

It is great news to hear that you and others are very eager to start a bona fide Prabhupada temple in Spain. Such eagerness is the price for winning Srila Prabhupada's and Lord Krishna's eternal blessings. This is the greatest service you could do there, and I assure you that many nice devotees will then visit your project from all over the world. Srila Prabhupada will certainly be very pleased with this attempt.

I am sending you several articles regarding the guru issue in the Krishna consciousness movement. I will summarize the issue in this letter below. Although I am not qualified to guide your holiness in these matters, I will share with you whatever little I know, by Srila Prabhupada's grace, through my study of his books, conversations and letters, and through my discussions with our learned Godbrothers.

In 1977, when Srila Prabhupada was very ill, some of his leading men came to him to inquire about the future of initiations in ISKCON. They were expecting Prabhupada to leave his body very soon, so they were wondering how initiations would be continued after his disappearance from this world. At that time Srila Prabhupada instituted, by an official decree (dated July 9th, 1977), the *ritvik* system of initiations. Several times before his departure on November 11th, 1977, Srila Prabhupada reconfirmed this system. He never suggested any other arrangements. This system of *ritvik* initiations had been functioning in ISKCON for several years prior, so no lengthy explanation was needed. Nonetheless, Srila Prabhupada carefully explained how appointed *ritviks* would initiate new disciples in the movement on behalf Srila Prabhupada and ISKCON. As before, all new ISKCON devotees would become disciples and followers of Srila Prabhupada directly, with senior devotees acting as "representatives of the Acarya" in the matter of the formalities of initiating new devotees. This was Srila Prabhupada's final order.

Unfortunately, as soon as Srila Prabhupada disappeared in late 1977, his appointed *ritviks* decided to hide his instructions for *ritvik* initiations and pose themselves as appointed successors and "Zonal Acharyas". Later, in 1980, Tamal Krishna Gosvami confessed that Srila Prabhupada had never appointed gurus but had only appointed *ritviks*. TKG apologized at that time for doing "*the greatest disservice*" by misleading devotees regarding these facts. Since that time, especially after 1987, when Srila Prabhupada's final order was revealed through the devotee magazine *Vedic Village Review*, many devotees have tried to convince the GBC to accept Srila Prabhupada's order and stop their unauthorized practice of sanctioning self-appointed Iskcon "gurus". Gradually many Iskcon devotees all over the world have come to agree that Srila Prabhupada wanted only *ritvik* initiations in his ISKCON mission, yet the GBC stubbornly refuses to admit this fact. They are dead against *ritvik* initiations in iskcon on behalf of Srila Prabhupada, yet they allow *ritvik* initiations done on behalf of so-called iskcon gurus. (In this regard, see my article "Idol Worship in Iskcon?")

Srila Prabhupada's wanted that everyone who joined his mission would become his disciple, disciple of ISKCON, and disciple of the eternal *guru parampara* of fully realized pure devotees. He never suggested that any of his disciples should artificially try to pose as successor *acaryas* or *diksa-gurus*. Without authorization and full realization, no one should pose as the bona fide spiritual master-- the giver of *diksa* and savior of all conditioned souls.

Although Srila Prabhupada's books contain quotes suggesting that every devotee should become a guru, the emphasis is not on initiating disciples but on preaching according to one's capacity. This is what Lord Caitanya taught by His personal example while preaching throughout South India and other places. To offer *diksa* to new devotees one must be a fully Krishna conscious, liberated devotee. Moreover, even though a devotee is qualified, he must be specifically ordered and empowered by Sri Guru and Sri Krishna to take up the post of *diksa-guru*. This is the real *siddhanta* in our eternal Gaudiya Sampradaya.

Although all devotees should become guru by teaching everyone about the *maha-mantra*, Srila Prabhupada, Lord Chaitanya and Krishna, no one should initiate disciples in the mission of Srila Prabhupada unless ordered by Srila Prabhupada and Lord Krishna. If Srila Prabhupada had wanted his disciples to begin initiating their own disciples, why didn't he explain how this should be done? Indeed, Srila Prabhupada never gave any such instructions. Rather he spoke only of *ritvik* initiations. He explained how such initiations should continue as before, even in his absence, without his personal supervision. After all, we can practically see that it is Srila Prabhupada's books, example and instructions that inspires and enlightens us all with transcendental knowledge. This is the real meaning of *diksa*.

Srila Prabhupada is still available and approachable in the form of his *murtis*, books, letters, *bhajan* songs, recorded conversations, and DVDs. He can reside in the heart of any sincere devotee. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, Bhaktivinoda Thakura, and the Six Gosvamis are also ready to guide us. We don't need voted-in self-appointed gurus. We need to learn how to pray to great devotees and get the mercy of Lord Chaitanya through appreciation of His eternal associates. Our Gaudiya Vaisnava *guru-paramapara* is fully transcendental and eternal. No need for upstarts or *smarta*-brahmins in our mission.

Official Iskcon devotees and leaders may gradually come to the same conclusion that Srila Prabhupada is the real *acharya* for this age, but for them it may take a long time. Most of them are likely contaminated by false ambitions and other offenses-- either directly, or indirectly by association. Unless we are very powerful preachers, it is not likely that we will be able to change their minds in this lifetime. There may be sincere devotees here and there in Iskcon, even today, but to extract them from that association is difficult unless they are very serious about hearing from Srila Prabhupada constantly and executing his mission fully. Try to avoid confrontations with iskcon leaders and followers. Pray for Srila Prabhupada's guidance.

I was unable to get the long-term visa I wanted for India, so for now my wife and I have been working to start a temple in Hawaii. As soon as this *yatra* is established to some extent, I want to return to South India to stay, if Krishna will allow me another chance there. Also, I would like to visit Spain regularly if you and other *Prabhupada-anugas* revive Srila Prabhupada's original mission in Spain.

I will inform Madhu Pandit (Bangalore TP) and Chanchalapati (Bangalore Vice TP) of your intended visit and your sincere eagerness to start a temple in Spain under Srila Prabhupada's authority and order. Bangalore ISKCON temple is a brilliant example of how wonderfully Srila Prabhupada's mission can expand if we follow his instructions carefully with full faith. I will send you news of other devotees who are also preaching the mission and following Srila Prabhupada's orders correctly. Several senior devotees have formed an informal organization of *Prabhupada-anugas* under the name "*Hare Krishna Society*". Many devotees, temples and farm projects all over the world now follow Srila Prabhupada's mission as it is. These are the real ISKCON devotees and temples. We have a website www.krishnaconsciousnessmovement.com and www.harekrishnasociety.org.

Please let me know more details where and how you plan to preach Prabhupada's mission in Spain and tell me about the devotees involved. Also let me know your exact time of arrival in Bangalore and your plans for India. If you like, you can also visit our farm in the Sahyadri Mountains at Sri Kshetra Kollur, near Udupi. I recommend you visit this project and Sri Udupi Krishna Kshetra, if possible. I will also inform the devotees there of your arrival.