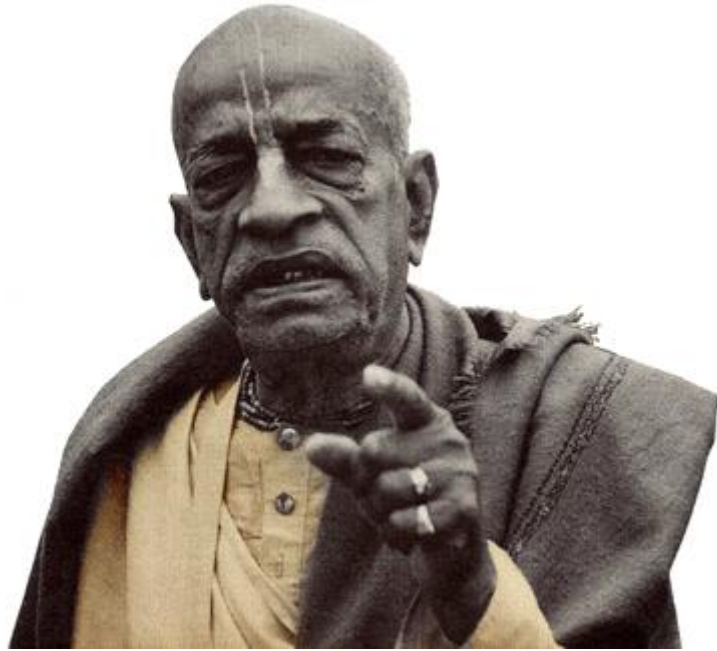


DEFEAT OF RITVIK-VADA

A detailed analysis and rebuttal of the
Ritvik-vada manifesto, *The Final Order*



His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada
Founder-Acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

by Rocana dasa
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	3
TECHNICAL NOTES	3
INTRODUCTION.....	5
THE FINAL ORDER.....	7
THE EVIDENCE	11
Modifications a) and b)	22
'Henceforward'	23
THE JULY 9 TH LETTER.....	27
SUPPORTING AND SUBSEQUENT INSTRUCTIONS.....	33
Considering TFO's Evidence.....	34
The July 31, 1977 Letter.....	35
The July 11, 1977 Letter.....	36
The July 19, 1977 Conversation.....	38
THE WILL AND CODICIL.....	42
OBJECTIONS.....	62
ALTERNATIVES	84
MORE OBJECTIONS	92
MAY 28 TH CONVERSATION.....	105
TFO'S CONCLUSION	133
'Ritvik' Terminology	141
ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE.....	143
DEFEATING RITVIK-VADA	145
CONCLUDING REMARKS	149
APPENDICES & REFERENCES	153

DEDICATION

*This book is humbly dedicated to my eternal Spiritual Master
Jaya Om Vishnupada Paramahansa Parivrajakacharya Asttotara Sata Sri Srimad
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada*

TECHNICAL NOTES

Because the full-length version of *Defeat of Ritvik-vada* (DOR) and its primary appendices is well over 200 pages, we also offer an abridged version, available here [[HTML](#) - [WORD](#) - [PDF](#)], in which we attempt to present a well rounded summary of our main arguments. Many readers will find it helpful to begin by reading the abridged version of DOR, first getting a handle on the arguments presented in narrative form before making a study of the more forensic, line-by-line analysis presented below.

This full-length version is in response to the Ritvik-vada manifesto, *The Final Order*, which is itself well over 100 pages. Of course, one cannot comprehensively rebut a 100-page paper in 10, or even 50 pages. Given the need to quote material so that comments can be easily understood in context, this paper is unavoidably lengthy. For that reason, we have employed a number of formats in this publication to make consuming the material easier for the reader.

DOR is footnoted, with links (where relevant) to the original online source documents listed under 'References'. There are a number of documents in Appendices, and a digital archive containing all referenced documents. In the Appendices we have included our extensive analysis of the May 28th Conversation, [[APX-5 & 6](#)] and in the Archive are digital copies of the May 28th, 1977 audio recording, in two formats. [[APX-7](#)]

Throughout the paper, we have employed a system of Error Notations, using bold red bracketed titles that identify various types of errors in *The Final Order*: errors of fact, errors of logic, assumptive errors, errors of omission, philosophical errors, contradictions, unsubstantiated claims, and instances of word jugglery. These Error Notations appear in an abbreviated form (**[EF 1]** etc.), prefacing our comments on each of the errors. Elsewhere in the paper they also appear in abbreviated form, where a given error is repeated in *The Final Order*, or where that error is again relevant to the discussion.

To enable the reader in making a categorical study of the errors found in *The Final Order*, we have included an Index of Errors in Appendices. [[APX-3](#)] It is not necessary to refer to this Index of Errors while reading the main paper. Rather, while studying errors categorically, page numbers noted in the Index of Errors will point the reader back to places in this main text where each error occurs.

Another system of red icons (**❶** etc.) is used to reference in the main paper those key points identified in the May 28th 'Comparative Review' document [[APX-5](#)]. Like the Error Notations,

these icons appear at various places in the main paper where key references to the 'Comparative Review' are relevant.

Bold blue text indicates quoted headings from *The Final Order*, included here to enable easy reference to the original TFO text. Elsewhere, blue text (not bold) is used to illustrate grammar and syntax of statements from the May 28th 'Conversation'. Indented, quoted material **not** taken from TFO, the source of which is not clearly evident (e.g., conversation transcripts), has been boxed to visually set it apart from quoted TFO text.

Finally, we have included in Appendices an FAQ [\[APX-8\]](#) which presents Frequently Asked Questions, grouped categorically along the standard lines of Ritvik-vada argument. In the FAQ we provide citations and links to various passages in DOR where answers to the questions are discussed in detail.

At the start, it might also be helpful for the reader to consider the rules of usage we apply throughout the paper with respect to the term, '*ritvik*':

1. When referring to the 11 representatives named in the July 9th Letter, we refer to them as *ritviks* – the word that actually appears in the July 9th Letter.
2. When referring to the term found in sastra that describes *ritvik* priests who engage in various ceremonial functions, or derivations of that term, we use the Sanskrit term, small case in italics. Likewise, when using the term as TFO applies it, we use *ritvik*.
3. When referring to devotees who are adherents of Ritvik-vada – the school of philosophy that asserts a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system for ISKCON – we use the term Ritviks. In this case the word is capitalized because it is used as a noun. These individuals are not necessarily *ritviks* (officiating priests), although some of them might be. Rather, they are members of a definable group (whether they consider themselves part of that group or not) – the group of those who accept that Srila Prabhupada put in place a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system for ISKCON.

Whether or not one bases their position on the July 9th Letter, the May 28th Conversation, or any and all other so-called evidence is not the determining factor for inclusion in the Ritvik-vadi group. Likewise, whether or not one emphasizes a 'no living guru' theme, an 'officiating acarya/prominent link' theme, or otherwise, if they accept that Srila Prabhupada established a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system for ISKCON, then in our nomenclature, they are Ritviks, or Ritvik-vadis.

Where the term 'Ritvik-vadis' is applied generally, or broadly, it is meant to refer equally to *The Final Order* and its author, because it is TFO which informs the Ritvik-vadis' essential position.

Let us now begin our response to *The Final Order* by Krishnakant, progressively analyzing key statements in TFO, rebutting its assertions in full and in context, and pointing out how each faulty argument is built upon the preceding ones.

INTRODUCTION

*nama om visnu padaya krsna presthaya bhutale
srimate bhaktivedanta swamin iti namine
namaste sarasvate deve gauravani pracarine
nirvisesa sunyavadi pascatyā desa tarine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada,
who is very dear to Lord Krsna,
having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master,
servant of Sarasvati Gosvami. You are kindly preaching the message
of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries,
which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

I would like to begin by advising the reader that this paper, *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*, is not 'light reading' and therefore requires a dedicated and focused approach. We believe, however, that the content is of great importance to the individual, and to the community of devotees concerned with the propagation of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's Sankīrtan Movement.

The creators of this paper, myself and my good wife, Jahnava devi dasi, have spent many years in putting this presentation together. I would be remiss not to say that it was a labor of love. Of course, we are trying to follow in the footsteps of the Acaryas who have rendered service in this capacity, in the sense of challenging asiddhantic philosophies that have arisen due to the influence of the material world, and especially the Age of Kali.

The principle that is found at the root of all problems is that the bewildered conditioned soul is prone to follow asiddhantic untruths. Those who are familiar with ISKCON's history since the departure of the great Acarya, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada, will be aware of the many problems that have beset his mission. The essence of all these problems is a misunderstanding of the philosophy.

In *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*, we are refuting a manifesto that was published by Krishnakant Desai in 1996, entitled *The Final Order*. This manifesto is held up as truth by those who have been convinced by the author's presentation of *guru-tattva*. These individuals, the Ritvik-vadis, have formed a group that now has several sub-branches. Underlying all problems in spreading Krsna consciousness, especially after the departure of a great Acarya, is the inevitable manifestation of religiosity. This Ritvik-vada is a form of religiosity, thus our occasional use of the designation, the 'Church of Ritvik'. With all due respect to the Ritvik-vadis, in the service of the Acaryas we are challenging their asiddhantic Ritvik position.

In the case of Ritvik-vada as presented in *The Final Order*, at least the asiddhantic philosophy has been written down in the form of a treatise that can be systematically addressed. This has allowed devotees to successfully challenge many aspects of Krishnakant's philosophical presentation over the years, and many writers have done an admirable job of that. Among them are the ISKCON leaders who have totally rejected Ritvik-vada, prohibiting it within Srila Prabhupada's society.

Throughout the years, we at the Sampradaya Sun have written many articles on this subject, addressing a variety of individuals and circumstances related to *guru-tattva*. This *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*, which is a forensic deconstruction of *The Final Order*, is by far our most in-depth and focused effort in challenging Ritvik-vada. By Sri Krsna's causeless mercy I've had the assistance of my wife, who has the expertise and nature required to forensically examine and challenge the contents of *The Final Order*, and together we offer this rebuttal of the asiddhantic philosophy it promotes. We hope that *Defeat of Ritvik-vada* will serve as a useful resource for all those preaching against Ritvik-ism in the service of Srila Prabhupada.

We ask the reader to focus and with an open mind, to study the material presented here. We encourage the reader to study both the abridged and full-length versions of DOR, preferably starting with the abridged.

Many of my godbrothers and sisters, and in many cases my good friends have somehow fallen under the spell of this Ritvik philosophy. It's not pleasurable for me to disturb their minds, and I ask for their forgiveness in this regard. I hope that I can make an impression on them, opening their minds to the principle that there is an alternative to Ritvik-vada, and that alternative does not require embracing some other form of institutionalized asiddhanta. As we argue in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*, by making a relatively small adjustment in thinking on *guru-tattva*, one can be in line with Guru, Sastra and Sadhu. That holds true for both the Ritviks and ISKCON leaders.

We welcome questions and challenges from our readers, and will appreciate hearing from each one of you. We do not claim that the conclusions presented in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada* are absolute, although we believe them to be correct and truthful, and in presenting our arguments, have been as faithful to Srila Prabhupada's teachings and standards as possible. We will encourage discussion and debate of this paper in the Sampradaya Sun, and welcome all devotees interested in challenging or discussing our position. We pray to Sri Krsna to bestow upon the reader the ability to comprehend what we are about to present here, for the pleasure of Srila Prabhupada. Hare Krsna.

your servant,
Rocana dasa

August 1, 2012
Lord Balarama's Appearance Day

THE FINAL ORDER

(1st Edition, 1996/97)

Foreword to The Final Order

In the Foreword to *The Final Order* by Dr. Kim Knott, a Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Leeds, the Doctor commends the presentation of arguments in *The Final Order*. But as this study will show, *The Final Order* is actually riddled with errors. As a non-devotee and scholar who is unfamiliar with the evidence, Dr. Knott would understandably not have recognized many of these errors. Her expert opinion was perhaps based on the apparent academic quality of *The Final Order*, as evidenced by the length and complexity of the paper. That, however, cannot be taken as any sort of credential for understanding the siddhanta.

Dr. Knott refers to *The Final Order* as being "*a serious attempt to argue the case that Srila Prabhupada established a system of ritvik gurus*", but in fact, that phrase does not appear in *The Final Order* or the July 9th Letter. The idea of "*ritvik gurus*" is not in line with the defined role of *ritvik* priests mentioned in sastra, nor does it fit with TFO's own conception of how the *ritviks* are to function on Srila Prabhupada's behalf – not as *gurus*, but as *officiators*.

The only name Dr. Knott cites as a reference authority in her Foreword is Jan Brezinski, aka Hiranyagarbha/Jagadananda das. This individual whose scholarship she cites is none other than the man who has become famous for leaving Srila Prabhupada and taking a replacement guru, Lalita Prasad, under whose influence he has written some of the most blasphemous statements ever to manifest in the modern Hare Krsna movement. Jagadananda has essentially called our great Acarya, His Divine Grace Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, a fraud and a cheater, thus becoming a pariah in the ISKCON community. The appearance of Brezinski's name in the Foreword to *The Final Order* only serves as a harbinger of what is to come – the assertion of a wholly asiddhantic school of thought.

INTRODUCTION

"Although we will refer to several papers and articles that have been published by senior ISKCON devotees on this subject, the main points of reference will be the GBC's most recent official handbook on initiation entitled. '*Gurus And Initiation In ISKCON*' [1] (to be referred to henceforward as *GII*), and the paper '*On My Order Understood*' [2] which is mentioned under section 1.1 of the 'Laws of ISKCON':"

In TFO's introduction of the personality whose instructions are to be central to its presentation, the first mention simply refers to him as "Srila Prabhupada". No honorifics are included, no respects offered to the Spiritual Master. In the initial reference, TFO doesn't even present his proper name – His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada. Just "Srila Prabhupada", and later, "Founder-Acarya". Improperly addressing this exalted transcendental personality does not lend itself to the "*philosophical chastity*" TFO claims to have been written in the interest of.

"Although some of the issues thrown up in confronting these discrepancies may seem quite radical, even painful to deal with, we feel that tackling them now will greatly minimise future confusion and potential deviation. It is not unprecedented that guru systems in ISKCON have come under quite radical review. In the past, symbols have been removed, ceremonies curtailed and paradigms shifted - all without too much long-term disruption." **[UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 1]**

UC 1: We are told that some seemingly *radical issues* will be introduced in *The Final Order*, and they are being compared to 'removed symbols, curtailed ceremonies and shifted paradigms', but no specifics are given to make this understandable.

An important opening assertion is made:

"Srla Prabhupada constantly stressed that we must not change, invent or speculate; but simply carry on expanding that which he so carefully and painstakingly established."
[CONTRADICTION 1]

C 1: In *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*, we will show that *The Final Order* contradicts itself in this regard, being itself highly speculative and inventive in interpreting Srila Prabhupada's instructions and promoting change of sastric dictates on *guru-tattva*.

"It is our strong conviction that the present guru system within ISKCON should be brought fully in line with Srila Prabhupada's last signed directive on the matter; his final order on initiation, issued on July 9th, 1977 (*please see appendices*)."

As we prove over the course of this paper, the July 9th Letter does not comprise an instruction for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system, either on its own or in accordance with other instructions from Srila Prabhupada. Coming "fully in line" with the July 9th Letter simply requires one to acknowledge that it contains instructions for a system in which Srila Prabhupada would personally participate and, given no instructions to the contrary, the system naturally ended upon His Divine Grace's departure.

"In our defence we shall simply repeat an axiom the GBC itself uses in the *GII* handbook:

"In logic, later statements supersede earlier ones in importance." (*GII*, p.25)"

In the 'Appointment Tape' section, TFO effectively rejects the notion that later statements in May 28th Conversation should be taken to modify earlier statements. Nor does it live by this 'last statement' rule as it applies to the very last instruction contained within the July 9th Letter, which TFO essentially rejects.

"Since the July 9th letter really is the final instruction on initiation within ISKCON, addressed as it was to the entire Movement, **[ERROR OF FACT 1] [ASSUMPTIVE ERROR 1]** it must be viewed in a category of its own." **[UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 2]**

EF 1: The July 9th Letter was not addressed to the "*entire Movement*", which at the time was comprised of many thousands of individuals, initiated and uninitiated. Rather, it was addressed to "*All G.B.C., and Temple Presidents*".

AE 1: The statement suggests there is something about the manner in which the letter was addressed (*'as it was'* to the *'entire movement'*) that relates to the finality of instructions contained there, but there is no such indication. Who the letter is addressed to does not determine the scope of contents.

UC 2: In addition to being predicated upon errors of fact and assumption, TFO's suggestion that because the letter was addressed to the *entire Movement* it's therefore in a special category, is an unsubstantiated claim. TFO doesn't specify this supposed category, or how it compares to other categories.

"We have no interest in conspiracy theories..." **[CONTRADICTION 2]**

C 2: TFO's preface to the Appointment Tape section implies that it's suspicious that there are four different versions of the May 28th Conversation transcript. Although Krishnakant says he has no interest in conspiracy theories, his statements in TFO effectively lend themselves to just that, saying for example that the plurality of transcripts 'raises serious questions', and:

"...even before the evidence is examined, we are placed in the invidious position of being expected to modify a signed letter through the analysis of a tape transcript, over which hang serious questions of authenticity."

Granted, TFO's author has not specifically charged a *conspiracy* of specific parties in creating this situation, but the implication is there, and is surely not dispelled. As discussed below, Krishnakant later repudiated the entire May 28th Conversation as evidence due to these *questions of authenticity*.

"As far as the authors are concerned, the vast majority of devotees in ISKCON are sincerely striving to please Srila Prabhupada; thus we consider it highly unlikely that anyone is deliberately disobeying, or causing others to disobey, **[ERROR OF LOGIC 1]** a direct order from our Founder-Acarya." **[ASSUMPTIVE ERROR 2]**

EL 1: This statement is devoid of logic. TFO states that because the majority are striving to please, the author considers it highly unlikely that **anyone** is disobeying. This is akin to saying 'because the majority of citizens love summer, we find it highly unlikely that anyone hates summer'. The statement is simply an effort to soften up the readership with sentiment.

AE 2: Aside from the error of logic, the statement also represents an assumptive error. To say that it's "*highly unlikely that anyone is deliberately disobeying, or causing others to disobey, a direct order from our Founder-Acarya*" is a poor assumption, indeed. As the author of TFO knows full well, ISKCON history is replete with examples of this very thing. While there is no need to dwell on such problems here, it cannot be denied that they exist.

"Nevertheless, somehow or other, it does seem as though certain aberrations of epistemology and managerial detail have found their way into general ISKCON currency over the last nineteen years. **[UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 3] [WORD JUGGLERY 1]** In identifying these grey areas we pray we may be of some assistance in rooting out unnecessary obstructions to our devotional service to Srila Prabhupada and Krsna."

UC 3: Exactly what *aberrations of epistemology and managerial detail* have found their way into ISKCON we are not told, nor how they're related to TFO's position.

WJ 1: This word jugglery is TFO's way of saying that there has, in fact, been disobedience of Srila Prabhupada's orders (which also qualifies the statement as a contradiction). It is this very situation that TFO seeks to remediate. Again, there's no need in this discussion to point the blame, but let us not deny the problems that exist.

"In this booklet we shall be presenting as evidence signed documentation, issued personally by Srila Prabhupada, and conversation transcripts, all of which are accepted as authentic by the GBC. We shall then look carefully at both the content and the context of these materials to see if they should be taken literally, or whether modifying instructions exist which might reasonably alter their meaning or applicability."

TFO accepts the possibility that the meanings contained within its evidence could reasonably be altered by other '*modifying instructions*' – it make this a fundamental rule of its own inquiry process. Yet TFO rejects the notion that the standing body of sastra is just such a modifying instruction on *guru-tattva*. Nor does TFO keep to the bounds of providing evidence '*accepted as authentic by the GBC*', as noted below under 'Supporting Instructions'.

TFO rejects the notion that sastric injunctions, which state that the qualified disciple has a right to become guru upon the spiritual master's departure, should be taken to modify the July 9th Letter. The author comes to this conclusion on the basis that the July 9th Letter instructs a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system, essentially saying that the word '*henceforward*' is an absolute demand that nothing can modify it – including sastric injunction. But as we will show in this *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*, the July 9th Letter contains no such instruction. Therefore, by TFO's own acceptance of a fundamental rule of inquiry wherein modifying instructions may exist, we assert that the author must accept the fact that sastra itself is a modifying instruction that acts upon the July 9th Letter 'final order' on initiations.

"We shall also discuss all relevant philosophical issues raised in connection with this evidence, and answer all of the most common objections raised against a literal acceptance of the July 9th initiation policy document." **[ASSUMPTIVE ERROR 3]**

AE 3: Here TFO assigns a new label of description to the July 9th Letter, calling it an *initiation policy document*. However, in common parlance, a 'policy document' is not an instrument that legislates an order. Rather, it is a means of exercising an entity's functions. **[3]** In other words a policy document does not in itself legislate, but sets policy for how something that has been legislated (made law) is to be followed, in a functional manner. A policy is typically

promulgated on the basis of some other official written document that legislates. Yet TFO appends the descriptor 'policy document' to the July 9th Letter, which it also says sets down the absolute law for future initiations in ISKCON, thus it has misapplied the term, even in the context of its own usage.

"And finally we shall look at how the 'officiating *acarya* system', as outlined in the July 9th order, **[ERROR OF FACT 2]** might be implemented with the minimum disturbance."

EF 2: The July 9th Letter does not mention an 'officiating *acarya* system'. No such system is being ordered. TFO's author has put the phrase 'officiating *acarya* system' in single quotes, which indicates an emphasis of some sort – perhaps emphasizing the fact that an arbitrary name is being assigning to the process outlined in the letter. But that arbitrary name is contrived. Later on in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*, we will show conclusively that TFO's use of the term '*officiating acarya*' is completely incorrect and unsupported.

"We shall base all our arguments solely on the philosophy and instructions given by Srila Prabhupada in his books, letters, lectures and conversations." **[ERROR OF FACT 3]**

EF 3: In fact, TFO relies upon numerous other pieces of evidence in making its arguments, and has produced this evidence in its Appendices. Such other evidence includes, for example, correspondence between devotees:

the July 11, 1977 letter from Tamal Krishna to Kirtanananda;
the July 21, 1977 letter from Ramesvara to the GBC and godbrothers; and
the July 31, 1977 letter from Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta;

as well as the transcript of Tamal Krishna's 'Pyramid House Confessions' of December 3, 1980. So TFO's arguments are **not** based solely on the philosophy and instructions given by Srila Prabhupada.

THE EVIDENCE

THE EVIDENCE

"It would certainly have been entirely out of character for Srila Prabhupada to leave an important issue, such as the future of initiation in his cherished society, up in the air, ambiguous, or in any way open to debate or speculation. This is particularly so in light of what happened to his own spiritual master's mission, which, as he would often point out, was destroyed largely through the operation of an unauthorised guru system."

[PHILOSOPHICAL ERROR 1]

PE 1: In this introductory paragraph of TFO's 'Evidence' section, the author lays out an argument we find repeated in the 'Appointment Tape' section, quoted here:

"When one considers the magnitude of the order in question, namely the continuation of the Sankirtan mission for up to ten thousand years, and what happened to the Gaudiya Math over precisely this issue, it seems inconceivable that Srila Prabhupada would have managed things in this way. However this is what we must believe if we are to accept the present GBC position." **[PE 1]**

These statements represent a serious philosophical error on the author's part. Noted as a single Philosophical Error, the statements actually comprise a number of separate errors.

First, there is the incorrect assumption that Srila Bhaktisiddhanta and Srila Prabhupada Thakurs could have controlled what happened after their departures. In fact, Sri Krsna is in control. Second, what happened after both Acaryas departed undoubtedly was, to a degree, predictable by these pure devotees – knowing the nature of the fallen conditioned souls, the possible future outcomes for both the Gaudiya Matha and ISKCON were likely clear to these *nitya-siddha* pure devotees.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta described this very situation, precisely and eloquently in his famous lecture on Putana's pastimes **[4]**, commonly referred to as his 'Organized Religion' lecture: *"The church that has the best chance of survival in this damned world is that of atheism under the convenient guise of theism."*

It should be no surprise that Srila Prabhupada would follow exactly in the footsteps of his Spiritual Master, as he did. And while TFO suggests that Srila Prabhupada would never leave the subject of initiations *"up in the air, ambiguous, or in any way open to debate or speculation"*, it is a failure of logic to assume that Srila Prabhupada could prevent his neophyte followers from speculating or debating amongst themselves, no matter how specific his instructions were.

Finally, we have the grievous philosophical mistake made by suggesting, even subtly, that Srila Bhaktisiddhanta erred in making his own provisions for succession, that as a result his matha suffered (which implies that it suffered from mismanagement), and that Srila Prabhupada would never make such a mistake knowing about the prior failure. All such notions are patently false. In saying that it's *"inconceivable that Srila Prabhupada would have managed things in this way"*, TFO's author has crossed the line into offensiveness.

TFO continues:

"Bearing this in mind, let us begin with facts that no-one disputes:"
[ERROR OF FACT 4]

EF 4: TFO wishfully prefaces its evidentiary narrative, but in fact, there are many devotees who dispute its characterization of the 'facts'.

"On July 9th 1977, four months before his physical departure, Srila Prabhupada set up a system of initiations employing the use of ritviks, or representatives of the acarya."
[CONTRADICTION 3]

C 3: Here TFO says the *ritvik* system was set-up on July 9th, but later, in the section on Srila Prabhupada's Will under 'Subsequent Instructions', it claims the system was already in place at the time the Will was executed – June 6th/7th, 1977. Referring to the Will, TFO states:

"the **system of management** in place within ISKCON must continue and could not be changed - an instruction left intact by a codicil added just **nine** days before his departure."

Under Objection #9 in the section, 'Objections Relating Directly to the Form...', TFO states:

"Besides, there was no need to give detailed explanations of the *ritvik* system in his books since he had practically demonstrated prototypes of it for many years, **[EF 29]** with the final touches of how it was to continue fully elucidated in the July 9th order."

The notion that a prototype *ritvik* system had been functioning *for many years* also contradicts the statement above. **[C 3]**

"Srila Prabhupada instructed that this '*officiating acarya*' system **[EF 2]** was to be instituted immediately, and run from that time onwards, or '*henceforward*' **[ERROR OF FACT 5]** - (please see Appendices)." **[UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 4]**

UC 4: There is no indication as to what TFO refers the reader to in Appendices.

As noted in **[EF 2]**, the July 9th Letter does not mention the term, '*officiating acarya*' system.

EF 5: Nor does it say that an '*officiating acarya*' system is to be instituted *immediately*. What it says is this (emphasis added):

"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."

As we will demonstrate repeatedly over the course of our analysis, TFO's characterization that an '*officiating acarya*' system was to be "*instituted immediately, and run from that time onwards, or henceforward*", is simply a fabrication. In fact, the July 9th Letter says that now "Temple Presidents **may henceforward** send recommendation" "to whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple". It does not say that they **MUST** do so, or that they **SHALL** do so, or even that they **SHOULD** do so. It says that they **MAY** do so. In other words, it is an option. Like the auxiliary verb "can", the auxiliary verb "may" indicates that one has the ability or option to do a thing. **[5]**

The inherent choice in the word "may" is similarly demonstrated in the subsequent sentence in the letter: "*After considering the recommendation, these representatives **may** accept the devotee*

as an initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada..." Obviously, this means that the *rittik* representatives **may** accept the recommended candidate, or they **may** reject them. They have an option, a choice. Likewise, the Temple Presidents **may** send recommendations to whichever of the eleven representatives is closest to their temple – they may do so; it is an option. And once received, the 11 *rittik* representatives may – or may not – choose to accept the candidate. Both parties have some choice in the matter.

One might ask, how could the instruction, "*Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation*" possibly be an option, when there is no other alternative? But there **are** potential alternatives, one of which arises in the July 7th Conversation (emphasis added):

Tamala Krsna: These men, they can also do second initiation. So there's no need for devotees to write to you for first and second initiation. They can write to the man nearest them. But all these persons are still your disciples. Anybody who gives initiation is doing so on your behalf.

Prabhupada: Yes.

Tamala Krsna: You know that book I'm maintaining of all of your disciples' names? Should I continue that?

Prabhupada: Hm.

Tamala Krsna: So if someone gives initiation, like Harikesa Maharaja, he should send the person's name to us here and I'll enter it in the book. Okay. Is there someone else in India that you want to do this?

Prabhupada: **India, I am here.** We shall see. In India, Jayapataka.

Tamala Krsna: Jayapataka Maharaja.

Prabhupada: You are also in India.

Srila Prabhupada is clearly indicating that he is willing to participate in the process where he is, in India. Now, one might say that Tamal Krishna's question is not entirely clear, and it is not otherwise clarified in the conversation. He says, "Is there someone else in India that you want to do this?" Is he referring to someone else in India who gives initiation, or someone else in India who enters names in the book? Harikesa, Tamal Krishna and Jayapataka, the three persons mentioned in this passage, are all among the named 11 initiating representatives. Srila Prabhupada's self-referential statement, "*India, I am here*", places him as a member of this group. The reference is clearly to initiating, not to the secretarial duty of writing names in a book. And TFO agrees that it is Tamal Krishna who will be writing names in the book **[EL 2]**

In addition, it is important to note that Jayapataka Swami, whose name only now came up in the context of the exchange above, was immediately affirmed a moment later, when Tamal Krishna listed the names of all seven of the initiating representatives chosen thus far. So obviously, the intent in this conversation, as both Tamal Krishna and Srila Prabhupada expressed it, was not that Jayapataka was mentioned in reference to writing names in the book – Srila Prabhupada mentioned him as an initiating representative, and added his own name in that very same statement. "*India, I am here. We shall see. In India, Jayapataka.*" Not that he and Jayapataka would just write names in a book, but that in India, **they would be available** to receive letters of recommendation and act accordingly.

Clearly, this exchange stands as an alternative illustrating the optional nature of the statement, "*Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation*". In the case of India, they may send recommendations to Srila Prabhupada, because "*India, I am here.*" Further elaboration on this point can be found in '*A Word and a Staple, Part Three*'. [6a](#)

Back in 1977, a Temple President who read the words of the July 9th Letter, [6b](#) instructing that they "*may henceforward send recommendation*", would be likely to take the statement literally, seeing it as an option, not an absolute requirement. They may begin sending letters of recommendation to one of the 11 representatives (to avoid the bottleneck), or they may continue doing what they have always done in the past, depending upon their circumstances. For example, a Temple President **may** choose to send a letter of recommendation for a diksa candidate in India to Srila Prabhupada himself, who is also in India. If that were to happen, what would the predictable outcome be? There is nothing in the July 9th Letter to indicate that such a letter of recommendation would have been rejected and sent back to the Temple President. Rather, the expectation would be that the letter would be accepted and processed, by Srila Prabhupada and whoever his secretary in India was at the time. Nor is there any reason to believe that the Temple President would have been considered to be **disobeying** the July 9th Letter in having taken this step, given that the letter says he "**may**" send it to one of the 11 representatives, not that he "**shall**", or he "**must**".

Granted, it was well known that Srila Prabhupada was having health difficulties during this time, thus an attentive Temple President would likely choose to send a letter of recommendation to one of the 11 *rittiks*, given the option. But that is not absolutely true, anymore than it is absolutely required by the July 9th Letter. Some devotees were also aware that at this very time, Srila Prabhupada was working even more vigorously on his translating work than before, despite ill health. This was communicated in a letter from Tamal Krishna to Kirtanananda on July 11, 1977:

"His Divine Grace has been maintaining His health on an even course and most amazingly has doubled His translation work keeping pace with the doubling of book distribution."

This was confirmed in a letter from Ramesvara to the GBC on July 21, 1977. Thus it would be entirely reasonable for a Temple President during that period, who had the same information, to have chosen to instead send a letter of recommendation to Srila Prabhupada himself for a candidate in India – "**India, I am here**", knowing that he was hard at work on his books, and therefore assuming that it would be alright to send a particular letter of recommendation to him directly.

Even the author of TFO admits (Objection #5) that the health issue did not represent some absolute obstacle in the minds of the devotees:

"Devotees may or may not have been aware of the extent of Srila Prabhupada's illness; but how could they possibly be expected to deduce from a letter that says nothing about his health, that this was the only reason it was issued?"

And of course, had the senior men realized who Srila Prabhupada really is through understanding his exalted transcendental status, they would never have just assumed that his illness would prohibit him from initiating.

The July 9th Letter says, "*Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation*". The term '*henceforward*' in this sentence refers specifically to what the Temple Presidents may do, **not** to what the 11 representatives may do. There is no '*henceforward*' instruction given to the 11 *ritvik* representatives other than, de facto, that they would obviously be the recipients of any letters the Temple Presidents **may chose** to send to them. The July 9th Letter does not say that '*henceforward*', the 11 *ritvik* representatives shall do anything at all. In fact, if no letters were sent to them, they would have no further instructions or role whatsoever under the terms of the July 9th Letter. '*Henceforward*' refers to the Temple Presidents, and the word is qualified by the auxiliary verb, "**may**".

When considering the optional nature of the word "**may**", we must also keep in mind the content of the July 7th Conversation which preceded this July 9th Letter. As noted above [AE 2], during the July 7th Conversation, Tamal Krishna informed Srila Prabhupada that a bottleneck had developed because the senior men had halted the standing order for processing initiates through Srila Prabhupada's existing system, due to concerns about his health. Srila Prabhupada therefore gave a solution to the problem, making various adjustments to the system. It is these adjustments that were memorialized in the July 9th Letter. This underscores and makes even more clear the fact that the July 9th instruction that "*Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation*" is an option, an alternative – not that it is a new hard and fast rule comprising a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system, as TFO asserts.

Taking all these points together, it becomes crystal clear that TFO offers a contrived version of events in saying that:

"Srila Prabhupada instructed that this 'officiating acarya' system was to be instituted immediately, and run from that time onwards, or 'henceforward'"

The truth is that:

- the July 9th Letter does not say "*ritvik*", but rather "*rittik*"
- the letter contains no mention of "*officiating acarya*"
- the *rittik*s are representatives of **the** acarya, not themselves *acarya*
- there is no mention of an order that "must" be followed by the *rittik*s,
- rather, the letter describes a process that "may" be followed"
- that Temple Presidents **may** take a certain action
- and Temple Presidents **may** take that action '*henceforward*'
- and Srila Prabhupada will **continue** to participate in the system, receiving names for his book

Even at this early point in the analysis, it is abundantly evident that TFO is constructed on a foundation of falsity.

"This management directive, which was sent to all Governing Body Commissioners and Temple Presidents [EF 1] of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, instructed that from that time on new disciples would be given spiritual names and have their beads [ERROR OF FACT 6] and gayatri mantras from the 11 named representatives." [ERROR OF FACT 7]

While correctly stated above, this is a contradiction of the previous erroneous statement found in TFO's 'Introduction', which says (emphasis added):

*"Since the July 9th letter really is the final instruction on initiation within ISKCON, addressed as it was **to the entire Movement**, it must be viewed in a category of its own." [EF 1]*

EF 6: While TFO states that new disciples would *"have their beads and gayatri mantras from the 11 named representatives"*, there is no mention of chanting on beads in the July 9th Letter.

EF 7: As proved in the section above, *"from that time on"* (*henceforward*) specifically refers to an action that a Temple President may choose to take. It does not refer to an action that *henceforward*, the 11 named *rittik* representatives must perform.

"Srla Prabhupada thus handed over to the representatives total power of attorney [ERROR OF FACT 8] over who could receive initiation, he made it clear that from that time onwards he was no longer to be consulted." [ERROR OF FACT 9]

EF 8: The July 9th Letter is not a 'power of attorney'. Power of attorney is a legal instrument [7] by which one person assigns another person the legal right to act on his behalf. While the specific elements required in a power of attorney vary depending on the jurisdiction in which it is executed, the July 9th Letter does not meet even the most basic requirements. The July 9th Letter does not identify itself as a power of attorney, does not specify a transference of rights, is signed by Srila Prabhupada but not dated by him, is not signed by an agent or fiduciary engaged to act on the grantor's behalf, is not notarized or witnessed, etc. In short, it would not be recognized as a 'power of attorney' in any legal jurisdiction. In Objection #3, just after the 'Appointment Tape' section of TFO, the author again uses this faulty 'power of attorney' argument.

One might argue that TFO's use of the term 'power of attorney' means the same as in the context of Srila Prabhupada's letter to Tusta Krsna, December 2, 1975 [8]. But clearly, in that instance Srila Prabhupada used the term in a very general, non-legal way. This is an important distinction to make, given that TFO characterizes the July 9th Letter in various ways, such as it being an absolute 'order', a 'policy document', a 'management directive' and a 'power of attorney'.

EF 9: The July 9th Letter does not say that that Srila Prabhupada is *"no longer to be consulted"*, nor is there a single thing contained within the letter to indicate that Srila Prabhupada *"made it clear that from that time onwards he was no longer to be consulted."* This is simply a fabrication.

TFO's assertion in this regard correlates to its later comments under Objection #3, at the end of the 'Appointment Tape' section. There, TFO ties the '*no longer to be consulted*' idea not to the July 9th Letter, but to the July 7th Conversation. Although as a category of claims, we are not dealing with this set of 30 objections in TFO, given that they're predicated upon an acceptance of TFO's assertions on the fundamental evidence (which we disprove and thus reject), we will deal with this particular Objection #3, which is framed as a question:

"3) We may accept Srila Prabhupada, but how do we know he has accepted us as his disciple even in his physical absence?"

TFO doesn't answer the question, but instead gives an explanation relevant to its 'power of attorney' and '*no longer to be consulted*' theories, stating:

"On July 7th, when setting up the *ritvik* system, **[CONTRADICTION 4]** Srila Prabhupada states that the *ritviks* could accept devotees as his disciples without consulting him. **[ERROR OF FACT 10]** Thus, Srila Prabhupada was not involved in the process of screening, or approving new disciples. The *ritviks* had full authority and discretion. Srila Prabhupada's physical involvement was not required."

Srila Prabhupada:	So without waiting for me, wherever you consider it is right. That will depend on discretion.
Tamal Krsna:	<i>On discretion.</i>
Srila Prabhupada:	Yes. <i>(SP Room conversation, 7/7/77, Vrindavan)</i>

C 4: Just as the earlier TFO claim that the *ritvik* system was started on July 9th is contradicted by the statement that the system was protected by the Will dated June 6th/7th, here is another contradiction, this time saying the system was being set-up on July 7th.

EF 10: We actually have several errors in the space of one sentence here. First, the July 7th Conversation does not mention the word *ritvik*, or any of its derivations, and does not set-up a "*ritvik* system". Second, Srila Prabhupada does not make any statement on July 7th about what *ritviks* can do. Third, Prabhupada never mentions the word 'consult' – in fact, no one mentions that word, or anything close to it. So this entire characterization of the July 7th Conversation by TFO is contrived.

Fourth, and most importantly, the conversation excerpt TFO provides above does not prove that '*Srila Prabhupada's physical involvement was not required*'. TFO is asserting a *system*, and Srila Prabhupada is certainly part of this system: "*India, I am here.*" With respect to Prabhupada saying, '*without waiting for me*', consider the statement in context (emphasis added):

Prabhupada: You can note down these names.

Tamala Krsna: Yes, I have them.

Prabhupada: Who are they?

Tamala Krsna: Kirtanananda Maharaja, Satsvarupa Maharaja, Jayatirtha Prabhu, Bhagavan Prabhu, Harikesa Maharaja, Jayapataka Maharaja and Tamala Krsna Maharaja.

Prabhupada: That's nice. Now you distribute.

Tamala Krsna: Seven. There's seven names.

Prabhupada: For the time being, seven names, sufficient. You can make Ramesvara.

Tamala Krsna: Ramesvara Maharaja.

Prabhupada: And Hridayananda.

Tamala Krsna: Oh, yeah. South America.

Prabhupada: **So without waiting for me, wherever you consider it is right... That will depend on discretion.**

Tamala Krsna: On discretion.

Prabhupada: Yes.

Tamala Krsna: That's for first and second initiations.

Prabhupada: Hm.

(July 7th Conversation with Srila Prabhupada)

The ten lines preceding the quote TFO presents from this conversation are specifically about the listing of names of representatives, their regional locations, and distributing the list of their names. In this context, Srila Prabhupada's statement – "*So without waiting for me, wherever you consider it is right... That will depend on discretion*" – could very well have been referring to adding more names to the list in a particular zone.

This part of the discussion was largely about specific people and geographic regions. First seven names, then another name, then another name were given. Then Srila Prabhupada says, 'without waiting... **wherever** you consider it is right. The word "**wherever**" refers to *place*. Where? In the regions under discussion... South America, and before that, India, and America. Srila Prabhupada said: "*Five, six men, you divide who is **nearest**.*"

So in the midst of all these statements referring to choosing representatives for regional areas, one cannot deny that Srila Prabhupada's statement, "**wherever** you consider it is right" could be referring to adding more representative names to the list in needed areas. That is at least as possible, if not more so, than TFO's conclusion that "*without waiting for me*" means 'give diksa by *ritvik* without waiting for me'.

TFO goes on in Objection #3:

"Furthermore, the names given by the *ritviks* would be entered by Tamal Krsna Goswami into the 'initiated disciples' book. Thus, externally at least, Srila Prabhupada would not even have been aware of the disciple's existence. Consequently, the process now would be the same as it was then, since the *ritvik* has full power of attorney." **[ERROR OF LOGIC 2]**

Here TFO confirms its understanding of the July 7th Conversation, saying that it is Tamal Krishna who will enter names into the book. This again substantiates the fact that when Srila Prabhupada says, "*India, I am here*", he is not saying that in India, he will write the names in the

book. No, Tamal Krishna will do that, as TFO admits. Srila Prabhupada's statement means that he will participate in the initiations system, from his location in India.

EL 2: TFO makes an error of logic in the statement, "*externally at least, Srila Prabhupada would not even have been aware of the disciple's existence*", arguing on this basis that the *ritviks* are enjoying *full power of attorney*. But the July 9th Letter, released just two days after and memorializing the July 7th Conversation, says something quite different. The Letter does not say who will write names in the book, but it does say that names are to be sent to Srila Prabhupada to be included in his book. Thus, as the recipient of names being sent in for the book (regardless of who actually *writes* the names into the book), Srila Prabhupada would certainly be a participant in the system, and would be aware of a new disciple's existence.

In summary, one cannot point to the July 7th statement by Srila Prabhupada, "*So without waiting for me, wherever you consider it is right. That will depend on discretion*", and say with any certainty that it refers to actually giving initiations. **[EF 10]** Even if this statement had been referring to initiations and not to the listing of regional representatives, TFO's argument is still flawed: One might conclude that Srila Prabhupada is agreeable to not being consulted on initiations for the time being, but that is not the same as saying he "*made it clear that from that time onwards he was **no longer to be consulted***". One obvious test that no such instruction is contained in the conversation is a hypothetical in which either a Temple President or one of the 11 representatives has a question about some aspect of a prospective initiation: Will they feel free to **consult** with Srila Prabhupada on the matter? Yes, of course they will. If, however, Srila Prabhupada had really 'made it clear that he was no longer to be consulted', then one could rightly assume that if they did consult him, i.e., if they did put a question to him on a matter of initiation sometime after this conversation, they would be disobeying his instruction. Obviously, that is not the case.

In fact, Srila Prabhupada gave no such instruction, that '*from that time onwards he was no longer to be consulted*'. Just the opposite is true. **[EF 9]** In the July 7th Conversation, Srila Prabhupada **specifically stated that he will be active in the initiation process: "India, I am here."**

Likewise, Srila Prabhupada did not state in the July 9th Letter that he is "*no longer to be consulted*", or that he will no longer be part of the system. TFO attempts to convey the notion that Srila Prabhupada was specifically and completely opting out of the entire initiations process, turning the duties of diksa over to the 11 named representatives, but that is simply not the case. TFO is mis-representing the facts.

"Immediately after Srila Prabhupada's physical departure, on November 14th 1977, the GBC suspended this system." **[ERROR OF FACT 11]**

EF 11: As mentioned earlier, the bottleneck problem dealt with on July 7th was a result of the fact that the senior men had, in large part, **already suspended** the process in place for initiations. And from July 9th until the time of Srila Prabhupada's departure, the '*ritvik system*' can only be said to have functioned in a limited way. Thus, it cannot be said that "*on November 14th 1977, the GBC suspended this system*".

"The above account is not a political opinion, it is historical fact, accepted by everyone, [EF 4] including the GBC." [UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 5]

These so-called *historical facts* are clearly wrong, what to speak of the notion that everyone else agrees with them. This account of events from TFO is certainly not historical fact, and it does bear all the marks of political opinion. TFO gives this proclamation great emphasis: large, bold type, some of which is underlined. Consequently, the fact that the statement is untrue in every regard must be afforded equal weight. As DOR proves, this 'historical account' of TFO's contains one contradiction, one error of logic, one unsubstantiated claim, and six errors of fact. In other words, the assertions contained in these two very important paragraphs have been thoroughly impeached.

UC 5: Furthermore no evidence is provided to show that the GBC accepts this account of so-called 'historical fact', and it is highly unlikely that they do.

"As mentioned above, the July 9th letter was sent to all GBCs and Temple Presidents, [CONTRADICTION 5] and remains to this day the **only** signed instruction on the future of initiation Srila Prabhupada ever issued to the whole Society."

C 5: This contradicts the erroneous statement made at [EF 1].

"Commenting on the July 9th order, **Jayadvaita Swami** recently wrote:

"Its authority is beyond question [...] Clearly, this letter establishes a ritvik-guru system."

(Jayadvaita Swami 'Where the ritvik People are Wrong' 1996)"

Like Dr. Knott in her Foreword to TFO, HH Jayadvaita Swami has employed incorrect language. The July 9th Letter does not mention a "*ritvik-guru system*". It refers to *ritvik representatives*, not to *ritvik-gurus*.

TFO's insertion of this quote would appear to indicate Jayadvaita's acceptance of the July 9th Letter as evidence in support of the Ritvik position, but here is the quote, in context:

"The appointment letter is dated July 9th, 1977. It is signed by Tamal Krishna Goswami and countersigned "Approved A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami." Its authority is beyond question."

Jayadvaita Swami is emphasizing 'authority beyond question' specifically in regards to the signatories to the letter – not specifically with respect to the stance the Letter takes on *guru-tattva*, as interpreted by Krishnakant.

Modifications a) and b)

"The source of the controversy arises from two modifications, **[ASSUMPTIVE ERROR 4] [ERROR OF LOGIC 3]** which were subsequently superimposed over this otherwise clear and authoritative directive

- **Modification a) : That the appointment of representatives or *ritviks* was only temporary, specifically to be terminated on the departure of Srila Prabhupada.**
- **Modification b) : Having ceased their representational function, the *ritviks* would automatically become *diksa* gurus, initiating persons as their own disciples, not Srila Prabhupada's."**

From our position, TFO's misinterpretation of the July 9th Letter is an equally great *source of controversy* as the GBC's misinterpretation of it is. TFO describes the July 9th Letter as 'clear and authoritative', and of course we agree. However, individual devotees have lent their own interpretations to it nonetheless, and have come to various conclusions about how to apply those 'clear and authoritative' instructions. For the sake of brevity, we won't lay out all the points of difference here, but many are covered herein, or in the FAQ in Appendices. **[APX-3]**

With the introduction of its Modification **a)** and Modification **b)** argument, TFO begins to explain how, according to them, the GBC deviated from the instructions that TFO claims are contained in the July 9th Letter. These arguments represent the core of TFO'S challenge to the GBC position. In terms of these 'Modifications', the challenge put forward in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada* focuses on Modification **a)** – rejection of the notion that '*henceforward*' is the instruction for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system for continuing Srila Prabhupada's branch of the disciplic succession.

AE 4: TFO's error of assumption is in thinking that the *source of controversy* related to Modification **a)** has to do simply with duration and termination of the July 9th Letter. In fact, as the DOR challenge illustrates, there is a great deal more to the controversy than that. There is controversy about the terminology of *ritvik* compared to *ritviks*. There is also controversy about the functional definition of *ritviks*, and what tasks the *ritviks* are ordered to perform by the letter. There is controversy about the relationship between the May 28th *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* and the *ritviks* of the July 9th Letter. So the controversy described above by TFO in terms of Modification **a)** is not an accurate characterization of the GBC's position. Neither does it represent the positions of others, like ourselves. In fact, the position does not even represent that of TFO's author, whose arguments in the realm of Modification **a)** actually spillover into some of these other sources of controversy, as well.

EL 3: Not only does TFO fail to understand Srila Prabhupada's position, but it predictably fails to give an accurate characterization of the GBC's position in the sphere of Modification **a)**. As we describe in great detail later in DOR, the GBC's argument in this regard hinges primarily upon the word '*acarya*' mentioned in the May 28th Conversation, not simply on '*henceforward*' in the July 9th Letter, so again, the *source of controversy* is not limited to issues of duration and

termination. Thus, the logical premise underlying TFO's Modification **a)** argument is flawed from the start, like a house built on sand.

There are many devotees who are not concerned with Modification **b)** in the same way that TFO assumes the reader is. Included among them are those who are not attempting to defend either the Zonal Acarya System or the current 'No Objection' Diksa Guru program. Again, TFO is primarily challenging the GBC's position, particularly as expressed in two of their official papers [1 & 2], and not the position of challengers like ourselves. Nevertheless, many of the arguments in our presentation unveil the weaknesses of Krishnakant's thesis, for all to see.

Our primary focus in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada* is **to challenge the fundamental evidence underlying Ritvik-vada**, as presented in TFO. We are not addressing philosophical or managerial issues that might arise subsequent to an acceptance (even a hypothetical acceptance) of that evidence.

Modification **a)** refers to a longevity element and a duration element in the July 9th Letter, as TFO suggests they are asserted by the GBC. Modification **b)** refers to the assumed status of the representatives upon cessation of the July 9th order. As we argue in some detail later in DOR, in the GBC's position, that assumed status is actually tied more to the May 28th Conversation than to the July 9th Letter itself, much like Modification **a)**. In our presentation, however, we are concerned with the **core evidence**, which can be adequately analyzed in the context of Modification **a)** alone. Again, we are not addressing here the GBC's rationalizations for either the Zonal Acarya System or the subsequent Diksa Guru system, therefore we will not focus on Modification **b)**.

'Henceforward'

Modification **a)** deals specifically with TFO's assertion of a time factor associated with the July 9th Letter, which it says the GBC modified by taking the position that *"the appointment of representatives or ritviks was only temporary, specifically to be terminated on the departure of Srila Prabhupada."* Thus, Modification **a)** represents a significant line of demarcation in the *guru-tattva* debate.

Ritvik adherents argue that a time factor is established by the word '*henceforward*', and say that timeline is indefinite, or as much as 10,000 years long. Some argue that the entire July 9th Letter is imbued with a presumed time factor. Non-Ritviks typically argue that '*henceforward*' does not mean "forever", but only 'for the time being' – not 'forever after Srila Prabhupada's departure'.

TFO asserts that the word '*henceforward*' was purposefully included in the letter with the approval of Srila Prabhupada, as a means of expressing his desire and instruction that the system for initiations, and the 11 *ritvik* representatives named in the letter to carry out that system, were to go on indefinitely. This argument comprises the core of the post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa position, or Ritvik-vada.

Even if one accepts the meaning attributed to *henceforward* by the Ritviks, according to the July 9th Letter the obvious boundary would have to be the length of the lifetimes of the 11 named *rittik* representatives, since no mention is made in the letter about a process for replacing *rittik*s as the 11 men become incapacitated or leave their bodies. TFO suggests that this is accomplished by way of Srila Prabhupada's Will and Codicil, but that notion is soundly defeated below.

Those Ritviks who say '*henceforward*' means '10,000 years' often suggest that Srila Prabhupada meant for the GBC to make replacements for the 11 men, although the July 9th Letter contains no instruction for them to do so. While TFO vehemently insists that the July 9th Letter be taken literally and absolutely, on this point the author, like most Ritvik-vadis, is willing to bend and move beyond the scope of the letter. Instead, the Ritvik-vadis insert into the process their own formulated solution for indefinite extension of the system, justifying it by suggesting that if the GBC were properly functioning, they would handle this task and the Ritviks wouldn't have to take such liberties. But again, the July 9th Letter makes no such provision, no matter how perfectly or how poorly the GBC are functioning. This element of longevity **cannot** be derived from the July 9th Letter. It can only be inferred based on the Will and Codicil, and again, that notion is soundly defeated in DOR.

This willingness on the part of many Ritviks to insert their own longevity solution into the July 9th Letter is not unlike another opinion held by many Ritviks – that because the GBC is no longer functioning as Srila Prabhupada intended, and because most (if not all) of the 11 *rittik* representatives have either fallen down or departed, they now have the right to appoint their own officiating *ritvik* priests. And the modern Ritvik movement has done just that – they have self-appointed *ritvik*s who are making a pretense of initiating candidates who they proclaim to be direct diksa disciples of Srila Prabhupada. Of course, the July 9th Letter, which they hold to be unassailably absolute, empowers them to do no such thing.

TFO argues that the entire July 9th Letter is imbued with a time factor beyond the scope of '*henceforward*', given that a) Srila Prabhupada had for many years employed a *ritvik* system for initiations during his lila; b) that this was an evolving system; and c) that he intentionally progressed that system to its culmination, expressed in the July 9th Letter by the establishment of a permanent system for post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa, *henceforward*. TFO also argues that the timing of events, particularly the May 28th and July 7th Conversations, stand as proof that the July 9th Letter was intended to establish a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system *henceforward*.

Of course, Srila Prabhupada never referred to his pre-1977 initiations system as a *ritvik* system. We suggest that it can more accurately be described as a *siksa* system, i.e., a system wherein *sikhas* assisted the *diksa guru*. And while the system did evolve, it could more accurately be described as having evolved away from the sort of *ritvik* system Srila Prabhupada instructed to assist him during his lila. This is evidenced by the bottleneck problem that Srila Prabhupada addressed on July 7th. There is no evidence in support of the Ritvik-vada conclusion that the July 9th Letter was a 'culmination' of the previous allegedly functional *ritvik* systems. Nor do the arguments above stand as proof for intended longevity in the July 9th instruction.

Thus far, TFO has argued that an '*officiating acarya*' system was to be instituted immediately, and run from that time onwards, or '*henceforward*'; and that '*henceforward*' is a time element that was the object of modification by the GBC. We have disproved all these points.

Because other devotees have written copiously and very effectively in arguing against TFO's interpretation of the term '*henceforward*', we will not repeat that material here. Instead, we refer the reader to the following documents, which make it clear that '*henceforward*' is not synonymous with '*post-samadhi*', and that the definition TFO attributes to '*henceforward*' is not congruent with common parlance or with legal definitions of the term, nor does the standing body of examples of Srila Prabhupada's use of the word demonstrate that he only used '*henceforward*' in the way TFO suggests.

- [\[10\]](#) Definitions of 'Henceforth' - Burton's Legal Dictionary
 - [\[11\]](#) Folio 2.0 (1990) – 'Henceforward'
 - [\[12\]](#) Vanipedia – 'Henceforward'
 - [\[13a\]](#) *The 'Henceforward' Bluff* - Part 1
 - [\[13b\]](#) *The 'Henceforward' Bluff* - Part 2
 - [\[31\]](#) *Disciple Of My Disciple* - Part 3, 'An Analysis of the Word 'Henceforward'
- Error Notations:** [\[EF 14\]](#) [\[EL 6\]](#) [\[UC 6\]](#)

TFO admits:

"Furthermore the argument that the whole *ritvik* system 'hangs' on one word - henceforward - is untenable, since even if we take the word *out* of the letter, nothing has changed."

TFO employs the same strategy the GBC does – it attempts to bridge the *officiating acarya(s)*/*ritvik acarya(s)* in the May 28th Conversation over *ritvik representative* in the July 9th Letter. But the two cannot be bridged. Thus, following TFO's claim that even the word '*henceforward*' is not necessary for its argument to be viable, we can see that its Ritvik-vada position is completely, utterly baseless.

Leaving for the moment our discussion of '*henceforward*' and Modifications **a)** and **b)**, let us return to TFO's 'Evidence' section.

"The reforms to the zonal *acarya* system, which took place around 1987, kept intact these two assumptions. The same assumptions, in fact, that underpinned the very system it replaced. [\[EL 3\]](#) We refer to **a)** and **b)** above as modifications since neither statement appears in the July 9th letter itself, nor in any policy document issued by Srila Prabhupada subsequent to this order." [\[ERROR OF LOGIC 4\]](#) [\[AE 3\]](#)

EL 4: In the paragraph above, TFO makes an additional error of logic by now offering a rationale for employing its terminology, saying the term 'modification' is used because certain statements do not appear in the July 9th Letter itself. But the absence of a thing does not an object of modification make. This is akin to saying that the July 9th Letter does not contain 'all things', therefore anything that exists outside the letter is a modification of it. The only way for

TFO to claim that the July 9th Letter has been 'modified' is to point to the term '*henceforward*', and say that **it** has been modified. But as we've just demonstrated, that is not true.

'*Henceforward*' specifically refers in the letter to an action that **may** be taken by Temple Presidents. It does not refer to an action the *rittik* representatives must take. Yet Modifications **a)** and **b)** refer specifically to actions on the part of the *rittik* representatives – not to actions of the Temple Presidents. Claiming that '*henceforward*' has been 'modified' by the actions of the 11 representatives denies that fact.

Referring back to a comment made in the Introduction of TFO:

"We shall base all our arguments solely on the philosophy and instructions given by Srila Prabhupada in his books, letters, lectures and conversations."

we can see that TFO has gone far beyond these hallowed bounds. Its Modification **a)** and **b)** arguments are not based on the philosophy or the instructions of Srila Prabhupada, but rather on its own interpretations of the GBC actions, which it characterizes based on faulty logic.

"Over the years increasing numbers of devotees have began questioning the legitimacy of these basic assumptions. For many, they have never been properly substantiated, and hence an uneasy sense of doubt and mistrust has grown both within and outside the Society. At present, books, papers, E-Mailouts and Internet Web Sites offer almost daily updates on ISKCON and its allegedly deviant guru system. Anything, which can bring about some sort of resolution to this controversy has got to be positive for anyone who truly cares about Srila Prabhupada's Movement."

In the same mood as TFO's statement above, over the years an increasing number of devotees, including the authors of DOR, have been questioning the legitimacy and basic assumptions of Ritvik-vada. A significant sense of doubt and mistrust against Ritvik-vada has developed, although more than fifteen years after TFO was first published, there continues to be a daily stream of updates on the Net and in various publications propagandizing its asiddhantic conclusions. Nonetheless, there are far more devotees in the ISKCON community today who reject Ritvik-vada than accept it. Among the former group there are two main divisions: those who accept the GBC version of *guru-tattva*, and those who do not. We are in the latter category, because we don't accept the institutionalization of diksa, although we do accept the sastric injunction that qualified disciples may become diksa gurus themselves after the Spiritual Master departs. But despite this difference, we join the GBC in concluding that Ritvik-vada cannot be substantiated by fact, logic or philosophy, and is asiddhantic.

It is significant to note that in *GII* the existence of the July 9th letter is not even acknowledged, even though this is the only place where the original eleven '*acaryas*' [ERROR OF FACT 12] are actually mentioned. This omission is puzzling, especially given that *GII* is supposed to offer the '*final siddhanta*' on the entire issue.

TFO's comment is boxed for emphasis, thus the following rebuttal must be given the same weight.

EF 12: The July 9th Letter does not mention the term '*acarya*' to describe the '*original eleven*' individuals. They are referred to once as "*rittik*" – *representative of the acarya*"; twice as "*disciples*", and eleven times as '*representatives*'. If Srila Prabhupada meant to convey that they were, in fact, *acaryas*, surely he would have used that term rather than repeatedly saying they are '*representatives*'. And these '*representatives*' are, in fact, described in the letter as *representatives of the acarya*.

Throughout TFO, the author seems to be intent on introducing terms that are different than the actual terms used in the evidence put forward. Even in cases where persons such as Dr. Knott and Jayadvaita Swami are quoted using incorrect terms, TFO does not point out the incorrect terminology. And in philosophical position papers like TFO, not pointing out such errors is akin to accepting or condoning them.

"Let us then look closely at the July 9th order to see if there is indeed anything that supports assumptions **a**) and **b**) above:"

Again changing terminology, TFO uses the word 'assumptions' rather than 'modifications', even though it has just explained that: "*We refer to a) and b) above as modifications since neither statement appears in the July 9th letter...*" *Assumptions* are entirely different than *modifications*. One may make a *modification* based on an *assumption*, but the two words are not synonymous.

THE JULY 9TH LETTER

Following is the text of the July 9th, 1977 Letter [\[APX-1\]](#) (p. 86), which is Srila Prabhupada's last signed directive on the matter of initiations in ISKCON. This letter serves as the foundation of Ritvik-vada philosophy.

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 Vrndavana, 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 Gosvami
His Holiness Jayapataka Swami
His Holiness Tamal Krsna Gosvami

His Holiness Hridayananda Gosvami
His Holiness Bhavananda Gosvami
His Holiness Hamsadutta Swami
His Holiness Ramesvara Swami
His Holiness Harikesa 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,
[signed]
Tamal Krsna Gosvami
Secretary to Srila Prabhupad

Approved: [signed] A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

[Note: In many digital copies of the letter, the word 'His' in the last sentence is blank. The word appears to have been present in the original but blanked out (inadvertently, we presume) in the photocopy from which many digital copies have proliferated. The presence of the word in the original is indicated in copies by typographical artifacts that match the left edge of a capital 'H'. Regardless, the meaning of the sentence is clear.]

THE ORDER ITSELF

"As previously mentioned, the July 9th order states that the *ritvik* system [EF 10] should be followed 'henceforward'." [ERROR OF FACT 13]

As demonstrated in "Evidence Tampering: Rtvik Sleight of Hand", [9] members of the Ritvik community have been playing very loose with words when it comes to making public representations of the text of the July 9th Letter. As the author of TFO knows, the actual text of

the July 9th Letter says "*rittik*", not "*ritvik*". The Ritvik-vadis continuously misrepresent this fact – even to the point of fabricating evidence to eliminate what they no doubt see as a problematic misspelling of the word. And in this section of TFO, we also find that one of the single-most relevant words in the entire July 9th Letter is misrepresented, both in spelling and in assigning contextual meaning to it.

EF 13: The letter does not say that a '*ritvik* system' should be followed '*henceforward*'. Rather, the letter gives the instruction that Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendations to the 11 *rittik* representatives.

We cannot over-emphasize the importance of this misinterpretation. It is one of the elephants in the proverbial temple room. Over all these years, and particularly since the publication of TFO in 1996/97, devotees have been led to believe that the July 9th Letter establishes a post-samadhi diksa *ritvik* system; that this system was instructed by Srila Prabhupada in the July 9th Letter; and that on the power of this letter, 11 named *ritvik* representatives were instructed to give diksa initiations on Srila Prabhupada's behalf indefinitely. The alleged evidence put forward to support this claim has always been the now infamous word, '*henceforward*'. To bolster this notion, TFO refers to the May 28th Conversation and the July 7th Conversation, which it claims culminated in the establishment of a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system set down in the July 9th Letter.

But that is not at all the truth.

The facts and evidence do not support, but instead contradict this conclusion.

As we have described in detail above, **[AE 2]** On July 7th, 1977, Tamal Krishna informed Srila Prabhupada that a bottleneck had developed because candidates for initiation were no longer being processed through Srila Prabhupada's existing system. Prabhupada therefore gave a solution to the problem, making various adjustments to the system. These adjustments were memorialized in the July 9th Letter.

One of the adjustments is described in the July 9th Letter, using the term '*henceforward*'. It is stated as an optional step, not as an absolute-only step. The term '*henceforward*' is specifically used in reference to an action the Temple Presidents may take – not actions that the Temple Presidents should, or shall, or must take – but actions that they may take. **[EF 5] [5]**

The Temple Presidents referred to, who may henceforward send recommendations for first and second initiation to whichever of the eleven *rittik* representatives are closest to them, are **NOT** one and the same personalities as the 11 *rittiks* themselves. This is an undeniable fact. It is not that any Temple President, anywhere on the planet, can simply assume the duties of one of the 11 *rittik* representatives, thereby becoming a *rittik* representative under the terms of the July 9th Letter. Likewise, it is not that one of the named 11 representatives who also happens to be a Temple President somehow loses his status as a *rittik* representative. No, these two roles are not synonymous, interchangeable, or non-different from one another.

If a *rittik* representative receives a letter of recommendation from a Temple President, it may result in the *rittik* representative accepting the recommendation, and taking action accordingly.

Cause and effect. But this is not an absolute given – the *ritvik* has an option. In the same way, there is nothing to indicate that continuing to send a letter of recommendation to Srila Prabhupada himself after July 9th is forbidden, or that if a Temple President did so, it would be rejected. Clearly, *may henceforward* is an optional instruction for the Temple President, not a restrictive absolute.

In both the July 7th Conversation and the July 9th Letter, it is clear and inarguable that Srila Prabhupada stated his intention to be part of the process. Neither the conversation nor the letter has **any** mention of a system for after Srila Prabhupada's departure. All these notions are contrived, screwed out of a misinterpretation of the evidence at hand. '*Henceforward*' in the July 9th Letter does **not** serve as evidence to support the post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa conclusion, therefore it becomes necessary to cobble the July 7th Conversation to the letter, trying to establish a post-samadhi instruction. In the same way, TFO rolls the May 28th Conversation into the argument, even though the author repudiates the conversation transcript in its entirety as evidence.

Without mention of the word *ritvik* in that May 28th conversation, the July 9th Letter argument disintegrates completely. And as we show conclusively, when carefully scrutinized, the May 28th Conversation also fails as evidence for the Rtvik conclusion.

"The specific word used, 'henceforward', only has one meaning, viz. 'from now onwards'. This is both according to Srila Prabhupada's own previous usage of the word and the meaning ascribed to it by the English Language. Unlike other words, the word henceforward is unambiguous since it only possesses one dictionary definition."

[ERROR OF FACT 14]

EF 14: The definition of '*henceforward*' is not so simple as to have 'only one meaning'. Given that TFO implies that the July 9th Letter is a legal instrument by which Srila Prabhupada granted 'power of attorney' to his representatives, **[EF 8]** it is only fair that the term '*henceforward*' be considered in that light.

Legal definitions of the term **[10]** refer to the root word of the adverb, *henceforth* which, through the legal concept of 'plain language', is directly linked to *henceforward*. *West's Encyclopedia of American Law*, (2nd edition, 2008) states that the term, when used in a legal document, statute, or other legal instrument, indicates that "**something will commence from the present time to the future, to the exclusion of the past**". This definition says "**to** the future", not 'for all future time', or 'forever', and it puts equal emphasis on distinguishing past and future from present.

In another of the most widely accepted legal dictionaries, *Burton's Legal Thesaurus* (2007, McGraw-Hill), the following definition is given:

"from here on in, from now on, from this day forward, from this day on, from this moment in time on, from this point forward, from this point in time forward, hereafter, **immediately**, in the future, **starting tomorrow**, **subsequently**, thereafter"

At least three of the given definitions (bolded) clearly attribute a legal meaning to '*henceforward*' that is different than the notion of 'forever' asserted by TFO. While there is no point in our offering an even more excruciatingly precise argument about the intended definition of '*henceforward*' in the July 9th Letter, since it refers to an optional action on the part of the Temple Presidents, not the 11 *rittik* representatives, it is nonetheless interesting to consider a more factual range of possible definitions, which far exceed TFO's 'only one meaning' assertion. (See the list of '*henceforward*' references on page 25 above.)

"On the other 86 occasions **[UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 6]** 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'."

UC 6: Conveniently, TFO provides no citations for this claim. As we'll show later in this analysis, in the discussion about terminology and usage of the term '*ritvik*' and its derivations, TFO's counts from the Folio have not proved to be accurate. Nor does TFO inform the reader as to what version of the Folio these 86 instances of use are found in.

Folio 2.0 (1990) provides 91 matches for the term '*henceforward*', **[11]** and Folio 4.11 (1997) gives in excess of 100 returns to the search query, '*henceforward*', so we are left to guess as to which of these references TFO bases its assertion on, and which references it did not count. Aside from the many instances of use of the term '*henceforward*' in lectures and purports, Vanipedia provides a listing of 57 uses of '*henceforward/hence forward/henceforth*', just in Srila Prabhupada's correspondence alone. **[12]**

Here are just two of the numerous examples that defeat TFO's assertion that the word '*henceforward*' has only one meaning according to Srila Prabhupada's previous usage of the word and that one meaning is "from now onwards":

Srila Prabhupada's Lecture on Bhagavad-gita, May 23, 1966, New York:

"... Yes man. Simply you have to agree, "Yes," henceforward we shall become karma-yogi. Then, from that very point, your life begins."

In this instance, '*henceforward*' does not mean 'from now onwards'. Its meaning is much closer to 'immediately' (one of the legal definitions noted above). 'Immediately *we shall become*', or 'sometime in the future *we shall become*'. But clearly the word does not mean in this context, 'from now onwards *we shall become*', because Srila Prabhupada has specifically qualified it as being a single point in time – '*from that very point*'.

Srila Prabhupada's Letter to Giriraja, July 5, 1969:

"... may transcribe it and send me a copy. I will be sending further tapes henceforward, because my Nectar of Devotion is now finished, and I shall concentrate on the Krishna..."

In this instance, '*henceforward*' does not mean 'from now onwards'. Clearly Srila Prabhupada is not saying that 'from now on' he will be sending further tapes, but rather that 'soon' or

'immediately' he will be sending tapes, and not that the sending of these tapes will go on for some long or indefinite period.

"On the other 86 occasions that we find on Folio [UC 6] where Srila Prabhupada has used the word 'henceforward', nobody raised even the possibility that the word could mean anything other than 'from now onwards'." [ASSUMPTIVE ERROR 5] [ERROR OF LOGIC 5]

AE 5: It would be impossible for TFO's author to know whether or not, at the time the word 'henceforward' was used by Srila Prabhupada, there were individuals who heard, read or otherwise received it, and questioned its meaning. Nor does the Folio provide information about people's reactions upon hearing particular words.

EL 5: TFO argues that on each occasion 'henceforward' was used, nobody questioned its meaning, therefore its meaning is clear and inarguable. But a clear use of the term in one circumstance offers no assurance at all that it will be understood in some other context, on another circumstance. Someone could understand the word ten times when it's used, then misunderstand it on the eleventh time.

"'From now onwards' does not mean 'from now onwards until I depart'. It simply means 'from now onwards'. There is **no** mention in the letter that the system should stop on Srila Prabhupada's departure, neither does it state that the system was to **only** be operational during his presence."

TFO attributes meaning to the word 'henceforward' as though it refers to an action on the part of the 11 named *rittik* representatives when in fact, the word specifically refers to an action on the part of the Temple Presidents. And as TFO admits, there is no specific reference in the July 9th Letter to either the continuation **or** the stoppage of actions which are directly referent to the *rittik* representatives **or** the Temple Presidents. In the absence of an order either to stop **or** to continue, you cannot arbitrarily say that therefore, one or the other must win out. Consequently, one must consider whether there is some other source of instruction or authorization that informs as to what parties to the order should do upon Srila Prabhupada's departure ... stop or continue? As it happens, such information is available – it is present in sastra and in the body of Srila Prabhupada's instructions regarding the age-old process for diksa and the continuation of the disciplic succession. It is there in the May 28th Conversation.

Logic dictates that in a scenario comprising three parties (Srila Prabhupada, Temple Presidents and *rittik* representatives), if one party becomes absent to the transactional relationship (the initiations process), then the other parties would naturally modify their behavior accordingly. No special instruction is needed in order for one party to stop talking (or sending letters of recommendation) to another party into the future when that party is no longer there to listen or receive. This is only common sense.

We remind the reader that the logical scenario described above meets TFO's own criteria for arguments that will be accommodated in the study of Srila Prabhupada's instructions regarding *guru-tattva*. In the 'Introduction' TFO states (emphasis added):

"In this booklet we shall be presenting as evidence signed documentation, issued personally by Srila Prabhupada, and conversation transcripts, all of which are accepted as authentic by the GBC. We shall then look carefully at both the content and the context of these materials to see if they should be taken literally, or whether **modifying instructions** exist which might reasonably alter their meaning or applicability."

In the absence of an instruction to either stop or continue steps instructed in the July 9th Letter, one is duty bound to make a common sense, logical inquiry to determine what is to be done next. That includes referring to sastra, which is the standing body of instruction on continuation of the disciplic succession.

Next, TFO presents three final statements in what is a very brief section on 'The Order Itself':

"Furthermore the argument that the whole *ritvik* system 'hangs' on one word - henceforward - is untenable, since even if we take the word *out* of the letter, nothing has changed. One still has a system set up by Srila Prabhupada four months before his departure, [C 3 & 5] with no subsequent instruction to terminate it. Without such a counter instruction, this letter would *still* remain intact [ERROR OF LOGIC 6] as Srila Prabhupada's final instruction on initiation."

EL 6: As we have already established, there is no indication whatsoever that the July 9th Letter was meant to refer to initiations after Srila Prabhupada's departure. Such an instruction simply is not there – not the in July 9th Letter, not in the July 7th Conversation, and not in the May 28th Conversation. It does not exist. In the case of the May 28th Conversation, we instead have a contra-indication. Srila Prabhupada begins the dialogue by referring to *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* who will conduct initiations after his departure. But as we prove conclusively later in this paper, these are not the same individuals as the 11 *ritvik* representatives named in the July 9th Letter.

To properly understand what is to be done after Srila Prabhupada's departure, not only with respect to the July 9th instructions, but regarding continuation of the disciplic succession, one must consult all the rest of Prabhupada's instructions, and sastra. There the answers are found, in line with Guru, Sadhu and Sastra. Srila Prabhupada spoke about these answers directly on May 28th. It is not that the answers are non-existent. They simply have to be accepted. These preceding instructions bear fully upon the circumstances of Srila Prabhupada's departure, even while the system that the July 9th Letter informed was underway. They cannot be ignored simply because there is no terminating instruction mentioned in a letter that likewise gives no instruction for continuity that outlives a key participant's physical presence.

SUPPORTING AND SUBSEQUENT INSTRUCTIONS

SUPPORTING INSTRUCTIONS

"There were other statements made by Srila Prabhupada, and his secretary, **[UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 7]** in the days following the July 9th letter, which clearly indicate that the *ritvik* system was intended to continue without cessation:" **[ERROR OF FACT 15]**

UC 7: Like the section above, 'The Order Itself', we have here a very brief section in which three pieces of support evidence are put forward. Only one of the three pieces is provided in Appendices. No links or citations are provided for the other two items, thus they must be considered unsubstantiated claims.

EF 15: As we will demonstrate below, there are **no** statements found in any of the three pieces of support evidence which "*clearly indicate that the ritvik system was intended to continue without cessation*".

We will begin with the third piece of evidence put forward as a Supporting Instruction, since it's the only one of the three that is properly cited, being included in Appendices – the July 31, 1977 Letter:

- "**...continue to become *ritvik* and act on my behalf.**" (July 31th)

First, however, we would like to remind the reader of how TFO describes what evidence it will consider in coming to its conclusions.

Considering TFO's Evidence

In the Introduction, TFO specifies seven essential forms of evidence that will be produced:

- 1) several papers and articles published by senior ISKCON devotees
- 2) the GBC's official *GII* handbook on initiation **[1]**
- 3) the GBC's paper, '*On My Order Understood*' **[2]**
- 4) signed documentation issued personally by Srila Prabhupada
- 5) conversation transcripts accepted as authentic by the GBC
- 6) modifying instructions which may exist
- 7) relevant philosophical issues raised in connection with this evidence

TFO's closing statement in introducing the methodology of evidence is this:

"We shall base all our arguments solely on the philosophy and instructions given by Srila Prabhupada in his books, letters, lectures and conversations"

Thus far in the section of TFO entitled 'The Evidence', the author has asserted his own opinion-based narrative account of events that led up to the July 9th Letter and events that followed Srila Prabhupada's departure. TFO provides a quote from Jayadvaita Swami, a quote from the *GII* handbook, the text of the July 9th Letter itself, and under 'Supporting Instructions', what are

apparently three pieces of correspondence, two of which are not properly identified, the third being a letter from Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta.

"In this booklet we shall be presenting as evidence signed documentation, issued personally by Srila Prabhupada, and conversation transcripts, all of which are accepted as authentic by the GBC. We shall then look carefully at both the content and the context of these materials to see if they should be taken literally, or whether modifying instructions exist which might reasonably alter their meaning or applicability."

Given that no conversation transcripts have yet been introduced, and only one document signed by Srila Prabhupada – the July 9th Letter – we must assume that the letter from Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta is presented because it modifies the instructions contained in the July 9th Letter. Otherwise, it would contradict TFO's own rules of evidence, since it qualifies in none of the other six categories of evidence set forth by the author.

Of course, there is more evidence yet to come in TFO, such as Srila Prabhupada's Will and Codicil and the transcript of the May 28th Room Conversation. But thus far, quite a number of arguments have already been asserted, and not a single one of them meets TFO's own stated criteria for arguments.

In fact, not a single piece of evidence from any of Srila Prabhupada's books, letters, lectures or conversations has yet been introduced.

The issue of how evidence is presented in TFO is further discussed in an appendix document entitled *Construction of The Final Order*. [APX-4] This document deals with issues of structural integrity in TFO that serve to obfuscate the author's intent as to how evidence is to be comparatively weighted in favor of his arguments.

The July 31, 1977 Letter

Tamal Krishna's letter to Hansadutta of July 31, 1977, which supposedly 'modifies' the instructions contained in the July 9th Letter, states that Srila Prabhupada addressed Hansadutta, through Tamal Krishna, saying the following:

"Make your own field and continue to become *ritvik* and act on my behalf." [ERROR OF LOGIC 7]

EL 7: This phrase can in no way be construed as 'modifying', or otherwise supporting the Ritvik-vada conclusions about the July 9th Letter. All it really indicates is that Srila Prabhupada recognizes that some 22 days after the July 9th Letter appointing Hansadutta as a *rittik* representative, he has still not succeeded in complying with that instruction.

If one is instructed to 'act as a *ritvik* representative', and to begin (*henceforward*) accepting letters of recommendation sent to you by Temple Presidents, that obviously means start now. But according to Tamal Krishna in this letter, Srila Prabhupada is telling Hansadutta to "**continue to**

become ritvik and act on my behalf". *Continue to become* means he has not *already* become, but that he must *continue trying* to become. He is *trying*, because he has not already *accomplished* it. And it follows that there is no guarantee he ever will.

Rather than disrupt the flow of our commentary on TFO's 'Supporting Instructions', we have included in Appendices a document entitled 'Performance of the 11 Rittik Representatives, July to November 1977', [APX-2] which provides a more detailed summary of the *ritvik* initiations that actually took place between July and November, 1977, and what they indicate about the functionality of the '*ritvik* system' that was in place at the time.

In the hypertext version of TFO presented online, in the 'Supporting Instructions' section, a link to the Appendices section is provided for this July 31, 1977 Letter from Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta. The other two preceding items included in the 'Supporting Instructions' section have no such link to Appendices and are not otherwise cited:

- "...**the process for initiation to be followed in the future**." (July 11th)
- "...**continue to become *ritvik* and act on my charge**." (July 19th)

While they technically stand as unsubstantiated claims [UC 7], judging by the dates and quoted material we can guess that they refer to two items included in TFO's Appendices – a letter and a conversation transcript. However, there are no statements found in either one which "*clearly indicate that the ritvik system was intended to continue without cessation*".

The July 11, 1977 Letter

The first item listed in the 'Supporting Instructions' section appears to be the letter of July 11, 1977 from Tamal Krishna to Kirtanananda, which states (emphasis added):

"A letter has been sent to all the Temple Presidents and GBC [C 4] which you should be receiving soon **describing the process for initiation to be followed in the future**. [ASSUMPTIVE ERROR 6] Srila Prabhupada has appointed thus far eleven representatives who will initiate new devotees on His behalf. You can wait for this letter to arrive (the original has been sent to Ramesvara Maharaja for duplicating) and then all of the persons whom you recommended in your previous letters can be initiated." [ASSUMPTIVE ERROR 7]

Although in its 'Introduction', TFO states that the July 9th Letter was 'addressed to the entire Movement' [EF 1], here it contradicts that by referring to Tamal Krishna's statement that the letter was sent to all the Temple Presidents and GBC (the latter is correct). [C 4]

AE 6: Like the July 31, 1977 Letter from Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta, this letter from Tamal Krishna to Kirtanananda must be assumed to fall into TFO's category of evidence which modifies the instructions contained in the July 9th Letter, because it does not qualify for any other category of evidence. But again, there is absolutely nothing in this letter that qualifies as

'modifying' the July 9th Letter instructions or otherwise supporting the Ritvik-vada conclusions about the letter. It is an error of assumption to say that the emphasized phrase, "*the process for initiation to be followed in the future*", modifies the instructions contained in the July 9th Letter. Nor does the statement in any way support a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system conclusion.

AE 7: Obviously, the statement TFO's author felt was relevant was: "*the process for initiation to be followed in the future*", which he emphasized:

- "...**the process for initiation to be followed in the future.**" (July 11th)

This is presumably put forward as evidence in support of '*henceforward*' and the alleged permanency of the overall July 9th Letter instructions. But this is also an error of assumption.

The term '*henceforward*' in the July 9th Letter refers to an action on the part of the Temple Presidents, not on the part of the 11 *ritvik* representatives. The term is qualified by the auxiliary verb "may", giving a meaning that the Temple Presidents are being advised of an action that they may take. '*Henceforward*' is not an instruction for the 11 *ritvik* representatives to carry out post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa initiations for all time (or until they themselves depart). The July 9th Letter instructions to be followed *in the future* include the participation of Srila Prabhupada, to whom names are to be sent for inclusion in his book of disciples.

We agree with TFO's conclusion that the statement in Tamal Krishna's letter to Kirtanananda – "*A letter...you should be receiving soon describing the process for initiation to be followed in the future*" – does in fact refer to the July 9th Letter, and properly characterizes it as being a letter that describes the process for initiation to be followed. Where we differ, of course, is on the interpretation of the phrase, "in the future".

Aside from the fact that this phrase is not a statement from Srila Prabhupada, but a comment passed from one devotee to another, the phrase, "in the future" does not, of its own accord, mean 'forever'. It does not mean, 'begin now and never stop'. It does not mean, 'you must do this for 10,000 years'. But these contrived interpretations are inferred by Ritvik-vadis who wish to assert a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa program based on the misguided reasoning of *The Final Order*.

The letter from Tamal Krishna to Kirtanananda is evidence of nothing at all associated with the system for initiations, except that it refers to the issuance and pending distribution of the July 9th Letter. However, it does provide one other important piece of evidence, which the author of TFO likely didn't intend for the reader to notice. This statement:

"His Divine Grace has been maintaining His health on an even course and most amazingly has doubled His translation work keeping pace with the doubling of book distribution."

We call the reader's attention back to earlier discussions of the July 7th Conversation, and the matter of the bottleneck that was created. Tamal Krishna indicates to Srila Prabhupada in that conversation that the reason his senior men stopped the initiations process already in place at the

time was due to concerns for his health. When Tamal Krishna reported on July 7th that the growing backlog had become a problem, Srila Prabhupada promptly gave a solution, and two days later the July 9th Letter was released. On July 7th, and again in the July 9th Letter, Srila Prabhupada made himself **an active part** of the newly adjusted system.

Whether TFO attempts to employ Tamal Krishna's July 11th letter to Hansadutta as a 'modification' of the July 9th instruction per its own evidence criteria (which it is not), or whether it attempts to point to "*the future*" as evidence in support of *henceforward beyond Prabhupada's lifetime* (which it is not), this so-called evidence provides nothing but contradiction of TFO's position that Srila Prabhupada had completely removed himself from the initiations system.

The July 19, 1977 Conversation

The third and final piece of evidence asserted in the 'Supporting Instructions' section of TFO, albeit improperly cited, is this, a statement apparently made during a July 19th Room Conversation:

- "**...continue to become *ritvik* and act on my charge.**" (July 19th)

Again, as noted above [EF 15], we will demonstrate that there are no statements found in this conversation transcript which "*clearly indicate that the ritvik system was intended to continue without cessation*". In terms of how this conversation excerpt is to be considered according to TFO's criteria for evidence, it falls into the category of 'conversation transcripts accepted as authentic by the GBC'.

There are some interesting anomalies associated with this conversation. The first is that the excerpt of the July 19th Conversation is included twice in TFO's Appendices. As mentioned below in the Appendix document, *Construction of The Final Order*, [APX-4] there are numerous problems with the construction of TFO. One problem is that the items of evidence listed in TFO's Appendices are not in date order, and there is no other apparent logic in their ordering, thus it may pass the reader's notice that evidence has been duplicated.

The July 19th Conversation excerpt is a duplication of cited evidence – not that it's mentioned more than once in the body, which would be understandable, but rather that the same item is included twice in TFO's Appendices. There is no comment from the author pointing this out or explaining the reason for it, thus the reader would tend to think it was simply a mistake. But when we compare the two examples, we see that they are significantly different from one another.

Among the many differences found when comparing the two items is the wording of headers, the typography, punctuation and capitalization – all of which makes it difficult for the eye to notice that the items are duplicated. There is also a difference in wording in the two quoted excerpts, the most critical of which is:

"Make your own field and continue to **become *ritvik*** and act on my charge."

"Make your own field and continue to **be *ritvik*** and act on my charge."

TFO's own criteria for evidence states that:

"we shall be presenting as evidence signed documentation, issued personally by Srila Prabhupada, and conversation transcripts, all of which are accepted as authentic by the GBC."

Just as no indication is given as to the sources of these different versions, no indication is given as to how they meet the requirement for evidence, e.g., that they are '*accepted as authentic by the GBC.*'"

While the Bhaktivedanta Archives is an enterprise operating independent of GBC control, one would assume that the Archives version of these conversations de facto has the approval of the GBC, given that Jayadvaita Swami is both a GBC and overseer of the Archives. This general assumption is made in the case of all BBT copyrighted material. Thus, we note that in both the Folio 2.0 (1990) and the Vedabase 4.11 (1998) the text states:

"Make your own field and continue to **become *rttvik*** and act on my charge."

So in fact, the BBT authorized version of this statement **does not** match either of the versions presented in TFO, because there is a difference in the spelling of the word "rttvik", which is given in italics as "*ritvik*" in both TFO quotations. More importantly, the alternate TFO version changes "**become *ritvik***" to "**be *ritvik***" – and that is a very significant difference, as we have demonstrated above in our analysis of the July 31, 1977 letter from Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta.

Given that the crux of the Ritvik-vada argument, based on the July 9th Letter, hinges on the time factor represented by '*henceforward*' and allegations of Prabhupada's intent for it to be upheld in perpetuity, the difference between "**be *ritvik***" and "**become *ritvik***" is very significant indeed.

A similar type of issue arises with respect to the spelling of the word '*ritvik*'. As pointed out in the article, "Evidence Tampering: Rtvik Sleight of Hand" [\[9\]](#), although the author of TFO presents a true copy of the text of the July 9th Letter in Appendices, with the spelling of the word "*ritvik*" just as it appears in the original Letter – emphasized as it is in quotation marks – throughout TFO, every other reference to the word is spelled differently – "*ritvik*", with one exception: Objection #25 under "The 'Appointment Tape'" section. Everywhere else in the paper, many dozens of times the author uses the spelling "*ritvik*". No mention is made of the fact that this critically important word is spelled differently in the July 9th Letter Srila Prabhupada signed. Even in the section where TFO lists words found in sastra with a similar Sanskrit derivation as "*ritvik*" (Objection #1, "The 'Appointment Tape'" section), it does not mention this issue of different spellings.

Comparing the July 19th Conversation and July 31st Letter Texts

Another anomalous element related to the July 19th Conversation transcript is discovered when we compare that text with the July 31, 1977 letter, in which Tamal Krishna writes to Hansadutta (emphasis added):

"You have written to Srila Prabhupada saying you do not know why Srila Prabhupada has chosen you to be a recipient of his mercy. His Divine Grace immediately replied, 'It is because you are my sincere servant. You have given up attachment for a beautiful and qualified wife and that is a great benediction. You are a real preacher. Therefore I like you. (Then laughing) Sometimes you become obstinate, but that is true of any intelligent man. Now you have a very good field. Now organize it and it will be a great credit. No one will disturb you there. **Make your own field and continue to become *ritvik* and act on my behalf.**'"

As mentioned above, there is no transcript of a conversation in which Srila Prabhupada states the message as Tamal Krishna quotes it here to Hansadutta. However, there is a similar piece of dialogue found in the July 19th Conversation transcript, as presented by the Folio and in one of the quotes in TFO's Appendices (emphasis added):

"And nobody is going to disturb you there. **Make your own field and continue to become *ritvik* and act on my charge.**"

The July 19th Conversation is the only instance found in either the 1990 or the 1998 Folio where Srila Prabhupada says the words, "*Make your own field and continue*". The transcript for this room conversation shows a break just before the phrase, "*And nobody is going to disturb you there*", and this missing part of the dialogue presumably includes the rest of the story Tamal Krishna is passing along to Hansadutta in his letter.

What is significant about this is that in both Tamal Krishna's July 31st Letter and in the July 19th Conversation transcript, the statement being made by Srila Prabhupada is: "continue to **become *ritvik*** and act on my charge." This raises further questions as to why the author of TFO has included an alternate version of the dialogue in Appendices. Surely both the July 31st Letter and the Folio's July 19th Conversation transcript are considered authentic by the GBC. Yet Krishnakant includes a contradictory version which falls outside the bounds of TFO's own criteria for evidence, without explanation.

Why TFO includes a duplicate version of the dialogue that says "continue to **be *ritvik***" rather than "continue to **become *ritvik***" is a significant question, given that "continue to become" establishes the fact that the naming of the 11 representatives in the July 9th Letter does not mean that they immediately at that moment, or that *henceforward* from **that** time on, into the future, were actually *ritviks*. "*Continue to become ritvik*" indicates a work in progress.

Another compelling aspect of the room conversation dialogue is the rest of Srila Prabhupada's statement:

"continue to become *ritvik* and act on my charge."

Whatever version of the July 19th Conversation text one accepts, whether it is "become *ritvik*" or "be *ritvik*", Srila Prabhupada has clearly said, "and **act on my charge**". Acting *on my charge* (akin to *on my order*) is different than acting *on my behalf*. If it were true that the 11 named representatives were meant to act in their roles as *ritviks* after Srila Prabhupada's departure, how would it be possible for them to do so "on my charge", except by way of the July 9th Letter instructions? What could "on my charge" mean, except "on my instruction"? And if Srila Prabhupada expected that a single instruction from himself was enough for his followers to execute upon, then given his instruction in the July 9th Letter for them to act as *ritvik* representatives, how could it be that Srila Prabhupada is still telling Hansadutta to "become *ritvik*?" Why would Srila Prabhupada expect him not to have already done that, immediately upon receiving the order?

So we can see that in the statement, "continue to become *ritvik* and act on my charge", Srila Prabhupada is continuing to instruct, continuing to encourage, continuing to coach his disciples along. He does not say, "You have already become my *ritvik*". And as we mention above, what if Hansadutta or any one of the 11 representatives never managed to accomplish "becoming *ritvik*" – how then could they act in that role indefinitely into the future after Srila Prabhupada's departure? On one hand, TFO asserts that the July 9th order must be a post-samadhi system order, or else the Movement could not continue on with any certainty. **[PE 1]** Yet here it presents us with evidence that indicates the entire future of the disciplic succession is hanging on the individual devotee's ability to 'become *ritvik*'. These hypothetical questions demonstrate just how shaky TFO's arguments and evidence are in this regard.

Other subsequent evidence

There is one more key piece of 'subsequent evidence', which the author of TFO chose not to call to the reader's attention – the comments made by Srila Prabhupada in a room conversation on October 18, 1977 in Vrindavan **[14]** (emphasis added):

Prabhupada: Hare Krsna. One Bengali gentleman has come from New York?

Tamala Krsna: Yes. Mr. Sukamal Roy Chowdury.

Prabhupada: So I have deputed some of you to initiate. Hm?

Tamala Krsna: Yes. Actually... Yes, Srila Prabhupada.

Prabhupada: So I think Jayapataka can do that if he likes. I have already deputed. Tell him.

Tamala Krsna: Yes.

Prabhupada: So, deputies, Jayapataka's name was there?

Bhagavan: It is already on there, Srila Prabhupada. His name was on that list.

Prabhupada: So I depute him to do this at Mayapura, and you may go with him. I stop for the time being. Is that all right?

Tamala Krsna: Stopped doing what, Srila Prabhupada?

Prabhupada: This initiation. I have deputed the, my disciples. Is it clear or not?

Giriraja: It's clear.

Prabhupada: You have got the list of the names?

Tamala Krsna: Yes, Srila Prabhupada.

Prabhupada: And if by Krsna's grace I recover from this condition, then I shall begin again, or I may not be pressed in this condition to initiate. It is not good.

This conversation took place more than three months after the July 9th Letter was released, and almost a month prior to His Divine Grace's departure. Here, Srila Prabhupada is clearly stating that if by Krsna's arrangement his health recovers, he will **begin again to initiate**. TFO's claim that Srila Prabhupada established a system for *ritvik* diksa initiations in which he would no longer participate, and would have no recourse in, is entirely contradicted by this conversation.

THE WILL AND CODICIL

Srila Prabhupada's June 6th/7th, 1977 Will and November 5th, 1977 Codicil

From a structural standpoint, the inclusion of a discussion of Srila Prabhupada's Will is incorrectly placed in TFO. It falls under the heading 'Subsequent Instructions', which refers to those subsequent to the July 9th Letter. Consequently, it follows the heading, 'The Order Itself'. But Srila Prabhupada's Will was dated June 6th/7th, 1977, which places it prior to the July 9th Letter, not subsequent to it. While one might think that the Codicil of November 5th, 1977 qualifies the associated Will as a piece of 'subsequent evidence' (although even that is called into question due to a conflict in referenced dates, as we'll see below), the Codicil still refers to a Will that was executed in June 1977. Furthermore, the Codicil is mentioned just once, briefly, while the rest of this lengthy 'Subsequent Instructions' section focuses on the Will, which preceded the July 9th Letter.

SUBSEQUENT INSTRUCTIONS

"Once the *ritvik* system was up and running, [C 3 & 5] Srila Prabhupada never issued a subsequent order to stop it, nor did he ever state that it should be disbanded on his departure. Perhaps aware that such a thing may mistakenly or otherwise occur, he put in the beginning of his final will that the **system of management** in place [ERROR OF LOGIC 8] within ISKCON must continue and could not be changed..."

EL 8: Not only is the opening statement above contradictory and entirely speculative, it also employs faulty logic. First, the timeline doesn't support a logical flow of events. TFO doesn't specify what it's referring to when saying, "*Once the ritvik system was up and running...*" Is it referring to the system prior to July 7, 1977 – the system that the senior men had arbitrarily stopped some weeks or months earlier, which therefore was not really 'up and running', thus resulting in a bottleneck of candidates? Or is it referring to the system put in place via the July

9th Letter? Presumably TFO is referring to the former, since statements in a Will dated in June cannot be said to have been written to protect a July system not yet put in place.

If TFO accepts that the Will refers not to a system set down in the July 9th Letter, but to the system in place prior to the June Will, then a statement suggesting that the pre-June system must continue and could not be changed clearly obviates its assertion that a statement in the Will was intended to safekeep the July 9th instruction which was, in fact a change from the system that preceded it, which the Will correlates to.

Creating a further breach of sound logic, TFO continues:

"he put in the beginning of his final will that the **system of management** in place [EL 8] within ISKCON must continue and could not be changed - an instruction left intact by a codicil added just **nine** days before his departure." [ERROR OF LOGIC 9]

EL 9: Here TFO states that the Codicil of November 1977 leaves intact the June Will instruction that the *system of management in place must continue and could not be changed*. This would mean that like the Will, the Codicil refers not the system instructed by the July 9th Letter, but rather to the system that existed at the time the Will was executed – in June. These are two different systems.

Perhaps the author of TFO would like to argue that in the formal statement Srila Prabhupada made in a legal instrument – his last Will and testament – that he said something he didn't really mean? He didn't actually mean that the June system must continue without change, as evidenced by the fact that he changed it on July 9th... he just didn't reflect that change by updating the legal instrument (the Will). And when he executed the Codicil nine days before departure, he again didn't specify the change made on July 9th, which departed from his earlier instruction in the June Will. But the author of TFO would likely not make such an argument.

It is even less likely that TFO would assert that when executing the Codicil, Srila Prabhupada meant to ignore the changes he had made on July 9th, intending to revert back to the system existing in June, to which the instruction in the Will actually referred. Rather, the author of TFO would likely argue that there is no difference between the system that existed in June and the July 9th system, thus the Will and Codicil apply equally to both. Of course, that would be contradictory to his argument on the absoluteness of the July 9th order and the notable differences it instituted, specifically designed for a post-samadhi system.

In fact, there is no question that there are differences between the system as it was instructed to function prior to June 6th/7th, and the system set down in the July 9th Letter. For the sake of brevity we won't list all the differences here, as they are more than obvious.

As we demonstrate below, TFO goes to some effort to bridge the July 9th Letter over to a reference in the Will to a *system of management*, arguing that the initiations system is part of that *system of management*. Obviously, the author does so in order to try and take advantage of statements in the Will indicating that the system must continue and cannot be changed, and he attempts to marry this imperative to '*henceforward*' in the July 9th Letter to cement his position.

But the effort fails. Aside from the ways in which those arguments fail in applying the *system of management* reference to the July 9th Letter, described in detail below, there is also the fact that the Will predates the July 9th Letter by more than a month and refers to a functionally different system.

We cannot know for certain what Srila Prabhupada was thinking when he executed his Will and Codicil, but we pose the above hypothetical arguments in order to illustrate the absence of logic in TFO's position. In fact, when we set aside the contrived meaning TFO assigns to the Will in its effort to convince readers that it refers to the initiations system, then the language Srila Prabhupada used in his Will and Codicil make perfect sense.

While TFO suggests that Srila Prabhupada made mention of the *system of management* right at the **beginning** of his final will because he somehow associated it to the potential disbanding of the *ritvik* system, we say there is no such indication found anywhere. Below, we will clearly demonstrate that the Will and Codicil deal with management of property and assets – **not** spiritual practices like initiation.

TFO states:

"...he put in the beginning of his final will that the **system of management** in place within ISKCON must continue and could not be changed..."

In fact, this is what Srila Prabhupada actually says in his Will:

"The system of management will continue as it is now and there is no need of any change."

Again – and not surprisingly – TFO's author prefers to use his own words rather than simply repeating what Srila Prabhupada actually said. And the two are substantively different.

Before addressing the issue of the Codicil and how that instrument relates to, modifies or affects the Will, let us first go to the heart of TFO's argument, which is that when the Will refers to a '*system of management*' it means to encompass matters related to initiation. TFO suggests that this stands as evidence in support of a July 9th Letter order that *ritvik* diksa is to be practiced *henceforward*, becoming a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system upon Srila Prabhupada's departure. Because that argument cannot be carried on the strength of '*henceforward*', TFO obviously hopes to reinforce its argument by welding together the July 9th Letter and the Will. But what indicators are there in Srila Prabhupada's Will that this '*system of management*' refers to initiations? In fact, **there are no such indicators**.

The first instance of use of the word '*manage*' in the Will is in this statement:

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

The next two instances of use are these:

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.

Thus far, the terminology refers to the GBC (managing) body, to the method of oversight for (**managed**) properties, and to this system of management. Taking items #1 and #2 together, thus far the 'system of management' is comprised of managers (the GBC) and managed assets. There is absolutely nothing here to suggest that the management of an initiation system is being referred to. And this fact is borne out in the remainder of the Will.

All references to '**management**' contained in the entire Will relate to four things:

who the managers will be;
what roles they will be assigned;
term of the role and how vacancies or derelictions of duty will be dealt with; and
what the objects of their management are.

In addition to the reference to the GBC body, there are references made in the Will to 28 individuals who will manage specific movable and immovable properties; 7 of these persons are also executors of the Will.

There are 4 categorical references made to immovable properties (real estate) and 71 references made to specific immovable (real estate) properties

There are 4 categorical references made to the roles these persons will fulfill (executive director, GBC committee member), along with a paragraph describing the term of roles and how vacancies are to be handled.

In addition to listed real estate properties, the other movable and immovable properties that are to be managed include various bank accounts.

This represents the sum total of all instructions contained within Srila Prabhupada's Will. It is obvious that the entire Will refers to the management of movable and immovable properties, solely and only. It does **not** mention or imply in any way, shape or form that it refers to spiritual processes like initiation. Thus it is folly to suggest that somehow or other, in the context of the Will, the term "management system" refers to the process of initiations. Even if the term "manage" is elsewhere associated with initiation practices, that reference is not incorporated into the Will. Therefore TFO's whimsical suggestion that the Will stands as evidence that a post-

samadhi *ritvik* diksa system exists, that it must continue, and that it cannot be changed, is pure fallacy.

In his Will, Srila Prabhupada initially stated that the "*Governing Body Commission (GBC) will be the ultimate managing authority of the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness.*" He then stated that ISKCON "*Properties in India will be managed by the following executive directors*". In the Will, he did not differentiate between Governing Body Commission members and executive directors, either indicating that they were one and the same, or different. Later he referred to *GBC committee members* and again, and he did not differentiate or say that they were one and the same with either the Governing Body Commission members or the executive directors. While historically, there has appeared to be consensus among the devotees in their understanding that Governing Body Commission members, 'executive directors' and 'GBC committee members' are all one and the same – GBC members – that is not specifically stated in the Will and is therefore open to interpretation.

In the July 9th Letter, Tamal Krsna mentions that while the GBC members were with Srila Prabhupada in Vrindavana, he indicated that he would appoint some senior disciples to act as "*ritvik*" representatives. These *ritviks*, the eleven senior devotees, are distinguished from the Temple Presidents in the letter. Nowhere in the July 9th Letter does Srila Prabhupada refer to the "GBC committee members" or "executive directors", who are mentioned in the Will. Clearly, however, the *Governing Body Commission (GBC)* mentioned in the Will is comprised of the very same personalities mentioned in the July 9th Letter: *all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace.*

The July 9th Letter does not say that all of the eleven senior devotees being named as *ritviks* are GBC members, nor does it say the contrary. The July 9th Letter differentiates the Temple Presidents from the *ritvik* representatives, but does not make an exclusive statement in this regard, i.e., that Temple Presidents may not also be GBC members, or *ritvik* representatives. And in fact, some of the named 11 representatives were, at the time, effectively serving in the role of Temple Presidents. The Letter simply refers to them independently, specific to particular functions.

So again, we find no connection whatsoever between the named parties in the July 9th Letter and those named in the Will, except insofar as the GBC members are referred to in both documents. However, the references to the GBC members in no way indicate that the GBC members have anything at all to do with the initiations process. It is simply that the GBC members were also with Srila Prabhupada in Vrindavan when Srila Prabhupada indicated that he would be appointing some senior disciples. Not only does the Will not mention even once the initiations process, it also does not refer to the individuals actually involved in that process.

In his Will, Srila Prabhupada set down a process for filling vacancies in the executive director role, and for dealing with directors who fail to act:

"The executive directors who have herein been designated are appointed for life. In the event of 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 Krishna 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."

Nowhere is it suggested that if the 11 *ritvik* representatives fail to act, they can be replaced by other executive directors. In his Will, Srila Prabhupada only made provisions for the replacement of executive directors who fail to act. This is yet another indication that the Will and the management system described in it for managing movable and immovable assets has nothing whatsoever to do with the process of initiations or those involved with it. TFO's assertion that the Will 'manages the initiations process' fails in this regard, as well.

Finally, we point out this statement from the Will (emphasis added):

"1. I have created, developed and organized the International Society for Krishna 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.**"

Of all the statements in the Will, this one alone received Srila Prabhupada's particular emphasis: do not indebt or in any way dispose of the India temple properties. Not only does the Will not make even a loose mention of initiations, it certainly does not say that post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa is an irrevocable process. Just the opposite – under the auspices of the Will, initiation is simply not mentioned at all.

Before turning our attention the Codicil, we would like to direct the reader to an important piece of evidence that helps us to understand Srila Prabhupada's intent in drafting the Will, and the reason certain terminology was employed in it. In his room conversation with the devotees on June 2, 1977, [\[15\]](#) Srila Prabhupada engaged in a long discussion of a draft of the Will that had been drawn up. The draft Will was being read to him by Giriraja, and several of the senior men were discussing it together with him:

Prabhupada: Instead of trustees...

Tamala Krsna: Use a different word.

Prabhupada: Ah!

Ramesvara: Not to apply in trust.

Giriraja: Oh, I see.

Ramesvara: It's a different word.

Prabhupada: Supreme managers.

Gopala Krsna: Supreme managers. (laughter)

Prabhupada: Or the ultimate managers, like that.

Gopala Krsna: The ultimate executives?

Prabhupada: Yes.

Tamala Krsna: Yes, the executors.
Gopala Krsna: Ultimate executors.
Tamala Krsna: Or commissioners. You have...
Prabhupada: Hm. Yes, commissioners.
Tamala Krsna: Commissioner is good, 'cause it's already...
Prabhupada: Use such word.
Tamala Krsna: Use a word that's proper.
Giriraja: Okay.
Tamala Krsna: For now just use one word.

Numerous titles were bandied about, and the notion of "supreme managers" made the devotees laugh at themselves. 'Supreme managers', 'ultimate managers', 'ultimate executors', and 'commissioners' were all discussed and considered on relatively equal terms. Clearly, Srila Prabhupada was not locked-in to the idea of any one particular term or title. The fact that the terms 'Governing Body Commission', 'executive directors' and 'GBC committee members' made it from the draft into the June 6th/7th copy of the Will appears to be as much by the choice of the senior men as that of Srila Prabhupada himself.

More to the point, there was absolutely **no discussion about anything remotely related to the initiations process**: not the *ritvik* representatives; not the Temple Presidents; and not the GBC in association with the *ritviks* and Temple Presidents involved in the initiations process. Although the author of TFO goes to great effort to convince us otherwise, the June 2, 1977 Conversation affirms the fact that the Will was never discussed in terms of initiations, nor was the "system of management" mentioned in the Will related in any way to the initiations system. This is clearly demonstrated in Srila Prabhupada's opening comments on the subject:

Giriraja: So we drafted a will, including the trust for the properties of India and some of the other...
Prabhupada: Will? Will, there will be direction that "Management should be done like this." That's all.
Giriraja: Yes.
Prabhupada: Nobody can say in court case that "This temple will be in charge of this person, this temple..."

Right from the start, Srila Prabhupada made it known that in his mind, the issue of management being addressed in the Will had to do with management of temple properties. And of course, the Will spells that out in great detail, focusing almost entirely on the subject of which named directors are in charge of which temple properties.

Under 'Subsequent Instructions', TFO states:

"...he put in the beginning of his final will that the **system of management** in place within ISKCON must continue and could not be changed - an instruction left intact by a codicil added just **nine** days before his departure. Surely this would have been the perfect opportunity to disband the *ritvik* system had that been his intention (please see Appendices)."

We have already dispensed with TFO's notion that the Codicil "left intact" what TFO argues – the *ritvik* system memorialized by the July 9th Letter's '*henceforward*'. First TFO suggested that the longevity of the July 9th Letter instruction is proved by the reference to a *system of management* in the Will. Then it attempts to link the Codicil up to that faulty premise in order to bestow final authority on it – the authority of a document executed just nine days before His Divine Grace's departure. But the Codicil makes no reference to the "*system of management*" referred to in the Will. In fact, the Codicil refers to a Will of a different date than the one put into evidence by TFO.

Aside from the other significant issues related to date references in the Codicil, described below, this document makes no reference one way or the other to the "*system of management*" referred to in the Will. But that absence of mention cannot be imbued with intent, as TFO suggests – that in writing the Codicil, Srila Prabhupada meant to convey that his earlier instruction in the Will (which we say doesn't even exist) be "left intact". Two negative parts do not create a positive whole. If a thing doesn't exist, and elsewhere that non-existent thing is not mentioned, the conclusion is not that the thing exists and is meant to remain. That is broken logic, [EL 8 & 9] and employed in this context, it constitutes word jugglery.

In the Appendices of TFO, the text of Srila Prabhupada's Will shows a date – "*DATE; 5th June 1977*" located just before the recital at the top of the document. On the actual copy of the Will [16 a] we see a date at the top of the document that says June 1977, with no specific day noted. At the bottom of the one-page document are two hand-written dates, "*6th June 1977*", followed by "*7th*", with the "*6th*" scratched out. Srila Prabhupada has signed the document lengthwise along the left margin.

On page two of the Will, [16 b] we find a handwritten date at the bottom, 6th June 1977 (the last 7 is cut off from the year on this scanned version). The dates on both page 1 and page 2 appear to be in Srila Prabhupada's handwriting.

On page 1 of the Will there is an illegible handwritten note in the bottom left corner margin. On page 2, in the bottom left corner are the handwritten signatures of what appear to be 5 witnesses to the document.

Because the only apparent change to page 1 of the Will is the addition of the handwritten note in the bottom left corner, it appears that the 6th June date was scratched out and changed to 7th on the day this handwritten notation was added.

Nowhere on either page 1 or 2 of the Will does the date 5th June 1977 appear, although that is the date given in TFO's version of the document, in its Appendices. This is an unfortunate error, as there are few documents in the world for which the date is known to be as crucial as in the matter of a Last Will and Testament.

The November 5th, 1977 Codicil

In TFO, a Codicil to Srila Prabhupada's Will is the next document presented in Appendices, after the Will. According to TFO's header, the Codicil is dated 5th November 1977. We do not have a true copy of this Codicil, therefore we cannot compare it to TFO's version or to other reproductions of the text. However, a copy of the Will and Codicil that was published in the Vada section of HareKrsna.com in 1996 [16 c] appears to be the same as the version in TFO's Appendices.

In the opening recital of the Codicil, Srila Prabhupada states:

"I, A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, a sannyasi and Founder- Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness ... do hereby make this last will and codocil to give vent to my intention, and to clarify certain things which are to a certain extent a liitle vague in my previous Will dated 4th June, 1977, as follows:"

Srila Prabhupada refers in the Codicil to **his previous Will dated 4th June, 1977**, but the date on the Will referred to above, as presented by TFO, was initially dated 6th June, and final dated 7th June 1977 – **not 4th June**. Whether or not another copy of Srila Prabhupada's Will exists, dated 4th June, 1977, we cannot say, but it's important to note that Srila Prabhupada **refers to this 4th June date three times in the Codicil**. The repeated references in the Codicil to a June 4th Will certainly opens the Codicil to scrutiny as it is associated to a Will of a different date.

We do have one additional piece of evidence that substantiates the existence of a Will dated earlier than the one signed 6th/7th June. That evidence is found in the transcript of the June 2nd Conversation (emphasis added):

Ramesvara: "Properties outside of India on principle should never be sold."

Tamala Krsna: So this will will take a little bit of time to get all those lists and everything together. In the meantime **we have that other will**.

Prabhupada: Hm?

Tamala Krsna: In the meantime **we have that short, brief will**. And this may take a little time to...

Tamal Krishna's mention of another "*short, brief will*" adds weight to the idea that the Codicil was meant to be appended to an earlier version of the Will – a 4th June version, not the signed 6th/7th June version presented in TFO. Given the question as to whether or not this Codicil is a relevant document in relationship to the June 6th/7th Will, we must likewise question the weight the Codicil should be given in the context of TFO's arguments. If the Codicil was attached to an earlier Will, and not re-drawn or revised to refer to the later Will, then from a legal standpoint it would likely be open to challenge. Nonetheless, we will offer some additional comments on it, in order to thoroughly rebut TFO's asserting it as evidence in support of its Ritvik-vada conclusion.

In this Codicil, Srila Prabhupada is giving both new and more specific details as to certain financial arrangements he is making for family members. Referring to steps to be taken on the ISKCON side of these arrangements, Srila Prabhupada uses the term, "authorities of ISKCON" rather than the "GBC Commission", "executive directors" or "GBC committee members" he mentions in the Will.

In the Codicil, Srila Prabhupada also adds Jayapataka Swami as an executor, states that the executors "will be entitled to act together or individually to fulfill their obligations under" the Will, and in closing states (emphasis added):

"I therefore hereby extend, 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.**"

As this Codicil relates to the assertions made in TFO, first we note that the contents are congruous with the contents of the Will discussed above, even though the date references differ. From the standpoint of a "*system of management*" and any managerial activities mentioned in it, the Codicil deals with the very same sorts of concerns the Will does, i.e., with the disposition of tangible assets. There is absolutely nothing found in this Codicil that has even a remote reference to the process of initiations.

The author of TFO continues to try and make a case for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system on the backs of the Will and Codicil, stating:

"That the use of *ritviks* to give initiates' names was a **system of management** can be illustrated by the following:

In 1975 one of the preliminary GBC resolutions sanctioned that the 'GBC would have sole responsibility for managerial affairs'. " **[WORD JUGGLERY 2]**

First, "the use of *ritviks* to give initiates' names" is not in and of itself "a system". It is obviously only one part of a system, which requires other parts in order to serve as a functional whole. The question is, is it part of a system of initiation, or part of a system of management? Clearly, it is the former – the giving of names is part of a system of initiation. If considered independent of other related parts, the giving of names has no association with, and has never been referred to as part of a *system of management*.

Now, could managing the system for initiations be considered a subset of a system for managing the society? Yes, it could. Most enterprises, like corporations or societies, are comprised of numerous systems, of many types. There are likely to be numerous systems of management, each system addressing a particular domain or functional area being managed. There might be a system for the management of people (human resource management), a system for the management of parts and supplies (inventory management), etc. But in the context of Srila Prabhupada's Will, which very specifically refers to the management of temple properties and tangible assets, to suggest that reference to a 'system of management' refers to managing other

things not remotely related to what is specifically referred to as being managed, is a failed argument.

WJ 2: Not surprisingly, TFO neglects to mention that the language in the **preliminary** 1975 GBC Resolutions, which *sanctioned* that the 'GBC would have sole responsibility for managerial affairs', was just that – preliminary. This sanction does not appear in the actual 1975 GBC Resolutions [17]. "Preliminary" indicates just the opposite of "sanctioned". A thing is only *sanctioned* when it is firm, final, accepted – not when it is preliminary and then rejected. Yet we see that this misleading statement is underlined in TFO's text, emphasizing its importance. That the author of TFO would present this statement in such a way is unfortunate.

TFO's next statement, "*Below are some of the 'managerial' issues the GBC dealt with that year*" must be taken in light of its word jugglery: the 'managerial' issues the GBC dealt with that year were not issues they were dealing with as their 'sole responsibility', as the quote lifted from the preliminary version indicates. Obviously, they were dealing with managerial issues under Srila Prabhupada's direct oversight, not at their own sole discretion.

TFO presents two references from the 1975 GBC Resolutions:

"Below are some of the 'managerial' issues the GBC dealt with that year:

"In order to receive first initiation, one must have been a full time member for six months. For second initiation there should be at least another one year after the first initiation." (*Resolution No. 9, March 25th, 1975*)

"Method of initiating Sannyasis." (*Resolution No. 2, March 27th, 1975*)"

TFO obviously hopes the reader will consider the above as falling within the jurisdiction of a '*system of management*' that the GBC men have '*sole responsibility*' for and that somehow, this proves that matters dealing with initiations were part of the '*system of management*' Srila Prabhupada mentioned in his Will. And this, TFO attempts to cobble together with its standing assertion that the July 9th Letter instructs a system of post-samadhi *ritvik diksa* '*henceforward*'. Again, it is a **completely failed argument**.

In the July 9th Letter, '*henceforward*' refers to an action on the part of the Temple Presidents, who **may** submit letters of recommendation to the 11 *ritvik* representatives – not that '*henceforward*' refers directly to the *ritviks* themselves, instructing an action that they must forever after take. Employing a rather devious application of the statements from the 1975 GBC Resolutions, TFO asserts that Srila Prabhupada gave sole control over the initiations process to the 11 named representatives, but we've proved that is not the case. Srila Prabhupada specifically stated that he would remain a participant in the ongoing initiations system, both in the July 7th Conversation (*India, I am here*) and in the July 9th Letter (names being sent to Prabhupada for his book). **[EF 9 & 10; EL 2]**

In attempting to bridge his interpretation of the July 9th Letter over to his interpretation of the Will, TFO's author tries to bolster the notion that the system of initiations, which he says is

synonymous with the '*system of management*' mentioned in the Will, is also the '*sole responsibility*' of the GBC. But in fact, that '*sole responsibility*' was only language used in a preliminary version of the 1975 GBC Resolutions, and was rejected for inclusion in the final Resolutions approved by Srila Prabhupada himself. So in the same way that Srila Prabhupada did not remove himself entirely from the process of initiations, he also did not turn managerial affairs regarding initiations solely over to the GBC.

The fact that in 1975, the GBC Resolutions make reference to first and second diksa initiations in Resolution No. 9, and refers to sannyasa initiations in Resolution No. 2, adds absolutely no credence at all to TFO's argument that the Will refers to a '*system of management*' that encompasses the system for initiations, and that the inclusion of these two references in the 1975 Resolutions stands as evidence of that. It is simply a false construct.

Let us look at the actual language of these 1975 GBC Resolutions.

"9) Resolved: In order to receive first initiation one must have been a full time member for 6-months. For second initiation, there should be at least another one year after first initiation."

TFO asserts that this reference to initiations is one of the "'managerial' issues the GBC dealt with that year". But in fact, it was Srila Prabhupada who was dealing with the issue – it was he who had established the requirements for first and second initiations, not the GBC. The only 'dealing' the GBC did on the matter was to memorialize Srila Prabhupada's mandate in the form of a GBC Resolution.

"2) Resolved: Method of initiating sannyasi:

Each year at Gaur Purnima festival, any GBC member can nominate a man from zone for sannyasa. The man must be a preacher and not sexually inclined. He must be an initiated brahmin. GBC should avoid recommending a sannyasi whimsically. After his nomination is recorded, then a year must pass, and if at the next Gaur Purnima festival, the man has continually preached and not fallen down, he can be initiated."

Furthermore, this Resolution deals with sannyasa, and therefore has nothing at all to do with diksa initiations. Nowhere in TFO does the author attempt to equate arguments regarding diksa with sannyasa initiations, so this reference is completely disassociated from TFO's thesis. The author simply includes it to convince the reader that because the GBC were 'managing' the sannyasa initiation process by virtue of Srila Prabhupada having given them permission to nominate sannyasa candidates, that somehow this validates his argument that the Will refers to diksa initiations being encompassed in the '*system of management*'. Obviously, this reference to sannyasa has nothing at all to do with diksa initiations, nor does it refer in any way to the July 9th Letter.

"These resolutions were *personally* approved by Srila Prabhupada. They demonstrate conclusively that the methodology for conducting initiations was deemed a **system of management**." **[ERROR OF LOGIC 10]**

EL 10: Here TFO essentially suggests that Srila Prabhupada's *personal* approval of the GBC Resolutions somehow qualifies them as evidence that the Will's reference to a 'system of management' refers to and encompasses the system of initiations. That is a baseless conclusion. Srila Prabhupada has *personally approved* many Resolutions – that alone does not imbue the Resolutions with abstract meaning that somehow connects them to some other document.

The Resolutions themselves do not refer to the Will, nor do they *demonstrate conclusively* anything about initiations being part of the management system mentioned in the Will. In fact, the only truly relevant aspect of Srila Prabhupada's *personal* approval as it relates to TFO's argument is the fact that Srila Prabhupada **did not** approve a Resolution giving 'sole responsibility for managerial affairs' to the GBC. Again, it is a contra-indication to TFO's position.

TFO's argument is further defeated by virtue of the fact that a) an enterprise may have many independent systems of management; and b) the system of management in the Will specifically refers to the system for managing temple properties and hard assets. There is no reference whatsoever in the Will or Codicil to initiations.

We do not argue with the notion that giving spiritual names may be part of a system for managing initiations. But we do say that the system under discussion in the Will was one **particular** system, and it is described in more than ample detail to make clear which system it is – and it is **not** a system for managing initiations, by any stretch of the imagination.

Thus changing the *ritvik* system of initiation was in direct violation **[ERROR OF FACT 16] of Srila Prabhupada's final will.**

EF 16: In fact, the *ritvik* system has no connection whatsoever to Srila Prabhupada's Will. Further, the Will is a legal instrument, and we suggest that no court in land would be likely to uphold TFO's interpretation that the Will refers to a system for initiations.

This assertion, boxed for increased emphasis, represents one of TFO's core assertions – and every element underlying this assertion has been thoroughly defeated. Therefore, our rebuttal must be given equal weight to the assertion itself.

"Another instruction in Srila Prabhupada's will which indicates the intended longevity of the *ritvik* system, is where it states that the executive directors for his permanent properties in India could only be selected from amongst Srila Prabhupada's **initiated disciples**: **[ERROR OF LOGIC 11]**

"...a successor director or directors may be appointed by the remaining directors, provided the new director is my initiated disciple,..."
(*Srila Prabhupada 's Declaration of Will, June 4th, 1977*)"

This is something that could only occur if a *ritvik* system of initiation remained in place after Srila Prabhupada's departure, since otherwise the pool of potential directors would eventually dry up."

EL 11: In addition to all the arguments made above that defeat the logic of bridging the Will to the July 9th Letter, we have this highly speculative assertion: the notion that Srila Prabhupada could not instruct that executive directors who manage his India properties be his initiated disciples unless there was some guarantee of a never-ending pool of initiated disciples to draw from. It is a foolish proposition.

The essence of the teachings of the Sampradaya, which are personified and represented by Srila Prabhupada, is that Lord Krsna is in control of everything. To fully realize this requires the followers to be sincere, pure and humble servants of the Lord, so they can recognize that Krsna is working on many different levels, such as Chaitya Guru. Pure devotees do not work in the way that the author of TFO is suggesting. They don't try to exert exhaustive control of the future by means of legal documents.

Nor does the law require that a document writer foresee every event that might happen in the long future, else all is lost. The law assumes that over the course of time, events are likely to unfold that writers of legal documents could not, or did not foresee and thus attempt to control. In this regard, the law does not set out to penalize people or institutions for inadvertent omissions in legal documents, when the intent is otherwise reasonably evident.

In the event that the last remaining Prabhupada disciple leaves his body, and there were no more to choose from in filling a vacant executive director position, it's not that Srila Prabhupada's society would automatically become defunct, and the society's properties and assets would all be turned over to the government or the general public, simply because there was no living successor to fill a vacant director's role. In such a scenario, the surviving members of the society's management body could draw up a fresh agreement amongst themselves for how executive directors would be chosen in future. If a fight among the surviving members broke out, they could petition the court, present arguments as to the intent and desires of Srila Prabhupada and current circumstances, and suggest what in their opinion is the most fair transfer of authority for the perpetuation of the society and ongoing management of its assets. They might petition the court to appoint a successor. The court would be expected to decide it, arriving at the most fair and logical remedy under law.

So it is not that without a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system in place, ISKCON would grind to a halt years down the road, when the last available initiated disciple who could serve as director for a given temple property left his body. TFO's effort to bolt together the July 9th Letter and His Divine Grace's Will by contriving meanings that are clearly not present in either text, on the premise that Srila Prabhupada intended this to ensure the long term future of initiations and a management system, is a theory with no basis in fact or reality.

TFO drives the same error in two different directions:

On one hand, TFO's author asserts that due to an absence of precise instruction in the Will regarding long-term succession and management of the named ISKCON properties (i.e., beyond the lifespan of Prabhupada's initiated disciples), the only obvious solution to ensure the perpetuation of the *management system* is to connect the Will to the July 9th Letter. On the other hand, he asserts that the only way to ensure the long-term future of ISKCON itself is through a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system, and this conclusion leads to the notion that the July 9th 'henceforward' must be married to a reference in the Will to a *system of management*, because the Will makes a statement about continuity without change.

Both efforts are built on contrived evidence and flawed logic.

Like any author of a Last Will and Testament, Srila Prabhupada was free to let time, circumstance and the law – what to speak of the Supreme Personality of Godhead – determine how institutional management would change hands in his society after all his direct disciples had departed from this world.

"Furthermore, every time Srila Prabhupada spoke of initiations after July 9th he simply reconfirmed the *ritvik* system." **[UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 8]**

UC 8: No citations are provided for the alleged conversations, therefore the assertion must be thrown out as unsubstantiated.

In the final analysis, TFO has relied upon the Will and Codicil as proof that the July 9th Letter established a post-samadhi *ritvik* system, calling the November 5, 1977 Codicil an affirmation of the July 9th 'final order'. But in fact, the November 5th Codicil affirms that a Will dated June 4th, 1977 "*shall always hold good*", and that Will pre-dates the July 9th Letter by more than a month. Therefore, as the Codicil relates to a "final order", it actually affirms the circumstances in place **before** July 9th, not after it.

"The above sets the scene. The instruction itself, supporting instructions and subsequent instructions only support the continuation of the *ritvik* system."

In response to this key summary statement in TFO, here is a summary of some of our rebuttal arguments thus far:

- A. According to TFO, '*the instruction itself*' is the July 9th Letter, which was produced following the July 7th Conversation in which a problem was presented to Srila Prabhupada, and he solved it. There is no indication in the conversation or letter that Srila Prabhupada was thinking about, planning for, or giving instructions for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. Just the opposite: he made clear in both the conversation and letter that he would be an active participant in the initiations system.

- B. TFO asserts that the word *'henceforward'* in the July 9th Letter is the instruction for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system *'henceforward'*, indefinitely and for as long as the next 10,000 years. But in fact, the term *'henceforward'* specifically refers to an optional action that the Temple Presidents may take in sending letters of recommendation to the named 11 *ritvik* representatives. In the July 7th Conversation we can clearly see that Srila Prabhupada was giving instructions to solve the bottleneck problem. Part of that solution was the naming of 11 regionally-specific representatives who Temple Presidents may *henceforward* send letters to. Not that they shall, or that they must send letters to them *henceforward*, for the next 10,000 years. Simply that the Temple Presidents *henceforward* may choose to send letters to the *ritviks* – an optional variation provided by Srila Prabhupada to streamline the system and resolve the bottleneck.

It cannot be said that because a letter, optionally sent by a Temple President, is received by a *ritvik* representative, therefore the *'henceforward'* option would apply to the *ritvik*, even if the Temple President did not send them a letter. *'Henceforward'*, as used in the July 9th Letter, does not refer equally to actions on the part of both Temple Presidents and *ritviks*.

- C. The "supporting instructions" referred to above in TFO's summary statement comprise three items, two of which are missing citations and are thus unsubstantiated. We surmise that the three items of evidence comprise two devotee letters and one excerpt from a room conversation with Srila Prabhupada. There are no statements found in any of the three which "*clearly indicate that the ritvik system was intended to continue without cessation*", or which "*only support the continuation of the ritvik system*".
- D. The cited letter from Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta, July 31st, 1977 states: "...continue to become ritvik and act on my behalf." "*Continue to become*" indicates a work in progress for a representative who has not yet become a ritvik. In addition, there are anomalies regarding the quoted material contained in Tamal Krishna's letter, which do not match up with the audio transcript evidence. Even so, the statements in this letter can in no way be characterized as 'modifying the July 9th Letter instructions', which is the category of evidence assigned by TFO's own definition.
- E. The next evidence in 'Supporting Instructions' is apparently a July 11, 1977 letter from Tamal Krishna to Kirtanananda. Again, based on TFO's criteria for evidence, this letter could only fall into the category of evidence that modifies the instructions of the July 9th Letter. And again, there is absolutely nothing in the letter that does any such thing. The letter simply mentions: "*...the process for initiation to be followed in the future*". But 'in the future' cannot be arbitrarily made synonymous with *'henceforward'* or 'forever after', or 'for 10,000 years'. However, this letter is notable in that it offers information about Srila Prabhupada's health at the time, contrary to the notion that it was so precarious that he had removed himself completely from the initiations process. That is a false assertion, as evidenced both by the July 7th Conversation, the July 9th Letter, and by this July 11th Letter.

- F. The third and final piece of evidence put forward in 'Supporting Instructions' is an excerpt from the July 19, 1977 Conversation. Again, it contains no statements which "*clearly indicate that the ritvik system was intended to continue without cessation*", or which "*only support the continuation of the ritvik system*", as TFO asserts. Although this evidence falls into the category of 'conversation transcripts accepted as authentic by the GBC', we pointed out several anomalies related to the conversation excerpt. Most notably, the excerpt is duplicated in TFO's Appendices; there are very significant differences in the two texts, one going in favor of TFO's thesis; and TFO's author does not point out this duplication of items, or the text differences. The Vedabase Folio (GBC approved) version of this conversation is the one that does not support TFO's arguments.
- G. Earlier in this paper, we put forward a great many additional rebuttal points with respect to these three pieces of evidence, not repeated here. As the reader considers the three pieces of evidence TFO asserts under 'Supporting Instructions', we call their attention to TFO's own standard:
- "We shall base all our arguments solely on the philosophy and instructions given by Srila Prabhupada in his books, letters, lectures and conversations"
- H. Finally, in TFO's summary assertion, it points to the area of "subsequent instructions" which supposedly "support the continuation of the *ritvik* system." Again, the evidence put forward thus far in support of TFO's assertion that "*Once the ritvik system was up and running, Srila Prabhupada never issued a subsequent order to stop it*", and which "*support the continuation of the ritvik system*" does not come close to meeting that characterization. The evidence produced in this regard is Srila Prabhupada's Will and Codicil, in relation to which TFO's argument hinges entirely upon the phrase '*system of management*', and we have conclusively demonstrated that such an interpretation of this phrase has no place in sane reasoning.
- I. The date of the Will shows that it preceded the July 9th Letter, and therefore it cannot be considered a '*subsequent instruction*'. The Codicil refers three times to a Will that has a different date than the one put into evidence by TFO. Furthermore, it says absolutely nothing about a "system of management", what to speak of referring to the system for initiations.

Clearly, the evidence and arguments asserted thus far in *The Final Order* **do not** establish that:

"The instruction itself, supporting instructions and subsequent instructions only support the continuation of the *ritvik* system"

The Final Order completely fails to make such a case.

"It is admitted by all concerned that Srila Prabhupada did not give any order to terminate the *ritvik* system on his physical departure. It is further accepted by all concerned that Srila Prabhupada did set up the *ritvik* system to operate from July 9th onwards." [EF 4] [C 2] [EL 6]

See previous rebuttal statements on all the above points.

"Consequently, for a disciple to stop following this order, with any degree of legitimacy, demands he provide some solid grounds for doing so." **[PHILOSOPHICAL ERROR 2]**

Again we would like to emphasize that when TFO refers to "*the order*" it is, for all intents and purposes, pointing collectively to the following:

- a) the July 9th Letter;
- b) a phrase in a devotee letter (July 19th) – "*continue to become ritvik*";
- c) the Will;
- d) the Codicil; and (presumably)
- e) phrases in two additional pieces of devotee correspondence (July 11th & 31st).

That represents the sum total of evidence in support of "*the order*", as TFO presents it thus far.

We have defeated every aspect of the summary assertion TFO puts forward thus far based on this collective evidence.

PE 2: Having omitted from its analysis the standing sastric instructions on *guru-tattva*, TFO advances its argument that no '*solid ground*' instructions exist for continuation of the disciplic succession outside the bounds of the July 9th Letter. The author has apparently concluded that because Srila Prabhupada did not make a specific statement 'terminating' a supposed July 9th order for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system, that such a system must therefore continue – despite the fact that Srila Prabhupada has explained on many occasions the age-old method for continuing the disciplic succession: that when the Spiritual Master departs, the qualified disciple may become an initiating guru. The author of TFO completely ignores these sastric instructions, which Srila Prabhupada clarified again for the devotees during the May 28th Conversation. TFO's rationale for doing so is suggested in the 'Introduction' of TFO:

"Sometimes people question the stress placed on this letter over and above other letters or teachings. In our defence we shall simply repeat an axiom the GBC itself uses in the *GII* handbook:

***"In logic, later statements supersede earlier ones in importance."
(GII, p.25)"***

While mundane rules of logic can be fairly applied in a discussion like this one, they cannot be considered Absolute. As a body of knowledge, modern rules of logic, grammar and rhetoric are not sastra, and do not trump the Absolute Truth presented in sastra. Consequently, one cannot argue that a whole body of sastric instruction should be rejected because a single statement is made later in a corpus of statements, and according to some interpretations, seemingly contradicts or 'supersedes in importance' earlier statements. That is not the method of approaching sastra set down by Srila Vedavyasa and the Acaryas in our Sampradaya. It is simply a convenient construct TFO employs to bolster its thesis.

In very simplistic fashion, TFO essentially states that '*the order*', collectively represented by the five evidentiary items listed above, is an independent thing – an absolute idea that exists apart from anything except what Krishnakant determines to be 'supporting and subsequent instructions'. The reader is not informed as to the logic by which he elevates 'the order' above and beyond, or makes it separate from the vastly larger body of instructions delivered by Srila Prabhupada and sastra. Instead, TFO appears to rest upon the notion that there is no specific termination instruction in or referring to the July 9th Letter, and "*later statements supersede earlier ones in importance*", thus all other instructions on *guru-tattva* are to be ignored, and only the July 9th Letter stands.

TFO states that, "*for a disciple to stop following this order, with any degree of legitimacy, demands he provide some solid grounds for doing so.*" Yet the author rejects the body of sastric instruction that provides cent percent legitimacy, describing how initiations are to go on after the Spiritual Master's departure. This is a nonsensical, asiddhantic position.

"The only thing that Srila Prabhupada actually told us to do was to follow the *ritvik* system." [PE 2]

No, this is not the "only thing" Srila Prabhupada actually told us to do. That is a ridiculous notion. The science of Krsna consciousness is not a simple thing, where over millennia, any one single sentence can be picked out from the continuum of Absolute Truth, and pointed to as the one single order that must be followed on a subject, contrary to all others.

"A disciple does not need to justify continuing to follow a direct order from the guru, especially when he has been told to continue following it."

Srila Prabhupada instructed that we follow authorized sastra – not just some of it, but all of it. A disciple does not need to justify doing so, even when following a plurality of statements that seemingly contradict one subsequent statement. But in the case of the July 9th Letter, there isn't even a seeming contradiction: the order for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system is a confabulation that simply does not exist.

"Since there is no *direct evidence* stating that the *ritvik* system should have been abandoned on Srila Prabhupada's physical departure, [ERROR OF FACT 17] the case for abandoning it could therefore only be based on *indirect evidence*." [ERROR OF LOGIC 12]

EF 17: But there **is** direct evidence: Srila Prabhupada made it clear that he would *physically* participate in the system. Naturally, when he physically departed he could no longer do so. This is the simplest, most unavoidable *direct evidence* anyone could ask for. But TFO ignores the July 9th Letter instruction that that names of initiates are to be sent to Srila Prabhupada for his book. Just as the author ignores Srila Prabhupada's July 7th statement, "*India, I am here*". [EL 2]

TFO asks the reader to consider the fact that the July 9th Letter does not specifically say *it should run while Srila Prabhupada is still present* – but that is certainly implied by what it does say.

And what is states is essentially this: here is the system, Prabhupada is part of it, now follow it. The word "*still*" present has nothing to do with it. Prabhupada is present; Prabhupada is part of the system and it must be followed. Obviously if he continues to be *still present*, and the standing order has not changed, then you will continue following it. Not that Prabhupada would have to repeat the order every day, or every hour that he's *still* here.

Also obvious is the fact that when Srila Prabhupada is no longer physically present, he will no longer be available to participate in the system. Here is the system, Prabhupada is part of the system, start following it. When Prabhupada has departed, the system – which is designed to include him – cannot function with him. Therefore, the system cannot function as designed.

The July 9th Letter does not need to include a specific start order to prove that it should run while Srila Prabhupada is present: he was present when he ordered the system, he made himself part of the system, and by executing the letter, he effectively said "start". Obviously, it should run while he is present; it says nothing to the contrary. The fact that the obvious is not unnecessarily stated does not change the meaning, although that's what TFO attempts to suggest, in circular fashion.

Neither must there be a specific termination order. Again, the equivalent of a 'stop order' is implied in the letter: here is the system, Prabhupada is part of the system, start following it. When Prabhupada has departed, the system designed to include him can no longer function with him, therefore, unless there is some other instruction for its continuity under this altered circumstance, naturally it must stop. A key element of its functionality is no longer present; it can no longer function as intended, therefore it stops.

In law, this principle is known as *impossibility of performance*. [18] The principle is that if it becomes impossible, due to uncontrollable circumstances (e.g., death or *force majeure*) to do what an agreement calls for, then either party can break the agreement. Likewise, if one party to a transactional relationship becomes unavailable to perform his part, not by choice or negligence but by uncontrollable circumstance, then the agreement may be terminated on this principle. If there is no other prior agreement stated to deal with a given termination scenario, then the principle of *impossibility of performance* arises.

Again, the July 9th Letter is not direct evidence in support of a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system; the term '*henceforward*' refers to an action the Temple Presidents may take; the letter represents Srila Prabhupada's solution to the bottleneck problem; and it in no way expresses Srila Prabhupada's desire to put in place a novel system for after his departure. Thus, the "*ritvik* system" referred to by TFO is not at all what Krishnakant has characterized it as being. That has already been conclusively proved in the context of the evidence put forward thus far by TFO. As we shall see, its only other evidence in support of this claim is the May 28th Conversation – and that evidence, too, is soundly repudiated in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*.

EL 12: TFO's claim that the *ritvik* system was 'abandoned' by the GBC upon Srila Prabhupada's departure is a hoax. First, there is an error of logic in the assertion that a process can be *abandoned*, when it was not actually functioning in the first place. Open for discussion is the degree to which the early 1977 initiations system was effectively halted by the senior men due to concerns about Srila Prabhupada's health. Whether the system came to a full sudden stop or

steadily declined, along what timeline trajectory this took place, and the degree to which the system effectively ceased functioning before July 9th is not fully known. But one cannot deny that the system had indeed been halted, thus causing the bottleneck Srila Prabhupada had to solve on July 7th.

Also open for discussion is the degree to which the new improved initiations system was effectively abandoned, or did not run properly, from July 9th to November 14th, 1977. Unless the GBC and/or the individual Zonal Acaryas publish the data, naming their 1977 and 1978 initiates and giving the dates of initiation, we will likely never know with certainty the degree to which that July to November initiations system failed.

As described in the Appendix document, *Performance of the 11 Rittik Representatives, July to November 1977* [APX-2], the record shows that only 234 initiations were conducted between the time of the July 9th Letter and Srila Prabhupada's entering into maha-samadhi. Common historical knowledge tells us that thousands were initiated by the Zonal Acaryas in early 1978. This is a good indication of the degree to which the system for initiations had not been functioning from early 1977, and for all intents and purposes remained non-functional even after the July 9th instruction was released.

Thus, while TFO suggests that the GBC cannot 'make a case for abandoning the July 9th order', it is a moot point, given that the system really was not functioning in the first place. One could argue that a system functioning even a little bit is not 'abandoned', but that is a matter of rhetoric. For the many candidates who were counting on having the system function – candidates whose spiritual lives stood to be enormously affected – the system working *only a little bit* would be of little consolation.

"Indirect evidence may arise out of special circumstances surrounding the literal direct instruction. These extenuating circumstances, should they exist, may be used to provide grounds for interpreting the literal instruction."

An accurate characterization of such circumstances has just been stated above. It is based on direct evidence, and no indirect evidence is needed to confirm it.

OBJECTIONS

OBJECTIONS RELATING DIRECTLY TO THE FORM AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE FINAL ORDER

Throughout this section, the ten objections put forward that TFO gives counter-arguments to are mostly presented as quotations, but we are not told who is being quoted, nor are citations given that would allow us to understand the objections in context. Thus the objections can only be taken as hypotheticals, out of context. We have already presented extensive arguments on all assertions made thus far in TFO and for the sake of brevity, will not repeat them. Relevant error notations are noted.

Objection #1

"1) "The letter clearly implies that it was only set up for whilst Srila Prabhupada was present."

TFO's counter-argument in response to this objection is:

"There is nothing in the letter that says the instruction was only meant for whilst Srila Prabhupada was physically present. In fact, the only information given **[UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 9]** supports the continuation of the *ritvik* system after Srila Prabhupada's departure."

UC 9: TFO does not specify what 'information given' it is referring to, therefore the claim is unsubstantiated and should be disregarded. To the degree that we can guess at TFO's argument in this regard, we have already rebutted it. **[EF 17] [EL 2]**

"It is significant to note that within the July 9th letter it is stated three times that those initiated would become Srila Prabhupada's disciples. [ERROR OF FACT 18] The GBC in presenting evidence for the current guru system have argued vigorously that Srila Prabhupada had already made it clear that, as far as he was concerned, it was an inviolable law that no one could initiate in his presence. **Thus the necessity to state Srila Prabhupada's ownership of future disciples must indicate that the instruction was intended to operate during a time period when the ownership could even have been an issue, namely after his departure." [ERROR OF LOGIC 13]**

EF 18: It is stated only **two times** in the July 9th Letter – **not three times** – that the initiated devotees would become Srila Prabhupada's disciples. The third reference TFO appears to be including actually says that the name of the new initiate should be sent to Srila Prabhupada, so it can be included in his "Initiated Disciples" book:

- 1) "...these representatives may accept the devotee as *an initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada...*"
- 2) "The newly initiated devotees *are disciples of His Divine Grace...*"
- 3) "The *name of a newly initiated disciple* should be sent by the representative who has accepted him or her to Srila Prabhupada..."

EL 13: Here we have another interesting example of TFO's bias, demonstrated in the narrow field of its argument specifically with the GBC. Both the objection and the counter-arguments integrate only a thin slice of the picture, convenient to that bias. TFO's arguments don't stand up, however, when the scope is broadened beyond a defense of the GBC's actions.

First, consider the July 7th Conversation, in which Tamal Krishna stated twice that the disciples were to be Srila Prabhupada's, and Prabhupada affirmed this:

Tamala Krsna: Actually they are initiating the person on Your Divine Grace's behalf. Those persons who are initiated are still your...

[]

Tamala Krsna: These men, they can also do second initiation. So there's no need for devotees to write to you for first and second initiation. They can write to the man nearest them. But all these persons are still your disciples. Anybody who gives initiation is doing so on your behalf.

Prabhupada: Yes.

Given this conversation, and the fact that the July 9th Letter was written just two days later to memorialize this July 7th Conversation, it's not surprising that Tamal Krishna emphasized this point in the letter.

What makes no sense at all is TFO's speculative conclusion, that rather than Srila Prabhupada arranging for the letter he signed to say outright, "this instruction will remain in place after my departure, and even then, all disciples will be my own", he would instead hint at it by repeating some *other* statement 'three times', as if it was code meant to inspire everyone to arrive at the same speculative conclusion. This is the very sort of ambiguous methodology TFO elsewhere says that Srila Prabhupada would never engage in.

"Right at the beginning of the July 9th letter it is emphatically stated that those appointed are 'representatives' of Srila Prabhupada." **[ERROR OF FACT 19]**

EF 19: This is not *emphatically* stated - there is no use of bold type, underlining, italics or capital letters to emphasize the word 'representatives'. Rather, the word is simply stated. What is **emphasized** is the term "*rittik*". Strangely enough, the author of TFO makes no mention of that interesting aspect of the July 9th Letter. The fact that the word is placed in quotation marks for emphasis is very striking. In the passage above from TFO, we see that the author is effectively drawing attention away from this fact by saying, incorrectly, that the word '*representatives*' is emphasized, when that is not at all the case. It is "*rittiks*" that is emphasized.

"The only innovation this letter contained then was the formalisation of the role of the representatives; **[ERROR OF FACT 20]** hardly something which could be confused with a direct order for them to become fully-fledged *diksa gurus*."

EF 20: The primary innovation introduced in the July 9th Letter was the instruction that in future, '*henceforward*', Temple Presidents may send letters of recommendation to the 11 newly named, regionally-chosen *rittik* representatives. This step went beyond just a formalization of the role the *rittik* representatives were already supposed to have been engaged in; it was a new step, to be taken by specific individuals other than the named representatives – i.e., the Temple Presidents. As evidenced by the July 7th Conversation, this innovation was added to the initiations process, at least in part, in order to solve the bottleneck problem. The July 9th Letter

was a direct byproduct of the July 7th Conversation in which this bottleneck problem was presented to Srila Prabhupada, and solved by him.

So in addition to formalizing the role of the *ritvik* representatives, the July 9th Letter also added two steps to the process: 1) giving the 11 *ritviks* the duty to receive any letters of recommendation the Temple Presidents may send them, and 2) giving the *ritviks* the duty to give spiritual names. The Letter also formalized the fact that Srila Prabhupada was a direct participant in the newly adjusted process, and that names of initiates were to be sent to him, for inclusion in his book. Furthermore, if we consider the context of the July 7th Conversation, which is inarguably directly related to the ensuing July 9th Letter, we see that Srila Prabhupada also confirmed his participation in the system in that conversation, saying "*India, I am here*".

[EL 2]

"Srila Prabhupada's emphasis on disciple ownership would therefore have been completely redundant were the system to operate only in his presence, especially since as long as he was present he could personally ensure that no one claimed false ownership of the disciples." **[ERROR OF LOGIC 14]**

EL 14: TFO asserts that Srila Prabhupada would not have had to repeat his instructions in order to have them followed while he was present, because he could personally ensure they were obeyed. But this is completely illogical, as evidenced by the existing circumstances at the time. At some point prior to July 1977, the process for initiations Srila Prabhupada had already established was not being followed; it had been stopped arbitrarily by the senior men – even while Prabhupada was personally present. Tamal Krishna said it was stopped on account of their concerns over Srila Prabhupada's health. Whatever the reason, the standing instruction was not followed, thus the bottleneck formed.

Clearly, TFO's statement above is built on faulty logic. The fact that Srila Prabhupada was physically present was no guarantee that he did not have to repeat or emphasize his instructions in order to have them followed – not only with respect to initiations, but on so many other subjects as well.

"As mentioned above, this point is hammered home **three times** in a letter which itself was quite short and to the point:"

Again, there are only **two mentions** of this particular instruction in the July 9th Letter, **not three**. **[EF 18]** This example is one of the many factual errors presented in TFO. And in this case, the error is escalated into a whole argument based on the notion of "three times stressed". TFO asserts that the 'ownership of disciples' references goes to prove its notion of a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system:

"So as soon as one thing is three times stressed, that means final."

(SP Bg. Lecture, 27/11/68, Los Angeles)

Of course, TFO does not present the above quote in context, and when we study the context we find that it obviates their point entirely.

Srila Prabhupada's Lecture on Bhagavad-gita, Nov 27, 1968, Los Angeles (emphasis added):

"And at the last time he [Sankaracarya] says, bhaja govindam bhaja govindam bhaja govindam mudha-mate. "You rascal fools. Oh, you are depending on grammar to understand. This is all nonsense." Bhaja govindam. "Just worship Govinda." Bhaja govindam bhaja... **Three times he says.** "Just worship Govinda." Bhaja govindam bhaja govindam bhaja govindam. Just like Caitanya Mahaprabhu says **three times**, harer nama harer nama harer nama. **Three times** means giving too much stress. Just like we sometimes say, "You do this, do this, do this." That means no more denial. Finish all stress. So as soon as one thing is **three times** stressed, that means final."

In this statement, Srila Prabhupada is specifically referring to the grammatical rule of 'thrice repetition' found in sastra. He provides two examples: *bhaja govindam bhaja govindam bhaja govindam* and *harer nama harer nama harer nama*. And he reinforces the grammatical concept with an English example: "You do this, do this, do this". In all three cases, the triple repetition occurs within a single phrase – not that a statement is repeated three times, spread throughout the body of a letter.

Interestingly enough, a moment later in the lecture Srila Prabhupada gives this caution: "*All this is nonsense. This dukrn karane, your grammatical jugglery of words, will not save you at the time of death.*"

The remainder of TFO's counter-argument to Objection #1 focuses on the issue of the entering of names into Srila Prabhupada's 'Initiated Disciples' book.

"The July 9th letter states that the names of newly initiated disciples were to be sent 'to Srila Prabhupada' - Could this indicate that the system was only to run while Srila Prabhupada was physically present? Some devotees have argued that since we can no longer send these names to Srila Prabhupada, the ritvik system must therefore be invalid."

When convenient, TFO emphasizes the necessity of taking statements **absolutely**, at (what it accepts as) face value, **without any interpretation** beyond the dictionary definition of a word. Applying that standard, the July 9th Letter does indeed say that **names are to be sent to Srila Prabhupada** – not to his *ritvik* representatives or secretaries – but to Srila Prabhupada himself, which indicates that His Divine Grace must still be in his manifest lila in order for the process as described in the July 9th Letter to go on.

For TFO to suggest that '*henceforward*' – a single word, open to interpretation even in its dictionary definition, what to speak of in the context of Srila Prabhupada's usage and sastra – must be taken in a certain way **absolutely**, then to turn around and suggest that another concrete statement should be ignored, or that great liberties should be taken with the statement, to the degree that it amounts to a complete rejection of the instruction, is the height of hypocrisy.

"Further evidence that the names should be sent for inclusion in the book, and NOT specifically to Srila Prabhupada is given in the letter written to Hansaduta, **[ERROR OF FACT 21]** the very next day, where Tamala Krishna Goswami explains his new ritvik duties to him:"

"...you should send their names to be included in Srila Prabhupada's 'Initiated Disciples' book."

(Letter to Hansaduta from Tamala Krishna Goswami, 10/7/77)

EF 21: This incorrect statement borders on word jugglery. The quoted statement by Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta says absolutely **nothing** about who the names should be sent to. The letter to Hansadutta simply eliminates that piece of information. The fact that a specific recipient is not named does not equate with 'do not send names to Prabhupada', or 'do not specifically send to Prabhupada', or 'send the names to Tamal Krishna'.

Given the lack of specificity in the letter to Hansadutta, one can only refer back to the July 9th Letter itself, which says:

"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 Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book."

Continuing to refer to the letter to Hansadutta, TFO's counter-argument continues:

"Their is no mention made here of needing to send the names to Srila Prabhupada. This procedure could easily have continued after Srila Prabhupada's physical departure."

What is or isn't included in a letter from Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta is not a determining factor for what is or isn't included in the July 9th Letter. Likewise, it doesn't matter if the procedure could go on of sending names so someone/anyone could enter them into the book after Prabhupada's departure. **That has nothing to do with the fact that the July 9th Letter says send the names "to Prabhupada".**

"Nowhere in the final order does it state that if the "Initiated Disciples" book becomes physically separated from Srila Prabhupada all initiations must be suspended."

Nor does it state that if the sky falls, or the *yuga* annihilation occurs, that initiations must be suspended. There are countless things that the July 9th Letter does not say. We are concerned with what it **does** say.

"The next point is that the procedure of sending the names of newly initiated disciples to Srila Prabhupada in any case relates to a **post**-initiation activity. The names could only be sent **after** the disciples had already been initiated. Thus an instruction concerning what is to be done after initiation cannot be used to amend or in any way interrupt **pre**-initiation, or indeed initiation procedures (the ritvik's role being already fulfilled well before the

actual initiation ceremony takes place). Whether or not names can be sent to Srila Prabhupada has no bearing on the system for initiation, since at the point where new names are ready to be sent, the initiation has already occurred. **[WORD JUGGLERY 3]**

WJ 3: While rife with faulty logic, this statement can best be characterized as word jugglery. The objection TFO is supposedly responding to is:

"1) "The letter clearly implies that it was only set up for whilst Srila Prabhupada was present."

Given that Krishnakant cannot produce a sensible argument to make the July 9th statement about 'sending names to Srila Prabhupada' disappear, he now attempts to carve the problem up into thinner slices of "*pre-initiation*" and "*post-initiation*" activities. But no matter what arbitrary divisions he assigns to the process of initiations instructed in the July 9th Letter, the fact remains – the letter instructs that names for the book are to be sent to Srila Prabhupada. And the existence of this statement in the July 9th Letter patently contradicts TFO's assertion that the letter establishes a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. Having to send names to Srila Prabhupada cannot go on if Srila Prabhupada is no longer physically manifest.

TFO's arbitrary division of *pre-initiation* and *post-initiation* phases of the process for initiations was never instructed by Srila Prabhupada. It is simply a contrivance – a manufactured construct with no basis in fact or logic. And it is not for Krishnakant to decide that just one particular element of the process instructed in the July 9th Letter shall be considered to have '*no bearing on the system for initiation*'.

Saying that '*whether or not names can be sent to Srila Prabhupada has no bearing on the system for initiation*' is no different than making any other presumptuous change to the prescribed system. One might as well proclaim that two of the eleven *ritvik* representatives shall now be ignored, or it doesn't matter if the Temple Presidents send letters of recommendation... if a *ritvik* decides to initiate someone, it doesn't matter where the recommendation came from, or whether a candidate has even *been* recommended. But no such arbitrary changes can be made, nor can any one element be capriciously cut and discarded. Yet here, TFO is essentially suggesting that no matter what Srila Prabhupada's instructions are, if the last step is discarded, too bad... it's too late, the initiation has already happened.

"The last point is that if sending the names to Srila Prabhupada were a vital part of the ceremony, then even before Srila Prabhupada's departure, the system would have been invalid, or at least run the constant risk of being so. **[ASSUMPTIVE ERROR 8]** **[ERROR OF LOGIC 15 & 16]** It was generally understood that Srila Prabhupada was ready to leave at any time, thus the danger of not having anywhere to send the names was present from day one of the order being issued. In other words, taking the possible scenario that Srila Prabhupada leaves the planet the day after a disciple has been initiated through the *ritvik* system, according to the above proposition, the disciple would not actually have been initiated simply because of the speed by which mail is delivered."

AE 8: It is offensive and erroneous to assume that one aspect or element of the Spiritual Master's instructions may be ignored or rejected, because the so-called follower judges it to be 'less than vital'.

EL 15: TFO's statement, "*if sending the names to Srila Prabhupada were a vital part of the ceremony, then even before Srila Prabhupada's departure, the system would have been invalid*" also represents an error of logic. No matter what was going on before Prabhupada's departure, or how a follower of his might choose to interpret what he thought the circumstances were at the time, that has *no bearing* on the instructions given in the July 9th Letter. Srila Prabhupada did not frame his instructions based on how countless followers might be interpreting current events.

EL 16: Aside from that, we must take note of the speculative nature of TFO's argument. According to TFO, because Srila Prabhupada was nearing the time of his departure, an element of his instructed system was 'at risk' that he might depart at any time, therefore we are to conclude that an element of the system is not 'vital' because of the risk. That is TFO's assertion.

TFO's author posits that there would be a '*danger of not having anywhere to send the names*', thus the element of sending names is not vital and we should accept his opinion that it may thus be ignored. Obviously, a nonsensical proposition. One could say that anything and everything was 'constantly at risk' as the time of Srila Prabhupada's departure approached, but that never had anything to do with his standing instructions. Srila Prabhupada did not append qualifiers to his instructions to mitigate risk that one day, he will leave his body. Or that any one of countless possibilities could occur that would result in the end of his manifest presence. Srila Prabhupada's instructions were not tied to some variable risk management scale, so that the devotees would know which instructions to follow only a little, or which ones to ignore entirely based on some speculative scale of risk.

To suggest that on the final day or days of Srila Prabhupada's manifest presence, it would be too risky to allow initiations because if he departed, there would be no one to send the name to for inclusion in the book, is ridiculous.

"Certainly there would be nothing preventing the names of new initiates being entered into His Divine Grace's "*Initiated Disciples*" book even now. This book could then be offered to Srila Prabhupada at a fitting time."

Again, TFO offers a nonsensical argument. Whether or not names could be entered in the book after Srila Prabhupada's departure has **nothing** to do with the existence of, or the intention inherent in, the instruction that is undeniably contained in the July 9th Letter – that names were to be **sent to Srila Prabhupada**. Not that names could be sent somewhere else, to some other person... not that something else could be sent in place of names... not that 40 years later, names could still be written in the book if only someone would send them... not any one of the myriad variations of activity the mind might conceive of changes the July 9th instruction. The July 9th Letter simply says that names are to be sent to Srila Prabhupada. TFO cannot accept that fact, because it completely contradicts its post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa theory.

"2) 'The letter does not specifically say 'this system will continue after Srila Prabhupada's departure'; therefore, it was right to stop the ritvik system at Srila Prabhupada's departure.'"

This objection and TFO's counter arguments have been addressed several times above, notably at **[EF 17]**, **[EL 6]**, and **[PE 2]**. In its counter-argument to Objection #2 TFO states:

2. The letter also does not state: *'The ritvik system should run while Srila Prabhupada is still present'*. Yet it was run while he was still present.
 3. The letter also does not state: *'The ritvik system should only run until the departure of Srila Prabhupada'*. Yet it was only allowed to run till his departure.
 4. The letter also does not state: *'The ritvik system must stop'*. Yet it was stopped."
- [ERROR OF LOGIC 17]**

EL 17: The above three statements, as combined by the author, imply an illogical conclusion: that things not stated in the letter, compared to actions taken, inform as to what the letter does say. But that is not viable logic.

The July 9th Letter may not specifically say *it should run while Srila Prabhupada is still present*, but that is certainly implied by what it says, which is essentially this: here is the system, Prabhupada is part of it, commence following it. The word "*still*" present has nothing to do with it. Prabhupada is present; Prabhupada is part of the system; start following it. Obviously if he continues to be *still present*, and the standing order has not changed, then you will continue following it. Not that Prabhupada would have to repeat the order every day, or every hour that he's *still* here.

Also obvious is the fact that when Srila Prabhupada is no longer present, he will no longer be available to participate in the system. Again, this is implied in the letter: here is the system, Prabhupada is part of the system, start following it. When Prabhupada has departed, the system – which is designed to include him – cannot function with him. Therefore, the system is naturally impacted. **[EF 17]**

"The letter does not specify that the *ritvik* system should be followed on July 9th either, so according to this logic it should never have been followed at all." **[ERROR OF FACT 22]**

EF 22: The Letter does specify that the *ritvik* system should be followed on July 9th. The specified start date is clearly implied in the dated message – it is immediate. Beginning from now, July 9th, the date the letter is executed – that is the effective date. The letter does not say 'start tomorrow', nor does it provide information on anything that triggers a delayed start, therefore the effective date is the date of the communicacé.

"The demand for the *ritvik* system to only operate within a pre-specified time period is contradicted by accepting its operation for 126 separate 24 hour time periods (i.e. four months). **[WORD JUGGLERY 4]** Since none of these 126 separate time periods is specified in the letter, yet everyone seems quite happy that the system ran during this

time frame. **[ERROR OF FACT 23]** Unless we take the word 'henceforward' literally to mean 'indefinitely', we could stop the system at any time after July 9th, so why choose departure?" **[ERROR OF LOGIC 18]**

WJ 4: Here, TFO moves beyond word jugglery and into the surreal. One need only follow sound logic on the matter of an operating timeframe with start and stop triggers. Obviously, there is no point to dividing time up into thin slices during the operating period. That proves nothing about the start time, stop time, or duration.

In the absence of an effective date to the contrary, an instruction begins on the date it is executed. It stops according to a stated termination instruction, or at a point when performance becomes impossible. Between start and stop runs the duration. If there is to be a dispute between parties as to the circumstances that caused action to stop, then the reasons for stoppage come under scrutiny. But even a disputed termination event does not change the stated start of an executed order.

EF 23: Nor was everyone "quite happy" that the system was running during the July to November timeframe. Among those not happy were disciples queued up, waiting to be initiated by Srila Prabhupada. Nor were Temple Presidents happy, who had sent letters of recommendation to the 11 *rittik*s, only to have them not acted upon. The author of this paper, DOR, happened to be the Temple President of Seattle during this period, and I can attest that numerous letters of recommendation sent to the appropriate *rittik* representative were never acted upon.

EL 18: We do take the word '*henceforward*' literally – in context: "...Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation..." That statement does not contain a time-sensitive trigger that would stop the system depending on how '*henceforward*' is interpreted. Nor are we required to give '*henceforward*' a literal definition of 'indefinitely, forever' in order to understand that it should not be stopped arbitrarily, on July 11th, for example.

The July 9th Letter does not contain a specific stop order. It **does**, however, describe elements of the system, and these elements are subject to the principle of *impossibility of performance*, as explained above. Unless one disobeys the order, the system cannot be stopped arbitrarily at any time while Srila Prabhupada is present, unless he stops it.

TFO suggests that while Srila Prabhupada was present, the system could be stopped arbitrarily by his followers on the basis of how they chose to interpret the word '*henceforward*'. Of course, that is not true. If there was a question about interpretation of '*henceforward*', the disciples would inquire from the Spiritual Master for clarification – not that they would arbitrarily stop the system.

And again, TFO's logic is flawed in its presumption that '*henceforward*' refers to the actions of the 11 *rittik* representatives, when in fact, it refers to the actions of the Temple Presidents.

"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''
[WORD JUGGLERY 5]

As we have previously noted, the "86 recorded uses" is an unspecified claim. **[UC 9]**

WJ 5: And as we have demonstrated above, TFO's statement qualifies as an error of fact, although it distinguishes itself here as word jugglery. It is plainly evident that the author of TFO does not have command of the complete history of usage of the English language, nor is he likely to know as a fact that some court of law hasn't assigned just that meaning to the term '*henceforward*'. Anyone who understands the law can imagine countless scenarios wherein the court might adopt just such an interpretation of '*henceforward*'. One only needs to consult a legal dictionary to see that this is true.

"All the letter states is that the ritvik system is to be followed '*henceforward*'.
[EF 7] So why was it stopped?"

As already explained **[EF 7]**, the July 9th Letter **does not state** that "the *ritvik* system is to be followed *henceforward*". What it states is that Temple Presidents may henceforward send letters of recommendation to the *ritvik* representative closest to them. That optional action on the part of the Temple Presidents is one of several elements that comprises the system of initiations. In the absence of an instruction to the contrary, the effective date of the instruction is inherently the effective date of the order itself. In the absence of a termination order, the instructed system is expected to run – with Srila Prabhupada present and a participant in it – until such time as he orders it stopped, or some other event occurs that makes it impossible to perform.

Objection #3:

"3) "Certain instructions obviously can not continue after Srila Prabhupada's departure, and thus it is understood that they could only have been intended to operate in Srila Prabhupada's presence; e.g. someone may have been appointed 'henceforward' to give Srila Prabhupada his regular massage. Maybe the ritvik order is of that type?"

Followed by TFO's counter to this rebuttal argument:

"If an instruction is impossible to perform, for example giving Srila Prabhupada his daily massage after his physical departure, then obviously there can be no question of doing it.
[CONTRADICTION 6] The duty of a disciple is simply to follow an order until it is impossible to follow any longer, or until the spiritual master changes the order."
[ERROR OF OMISSION 1]

Here TFO is basically acknowledging the principle of *impossibility of performance*, although in the next statement below, it argues against a determination of *impossibility* in the context of the July 9th order.

C 6: In the section of TFO entitled 'The Order Itself', TFO says this: '*From now onwards*' does not mean '*from now onwards until I depart*'. Yet in the passage above, the author uses that very example to illustrate his point.

EO 1: TFO erroneously omits a third and obvious option: *The duty of a disciple is simply to follow an order until it is impossible to follow any longer, or until the spiritual master changes the order, OR until that order is supplanted by a preceding, standing order that is triggered by a given event.* Sastra provides Absolute instructions for how the disciplic succession is to continue in the event the Spiritual Master departs. **[C 4], [PE 2]** These standing instructions, like all instructions in sastra, do not need a special invitation in order to come into play. They are simply there, to be followed as part and parcel of Vaisnava protocol.

"The question then is whether it is feasible to follow a *ritvik* system without the physical presence of the person who set it up." **[ERROR OF LOGIC 19]**

EL 19: Based on the stated objection and the content of the July 9th Letter, TFO has framed this summation question incorrectly. It should read:

"The question then is whether it is feasible to follow a *ritvik* system without the physical presence of **one named as a key participant.**"

The question does not hinge on the fact that Srila Prabhupada set the system up, but rather on the fact that he is described as a key participant. If a required element/person disappears or becomes unavailable to the system, then it is common sense to conclude that the way the system operates has changed. In the absence of an ameliorating instruction, the reality of Srila Prabhupada's departure effectively serves as a 'stop order' – it is the *impossibility of performance* principle.

This brings us to a key point not raised in Objection #3 and TFO's counter to it – the possibility (if not the likelihood) that Srila Prabhupada wished to be a participant in the July 9th system, and to remain a part of it until he ordered otherwise, because it provided him with direct oversight of the process. As the recipient of names of new initiates – no matter who wrote them into the book – he would have direct knowledge of how his system was working, insofar as how many initiates were being processed through it. This would enable him to take remedial action, if he wished, should the system not function to his liking.

We can only speculate as to why the pure devotee made himself part of the system. But we cannot make a speculative assumption that he did so for only one of the many possible reasons he might have done so. We cannot deny that Srila Prabhupada may have wished for the system not to function without his personal oversight. Given the philosophical issues involved in diksa initiation, that would be an entirely understandable position for him to take.

"In fact, the *ritvik* system was set up *specifically* to be operational without *any* physical involvement from Srila Prabhupada whatsoever. Had the *ritvik* system continued after his departure, it would be identical in every respect to how it was practiced whilst Srila Prabhupada was present." **[EL 2] [EF 21]**

This is incorrect on two counts. First, in the July 7th Conversation that was memorialized by the July 9th Letter, Srila Prabhupada clearly stated his own continued involvement, saying, "*India, I am here.*" [EL 2] Second, the closing statement in the July 9th Letter says that names of new disciples should be sent to Srila Prabhupada, to be included in his book. [EF 21] So a *ritvik* system functioning after Prabhupada's departure would **not** be identical in every respect: Srila Prabhupada would not be participating in India, he would not be receiving letters sent to him with names of new initiates, therefore he would not necessarily have direct knowledge of who was (or wasn't) being initiated. And perhaps most importantly, he would not be physically present to oversee the system. We can only speculate as to the many possible implications of that fact, given the inconceivable nature of such transcendental oversight.

"After July 9th, Srila Prabhupada's involvement became non-letter existent, [UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 10] and so even at that stage it was operating as though he had already left. This being the case, we cannot classify the *ritvik* system dysfunctional, or inoperable, on the grounds of Srila Prabhupada's departure, [PHILOSOPHICAL ERROR 3][EL 19] since his departure does not in any way affect the running of the system."

UC 10: This turn of phrase – *non-letter existent* – is so ambiguous that its meaning cannot be guessed. Thus, it serves as an unsubstantiated claim.

PE 3: Unless an extraordinary explanation for the ambiguous phrase, "*non-letter existent*" is forthcoming in TFO, this callous statement can only be taken as a philosophical error because it makes the grievous mistake of suggesting that Srila Prabhupada's physical presence matters not, one way or the other. Even if the July 9th Letter didn't say what it does – that names are to be sent to Srila Prabhupada – even then, it would be offensive to suggest that Srila Prabhupada's physical presence wouldn't matter at all with respect to the system of initiations going on, on his behalf. And that's really what this statement conveys: "*at that stage it was operating as though he had already left*".

While we won't digress here into a philosophical discussion regarding the dynamic of empowerment that manifests during the lila pastimes of a pure devotee – empowerment that directly effects those playing a part during His Divine Grace's manifest lila – the reader would be wise to consider it carefully. To suggest that the pure devotee's physical presence does not change things going on around him is actually asiddhantic.

Even on the level of management or stewardship of the initiations process, Srila Prabhupada's physical presence certainly impacts the system. Regardless of whether he had a direct hand in the process or not (and the July 9th Letter says that he did have a direct hand), he would still provide oversight, would still have an opportunity to hear and know about problems or deviations he might choose to involve himself in. We can say with complete certainty that his physical presence **would** impact the system's operation.

"In other words, **since the system was specifically set up to operate as if Srila Prabhupada was not on the planet, [EL 2] [EF 21] his leaving the planet can not in itself render the system invalid.**"

While this rephrasing takes a little sting out of TFO's philosophically incorrect statement above, it does not entirely dispel it. Again, even if the July 9th Letter did not specifically say (as it does) that names of initiates are to be sent to Srila Prabhupada for inclusion in his book, there is nothing to indicate an intention to create a system that assumes Prabhupada *'is not on the planet'*.

Further, TFO continues to assert the factual error that the system was set-up to operate as if Srila Prabhupada were not physically present, when in fact, the letter specifies that he is to be a direct participant. We have already argued conclusively with respect to the triggering of start and stop orders inherent in the July 9th Letter, and thus the duration it establishes. Our arguments disprove TFO's statement about the system being rendered invalid.

Objection #4:

"4) " The fact that the order was 'only' issued in a letter, and not in a book, gives us a license to interpret it."

TFO's counter to this rebuttal argument:

"This 'letters v books' argument does not apply in this case since this was no ordinary letter. Generally, Srila Prabhupada wrote a letter in response to a specific query from an individual disciple, or to offer individualised guidance or chastisement. Naturally, in these cases the devotee's original query, situation or deviation may give grounds for interpretation. Not everything in Srila Prabhupada's letters can be applied universally (for example in one letter he advised a devotee, who was not good with spices, to just cook with a little salt and tumeric; clearly this advice was not meant for the entire Movement). However, the final order on initiation is not open to any such interpretation since it was not written in response to a specific query from a particular individual, **[ERROR OF FACT 24]** or to address a disciple's individual situation or behaviour."

Srila Prabhupada wrote many letters that were managerial in nature, and not in response to a devotee's query, or offering guidance or chastisement. But the more essential argument here is not what form the Spiritual Master's instructions take, but what the instructions comprise.

EF 24: We also take note of TFO's error in stating that the July 9th Letter was not "*written in response to a specific query from a particular individual*". As the July 7th Conversation clearly shows, the portion of the conversation that was memorialized two days later in the July 9th Letter began with this statement by Tamal Krishna, who was indeed **a particular individual making a specific query** (emphasis added):

Tamala Krsna: Srila Prabhupada? We're receiving a number of letters now, and these are people who want to get initiated. So up until now, since your becoming ill, we asked them to wait.

Prabhupada: The local, mean, senior sannyasis can do that.

Tamala Krsna: That's what we were doing... I mean, formerly we were... The local GBC, sannyasis, were chanting on their beads, and they were writing to Your Divine Grace, and you were giving a spiritual name. **So should that process be resumed, or should we...?** I mean one thing is that it's said that the spiritual master takes on the... You know, he takes on the... He has to cleanse the disciple by... So we don't want that you should have to... Your health is not so good, so that should not be... That's why we've been asking everybody to wait. **I just want to know if we should continue to wait some more time.**

Prabhupada: No, the senior sannyasis...

Tamala Krsna: So they should continue to...

Prabhupada: **You can give me a list of sannyasis. I will mark who will...**

Tamala Krsna: Okay.

Tamal Krishna described a problem and asked Srila Prabhupada how it should be solved. Srila Prabhupada answered him. A discussion followed in which the devotees asked further questions, and along with Srila Prabhupada, made statements of clarification and offered suggestions. The contents of the July 9th Letter are a direct reflection of this conversation. Granted, the problem is not Tamal Krishna's alone; he is speaking on behalf of a small group of senior men. Nonetheless, as TFO admits, "*Naturally, in these cases the devotee's original query, situation or deviation may give grounds for interpretation.*" Clearly, the problem Tamal Krishna raised is just that: a query about a situation that arose, and a problem that needed to be solved.

We also agree with TFO's statement that the context may give grounds for interpretation, and that "*Not everything in Srila Prabhupada's letters can be applied universally...*" As we have pointed out repeatedly in our analysis thus far, there are numerous aspects of the context within which the July 9th Letter manifested that must be taken into consideration when interpreting it.

"The July 9th letter was a procedural instruction, or management policy document, which was sent to every leader in the Movement." [CONTRADICTION 7]

TFO suggests that the July 9th Letter is special because it's a "*procedural instruction, or management policy document*". Elsewhere it has referred to the letter as an *initiation policy document* [AE 3]. How this procedural instruction/management policy document compares to other documents is not explained.

C 7: This is TFO's second alternate characterization regarding the scope of distribution of the July 9th Letter. The Letter is actually addressed: *To All G.B.C., and Temple Presidents*, although TFO's 'Introduction' claims that the letter was addressed to the "*entire movement*". [EF 1] Now TFO claims it was addressed to "*every leader in the Movement*". (See also [AE 6] and [C 4]) Of course, in 1977, there were a great many *leaders* in the Movement who were not GBC or Temple Presidents.

"The letter follows the format of any important instruction that Srila Prabhupada issued and wanted followed without interpretation - he had it put in writing, he approved it, and

then sent it to his leaders. **[ERROR OF FACT 25]** For example, he had one sent on April 22nd, 1972, addressed to 'ALL TEMPLE PRESIDENTS':"

EF 25: This statement is completely incorrect. Srila Prabhupada gave countless important instructions that he wanted the devotees to follow, without interpretation. His lectures and room conversations are replete with such instructions. All these instructions have issued forth from the lips of the pure devotee, and all are therefore Absolute in nature. Putting all these instructions in writing, approving them by signature, and sending them out to his leaders was the exception, not the rule. So to suggest that the July 9th Letter followed a special format that somehow marks it as a particularly important instruction that should be particularly followed without interpretation in comparison to all the other important instructions, is misleading. Among the many other important instructions not to be interpreted or changed are those contained in the body of sastra that represent the standing instructions for continuation of the disciplic succession after the departure of the Spiritual Master. Like the July 9th Letter, these instructions cannot be loosely interpreted or ignored, yet TFO does indeed ignore them.

Next, Objection #5:

"5) "Maybe there was some special background surrounding the issuing of the order that precludes its application after Srila Prabhupada's departure?""

What precludes application of the system after Srila Prabhupada's departure is the absence of a post-samadhi instruction, and the fact that he was a stated participant in the system. However, there are three notable background issues to consider:

First, there is the May 28th Conversation, which is the only instance, up to the time of the July 9th Letter, when *ritviks* were mentioned in relationship to initiations. In that conversation, the term was used in the specific context of *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* who would conduct diksa initiation after Srila Prabhupada's departure.

Second, there is the July 7th Conversation, which was memorialized two days later by the July 9th Letter. That conversation was comprised of a problem (the bottleneck) being presented to Srila Prabhupada, and his giving a solution to it. There was absolutely no mention, no indication of anything associated with a plan for initiations after his departure. Just the opposite: on July 7th, Srila Prabhupada stated that he would serve as a participant in the system.

Third, there is the standing body of sastric instruction on continuation of the disciplic succession. And of course, Srila Prabhupada's comments on May 28th were, as always, in complete accord with sastra.

In its counter-argument, TFO states:

"If such circumstances did exist, Srila Prabhupada would have stated them in the letter, or in an accompanying document."

Krishnakant cannot know what Srila Prabhupada would or would not do. Instead of acknowledging sastra, TFO focuses on the specificity of instructions in the letter itself, hoping to convince readers that because the letter does not say 'when I depart and am no longer here to participate in the system, please refer to sastra and my preceding instructions on how to go forward'. Of course, if Srila Prabhupada had put all of his previous instructions, and the sastric injunctions regarding continuation of the disciplic succession into the July 9th Letter, it would have become a book instead of a letter. To suggest that he must do so, or else the letter can be conveniently interpreted, is nonsense. As we have repeatedly pointed out, there was no need for Srila Prabhupada to go to such lengths, or even to include a termination clause, because **the July 9th Letter never instituted a post-samadhi ritvik diksa system in the first place.**

The entire basis for TFO's assertion of a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system hangs on a few shaky points:

- the single word '*henceforward*' in the July 9th Letter, which supposedly refers to an action on the part of the 11 *ritvik* representatives, that they must take ever after, for as long as 10,000 years [but which actually refers to an action that the Temple Presidents may optionally take]
- Srila Prabhupada supposedly specifying in the July 9th Letter that he was to have no future physical role in the initiations system [but actually, he included himself as a participant in India per the July 7th Conversation, and the letter specifies that names should be sent to him, for his book]
- use of the words '*continue*' and '*future*' by Tamal Krishna in his personal correspondence to devotees [but Tamal Krishna's statements are not synonymous with Srila Prabhupada's instructions, and in no way modify them; nor does Tamal Krishna saying '*continue in future*' equate to a post-samadhi ritvik diksa system.]
- Srila Prabhupada's statement, "*become ritvik*", in a July 19th Conversation [conflicting versions of which are duplicated in TFO's Appendices, without citation, and which have no bearing on post-samadhi application of the July 9th order, regardless; and '*become*' indicates a work in progress, not an immediate change that has been effected]
- The Will and Codicil, which mentions a '*system of management*' [that is actually related, very specifically, to properties and tangible assets, with absolutely no reference to initiations; the Will predates the July 9th Letter, and the Codicil refers to a Will of a different date]
- and two GBC Resolutions that supposedly indicate initiations fall under the "*system of management*" domain [although one Resolution isn't about initiations; the Resolutions do not *sanction* the GBC having *sole responsibility for managerial affairs*; and neither Resolution has anything to do with the July 9th Letter or post-samadhi initiations]

As TFO's 'evidence' is viewed in summary, it becomes all the more clear that it is not 'evidence' at all.

TFO's continues with its counter-argument to Objection #5:

"...had Srila Prabhupada intended the *ritvik* system to stop on his departure he would have added the following seven words to the July 9th letter - "This system will terminate on my departure"." **[ERROR OF LOGIC 20]**

EL 20: None of us is in a position to say what Srila Prabhupada would or would not do in expressing his intentions – nor can we arrive at a definitive conclusion by speculating as to his intentions. Of course, following TFO's logic, if Srila Prabhupada had wanted to establish a post-samadhi *ritvik* system, then all he had to do was say so: "*Henceforward, for 10,000 years, all diksa initiates in ISKCON will be my own direct disciples.*" But the letter doesn't say that, either.

We cannot dictate what the pure devotee must do if he wants to be understood by the fallen conditioned souls – what to speak of reducing such a supposedly prescient 'knowing' down to seven words that he must use.

In fact, Srila Prabhupada gave ample information for his followers to apply in correctly understanding the July 9th Letter. He approved a Letter that said just what he meant to say. Given the bottleneck problem discussed two days prior and the solution he provided, which Tamal Krishna memorialized in the letter, Prabhupada gave a sensible means to fix what was broken. There is no evidence in support of TFO's speculative notion that he was acting upon some secret desire to establish a mechanism that would ensure that his own personal diksa line dominated the Gaudiya Vaisnava tree for 10,000 years beyond his departure... nor even for 20 years beyond.

TFO asserts that, "*A quick look at the letter tells us he wanted it to continue 'henceforward'.*" And a "quick look" is obviously all Krishnakant is hoping the reader will give it, because if one gives it any more study than that, it will quickly become apparent that the July 9th Letter does not instruct a '*henceforward*' *ritvik* diksa system that will go on after Srila Prabhupada's departure.

"Sometimes it is argued that the *ritvik* system was only set up because Srila Prabhupada was sick."

Devotees may or may not have been aware of the extent of Srila Prabhupada's illness; but how could they possibly be expected to deduce from a letter that says nothing about his health, that this was the only reason it was issued?? **[ERROR OF LOGIC 21]**

EL 21: What devotees might *deduce* about why an instruction was given does not change or impact the intended instruction itself.

TFO argues that Srila Prabhupada's ill health was **not** the only reason for the letter, thus the letter cannot be interpreted or challenged on the basis of health-related arguments. Yet a moment later, the author essentially makes that very claim:

"Srila Prabhupada had already announced that he had come to Vrindavan to leave his body. Being *tri-kala-jna* he was most likely aware of his departure in four months time. He had set in motion the final instructions for the continuation of his Movement. He had already drawn up his will and other documents relating to the BBT (Bhaktivedanta Book Trust) and GBC, specifically to provide guidance for after his imminent departure."

The author of TFO doesn't wish to admit that the letter ordered an interim system related to Srila Prabhupada's ill health, because he instead argues that it was meant to be a permanent, post-samadhi system. So instead, he says the letter ordered a system predicated on Prabhupada's anticipated departure. We say that this is sheer speculation. Obviously, neither is indicated in the letter nor in the conversation that preceded it.

"The one matter that had not yet been settled was how initiations would operate when he left. At this point, no one had the faintest clue how things were to run. **[ERROR OF FACT 26]** The July 9th order clarified for everyone precisely how initiations were to proceed in his absence."

EF 26: Certainly, the devotees had already been instructed as to how initiations would operate when Srila Prabhupada left – these standing instructions are embodied in sastra, and Prabhupada had preached on the subject of disciplic succession many times, and discussed it as recently as May 28th, 1977.

TFO has argued that Srila Prabhupada would not have been purposefully vague on the subject, i.e., he would not depart without crystal clear instructions as to **which individuals** were authorized to give diksa after his departure. We have shown that a serious philosophical error underlies that thinking. **[PE 1]** While the author of TFO may find it disagreeable or unacceptable, the fact of the matter is that Srila Prabhupada **did** make it adequately clear – the instructions for disciplic succession are there. He simply didn't name individual diksa successors, just as his own Spiritual Master had not. TFO has recklessly implied that Srila Prabhupada would not make the same 'management mistake' Srila Bhaktisiddhanta made, but that is an offensive conclusive.

As recently as 42 days prior to the July 9th Letter, during the May 28th Conversation, Srila Prabhupada reiterated what he said many times before, clarifying how initiations would operate when he left:

"...in my presence one should not become guru, so on my behalf. On my order, amara ajnaya guru hana, (he is) (be) actually guru. But by my order." []

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

He also said earlier in that conversation:

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

But the fact is, for whatever reason, Srila Prabhupada never did appoint any *officiating acarya(s)*, just as Srila Bhaktisiddhanta had not.

For TFO to say that "*no one had the faintest clue how things were to run*" is to ignore all the standing instructions and the devotees who were well versed in them, and in sastra. They did know. Granted, in 1977, those who had their eye on Zonal Acarya-ism can't be counted among 'those who knew'. But other devotees at the time knew full well what sastra said, and what Srila Prabhupada had preached – and they were summarily driven out of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness for speaking up in that regard. This is an inarguable fact of ISKCON history. For TFO to casually suggest that '*no one had a clue*' is disingenuous and offensive to the stalwart devotees who **did** know, and paid a great price for acting upon that knowledge.

"There is no record of Srila Prabhupada ever behaving in such a purposely ambiguous and uninformative manner, especially when instructing the entire Movement. **[EF 1], [AE 6], [C 7]** Srila Prabhupada never signed anything in a cavalier fashion, and when one considers the magnitude of the instruction in question, it is inconceivable that he would have left out **any** vital information." **[PE 1]**

All these allegations have previously been rebutted, per the above error notations.

TFO's Objection #6:

"6) "Does not the 'Appointment Tape' contain relevant information that clearly frames the July 9th order as being only applicable whilst Srila Prabhupada was physically present on the planet?"

Thus far, this is the very first mention of Srila Prabhupada's May 28th Conversation, which TFO refers to as the 'Appointment Tape'. Given that the May 28th Conversation and the July 7th Conversation are commonly referred to by Ritvik-vada adherents as primary evidence in support of its interpretation of the July 9th Letter, it's interesting to note how far along TFO's arguments have proceeded before it introduces the May 28th Conversation. And up to now, the July 7th Conversation has been mentioned only in reference to names of initiated disciples being sent to Srila Prabhupada for inclusion in his book.

As we have seen with all the evidence presented by TFO thus far, from the Will and Codicil to the July 9th Letter itself, the author of TFO has taken great liberties in interpreting these documents. Consequently, we must study very carefully the exact wording of all evidentiary documents, in context, in order to properly ascertain what they say and whether or not that differs from TFO's interpretations. The same holds true with the May 28th Conversation – perhaps even more so given the nature of that dialogue.

TFO's approach to the May 28th Conversation is that it is being addressed because the GBC asserted it as evidence in their *GII* handbook. [1] TFO does not accept that the conversation 'modifies' the July 9th Letter, and says it is not vital to an understanding of the letter. Shortly after publication of TFO, Krishnakant repudiated entirely the May 28th Conversation, [19] on the basis of a forensic audio investigation of a copy of the conversation tape, which reportedly concluded the tape may have been tampered with. Thus, TFO proclaimed that the May 28th Conversation cannot be used as evidence, in any way, in the ISKCON guru-tattva debate. yet as we have pointed out elsewhere in DOR, TFO nonetheless employs the May 28th Conversation to bolster its arguments, whenever convenient.

In its counter-argument to Objection #6, TFO states:

"In the GBC's handbook *GII*, the **sole** evidence offered in support of **modifications a) & b)** is extracted from a conversation, which took place on May 28th, 1977. **[ERROR OF FACT 27]** The paper appears to concede that there is no other instructional evidence, which directly relates to the function of *ritviks* **[WORD JUGGLERY 6]** after Srila Prabhupada's departure:

"Although Srila Prabhupada did not repeat his earlier statements, it was understood that he expected these disciples to initiate in the future." (GII, p.14, emphasis added)"

EF 27: If one reads the quoted section of *GII* in context, [1] they will find not only references to the May 28th Conversation, but numerous other references to relevant instructions given by Srila Prabhupada in his lectures and addresses (see *GII* footnote #4). Many other instructions exist in which Srila Prabhupada expressed his expectation that his disciples would initiate in future, and *GII* has documented quite a number of them.

WJ 6: The *GII* does **not** 'concede that there is no other instructional evidence' – it makes no assertions at all about "the function of *ritviks* after Srila Prabhupada's departure" – it simply repudiates the post-samadhi *ritvik* notion.

"Since it is the **sole** evidence, **[EF 27]** **there is a section exclusively dedicated to the May 28th conversation.** Suffice to say it was not referred to in the July 9th letter, nor did Srila Prabhupada demand that a copy of the taped conversation be sent out with the final order. From this we can deduce, with absolute confidence, that it cannot contain a scrap of modifying information vital to the understanding of the final order." []

"As will be seen later, the May conversation has nothing in it to contradict the final order."

Our own detailed analysis of the May 28th Conversation, located in Appendices **[APX-5]** will be introduced later on, when we get to TFO's main 'Appointment Tape' section. For now, we note that we are in agreement with TFO's statement, that the May 28th Conversation "has nothing in it to contradict the final order."

We also remind the reader that TFO's treatment of the May 28th Conversation should be understood in terms of its rebuttal of the GBC's position, which is different than our own. As stated above, TFO is trying to show that the conversation is the GBC's "*sole evidence*" in support of Modifications **a)** and **b)**. We have just demonstrated that to be a factual error. **[EF 27]** Aside from that, our position does not rely upon the May 28th Conversation, like TFO presumes the GBC's position does. We are simply proving that the July 9th Letter does not institute a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa initiation system. We do not need to rely upon the May 28th Conversation to make that case. We are, however, refuting TFO's usage of the May 28th Conversation as a means to bolster its own arguments, even as it later repudiated it entirely as evidence.

"As a general point, later instructions from the guru will always supersede previous instructions: **The final order is the final order, and must be followed:**"

Concluding its counter-arguments to Objection #6, TFO offers a number of quotes which state that later instructions supersede previous ones. It is applying these rules in support of the notion that the July 9th Letter is the final order, superseding all previous instructions of Srila Prabhupada, and apparently even those of sastra and the predecessor Acaryas of our Sampradaya.

And given TFO's emphasis on last instructions, let us again look at the **last, final** statement contained in this **final** order:

"The name of a newly initiated disciple should be **sent by the representative** who has accepted him or her **to Srila Prabhupada**, to be included in His Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book."

Names are to be sent to Srila Prabhupada in order for this final order system to be employed. If Srila Prabhupada has departed, the system cannot be employed as ordered. This is the last word of the final order. And how does TFO attempt to navigate around that final instruction? The answer is found above, under TFO's counter-arguments to Objection #1. TFO employs several tactics to get around this very obvious 'final order', that names should be **sent to Srila Prabhupada**:

- TFO attempts to shift the focus onto the *purpose* of names being included in a book;
- TFO says someone other than Prabhupada will do the actual *entering* of names into the book;
- TFO asserts a letter Tamal Krishna wrote to Hansadutta about names in the book **[EL 2]**;
- TFO says names could *still be entered* even if Srila Prabhupada was not here;
- TFO points out that the July 9th Letter does not say that *if the book gets separated* from Srila Prabhupada, initiations must stop;
- TFO introduces the word jugglery of '*pre-initiation*' and '*post-initiation*' activities; and finally,
- TFO attempts to invalidate the instruction on the basis that the *initiations system was at risk* that an initiation might take place just before Srila Prabhupada departed, and he

wouldn't be there to receive the name sent for entering in the book, thus this final step is not vital.

This is how the author of TFO deals with the last, final instruction contained within the July 9th final order – a final order that TFO says is synonymous with Sankaracarya's '*bhaja Govinda*' and Sri Krsna's final order, "*Always think of Me and become My devotee*".

It is an argument of convenience, of the worst kind.

"7) "Srila Prabhupada stated many times that all his disciples must become gurus, surely this proves that Srila Prabhupada did not intend the ritvik system to be permanent."

"Srila Prabhupada never appointed or instructed anyone to be *diksa* guru for after his departure. Evidence for this claim has never been produced, indeed many senior leaders within ISKCON have conceded the point:"

Given that TFO's counter-arguments to Objection #7 essentially deal with Modification **b**), we will offer no comments.

ALTERNATIVES

EVIDENCE USED TO SUPPORT AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE *RITVIK* SYSTEM FALLS INTO THREE BASIC CATEGORIES

The exercise of looking for evidence to support an alternative to the *ritvik* system is not required in order to repudiate the notion that the July 9th Letter establishes a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. Even if there was no evidence to be found of an alternative system, still the letter does not instruct a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. If the only other alternative was that for the next 10,000 years, sincere seekers would have to rely only on Chaitya Guru to make arrangements for them to meet their eternal diksa guru, that would also be a perfect arrangement.

Evidence used to support an alternative to the *ritvik* system falls into three basic categories :

- "1. Srila Prabhupada's frequent call for everyone to become guru, often made in conjunction with the '*amara ajnaya guru hana*' verse from the *Caitanya-Caritamrta*.
2. The half dozen or so personal letters where Srila Prabhupada mentions his disciples acting as *diksa* guru after his departure.
3. Other statements in Srila Prabhupada's books and lectures where the principle of disciples going on to be *diksa* guru are mentioned."

Looking first at category 1

[]

Looking now at category 2

In this section, all of TFO's counter-arguments to category #1, and to the first half of category #2, specifically address Modification **b**). However, mid-way through its category #2 commentary, TFO introduces a quote that brings the discussion back into the realm of Modification **a**), where our interest lies:

"Another letter which is quoted to support the M.A.S.S. states:

"By 1975, all of those who have passed all of the above examinations will be specifically empowered to initiate and increase the number of the Krsna Consciousness population."

(SP Letter to Kirtanananda, 12/1/69)" [20]

It appears to have been Krishnakant, author of TFO, who first introduced the term 'Multiple Acarya Successor System', or 'M.A.S.S.'. In his paper, *A Reply to Jayadvaita Swami's Paper "Where the ritviks are Wrong"*, [21] Krishnakant writes:

"We are grateful for your use of the term 'post-*samadhi*' as opposed to 'posthumous', which always carried with it mundane connotations. We are happy to use the term. We shall use the term 'Multiple *Acarya* Successor System', or M.A.S.S., when referring to your favoured method of continuing the *parampara* - (in this context we use the word '*acarya*' in its strongest sense, i.e., initiating spiritual master, or *diksa guru*)."

And we are grateful to know that Krishnakant appreciates the term 'post-*samadhi*', which we also use. Some Ritvik-vadis today take exception to our use of the term, perhaps not realizing that it has been vetted in their own Ritvik-vada manifesto, *The Final Order*.

In Krishnakant's paper, [21] the history of the M.A.S.S. is also given:

"The M.A.S.S was introduced in two phases. The first phase began in March 1978. The second modified version was set up around 1987. Srila Prabhupada described neither version previous to 1977."

Not surprisingly, TFO attempts to rebut the above statement made by Srila Prabhupada in his letter to Kirtanananda, which directly refers to his trained followers being able to initiate. TFO states:

"Does the above statement validate the termination of the final order on initiation?"

Since this is an attempt to terminate the ritvik system through the use of personal letters, we shall invoke here Srila Prabhupada's 'law of disciplic succession'.

[UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 11] The first part of the 'law' states that a disciple must not act as initiating acarya in his own guru's physical presence."

Again we must differentiate our position from the GBC's, reminding the reader that we are not 'attempting to terminate' the *ritvik* system established on July 9th. The termination element is already written into the letter, which sets down a system that is to function in a particular way. In the absence of a specific termination clause or a statement about continuity in the event the system can no longer function as ordered, it naturally terminates. No outside influence needs to act upon the letter in order for that process to take place.

UC 11: TFO introduces a new evidentiary reference here – "*Srila Prabhupada's 'law of disciplic succession'*", for which it provides no citation, thus it is an unsubstantiated claim. Perhaps TFO is referring to Srila Prabhupada's comments in a letter to Tusta Krsna, December 2, 1975, New Delhi. **[8]** Upon reading that letter, we can see why TFO would not have included a copy of it in Appendices, or even given a citation for it – because in it, Srila Prabhupada states (emphasis added):

"Keep trained up very rigidly **and then** you are bonafide Guru, and you can accept disciples on the same principle. But as a matter of etiquette it is the custom that during the lifetime of your Spiritual master you bring the prospective disciples to him, and **in his absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without any limitation. This is the law of disciplic succession.** I want to see my disciples become bonafide Spiritual Master and spread Krishna consciousness very widely, that will make me and Krishna very happy.
(Srila Prabhupada Letter to Tusta Krsna, December 2, 1975, New Delhi)"

TFO continues:

"Since this was the 'law', clearly the above letter could not be referring to Srila Prabhupada's disciples initiating on their own behalf: **Srila Prabhupada was still on the planet in 1975.** **[WORD JUGGLERY 7]** We can therefore only conclude that he was already contemplating some sort of 'officiating' initiation system as early as 1969."

WJ 7: Of course, the letter TFO is referring to is Srila Prabhupada's letter to Kirtanananda **[20]** – not the letter to Tusta Krsna, **[8]** although it is **only** the latter that mentions a *law of disciplic succession*. The Tusta Krsna letter says exactly the opposite of what TFO is presenting above. Granted, TFO clearly says it's the letter to Kirtanananda being responding to – but Krishnakant has nonetheless made a misleading representation about the *law of disciplic succession*, since that reference comes only in the letter to Tusta Krsna, not the letter to Kirtanananda. The *law* as described in the Tusta Krsna letter is that **in the absence or disappearance [of the spiritual master] you can accept disciples without any limitation**, so obviously it is instructing a scenario for a time when Srila Prabhupada is no longer physically present. It does **not** indicate

that Tusta Krsna prabhu needs any additional order beyond the one contained in this letter, in order to act as diksa guru after Prabhupada's departure.

We would also remind the reader of TFO's convenient application of the statement in *GII* (p. 25): "***In logic, later statements supersede earlier ones in importance***". Srila Prabhupada's letter to Kirtanananda was written on December 1, 1969, whereas his letter to Tusta Krsna was written December 2, 1975. And since Srila Prabhupada's '*law of disciplic succession*' says (in the portion not disclosed by TFO) that in the Spiritual Master's absence or disappearance, "you can accept disciples without any limitation", how can TFO conclude that the July 9th Letter prevents or limits any disciple from being, or becoming a bona fide diksa guru, since this is **the law**?

This letter to Tusta Krsna Swami can be considered Srila Prabhupada's direct order to his disciple to 'become guru' (when you are qualified, and after I have departed), and no doubt Tusta Krsna prabhu took it as just that. But given the fact that the sentence begins with the statement, "*But as a matter of etiquette it is the custom...*", one could also take this letter as a general order to all qualified, bona fide diksa guru candidates who come to know of the letter, that in Srila Prabhupada's absence or disappearance, they "can accept disciples without any limitation". Srila Prabhupada wrote: "*This is the law of disciplic succession. I want to see my disciples become bonafide Spiritual Master...*" A 'law' is not generally something that applies only to one person or one situation, and Prabhupada was not just referring to Tusta Krsna, but in plural, to "*my disciples*".

"By 1975, Srila Prabhupada had indeed 'empowered', or authorised, devotees **[ASSUMPTIVE ERROR 9]** such as Kirtanananda to chant on beads and conduct initiations on his behalf. The above letter appears then to be predicting the future use of representatives for the purpose of initiation." **[ASSUMPTIVE ERROR 10]**

AE 9: By equating the two words, 'empowered' and 'authorised', TFO implies that the trained, empowered disciples later became the authorised *ritviks*. Of course, Srila Prabhupada never said such a thing. He never "authorised" anyone to initiate. He simply appointed *rittik* representatives to assist him.

In his January 12, 1969 letter to Kirtanananda, **[20]** Srila Prabhupada writes:

"A first examination will be held sometimes next January on Bhagavad-gita As It Is, and those passing will have the degree of Bhakti-sastri. **[22]** Next year we will hold an examination on Srimad-Bhagavatam, and the person who passes will have the title Bhakti-vaibhava. And the next year we shall hold an examination on Teachings of Lord Caitanya, Nectar of Devotion and Vedanta Sutra, and those who will successfully pass will be awarded with the title of Bhaktivedanta. By 1975, all of those who have passed all of the above examinations will be specifically empowered to initiate and increase the number of the Krishna Consciousness population."

Although graduates of this program of learning would be *empowered to initiate*, that is not the same thing as saying that they are *authorized* to initiate, or that they have automatically gotten the order to initiate upon graduation.

AE 10: There is also nothing to indicate that Srila Prabhupada's preparing or empowering devotees was intended so that they could become *representatives*, particularly as that word is associated with *ritvik representatives*. It is equally possible, if not far more likely that he was preparing them to be diksa gurus on their own right, ready to serve after his departure. TFO has neither the authority nor right to try to arbitrarily assign such intent to the statement in Srila Prabhupada's letter to Kirtanananda.

"The above letter appears then to be predicting the future use of representatives for the purpose of initiation. Later he called these representatives 'ritviks', and formalised their function in the July 9th order." **[ASSUMPTIVE ERROR 11]**

AE 11: This is a completely unfounded assumption. In his letter to Kirtanananda, Srila Prabhupada does not mention 'representatives', or *ritviks*. Rather, he refers to students who will take classes for degrees like Bhakti-sastri, Bhakti-vaibhava, etc., and "*will be specifically empowered to initiate and increase the number of the Krishna Consciousness population.*" He did not call them *representatives*, and TFO's assertion that they **are** representatives who Srila Prabhupada later called *ritviks* is complete speculation.

"Again, it would be foolhardy to suggest that Srila Prabhupada was actually authorising **Kirtanananda** to act as a *sampradaya* initiating *acarya* as long as he passed a few exams."

Again, TFO's error of assumption in this regard **[AE 10]** is in not recognizing that being '*empowered*' to initiate is not the same thing as being '*authorized*' or ordered to initiate. Yes, it would be foolish to make such an assumption about Kirtanananda, but it is equally foolish to assume that class graduates are predicted to become post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa initiators. There is no proof for such a claim, nor even any indications in favor of such a conclusion.

"Even if such letters as these did allude to some other type of guru system, they still could not be used to modify the final July 9th order since these instructions were not repeated to the rest of the Movement." **[ERROR OF LOGIC 22]**

Here is yet another instance where the scope of distribution of the July 9th Letter is misrepresented by TFO, this time implying that it went out to *the rest of the Movement*. **[EF 1], [AE 6],[C 4 & 7]**

EL 22: In addition, TFO makes an error of logic by suggesting that whether or not a letter to a devotee has relevance to (could modify) the July 9th Letter has to do with the distribution of that letter. Given that the July 9th Letter only went out to GBC and Temple Presidents – not to the *entire Movement*, and not to '*all the leaders in the Movement*' – it makes no sense to say that other instructions couldn't modify the letter unless they were received by the *rest of the Movement*.

Finally we shall look at category 3

"There are various statements in Srila Prabhupada's books and lectures which have been extracted to justify the disbanding of the *ritvik* system. We shall now examine this evidence."

Again, we are not concerned with defending or rebutting Modification **b**), thus we will not comment on much of the material contained in this section. Although we do take objection to quite a bit of TFO's commentary on the role of diksa guru, and disciples becoming diksas, we will hold those comments for another day. They are not relevant to our rebuttal of the evidence used to support the assertion of a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system.

Referring to a number of quoted examples presented by those arguing that disciples may become diksa gurus after the Spiritual Master departs, TFO states:

"It has already been demonstrated that Lord Caitanya's instruction was for everyone to preach vigorously, make lots of Krsna conscious followers, but *not* to take disciples. This point is re-inforced where Srila Prabhupada encourages his disciples to make many more devotees. It is significant that Srila Prabhupada states, "**suppose you have got now ten thousand...**" (i.e. in Srila Prabhupada's presence). From this it is clear he is talking about Krsna conscious followers, not '*disciples of his disciples*', **[ASSUMPTIVE ERROR 12]** since the main point of the lecture **[ERROR OF FACT 28]** was that they should not initiate in his presence. The implication being then, that just as at that time there may have been around ten thousand followers of Krsna Consciousness, so in the future millions more would be added."

AE 12: When Srila Prabhupada says "*suppose you have got now ten thousand...*" **[23]**, he could certainly have been referring to a group comprised of his own disciples and his grand-disciples, not just 'all followers'.

EF 28: TFO is incorrect in saying that "*the main point of the lecture was that they should not initiate in his presence.*" In fact, there were *many* points made in the lecture. Among the most prominent were: a) points of definition of 'acarya'; b) that the acarya is one who spreads Krsna consciousness; c) that acarya is considered as good as Krsna; d) that guru is required in order to receive truth through parampara; e) that while one's guru is present, one should not become acarya; f) by simply repeating, you become guru/acarya; and g) by simply preparing yourself to repeat perfectly, there will be no shortage of acaryas. "***Then*** *hundred thousand to million, and million to ten million.*"

"The *ritvik* system was to ensue that when these followers became suitably qualified for initiation, they could receive *diksa* from Srila Prabhupada, just as they could when he gave the above lecture." **[PHILOSOPHICAL ERROR 4]**

PE 4: In this lecture, Srila Prabhupada was encouraging all his followers to become trained up as acaryas, so they could exponentially grow the Krsna consciousness Movement. Yes, as part of that message, he said they should not become acarya while the guru (himself) was still

present. Obviously he did not mean they shouldn't become siksa acarya, because etiquette does not call for them to delay becoming siksas until after the guru departs. The instruction to wait until after the departure of the Spiritual Master refers to becoming diksa acarya.

Srila Prabhupada also **did not say** in this lecture that devotees should get trained up as *ritviks*, initiating on his behalf, to expand the number of his diksa disciples. This is TFO's concocted interpretation which, because it goes to the heart of *guru-tattva*, is a serious philosophical error.

In his *Caitanya-caritamrta* lecture, Srila Prabhupada was not just referring to his desires for the movement during his physical presence. This is indicated, for example, by the fact that he said his trained disciples should become acaryas, but while he is present they should bring candidates for initiation to him. Not that acarya-ship is conditional while Prabhupada is present (the disciples are his), **and** it remains conditional after his departure (the disciples are **still** his). It is not that even though they have followed his order and trained up to be a bona fide acarya/guru, even after the period of restraint borne of etiquette is passed and their Spiritual Master has departed, they **still** cannot initiate as diksa gurus because they must continue to bring all candidates to him. **Srila Prabhupada says no such thing:** not in the *Caitanya-caritamrta* lecture, not in the July 9th Letter, not anywhere. This is an **asiddhantic contrivance** perpetrated by the author of *The Final Order*.

Krishnakant's asiddhantic thesis presumes that as the line of disciplic succession grows forward from Srila Prabhupada's branch of the Gaudiya Vaisnava tree, that among the anticipated millions of *jivatmas* that would purportedly become his diksa disciples, all of them would be denied the opportunity of themselves ever becoming diksa gurus – no matter how qualified, how bona fide; no matter if they are *maha-bhagavata*, *uttama-adhikari nitya-siddhas*... no matter if they get Srila Prabhupada's direct order to become diksa guru by way of a letter, a dream, the Book Bhagavat or Chaitya Guru: none of them may ever become diksa gurus. Even Srila Prabhupada himself would be prohibited from coming back in another lifetime, to serve as diksa in the Gaudiya Vaisnava ISKCON branch he founded.

It is a ludicrous proposition.

In Conclusion:

"There is no evidence of Srila Prabhupada issuing specific orders for his disciples to become *diksa* gurus, thus setting up an alternative to the *ritvik* system."

By employing plural terms, this concluding statement may hope to sidestep one piece of evidence already discussed – Srila Prabhupada's Letter to Tusta Krsna, December 2, 1975 [8]:

"Keep trained up very rigidly and then you are bonafide Guru, and **you can** accept disciples on the same principle. But as a matter of etiquette it is the custom that during the lifetime of your Spiritual master you bring the prospective disciples to him, and **in his absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without any limitation**. This is the law of disciplic succession."

Surely the author of TFO does not deny that Srila Prabhupada, in this letter, has given a direct and specific order to Tusta Krsna, that if he remains rigidly trained up, he **can** accept disciples, without any limitation. Granted, this is one letter to one devotee, not orders for disciples to become diksa gurus, as the statement is phrased above, in plural, by TFO. But as we pointed out, in the letter Prabhupada was obviously referring to more than just Tusta Krsna in saying, "*But as a matter of etiquette it is the custom...*". This custom does not apply only to Tusta Krsna, thus one could also take this letter as a general order to all qualified, bona fide diksa guru candidates who come to know of this letter, that in Srila Prabhupada's absence or disappearance, they "can accept disciples without any limitation". Srila Prabhupada wrote: "*This is the law of disciplic succession. I want to see my disciples become bonafide Spiritual Master...*" A 'law' does not generally apply to only one person, and Prabhupada is referring, in plural, to "*my disciples*".

Tusta Krsna's order to be guru, at the appropriate time, cannot be characterized as a replacement or *alternative* for the July 9th Letter, because the July 9th Letter is **not** the order for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. It simply instructed a system to be used during Srila Prabhupada's presence. But if one were to accept TFO's interpretation that the July 9th Letter does establish a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system, then by all means, the order Tusta Krsna received would represent an alternative to that system.

And because TFO has emphasized its concluding statement above by putting it in bold text, **the rebuttal must be given equal weight**.

"What we *do* have is a handful of (at the time) unpublished personal letters, **[UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 12]** sent only to individuals who were desiring to become *diksa* gurus even in Srila Prabhupada's presence, **[ERROR OF ASSUMPTION 13]** sometimes having only recently joined the Movement. In such cases they are told to wait **[UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 13]** until Srila Prabhupada leaves the planet before they fulfil their ambitions."

UC 12: TFO does not specify what comprises this 'handful' of personal letters, thus making it an unsubstantiated claim.

AE 13: We also challenge TFO's assumption that all the individuals who received these letters were hankering to become diksa gurus, even in Srila Prabhupada's presence. The author of TFO is not Paramatma, and cannot know what is in the hearts of these individuals, nor is there any anecdotal or direct evidence provided to support this claim.

UC 13: Because TFO has not specified what letters are included in the 'handful', we cannot verify that these unidentified letter recipients were told to '*wait until Srila Prabhupada leaves the planet*'.

"Furthermore, Srila Prabhupada's books and conversations only contain instructions for his disciples to be *siksa* gurus. Though the general *principle* of a disciple becoming a

diksa guru is mentioned, Srila Prabhupada does not specifically order his disciples to initiate and take their own disciples."

We remind the reader of the example of plural terms, addressed above. Taken in the singular, this statement is incorrect, as evidenced by the letter to Tusta Krsna. And in the context of the argument being presented, the order to Tusta Krsna does logically meet the test. No, Srila Prabhupada didn't say, 'right now, begin initiating and taking disciples'. But he did say, **in his [Prabhupada's] absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without any limitation** if you *'keep trained up very rigidly'*. This is more than simply a statement about the general principle of giving diksa. And the context of this whole argument is whether or not there could be diksa gurus to perpetuate the growth of the movement after Prabhupada's departure, thus demonstrating an alternative to the post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa theory being proposed.

"The above then does not represent grounds for supplanting the explicit instruction of July 9th, an order that was distributed to the whole Movement as a specific policy document."

Here is yet another example of misrepresentation of the scope of distribution of the July 9th Letter. [EF 1], [AE 6], [C 7], and [EL 22]. We also have a repeat of the erroneous statement that the letter was a *policy document*. [AE 3] [3]

MORE OBJECTIONS

OBJECTIONS #8-10

Objection #8 and counter-argument:

"8) "Maybe there is some sastric principle in Srila Prabhupada's books that forbids the granting of diksa when the guru is not on the same planet as the disciple?"

"There is no such statement in Srila Prabhupada's books, and since Srila Prabhupada's books contain all essential *sastric* principles, such a restriction simply can not exist in our philosophy."

Our focus in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada* is, first and foremost, to analyze the fundamental evidence upon which Ritvik-vada is built. This encompasses TFO's Modification a), which addresses the nature and intended duration of the July 9th instruction. Our comments do not encompass a rebuttal of the 'no living diksa guru needed' argument, although it is a sub-theme in TFO, particularly within the scope of Modification b). We reject entirely the notion that the July 9th Letter established a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system, thus we don't need to engage in lines of argument having to do with whether or not post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa is sanctioned by sastra. We don't accept that it is, but more fundamental to this commentary is our assertion that **such a system simply was not instructed**. That said, we will only comment on TFO's statements in the remainder of this 'Objections' section that are relevant to the general discussion.

"In one of the main sections on *diksa* in Srila Prabhupada's books, **[UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 14]** it is stated that the only requirement for receiving it is the agreement of the guru. This agreement was totally delegated to the *ritviks*:"

UC 14: Absent citations, the claim must be thrown out as unsubstantiated.

Srila Prabhupada could give his agreement as *diksa* guru while present, but that circumstance would change once he physically departed. Nowhere has Srila Prabhupada at any time given any one of his disciples the right to make agreements on his behalf by accepting direct *diksa* disciples for him after his departure.

As evidence of how "this agreement" was supposedly delegated to the *ritviks*, TFO quotes this statement from the July 7th Conversation:

"So without waiting for me, wherever you consider it is right. That will depend on discretion." [ERROR OF LOGIC 23]
(*SP Room conversation, 7/7/77, Vrindavan*)"

EL 23: In order to understand the likelihood that the above quote from the July 7th Conversation **does not** serve as evidence of a transfer of powers, as characterized by TFO, we refer back to the explanation give above under **[EF 10]**.

Objection #9:

"9) "Since this instruction would lead to the setting up of a system that is unprecedented, and has no historical basis, it should be rejected."

This can not be a reason to reject the July 9th order since Srila Prabhupada set many precedents - (reducing the number of required rounds of *japa* from sixty-four to sixteen, performing marriages, allowing women to live in the temples, giving *gayatri mantra* by tape, etc)."

Regarding TFO's claim that the July 9th order is no more unprecedented than many other actions Srila Prabhupada took, let us again look at exactly what the July 9th Letter instructs:

1. the appointment of 11 senior disciples to act as "*rittik*" - **representative of the acarya**, for the purpose of performing first and second initiation;
2. that Temple Presidents **may henceforward** send recommendations for first and second initiation to whichever of the eleven representatives are nearest their temple;
3. after considering a recommendation, the *rittik* representative **may** accept the devotee as an initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada by giving a spiritual name or *gayatri*;

4. the newly initiated devotees are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the above eleven senior devotees having acted as His representatives in the initiations process;
5. after receiving a letter from a representative giving the spiritual name or the thread, the Temple President can perform a fire *yajna*; and
6. the name of a newly initiated disciple should be **sent by the representative to Srila Prabhupada**, to be included in His Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book.

This is the sum total of all instructions contained within the July 9th Letter. To the degree that this set of instructions may set precedent, we agree with TFO that is not untoward. Of course, we can see that *no* instruction was given for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system – certainly not by means of the term '*henceforward*', referring to an optional action the Temple Presidents may take. *If* such a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system had been instructed, we would need to grapple with a far more difficult question of precedent – but that is not the case.

"Besides, there was no need to give detailed explanations of the *ritvik* system in his books since he had practically demonstrated prototypes of it for many years, **[ERROR OF FACT 29]** with the final touches of how it was to continue fully elucidated in the July 9th order."

EF 29: Here, TFO attempts to convince the reader that the system of initiation Srila Prabhupada used over the years, adjusting it as needed from time to time, was designed to serve eventually as a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. The term '*prototypes*' implies a design, and a design suggests intention. But we have no evidence of any intention on Srila Prabhupada's part to progressively design a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system.

Furthermore, the system Srila Prabhupada employed for initiations was initially, and throughout the early years, essentially a *siksa* system. There is no basis for referring to it as a "*ritvik* system" until 1977, when that term was actually introduced in relationship to initiations.

"If a system of initiation can be rejected solely on the grounds that it has no exact historical precedent, [WORD JUGGLERY 8] then we would certainly be forced to reject the current guru system within ISKCON by the same token."

WJ 8: Use of the word '*exact*' suggests that common disagreement with TFO's Ritvik-vada conclusion is a matter of nuance; that there is *similar* historical precedent, just not an *exact* precedent. But in fact, there is **no** precedent at all for post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa in our Gaudiya line.

"Never before has a plethora of *diksa* gurus been subordinate to a committee, which could suspend or terminate their initiating activities. No previous initiating *acarya* in our line has ever been voted into office with a two-thirds majority vote, nor subsequently fallen prey to gross sinful activity and as a consequence been hastily withdrawn from the 'disciple succession'. We reject such irregular practices, not on the grounds of historical

precedent, but because they clash violently with many of the basic tenets of *Vaisnava* philosophy found in Srila Prabhupada's books, and are in blatant violation of Srila Prabhupada's final order." [ASSUMPTIVE ERROR 14]

AE 14: We agree that there is no historical precedent for the current ISKCON guru system, and like the author of TFO, we reject the practices mentioned above – they are as contrived as Ritvik-vada itself. We disagree, however, that the ISKCON/GBC's practices are "*in blatant violation of Srila Prabhupada's final order*". This argument relies on the assertion that the July 9th Letter contains instructions for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system, which it does not. What the ISKCON/GBC practices violate is not the letter, but sastra itself, which the Ritvik-vadis violate in similar fashion, as both camps attempt to impose contrived institutional controls on a system of spiritual philosophy.

"The fact that the identical system to *ritvik* is not directly mentioned in *sastra*, or ancient Vedic texts, is also not pertinent. According to some Vedic rules, *sudras* and women should not even receive *brahmin* initiation at all: [PHILOSOPHICAL ERROR 5]

" Diksa cannot be offered to a *sudra* [...] This initiation is offered not according to Vedic rules, because it is very difficult to find out a qualified *brahmana*."
(*SP Bg. Lecture, 29/3/71, Bombay*)"

Again, TFO introduces the word '*identical*' in the same way as the previous statement about "*no exact historical precedent*". Post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa is conspicuously absent from sastra and sampradaya history. It is not that there is something very similar, but not quite *identical* – in fact, there is no system even close to the *ritvik* system mentioned in sastra.

PE 5: The comparison TFO draws between a system for initiation like *ritvik*, and the qualifications of a candidate for initiation, is erroneous. It is apples and oranges – one is not equivalent to, or synonymous with the other. The philosophical tenets that are contravened by the Ritvik-vada system asserted in TFO are very different from the aspects of philosophy involved in the matter of who is qualified to take diksa in Kali-yuga.

TFO includes the quote here as a means of substantiating its assertion that the absence of historical precedent is no reason to reject its post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa theory. In other words, *sudras* are given diksa in ISKCON not in accordance with Vedic rules, therefore a Ritvik system that is also not according to Vedic rules should also be accepted. But when we look at the quote from Srila Prabhupada's Bombay lecture in context, we can see how TFO misapplies the quote (emphasis added):

Srila Prabhupada's Lecture on Bhagavad-gita, March 29, 1971, Bombay:

"Our Sanatana Gosvami gives direction in the Hari-bhakti-vilasa that one man can become a brahmana by the regular process of diksa. Diksa, this initiation, cannot be offered to a sudra. Diksa cannot be offered to a sudra. But in this age, Kali-yuga, it is the statement of the sastras that in the Kali-yuga most of the population are

sudras. Kalau sudra sambhavah. How they can be initiated? This initiation is offered not according to the Vedic rules, because it is very difficult to find out a qualified brahmana. Diksa is offered to a qualified brahmana. Therefore **this diksa is offered according to Pancaratrici-vidhi. That is recommended in this age.** My spiritual master inaugurated this Pancaratrici-vidhi, and we are following his footsteps. Anyone who is inclined to devote his life for Krsna, he should be accepted as brahmana."

Clearly, the instruction is that "*diksa is offered according to Pancaratrici-vidhi*" – "*that is recommended in this age.*" The excerpt quoted by TFO, that diksa for sudras is "*not according to Vedic rules*" is conveniently presented out of context.

"Thus, strictly speaking, Srila Prabhupada should not have initiated any of his western disciples since they were all born lower than the lowest Vedic caste. Srila Prabhupada was able to over-rule such Vedic laws through the invocation of higher order sastric injunctions." **[PHILOSOPHICAL ERROR 6]**

PE 6: TFO extends the philosophical error made above **[PE 5]**, now adding to it a second one: It is **incorrect** to say that "*strictly speaking, Srila Prabhupada should not have initiated any of his western disciples since they were all born lower than the lowest Vedic caste*". **Strictly** speaking, Srila Prabhupada followed the sastric injunctions precisely in initiating his western disciples, as described above in his lecture on Bhagavad-gita, March 29, 1971, Bombay, and as stated again in his Bhaktivedanta Purport to Srimad Bhagavatam 8.12.10 (emphasis added):

"For the present day, the pancaratrici-vidhi as enunciated by Narada Muni is the only hope. Srila Rupa Gosvami, therefore, has quoted the following verse from the Brahma-yamala:

*sruti-smrti-puranadi-
pancaratra-vidhim vina
aikantiki harer bhaktir
utpatayaiva kalpate*
[BRS 1.2.101]

"Devotional service of the Lord that ignores the authorized Vedic literatures like the Upanisads, puranas and Narada-pancaratra is simply an unnecessary disturbance in society." (Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu 1.2.101) Those who are very advanced in knowledge and are situated in the mode of goodness follow the Vedic instructions of the sruti and smrti and other religious scriptures, **including the pancaratrici-vidhi.** Without understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead in this way, one only creates a disturbance. In this age of Kali, so many gurus have sprung up, and **because they do not refer to the sruti-smrti-puranadi-pancaratrika-vidhi [BRS 1.2.101],** they are creating a great disturbance in the world in regard to understanding the Absolute Truth. However, those who follow the pancaratrici-vidhi under the guidance of a proper spiritual master can

understand the Absolute Truth. It is said, pancaratrasya krtsnasya vakta tu bhagavan svayam: **the pancaratra system is spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, just like Bhagavad-gita.**"

So it is not that Srila Prabhupada did something he should not have done, *strictly speaking*, by 'invoking higher order sastric injunctions'. Srila Prabhupada explains that pancaratrici-vidhi **is** sastric injunction. And again, nowhere do we find a statement in sastra that by following a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system in Kali-yuga under the guidance of a proper spiritual master, one can understand the Absolute Truth. This is not a system proscribed by Narada Muni, the Six Goswamis, or Srila Prabhupada.

"He sometimes exercised these injunctions in ways that had never been applied before:"
[UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 15]

UC 15: The claim is unsubstantiated, as no instances are cited on which Srila Prabhupada allegedly exercised 'higher injunctions that had never been applied before'.

"The important point is that although the *ritvik* system may be totally unique, (at least as far as we know), it does not violate higher order *sastric* principles."
[PHILOSOPHICAL ERROR 7]

PE 7: There are any number of aspects of the post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa theory that violate sastric principles, including the following:

- the rule of disciplic succession (or *law of disciplic succession*) that when the diksa guru departs, the qualified disciple may become diksa guru;
- the rule of *pariksa* (mutual testing of guru and disciple candidates); **[24]**
- it limits the Supreme Personality of Godhead, suggesting that He cannot send an initiating guru in Srila Prabhupada's line, and that in the form of Chaitya Guru, He cannot direct a candidate to one of Srila Prabhupada's disciples who would act as bona fide diksa after Prabhupada's departure; and therefore,
- it restrict the jiva's free will, creating an obstacle to the individual who may wish to repose their loving affections in a personality other than Srila Prabhupada, desiring them as diksa guru.

TFO continues:

"Perhaps we have yet to fully grasp just how unique Srila Prabhupada is. There has never been a world *acarya* before. No previous *acarya* has ever stated that his books would be the law books for ten thousand years. Here there has never been anything like ISKCON before. Why should we be so surprised that such an unprecedented personality might decide to set a seemingly unusual initiation system?"

We would certainly not argue that His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada is an exalted personality, appearing in our Sampradaya to fulfill the prediction of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself. The problem is not a matter of being *surprised* that he should establish a seemingly unprecedented system – it is the fact that he simply did not do so. There is no order for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system in the July 9th Letter. Of course, TFO asserts that he did just this, via a single word, '*henceforward*', in the July 9th Letter. But as we have clearly shown, that is not at all what the July 9th Letter states, nor does any other evidence support that notion.

Ritvik-vada asserts a completely unprecedented system for continuation of the disciplic succession – an asiddhantic system that goes against sastric principles such as *pariksa*, free will and the role of Chaitya Guru, what to speak of the threefold test of Guru, Sadhu and Sastra. Yet TFO argues that just such a system was set down by Srila Prabhupada, by way of nothing more than a letter that says: "...*Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation for first and second initiation to whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple.*" That is the core of *The Final Order*, and the foundation of the Ritvik-vada it asserts.

Objection #10:

In its counter-argument to Objection #10, TFO characterizes the Ritvik system as follows:

"The most notable difference after July 9th, 1977 was that the acceptance of new disciples would now be done by representatives without recourse to Srila Prabhupada. **[ERROR OF FACT 30]** The letter, which was sent out to new initiates, would no longer be signed by Srila Prabhupada, **[UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 16] [ERROR OF FACT 31]** and the selection of all the initiates' names would be done by the *ritviks*. **[EF 30]** Also the procedure was now linked with the relatively unfamiliar word - '*ritvik*'." **[ERROR OF FACT 32]**

EF 30: This pretentious statement ignores the fact that Srila Prabhupada **did** continue to involve himself directly as a prospective initiator ("*India, I am here.*"). That is confirmed elsewhere in TFO itself. This distinction is important, because the post-samadhi aspect of TFO's Ritvik-vada conclusion rests, in large part, upon the notion that Srila Prabhupada had completely removed himself from the initiations system as of the July 9th Letter, thus proving it was intended as a post-samadhi solution. But **that is false**. TFO repeats the mistake in this paragraph, also suggesting that the names would be selected only by the *ritviks*.

UC 16: No evidence has been produced thus far by TFO to substantiate the claim that prior to July 9th, 1977 letters sent out to new initiates were signed by Srila Prabhupada rather than by one of his secretaries.

EF 31: The July 9th Letter does not state that letters sent out to new initiates will no longer be signed by Srila Prabhupada. In fact, **there is no such reference to a letter even going to the initiate**. The July 9th Letter itself refers to three other letters:

- 1) letters of recommendation sent by Temple Presidents to *rittik* representatives;
- 2) letters from the *rittik* representatives to Temple Presidents giving names or giving threads; and
- 3) letters from the *rittik* representatives to Srila Prabhupada, with names to be entered into his book.

EF 32: And finally, TFO makes an error in the statement, "*Also the procedure was now linked with the relatively unfamiliar word - 'ritvik'.*" In fact, the unfamiliar term used in the July 9th Letter was '*rittik*', and this word was given added emphasis, being put in quotation marks.

As we have already pointed out, it is difficult to argue that the word *rittik* was just a misspelling in the July 9th Letter. One would not tend to misspell a word they have just encased in quotation marks for emphasis. Srila Prabhupada had repeatedly used the word *ritvik* when preaching on Srimad Bhagavatam, but never in the context of initiations. Tamal Krishna specifically introduced the term *ritvik* in the May 28th Conversation, asking if that was a correct synonym, and Srila Prabhupada affirmed it. Why then, would we expect Tamal Krishna to suddenly change the spelling of the word, putting it in quotation marks, if he meant to emphasize the fact that this was the word used on May 28th? We can only speculate – but we **cannot** assign an absolute conclusion that *ritvik* and *rittik* are exactly the same, or that Srila Prabhupada didn't have some reason for approving use of the term *rittik*.

Out of the four elements mentioned above, which TFO characterizes as the "*most notable differences*" after the July 9th Letter, one is unsubstantiated, and the remaining three are completely wrong.

It's also interesting to consider the two '*notable differences*' contained in the July 9th Letter that TFO does not mention:

1. that "...*Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation for first and second initiation to whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple*"; and
2. "*The name of a newly initiated disciple should be sent by the representative who has accepted him or her to Srila Prabhupada, to be included in His Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book.*"

Of course, pointing out the first of these *notable differences* would require emphasizing the context '*henceforward*' is actually used in – and that would emphasize the presence of the verb '**may**', which indicates an optional action on part of the Temple Presidents – not an action on the part of the 11 *rittik* representatives.

Pointing out the second of these *notable differences* would require emphasizing the fact that the system for initiations includes Srila Prabhupada as a direct participant – which completely contradicts the notion of a post-samadhi system.

"To get connected to the bona fide *acarya* through the use of representatives was the experience of initiation that was familiar for thousands of disciples. The July 9th letter defines the word '*ritvik*' [EF 32] as meaning: '**representative of the *acarya***'."

Again, the July 9th Letter does not mention the word "*ritvik*". The word used is "*rittik*", and it is defined as meaning: '*representative of the acarya*' specifically for the purpose of performing first and second initiations in a system that **includes Srila Prabhupada as a participant**. Not '*representative of the acarya*' after Srila Prabhupada has departed; or '*representative of the acarya*' in all matters; or *representative with power of attorney*; or *representative with sole responsibility for managerial affairs* – or any other roles TFO might suggest should be attributed to the *rittik* representatives.

"Why should it have come as such a great shock that this system would continue beyond November 14th, 1977?"

The July 9th Letter *did not instruct* that it should continue. Instead, the letter indicated that it should **not** continue, by virtue of the instruction that **letters with names of initiates should be sent to Srila Prabhupada** for inclusion in his book. Post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa was never instructed anywhere else by Srila Prabhupada and contravenes other sastric principles. Instead, there is ample evidence to the contrary: Srila Prabhupada's specific statements about the traditional method for continuation of the disciplic succession.

"Although unfamiliar to many, the word '*ritvik*' [EF 32] was not new either. The word and its derivatives had already been defined 32 times by Srila Prabhupada in his books. [ERROR OF FACT 33] What was 'new' was that the system which had already been in existence for many years was now put in writing with the necessary adjustments for the future."

EF 33: The term '*ritvik*' and its derivations were mentioned 34 times in Srila Prabhupada's books, not 32 times. See our detailed comments below on TFO's analysis of the term '*ritvik*' and its derivations, under the "Appointment Tape" section ('Conclusion' – Objection #1).

"Ironically what was 'new' was the curious metamorphosis of the *ritviks* into the 'material and spiritual pure successor *acaryas*' to Srila Prabhupada. This particular innovation came as such a shock that many hundreds of disciples left the Movement shortly after its implementation, with thousands to follow them."

TFO asserts an equally curious '*metamorphosis*'. First, the author implies that the 11 representatives had been *ritviks* all along ('Objections Relating Directly to the Form and Circumstances of the Final Order', #1), although Temple Presidents were doing the fire yajnas (performing the sacrifices, which is a task of *ritvik* priests). [25] Meanwhile, through much of 1977, the senior men, named on July 9th as *rittik* representatives, were not properly functioning in their jobs and waiting candidates were not being initiated. Yet upon mention in the July 9th Letter that *henceforward*, Temple Presidents may begin sending recommendations to the *rittik* representatives, suddenly, TFO would have you believe, these representatives transformed into

ritviks in charge of conducting post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa initiations for perhaps as long as the next 10,000 years.

Like the Zonal Acarya System, this Ritvik conclusion also came as a great shock to thousands of devotees, and has since ripped the movement further asunder, as Srila Prabhupada's followers have had to grapple with the introduction of yet another asiddhantic system.

Summary:

"We have demonstrated that there is no **direct evidence** supporting the termination of the *ritvik* system on Srila Prabhupada's departure, nor the subsequent transformation of the *ritviks* into *diksa* gurus - assumptions **a**) and **b**). Even if there was extremely strong **indirect evidence** supporting **a**) and **b**) , it would still be debatable whether it could actually supplant the **direct evidence**, since this usually takes precedence. However, as just demonstrated, there is not even a shred of *indirect evidence* supporting the discarding of the *ritvik* system on Srila Prabhupada's departure. Thus:"

As pointed out in the Appendices document, "Construction of the Final Order", [\[APX-4\]](#) there are numerous structural problems in TFO that make it difficult to ascertain how the author intends his evidence and assertions to be understood. While we hesitate to make this paper any longer than necessary, for the sake of clarity, let us review the classifications of 'direct evidence' and 'indirect evidence' as employed thus far by TFO.

At this point in TFO, we are in a section of summary comments that would appear to address all the material presented in this main section, entitled 'Evidence used to support an alternative to the *ritvik* system falls into three basic categories'. TFO states that there are three categories of evidence included in this section: 1) regarding the call to become guru; 2) letters from Srila Prabhupada mentioning his disciples acting as diksa after his departure; and 3) other statements in his books and lectures regarding disciples becoming diksa gurus. All three of these categories relate primarily to Modification **b**).

In an earlier section of TFO (two full sections prior to this one), entitled 'The Evidence', we have sub-sections for 'Supporting Instructions' and 'Subsequent Instructions'. And in fact, it is in *these* sections that we find TFO's references to 'direct evidence', presented under the sub-heading of 'Subsequent Instructions'. Given the architecture of information presented in TFO, the Summary comments we are now dealing with would appear to be in reference to the ten objections noted under the three categories of evidence included in this section – not with the direct evidence classification introduced in earlier sections of the paper.

While tedious to follow, this is important because it calls into question exactly what evidence and assertions TFO's summary statements in this section refer to.

"We have demonstrated that there is no **direct evidence** supporting the termination of the *ritvik* system on Srila Prabhupada's departure, nor the subsequent transformation of the *ritviks* into *diksa* gurus - assumptions **a**) and **b**)."

By way of our own summary, we have provided conclusive evidence addressing Modification a): that the July 9th Letter does not instruct a system of post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa initiations. It follows that there are no termination instructions for something that doesn't exist in the first place. We have also discussed the standing body of sastric instruction that deals with how the discipic succession is to go forward after the departure of the Spiritual Master.

And just in case the reader is confused by TFO's reference to 'direct evidence', following are our previous statements in rebuttal to the actual 'direct evidence' argument put forward under 'Subsequent Instructions' in the main section, 'The Evidence'. Regarding 'subsequent instructions' which supposedly 'support the continuation of the *ritvik* system' and TFO's assertion that "*Once the ritvik system was up and running, Srila Prabhupada never issued a subsequent order to stop it*", and which supposedly "*support the continuation of the ritvik system*", we wrote:

- the 'direct evidence' they produced was Srila Prabhupada's Will and Codicil, in relation to which their argument hinges entirely upon the phrase '*system of management*'. We have conclusively defeated their interpretation of that phrase.

Furthermore, we pointed out various problems with the Will and Codicil which completely compromise it as 'direct evidence':

- the date of the Will shows that it preceded the July 9th Letter, and therefore it cannot be considered a 'subsequent instruction';
- the Codicil refers three times to a Will that has a different date than the one put into evidence by TFO; and
- the Codicil says nothing about a 'system of management', what to speak of referring to the system for initiations.

In the present 'Summary' section, TFO makes four concluding assertions. At the risk of being repetitive, to underscore the significance of these **concluding assertions**, presented as they are in the 'Summary' section of TFO, we will summarize our rebuttals of each one.

TFO's concluding assertion #1:

"An instruction was issued to the whole Movement to be followed - **Direct evidence**"
[ERROR OF FACT 34] [EF 1], [AE 6], [C 4 & 6] [EL 22]

EF 34: An instruction was issued by way of the July 9th Letter, directed not "*to the whole Movement*", but to the GBC and Temple Presidents, and it was not an instruction for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. The July 9th Letter stands as "direct evidence" of only five specific instructions:

1. the naming of 11 senior disciples to act as "*rittik*" - representative of the acarya, for the purpose of performing first and second initiations;

2. that Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation for first and second initiation to whichever of the eleven *rittik*s are nearest their temple;
3. that after considering a recommendation, the *rittik* may accept the devotee as an initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada by giving a spiritual name, or chanting on the thread;
4. after the Temple President receives a letter from the *rittik* giving the spiritual name or thread, he can perform the fire yajna; and
5. the name of a newly initiated disciple should then be sent by the *rittik* to Srila Prabhupada to be included in his "Initiated Disciples" book.

The July 9th Letter stands as direct evidence of these five points, **and nothing more.**

TFO's concluding assertion #2:

"An examination of the instruction itself, as well as other supporting and subsequent instructions, only supports the continuation of the *ritvik* system **[ERROR OF LOGIC 24] - Direct evidence**"

EL 24: The conclusion TFO arrives at here is an error of logic, because the direct evidence simply does not lead to this conclusion. We have proved this by conclusively rebutting all three categories of direct evidence mentioned here: the July 9th Letter, supporting, and subsequent instructions.

TFO's concluding assertion #3:

"There is **no direct evidence** of Srila Prabhupada specifically ordering **[ERROR OF FACT 35]** the termination of the *ritvik* system upon his departure"

EF 35: The direct evidence is inherent in the letter itself. It contains elements that trigger the start of the instruction (the effective date of the letter); the termination of the instruction (when a key element involved in it is eliminated and there is *impossibility of performance*, and no other clause for continuation or termination is specified); and therefore the duration of the instruction (the time between start and stop). And of course, there was no order instructing a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system, therefore it is illogical to assume there should be a termination order for one. **[EF 11 &17], [EL 6, 17 & 20], [EO 5], [PE 4]**

TFO's concluding assertion #4:

"There is also **no indirect evidence** on the basis of the instruction, *sastra*, other instructions, special circumstances, the background, the nature and the context of the instruction, **[EF 11, 17 & 35], [EL 6, 17 & 20], [EO 5], [PE 4]** nor anything else we can conceive of, that gives valid grounds for stopping the *ritvik* system at the time of Srila Prabhupada's departure. Interestingly, in examining these other factors we find only

further indirect evidence *supporting* **[UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 17]** the continued application of the order."

The claim that there is "further indirect evidence *supporting*" the July 9th Letter conclusion does not specify what that evidence is. **[UC 17]** Thus far in TFO, 'indirect evidence' is only referred to once, under 'Subsequent Instructions'. The reference is general, and no actual evidence of this sort is identified. Therefore, the claim must be thrown out as unsubstantiated.

Our Conclusion

We can see that all four of the concluding assertions TFO puts forward in this 'Summary' section are completely without basis and fail to make the case for its thesis. These concluding assertions are riddled with errors of fact, logic, contradiction, and claims that have not been substantiated.

"In view of the above analysis, we humbly submit that the revoking of Srila Prabhupada's final instruction regarding initiation on November 14th 1977, was at best an arbitrary and unauthorised act. We can find no evidence to support assumptions **a)** and **b)**, which, as we have said, form the very foundation of ISKCON's current guru policy. To re-comply with Srila Prabhupada's original **order** is our only option as disciples, followers and servants of Srila Prabhupada."

We have given conclusive evidence that the July 9th Letter did not contain an order for post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa, and in fact, clearly stated Srila Prabhupada's direct participation in the system. Given that, and the fact that sastra serves as a standing body of instruction on how the disciplic succession is to continue after the departure of the Spiritual Master, we assert that it is perfectly right for the existing system to have ceased upon Srila Prabhupada's departure. No instruction was ever issued to the contrary. The stoppage of the system in November 1977 was not arbitrary, nor was it unauthorized. Just the opposite – the system as it was designed **would stop when it became impossible for it to continue**. What the GBC and Zonal Acaryas did after Srila Prabhupada's departure does not change these facts.

Again, we are not concerned with defending the GBC's guru policies because complying with Srila Prabhupada's instructions and sastric injunctions is the only option.

"To further assist with this compliance we will now go through the May 28th conversation and a number of related objections that appear to have given rise to confusion."

We again call to the reader's attention the fact that thus far, TFO has not substantively addressed the July 7th Conversation, which directly gave rise to the July 9th Letter. **[EF 10], [EL 2]** Instead, the author is now moving on to present his in-depth analysis of the May 28th Conversation. The reasons for this will be made obvious in our own commentary on that Conversation.

MAY 28TH CONVERSATION

THE 'APPOINTMENT TAPE'

"The GBC claims in *GII* that the **sole** justification for **modifications a) & b)** to the final July 9th order comes from a taped room conversation which took place in Vrindavan on May 28th, 1977. These modifications are given below for reference:"

As we begin to address the "Appointment Tape" section of TFO, we remind the reader that our commentary is concerned only with Modification a):

"Modification a) : That the appointment of representatives or *ritviks* was only temporary, specifically to be terminated on the departure of Srila Prabhupada."

Issues surrounding Modification b) – how and why the GBC transformed themselves into instant Zonal Acaryas – is not the concern of this study. However, we note the ways in which TFO weights the evidence in favor of its overall thesis, much of which specifically addresses Modification b). In *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*, we are demonstrating that in order for *The Final Order* thesis to be proved viable, the July 9th order must stand on its own as evidence in support of Modification a) – and that it completely fails to do so.

Referring to the May 28th Conversation, TFO states:

"Since the entire GBC position rests on just this one piece of evidence it is quite worrying that they have already published at least four different versions, [C 2] or transcripts, of this very same evidence. These differing transcripts appeared in the following publications:"

TFO presents a composite of the four different transcripts of the May 28th Conversation, with the variations in brackets. Much of the commentary that follows in TFO is comprised of arguments impeaching the May 28th Conversation as evidence in support of Modifications a) and b).

The arguments of primary concern in this study are those that link the May 28th Conversation to the July 9th Letter, directly or indirectly. Any such links, presented by TFO in the context of evidence, must be considered in light of the author's repudiation of the May 28th Conversation.

"As we have previously mentioned neither the July 9th order, nor any subsequent document signed by Srila Prabhupada, ever refers back to the above conversation. This is quite peculiar since the central argument of *GII* is that this brief exchange of words is absolutely crucial to the proper understanding of the July 9th order."

While TFO suggests that it's '*peculiar*' that *GII* doesn't refer to the May 28th Conversation, TFO has thus far made scant mention of the July 7th Conversation, which is equally *peculiar*.

Of course, it is understandable that TFO's author would choose to avoid getting into a discussion of the July 7th Conversation, given that there was absolutely no mention in either the July 7th Conversation, or subsequently in the July 9th Letter, to a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. In addition, the July 7th Conversation makes it clear that Srila Prabhupada said he would continue to be involved in the system ("*India, I am here*"), although TFO asserts that Srila Prabhupada was actually removing himself entirely from the system, and this was an indication that he was preparing a plan for continuation after his departure. So obviously, it does not serve TFO's thesis to put undue focus on the July 7th Conversation.

At this juncture of TFO's presentation, however, it becomes unavoidable to address the July 7th Conversation, because the July 9th Letter refers to a previous discussion – and given the available evidence, it was either the May 28th Conversation or the July 7th Conversation:

"Recently when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vrindavana, 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."

Although the July 7th Conversation in Vrindavan took place only two days prior to the July 9th Letter, the May 28th Conversation in Vrindavan is also a likely referent in the letter, given that Srila Prabhupada indicated on May 28th that he would be appointing some of his men to act as *ritvik*.

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.

(May 28th Conversation)

The July 9th Letter makes the statement, "Recently when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vrindavana...", but it does not specifically say **which** Vrindavana conversation is being referred to, therefore the question remains open. It could refer to the July 7th Conversation, which is closest on the timeline, when specific names of men were being mentioned to assist with initiations. While the conversation transcript indicates who was speaking on July 7th, it does not indicate who else was present in the room, therefore it cannot be disqualified as the referent mentioned in the July 9th Letter based on the transcript alone.

The same holds true for the May 28th Conversation – the transcript only indicates who was speaking, not who else was present in the room. While the word *ritvik* was mentioned only on May 28th, and not on July 7th, the word used in the July 9th Letter is "*ritvik*", in quotations. So again, one cannot say with certainty that it was the May 28th Conversation being referred to in the July 9th Letter, based on the transcript alone.

Clearly, it was only during the July 7th Conversation that Srila Prabhupada named specific men who would assist him – he did not list specific names during the May 28th Conversation.

Therefore, one cannot deny that the July 9th Letter refers, at least in part, to the July 7th Conversation, not just the May 28th Conversation. And in the 'Appointment Tape' section, TFO acknowledges this:

"It is clear though that the specific order naming specific people to perform specific functions was first made on July 7th (*please see Appendices*), and then confirmed in the signed letter of July 9th."

Although TFO's author admits that the July 7th Conversation is also reflected in the July 9th letter, he ignores the July 7th statement, "*India, I am here*", which undermines the longevity element he insists the letter sets forth. At the same time, he acknowledges that the listing of names from July 7th is an integral element of the letter.

Following TFO's earlier point, that neither the July 9th Letter nor any subsequent document signed by Srila Prabhupada refers back to the May 28th Conversation, the author states:

"This was not the regular way in which Srila Prabhupada issued instructions to his vast world-wide organisation, i.e., by releasing incomplete and misleading written directives which could only be properly understood by rummaging through old taped conversations."

As we have clearly demonstrated in our "Comparative Review of the May 28th Conversation Transcripts" [APX-5], Srila Prabhupada did no such thing as proposed above. The content of the conversation was not incomplete – Srila Prabhupada said exactly what he wished to say. And it was certainly not misleading, which is a poor characterization, indeed. The conversation was not misleading, nor did Srila Prabhupada institute a sea change in the age-old system for continuation of the disciplic succession on the strength of a single word, '*henceforward*' – a word that very specifically refers to an action on the part of Temple Presidents, **not** the *ritvik* representatives. A word that refers to an **optional** action the Temple Presidents **may** take as part of a process that specifically **involves Srila Prabhupada in his physical presence**.

"When one considers the magnitude of the order in question, namely the continuation of the Sankirtan mission for up to ten thousand years, [ERROR OF FACT 36] and what happened to the Gaudiya Math over precisely this issue, it seems inconceivable that Srila Prabhupada would have managed things in this way. [PE 1] However this is what we must believe if we are to accept the present GBC position."

EF 36: And again, this is a false statement. The July 9th Letter says absolutely nothing about post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa, let alone for *up to ten thousand years*.

"Let us now proceed carefully through the composite transcript, paying particular attention to all the lines which *GII* claim support the above mentioned modifications to the July 9th order."

Because the author of TFO has engaged in a line-by-line commentary on the May 28th Conversation, we will respond in like kind. This analysis alone comprises a substantial body of

material, therefore we have included it in the Appendices, [APX-5] along with relevant supplemental items [APX-6 & 7c]. We will limit our comments herein to rebutting specific points made by TFO, but will refer often to the detailed analysis and commentary in [APX-5].

Because of the nature of the May 28th discussion, a close examination of the dialogue is required in order to make the most accurate assessment of what was said and a fair interpretation of what was meant by the words spoken. There are numerous extant versions of the conversation transcript, [APX-6] along with a professional forensic opinion that the tape shows "strong signs suggestive of falsification". [27] All these elements should be taken into consideration as one studies the language, grammar and flow of the May 28th dialogue.

TFO points out that there are four known 'official' versions of the May 28th transcript:

"1985: Under My Order (Ravindra Svarupa das)
1990: ISKCON Journal (GBC)
1994: Continuing The Parampara (Sivarama Swami)
1995: Gurus and Initiation in ISKCON (GII) (GBC)"
[UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 18]

UC 18: The author has apparently shown these alternate versions by bracketing words in a composite version presented in the body of TFO. Also included in TFO's Appendices is a copy of the conversation transcript, but which version it is has not been identified. The Appendices transcript is not the combined version, but appears to be a single, particular version (presumably TFO's favored one). But in fact, all five transcripts must be considered unsubstantiated since copies of four of them are not provided in TFO (the four used in the composite version), and the fifth Appendix version isn't identified, thus none of them can be compared to official copies.

The first mention of Srila Prabhupada's May 28th room conversation is found in TFO under the heading, "Objections Relating Directly to the Form and Circumstances of the Final Order". Under Objection #6, it is referred to as the 'Appointment Tape', which is a label TFO sometimes uses for the May 28th Conversation. Although TFO's overall argument is significantly reliant upon its interpretation of the May 28th Conversation, thus far in TFO, this is the first mention of the conversation. And up to this point in TFO, the July 7th Conversation has been mentioned only by way of isolated references that do not acknowledge the direct correlation between it and the subsequent July 9th Letter. In other words, TFO's presentation of evidence is clearly biased.

As we have seen with all the evidence presented by TFO thus far, from the Will and Codicil to the July 9th Letter itself, because of the liberties taken by the author in his interpretation and presentation of these documents, we must study very carefully the exact wording of all items in evidence, in context, in order to properly understand what they say and how that may differ from TFO's interpretations. The same holds true for the May 28th Conversation – perhaps even more so, given the nature of the dialogue.

TFO's author addresses the May 28th Conversation because the GBC relied on it as evidence in their *GII* handbook [1], yet he does not accept that the conversation modifies the July 9th Letter, and says it is not vital to an understanding of the letter. Later, after publication of TFO,

Krishnakant repudiated the May 28th Conversation entirely on the basis of a forensic audio investigation of a duplicate copy of the conversation tape [27] that indicates the tape appears to have been tampered with. We refer the reader to the 1998 article by TFO author Krishnakant, entitled "Chakra's 'Army' – Fires Blanks" [19], and to our own comments on that article, "Evidence Tampering: Rtvik Sleight of Hand, Part 2". [26] TFO's author has proclaimed that the May 28th Conversation cannot be used as evidence, in any way. Nonetheless, he makes many points about the conversation that favor the Ritvik-vada conclusion, and this represents a contradiction in terms of proffered evidence. **[CONTRADICTION 8]**

Our approach to analyzing the May 28th Conversation was to do a forensic deconstruction of it, in the form of a 'claim chart'. Claim charts are typically used in the field of patent law, to break down a statement of claim and isolate every element contained therein, thus establishing the factual truth of the claim. We found this process to be very helpful in examining what actually transpired in the May 28th Conversation. In fact, we applied the same process to TFO in its entirety, in preparation for producing this paper. While it was a time consuming and painstaking process, it resulted in exposing many errors in TFO that appear to have gone unnoticed over the years.

In order to offer the most comprehensive analysis possible on TFO's presentation of the May 28th Conversation, our deconstruction reflects all four versions of transcript presented in its composite version, showing all of the bracketed alternate text as presented in the body of TFO. In addition, we have provided a document showing a side-by-side comparison of eight different extant versions of the transcript, so the reader can easily compare them all. **[APX-6]**

We do not have original copies of the 1990 ISKCON Journal version or the 1985 'Under My Order' version, so these two are only reflected in TFO's composite version. Among the four versions we have added are the Folio 2.0 (1990) and Vedabase 4.11 (1997) versions (combined, since the only difference is the spelling of diksa/diksha), along with two versions produced by Nandini devi dasi (Nori Muster), who served as Ramesvara Swami's secretary. She confirms that these are the original typed transcriptions produced in 1977 (presumably from the audio tape) with handwritten corrections made at that time. We have also added our own transcript of the conversation audio tape. **[APX-7c]**

Before proceeding with the detailed summary below of the transcript versions analysed by TFO (its composite version, not its Appendices version), we invite the reader to first review our detailed analysis of all eight transcript versions, presented in the "Side-by-side Comparison" chart **[APX-6]**, along with our deconstructive report, 'Comparative Review of the May 28th Conversation Transcripts'. **[APX-5]** Afterwards, the reader is encouraged to continue reading the commentary below. For ease of reference, following are the collected Appendix and Reference items directly related to the May 28th Conversation:

ANALYSIS OF MAY 28TH CONVERSATION

- [APX-5] "Comparative Review of the May 28th Conversation Transcripts.doc"
- [APX-6] Side-by-side comparison of 8 versions of May 28th Conversation transcripts
- [APX-7c] Audio of May 28th Conversation
24a - M28C.mp4; 24b - M28C.wmv; 24c - M28C Audio.htm
<http://www.archive.org/details/May28>
- [27] Appointment Tape Fraud: Tape Analysis Report from Norman I. Perle provided To Harvey Mechanic Esq. (Mrigendra das)
<http://gurupoison.tripod.com/evidence/perle.htm>
- [28] "The Real Appointment Tape" by Krishnakant, ISKCON Reform Movement (IRM) <http://www.iskconirm.com/docs/webpages/gbc7.htm>
- [19] "Chakra's 'Army' – Fires Blanks" by Krishnakant (1998)
<http://www.iskconirm.com/docs/webpages/ch1.htm>
- [30] "May 28th Tape Analysis" by Giri-nayaka das
<http://prabhupadavision.com/2012/04/may-28th-tape-analysis/>

Assuming the reader has by now perused the 'Comparative Review of the May 28th Conversation Transcripts' [APX-5], following is a brief summary of some of the significant points presented in that analysis. We have provided a visual numbering system, using red numerical icons (MS Wingdings2 font) to identify primary and secondary points of information found in the 'Comparative Review' (see page #), which are keyed to various points in the main body of DOR.

May 28th Conversation – Key Points:

- ❶ **Singularity vs. Plurality** (whether statements contained in the May 28th Conversation refer to singular or plural referents)
 - a) (p. 5) "*acarya(s)*" – if singular, is Srila Prabhupada instructing that the role of acarya be filled by a group of persons?
- ❷ **Clarity or Specificity** (statements contained in the May 28th Conversation that may appear ambiguous or contradictory)
 - a) (p. 5) In Srila Prabhupada's statement, *After this is settled up*, what does "*this*" refer to? How does the referent "*this*" relate to ordering of events on a timeline?

- b) (p. 10) The fact that Satsvarupa was referring to *the* initiated disciple when asking about initiations after Srila Prabhupada's departure (rather than referring to Prabhupada himself) is further evidenced by his follow-up statement. Prabhupada has said '*He's guru*', and Satsvarupa says affirmatively, "But *he* does it on your behalf". In the prior question, *Then what is the relationship of that person who gives the initiation and the...* Satsvarupa obviously refers to *the* as being the disciple, not Srila Prabhupada. One is *the person who gives initiation*, and one is *the (disciple)*.
- c) (p. 13) Further evidence against the interpretation that Srila Prabhupada meant himself in saying '*He's guru*', is found in Satsvarupa's statement, where he says: "**he** (the guru) *does it on your* (Srila Prabhupada's) *behalf*. Not that *He* [Srila Prabhupada] *is guru* and *he* [Prabhupada] *does it on your* [Prabhupada's] *behalf*. That's obviously a nonsensical interpretation.
- d) (p. 23) Srila Prabhupada has affirmed the intention of his message no less than five ways, in this single sentence:

"Yes. That is formality. Because in my presence one should not become guru, so on my behalf. On my order, amara ajnaya guru hana, (he is) (be) actually guru. But by my order."

in my presence one should not become guru
so on my behalf (you initiate while I am present)
On my order (be guru)
amara ajnaya guru hana (In this way become a spiritual master)
But by my order

No such order was ever given by Srila Prabhupada in the July 9th Letter. He gave the instruction for 11 men to serve as "*rittik*" **representatives** of the acarya – not as acaryas or initiating gurus themselves. He did not later change that instruction, for anyone to become acaryas instead of representatives of **the** acarya.

- e) (p. 24) "*So (then) (they) (they'll) (may) also be considered your disciples?"*

Who are these disciples? Satsvarupa is not specific in posing the question. **They may also be considered your disciples** undoubtedly means disciples initiated by *someone*. Who that initiator is, is open to interpretation. In this part of the exchange, whether Satsvarupa in asking, or Srila Prabhupada in answering, is referring to disciples who have been initiated during Prabhupada's presence, or after his departure is not specified. That point, however, is clarified in Srila Prabhupada's statements to follow.

- f) (p. 28) The *rittik* (representative of the acarya) is initiating on Prabhupada's behalf because in his presence one should not become guru. *Yes, they are disciples, but consider... who – consider who is initiating, on whose behalf, and when?* While Prabhupada is still present, they are his disciples. The *rittik* representatives of the acarya are initiating on his behalf. After Prabhupada's departure, those who have been given

diksa initiation are also initiated disciples. *Yes, they are disciples, but consider... who – consider who is initiating, on whose behalf, and when?*

The clear answer is given next by Srila Prabhupada. When Tamal asks: *these ritvik acaryas, they are officiating, giving diksa... the people who they give diksa to, whose disciples are they?* Prabhupada: *They are his disciples... Who is initiating ... (his) (he is) grand-disciple ... When I order you become guru, he becomes regular guru. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple.*

3 Definition of Terms (whether the terms *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* in the May 28th Conversation are the same as, or synonymous with, *ritvik representative* in the July 9th Letter)

- a) (p. 6) Srila Prabhupada has said, *"I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating acarya(s)."* Tamal Krishna confirms, *"Is that called ritvik acarya?"* In the next sentence, Srila Prabhupada confirms, *"Ritvik. Yes."*

What is Tamal Krishna referring to with the word **that**? *"Is that called ritvik acarya?"* Clearly, *that* refers to the *officiating acarya(s)* Srila Prabhupada just mentioned. And what will those *officiating acarya(s)* be doing? They will be conducting first and second initiations after Srila Prabhupada is no longer physically with us. There is no other explanation.

Will these *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* also be serving as non-initiating assistants while Srila Prabhupada is still here? No such thing has been said by Srila Prabhupada. Therefore, to point to the mention of *"ritvik" representatives of the acarya* in the July 9th Letter, and say they are one and the same persons as the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* mentioned on May 28th, is a contrivance.

[This argument is repeated throughout our analysis, but for simplicity's sake, we mark the icon notation here only, in its first instance of use.]

- b) (p. 6) In his confirming question, *"Is that called ritvik acarya?"*, Tamal Krishna seeks clarification of the noun, *acarya*, which Prabhupada just described with the adjective, *officiating*. This is the type of *acarya* being referred to. Thus, Tamal Krishna clarifies by suggesting another descriptive adjective, *ritvik*. Again, this adjective *ritvik* is a descriptor of the noun, *acarya*.

In their interpretations of the July 9th Letter, both TFO and the GBC ignore the noun, which is the root word in the phrase. They ignore the absence of *acarya* in the letter, focusing instead on the adjective *ritvik*, because that's the word they say bridges the May 28th Conversation to the July 9th Letter (*ritvik/ritvik*). But this 'bridge' is only a descriptive adjective... the noun is missing. Actually, in the July 9th Letter, a new noun is provided: *representative*. Not *acarya*. The *representative* is not giving diksa initiations, but is assisting **the** *acarya*. The *acarya* will himself be the diksa guru – no such authorization was given to anyone else in the July 9th Letter.

4 Tense and Person (what grammar elements of tense and person indicate about the meaning of statements in the May 28th Conversation)

- a) (p. 8) There is a future tense indication given in Satsvarupa's statement, "*who gives*". Given that this statement follows the opening inquiry about initiations after Srila Prabhupada's departure, we must assume the reference is to post-samadhi initiations.
- b) (p. 8) While Satsvarupa's question is truncated, he clearly appears to be referring to the initiated disciple in using the grammatical person term, "*the*".
- c) (p. 9) Satsvarupa switched from first person to third person, and the evidence shows that Srila Prabhupada likewise switched to third person in responding to him – not that suddenly Srila Prabhupada was speaking of himself in third person.
- d) (p. 9) We have further evidence that Srila Prabhupada responded in third person following Satsvarupa's lead – not that Srila Prabhupada suddenly changed to third person to refer to himself by saying "*He's guru*". The proof is in the prior statement, (*Then*) *What is the relationship of that person...* The dialogue up to now has been established in future tense, after Srila Prabhupada's departure, therefore "*He's guru*" clearly refers to someone initiating after Prabhupada's departure. This repudiates TFO's claim that Prabhupada is referring to himself as guru.
- e) (p. 33) TFO asserts that in saying, "*He's guru. He's guru*", Srila Prabhupada was referring to himself. TFO's evidence, however, is derived by conveniently taking Srila Prabhupada's statements out of context and re-ordering the statements. TFO's attempt to put the focus on singularity vs. plurality fails.
- f) (p. 36) In answer to Tamal Krishna's pointed re-phrasing of the question, if Srila Prabhupada was still referring to initiations while he was present – formalities, on his behalf – he would have said *They are my disciples*. But the question clearly, unarguably referred to post-samadhi initiations, and the answer likewise referred to post-samadhi initiations. This cannot be denied, although TFO asserts that Srila Prabhupada meant himself when he said *They are his disciples*. There is nothing in either the syntax, grammar or context to support the notion that Prabhupada said *his* in place of *my* - - such a conclusion goes beyond wishful thinking.
- g) (p. 36) *Who is initiating ... he is grand-disciple ...* Although the word *who* sometimes indicates a question, we have several indications that is not the case here. First, the audio clearly indicates that Srila Prabhupada's inflection is not that of a question, nor do any of the transcripts put a question mark at the end of the statement. Second, the rest of the statement, (*his*) (*he is*) *grand-disciple ...*, indicates that Prabhupada is making a statement of identification, not asking a question. In this instance, *who* is grammatically referred to as a relative pronoun, i.e., it relates, or identifies a person: *he who is initiating*. The *who* refers to the person *who* is initiating: *these ritvik acaryas, they are officiating, giving diksa*.

Prabhupada completes the statement by again answering the question:

Q: ...the people who they give diksa to, whose disciples are they?

A: They are his disciples.

These ritvik acaryas, they are officiating, giving diksa – they are his disciples.
He (that disciple) is grand-disciple.

5 Terminology (issues related to terminology that have a bearing on interpretation of the May 28th Conversation)

- a) (p. 12) Satsvarupa's line of inquiry indicates that he did not have a clear understanding of the term "*ritvik*" in the context of initiations.

6 Key Evidence (significant evidence found in the May 28th Conversation)

- a) (p. 16) In the May 28th Conversation, Srila Prabhupada states (emphasis added):

"After this is settled up I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating acarya(s)"

whereas the July 9th Letter says (emphasis added):

"Srila Prabhupada 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."

The May 28th Conversation began in the context of a discussion about initiations **after** Srila Prabhupada's departure. He indicates that at some point in future, he'll recommend some **officiating acarya(s)** who will act as initiating diksa gurus after his departure. 42 days later, in the July 9th Letter, eleven "*rittik*" **representatives of the acarya** were named – representatives of **the acarya**, not acaryas themselves – and these eleven were instructed on how to conduct initiations **while Srila Prabhupada was present** (receiving names for his book of disciples.

- b) (p. 17) Srila Prabhupada has acknowledged Satsvarupa's query about how initiations are to be performed after his departure. Satsvarupa affirms, "*But he does it on your behalf*". And at this point, Srila Prabhupada begins to address present time, not future time. He does so by way of offering a rationale for the system **as it operates while he is present**.
- c) (p. 18) This timeframe segue can be conveniently presented by tacking the *on your behalf* portion of the phrase onto the first part of the exchange, rather than the latter, and failing to acknowledge that in making the statement, "*But he does it on your behalf*", Satsvarupa is not asking a question, he is making an affirmative statement. But Srila Prabhupada immediately replies with a statement of clarification – and **that clarification puts the 'on my behalf' element into present time, not future time.**

- d) (p. 21) TFO fails to acknowledge the difference between an (*officiating/ritvik*) **acarya**, and a representative of Srila Prabhupada, **the acarya**. It fails to recognize that the July 9th Letter, and the July 7th Conversation that preceded it, show that Srila Prabhupada was describing a system in which he would be an active participant – not a system that would operate after his departure.
- e) (p. 29) There is a significant difference in terminology. The May 28th reference was to *officiating acarya(s)*, and *ritvik acarya(s)*. The July 9th Letter refers to eleven "ritvik" - **representatives of the acarya**. Nowhere do we find the statement that an *officiating acarya/ritvik acarya* is the same things as a "ritvik" **representative of the acarya**. **An acarya and a representative of the acarya are two different things.**
- f) (p. 30) Clearly, on May 28th, Srila Prabhupada gave instructions for how diksa is to proceed... **when** he recommends some to act as *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*; **when**, on his order, his disciples become actually guru, regular guru. Because we do not have evidence that Srila Prabhupada recommended any one individual or group of individuals to act as *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*, there is only one (of 5) options [2(f)] that is supported by the May 28th Conversation, and by Guru, Sadhu and Sastra:

Those Srila Prabhupada would recommend (but never did) sometime after May 28th to be *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* would be diksa gurus, initiating their own disciples after Srila Prabhupada's departure. If such *acaryas* were recommended *en masse* before Srila Prabhupada's departure (which they were not), then by all indications, they would initiate on his behalf, making direct diksa disciples for Srila Prabhupada while he is present. After his departure, those specifically recommended as *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*, per the May 28th Conversation, would become initiating diksa gurus themselves. They would be joined by others who had also received Srila Prabhupada's order to be *actually guru, regular guru*, initiating on their own behalf, making their own direct diksa disciples, after Prabhupada's departure. [8]

- g) (p. 31) One cannot assert that in the absence of an instruction to be guru, all 11 *ritvik* representatives of the acarya received a mystical order, *en masse*, to become *officiating/ritvik acaryas*, conducting post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa initiations on Srila Prabhupada's behalf, **because** on May 28th, Prabhupada clearly said that **those who would conduct diksa initiations after his departure (if and when he appointed them) would be gurus, and that the disciples would be their disciples.**
- h) (p. 34) Saying "No", Tamal Krishna ended Satsvarupa's line of inquiry and rephrased the question, asking about **these ritvik acaryas** who are *giving diksa*. He is clearly referring to the very same persons mentioned earlier in the conversation, who Srila Prabhupada says he will recommend as *officiating/ritvik acaryas* to give diksa **after** his departure. There is no other way to interpret this element of the dialogue.

The conversation began with an inquiry about initiations after departure. Tamal Krishna is reaffirming the devotees' desire to get that information. Srila Prabhupada has already

said that these *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* are **gurus**. He interjects that during his presence, initiation is a formality, on his behalf, but on his order, be regular guru.

- i) (p. 44) TFO's assertion that when Srila Prabhupada said "*He's guru*", he was talking about himself, is again proved wrong by this final statement. When Srila Prabhupada says "*He becomes regular guru*", he certainly isn't talking about himself. The mahabhagavat Acarya, Srila Prabhupada, does not become 'regular guru'.

Assuming one has already read the detailed 'Comparative Review of the May 28th Conversation Transcripts' [APX-5], we hope that re-visiting the key points in the above summary will help to underscore the salient facts contained in that detailed commentary.

Let us now return to the text of TFO, in which the author gives his own commentary on the May 28th Conversation. As noted above, TFO's commentary is based on a composite transcript that reflects the content of four transcripts [UC 18] (The blue numbers correlate to the versions presented in our 'Comparative Review'.)

1985: Under My Order (Ravindra Svarupa das)

1990: ISKCON Journal (GBC)

1994: Continuing The Parampara (Sivarama Swami) (#7)

1995: Gurus and Initiation in ISKCON (GII) (GBC) (#6)

TFO states:

"Lines 1-3: Here Satsvarupa dasa Goswami asks Srila Prabhupada a specific question regarding how initiations will run in the future - 'particularly at that time when you are no longer with us'. Whatever answer Srila Prabhupada gives we know it will be particularly relevant to after his departure, since that is the time frame Satsvarupa is clearly concerned with, i.e. - '**when you are no longer with us**'."

While TFO notes that the conversation begins with a clear question on future initiations, after Srila Prabhupada is no longer present, it does not analyze the anomalous statements Satsvarupa later interjected into the conversation, which caused Srila Prabhupada to shift a portion of his remarks from future tense to present tense. ['Comparative Review' (CR) Lines 7 & 8, and key points 2(a-d), 5b-c, and 6(a-d)] Rather, TFO takes advantage of the anomalous interjections and responses to them, to skew the dialogue towards a Ritvik-vada conclusion.

"Lines 4-7: Here Srila Prabhupada answers Satsvarupa dasa Goswami's question. He says he will be appointing some disciples to act as '*officiating acarya*', or '*ritviks*'.
[ERROR OF FACT 37]

EF 37: In fact, as the various transcripts show, Srila Prabhupada said he will recommend '*officiating acarya(s)*'; in response to which Tamal Krishna asked for clarification, *Is that called ritvik acarya?* To which Prabhupada said answered, *ritvik. Yes.* He does not answer, "*Ritviks... but just ritviks.... not acaryas, just ritvik representatives*", although he certainly could have made that distinction if he'd wished to. Instead, he affirms the adjective portion of Tamal Krishna's

query, *ritvik*, thereby accepting the noun to which that adjective applies: *acarya(s)*. Nor does TFO point out the plural variation, *acarya(s)*.

By ignoring the use of the word '*acarya(s)*', the author of TFO no doubt hopes to take the focus off the difference between the '*officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*' mentioned in the May 28th Conversation, and the '*ritvik representatives of the acarya*' mentioned in the July 9th Letter. As the conversation progresses, we see that the *ritvik acarya* is actually a diksa guru, initiating his own disciples – Srila Prabhupada's grand-disciples. The '*ritvik representative of the acarya*', however, is simply assisting Srila Prabhupada with initiations **while** he is present and involved.

[Throughout DOR, our repeated use of *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* is meant to indicate that in the various May 28th transcripts, *officiating acarya* is sometimes shown in the singular, sometimes in the plural. Therefore, Srila Prabhupada's affirmation, "*ritvik. Yes*", is reflected by the tandem term, with singular and plural alternatives. This also serves as a reminder that *ritvik* was specifically used to describe *acarya(s)* – it was not used as a standalone term, although TFO consistently employs it in that way.]

Next TFO offers this peculiar argument:

"Sometimes people have argued that the full answer is only properly revealed, piecemeal as it were, throughout the rest of the conversation. The problem with this proposition is that, in issuing instructions in such a manner, Srila Prabhupada would only correctly answer the original question posed by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami if the following conditions were satisfied:

- **That somebody took it upon themselves to ask more questions.**
- **That by sheer luck they would happen upon the right questions to get the correct answer to Satsvarupa Maharaja's original question."**

The real point of all this is that TFO's author would like to ignore the remainder of the May 28th Conversation. He prefers to lock-in on Srila Prabhupada's statement that sometime in future (*after this is settled up*) he will recommend *officiating acarya(s)/ritviks* – of course, TFO ignores the fact that it's really the *ritvik acarya(s)* who will conduct initiations of their own disciples after Srila Prabhupada's departure. TFO ignores this because in the remainder of the conversation, Srila Prabhupada very clearly sets down the basis for a succession in which his disciples become diksa gurus themselves (on his order), initiating their own diksa disciples (Prabhupada's grand-disciples). This does not fit the Ritvik-vada conclusion, thus TFO's effort to minimize the remainder of the conversation.

TFO's author has obviously concluded that he can make a case based on mention in the July 9th Letter of *ritvik* representatives of the acarya, and the word, '*henceforward*'. But we have clearly demonstrated that no such case can be made.

"Indeed if, as is being proposed by the GBC, he went to all the trouble of issuing a letter to the whole Movement [EF 1 & 34], [AE 6], [C 4 & 6] [EL 22] with instructions on initiation which were only to have relevance for four months, surely he would not have

dealt in such an obscurest manner with instructions which could run for as long as ten thousand years." [ERROR OF LOGIC 25]

First, it should come as no surprise that Srila Prabhupada signed the July 9th Letter. This Letter followed, by two days, the July 7th Conversation in which Tamal Krishna had presented Srila Prabhupada with a problem (the bottleneck of candidates), for which Srila Prabhupada offered a solution, amending the process to streamline it (but still including himself in the process). Two days later the July 9th Letter was released. The names mentioned on July 7th are affirmed in the July 9th Letter.

We cannot speculatively assume that Srila Prabhupada *knew* his instructions would only be good for four months; Srila Prabhupada would never presume to limit Sri Krsna's ability to make whatever arrangements He might wish.

EL 25: In the statement above, TFO suggests that a letter of such importance would not be sent to "the whole Movement" if it would only have relevance for four months, which implies that the letter was actually relevant to a longer period of time because it was widely distributed.

And while TFO expresses dismay at the idea that Srila Prabhupada would neglect to give clear instructions on initiation for a period that could run as long as ten thousand years, the author appears to have no qualms about encouraging the reader to ignore the portions of the May 28th Conversation which provide just that – Srila Prabhupada's comments on how diksa can go forward after his departure. This is simply tunnel vision borne of agenda – limbs of the asiddhantic body of Ritvik-vada.

"Clearly if we are looking to this transcript to incontrovertibly support **modifications a) & b)** we are not doing very well so far. **Srila Prabhupada is asked what will happen about initiations, particularly when he leaves: he answers he will be appointing ritviks.** [EF 12 & 37] This completely contradicts both of the GBC's proposed modifications and simply reinforces the idea [CONTRADICTION 9] [C 8] that the July 9th order was meant to run 'henceforward'."

C 9: TFO has repudiated the May 28th Conversation as evidence [19] but analyzes it nonetheless, and in doing so asserts various connections between it and the July 9th Letter that serve to bolster its claims about the July 9th Letter. [C 8] In this case, the claim is that an aspect of the conversation *reinforces* its conclusion about the letter.

"**Lines 8-9:** Here Satsvarupa dasa Goswami asks what relationship the **initiator** has with the person being initiated. Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami does not quite finish his question when Srila Prabhupada immediately answers '**he is guru**'. Since *ritviks*, by definition, are not the **initiators**, [ASSUMPTIVE ERROR 15] Srila Prabhupada can only have been referring to himself as the '**guru**' of those being initiated. This is confirmed in the July 9th letter where it states three times that those being initiated were to be the disciples of Srila Prabhupada." [CONTRADICTION 10]

We have clearly demonstrated in our 'Comparative Review' [APX-5], from the standpoints of content, syntax and grammar, that Srila Prabhupada is **NOT** referring to himself when he says, "He's guru". [CR Lines 5 to 8, 4 (b-d) and 2 (b-c)]

AE 15: Here TFO's author makes an error of assumption, building upon his earlier error in thinking, described above. He has ignored the variable plurality of *acarya(s)* noted in various transcripts; he has ignored Srila Prabhupada's use of the word *officiating acarya(s)*; and he has taken Srila Prabhupada's answer to Tamal Krishna's qualifying question, *Is that called ritvik acarya?*, to which he replied, *ritvik. Yes*, as evidence in favor of the idea of *ritvik* (representative) – not *ritvik acarya*. But the word is used in the May 28th Conversation to describe a type of *acarya – officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*. It is not used on May 28th to describe a *ritvik* representative of **the** *acarya*. TFO repeatedly obfuscates this fact, for obvious reasons.

TFO extends this logic forward to the July 9th Letter, making the erroneous assumption that *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* is one and the same as *ritvik representatives* of **the** *acarya*. Built upon this flawed line of reasoning is TFO's equally flawed conclusion that "*ritviks, by definition, are not the initiators*", and therefore "*Prabhupada can only have been referring to himself as the 'guru'*" when he said, "*He's guru*".

TFO concludes, "*This is confirmed in the July 9th letter where it states three times that those being initiated were to be the disciples of Srila Prabhupada.*" But it is stated only two times, not three [EF 18]. And, TFO ignores the fact that in the May 28th Conversation, when Srila Prabhupada referred to the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* that he would recommend sometime in future, he was **specifically** referring to initiations after his departure. These *ritvik acaryas* are described as *diksa gurus*, initiating their own disciples – Srila Prabhupada's grand-disciples.

There is no evidence that Srila Prabhupada recommended or authorized any *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*. The July 9th Letter named 11 *ritvik representatives* of **the** *acarya* – it did not authorize anyone to be *diksa initiating ritvik acaryas* themselves.

C 10: Again, while TFO has repudiated the May 28th Conversation as evidence [C 8 & 9], it uses the conversation to bolster its claims about the July 9th Letter. In this case, the claim that three times, the letter says those being initiated were to be the disciples of Srila Prabhupada, is being vetted against the May 28th Conversation.

"Sometimes the curious theory is put forward that when Srila Prabhupada says '**he is guru**', he is really talking about the *ritviks* themselves. This is quite bizarre since Srila Prabhupada has only just defined the word *ritvik* as 'officiating acarya'- literally a priest who conducts some type of religious or ceremonial function. [ERROR OF FACT 38] In the July 9th letter Srila Prabhupada clarifies precisely what ceremonial function these priests will conduct. [ERROR OF FACT 39] They were supposed to give spiritual names to new initiates, and in the case of second initiation, chant on their *gayatri* thread - all on Srila Prabhupada's behalf. That was it. There is no mention of them being *diksa gurus*, initiating their own disciples or being Spiritual Masters on their own behalf." [ERROR OF FACT 40]

A few paragraphs above, we provided citations for ample evidence in our 'Comparative Review' [APX-5] to show that Srila Prabhupada was not referring to himself in saying "He's guru", but was in fact referring to gurus. These gurus are the same *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* just mentioned by him.

EF 38: TFO states that Srila Prabhupada has just defined the word *ritvik* as being, literally, "*a priest who conducts some type of religious or ceremonial function*", but **he has done no such thing**. It is TFO's author who has attributed this definition to the term. Srila Prabhupada has used the term *officiating acarya(s)* as synonymous with *ritvik acarya(s)*. Nothing more.

EF 39: TFO states that "*In the July 9th letter Srila Prabhupada clarifies precisely what ceremonial function these priests will conduct.*" But that is also not the fact. The July 9th Letter does not refer to "these priests". The July 9th Letter refers to "*ritvik - representatives of the acarya*". A representative of the acarya is not the same thing as the Acarya himself.

EF 40: TFO goes on to say that there is no mention of them "*being diksa gurus, initiating their own disciples*", but that is also incorrect. The *them* being spoken about here are the very same persons Srila Prabhupada has just referred to as the *officiating/acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* who will conduct diksa initiations after his departure. Srila Prabhupada made it very clear that on his order, they will be making their own disciples:

Tamal Krsna: 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?

Prabhupada: They are his disciples.

[]

Prabhupada: When I order you become guru, he becomes regular guru. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple. (That's it). (Just see).

Of course, that part of the dialogue is later in the conversation, and TFO would prefer to have you stop as soon as the term "*ritvik*" (*ignoring 'acarya'*) has been uttered.

"The letter specifically defines *ritvik* as 'representative of the acarya'. They were to act on behalf of the *acarya*, not as *acaryas* in their own right. This being the case why would Srila Prabhupada cloud the issue by calling the *ritviks* 'guru'? If they were initiating gurus all along, why not just call them that to save confusion?"

Finally, TFO acknowledges what has been obvious all along: The July 9th Letters refers to *ritvik* representatives of the acarya – not to *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*. Unfortunately, the author does not take this opportunity to reverse the course of his flawed logic.

The fact of the matter is that the 11 personalities named in the July 9th Letter were authorized to be *ritvik* representatives of the acarya, nothing more. Not acaryas themselves... not acaryas of any type. Simply representatives of **the** acarya.

The personalities that Srila Prabhupada referred to at the start of the May 28th Conversation were not called '*representatives of the acarya*'. They were called *officiating/ acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* who would be **initiating diksa gurus**. Srila Prabhupada stated that at some point in the future, after some unspecified event had taken place, he would authorize **actual acaryas**:

"After this is settled up I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating acarya(s)."

Representatives of the acarya and the acarya himself are simply not one and the same thing. There is no evidence to show that Srila Prabhupada ever recommended any acaryas. He went no further than to name 11 *ritvik* **representatives of the acarya**, deputed to help streamline the initiations process which had become log-jammed because they had stopped operation of the system already in place, then came to Srila Prabhupada for help in solving the bottleneck problem that resulted. TFO's author cannot seem to make sense of these facts. He asks:

"why would Srila Prabhupada cloud the issue by calling the *ritviks* 'guru'? If they were initiating gurus all along, why not just call them that to save confusion?"

It is not surprising that on the ever-contentious topic of *guru-tattva*, the conditioned souls became confused. However, we cannot lay blame on Srila Prabhupada for 'clouding the issue'. In his opening statement on the subject, Srila Prabhupada said "*...I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating acarya(s).*" One might more accurately accuse Tamal Krishna of clouding the issue by asking to have that statement clarified. "Is that called *ritvik acarya*?" To which Srila Prabhupada replied "*ritvik. Yes.*"

One cannot blame Srila Prabhupada for first calling these gurus who would be giving diksa initiation after his departure, "*officiating acarya(s)*". This is the term the Spiritual Master used to convey the idea, and it is faultless. That Tamal Krishna felt compelled to qualify it, comparing it to what he thought was a synonymous term, *ritvik acarya*, is no fault of Srila Prabhupada's.

What Srila Prabhupada was thinking when he said "*ritvik. Yes*", we cannot know. This was the **first** instance when the term was used in the context of initiations. In his Bhagavatam lectures, Srila Prabhupada had only previously used the term, or derivations of the term, in contexts that had nothing to do with initiation. In the case of the May 28th Conversation, we can only assume that Srila Prabhupada was agreeable that, at least for the purposes of this exchange, "*ritvik*" could be used like "officiating" in this context. Whether he would have used the word that way in one of his Bhaktivedanta Purports is not for us to say.

We do know that up to this time, no definition had ever been given by Srila Prabhupada for *ritvik* as an officiating initiator... neither diksa, siksa, or otherwise. Nor had Srila Prabhupada ever defined '*acarya*' by comparing or equating it to '*ritvik officiating priest*'. There is no other indication that '*ritvik*' is synonymous with '*acarya*'. We do have an indication in the May 28th dialogue that Satsvarupa did not understand the meaning of *ritvik* well enough to be certain how to apply it. [CR 5(a)]

At the conclusion of this section, the reader will find a detailed analysis of how the term "*ritvik*" and its derivations have been used.

"When discussing philosophical or managerial issues surrounding his position as *Acarya*, Srila Prabhupada would often speak of himself in the third person. It is particularly understandable that he should do so here since Satsvarupa dasa Goswami's questions at this point are posed in that tense."

In response to this line of argument, which TFO asserts on several occasions, our 'Comparative Review' [APX-5] includes Grammar & Syntax charts for 13 lines of dialogue in the May 28th Conversation. As these charts and the attendant commentary illustrate, TFO makes a number of significant errors with respect to assigning grammatical tense and person, thus the assumptions that follow are based on these faulty interpretations. Please refer to the 'Comparative Review' text and icons: [Line 6, 4 (c); Line 9; Line 10; Line 11 4 (e); Line 12 4 (f)]

"Thus the conversation can only make sense if we take it that Srila Prabhupada is the 'guru' who was initiating new disciples, through his representatives, the *ritviks*."

This paragraph in TFO is bolded for emphasis. As we have just proved, it represents an entirely incorrect conclusion. The importance of that error should be taken as emphatically as the bold text used to convey the claim.

"Although Srila Prabhupada's answers are quite clear and consistent, it does seem as though there is some confusion in the mind of the questioner at this point. This is where Satsvarupa dasa Goswami asks on **Line 10 - 'But he does it on your behalf'**. The '**he**' Satsvarupa dasa Goswami is referring to is the *ritvik*, whereas the '**he**' that Srila Prabhupada was referring to, as we have shown, could only have been himself, since he is the only *initiator* [EF 40] within the *ritvik* system."

Branching into two paths – what Satsvarupa is thinking, and what Srila Prabhupada is thinking – TFO asserts that the two have now begun talking about two different persons. This is nonsensical, and the logic preceding it has already been defeated. TFO then carries forward the errors of logic enumerated above [EF 38 & 40].

"If **lines 11-13** do establish **modification a)**, this will only be at the expense of contradicting **lines 1-7** where Srila Prabhupada has already clearly answered that *ritviks* were to be appointed 'particularly' for after his departure."

While TFO's argument is directed primarily at the GBC, against their *GII* [1] and so-called Modifications **a)** and **b)**, the disclosure made here is fully applicable in the context of DOR's challenge to TFO. **TFO clearly admits that *ritviks* were to be appointed 'particularly' for after Srila Prabhupada's departure.** More specifically, and what TFO does not admit, is that *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* were to be appointed, not just *ritvik* representatives of the *Acarya*. Nonetheless, at least the author admits that the *ritviks* were those who would be appointed 'particularly' for a role post-samadhi. This contradicts TFO's conclusion that those

very same persons are the ones named in the July 9th Letter (the 11 *ritvik representatives* of **the** Acarya). TFO's argument follows this admittance:

"Let us see if this did in fact happen. Remember we are looking for a specific statement that the *ritviks* must cease their duties once Srila Prabhupada departs. In other words that they can only operate in his presence."

We cannot characterize this as an error of logic or assumption; it is simply an admission of the strategy TFO employs. It does employ flawed logic, however. Obviously, TFO's author is looking for anything that might be considered a 'stop order' relative to the July 9th Letter, the non-existence of which his entire theory relies upon. But as we have shown, there is no evidence whatsoever that Srila Prabhupada ever recommended or authorized any *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*. He did authorize 11 *ritvik representatives* of **the** acarya. But '*representatives of the acarya*' are not the same thing as '*the acarya*' himself.

Nowhere in the July 9th Letter does it say that these *ritvik* representatives will continue to serve as representatives in their specifically deputed role after Srila Prabhupada accepts maha-samadhi. Rather, the July 9th system is designed with Srila Prabhupada as **a direct participant**. Should he become unavailable to participate, then in the absence of any stated mechanism for continuity, the ordered system would stop functioning, i.e., the principle of *impossibility of performance* would come into play.

Nor does the term '*henceforward*' specifically refer to an act on the part of these 11 *ritvik* representatives. '*Henceforward*' refers to an optional act on the part of the Temple Presidents, who may now send recommendations to the *ritvik* closest to them. Not that they **shall**, or they **will**, or they **must** do so, but that they **may** do so. Just as the *ritviks* **may** accept the recommendation, or not.

TFO's author suggests that he is looking for an instruction for the *ritviks* to cease their duties, when in fact, the *ritviks* he is referring to never got their authorization to begin with – the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* were never recommended. Only the 11 *ritvik representatives* of **the** acarya were named, and there was never any indication that their duties would continue on after Srila Prabhupada's departure.

While TFO argues that the May 28th Conversation, the July 7th Conversation and the July 9th Letter all specifically deal with Srila Prabhupada's plans for a system of initiations to operate after his departure, in fact **not one of them does so**. In the July 7th Conversation, Srila Prabhupada specifically indicates he will be a participant ("**India, I am here**"), and the July 9th Letter specifies that *ritvik* representatives shall send the names of new initiates **to Srila Prabhupada** for inclusion in his book. Nowhere is there an instruction for a post-samadhi system. **This is the great fallacy of Ritvik-vada and The Final Order.**

In the May 28th Conversation, Srila Prabhupada said he would, after some time, be recommending *officiating acaryas*. Just 40 days later, during the July 7th Conversation, when Prabhupada was listing names of devotees who could assist with initiations on his behalf, he never referred to *officiating acaryas*, or *ritvik acaryas*, or even representatives of **the** Acarya. He

simply referred to them as 'sannyasis' and 'men'. He did not reiterate the earlier statement of May 28th, indicating that these men were one and the same as the *acarya(s)* he would be recommending sometime in future. Rather, he named the men in the context of a specific discussion, about the bottleneck problem and the solution for it.

And as we've pointed out, when Srila Prabhupada said, "*After this is settled up I shall recommend some of you*", we can't say with certainty what *this* refers to. After *this* what? For all we know, it could mean 'After *this* lila pastime ends, I will recommend some of you to Krsna.' There was no promise or specific commitment assigned to the statement.

"On reading **lines 11-13** we see that all that is stated is that the *ritviks* must operate in his presence because in his presence they can not be guru. Thus Srila Prabhupada is simply re-stating a principle he occasionally invoked in his dealings with ambitious disciples: **that in the presence of the guru one must act only on his behalf.**"

We have addressed this issue in great detail in our 'Comparative Review' [\[APX-5\]](#), Line 8. To understand all the nuances of this portion of the dialogue, please see Lines 7 to 10, complete. For the sake of brevity, we won't re-state even the key points here, which are numerous.

"However what Srila Prabhupada does not say is that this 'acting on his behalf' must cease once he leaves the planet. He also does not say that 'acting on his behalf' can *only* happen whilst he is present. Indeed nowhere thus far has he directly linked his physical presence in any way with the concept of acting on his behalf, but rather simply states it as a reason that prevents his disciples from being guru, and it is this 'not being guru' which is linked to acting as a *ritvik*."

Srila Prabhupada does not specifically say that acting on his behalf during his presence "must cease". Rather, he makes explicit mention of how initiations will be carried out after his departure: by *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* he will recommend to give diksa after his departure. This is the opening instruction given in the May 28th Conversation (an instruction which earlier, TFO wished to rely on as the be-all and the end-all of the conversation).

Srila Prabhupada never said that once the system instructed in the July 9th Letter had begun, the system operating prior to that time would still be an optional system to follow. He gave no indication that two systems could or should run as parallel tracks. Likewise, he did not say the July 9th system should continue after his departure. Nor did he specifically say that so many things should stop when he departs: '*Please stop calling me on the telephone*'. In other words, it is not required that one elocute all the things that should stop or change when a significant event occurs that will naturally stop or change them.

"On **line 12** we see that being guru also depends on receiving a specific order from Srila Prabhupada - '**On my order**'. He repeats this condition on **line 13** - '**But by my order**', and once more on **line 25** - '**When I order**'. It is quite clear then that this cannot be the order proper, otherwise why say 'When I order'? If this was the actual order to become guru after his departure, as the GBC maintains, then surely he would have said something like: 'I am now ordering you, that as soon as I leave, you stop being *ritviks* and become *diksa*

gurus'. Such a statement would certainly lend some credibility to the current GBC position and the M.A.S.S. doctrine. However, as can be seen, nothing even remotely resembling such a statement [ERROR OF LOGIC 26] can be found anywhere in the May 28th conversation."

Here, TFO demonstrates that its arguments are aimed primarily at the GBC's *GII* [1] and Modifications a) and b). We agree with the argument – the Line 12 that TFO refers to **does not** represent an order to be diksa guru.

EL 26: The error TFO makes here, and throughout its thesis, is one that we have already pointed out. TFO ignores the word **acarya**. On May 28th, Srila Prabhupada did not say he would be appointing '*ritvik* representatives of the acarya'. He said that he would be *appointing officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* who would be conducting diksa initiations after his departure. Again, a **representative** of **the** acarya is not the same thing as the **acarya** himself. In the above paragraph, TFO makes another error of logic by building on what has already been shown to be an error of fact [EF 39 & 40].

"There is certainly nothing on **lines 11-13** which in any way modifies Srila Prabhupada's clear reply to Satsvarupa's original question - (**lines 1-7**) Thus our understanding of **lines 1-7** remains intact. Srila Prabhupada did not contradict himself, the July 9th order stands so far unmodified"

This underscores TFO strategic logic. By ignoring the fact that Srila Prabhupada initially referred to *appointing officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*, instead emphasizing his affirmative reply to Tamal's request for confirmation with just *ritvik*, TFO repeatedly asserts the notion that the May 28th term *ritvik* refers to, and is synonymous with, the *ritvik representative(s) of the acarya* mentioned in the July 9th Letter. But **that is false**, and in every instance where such a statement or insinuation is made throughout TFO, **it is also false**.

"What **lines 11-13** do establish is that the *ritvik* system was to operate whilst Srila Prabhupada was still present., [ERROR OF FACT 41] but not that it can *only* operate whilst he is present. The July 9th letter makes this clear anyway by the use of the word 'henceforward'. [ERROR OF LOGIC 27] The word 'henceforward' encompasses all time frames from that day onwards, regardless of Srila Prabhupada's physical proximity. [UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIM 19] *Let us read on:*"

EF 41: It is not a "*ritvik* system" that is established in these lines of the May 28th Conversation – or anywhere in the conversation. The so-called *ritvik* system was established by the July 9th Letter, which appointed 11 *ritvik* representatives of the acarya, to operate within a system of initiation that involved Srila Prabhupada's presence. **That** is the "*ritvik* system". The system of initiations that existed prior to the May 28th Conversation had never been called a "*ritvik* system". And the reference in the May 28th Conversation to *ritvik(s)* was specifically referring to *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* who would be recommended sometime **in future**, and would conduct diksa initiations after Srila Prabhupada's departure.

EL 27: Not only is this statement predicated upon error **[EF 41]**, it also contains flawed logic. As repeatedly noted, the word 'henceforward' in the July 9th Letter refers specifically to an action on the part of the Temple Presidents – an optional action that they **may** take. 'Henceforward' does not establish a *ritvik* system involving *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*, and does not indicate that such a system exists.

UC 19: No evidence in support of this all-encompassing claim is provided. The assumption that this word encompasses all time frames from that day onward, goes against common sense and the rules of definition and grammar, as we pointed out in our detailed analysis of the July 9th Letter and the term 'henceforward'.

"Lines 14-15: Interestingly at this point Satsvarupa dasa Goswami asks a question in the first person: **[ERROR OF FACT 42]** **'So then they'll also be considered your disciples?'**"

EF 42: As indicated in the Grammar & Syntax chart from our 'Comparative Review' **[APX-5]**, Line 9 [see also **2(e)**], Satsvarupa is **not** speaking in first person, as TFO says:

DIALOGUE	GRAMMAR & SYNTAX
So (then) (they) (they'll) (may) also be considered your disciples?	So (then) (they) (they'll) [plural pronoun, third person - could be subject or object pronoun] (may) also be considered your [singular possessive adjective, second person] disciples?

In the Grammar & Syntax chart for Line 10, we have Srila Prabhupada's response:

DIALOGUE	GRAMMAR & SYNTAX
Yes, they are disciples, (but) (why) consider ... who	they are disciples [plural subject pronoun, third person] (why) consider ... who [too fragmentary to categorize grammatically]

The question posed to Srila Prabhupada by Satsvarupa was in a mixed tense of third and second person, and Srila Prabhupada answered in third person.

"Srila Prabhupada answers **'Yes, they are disciples...'** Once more confirming the ownership of any future disciples. **[ASSUMPTIVE ERROR 16]** Although it is not clear

what Srila Prabhupada is going on to say, his initial answer is quite definite. He is asked a direct question, in the first person, [EF 42] and he answers 'Yes'."

AE 16: One cannot assume that based on this fragmentary statement, the ownership of future disciples is "confirmed". As noted in our detailed analysis, Satsvarupa has improperly inserted this question into the conversation. [CR Line 9 ② (e)] Srila Prabhupada begins to give a conditional answer, *Yes, they are disciples (but) (why) consider ... who*. The sentence is fragmentary because it is not completed. The object of the conditional word(s) – 'but/why' – is 'who', and the sentence ends without telling us what it is about 'Yes, they are disciples' that is conditional on something. Again, we have provided a detailed analysis of this portion of the exchange. [CR Line 10]

"Whatever Srila Prabhupada was going on to say is irrelevant since no-one can ever know. We only know that when asked whether future initiates were to be his disciples, he answered 'Yes'. [AE 16] Again not a good sign for the **modifications a) & b).**"

By this point in our analysis, the attentive has reader has no doubt taken note of a trend in TFO's presentation of arguments. Due to the fact that TFO is intent on challenging the GBC's *GII* [1] and modifications **a)** and **b)**, many of its arguments have been skewed in a particular direction. These arguments are not presented conditionally, i.e., the author does not say they only relate to a *GII* rebuttal and not otherwise. Rather, TFO presents these things as fact, as truth – its conclusions about various evidence put forward in support of its position. Consequently, TFO's author and Ritvik-vada adherents must now live with these assertions, or recant them. Clearly, in the context of offering a defense against this particular challenge paper, *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*, they will no doubt wish they had not married some of these elements together in building the foundation of Ritvik-vada.

Lines 16-18: Tamal Krsna Goswami seems to sense some confusion here and interrupts Srila Prabhupada. He further clarifies Satsvarupa dasa Goswami's question by asking Srila Prabhupada whose disciples are those who are being given *diksa* by the *ritviks*."

Our interpretation of the audio conversation [APX-7c] is that Tamal Krishna did not cut Srila Prabhupada off. Prabhupada stopped after the word *who*, and Tamal Krishna promptly re-phrased the question, accurately but more clearly. Again, TFO suggests that those giving *diksa* are just *ritviks* rather than *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*. [EL 26 & 27]

"Once again Srila Prabhupada answers in the third person (having been asked the question in the third person): '**They are his disciples**'. [CR Line 6, ④ (d) under Line11] As we have discussed he can only be referring to himself since *ritviks* do not, by definition, possess their own disciples. [AE 16] Furthermore we know that he was definitely referring to himself since he answers the question in the singular ('his disciples...who is initiating'), having been asked the question about the *ritviks* in the plural ('these ritvik-acaryas')." [CR Line 12, ④ (f)]

The faulty logic of the last statement above has already been thoroughly described.

"One idea, which is sometimes put forward, is that at this point in the conversation Tamal Krsna Goswami is asking the question in some vaguely futuristic sense, about an unspecified time frame in which the *ritviks* have somehow transformed themselves into *diksa gurus*. According to this theory when Srila Prabhupada, who is now presumably mystically attuned to Tamal Krsna Goswami's mind set, answers that future initiates are '**his disciples**', what he actually means is that they are disciples of the *ritviks*, who are now not *ritviks* at all, but *diksa gurus*." [WORD JUGGLERY 9] [AE 16] [EL 26]

WJ 9: This rather sarcastic presentation goes down as a classic example of word jugglery. There is nothing 'vaguely futuristic' about Tamal Krishna's question. Srila Prabhupada began the conversation talking about *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* who would give diksa after his departure. Following Satsvarupa's improperly inserted and thus confusing statement, *But he does it on your behalf*, [CR Line 7, 2(c)], followed by the likewise ambiguous question, *So they may also be considered your disciples?*, which lacked clarity and definition, Tamal Krishna very properly, from the standpoint of content, syntax and grammar, began again – rephrasing the question in proper fashion. The word jugglery here is TFO's attempt to demonize this appropriate re-phrasing by calling it "vaguely futuristic" and suggesting Tamal Krishna is "mystically attuned". But this ploy does not eradicate the flaw in TFO's logic.

TFO's complaint that Tamal Krishna is referring to some *unspecified time frame in which the ritviks have somehow transformed themselves into diksa gurus* is actually somewhat offensive to Srila Prabhupada. It was Prabhupada who set the stage here for an unspecified time frame: *I shall recommend some of you. After this is settled up.* [CR Line 2 and 2(a) thereunder].

Again TFO takes advantage of the factually and logically erroneous notion it has been pressing forward in its presentation. It continually suggests that the *ritviks* under discussion in the May 28th Conversation are the *ritvik representatives of the acarya* mentioned in the July 9th Letter, when in fact, the *ritviks* mentioned here are the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* Srila Prabhupada began this conversation by referring to, while the July 9th *ritviks* are *representatives of the acarya*.

And in fact, the conversation shows that yes indeed, *his disciples* **are** the disciples of the *ritviks* – not the *ritvik representatives of the acarya*, but the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* Srila Prabhupada mentioned – the acaryas he never did recommend before departing.

"Leaving aside the fact that this fanciful 'meeting of minds' is both unlikely and highly speculative, there is at least one other problem with this hypothesis:

Up till this point Srila Prabhupada has not stated that the *ritviks*, which he has yet to appoint, will ever act in any capacity other than as *ritviks*. So why would Tamal Krsna Goswami have assumed their status was to change?" [WJ 9]

Mixing references to the real, factual *ritviks* together with TFO's falsified representation of *ritviks*; dropping the *acarya* designation; pretending that the diksa disciples being talked about belong to Srila Prabhupada because they were initiated by the *ritvik representatives of the*

acarya, rather than by the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* Srila Prabhupada refers to, the author of TFO continues on with what is **an utterly failed argument**.

"**Lines 19-20:** Tamal Krsna Goswami repeats the answer, and then Srila Prabhupada continues; '**who is initiating ... his grand-disciple.**' We have chosen the transcript version '**his grand-disciple**' over the version '**he is grand-disciple**' since it most closely resembles the tape, and seems to flow best with the sense of the conversation. (Otherwise the person initiating would simultaneously become a grand-disciple! - '**who** is initiating ... **he** is grand-disciple.')"

Our interpretation of the audio is that Srila Prabhupada said: *Who is initiating ... he is grand-disciple ...* Naturally, TFO's author has chosen a version that best suits his conclusion, although we think *his grand-disciple* is a very poor fit for the argument TFO is trying to make.

We have given a detailed analysis of the conversation: [C.R. Line 12 and **p(f)** therein, and Line 14 complete]. We argue that *who is initiating* refers to Srila Prabhupada's previous emphatic statement, *They are his disciples*. And that the second part of the phrase is an independent clause, *he is grand-disciple*, referring to the disciple and his status as a grand-disciple of Srila Prabhupada's.

Obviously, the person initiating would not also be grand-disciple. In fact, the generational term *grand* makes the content of the message very clear. *He* (the disciple) is *grand-disciple*. Grand-disciple is generational... grand means two steps removed. Who is two steps above the grand-disciple? Srila Prabhupada. Again, the initiator being referred to is **NOT** Srila Prabhupada, as we have clearly shown – it is the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* that are the primary subject of the discussion. They are initiating, after Srila Prabhupada's departure (upon his recommendation), and their disciples will be grand-disciples of Srila Prabhupada.

Following the many errors of fact, logic, assumption, etc., following all the word jugglery, we can clearly see that TFO has talked this simple, straightforward conversation into an extremely convoluted twist. Any sincere reader who is not driven by an agenda can see what has transpired here – how the evidence has been misrepresented, how the arguments have been made exceedingly complex, how broken logic and false ideas have been woven into a lead blanket that has immobilized the devotee community for years in the Great Ritvik Debate.

"The argument that when speaking here in the third person, Srila Prabhupada must be referring to the *ritviks* and not himself, can be tested by modifying the conversation in accordance with this view, replacing third person with first person statements (shown in brackets), for **lines 17-20** :"

The fact that Srila Prabhupada answers in third person here does not serve as evidence in favor of TFO's conclusion – just the opposite. If Srila Prabhupada had answered in first person, he would have said "They are mine" – "They are my disciples". If he had answered in second person, he would have said "They are yours" – "They are your disciples". But speaking in third person, he said "*They are his disciples*". There is absolutely nothing in this context to indicate that Srila Prabhupada, speaking in third person, is talking about himself.

Tamal Krishna's question was very clear: "*these ritvik acaryas* [who you'll recommend to give initiations after you're no longer with us], *they're officiating*, giving diksa, *their... the people who they give diksa to, whose disciples are they?*"

If Srila Prabhupada was still referring to initiations while he was present – formalities, on his behalf – he would have said *They are my disciples*. But the question clearly, unarguably referred to post-samadhi initiations, and the answer likewise referred to post-samadhi initiations. There is nothing in either the syntax, grammar or context to support the notion that Srila Prabhupada said *his* in place of *my*.

They [plural subject pronoun, third person] *are his* [singular possessive pronoun, third person] *disciples*.

There is no way to turn the third person **his** into a first person statement. Furthermore, as the audio indicates, Srila Prabhupada added emphasis to his answer, saying *They are his disciples*.

"Given the premise that *ritviks* are only officiating, and that their role is only representational, it should be self-evident to the reader that this interpretation of **lines 17-20** is nonsense. It is a contradiction in terms for a *ritvik* to have their own disciples, what to speak of grand-disciples."

Again, TFO presses forward its wholly flawed argument: **[AE 16] [EL 26] [WJ 9]**

"There appears to be just two possible options for interpretation in considering this conversation:

- 1) Future new disciples were to belong to *ritvik* priests, who by definition are not diksa gurus, but officiators who have been set up specifically to act as proxies.
- 2) Future new disciples were to belong to the *diksa* guru, Srila Prabhupada.

Option 1) is just absurd. Therefore we have gone for option 2) as the only rational choice, and have thus interpreted the tape accordingly."

TFO completely ignores the obvious third option, which is the true and right one:

The *ritviks* being spoken of on May 28th, who would be initiating diksa disciples after Prabhupada's departure – disciples who will be Prabhupada's grand-disciples – those *ritviks* are **NOT** the *ritvik representatives of the acarya* – they are the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* Srila Prabhupada has been referring to throughout this May 28th Conversation. They are **acaryas**, they are **diksa gurus**, they are taking **their own disciples**, their disciples will be **Srila Prabhupada's grand-disciples** – and although Prabhupada said he would recommend them sometime in the future, he never did so. Instead, 42 days later when he solved the bottleneck problem presented on July 7th, Srila Prabhupada named 11 *ritvik representatives of the acarya* – they are not acaryas; they are not diksa gurus; they are not taking their own disciples.

"A great deal is made of the use of the term 'grand-disciple'. For many, the use of this phrase by Srila Prabhupada acts as a clincher, since you can only have grand-disciples if there are *diksa* gurus. **This is true.** Unfortunately the words following the term 'his grand-disciple' are usually ignored. Srila Prabhupada goes on to state that a grand-disciple and hence a *diksa* guru will only exist when Srila Prabhupada orders his disciple to become a *diksa* guru. *In other words Srila Prabhupada is simply saying that when a guru orders his disciple to become a diksa guru, he will have grand-disciples ('his grand-disciple'), since the new diksa guru will then be initiating in his own right ('he becomes disciple of my disciple')."*

Again, because TFO's author is primarily aiming his arguments at the GBC, he is asserting arguments that will not hold up in a challenge environment like the one presented here in DOR. Yes, it is true that you must have a *diksa* guru in order to have grand-disciples. We are pleased to see TFO's admission that **this is true** (emphasis added above). And because we are not defending the Zonal Acarya System or ISKCON's institutional *Diksa* program, we have no difficulty at all in paying attention to the words following *his grand-disciple*:

"When I order you become guru, he becomes regular guru. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple. (That's it). (Just see)."

Precisely! When the Acarya orders, his disciples may become regular *diksa* gurus. The regular guru's disciples become Srila Prabhupada's grand-disciples... *disciple of my disciple. That's it.*

We have no qualms about the fact that Srila Prabhupada never, during his manifest lila, recommended, named or authorized disciples to be *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*. When he might have intended to do that, having mentioned in the May 28th Conversation that it would be sometime *after this is settled up* – that we don't know. Perhaps he changed his mind. Perhaps what he had hoped to settle up never got settled. We can only speculate. What we do know is that no such order or authorization is known to exist.

TFO's Ritvik-vada position, which primarily argues against the GBC, takes liberties with the knowledge that only certain lines of argument and defense would likely come from the ISKCON leaders who, after a history of Zonal Acarya-ism, re-wrote ISKCON *guru-tattva* to support an institutional *Diksa* Guru program. The GBC has never been able to philosophically defend that program, and in fact, it is also asiddhantic. But we are not encumbered by the weight of these asiddhantic constructs. There is no institutional imperative to have an easy, immediate solution available for initiations – what we call 'diksa on-demand'.

"In other words Srila Prabhupada is simply saying that when a guru orders his disciple to become a diksa guru, he will have grand-disciples ('his grand-disciple'), since the new diksa guru will then be initiating in his own right ('he becomes disciple of my disciple')."

Although TFO's author has clearly stated the truth right here, he has been unwilling to live by it. Instead, he has consistently ignored the May 28th term *acarya*, constantly inserting into TFO's

arguments the May 28th term *ritvik*, as if it were one and same as the *rittik representatives of the acarya* named in the July 9th Letter. But clearly, *acarya* and *ritvik* are entirely different terms.

And what is this incaltrant unwillingness on the part of TFO's author borne of? What do we make of the grudging unwillingness on the part of so many Ritvik devotees today, who refuse to accept the obvious? We have written much on that subject in the past, and will not digress into reiterating it here. Suffice to say, the roots of asiddhantic Ritvik-vada **do** have a source: that source can be traced in a logical, unsentimental fashion following the lines of argument presented here in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*.

"In actuality the May 28th conversation is not ordering any specific person to do anything at all."

Correct!

"Srila Prabhupada is simply making known his intention to appoint *ritviks* at some point in the future."

No! He is making known his intention to appoint *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*. He is **not** making known his intention to appoint 11 *rittik representatives of the acarya*.

"He then goes on to answer slightly muddled questions about guru-disciple relationships within the *ritvik* system. He then concludes with a statement about what would happen should he ever decide to give the relevant **order** to someone to become a *diksa* guru."

Correct.

"It is clear though that the specific order naming specific people to perform specific functions was first made on July 7th (*please see Appendices*), and then confirmed in the signed letter of July 9th."

Correct.

"But as can be seen from reading the July 9th letter, there is no mention whatsoever of the eleven appointed *ritviks* ever becoming *diksa* gurus; or for the *ritvik* system to ever stop."

Correct! The July 9th Letter names 11 *rittik representatives of the acarya*. These representatives were not being authorized on July 9th to be *diksa* gurus. They were authorized to serve as *rittik representatives of the acarya*, conducting specific activities on behalf of Srila Prabhupada while he was present and involved in the process. No, the July 9th Letter does not say that the system it describes should stop, nor does it say that it should continue after Prabhupada's departure. It does not say the representatives should continue acting on behalf of the acarya even when he is no longer there to be represented and personally participate in the process, as he said he would be in both the July 9th Letter and the July 7th Conversation that preceded it.

But make no mistake: the *ritvik* system TFO referred to above, for which it says no stop order exists, is **NOT** the same system of *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* that Srila Prabhupada is discussing in this May 28th Conversation, as our analysis clearly proves. TFO essentially admits that, in the last quote above. Yet still, Krishnakant employs the May 28th Conversation as a means to bolster his assertion of longevity in the July 9th order. Knowing that 'henceforward' cannot carry the argument, he points to the May 28th reference to after Srila Prabhupada's departure.

Furthermore, the system described in the July 9th Letter **does** have an inherent stop order, which we have described above.

"After our exhaustive analysis of the May 28th conversation, it is clear that what the GBC is presenting is a classic circular argument:"

In fact, TFO is presenting its own flawed argument. While not exactly circular in nature, it is predicated on more than 130 different errors: errors of assumption, errors of fact, logic and omission, philosophical errors, contradictions, unsubstantiated claims and instances of word jugglery. [\[APX-3\]](#)

Because we are not interested in defending or challenging modification **b)** in this paper, we will not address TFO's lengthy comments in that regard, but will move instead to the comments in conclusion of this section of TFO:

TFO'S CONCLUSION

IN CONCLUSION:

"1. On July 9th 1977 Srila Prabhupada appointed 11 *ritviks* to carry out first and second initiations 'henceforward'.

[]

4. The one thing clearly established in the May 28th conversation is that the *ritviks* were to operate after Srila Prabhupada's departure."

Error notations [\[AE 16\]](#) [\[EL 26\]](#) [\[WJ 9\]](#) are applicable to both the above statements of conclusion. Given that these statements are emphasized as points of conclusion, equal weight should be assigned to the rebuttals, which are conclusive.

"It should be noted that there are at least four different transcripts, and four differing 'official' GBC interpretations of this very same conversation. Many devotees feel that for this reason alone the conversation cannot be considered as conclusive evidence. Should this be the readers conclusion then he will have no choice but to return once more to the July 9th letter as the final order, since it is a signed letter, clearly written and sent to the entire Movement. [\[EF 1\]](#) This would certainly be the conclusion in a court of law; signed written evidence always takes precedence over tape recordings. [\[ERROR OF FACT 43\]](#)

The only reason we have examined the May 28th conversation so carefully here is because the GBC have put forward as the **only** piece of evidence in support of **modifications a) and b).**"

EF 43: This is incorrect. There is no such hard and fast rule in law – in fact, just the opposite. First, rules of evidence vary from one jurisdiction to the next. Second, as a general rule, the authenticity and admissibility requirements are no different for audio than for documents. If the audio evidence is properly (legally) procured and meets predicate rules, it is fully admissible. Beyond that, how signed documents are weighted in comparison to audio evidence is a matter of case particulars and is entirely at the Court's discretion. Most certainly, audio content is sometimes given more weight than signed documents.

We have provided our detailed analysis of the May 28th Conversation primarily because TFO has addressed it in detail. We patently reject it as evidence in support of a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. However, over the course of the analysis, particularly of TFO's own comments on the conversation, we have had an opportunity to point out many elements of Krishnakant's position and strategy that hold the same degree of merit and importance whether the May 28th Conversation is rejected due to questions of authenticity, or not.

The Final Order was first presented to the GBC in October 1996. It was then released online around February 1997. In Jan 1998, Krishnakant repudiated the May 28th Conversation as evidence [19] although, as we have shown, his entire position relies upon so-called evidence he has culled from that very conversation. Without the May 28th reference to '*ritviks*' – an adjective TFO has conveniently locked onto, truncating Srila Prabhupada's actual reference by dropping the noun, '*acarya(s)*' – its interpretation of the July 9th Letter would have no legs at all except for the misinterpreted word, '*henceforward*'.

As we've shown above, TFO's strategy in writing a convincing manifesto for Ritvik-vada relies heavily on its application of the May 28th Conversation, particularly with respect to how it slants its arguments in challenging the GBC's position. [C 8, 9 & 10] We have shown numerous examples of this but here is one more excellent example, from a paper that Krishnakant's ISKCON Reform Movement (IRM) released sometime after TFO, entitled "The Real Appointment Tape". [28]

Readers who have carefully studied our analysis herein and in the "Comparative Review" [APX-5] will be able to quickly identify the adroit word jugglery presented by TFO author Krishnakant in "The Real Appointment Tape", as he attempts to lead his readers to the desired interpretation of the lines of dialogue in the May 28th Conversation.

He begins with a critique of H.G. Ravindra Svarupa dasa's 1985 paper, "Under My Order". [29] Appended to this paper was one of the transcripts emphasized in TFO's analysis of the May 28th Conversation, although he does not provide a copy of the text or a link to the source document.

While it is tempting to digress into an analysis of the many errors of fact and logic found in "The Real Appointment Tape", we will refrain. Suffice to say, the attentive reader of the paper will no

doubt identify many errors. In "The Real Appointment Tape", Krishnakant writes (emphasis added):

"*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*."

The author admits that the only order is the one contained in the July 9th Letter, to "be *ritviks*". He does not, of course, point out that the order is for *ritvik representatives of the acarya* who will help with initiations while Srila Prabhupada is present, **NOT** for the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acaryas(s)* Srila Prabhupada referred to in the May 28th Conversation, who would give diksa initiation to their own disciples after Prabhupada's departure.

In the second half of "The Real Appointment Tape", the author rides on his assumed success in convincing the reader that "*He's guru*" is Srila Prabhupada referring to himself, and that "*ritvik*" refers to *ritvik* representatives of the acarya, not to *ritvik/officiating acaryas* themselves, although it is the latter to whom a May 28th post-samadhi longevity factor referred. Next, because he is arguing against the GBC, Krishnakant offers an explanation about the difference between two types of persons Srila Prabhupada mentions: those who initiate, and those who officiate. He writes:

- "a. Now please note that in the whole conversation Srila Prabhupada speaks of two **DIFFERENT** entities:
- **Those who INITIATE**
 - **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:"

What is obscured behind the cloud of this clever presentation is the fact that on May 28th, Srila Prabhupada used the word *officiating* (the Officiator) to specifically describe the *officiating*

acarya(s) who would give diksa after his departure. This person most certainly **would** be the initiator.

In describing the non-initiating "officiator", Srila Prabhupada did not use the term *officiator* at all. Rather, he simply described those who do it on his behalf:

"...in my presence one should not become guru, so on my behalf."

The 11 *rittik* representatives of the *acarya* named in the July 9th Letter are just that – representatives. They are the "officiators" Krishnakant refers to here. They are **not** initiators (diksa gurus). They are **not** the ***officiating*** *acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* Srila Prabhupada describes as the **initiators** he will be recommending (but never did). On July 9th, Srila Prabhupada authorized 11 **representatives of the** *acarya* – non-initiators, officiators only insofar as they are officiating *representatives*. They are **not** *acaryas* – not *ritvik acaryas*, not *officiating acaryas*.

Krishnakant writes:

"Thus the persons Srila Prabhupada will appoint to assist with initiations **AFTER** his departure he denotes as '**OFFICIATING**' or '**RITVIKS**', **NOT** 'initiating'."

Again, we can see how TFO eliminates the word *acarya* used in Srila Prabhupada's actual statements: *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*. Clearly, this is done for the purpose of convincing readers that the *ritviks* (*rittik* representatives of the *acarya*) are non-initiating **officiators** named in the July 9th Letter – **and** they are one and the same as the **officiating** *acaryas* mentioned on May 28th ... those who would be empowered to act after Srila Prabhupada's departure. But clearly, that is not the truth.

"In order to present their false, imaginary meanings, they must adopt so much word jugglery and grammatical interpretation that they finally become ludicrous." (Caitanya-caritamrta *Madhya* 6.131-132)

With this understanding firmly in mind, the reader should consider Krishnakant's statement of conclusion in *The Real Appointment Tape*: [28](#)

"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."

This is the very same conclusion he leads his readers to in *The Final Order*, and it is patently false. **This is a lynchpin of asiddhantic Ritvik-vada philosophy.**

The debate will no doubt rage on in the devotee community as to whether or not extant copies of the May 28th Conversation audio have been tampered with [28], or not [30]. But what no one questions in their commentaries on the May 28th Conversation is that Srila Prabhupada clearly said *officiating acarya(s)*, and confirmed that this meant *ritvik acarya(s)*. Fortunately, future debates about the difference between an acarya and a *ritvik* representative of the Acarya have nothing at all to do with the quality of the May 28th audio tape.

In Summary

ISKCON's current Diksa Guru program does not feature calling anyone an ISKCON 'Acarya', although TFO author Krishnakant characterizes the current GBC Diksa Guru program as a "Multiple Acarya Succession System", claiming that the GBC does still promote their diksa gurus as acaryas.

The Ritvik-vadis distinguish themselves from the GBC/ISKCON by saying that Srila Prabhupada appointed **not** successor acaryas, but *ritviks* to carry on initiations after his departure – a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system wherein these *ritviks* officiate in making diksa disciples on behalf of Srila Prabhupada after his departure. In this way, they distance themselves from the claim that Srila Prabhupada named successor acaryas.

But as we have demonstrated, the Ritvik-vada system actually derives its authority from the notion that these *ritviks* are, in fact, acaryas – TFO argues that they are the *officiating acaryas/ritvik acaryas* mentioned on May 28th. On one hand TFO claims, 'No! Srila Prabhupada did not name successor acaryas!' On the other hand, it says that he named *ritviks* to serve as **officiating initiators** – but the only way TFO can argue that these *ritviks* are authorized to serve **after** Srila Prabhupada's departure is by claiming that they are acaryas – the same **officiating acaryas** mentioned in the May 28th Conversation.

We argue that in the July 9th Letter, Srila Prabhupada **did not authorize anyone to act as acarya**: not *ritvik acarya*, not *officiating acarya*, not *diksa guru acarya*. Rather, he named 11 senior men to assist him as *ritvik representatives* of the acarya, and to act in that capacity while he was **present and involved** in the system.

We do not accept that the role of *acarya* is synonymous with, or non-different than so many other roles. By virtue of logic, the author of TFO asserts that there is no difference at all between the 'representative' and the 'acarya' himself. We contend that an **acarya** and a **representative** of the acarya are two very different things.

"Sunlight is existing in the sun, but sun is not present in the sunshine. Without sun there is no sunshine." (Srila Prabhupada Lecture on Bhagavad-gita 4.42, Aug 4, 1976)

We say there is **no evidence** that the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* Srila Prabhupada referred to in the May 28th Conversation, who he said he would recommend after "this" (unknown event) "is settled up", are one and the same as the eleven *rittik representatives* of **the acarya** named in the July 9th Letter.

We are **not** arguing on the basis of **definition about the qualifications** of an "acarya". That is not the determining factor.

We are arguing about the assignment of the title, "acarya". While that title was mentioned on May 28th, it was **not assigned** on July 9th. The title of *acarya* was not given by virtue of the naming of 11 *rittik* representatives of **the acarya** on July 9th. These representatives were specifically deputed in the letter to act while Srila Prabhupada was present. The *acaryas* mentioned on May 28th were specifically mentioned as being initiators after Srila Prabhupada's departure. **They are not one and the same.** ③(a-b)

In fact, the May 28th dialogue **specifically** says they are **not** one and the same, by virtue of the fact that Srila Prabhupada says the *officiating/ritvik acarya(s)* will be recommended "After this is settled up" – not that they are, here and now on May 28th, being recommended or ordered to action. ②(a)

Speculatively suggesting that such an assignment was made, for the purpose of affirming that the *rittik* representatives have a right to assist Srila Prabhupada while he is present, is simply unnecessary. The July 9th Letter says very clearly what is being instructed. The July 9th instructions do not need the May 28th reference to the word "*officiating*" layered over them in order for the July 9th instructions to be understandable or valid.

The July 9th Letter does not need to be married up to the May 28th Conversation in order to make it stand. It does not require associating "*rittik* representatives" with "*officiating acarya(s)*" or "*ritvik acarya(s)*" in order for the letter to be clear. This bridging together of two communications has been constructed by the author of TFO as a means to extract a particular interpretation out of Srila Prabhupada's instructions – an interpretation that fits the Ritvik-vada post-samadhi agenda. And the GBC have allowed themselves to be unnecessarily co-opted into this situation, as they've defended their own *guru-tattva* against the Ritvik-vadis.

Clearly, the '*acarya(s)*' mentioned on May 28th are to be diksa gurus. Mention of '*rittik representatives* of **the acarya**' on July 9th, without inclusion of the word '*acaryas*' in reference to the *rittik*s, specifically implies that these representatives are **not** diksas. It is not just that we have an omission of the term '*acarya*' in the July 9th Letter. When tied to the May 28th Conversation, the absence of that word actually proves to be **a specific contra-indication** – because in the July 9th Letter, just as in the July 7th Conversation that preceded it, **Srila Prabhupada has made clear that he will be a participant in the system.**

Srila Prabhupada had every opportunity to follow-up on his comments of May 28th by specifically recommending some of his disciples to act as *officiating acarya/ritvik acarya*. He never did so. He stopped short of that very significant assignment, instead naming only 11 *rittik* representatives to assist with initiations while he was present.

Of course, it is not only TFO who conveniently interprets an "order" in the May 28th Conversation. The GBC and its representatives also do so in their official papers, such as "Under My Order" by Ravindra Svarup dasa (1985) [29]. These conclusions are carried forward in more recent papers, such as "Disciple of my Disciple": An Analysis of the Conversation of May 28, 1977" by Badrinarayan dasa, Giridhari Swami and Umapati Swami (2008) [31]. In the period of more than 20 years between these two official ISKCON papers, little has changed in the GBC's position, which effectively concludes that there is no difference at all between the 'representative' and the 'acarya' himself.

Although the current ISKCON institutional Diksa Guru program does not feature calling anyone an 'acarya' (in fact, that was prohibited under *GII 1.5.6.1*) [1], the current system is nonetheless based upon the notion that on May 28th, 1977, Srila Prabhupada ordered diksa gurus who would act after his departure; that these diksa gurus are the personalities referred to in the conversation as *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*; and they are one and the same as the individuals referred to in the July 9th Letter as the *ritvik representatives* who were then being ordered to assist Srila Prabhupada. According to the GBC, upon Srila Prabhupada's departure these individuals would begin initiating as diksa gurus themselves, having gotten the order to do so on May 28th by virtue of the statement, "*After this is settled up, I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating acaryas.*"

We contend that no such order was given on May 28th by virtue of this statement.

The authors of "Disciple of my Disciple" suggest that the order to be diksas was given by the statement:

Yes. I shall recommend some of you, after this is settled up. I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating acarya.

They also say that the order was given by virtue of Srila Prabhupada's statement:

Because in my presence one should not become guru, so on my behalf, on my order... Amara ajnaya guru hana. Be actually guru, but by my order.

And at the same time, the GBC prohibited accepting the *acarya* title, as stated in the GBC's *GII* handbook (1.5.6.1):

"No guru should declare himself or allow himself to be declared an "acarya" or "present acarya" for ISKCON or for a geographical area of ISKCON. There should be no use of the word acarya" as a title of office."

Of course, the GBC and its deputed representatives do not explain why, if Srila Prabhupada said he would be appointing *officiating acaryas* – and if those *acaryas* are accepted as the 11 named *ritvik* representatives of July 9th, they would prohibit gurus from accepting that *acarya* title. This would seem to be a direct rejection of Srila Prabhupada's instruction.

In fact, the GBC, in order to give its institutional authorization and support to a sastrically sound system for diksa initiations, does not need to tangle itself up in the same asiddhantic ball of confusion the Ritvik-vadis are tied up in by way of *The Final Order*. The standing body of Srila Prabhupada's instructions and Gaudiya Vaisnava sastra provide the basis for ISKCON's ongoing diksa guru system. No contrived interpretations of the May 28th Conversation, bridged over to the July 9th Letter, are needed in order for the GBC to properly lead the society's *guru-tattva*.

To avoid redundancy, we will not repeat our rebuttals of TFO's concluding remarks in 'The Appointment Tape' section. As noted above, error notations [AE 16] [EL 26] [WJ 9] are applicable to items #1 and #4 of TFO's concluding remarks. The July 9th Order is not at all what TFO characterizes it to be in its statement of Conclusion, Item #1 above, thus the conclusory statements #2, #3 and #4 are rejected. The ideas of an order for *ritviks* to cease duties, metamorphose into *diksa* gurus or operate post-samadhi are moot constructs, since no *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* mentioned on May 28th were appointed on July 9th.

"It should be noted that there are at least four different transcripts, and four differing 'official' GBC interpretations of this very same conversation. Many devotees feel that for this reason alone the conversation cannot be considered as conclusive evidence. Should this be the readers conclusion then he will have no choice but to return once more to the July 9th letter as the final order, since it is a signed letter, clearly written and sent to the entire Movement. [EF 1]

This would certainly be the conclusion in a court of law; signed written evidence always takes precedence over tape recordings. [EF 43] The only reason we have examined the May 28th conversation so carefully here is because the GBC have put forward as the **only** piece of evidence in support of **modifications a) and b).**"

Following its statement of conclusion, TFO proceeds to address 30 additional 'related objections'. The first of these deals with the issue of terminology and the use of *ritvik* and terms of similar derivation. Our commentary on Objection #1 follows. Next, we offer an analysis of the very last section of TFO before the Appendices, entitled 'What is a *ritvik*?'

The other 29 objections deal with topics that are important to consider in the context of TFO *only* if the reader accepts TFO's thesis on the basis of the evidence it puts forward in support of a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. Since we do not accept Ritvik-vada, we will not address the remaining 29 additional objections in TFO's analysis.

Finally, we will address the remaining relevant pieces of correspondence and conversation transcripts included in TFO's Appendices, not already analyzed above.

'Ritvik' Terminology

RELATED OBJECTIONS

"1) Srila Prabhupada has not mentioned the use of ritviks in his books."

1) The word '*ritvik*' (meaning priest) and its derivatives actually have 32 separate references in Srila Prabhupada's books, only slightly less than the word *diksa* and its derivatives, which has 41 separate references in Srila Prabhupada books. Certainly, the use of *ritvik* priests to assist in ceremonies is a concept fully sanctioned in Srila Prabhupada's books:

<i>Ritvik</i> :	4.6.1 / 4.7.16 / 5.3.2 / 5.3.3 / 5.4.17 / 7.3.20 / 8.20.22 / 9.1.15 .
<i>Rtvijah</i> :	4.5.7 / 4.5.18 / 4.7.27 / 4.7.45 / 4.13.26 / 4.19.27 / 4.19.29 / 5.3.4 / 5.3.15 / 5.3.18 / 5.7.5 8.16.53 / 8.18.21 / 8.18.22 / 9.4.23 / 9.6.3 .
<i>Rtvijam</i> :	4.6.52 / 4.21.5 / 8.23.13 / 9.13.1 .
<i>Rtvigbhyah</i> :	8.16.55 .
<i>Rtvigbhih</i> :	4.7.56 / 9.13.3 . (all these references are from the <i>Srimad-Bhagavatam</i>)"

In the list of citations above, TFO mentions 32 references, but only 31 are listed. In comparing TFO's list of '*ritvik*' references against the Folio 2.0 (1990), we also find these anomalies:

- a difference in spelling: *rtvik* instead of *ritvik*
- a correction: under *ritvik*, the citation should be 7.3.30, not 7.3.20
- a correction: under *rtvijah*, the citation should be 9.6. 35-36, not 9.6.3

Not included in TFO's list of book citations are the two famous mentions, in Srila Prabhupada's conversation of July 19, 1977 (*rttvik*) and the July 9th Letter (*rittik*). Please refer to "Evidence Tampering: Rtvik Sleight of Hand, Part One" [\[9\]](#) for commentary on the issue of the spelling of "*rittik*" in the July 9th Letter.

Although TFO notes at the end of its citations list that "*all these references are from the Srimad-Bhagavatam*", the list is prefaced by a statement that would seem to indicate broader coverage than just the *Bhagavatam*:

"Certainly, the use of *ritvik* priests to assist in ceremonies is a concept fully sanctioned in Srila Prabhupada's books:"

Not included in TFO's list is a citation from *Krsna Book*, Chapter 23, nor do we find on the list a citation from *Srimad Bhagavatam* 10th Canto that might correspond to it. In *Krsna Book* we find this description associated with the *rtvik*:

"There are various details to be observed in the performance of sacrifices, they are known collectively as *desa*. They are as follows: *kala* means the time, *prthag-dravya*, the different detailed paraphernalia, *mantra*, hymns, *tantra*, scriptural evidences, *agni*, fire, *rtvik*, learned performers of sacrifices, *devata*, the demigods, *yajamana*, the performer of the sacrifices, *kratu*, the sacrifice itself, and *dharma*, the procedures. All these are for satisfying *Krsna*." (*Krsna Book 23*)

Although we find a variation in spelling, given as *rtvik* in the Folio, and given as *rtvij* in the online edition of *Krsna Book*, [25] this would not likely be the reason TFO omitted the reference, since in the derivations of *rtvik*, the root *rtvij*, e.g., in *rtvijah* and *rtvijam*, is included in the list.

In this *Krsna Book* reference, as in other *Bhagavatam* references, the *rtvik* is clearly defined as being the performer of sacrifices. In the context of *diksa* initiations, there is the fire *yajna* element of the process. There are also the steps of giving names, chanting on beads, accepting names for the book, etc. Of course, the July 9th Letter clearly states that it is the Temple Presidents who are to perform fire *yajnas* (sacrifices) – not the 11 named "*rittik*" representatives:

"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."

So one of main activities mentioned in the July 9th Letter that might be said to meet the criteria for '*rtvik, learned performers of sacrifices*' as set down here in *Krsna Book*, is not even an activity the 11 *rittik* representatives are instructed to perform.

In one of the above citations, *Srimad Bhagavatam 4.7.27*, the sloka opens with "*rtvijah ucuh*" – '*rtvijah-the priests*'. In his *Bhaktivedanta Purport*, *Srila Prabhupada* states:

"Those who are serious students of the Vedas are very much attached to the ritualistic ceremonies mentioned in the Vedas, and therefore these veda-vadis cannot understand that the ultimate goal of the Vedas is to understand Lord *Krsna*, or *Visnu*."

And he quotes *Bhagavad-gita 2.42* on "the crude Vedic scholars":

"Men of small knowledge are very much attached to the flowery words of the Vedas, and they say that there is nothing more than this."

In the *Purport to Srimad Bhagavatam 2.6.26* we read:

"To perform a sacrifice successfully, at least four expert priests are needed: one who can offer (hota), one who can chant (udgata), one who can kindle the sacrificial fire without the aid of separate fire (adhvaryu), and one who can supervise (brahma)."

Of course, Srila Prabhupada has not given a comparative definition of *ritvik* or 'officiating priest' as being an officiating initiator... diksa, siksa, or otherwise. And as the authors of "Disciple of my Disciple" [\[31\]](#) point out:

"Ritvik" means "priest," and a priest is not obliged to act on someone else's behalf. The yajna brahmanas of Vrndavana were ritviks and were acting on their own behalf. One may argue that their yajna was not an initiation, but still they were acting on their own behalf, as opposed to the [Krishnakant's] Controversy Paper's "very definition of ritvik."

The remainder of TFO's comments under Objection #1 deal primarily with its arguments on how the process and formalities of initiation relate to *ritvik* initiators, which it argues in support of its post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa vada. The purpose of our analysis is to defeat the evidence underlying that asiddhantic system, not to consider its application, therefore our comments on Objection #1 end here. We will instead move on to the last section of TFO before Appendices:

What is a *ritvik*?

"*Ritviks* are often defined in one of two incorrect ways:

- 1) As insignificant priests, mere functionaries, who simply dish out spiritual names robotically.
- 2) As apprentice *diksa* gurus who are acting as *ritviks* only until they are fully qualified, at which point they will initiate on their own behalf."

Like the author of TFO, we don't accept either of the above two definitions. *Ritvik-vada* critics of our position often find fault with our use of the terminology "Ritviks", as we apply it to the adherents of *Ritvik-vada*, therefore we refer the reader to our rules of usage for the term, mentioned above in the 'Technical Notes' section at the beginning of this paper.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

We will now address two relevant items included under TFO's Appendices that have not yet been mentioned:

Appendices

Letter From Ramesvara, July 21 1977

In "A Word and a Staple, Part One" [32], we offered a detailed commentary on the contents of this letter from Ramesvara dasa Swami, and on the circumstances surrounding its origination and distribution. Among the most pertinent aspects of this letter to the discussion hand are the following statements:

"...am enclosing herein ... 2) Srila Prabhupada's initial list of disciples appointed to perform initiations for His Divine Grace."

Ramesvara has referred not to *officiating acarya(s)* or *ritvik acarya(s)*, or even to *rittik representatives*, but simply to *disciples* with an appointed task.

"From Tamal's letter it seems that Srila Prabhupada is enthusiastic despite poor health, and is translating full force."

And, Ramesvara confirms that Srila Prabhupada is continuing full force with his writing work. Not surprising, then, that in both his July 7th and July 9th communicaés, Srila Prabhupada included himself as an active participant in the initiations process.

Pyramid House Confessions, December 3rd 1980

Like the May 28th Conversation and the July 9th Letter, the transcript of Tamal Krishna Goswami's 'Pyramid House Confessions' is used by both TFO and the ISKCON GBC to support their conclusions on *guru-tattva*.

At the famed Pyramid House in Topanga Canyon, Los Angeles, Tamal Krishna said this about the July 9th Letter:

"Now I understand that what he did was very clear. He was physically incapable of performing the function of initiation; therefore he appointed **officiating priests** to initiate on his behalf. He appointed eleven, and he said very clearly, 'Whoever is nearest can initiate'. [...] He named them. They were spread out all over the world, and he said, 'Whoever your 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.**"

Notably, in his 1980 disclosure, Tamal Krishna uses the term *officiating priests*, acknowledges they'll initiate on Srila Prabhupada's behalf, and they are not serving as guru.

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

You cannot show me anything on tape or in writing where Prabhupada 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 be come a father when your father disappears, if you are qualified. No appointment. It doesn't require an appointment, because there isn't one."

In his Pyramid House admission, Tamal Krishna comes to the same conclusion we do: Srila Prabhupada appointed assistants, not gurus, although he expected his qualified disciples to become gurus themselves. One becomes a diksa guru by qualification, not by appointment. Srila Prabhupada demonstrated this in his ISKCON, doing exactly what his Spiritual Master had done before him. He did not appoint a successor acarya, or a succession of initiating diksas to take over initiations after his departure.

DEFEATING RITVIK-VADA

In simple terms, the foundation of Ritvik-vada was built by Krishnakant in TFO using these cornerstones:

- dropping the word *acarya* from the *officiating/ritvik acarya* in the May 28th Conversation;
- marrying that *ritvik* up with the *ritvik* in the July 9th Letter, but without the *acarya*;
- co-opting a longevity factor in the May 28th Conversation (initiations after Prabhupada's departure); and
- marrying that longevity factor up with *henceforward* in the July 9th Letter for the post-samadhi element.

In so doing, the author of TFO:

- ignored the fact that the May 28th *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* were to be diksa gurus initiating their own disciples after Srila Prabhupada's departure;
- ignored the problem-solving connection between the July 7th Conversation and the July 9th Letter;
- ignored the fact that on July 7th, Srila Prabhupada said he would participate in the initiations system ("*India, I am here*");
- ignored the word *may*, that refers to an optional action on the part of the Temple Presidents (not the *ritvik* representatives); and
- ignored the fact that Srila Prabhupada was part of the system described in the July 9th Letter.

TFO attempts to strengthen its position by adding the following evidence, which it refers to as 'supporting' and 'subsequent instructions':

- use of the words '*continue*' and '*future*' by Tamal Krishna in his personal correspondence to devotees [although Tamal Krishna's statements are not synonymous with Srila Prabhupada's instructions, and in no way modify Prabhupada's instructions]
- Srila Prabhupada's statement, "*become ritvik*", in a July 19th Conversation [conflicting versions of which are duplicated in TFO's Appendices, without citation, and which have no bearing on post-samadhi application of the system regardless]
- the Will, which mentions a '*system of management*' [but is actually related, very specifically, to properties and tangible assets, with absolutely no reference to initiations; and which predates the July 9th Letter by over a month]
- the Codicil [which refers to a Will of a different date, and which makes no mention of initiations or a *system of management*]
- and two GBC Resolutions that allegedly indicate matters related to initiation fall under the '*system of management*' domain [but the Resolutions are misrepresented, and serve as proof of nothing to do with the July 9th Letter or post-samadhi initiations]

To summarize the key rebuttals of TFO's evidence:

The cited letter from Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta, July 31st, 1977 states: "*...continue to become ritvik and act on my behalf.*" "*Continue to become*" indicates a work in progress for a representative who has not yet become a ritvik. In addition, there are anomalies regarding the quoted material contained in Tamal Krishna's letter, which does not match up with the audio transcript evidence. Even so, the statements in this letter can in no way be characterized as 'modifying the July 9th Letter instructions', which is the category of evidence assigned to these items according to TFO's definition.

The July 11, 1977 letter from Tamal Krishna to Kirtanananda, based on TFO's criteria for evidence, could only fall into the category of evidence that modifies the instructions of the July 9th Letter. And again, there is absolutely nothing in the letter that does any such thing. The letter simply mentions: "...*the process for initiation to be followed in the future*". But "in the future" cannot arbitrarily be made synonymous with 'forever after for up to 10,000 years', anymore than the word '*henceforward*' can. This letter is notable, in that it defeats the notion that Srila Prabhupada's health was so precarious at the time that he had removed himself completely from the initiations process. That notion is also repudiated by the July 7th Conversation and the July 9th Letter.

The third and final piece of evidence put forward in "Supporting Instructions" is an excerpt from the July 19, 1977 Conversation. Again, it contains no statements which "*clearly indicate that the ritvik system was intended to continue without cessation*", or which "*only support the continuation of the ritvik system*", as TFO asserts. Although this piece of evidence falls into the category of 'conversation transcripts accepted as authentic by the GBC', we pointed out several anomalies related to the conversation excerpted. Most notably, the excerpt is duplicated in TFO's Appendices and there are significant differences in the two texts, one going in favor of TFO's thesis.

With respect to the Will and Codicil, the date of the Will shows that it preceded the July 9th Letter, and therefore it cannot be considered a "subsequent instruction". The Will says nothing about initiations. The Codicil refers three times to a Will that has a different date than the one put into evidence by TFO. And the Codicil says nothing about a "*system of management*", what to speak of referring to a system for initiations.

In its concluding remarks to the section entitled 'The 'Appointment Tape', TFO states:

"1. On July 9th 1977 Srila Prabhupada appointed 11 *ritviks* to carry out first and second initiations 'henceforward'."

He appointed 11 *ritvik representatives of the acarya*. He did not appoint *acaryas*. The *ritviks* he referred to on May 28th were specifically stated to be *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* who would perform diksa initiations **after** Srila Prabhupada's departure. These persons are **not** one and the same as the 11 *ritvik representatives of the acarya*, who were instructed to assist with initiations, making diksa disciples on behalf of Srila Prabhupada **while he was present**.

Nor does the term '*henceforward*' refer to an action on the part of the 11 *ritvik* representatives. It refers to an action on the part of the Temple Presidents who **may**, in future, begin sending recommendations to the *ritvik* representative of the acarya who is closest to them. Not that they **shall**, or that they **must** send letters to them *henceforward*, for the next 10,000 years. Simply that the Temple Presidents *henceforward* may choose to send letters to the *ritviks* – an optional variation provided by Srila Prabhupada to streamline the system and resolve the bottleneck.

It cannot be said that because a letter, optionally sent by a Temple President, is received by a *ritvik* representative, that therefore the '*henceforward*' option would apply to the *ritvik*, even if the

Temple President did not send them a letter. 'Henceforward', as used in the July 9th Letter, does not refer equally to actions on the part of both Temple Presidents and *ritviks*.

When TFO refers to "*the order*" it is, for all intents and purposes, pointing collectively to the following:

- a) the July 9th Letter;
- b) a phrase in a devotee letter (July 19th) – "*continue to become ritvik*";
- c) the Will;
- d) the Codicil, and (presumably)
- e) phrases in two additional pieces of devotee correspondence (July 11th & 31st).

That represents the sum total of evidence in support of "*the order*", as TFO presents it.

We have defeated every aspect of TFO's collective evidence.

On May 28th, Srila Prabhupada said he would, sometime in future, recommend *officiating/ritvik acaryas*. **He never did so.**

In the July 7th Conversation, a bottleneck problem was presented and Srila Prabhupada gave a solution for it. That solution was memorialized in the July 9th Letter.

Neither the May 28th Conversation, the July 7th Conversation or the July 9th Letter authorize a post-samadhi ritvik diksa system.

In his conversations of May 28th and July 7th, Srila Prabhupada did not use the term '*henceforward*', or any other word referring to longevity that could be construed as relating to a post-samadhi *ritvik* instruction. Tamal Krishna introduced the word '*henceforward*' in the July 9th Letter he authored. In the letter, the word '*henceforward*' is used in a sentence that specifically refers to an action on the part of the Temple Presidents – **not** to an action on the part of the 11 named *ritvik* representatives.

We reject TFO's notion that upon Srila Prabhupada's departure, the statement in the July 9th Letter – "*Now that Srila Prabhupada has named these representatives, **Temple Presidents may henceforward** send recommendation*" – is an instruction that triggers a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. Likewise, we reject the notion that this statement became the 'object of modification' by the GBC.

As we can understand by their own statements [1 & 2], the GBC **did not** derive their primary authority for diksa gurus from '*henceforward*' – they derived it from the terms *officiating acarya(s)/ ritvik acarya(s)* in the May 28th Conversation, these being terms directly associated with initiations to be conducted after Srila Prabhupada's departure. The GBC bridged the word '*acarya*' over to the July 9th Letter primarily via the word '*ritvik*', not the word '*henceforward*'. TFO makes an error of logic [EL 3] in this regard, attempting to imbue '*henceforward*' with magical powers that it simply does not have, and accusing the GBC of doing the same.

In the letter, '*Henceforward*' specifically refers to an action that **may** be taken by Temple Presidents. It does not refer to an action the *rittik* representatives must take. Yet TFO's Modifications **a)** and **b)** refer specifically to actions on the part of the *rittik* representatives – not to actions of the Temple Presidents. Claiming that '*henceforward*' has been 'modified' by the actions of the 11 representatives denies the fact that the word does not primarily refer to the *rittik* representatives.

"We shall base all our arguments solely on the philosophy and instructions given by Srila Prabhupada in his books, letters, lectures and conversations."

TFO's arguments do not remotely fit this parameter. TFO's Modification **a)** and **b)** arguments are not based on the philosophy or the instructions of Srila Prabhupada, but rather on Krishnakant's own interpretations of GBC actions, which are characterized according to his own faulty logic.

In challenging the GBC, TFO states:

"Over the years increasing numbers of devotees have began questioning the legitimacy of these basic assumptions."

Likewise, over the years an increasing number of devotees, including the authors of DOR, have been questioning the legitimacy and basic assumptions of Ritvik-vada. Likewise, we don't accept the GBC's institutionalization of diksa, although we do accept the sastric injunction that qualified disciples may become diksa gurus themselves after the Spiritual Master departs. But despite this difference, we join the GBC in concluding that **Ritvik-vada cannot be substantiated by fact, logic or philosophy, and is therefore asiddhantic.**

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It has been our position over the years that Srila Prabhupada remained purposely vague rather than give his disciples specific authorization as acaryas or successive diksa gurus, beyond private statements like the one made to Tusta Krsna [\[8\]](#). This was demonstrated not only by some of the things Srila Prabhupada said, but even more so by what he did not say.

The May 28th dialogue began with Satsvarupa inquiring as to how initiations will be handled after Srila Prabhupada is no longer with us. Associating that conversation with the July 9th Letter, many devotees have struggled to understand why the letter – the final order on initiations – did not specifically mention a system for post-samadhi initiations. Many have great difficulty accepting the concept that Srila Prabhupada would not definitively spell out who the exact personalities are that he approved of as being qualified diksa gurus following his departure. They do not understand how the Movement could go on without such a specific instruction for initiations after the close of Srila Prabhupada's manifest *lila*. Consequently, they have been convinced by Krishnakant, *The Final Order* and the Ritvik-vada movement borne of it, that the July 9th Letter is the crucially needed post-samadhi instruction.

We have stated numerous times our opinions as to why Srila Prabhupada did not give specific authorization for acaryas or appoint successor diksa gurus. He undoubtedly expected his disciples to continue developing their Krsna consciousness, becoming qualified in the future. While we can only speculate about it, surely he understood that they thought they were qualified, and he no doubt anticipated that they would quickly assume the title and position of diksa guru after his departure. From a sastric perspective, of course, it is authorized for the qualified disciple to become diksa guru after the guru departs. Srila Prabhupada never went against sastric injunction, and therefore he wouldn't deny them their right to take disciples. At the same time, if he endorsed or specified who could assume that position, then he would essentially be held responsible for whatever they were going to do.

TFO asserts that by establishing a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system, Srila Prabhupada was following in the footsteps of his Spiritual Master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, by pushing forward the Sankirtan Movement. Because Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's mission was negatively impacted by his disciples instituting an unauthorized guru system after his departure, TFO asserts that Srila Prabhupada would never let such a thing happen to his mission – that somehow, he would manage things better than his own Spiritual Master had done, which is a most offensive thing to suggest.

"When one considers the magnitude of the order in question, namely the continuation of the Sankirtan mission for up to ten thousand years and what happened to the Gaudiya Math over precisely this issue, it seems inconceivable that Srila Prabhupada would have managed things in this way." [PE 1]

TFO claims that in order to avoid the same problems experienced in Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's mission, Srila Prabhupada instituted a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system for ISKCON initiations after his departure. We say he did nothing of the sort. We assert that Srila Prabhupada followed his Spiritual Master in this regard, not that he attempted to improve upon his Guru Maharaja's methods. [PE 1]

Like Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, our Prabhupada did not appoint successor acaryas. He remained somewhat vague as to exactly who would be authorized to give diksa initiations after his departure, knowing full well that sastra lays down the rules in this regard – and these rules he had spoken many times. He was not required to name individuals who would succeed him as acaryas or as diksa gurus, just as his Spiritual Master had not done.

In the 'Introduction' of TFO, author Krishnakant states that his main points of reference will be the GBC's *GII* handbook on initiation [1] and the official GBC paper, '*On My Order Understood*' [2], which is mentioned in the *GII*. In 2004, 8 years after TFO was first published, the GBC passed a Resolution at the 2004 Annual Meeting, replacing '*On My Order-Understood*' as the official GBC policy, and offering in its place the language contained in Resolution. 409, "Continuing the Disciplic Succession". [33]

Resolution 409 states that "The GBC officially accepts the following conclusions about continuing the disciplic succession", including these statements:

"As a matter of utmost ecclesiastical responsibility, ISKCON's ultimate managing authority, the GBC, regulates who within ISKCON may perform the service of initiating disciples.

When the GBC allows a devotee to take up the service of initiating, it does not thereby endorse him as an *uttama adhikāri* or "pure devotee" or certify his having achieved any specific state of realization. Rather, the GBC indicates that it has no objection to his initiating disciples within ISKCON.

Within this context, the choice of whom to select as one's spiritual master is ultimately the prospective disciple's own **responsibility**."

No substantive changes have been made to ISKCON's policy on initiations since Resolution 409 was put on the books. Known officially as the "No Objection" Diksa Guru program, and more commonly known as the Guru Rubber-stamp program, it effectively serves as a representation of the GBC's present understanding of the final order on initiations contained within the July 9th Letter.

The GBC have not come to the same conclusion Tamal Krishna Goswami eventually did in his 1980 Pyramid House Confession – that when the Spiritual Master departs, the qualified disciples have a right to become initiating gurus, not by appointment, but by sastric injunction. Instead, as the 'ultimate managing authority', the GBC continues to enforce an institutional approach to diksa initiation that is neither siddhantically sound nor practically effective. Many GBC members and leaders today will admit, off the record, that the institutionalization of diksa in ISKCON is a failed experiment.

This paper, in addition to serving as our contribution to the defeat of *The Final Order* and Ritvik-vada, is also proffered as a bridge the GBC are encouraged to cross in eliminating some of the problems inherent to ISKCON *guru-tattva*. Adopting this solution, which is one step in the right direction, simply requires accepting and publicly acknowledging the following facts, which are clearly established herein:

1. The July 9th Letter does not recommend 11 *officiating/ritvik acaryas* who will carry out diksa initiations after Srila Prabhupada's departure. It simply names 11 *rittik representatives of the acarya* to assist with initiations while Srila Prabhupada is present.
2. The word '*henceforward*' in the July 9th Letter does not order that the 11 *rittik representatives of the acarya* will **automatically** become diksa gurus upon Srila Prabhupada's departure, initiating diksa disciples of their own. '*Henceforward*' specifically refers to an optional action the Temple Presidents may take, not to an action the 11 *rittik*s must take ever after.
3. The standing body of Gaudiya Vaisnava sastra, within which Srila Prabhupada's own extensive body of instructions reside, provides ample basis for the process of disciplic succession – when the Spiritual Master departs, his qualified disciples may themselves

become diksa gurus. Accepting and acting upon this sastric platform does not require reliance upon an interpretation of the May 28th Conversation and July 9th Letter in which the *officiating/ritvik acaryas* mentioned on May 28th are made out to be one and the same as the 11 *rittik representatives of the* acarya named on July 9th.

The GBC's interpretation of the May 28th Conversation and July 9th Letter appear to have developed, in large part, as a defensive response to *The Final Order* manifesto and subsequent papers from the Ritvik-vadis. But the GBC can clarify the portion of their position that does not serve ISKCON *guru-tattva*, just as they changed their earlier conclusions via Resolution 409.

As stated in the GBC's *GII* handbook (1.5.6.1):

"No guru should declare himself or allow himself to be declared an "acarya" or "present acarya" for ISKCON or for a geographical area of ISKCON. There should be no use of the word acarya" as a title of office."

This edict would appear to reject an interpretation of the May 28th Conversation and July 9th Letter in which the *officiating/ritvik acaryas* mentioned on May 28th are one and the same as the 11 *rittik representatives of the* acarya named on July 9th. **That point of clarification should be clearly and specifically made by the GBC.**

The GBC has rightly rejected the Ritvik-vada interpretation of '*henceforward*' as an order for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. But they have not yet made it clear that their current institutional Diksa Guru program does not derive its authorization, just as *The Final Order* does, from a bridge built from the May 28th mention of *officiating/ritvik acarya(s)* to the July 9th appointment of *rittik* representatives of **the acarya**.

If the GBC does not clarify its position by repudiating the notion that the July 9th Letter appointed 11 *ritviks* who were ordered, via the May 28th Conversation, to automatically become diksa gurus upon Srila Prabhupada departure, then they will continue to feed the fires of the asiddhantic Ritvik-vada. And there is **no need** for them to do so – it serves no practical purpose for the GBC or ISKCON at large. It only perpetuates the Great Ritvik Debate by suggesting, from the GBC side, that the July 9th Letter is imbued with an element of longevity that simply does not exist.

The ISKCON GBC are faced with the difficult task of understanding sastra, particularly Srila Prabhupada's many instructions, and putting them into practice as they effectively lead the society in delivering Lord Caitanya's Sankirtan Movement to the world. Solving the many institutional problems they face, from dealing with 'parallel lines of authority' to grappling with a constitution and a philosophical statement identifying His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and his place in the *guru-parampara* – these are weighty affairs, and how they are handled will have enormous and far-reaching consequences.

Today, some GBC members are themselves calling for discussions on the institutional Diksa Guru program, which a percentage of the leadership has long been dissatisfied with, much like

the institutionalization of sannyasa. We suggest that the GBC would be well served to take this first step – to abandon and renounce certain elements of their position on the May 28th Conversation and July 9th Letter which serve to bolster the Ritvik-vada position as established by *The Final Order*. Doing so would be a show of good faith that would give hope to thousands of devotees, both within and presently outside of the ISKCON institution.

At the center of every practical problem is a philosophical problem. In this case, the GBC have it within their power to make what is, from a practical standpoint, a relatively small adjustment that would help solve a significant philosophical problem.

As the author of TFO himself said:

"Anything, which can bring about some sort of resolution to this controversy has got to be positive for anyone who truly cares about Srila Prabhupada's Movement."

APPENDICES & REFERENCES

- [\[APX-1\]](#) *The Final Order* (1997)
Original version saved in 1997 (without logo) and analyzed in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*
- [\[APX-2\]](#) *Performance of the 11 Rittik Representatives, July to November 1977*
[\[APX-2a\]](#) See also: Srila Prabhupada Disciple Database (Zip file)
- [\[APX-3\]](#) *Index of Errors in The Final Order*
- [\[APX-4\]](#) *Construction of the Final Order*
Comments on the inherent structural problems existing within TFO
- [\[APX-5\]](#) *Comparative Review of the May 28th Conversation Transcripts*
- [\[APX-6\]](#) Side-by-side comparison of 8 versions of May 28th Conversation transcripts
M28C Comparisons.xls
- [\[APX-7a\]](#) Audio of May 28th Conversation - M28C.mp4
[\[APX-7b\]](#) - M28C.wmv
[\[APX-7c\]](#) - M28C Audio Source - <http://www.archive.org/details/May28>
- [\[APX-8\]](#) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) [To be completed]
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- [15] June 2, 1977 Room Conversation Transcript
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[16 b] Srila Prabhupada's Will (Page 2)
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Guru-tattva Archive: <http://www.harekrsna.com/sun/guru-tattva/guru-tattva.htm>

Contact the Author: Rocana dasa – sun@harekrsna.com

ERRATA

Since the date of publication, the following changes have been made to all three versions of *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*:

AUG 03 2012: Addition of footnote for Reference [14] - full-length version p. 41; abridged version p. 50