabhupāda made many adjustments according to time, place and circumstance. Among many other examples, a prominent one was that he ordered all his disciples to chant 16 rounds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* daily on the beads. But the actual standard of daily prescription of chanting is 64 rounds a day. In fact, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla Prabhupāda, went on record saying that if one chants less than 64 rounds a day, he is not even considered to be a human being. But Śrīla Prabhupāda observed that the modern candidate is unfit to chant 64 rounds and therefore he gave us 16 rounds-per-day stipulation.

In the following translation and purport to a verse in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, Śrīla Prabhupāda reveals an interesting truth.

*svayaṁ samuttīrya sudustaraṁ dyuman
bhavārṇavaṁ bhīmam adabhra-sauḥṛdāḥ
bhavat-padāmbhoruha-nāvam atra te
nidhāya yātāḥ sad-anugraho bhavān*

“O Lord, who resemble the shining sun, You are always ready to fulfill the desire of Your devotee, and therefore You are known as a desire tree [*vāñchā-kalpataru*]. When **ācāryas** completely take shelter under Your lotus feet in order to cross the fierce ocean of nescience, they **leave behind on earth the method by which they cross, and because You are very merciful to Your other devotees, You accept this method to help them.**”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.2.31

“In our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, ... the devotees have been advised to refrain from four sinful activities — illicit sex, intoxication, meat-eating and gambling — and **to chant sixteen rounds a day. These are bona fide instructions.** ... The *ācārya* gives the suitable method for crossing the ocean of nescience by accepting the boat of the Lord’s lotus feet, and if this method is strictly followed, the followers will ultimately reach the destination, by the grace of the Lord. This method is called *ācārya-sampradāya*. It is therefore said, *sampradāya-vihīnā ye mantrās te niṣphalā matāḥ* (*Padma Purāṇa*). The

ācārya-sampradāya is strictly bona fide. Therefore one must accept the *ācārya-sampradāya*; otherwise one's endeavor will be futile."

— *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 10.2.31, Purport

The stipulation of 16-rounds-a-day is certainly unconventional but Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions in this purport above that it is a strictly bona fide instruction. This is the transcendental authority of the *ācārya* to preach according to the time, place and circumstance. The principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not compromised but the minor technical details are adjusted by the *ācārya* (*ācārya-sampradāya*) to suit the particular situation. So, if the unconventional 16-rounds-a-day stipulation is bona fide, then why not the unconventional *ṛtvik* system?

If one is not ready to accept the *ṛtvik* system of initiations because it is unconventional, then one should also not accept the 16 rounds' regulation. One may go on and chant 64 rounds as was the original prescription by predecessor *ācāryas*. But that is practically not possible in today's context. So the only bona fide and practical process is to follow Śrīla Prabhupāda's prescription of 16 rounds and hence, his *ṛtvik* system of initiations also.

2.3.4: "But Śrīla Prabhupāda Said Like This Before ..."

Śrīla Prabhupāda may have seemingly encouraged his disciples many times previously to become *gurus* in the future, after his physical departure, and initiate devotees on their own, thus continuing the chain of disciplic succession. Why then would he later introduce the *ṛtvik* system of initiations and stop the disciplic chain with him being the last in the succession?

It is prudent to remember that disciplic succession means the disciplic conclusion, or the science of devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.2. As long as Śrīla Prabhupāda's books are spreading the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the disciplic succession is not considered broken.

Nevertheless, we shall study the open order for everyone to become *guru*, which was also issued by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The instruction for everyone to become *guru* is found in the following verse in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, which was often quoted by Śrīla Prabhupāda:

*yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa
āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra' ei deśa*

"Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as they are given in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad Bhagavatam*. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land."

— *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 7.128*

However, the type of *guru* which Lord Caitanya is encouraging everyone to become is clearly established in the detailed purports following this verse:

"That is, one should stay at home, chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* and preach the instructions of Kṛṣṇa as they are given in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad Bhagavatam*."

— *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 7.128, Purport*

"One may remain a householder, a medical practitioner, an engineer or whatever. It doesn't matter. One only has to follow the instruction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and instruct relatives and friends in the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* ... **It is best not to accept any disciples.**"

— *Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā, 7.130, Purport*

We can see that these instructions do not demand that the *gurus* in question first attain any particular level of realization before they act. The request is immediate. From this it is clear that everyone is simply encouraged to preach what they may know, and in so doing become *śikṣā*, or instructing, *gurus*. This is further clarified by the stipulation for the *śikṣā guru* to remain in that position, and not then go on to become a *dīkṣā guru*:

"It is best not to accept any disciples."

— *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 7.130, Purport*

To accept disciples is the main business of a *dīkṣā guru*, whereas a *śikṣā guru* simply needs to carry on his duties in assisting the *dīkṣā guru* and preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness as best he can. It is clear from Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports that, in the above verse, Lord Caitanya is actually authorizing *śikṣā gurus*, not *dīkṣā gurus*.

Even though Śrīla Prabhupāda did mention many times earlier on to encourage everyone to go on to become *dīkṣā-gurus*, his order in the July 9, 1977 should supersede all of his previous statements. The following Q&A session clears up this

matter.

Acyutānanda: [reading question put by audience] "Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the end of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *sarva-dharmān parityajya* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66], but in another place in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, twice it is mentioned, *śreyān sva-dharmo, para-dharmo bhayāvahaḥ* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 3.35]: one should perform his own duty rather than another's duty."

Prabhupāda: Yes.

Acyutānanda: "How can we..."

Prabhupāda: I may say many things to you, but when I say something directly, "Do it," your first duty is to do that. You cannot argue, "Sir, you said me like this before." No, that is not your duty. What I say now, you do it. That is obedience. You cannot argue. Of course, Kṛṣṇa never said anything contradictory, but if when one thinks foolishly that Kṛṣṇa said something contradictory, no, that is not to be. You could not understand. So "Even though you could not understand, you take My direct orders now, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekam* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66]. That is your business." The master says like that, and the servant's business is to accept it as it is, without any argument.

— Śrīla Prabhupāda's lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.5.3, April 15, 1975, Hyderabad

In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa gave so many instructions to Arjuna, He spoke of all types of *yoga* from *dhyāna* to *jñāna*, but all this was superseded by His final instruction:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekam śaraṇam vraja
aham tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear."

— *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66

""You just give up everything and become My devotee, My worshipper" – should be taken as the final order of the Lord, and one should follow that principle."

— Teachings of Lord Caitanya, Chapter 11

Even the final instruction given by Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya in his song "*Bhaja Govindam*", was also meant to supersede all his previous Māyāvādī or impersonal instructions.

Śrīpāda Sankarācārya clearly advises right in the beginning of his song that all his previous deliberate Māyāvādī misinterpretations of the Vedic texts by elaborate study of grammatical arrangements is useless to help anyone at the end of life. He advises everyone to forget such nonsense and just worship Govinda in devotional service if one at all wants real benefit.

The point is that to execute the final instruction is the immediate duty of the disciple, not to argue about previous instructions that may seem contradictory. The final instruction supersedes all previous instructions. Therefore, the July 9th letter/directive and the declaration of Will of Śrīla Prabhupāda should be taken as his final instructions in this connection and should not be argued upon.

All this points to again the same thing — Śrīla Prabhupāda is the authorized *dīkṣā guru* of ISKCON for as long as his books are intact.

2.4: Is Śrīla Prabhupāda The Śikṣā or Dīkṣā Guru of ISKCON?

Another contention is that since Śrīla Prabhupāda is giving us the teachings through his books, he is the *śikṣā guru* and the *dīkṣā guru* is the one who gives the spiritual name.

But as we have already witnessed in the section above regarding the definition of *dīkṣā*, *dīkṣā* means the imparting of transcendental knowledge by the spiritual master. The giving of the name and chanting on the beads is only a formality that other devotees can do on behalf of Śrīla Prabhupāda as he instructed in the July 9, 1977 letter/directive. It is only a technical detail of the initiation process but real initiation is the transmission of transcendental knowledge.

The following quotes by Śrīla Prabhupāda clarify this matter.

“The GBC should all be the instructor *gurus*. I am in the initiator *guru*, and you should be the instructor *guru* by teaching what I am teaching and doing what I am doing.”

— Śrīla Prabhupāda’s letter to Madhudviṣa, Aug 4th 1975, Detroit, USA

“Sometimes a *dīkṣā guru* is not present always. Therefore one can take learning,

instruction, from an advanced devotee. That is called the *śikṣā guru*.”

— Śrīla Prabhupāda’s lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 17.1-3, July 4th 1974
[Incorrect Date, Fidelity Check Pending], Honolulu, Hawaii

The *dīkṣā guru* gives the standard transcendental knowledge and the *śikṣā guru* is anyone who guides other devotees and people in general according to the teachings of the *dīkṣā guru*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is the initiator *guru* (*dīkṣā guru*) and his responsible disciples should become the instructor *gurus* (*śikṣā gurus*).

Chapter 3: Śāstric Study of Deviations

Despite crystal clear instructions by Śrīla Prabhupāda regarding the continuance of his position as the *dīkṣā guru* of ISKCON even after his physical departure, so much deviation has ensued after his physical departure. Even to this day, the deviants may justify their stand in this way or that.

But with each passing day, their stand is becoming weaker and weaker as news of the official and unofficial downfalls of the deviants are revealed. An authorized or empowered *ācārya* never falls down but one who is not authorized will fall down.

“The spiritual master must never be carried away by an accumulation of wealth or a large number of followers. A bona fide spiritual master will never become like that. But sometimes, if a spiritual master is not properly authorized and only on his own initiative becomes a spiritual master, he may be carried away by an accumulation of wealth and large numbers of disciples. His is not a very high grade of devotional service. If a person is carried away by such achievements, then his devotional service becomes slackened. One should therefore strictly adhere to the principles of discipic succession.”

— Nectar of Devotion, Chapter 14: Devotional Qualifications

We have studied the qualifications of a *dīkṣā guru* in a previous chapter. In this chapter, we shall visit the *śāstric* references which point out why deviations take place, the position of deviants, the results of following deviants, how to rectify the situation and how to deal with the truthful, sincere devotees and the envious ones.

3.1: Causes of Deviation

Firstly, why do deviations take place, in general?

“The main business of human society is to think of the Supreme Personality of Godhead at all times, to become His devotees, to worship the Supreme Lord and to bow down before Him. The *ācārya*, the authorized representative of the Supreme Lord, **establishes these principles, but when he disappears, things once again become disordered.** The perfect disciples of the *ācārya* try to relieve the situation by sincerely following the instructions of the spiritual master.”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 4.28.48, Purport

When the *ācārya* is physically present, he can forcefully correct a wayward disciple and set things back in order. Śrīla Prabhupāda did this on countless occasions. But when the *ācārya* leaves, the onus of conducting his mission solely rests upon his disciples. Their sincerity plays the biggest role. If a disciple deliberately disobeys the instruction of the *dīkṣā guru* and if there are no competent senior *śikṣā gurus* to rectify the situation, then chaos reigns. This is what happened to Śrīla Prabhupāda's movement.

The psychology that leads to deviation is clearly explained in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta as follows:

*'niṣiddhācāra', 'kuṭīnāṭī', 'jīva-himsana'
'lābha', 'pūjā', 'pratiṣṭhādi' yata upasākhā-gaṇa*

"Some unnecessary creepers growing with the *bhakti* creeper are the creepers of **behavior unacceptable for those trying to attain perfection, diplomatic behavior, animal killing, mundane profiteering, mundane adoration and mundane importance.** All these are unwanted creepers."

— Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līla 19.159

"I can definitely say for myself, and for which I humbly beg forgiveness from everybody, that there was definitely some degree of trying to control [...] This is the conditioned nature, and it came out in the highest position of all, "*Guru*, oh wonderful! Now I'm a *guru*, and there is only eleven of us."

— Tamāla Kṛṣṇa's Confession — Dec 3, 1980

When a progressing devotee acquires these unwanted desires that are separate from the desires of the *ācārya* and the Supreme Lord, he is said to be a separatist. Such a person commits the greatest offence of disobeying the order of the spiritual master. His devotional service is understood to be mixed with the modes of passion and ignorance. He thus becomes envious of the *ācārya* and desires fame and adoration.

*abhisandhāya yo himsāṁ dambhaṁ mātsaryam eva vā
saṁrambhī bhinna-dṛḡ bhāvaṁ mayi kuryāt sa tāmasaḥ*

"**Devotional service** executed by a person who is **envious, proud, violent and angry, and who is a separatist**, is considered to be in the **mode of darkness.**"

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.29.8

*viṣayān abhisandhāya yaśa aiśvaryaṁ eva vā
arcādāv arcayed yo mām pṛthag-bhāvaḥ sa rājasah*

“The **worship of Deities** in the temple **by a separatist**, with a motive for **material enjoyment, fame and opulence**, is devotion in the **mode of passion**.”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.29.9

Such a devotee is considered a third class devotee.

*arcāyām eva haraye pūjām yaḥ śraddhayehate
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*

“A devotee who faithfully engages in the worship of the Deity in the temple but **does not behave properly toward other devotees** or people in general is called a *prākṛta-bhakta*, a materialistic devotee, and is considered to be in the lowest position (third class).”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.2.47

*tato 'rcāyām harim kecit samśraddhāya saparyayā
upāsata upāstāpi nārthadā puruṣa-dviṣām*

“Sometimes a **neophyte devotee** offers all the paraphernalia for worshiping the Lord, and he factually worships the Lord as the Deity, but because he **is envious of the authorized devotees of Lord Viṣṇu, the Lord is never satisfied with his devotional service**.”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 7.14.40

As long as one keeps oneself in the third class platform, one will fall down.

“**The third-class person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness may fall down**, but when one is in the second class or first class, he does not fall down.”

— Bhagavad-gītā 9.3, Purport

As long as one does not follow the strict prescription of *sādhana* given to us by Śrīla Prabhupāda — chanting 16 rounds, following the four regulative principles, waking up for *manglārati*, and participating in the entire morning program until the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam class and later on engaging in various other services, reading Śrīla

Prabhupāda's books daily — one is sure to remain in the third class position. And as long as one is in the third class position, he is bound to cause problems to other devotees because of his imperfect conduct.

The problem in ISKCON is that the senior most devotees have proven themselves to be third-class by falling down. And if such people head the movement in the garb of *gurus*, what will the result be? Utter chaos.

3.2: The Position of Deviants And Their Followers

Undoubtedly, Māyā is very strong. Therefore, sometimes a *sannyāsī* may also fall down. But a bona fide spiritual master can never fall down. It is important to remember again that a bona fide spiritual master is both qualified and authorized by his spiritual master.

In ISKCON history since 1977, there have been scores of *gurus* who have fallen from grace. If they are falling down, what class of devotees are they? Third-class, obviously. How then can they become *gurus*?

If they really are empowered and authorized by Śrīla Prabhupāda to become his successors in the sacred disciplic succession, why would they fall down in the first place? Some of them have officially fallen down but many others, although fallen down, are not officially labelled as such because a downfall in ISKCON has somehow only been associated with inappropriate sexual behavior.

A **downfall** from devotional service can mean that an offender ends up either as a **sense gratifier and/or** as an **impersonalist**. **Saubhari Muni** offended Garuda, the great carrier of Lord Visnu, and he therefore **became a sense gratifier** by marrying fifty princesses even after having been situated on a mature platform of yogic practice. **Rāmacandra Purī**, a disciple of the great *ācārya* Mādhavendra Purī **became a Māyāvādī impersonalist** by offending his spiritual master. We have to learn from these examples. Both these results are being observed in ISKCON today but the tendency towards impersonalism is somehow not recognized as a deviation or downfall.

Moreover, since Śrīla Prabhupāda never gave the authority to anyone to become a *dīkṣā guru*, just by taking up such a position whimsically or by the recommendation of the bewildered GBC, one is already considered to have sown the seed of offence at the

lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda and only time will reveal the fruit even if it did not by now. We are not praying for such downfalls but we are stating the natural consequences of offending a pure devotee and the Founder-Ācārya of ISKCON.

Here are some of the behavioral regulations for the renounced order that have been transgressed by many of the current so-called *gurus*, owing to their offences towards Śrīla Prabhupāda.

*padāpi yuvatīm bhikṣur na spṛśed dāravīm api
spṛśan karīva badhyeta karīnyā aṅga-saṅgataḥ*

“A saintly person should never touch a young girl. In fact, he should not even let his foot touch a wooden doll in the shape of a woman. By bodily contact with a woman he will surely be captured by illusion, just as the elephant is captured by the she-elephant due to his desire to touch her body.”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.8.13

*strīṅāṁ nirīkṣaṇa-sparśa- saṁlāpa-kṣvelanādikam
prāṇino mithunī-bhūtān agrhastho 'gratas tyajet*

“Those who are not married — *sannyāsīs*, *vānaprasthas* and *brahmacārīs* — should never associate with women by glancing, touching, conversing, joking or sporting. Neither should they ever associate with any living entity engaged in sexual activities.

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.17.33

*yadi na samuddharanti yatayo hṛdi kāma-jaṭā
duradhigamo 'satām hṛdi gato 'smṛta-kaṅṭha-maṇiḥ
asu-tṛpa-yoginām ubhayato 'py asukhaṁ bhagavann
anapagatāntakād anadhirūḍha-padād bhavataḥ*

“Members of the renounced order who fail to uproot the last traces of material desire in their hearts remain impure, and thus You do not allow them to understand You. Although You are present within their hearts, for them You are like a jewel worn around the neck of a man who has totally forgotten it is there. O Lord, those who practice yoga only for sense gratification must suffer punishment both in this life and the next: from death, who will not release them, and from You, whose kingdom they cannot reach.”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.87.39

“By a false display of religious sentiments, they present a show of devotional service while indulging in all sorts of immoral activities. In this way they pass as spiritual masters and devotees of God. Such violators of religious principles have no respect for the authoritative *ācāryas*, the holy teachers in the strict disciplic succession. They ignore the Vedic injunction *ācāryopāsana* — “One must worship the *ācārya*” — and Kṛṣṇa's statement in the Bhagavad-gītā (4.2) *evam paramparā-prāptam*, “This supreme science of God is received through the disciplic succession.” Instead, to mislead the people in general they themselves become so-called *ācāryas*, but they do not even follow the principles of the *ācāryas*.

These rogues are the most dangerous elements in human society. Because there is no religious government, they escape punishment by the law of the state. They cannot, however, escape the law of the Supreme, who has clearly declared in the Bhagavad-gītā that envious demons in the garb of religious propagandists shall be thrown into the darkest regions of hell (Bg. 16.19-20). Śrī Tīsoṇiṣad confirms that these pseudo religionists are heading toward the most obnoxious place in the universe after the completion of their spiritual master business, which they conduct simply for sense gratification.”

— Śrī Tīsoṇiṣad Mantra 12, Purport

śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi-pañcarātra-vidhiṃ vinā
aikāntikī harer bhaktir utpātāyaiva kalpate.

“Devotional service of the Lord that ignores the authorized Vedic literatures like the Upaniṣads, Purāṇas, Nārada-pañcarātra, etc., is simply an unnecessary disturbance in society.”

— Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu

What will eventually be the fate of those who follow such offenders?

*teṣāṃ kupatha-deṣṭṛiṇāṃ patatāṃ tamasi hy adhaḥ
ye śraddadhyur vacas te vai majjanty aśma-plavā iva*

“**Leaders** who have fallen into ignorance and **who mislead people** by directing them to the path of destruction [as described in the previous verse] **are**, in effect, **boarding a stone boat, and so too are those who blindly follow them**. A stone boat would be unable to float and would sink in the water with its passengers. Similarly, those who mislead people go to hell, and their followers go with them.”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 6.7.14

3.3: How To Rectify The Situation?

The answer is very simple. One should stop disobeying Śrīla Prabhupāda and follow the *ṛtvik* system of initiations. If the leaders of ISKCON can do this, it is the best thing that they can ever do and we shall be forever grateful to them.

But if they do not do so, we cannot remain party to the offence by supporting them. We have no choice but to work independent of them, with like-minded devotees who are serious about reinstating Śrīla Prabhupāda as the sole *dīkṣā guru*, until such a time when the management of ISKCON understands their own folly and choose to rectify it.

For those who are interested in rectifying the situation, the first thing to note is that the instruction of the spiritual master is the supreme guiding principle for the disciple. His instruction should never be ignored.

*ācāryam mām vijānīyān navamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta sarva-deva-mayo guruḥ*

One should know the ācārya as Myself and never disrespect him in any way. One should not envy him, thinking him an ordinary man, for he is the representative of all the demigods.”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.17.27

*mahatām bahu-mānena dīnānām anukampayā
maitryā caivātma-tulyeṣu yamena niyamena ca*

“The pure devotee should execute devotional service by **giving the greatest respect to the spiritual master and the ācāryas**. He should be compassionate to the poor and make friendship with persons who are his equals, but all his activities should be executed under regulation and with control of the senses.”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.29.17

“The spiritual master is as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and therefore one who is very serious about spiritual advancement must regard the spiritual master in this way. **Even a slight deviation from this understanding can create disaster in the disciple’s Vedic studies and austerities.**”

One should therefore thoroughly study the *ṛtvik* system of initiations from both the documentary and scriptural evidence that supports it and be convinced of its veracity and then openly talk about it to sincere devotees.

One may fear offending the senior Vaiṣṇavas if one rejects the association of the deviant ISKCON but who in ISKCON is a more senior Vaiṣṇava than Śrīla Prabhupāda? How can we commit offence at his lotus feet or tolerate others doing so? And how can anyone be called a Vaiṣṇava if such a person wilfully offends Śrīla Prabhupāda? These should be the considerations of a sincere devotee.

3.4: How To Deal With Someone Having Opposing Views?

To one who is innocent, we can present our point thoroughly with *śāstric* backing as presented in this booklet. But there may be many who may strongly disagree with the *ṛtvik* system of initiations although it is completely authorized by Śrīla Prabhupāda. The following verses enlighten us on how to deal with them.

*na sabhām praviśet prājñāḥ sabhya-doṣān anusmaran
abruvan vibruvann ajño naraḥ kilbiṣam aśnute*

“A wise person should not enter an assembly if he knows the participants there are committing acts of impropriety. And if, having entered such an assembly, he fails to speak the truth, speaks falsely or pleads ignorance, he will certainly incur sin.”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.44.10

*nindām bhagavataḥ śṛṇvaṁs tat-parasya janasya vā
tato nāpaiti yaḥ so 'pi yāty adhaḥ sukṛtāc cyutaḥ*

“Anyone who fails to immediately leave the place where he hears criticism of the Supreme Lord or His faithful devotee will certainly fall down, bereft of his pious credit.”

— Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.74.40

*īśvare tad-adhīneṣu bālīṣeṣu dviṣatsu ca
prema-maitrī-kṛpopekṣā yaḥ karoti sa madhyamaḥ*

An intermediate or second-class devotee, called madhyama-adhikārī, offers his love to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is a sincere friend to all the devotees of the Lord, shows mercy to ignorant people who are innocent and **disregards those who are envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.**

— *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 11.2.46

One should similarly disregard those who are envious of a pure devotee of the Supreme Lord like Śrīla Prabhupāda. In other words, if one is challenging the position of Śrīla Prabhupāda as the sole *dīkṣā guru* of ISKCON, he is to be considered envious of Śrīla Prabhupāda and should be neglected or disregarded.

*mahatām bahu-mānena dīnānām anumāyā
maitryā caivātma-tulyeṣu yamena niyamena ca*

“The pure devotee should execute devotional service by giving the **greatest respect to the spiritual master and the ācāryas.** He should be compassionate to the poor and make friendship with persons who are his equals, but all his activities should be executed under regulation and with control of the senses.”

— *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 3.29.17

“**Friendship should be cemented between persons with mutual interests and understanding. Such persons are said to be *sva jāti*, “of the same caste.” The devotee should avoid a person whose character is not fixed in the standard understanding; even though he may be a Vaiṣṇava, or a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, if his character is not correctly representative, then he should be avoided. One should steadily control the senses and the mind and strictly follow the rules and regulations, and he should make friendship with persons of the same standard.**”

— *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 3.29.17, Purport

Conclusion

We hope this compilation of documentary and scriptural evidences has convinced you of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s undisputed position as the only *dīkṣā guru* for ISKCON, especially even after his physical departure. Any claims by anyone that the *ṛtvik* system of initiations is nowhere supported by any documents or scripture or the disciplic succession should be considered baseless.

However, after having read all this, if one still does not have faith in these instructions and/or wilfully disobeys the instructions of Śrīla Prabhupāda by not adhering to the authorized *ṛtvik* system of initiations, the following verses from the Bhagavad-gītā reveal their fate.

*ajñāś cāśraddadhānaś ca samśayātmā vinaśyati
nāyaṁ loko 'sti na paro na sukhaṁ samśayātmanaḥ*

“But ignorant and faithless persons who doubt the revealed scriptures do not attain God consciousness. For the doubting soul there is happiness neither in this world nor in the next.”

— Bhagavad-gītā 4.40

*yaḥ śāstra-vidhim utsrjya vartate kāma-kārataḥ
na sa siddhim avāpnoti na sukhaṁ na parāṁ gatim*

“But he who discards scriptural injunctions and acts according to his own whims attains neither perfection, nor happiness, nor the supreme destination.”

— Bhagavad-gītā 16.23

Having said that, if you need any further clarifications, please do not hesitate to email us at admin@srikrishnamandir.org.

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda! Hare Kṛṣṇa!

[END]

Appendix A: Śrīla Prabhupāda's Declaration of Will (Reproduced)

Tridandi Goswami
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
Founder-Acharya:
International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

CENTER: Kṛṣṇa-Balarama Mandir,
Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg,
Ramanareti, Vṛndāvana, U.P.
DATE: June, 1977

DECLARATION OF WILL

I, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, Settlor of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, and disciple of Om Visnupada 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktsiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvāmī Maharaj Prabhupāda, presently residing at Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarama Mandir in Vṛndāvana, make this my last will:

1. The Governing Body Commission (GBC) will be the ultimate managing authority of the entire International Society for Kṛṣṇa 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.
3. Properties in India will be managed by the following executive directors:
 - a) Properties at Śrī Mayapur Dhama, Panihati, Haridaspur and Calcutta: Gurukṛpa Swami, Jayapataka Swami, Bhavananda Gosvāmī and Gopāl Kṛṣṇa das Adhikari.
 - b) Properties at Vṛndāvana: Gurukṛpa Swami, Akshoyananda Swami, and Gopāl Kṛṣṇa das Adhikari.
 - c) Properties at Bombay: Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī, Giriraj das Brahmachary, and Gopāl Kṛṣṇa das Adhikari.

- d) Properties at Bhubaneswar: Gour Govinda Swami, Jayapataka Swami, and Bhagawat das Brahmachary.
- e) Properties at Hyderabad: Mahamsa Swami, Śrīdhar Swami, Gopāl Kṛṣṇa das Adhikari and Bali Mardan das Adhikari.

The executive directors who have herein been designated are appointed for life. In the event of the death or failure to act for any reason of any of the said directors, a successor director or directors may be appointed by the remaining directors, provided the new director is my initiated disciple following strictly all the rules and regulations of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness as detailed in my books, and provided that there are never less than three (3) or more than five (5) executive directors acting at one time.

- 4. I have created, developed and organized the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, and as such I hereby will that none of the immovable properties standing in the name of ISKCON in India shall ever be mortgaged, borrowed against, sold, transferred, or in any way encumbered, disposed of, or alienated. This direction is irrevocable.
- 5. Properties outside of India in principle should never be mortgaged, borrowed against, sold, transferred or in any way encumbered, disposed of, or alienated, but if the need arises, they may be mortgaged, borrowed against, sold, etc., with the consent of the GBC committee members associated with the particular property.
- 6. The properties outside of India and their associated GBC committee members are as follows:
 - a) Properties in Chicago, Detroit and Ann Arbor: Jayatirtha das Adhikari, Harikesa Swami, and Balavanta das Adhikari.
 - b) Properties in Hawaii, Tokyo, Hong Kong: Guru Krpa Swami, Rameswara Swami, and Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī.
 - c) Properties in Melbourne, Sydney, Australia Farm: Guru Krpa Swami, Hari Sauri, and Atreya Rsi.
 - d) Properties in England (London Radlett), France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden: Jayatirtha das Adhikari, Bhagavan das Adhikari, Harikesa Swami.
 - e) Properties in Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa: Jayatirtha das Adhikari,

Brahmananda Swami, and Atreya Rsi.

- f) Properties in Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, Costa Rica, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Chile: Hridayananda Gosvāmī, Panca Dravida Swami, Brahmananda Swami.
 - g) Properties in Georgetown, Guyana, Santo Domingo, St. Augustine: Adi Kesava Swami, Hridayananda Gosvāmī, Panca Dravida Swami.
 - h) Properties in Vancouver, Seattle, Berkeley, Dallas: Satsvarūpa Gosvāmī, Jagadisa das Adhikari, Jayatirtha das Adhikari.
 - i) Properties in Los Angeles, Denver, San Diego, Laguna Beach: Rameswara Swami, Satsvarūpa Swami, Adi Kesava Swami.
 - j) Properties in New York, Boston, Puerto Rico, Port Royal, St. Louis, St Louis Farm: Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī, Adi Kesava Swami, Rameswara Swami.
 - k) Properties in Iran: Atreya Rsi, Bhagavan das Adhikari, Brahmananda Swami.
 - l) Properties in Washington D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, Montreal and Ottawa: Rupanuga das Adhikari, Gopāl Kṛṣṇa das Adhikari, Jagadisa das Adhikari.
 - m) Properties in Pittsburgh, New Vr̥ndāvana, Toronto, Cleveland, Buffalo: Kirtanananda Swami, Atreya Rsi, Balavanta das Adhikari.
 - n) Properties in Atlanta, Tennessee Farm, Gainesville, Miami, New Orleans, Mississippi Farm, Houston: Balavanta das Adhikari, Adi Kesava Swami, Rupanuga das Adhikari.
 - o) Properties in Fiji: Hari Sauri, Atreya Rsi, Vasudev.
7. I declare, say and confirm that all the properties, both movable and immovable, which stand in my name, including current accounts, savings accounts and fixed deposits in various banks, are the properties and assets of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, and the heirs and successors of my previous life, or anyone claiming through them, have no right, claim or interest in these properties whatsoever, save and except as provided hereafter.
8. Although the money which is in my personal name in different banks is being spent for ISKCON and belongs to ISKCON, I have kept a few deposits specifically marked for allocating a monthly allowance of Rs. 1,000/- [unreadable addition] to the members of my former family (two sons, two daughters, and wife). After the deaths of the members of my former family, these specific deposits (corpus, interest, and savings) will become the property of ISKCON for

the corpus of the trust, and the descendants of my former family or anybody claiming through them shall not be allowed any further allowance.

9. I hereby appoint Guru Krpa Swami, Hridayananda Gosvāmī, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī, Rameshwar Swami, Gopāl Kṛṣṇa das Adhikari, Jayatirtha das Adhikari and Giriraj das Brahmachary to act as executors of this will. I have made this will this 4th day of June, 1977, in possession of full sense and sound mind, without any persuasion, force or compulsion from anybody.

Witnesses:

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

The above will was signed by Śrīla Prabhupāda and sealed and witnessed by the following: Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, Bhagavan das Adhikari and several other witnesses (signatures appear on the original document).

CODICIL

I, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, a sannyasi and Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, Settlor of Bhaktivedanta Book Trust and disciple of Om Visnupada 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Gosvāmī Mahārāja Prabhupāda, presently residing at Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarama Mandir in Vṛndāvana, do hereby make this last Will and codicil to give vent to my intention, and clarify certain things which are to a certain extent a little vague in my previous Will dated 4th June, 1977, as follows:

I had made a Will on 4th June, 1977, and had made certain provisions therein. One of them being a provision of maintenance allowance to Śrī M.M. De, Brindaban Chandra De, Miss Bhakti Lata De and Smt. Sulurmana Dey, who were born of me during my grhastha ashram, and Smt. Radharani De, who was my wife in the grhastha ashram for their lives as per para. 8 of the said Will. Since on careful consideration I feel that the said paragraph does not truly depict my intentions, I hereby direct that as regards Smt. Radharani De, she will get Rs. 1,000/- per month for her life out of interest to be earned from a fixed deposit of Rs. One Lakh Twenty Thousand to be made by ISKCON in any bank that the authorities of the said society may think proper for a period of 7 years in the name of ISKCON, which amount shall not be available to any of

her heirs and after her death the said amount be appropriated by ISKCON in any way the authorities of ISKCON think proper looking to the objects of the society.

As regards Śrī M.M. De, Śrī Brindaban Chandra De, Smt. Sulurmana Dey and Miss Bhaktilata De, the ISKCON will deposit Rs. One Lakh Twenty Thousand under 4 separate Fixed Deposit receipts, each for Rs. 1,20,000/- for seven years in a bank to earn interest at least Rs. 1,000/- a month under each receipt. Out of the said sum of Rs. 1,000/-, only Rs. 250/- per month will be paid to each of them from the interest of their respective Fixed Deposit receipts. The remaining interest of Rs. 750/- will be deposited again under new Fixed Deposit receipts in their respective names for seven years. On the maturity of these Fixed Deposit receipts created from the Rs. 750/- monthly interest for the first seven years, the said sums shall be invested by the above named persons in some Govt. Bonds, Fixed Deposit receipts or under any Govt. Deposit Scheme or shall be used to purchase some immovable property or properties so that the amount may remain safe and may not be dissipated. In case, however, the above named persons or any of them violate these conditions and use the said sum in purpose or purposes other than those described above, the ISKCON authorities will be free to stop the payment of the monthly maintenance of such person or persons from the original Fixed Deposits of Rs. 1,20,000/- and they shall instead give the amount of interest of Rs. 1,000/- per month to Bhaktivedanta Swami Charity Trust. It is made clear that the heirs of the said persons will have no right to anything out of the said sums and that these sums are only for the personal use of the said persons of my previous life during their respective lifetimes only.

I have appointed some executors of my said Will. I now hereby add the name of Śrī Jayapataka Swami, my disciple, residing at Śrī Mayapur Chandrodya Mandir, Dist. Nadia, West Bengal, as an executor of my said Will along with the persons already named in the said Will dated 4th June, 1977. I hereby further direct that my executors will be entitled to act together or individually to fulfill their obligations under my said Will.

I therefore hereby amend, modify and alter my said Will dated 4th June, 1977, in the manner mentioned above. In all other respects the said Will continues to hold good and shall always hold good.

I hereby make this Will codicil this 5th day of November, 1977, in my full conscience and with sound mind without any persuasion, force or compulsion from anybody.

Witness: (signatures appear on the original document)

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Appendix B: Tamāla Kṛṣṇa's Confession — Dec 3, 1980

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī: "I've had a certain realization a few days ago. [...] There are obviously so many statements by Śrīla Prabhupāda that his Guru Mahārāja did not appoint any successors. [...] Even in Prabhupāda's books he says *guru* means by qualification. [...]

The inspiration came because there was a questioning on my part, so Kṛṣṇa spoke. Actually, Prabhupāda never appointed any *gurus*. [...] He appointed eleven *ṛtviks*. He never appointed them *gurus*. Myself and the other GBC have done the greatest disservice to this movement the last three years because we interpreted the appointment of *ṛtviks* as the appointment of *gurus*.

What actually happened I'll explain. I explained it, but the interpretation is wrong. What actually happened was that Prabhupāda mentioned he might be appointing some *ṛtviks*, so the GBC met for various reasons, and they went to Prabhupāda, five or six of us. (This refers to the meeting of May 28th, 1977). We asked him, 'Śrīla Prabhupāda, after your departure, if we accept disciples, whose disciples will they be, your disciples or mine?'

Later on there was a piled up list for people to get initiated, and it was jammed up. I said, 'Śrīla Prabhupāda, you once mentioned about *ṛtviks*. I don't know what to do. We don't want to approach you, but there's hundreds of devotees named, and I'm just holding all the letters. I don't know what you want to do'.

Śrīla Prabhupāda said, 'All right, I will appoint so many...', and he started to name them [...] He made it very clear that they are his disciples. At that point it was very clear in my mind that they were his disciples. Later on I asked him two questions, one: 'What about Brahmananda Swami?' I asked him this because I happened to have an affection for Brahmananda Swami. [...] So Śrīla Prabhupāda said, 'No, not unless he is qualified'. Before I got ready to type the letter, I asked him, two: 'Śrīla Prabhupāda is this all or do you want to add more?'. He said, 'As is necessary, others may be added.' Now I understand that what he did was very clear. He was physically incapable of performing the function of initiation physically; therefore he appointed officiating priests to initiate on his behalf. He appointed eleven, and he said very clearly, 'Whoever is nearest, he can initiate'. This is a very important point, because when it comes to initiating, if it isn't

whoever is nearest, it's wherever your heart goes. Who (you) repose your faith on, you take initiation from him. But when it's officiating, it's whoever is nearest, and he was very clear. He named them. They were spread out all over the world, and he said, 'Whoever you're nearest, you just approach that person, and they'll check you out. Then, on my behalf, they'll initiate.'

It is not a question that you repose your faith in that person—nothing. That's a function for the *guru*. 'In order for me to manage this movement', Prabhupāda said, 'I have to form a GBC and I will appoint the following people. In order to continue the process of people joining our movement and getting initiated, I have to appoint some priests to help me because just like I cannot physically manage everyone myself, I physically cannot initiate everyone myself.'

And that's all that it was, and it was never any more than that. If it had been more than that, you can bet your bottom dollar that Prabhupāda would have spoken for days and hours and weeks on end about how to set up this thing with the *gurus*, but he didn't because he already had said it a million times. He said: My Guru Mahārāja did not appoint anyone. It's by qualification.' We made a great mistake. After Prabhupāda's departure, what is the position of these eleven people? [...]

Prabhupāda showed that it is not just *sannyāsīs*. He named two people who were *gṛhasthas*, who could at least be *ṛtviks*, showing that they were equal to any *sannyāsī*. So anyone who is spiritually qualified—it's always been understood that you cannot accept disciples in the presence of your *guru*, but when the *guru* disappears, you can accept disciples if you are qualified and someone can repose their faith. Of course, they (prospective disciples) should be fully appraised at how to distinguish who is a proper *guru*. But if you are a proper *guru*, and your *guru* is no longer present, that is your right. It's like a man can procreate [...] Unfortunately, the GBC did not recognize this point. They immediately (assumed, decided) these eleven people are the selected *gurus*. I can definitely say for myself, and for which I humbly beg forgiveness from everybody, that there was definitely some degree of trying to control [...] This is the conditioned nature, and it came out in the highest position of all, "*Guru*, oh wonderful! Now I'm a *guru*, and there is only eleven of us" [...] I feel that this realization or this understanding is essential if we are to avoid further things from happening, because, believe me, it's going to repeat. It's just a question of time until things have a little bit faded out and again another incident is going to happen, whether it's here in L.A. or somewhere else. It's going to continuously happen until you allow the actual spiritual force of Kṛṣṇa to be exhibited without restriction. [...] I feel that the GBC body, if they don't adopt this point

very quickly, if they don't realize this truth: You cannot show me anything on tape or in writing where Prabhupāda says: "I appoint these eleven as *gurus*". It does not exist because he never appointed any *gurus*. This is a myth. [...] The day you got initiated you get the right to become a father when your father disappears, if you are qualified. No appointment. It doesn't require an appointment, because there isn't one."

Note: Here Tamāla Kṛṣṇa claims that one automatically inherits the right to become a *guru* after his *guru* departs, provided he is qualified. That was his viewpoint. But as quoted in [Chapter 2.2.2: Authorization of Dīkṣā Guru](#) (page 27) of this book, Śrīla Prabhupāda clarifies the point that apart from being qualified, a pure devotee must be authorized by his *guru* to become a *guru* himself.]