

The "Henceforward" Bluff: Admissions

Part Two of a series of essays entitled
The Reality of Guru-Parampara and the Myth of "The Final Order"
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The following paper is the second in a series of articles examining some serious (indeed fatal) weaknesses in the Ritvik scenario, and pointing out some essential aspects of guru-tattva. It is meant for those who are trying to make sense of the current ISKCON GBC / Ritvik/ Gaudiya Matha polemic. [Part One Part Three Part Four.]

Part 2: Adjustments by IRM

In my previous article I challenged IRM on their misinterpretation of the word "henceforward" in Srila Prabhupada's letter of July 9th. Specifically, they were falsely claiming that the word always and necessarily means 'from now onwards', implying an indefinite period. This false claim fuelled their propaganda that their Ritvik system should be continued after Srila Prabhupada's physical departure, and for the duration of ISKCON.

Having been challenged on their misinformation about the meaning of the word "henceforward", IRM has now backed away to a more conservative position. Therefore we agree fully with JD [abbreviation for Jnanadasa, my previous name] that sometimes, in some circumstances the word could indeed apply for just a limited time period. [W]e fully acknowledge that in many instances the word 'henceforward' can mean for a limited time.

As far as I know, this is the first time that they have made such an admission. At any rate, this information is certainly not available in The Final Order (TFO). In other words, IRM was not honest enough to raise this possibility until someone checked their statements and confronted them with the truth. We should note that their new statement, [[We FULLY ACKNOWLEDGE that in MANY INSTANCES...]] flatly contradicts the categorical statement in TFO that "henceforward" has "only one meaning", and only ever means "from now onwards".

Having acknowledged the new perspective on the word "henceforward", IRM still goes back to the position stated in TFO: [[We say that: 'There is no example, either in Srila Prabhupada's 86 recorded uses, nor in the entire history of the English language, where the actual word 'henceforward' has ever meant: 'Every time period until the departure of a person who issued the order'.]]

IRM's position here is false. In the first place, Srila Prabhupada himself used the word "henceforward" in precisely the sense that TFO denies, i.e. in instructions that could only be followed during his own physical lifetime, e.g. "Please write to me occasionally and as Gopala is not accustomed to reply promptly I shall henceforward write to you."^[1]
 "Henceforward write in [the] English language."^[2] "Henceforward you send the checks direct to me, because most probably I am going to close the account in Montreal."^[3]
 "Henceforth, all money sent to me should be sent directly to me."^[4]

The second reason that IRM's restated position is false is that there is no need for such a tortuous condition as "Every time period until the departure of a person who issued the order". It is enough to show that the word is often used in LIMITED contexts such as a particular person's lifetime. Srila Prabhupada wrote in one letter, "Anyway, rest assured that your son will not be initiated in brahmanahood at least for one year henceforward ..." [5] This and many other statements by Srila Prabhupada obviously invalidate the false claim in TFO that "henceforward" has "only one meaning", and only ever means "from now onwards".

In my previous article, I stated, "In less than ¼ of the instances on FOLIO does the word "henceforward" actually refer to an indefinite period into the future." IRM now responds, "[Maybe so, and the July 9th directive is one such order...]" How do they know that? What divine authority do they have for such an assertion? Here is strong evidence that "the July 9th directive" is NOT "one such order". In 1972, Srila Prabhupada gave an instruction that was almost identical to the July 9th "henceforward" letter. In this case, he used the word "henceforth" (which according to the *Oxford Dictionary* is synonymous with "henceforward") and made it clear that it was for the LIMITED TIME period that he was not in USA.

[O]nce before I had empowered you to chant the beads on my behalf, so henceforth, as long as I am away from America and Canada, I am requesting all of the temple presidents in that zone of North America and South America to send the beads of the new devotees to you at New Vrindaban. Similarly, I have appointed Revatinandana Maharaja in England to chant the beads of the new devotees on European Continent. Otherwise, in other parts of the world, I shall chant them as always. [6]

What concrete evidence does IRM have that the July 9th letter is NOT for a limited period?

IRM claims, "[...our case does not depend on the word "henceforward". Even if one were to Tipex out the word 'henceforward' from the July 9th directive it would not change anything.]" If this were true, why would they emphasise the word "henceforward" so much?

The significance of deliberate deception

IRM concludes that all the arguments in my previous article "were dealt with way back in 1996." However, my previous paper made a very significant point, which IRM has not addressed adequately, and which I will now spell out again.

TFO places a great deal of emphasis on the word "henceforward", and claims that this word can only mean "from now onwards". "On the other 86 occasions that we find on Folio where Srila Prabhupada has used the word 'henceforward', nobody raised even the possibility that the word could mean anything other than 'from now onwards'. 'From now onwards' does not mean 'from now onwards until I depart'. It simply means 'from now onwards'." [7]

Now, Krishnakant, the author of TFO, has studied Srila Prabhupada's instructions carefully, and therefore knows that Srila Prabhupada VERY OFTEN used the word to refer to events in the lifetime of a specific personality, e.g. "In case you think your salary insufficient, henceforward it will be doubled." [8] "You can chant on their beads henceforward" [9] and "I

pray Krishna that you may live henceforward happily as a householder."^[10] Hence, the statement in TFO can only be deliberate deception, as I pointed out in my previous article.

The deliberate deception is indicated by the indirect wording of the denial in TFO. Instead of writing, "THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY that the word could mean anything other than 'from now onwards'", Krishnakant wrote, "NOBODY RAISED EVEN THE POSSIBILITY that the word could mean anything other than 'from now onwards'". This could mean, "No one has called our bluff so far, but I won't tell a direct lie in case someone calls our bluff in the future." Twice in TFO, Krishnakant uses the word "henceforward" to refer to a limited context, which again suggests that he knew perfectly well what the word actually means.

Elsewhere in TFO Krishnakant has written, "There is no example, either in Srila Prabhupada's 86 recorded uses, nor in the entire history of the English language, where the actual word 'henceforward' has ever meant: 'Every time period until the departure of a person who issued the order'".^[11] This must also be deliberate deception, because Krishnakant must know that Srila Prabhupada himself obviously used the word in this sense several times. I pointed this out in my previous article, but IRM is coming back to this position again. This means that they are simply continuing their policy of deliberate deception.

IRM states that there is nothing new in my last paper. That means that they do not think it is significant to point out that they have a policy of deliberate deception. However, according to Srila Prabhupada, this point IS significant. "[L]ying is the most sinful activity. Everyone should be afraid of the sinful reactions to lying, for mother earth cannot even bear the weight of a sinful liar."^[12] The bull of religion has four legs, but only one is left now. That one leg is truthfulness, and it is also being destroyed. "You are now standing on one leg only, which is your truthfulness, and you are somehow or other hobbling along. But quarrel personified [Kali], flourishing by deceit, is also trying to destroy that leg."^[13]

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura warns us about Kali-chelas, disciples of Kali, who wear tilaka and neck-beads, but who are actually opposed to the principles of devotional service. There is no more sinister Kali-chela than someone who tries to subvert Srila Prabhupada's movement.

Krishnakant has written in TFO that we should not deviate "even a millionth of a hairsbreadth" from the parameters that Srila Prabhupada has given us. Having endorsed such noble sentiments, IRM will naturally want to cooperate in detecting and correcting any deviations, especially those that are considerably more than a millionth of a hairsbreadth.

The next article introduces Srila Prabhupada's principle of accepting direct meanings, and shows that his "henceforward" letter of July 9th DEFINITELY refers to a temporary and provisional arrangement.

References:

[1] Letter to Sally: 6 November, 1965; [2] Letter to Mangalaniloy Brahmachari: 11 June, 1966; [3] Letter to Gopala Krishna: 2 February, 1970; [4] Letter to Labangalatika: 14 March, 1970; [5] Letter: 27 May, 1969; [6] Letter to Kirtanananda: 5 January, 1973; [7] TFO, p.6; [8] C.C. Antya 9.106; [9] Letter to Bhagavan: 1 February, 1974; [10] Letter to

Janis: 10 December, 1966; [11] TFO, p.11; [12] SB 8.20 Summary; [13] SB 1.17.25

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