

The Real 'Appointment Tape'



by Krishnakant

The so-called '[appt tape](#)' has caused much confusion for persons trying to understand the 'Guru' issue, and for many remains as the main stumbling block to accepting Srila Prabhupada's [July 9th](#) order, setting out a *ritvik* system for ISKCON.

The following is written for those persons who are **NOT** in anyway concerned over the tape's authenticity. This is an issue that is highlighted by Norman Perle's GBC authorised report which stated that the tape exhibited '*strong signs suggestive of falsification*', and also by the fact that such a short recording has produced up to **5** different official GBC transcripts. (Please note that in the extracts of the tape transcripts that follow, we have allowed for all these different transcripts, by putting the disputed variations in brackets).

Leaving this aside, it appears that there are two main sources of confusion.

The First Source of Confusion

The first source of confusion arises from a mis-representation of what was actually said in the last 2 or 3 sentences of the conversation. The transcript that most people are presented by the GBC is similar to the following:

Srila Prabhupada: Who is initiating. He is grand-disciple.

Satsvarupa dasa Goswami: *Then we have a question concerning...*

Srila Prabhupada: When I order you become guru, he becomes regular guru. That's all.
He becomes disciple of my disciple.

Most persons who see this transcript as presented above will naturally either be confused or think that Srila Prabhupada is speaking of the '*ritviks*' having their own disciples and thus being *Diksa* Gurus. However the above transcript is **NOT ACCURATE**. And simply reproducing the transcript correctly causes the whole GBC case to collapse.

The first source of inaccuracy is the phrase '*He is grand-disciple*'. Please note the following:

1. In 1985, His Grace Ravindra Svarupa prabhu produced his landmark paper '*Under My Order*'. This paper very carefully analysed the whole '*Appt Tape*'. It was this analysis of the tape that led to the current guru system in ISKCON being introduced and the zonal *acharya* system being disbanded. Thus one can appreciate the significance of this paper and the thought that went into it. Also since the whole paper revolved around an analysis of the so-called '*Appt Tape*', its treatment of this tape also needed to be done carefully. To this end the transcript for the tape they produced was crucial and would have needed to be checked thoroughly. Indeed H.G. Ravindra Svarupa prabhu states that the transcript has been carefully '*checked and corrected*' by H.H. Jayadvaita Swami, a senior BBT editor. In this transcript, it clearly states '**HIS grand-disciple**' NOT 'HE IS grand-disciple'. This rendering was never challenged at the time, or subsequently, by *ANY* member of the GBC.
2. Fast forward to 1990. H.G. Ravindra Svarupa prabhu helps put out the *ISKCON Journal*.

Mysteriously the transcript has now been changed to '**HE IS grand-disciple**'. No explanation is given for this change. All subsequent GBC transcripts start repeating this phrase as '**HE IS grand-disciple**'.

3. However since the change involves moving from one word to two words, it can be easily resolved by listening to the tape. The tape has been listened to by a number of persons and they all agree that only **ONE** word is spoken before the word '*grand-disciple*'. Obviously both H.G. Ravindra Svarupa Prabhu and H.H. Jayadvaita Swami would also have heard only one word. Thus the term spoken before the word '*grand-disciple*' **DEFINITELY CANNOT** be '**HE IS**', since only **ONE** word is spoken, not **TWO** words.
4. In response to this point the GBC have now tried to subsequently argue in '*Disciple of My Disciple*' (1997) that '*maybe*' the word spoken was "*He's*". But this does not explain why the carefully checked transcript in 1985 was sure that it was '*His*', nor why **NONE** of the GBC transcripts subsequently have never said '*He's*', but only '*He is*'. The only possible explanations are:
 - a. They have a different version of the tape, where the words '*He is*' **ARE** spoken.
 - b. They have deliberately been mis-representing **HIS/HE'S** as '**HE IS**' all this time.

Of course if **a)** was the case the whole GBC case collapses anyway since it proves beyond any doubt that the tape was falsified since two different recordings exist. If **b)** is the case then it supports the idea that they have been deliberately trying to mis-represent the actual recording so that people will draw the '*ritviks are diksa gurus*' conclusion. However, with this mis-representation now cleared away, as will be seen, the conclusion that will be drawn is completely different.

5. Also there is no reason to suppose that Srila Prabhupada did say '*He's*' as opposed to '*His*', since such an interpretation would not make any sense. The pronoun '*He*' (from *He's*) before the term '*grand-disciple*' refers to the person **BEING** initiated, the initiate, or the '*grand-disciple*'. However in straightforward standard English the pronoun usually refers to the immediate ante-cedent (the term that the pronoun follows). In this case that term is '*who is initiating*'. It is obvious therefore that in this case the pronoun **CANNOT** be '**HE**' because how can the **INITIATE**, the person being **INITIATED**, or '*grand-disciple*', simultaneously be the person '*who is initiating*'!
6. Even if we allow for the ante-cedent that the pronoun refers to. To not be the most immediate. There is actually **NO** ante-cedent for the pronoun '**HE**' to refer to in the whole conversation, since the speaker Srila Prabhupada has never previously mentioned nor alluded to the initiate, or the person **BEING INITIATED**, in the singular. The only time previously in the conversation that the speaker or the questioners ever mention the initiate, it is **ALWAYS** in the plural. '(Yes, **THEY** are disciples.)' Thus a speaker cannot just introduce a pronoun that has no ante-cedent. It does not make sense. In other words the '**HE**' has to **REFER** to something. But it can not refer to something that has not yet even been mentioned.
7. However the use of '*His*', does make sense, since this use **CAN** be consistent with the most immediate antecedent, '*who is initiating*'. In this case the '**HIS**' **MUST** refer to Srila Prabhupada since the '*ritvik*' cannot have grand-disciples. Srila Prabhupada would then also be the person '*who is initiating*'. Thus there is no case for insisting that the words spoken were '**HE IS**' or even '**HE'S**'. Even the GBC admit that at the very best '*maybe*' it states '*He's*' ('*Disciple of My Disciple*'), as opposed to '**HIS**'.

The second source of inaccuracy is in the way the transcript is written out. If one actually listens to this part of the tape the sequence of events are as follows:

1. Srila Prabhupada states '*Who is initiating*'. He then **PAUSES**.
2. After the **PAUSE**, he next states '**HIS** grand-disciple'. (See above)
3. Srila Prabhupada again pauses.
4. H.H. Satsvarupa Maharaja then attempts to interrupt and begins to ask another question.
5. Srila Prabhupada **IGNORES** him and **CONTINUES SPEAKING**.

Taking all these facts into account, and omitting the interruption from H.H. Satsvarupa Maharaja, which

has absolutely no bearing on what Srila Prabhupada says, since he also ignores this interruption, the transcript can now be more accurately represented as:

Srila Prabhupada: Who is initiating (pause) His Grand-Disciple (pause) When I order you become guru, he becomes regular guru. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple.

Now the transcript becomes clearer. The term '*his grand-disciple*' is first introduced, and then mentioned again in different terms at the end of the sentence - '*Disciple of My Disciple*'. This by the way is another reason to put these two terms together on the same line, representing the same stream of thought, since the two terms are both speaking of the same entity - Srila Prabhupada's grand-disciples. Sandwiched in between the two terms is the **PROCESS** by which the entity is arrived at - '*When I order you become guru, he becomes regular guru*'. Thus in the **LAST** sentence of the whole conversation Srila Prabhupada merely repeats the standard **PRINCIPLE**, that **WHEN** the Guru orders the disciple, **THEN** he becomes a *Diksa* Guru. We see that on the May tape no such order was given. And the only order, which was given, was on July 9th, to be *ritviks*. So it is straightforward. Unless they can produce the actual order, the line:

"His grand-disciple, when I order you become guru, he becomes regular guru. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple."

In itself authorises and orders nothing.



The Second Source of Confusion

The next source of confusion revolves around a phrase used earlier on in the conversation:

Satsvarupa dasa Goswami: So (then) (they) (they'll) (may) also be considered your disciples?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, they are disciples, (but) (why) consider ... who

Tamal Krsna Goswami: No. He is asking that these *ritvik* acaryas, they are officiating, giving *diksa*, (there)... the people who they give *diksa* to, whose disciples are they?

Srila Prabhupada: They are his disciples.

Tamal Krsna Goswami: They are his disciples (?)

Srila Prabhupada: Who is initiating.

(Please note the words in brackets relate to all the different variations that have been given in official GBC transcripts.)

Please note where Srila Prabhupada states: 'They are **HIS** disciples'.

The argument is presented that the '**HIS**' here cannot possibly refer to Srila Prabhupada, since why would he refer to himself in the 3rd person. However, with the correct transcript given in the last

section, please note the following:

1. The very next phrases that Srila Prabhupada states after saying, 'They are **HIS** disciples', are:

Who is initiating. (pause) HIS grand-disciple.

Now we have already demonstrated above that the '**HIS**' here **MUST** refer to Srila Prabhupada, since neither the *ritvik* nor grand-disciple has grand-disciples! Thus the point that the **HIS** here **MUST** refer to Srila Prabhupada is not in doubt. So the argument that the '**HIS**' in the line above cannot refer to Srila Prabhupada is defeated by the fact that he uses '**HIS**' again **IMMEDIATELY** to refer to **HIMSELF**.

2. Further as soon as Srila Prabhupada has given his answer to the question of '*whose disciples are they*', with '*They're His Disciples*', Srila Prabhupada immediately **QUALIFIES** the answer, with '*who is initiating*'. This is very significant, since if the answer 'They're **HIS** disciples', was so clear on its own, there would be no need for Srila Prabhupada to qualify his answer. Thus to understand the answer - 'they're **HIS** disciples'- we have to take into account his qualification, '*who is initiating*'.
 - a. Now please note that in the whole conversation Srila Prabhupada speaks of two **DIFFERENT** entities:
 - o **Those who INITIATE**
 - o **Those who OFFICIATE**

The following can prove the fact that these are two **DIFFERENT** entities:

- i) The words in themselves mean completely different things:

- **Officiator** = He who acts in an official capacity on another's behalf.
- **Initiator** = He who is the counter-party to the initiate, or the person being initiated.

- ii) There would also be no need for Srila Prabhupada to simultaneously use two different words, which have different meanings, if he wanted to refer to exactly the same thing.

- b. Please note how Srila Prabhupada uses these terms: Right at the opening exchange of the conversation, he calls the soon to be appointed *ritviks* - as officiating:

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 initiation would be conducted.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. I shall recommend some of you. After this is settled up I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating *acarya*(s).

Tamal Krsna Goswami: Is that called *ritvik acarya*?

Srila Prabhupada: *Ritvik*. Yes.

Please note that '*Disciple of My Disciple*' has agreed that this exchange refers specifically to what will happen **AFTER** Srila Prabhupada's departure. Thus the persons Srila Prabhupada will appoint to assist with initiations **AFTER** his departure he denotes as '**OFFICIATING**' or '**RITVIKS**', **NOT** 'initiating'. Thus already by a simple process of elimination:

- i) Since the only two entities in question in this conversation are Srila Prabhupada and his disciples;

- ii) And having already established above that officiators and initiators are two different entities;
- iii) And since Srila Prabhupada has already referred to his disciples as 'officiating', it follows that Srila Prabhupada must be the initiator, since the officiator and initiator are not the same person.

c. Next he agrees that the person who 'gives the initiation' is the 'Guru':

Satsvarupa dasa Goswami: (Then) What is the relationship of that person who gives the initiation and ...

Srila Prabhupada: He's guru. He's guru.

This person **CANNOT** be the 'officiators' or '*ritviks*' he has **JUST** referred to. Otherwise we would have to argue that in the space of a few seconds Srila Prabhupada used and understood the words and phrases, 'Officiating *acharyas*', '*ritvik*', and the 'person who gives the initiation' and 'guru' to refer to and mean exactly the same thing! If a name-giving *ritvik* is the same as a *diksa* guru, then the whole argument for the last 20 years becomes meaningless anyway.

To make this clear later on Srila Prabhupada clarifies that it will be **HIM** '*who gives the initiation*', and who is the '*initiator*' and thus the counter-party to the '*initiate*' or the person who possesses the '*disciple*':

Satsvarupa dasa Goswami: So (then) (they) (they'll) (may) also be considered your disciples?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, they are disciples, (but) (why) consider ... who

It would be impossible for Srila Prabhupada to answer '*Yes, they are disciples*', under **ANY** circumstance, if it was **HIM** who was the 'officiator', or **HE** was **NOT** the person '*who gives the initiation*'.

Thus now we come to the exchange in question:

Tamal Krsna Goswami: No. He is asking that these *ritvik* acaryas, they are officiating, giving *diksa*, (there)... the people who they give *diksa* to, whose disciples are they?

Srila Prabhupada: They are his disciples.

Tamal Krsna Goswami: They are his disciples (?)

Srila Prabhupada: Who is initiating.

Please note that though H.H. Tamala Krishna Goswami, asks primarily in terms of those who are '**OFFICIATING**', (though he assumes that this is the same as 'giving *diksa*': 'they are officiating, giving *diksa*'), when Srila Prabhupada answers he makes a point of qualifying the answer with 'who is **INITIATING**'. Again if the officiator and initiator were the same person, there would have been no need for Srila Prabhupada to have given this extra qualifying remark. That the '**HIS**' refers to that entity which is '*initiating*', as opposed to those who '*officiate*', the entity of whom the question was originally asked. And we have already shown that the person who is '*initiating*' is Srila Prabhupada, and those who are to '*officiate*' were his disciples who were to be appointed to that position, as indicated in the opening exchange.

Thus in summary:

1. We have shown that the '*initiating*' and '*officiating*' are distinguished between in this conversation by Srila Prabhupada.
2. That they are two separate entities.
3. That those who were to be '*officiating*' were Srila Prabhupada's disciples who were soon to be appointed to that role as '*ritviks*'.
4. Thus the person 'who is initiating' is Srila Prabhupada.

Thus we have two totally different reasons demonstrating that '**HIS** disciples' **DOES** refer to Srila **PRABHUPADA**.

Conclusion

1. Both sources of confusion are linked are related to the use of the word '**HIS**'. Please note if we ignore the interruptions, the following is actually what Srila Prabhupada says:

They're HIS disciples. WHO is initiating. HIS grand-disciple.

Please note that by the rules of grammar, since all 3 terms follow in succession, the 3 underlined terms are referring to the same entity. The fact that it must be Srila Prabhupada can be proven **ABSOLUTELY** by the use of the last phrase - **HIS** grand-disciple, since in this conversation, no one except Srila Prabhupada can possibly possess grand-disciples.

2. A further proof that Srila Prabhupada is referred to by '**HIS**' in the above is afforded by the understanding of the terms '*officiate*' and '*initiate*' and the manner in which they are distinguished in the conversation. The only way this understanding can be rebutted is to assume:
 - a) That the terms '*officiating acarya*', '*ritvik*', and '*officiating*' mean exactly the same thing as 'he who gives initiation', 'guru', 'initiating'.
 - b) That Srila Prabhupada unnecessarily used all these different terms in succession, even though they mean different things, to refer to the same entity throughout.
3. The bottom line is that at the very best, the only way the whole GBC case regarding the tape hangs together is to:
 - i) Totally dis-regard the evidence that throws doubt on the authenticity of the tape;
 - ii) Forget that there are at least 5 different transcripts;
 - ii) Pick and choose which transcript they want to use;
 - iv) Dis-regard the fact that the opening exchange of the tape clearly only appoints *ritviks*;
 - v) Mis-represent the manner in which the words were actually spoken;
 - vi) Assume that the word '**HIS**' as heard on the tape was actually '**HE's**'
 - vii) Dis-regard that this assumption does not even make sense;
 - viii) Assume that different words meaning different things were continually used in succession by Srila Prabhupada to refer to the same thing;
 - ix) Dis-regard the fact that how can an **EARLIER** tape modify a **LATER** letter that is supposed to be the **RECORD** of the tape?
 - x) Dis-regard the fact that the July 9th letter which is supposed to be the **RECORD** of the tape, **ONLY** mentions *Ritviks*.

xi) Assume that an order to become *Diksa* Guru is given either on the tape or previously, even though no such order has ever been located.

- **Please note ALL the above 11 factors must be present otherwise the WHOLE GBC case collapses.**

Please chant: *Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Hare, Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama, Rama, Hare, Hare.* And be Happy!