

WHY IS THE RITVIK SYSTEM BONAFIDE?

by Urdhvaga Das (ACBSP)

Why the Ritvik System is bonafide! BECAUSE **Srila Prabhupada says so!**. We don't say like this. It is Srila Prabhupada who says, that the Ritvik System is to be followed after his departure. Why you contradict Srila Prabhupada?:

Satsvarupa: "Then our next question concerns **initiations in the future, particularly at that time when you're no longer with us**. We want to know how first and second initiations would be conducted." ([May 28th discussion](#))

Prabhupada: "Yes; I shall recommend some of you. After this is settled up, I shall recommend some of you **to act as officiating acharyas**."

Tamala Krsna: "Is that called ritvik-acharya?"

Prabhupada: "Ritvik yes."

The question arises, why all of those "anti-ritvik proponents" are against Srila Prabhupada? Why you are so offensive to Srila Prabhupada, calling him a "Ritvikist" and other bad names, not following his instruction? Why do you reject His statement, concocting your own philosophy? Why do you denigrate HIS words of "ritvik", derogating His instructions to follow the Ritvik-Initiation-System?

To call Srila Prabhupada or his disciples, who follow his instructions, "Ritvikist" or "Ritvikvadis" is a great offence to Srila Prabhupada and his movement. These designations (Ritvikist, Ritvikvadis) are concoctions of words, of those false gurus and bogus devotees who are antagonistic against Srila Prabhupadas instruction to act as His ritvik representatives.

Calling Srila Prabhupada a "ritvikist" or "ritvik-vadi" is direct blasphemy to Him and a great guru-aparadha. You all – immediately stop being blasphemous to our Spiritual Master Srila Prabhupada. You are envious offensive, no wonder your guys are falling down one after the other. With all of your guru-aparadhas your destination after death is pretty clear.

So where did this idea of Ritvik come from? It comes directly from Srila Prabhupada and only from His Divine Grace. (NOT FROM ANY OTHER DEVOTEES) Because Srila Prabhupadas ritvik order was purposely misinterpreted, thousands of new disciples were forced to take initiation from unqualified godbrothers, conditioned souls who fall down after some time.

The problem with those so called 11 "Ritvik-Acaryas" is, that they imitated Srila Prabhupada to sit in His seat, (Vyasasana) without having His Divine Graces qualities.

Srila Prabhupada: Don't be allured by cheap disciples. Go on steadfastly to render service first. If you immediately become guru, then the service activities will be stopped; and as there are so many cheap gurus and cheap disciples, without any substantial knowledge, and manufacturing new sampradayas, and with service activities stopped, and all spiritual progress choked up. (SPL (VI 1987) 68.8.17)

SRILA PRABHUPADA GIVES A PERFECT PLAN (KEEPING THE ACARYA AT THE CENTRE): but unfortunately, after His departure, the Ritvik-Representatives of the Acarya no longer want to be representatives, but they want to be Acaryas themselves, thus deviating from Srila Prabhupadas instruction.

Hansadutta: Actually, unless a person has been properly initiated by someone acting strictly as the *ritvik* representative of the SAMPRADAYA ACHARYA, Srila Prabhupada,

his so-called initiation is more or less a kind of KIDNAPPING THE DISCIPLE AWAY FROM THE SHELTER OF THE LOTUS FEET OF SRILA PRABHUPADA, THE SAMPRADAYA ACHARYA, AND KRISHNA.

Such kidnapper gurus and their unfortunate disciples fall down from the devotional path in due course of time, just as a tree that receives no water loses its leaves (disciples), dries up and dies. We have seen this phenomenon repeat itself again and again in a long list of **so-called gurus, myself included**. However, such dead gurus and disciples can be brought back to life simply by situating themselves properly in the *ritvik* initiating arrangement made by Prabhupada. The current re-initiation syndrome practiced in ISKCON is trying to correct one mistake by making another mistake. (*Letter 8 October 1993*)

Srila Prabhupada: "As soon as he learns that Guru Maharaj is dead, now **I am so advanced I can kill guru and become guru**. Then he is finished." (Srila Prabhupada 1976).

Srila Prabhupada made himself very clear on how new devotees coming into his movement were to be accepted into it after his disappearance. The word "ritvik" was first heard from Srila Prabhupada's Lotus mouth in the May 28th conversations and His Divine Grace used the term many times during his last two weeks in Vrindaban.

About 3 to 4 days before His Divine Grace's departure when many of the devotees were in Srila Prabhupada's room Srila Prabhupada told us: "**Of my disciples I see no one who has my qualities but if I look at this or that one, I see some percentage of my qualities there, so I have some faith that this movement some how can go on.**"

Srila Prabhupada: "I shall recommend some of you **to act as officiating acharyas.**"

Srila Prabhupada clearly defined officiating acaryas as ritviks who initiate disciples on behalf of the spiritual master.

Srila Prabhupada never created any special status for "officiating acaryas." Their function as ritviks is to assure that Srila Prabhupada requirements are met before a student is formally accepted for initiation in ISKCON. Like all senior initiated disciples, they are meant to be teachers by their practical example. They have accepted an added responsibility, an added burden on behalf of Srila Prabhupada. Their burden is to assure that Srila Prabhupada's standards for initiation are preserved in ISKCON. (Srila Prabhupada's July 9th directive sent to every leader in ISKCON mentions three times that all devotees are Srila Prabhupada's disciples and that the deputed ritviks offer initiation on behalf of Srila Prabhupada. This same instruction was repeated by Srila Prabhupada several times additionally after July 9th in letters, documents, and instructions.)

Ritviks are the priests authorized by the spiritual master or his institution to accept students on behalf of ISKCON and Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada made this perfectly clear. This understanding of the procedure Prabhupada prescribed is consistent with references to ritviks mentioned in Srila Prabhupada's books.

Often devotees opposed to Srila Prabhupada's ritvik-system for initiations deliberately use the term "ritvik-vada" for the negative connotation this seems to imply. (For instance, the ideas of the sunyavadas, mayavadas, and advaitavadas are condemned by Vaisnava acaryas.) In truth, the term "vada" has no negative connotation. It refers to a philosophical system. There exists no such philosophy as "ritvik-vada". Acceptance of a specific procedure for conducting a Vedic ritual in no way constitutes a "vada", or

philosophical system. If someone insists on calling ritvik a “vada”, he could use a more fitting term, such as “Prabhupada-vada.” Devotees of the “ritvik camp” believe that all of Srila Prabhupada’s orders are perfect and should be accepted as such by those who claim to be his disciples — particularly those who are leaders in ISKCON.

The attempt of Iskcon bogus GBC gurus to degrade the transcendental Vedic term “rtvijah” or “ritvik” to a derogatory word is one more example of offenses that have entered iskcon due to neglecting Srila Prabhupada’s instructions in this regard. In Vedic culture, a ritvik is an exalted priest. Such priests were often respected as gurus, yet they never pretended to be as good as Lord Hari. By the order of the Acarya, the rtvijah recites the mantras that request the presence of Lord Visnu in the fire of Vedic sacrifice (agni-hotra), and he then makes offerings to the Supreme Lord according to Vedic sastra. The rtvijah performs an exalted function. He is a pure brahmin or Vaisnava who is never concerned about the political correctness or convenience of his stance.

Offensive GBC Resolution against Srila Prabhupada:

Iskcon GBC Resolution 304 states: “Whereas the doctrine that Srila Prabhupada desired to continue to act as diksa-guru after his departure from this world, and did not desire any of his disciples to give diksa, or initiation, in succession after him is an errant philosophical deviation (known as **ritvikism**); and Whereas **ritvikism** directly contradicts the principle of parampara.

Srila Prabhupada: *“I have selected you among eleven men as ‘ritvik’ or representative of the acharya, to give initiations, both first and second initiation, on my behalf.”* (July 10th)

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

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

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

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

Above GBC statement is a direct blasphemy against Srila Prabhupada, for which the GBC collectively will receive their karma und be punished for sure.

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

SB 9.1.15 adhvaryuna–by the rtvik priest;

SB 4.5.7 rtvijah–the priests;

SB 4.5.18 rtvijah–the priests

SB 4.6.52 rtvijam–of the priests;

SB 4.7.16 rtvik–the priests;

SB 4.7.27 rtvijah–the priests;

SB 4.7.45 rtvijah–the priests;

SB 4.7.56 rtvigbhih–with the priests;

SB 4.13.26 rtvijah–the priests;

Why you “anti-ritviks” want proof from us concerning the ritvik validity? It is Srila Prabhupada Himself who establishes the ritvik-system, even in writing:

Srila Prabhupada’s letter July 9th, 1977: Srila Prabhupada indicated that soon He would appoint some of His senior disciples to act as ritvik – representative of the acarya, for the purpose of performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation.

Urdhvaga das: Srila Prabhupada’s ritvik instruction, outlined in [His letter of July 9](#), addressed to all devotees is self- explanatory and anyone can understand it whose brain substance is not contaminated by bogus philosophy preached by Iskcons false successor acaryas, **self appointed gurus worshiped in a homosexual paedophile guru lineage.** Religious propagandist and **pseudo-gurus disguised as devotees exploiting the members and assets of the society, demoniac Kali-yuga disciples.**

Srila prabhupada: “There are many jealous people in the dress of Vaishnavas in this Krishna Consciousness movement, and they should be completely neglected. A false acarya may try to override a vaishnava by a high-court decision, (2/3 hand vote) but Bhaktivinoda Thakura says that he is nothing but a disciple of Kali-yuga.” (CC.Madhy., Ch.1, Text 218 / 220, purport)

The problem with you people is that you rather like to follow **self-appointed bogus Iskcon gurus** (conditioned souls who fall down after some time) rather than to take shelter unto Srila Prabhupada who is the perfect guru. Why do you insist on worshiping false gurus? That is your problem.

“**Bhaktivinoda Thakura says, Kali-cela.** He indicates that there are other Vaishnavas, pseudo-Vaishnavas, with tilaka on their nose and kunti beads around their neck. Such a pseudo-Vaishnava associates with money and women and is jealous of successful Vaishnavas. Although passing for a Vaishnava, his only business is earning money in the dress of a Vaishnava”.

We should not be fooled by all those 2/3 hand voted in, self-appointed bogus Iskcon gurus, who like ordinary conditioned souls, are falling down after some time, and who are preaching bogus philosophy such as the “current link philosophy”, in support of “**voted in successor acaryas**“, with a “**less then liberated guru thesis**” and a “**minimum qualification theory**“, for adapting their “homosexual pedophile guru lineage” of conditioned souls into the pure guru-parampara, excluding Srila Prabhupada as a non physical link. This “current link philosophy” (preached by Bhakti Charu and others) is completely nonsensical in any context and is not confirmed by shastra and is a negation of Srila Prabhupada’s presence in his “vani”. It is simply the same old bogus philosophy which has caused so much chaos in our movement.

Srila Prabhupada’s letter July 9th, 1977 “.... **His senior disciples to act as ritvik – representative of the acarya,** for the purpose of performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation. The newly initiated devotees are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. The name of a newly initiated disciple should be sent by the representative who has acceted him or her to Srila Prabhupada, to be included in His Divine Grace’s “Initiated Disciples” book.

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

1) Srila Prabhupada’s final, signed, legally binding directives, outlined in his July 9th letter, conclusively establish that 11 senior devotees are appointed as Ritvik Representative of the Acarya, for the purpose of performing initiations, both first

initiation and second initiation (particular at the time when Srila Prabhupada is no longer with us). The newly initiated devotees are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. The name of a newly initiated disciple should be sent by the representative who has acceted him or her to Srila Prabhupada, to be included in His Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book. (Srila Prabhupada's letter July 9th, 1977)

2) Just after his departure Srila Prabhupada's leading disciples disobeyed these directives, preferring instead to unauthorisedly replace Him with themselves as full-fledged initiating Diksa gurus for ISKCON. Thus their self-appointed guru-ship is unauthorized and bogus. Thus it is clear that the GBC are legally bound to continue to act as we have outlined above in paragraph 3, and only implement and preserve those systems and teachings given by Srila Prabhupada, even in Srila Prabhupada's absence.

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

a) **He would appoint some of His senior disciples to act as ritvik – representative of the acarya,**

b) **the above eleven senior devotees acting as His (Prabhupadas) representative.**

c) **The newly initiated devotees are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C.**

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad,

d) **The name of a newly initiated disciple should be included in His Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book.**

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

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

5) However on November 15th, 1977, the day after Srila Prabhupada's departure from this world, without any countermanding instruction from Srila Prabhupada, the GBC took it upon themselves to stop the execution of this directive. By suspending the system of managing initiations that was set out in the directive, whereby all initiates became Srila Prabhupada's disciples, the GBC was also guilty of acting in direct violation of paragraph 2 of his Last Will and Testament, which states:

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

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

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

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

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

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

8) The GBC have never been able to justify terminating the system of initiation Srila Prabhupada personally put in place with his last institutional directive on this matter. They simply say that the directive must terminate automatically on the departure of Srila Prabhupada from this world, for when Srila Prabhupada departed, the directive died with him. However this reasoning is based on a faulty assumption – that the directive is tied to the physical presence of Srila Prabhupada. However the circumstances of the July 9th directive are that it is issued for, and to be implemented within, and by, an institution. Thus the applicability of the directive is tied to the institution, and therefore only the demise of the INSTITUTION can terminate its applicability.

The physical presence of the Founder who authorised the instruction has no relevance to terminating the directive. Thus the directive must remain in force for as long as the institution remains. Arguments based on considerations of 'tradition', the practice of other institutions, etc. have no applicability in determining how Srila Prabhupada intended his institution to be run. We can only decide that from his own institutional directives on the subject. Just like Srila Prabhupada also issued so many other

directives to the movement stating that we must read his books, follow his teachings etc. None of these directives became invalidated just because Srila Prabhupada departed – and neither does this one. Srila Prabhupada’s position as Guru of Iskcon is not dependent on his physical presence, juts as he taught:

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

CONCLUSION

Srila Prabhupada’s specific instructions for carrying out initiations in Iskcon after his physical disappearance as asked directly of him by his Governing Board Commissioners on [May 28, 1977](#) was that he would soon recommend some of his disciples to act as officiating acaryas or ritviks representatives. In the following week on June 4, 1977 he wrote in his will that Iskcon directors would have to be his duly initiated disciples. This also confirms his no change “henceforward” order sent to all GBCs and temple presidents the following month ([July 9, 1977](#)) proclaiming his 11 chosen ritvik representatives that would initiate future disciples on his behalf even after his physical disappearance. These three seperate instructions are Srila Prabhupada’s actual replies to the direct question from his GBC disciples in charge of ISKCON management on how they should carry on initiations. Over the next 4 months until his physical disappearance, Srila Prabhupada never changed these orders either written or spoken.

- He would appoint some of His senior disciples to act as ritvik – representative of the acarya,
- the above eleven senior devotees acting as His (Prabhupadas) representative.
- The newly initiated devotees are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad,
- The name of a newly initiated disciple should be included in His Divine Grace’s “Initiated Disciples” book.
- “...the process for initiation to be followed in the future.” (July 11th)
- “...continue to become ritvik and act on my charge.” (July 19th)
- “...continue to become ritvik and act on my behalf.” (July 31th)

It was clear that Srila Prabhupada had officially introduced the concept of “Rittvik representative of the Acharya” as the arrangement for initiations by his disciples for the future of ISKCON. Had there been anything more to clarify certainly Srila Prabhupada would have written another letter to amend what was already so clear. But he never did, other than to reinforce what he had already written: **“Continue to act as rittvik representative of the Acharya.”**

Although Srila Prabhupada spoke of all his disciples becoming Gurus, he never once ordered any disciple to be a Guru; rather, he gave conditional authority and responsibility to some leading disciples to “act as Rittvik representatives of the Acharya.” Having failed to carry out this responsibility and having assumed that automatically upon Srila Prabhupada’s disappearance the rittviks would become Gurus, we find everything has gone off track, and the whole ISKCON movement is in shambles. Still it is better late than never. Everything can be brought back into focus if we simply come back to the order of the spiritual master and act as “Rittvik representative of the Acharya.”

The emperor or king delegates power to a viceroy who thus has all the power of a king to rule over a colony or state, yet it is understood that the viceroy is not the king, but

ruling as the king's representative. Such a viceroy would not automatically become a king upon the death of the king; rather, he would continue to act as the viceroy until the next emperor or king was installed on the throne. Similarly the "Rittvik representative" does not automatically become a Guru or Acharya (as we assumed when Srila Prabhupada disappeared), but the Rittvik continues to act as the representative of the Acharya, Srila Prabhupada. (*Hansadutta Letter*)