

Many wonderful contributions have been made on the recent topic of guru, initiation, diksa, siksa etc. I would like to summarise what has been said and what I have understood so far and elaborate a bit on what has been and is the common feeling amongst devotees, because senior devotees are discussing these topics ever so urgently. They are very concerned about what has become of Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON in such a short time since he physically left this world.

They are increasingly concerned, knowing very well that in the next 10 years or so many of us will not be any longer present in our physical bodies. Time is running out to turn around the ISKCON ship for the benefit of humanity at large. The dangers to become the Hare Krishna religion or another Hindu religion based on religiosity and not spirituality are too great to ignore.

First of all, I want to congratulate Rocana Prabhu for his “ [Sampradaya Acarya](#) ” article ([Sampradaya Acarya Thesis](#)) and his recent article, “ [The Latest Victim of Religiosity](#) ”. These are both brilliant contributions and are a kind of a torchlight illuminating the whole debate.

Personally I feel the fog on guru-tattva is clearing more than ever before. I would therefore like to summarise what I have understood so far and what would be the most beneficial and workable solution for ISKCON today:

Srila Prabhupada is the Sampradaya Acarya, the head of our sampradaya and the 32nd link coming from Lord Brahma. Who can argue with this and who would dare to disagree? Only those who want to diminish Srila Prabhupada. Maybe the Gaudiya camp will not be happy with this, but who could and would disagree from within ISKCON?

Maybe it will stay like this for the next 10,000 years, who knows? We have been so fortunate to have had 3 Sampradaya Acaryas in the very recent past.

Following from this is that no one, and really NO one at the present moment in time is equally qualified as Srila Prabhupada, a pure uttama liberated diksa guru. Full stop. It is obvious. No one should therefore attempt to usurp this position. This is an immediate disqualification for any sort of guruship. And mere lip service alone will not do either anymore.

Therefore stop all guru-pujas other than Srila Prabhupada's. Guru-puja as we learned from Srila Prabhupada is exclusively reserved for the pure devotee uttama-adhikari liberated Sampradaya Acarya. Even the Gaudiya Math don't do elaborate guru-pujas like this.

No more foot bathing either. Jesus was washing the feet of his disciples. We can do this instead. What a nice and humble example. No more Vyasa Pujas other than Srila Prabhupada's. And no more guru daksina or alternatively, guru daksina has to go in a transparent pool. That will be hard to swallow as it threatens the livelihood of some. Of course, sannyasis should be financially maintained no doubt, and a way has to be found to practically do that in a transparent way. This is actually a minor issue and it will all fall in place once the major adjustments regarding diksa and siksa guru have been implemented.

Guru should be understood to be siksa or vartma pradarsaka guru. Let's leave the diksa guru position for Srila Prabhupada only as long as no one else is qualified and has come up to this level. And of course, every siksa or vartma pradarsaka guru will be judged by how much he or she is able to imbibe Srila Prabhupada's mood and teachings and how much he is able to instill this in others and bring them to Srila Prabhupada's lotus feet. This means Srila Prabhupada is in the centre once again, the real centre, not just lip service.

I came across a very nice quote recently, which seems to confirm all this. Srila Prabhupada explains that a diksa guru may not always be available. In this case one has to take shelter of a siksa guru. One can never be without guru at any stage. In any case siksa reigns supreme. It is the essence of our sampradaya, which is primarily a siksa sampradaya as some of the writers on this forum have so nicely pointed out.

Where does that leave the Ritviks? Ritvik is not an answer nor a solution, as much as it might seem on the surface. It is a non-starter, really. Srila Prabhupada has been the diksa guru of some but he is no longer physically present in his vapu form to perform that diksa, however, he is very much spiritually present in his vani form. And that is what we are after and should be after if we really want to make real spiritual advancement.

To mind comes a very interesting and supremely important quote, even though we really always knew it all along instinctively:

“Therefore having a bona fide spiritual master and serving him and pleasing him and getting his mercy is essential. Otherwise there can be no advancement in Krishna consciousness. And unless the spiritual master is a pure devotee of Krishna then he has no potency to give you Krishna. He is simply a cheating rascal.

So in fact, above all the rules and regulations and offenses I have mentioned the most important thing, the essential thing, which is required if you want to come to the stage of purely chanting the Hare Krishna mantra is you must have a bona fide spiritual master who is a pure devotee of Krishna. Without having a bona fide spiritual master you can chant Hare Krishna forever but you will not be able to advance because Krishna does not reveal Himself in this way. He only reveals Himself to those devotees who surrender to and serve and please His pure devotees.”

(Srla Prabhupada Letter to his London Disciples, July, 1969)

It couldn't be clearer than this. Regarding Ritvik, I personally always felt why would anyone want to be diksa initiated by Srla Prabhupada after he left his vapu form, when his siksa is so readily available. Can't we be satisfied with Srla Prabhupada's siksa? It doesn't really make that much of a difference in terms of spiritual advancement, as we can see by the example of so many wonderful Vaishnavas whose guru has fallen down and who subsequently didn't opt for another fallible diksa guru, but took full shelter of Srla Prabhupada's siksa. No re-initiation.

And when someone asks who is your guru maharaja the answer should proudly be, 'Srila Prabhupada'. And it is a fact, if someone takes instructions from Srila Prabhupada in all sincerity and makes that connection within his heart, then Srila Prabhupada is certainly his or her guru maharaja, not by diksa, but by siksa.

On the other hand there are examples of diksa initiated disciples of Srila Prabhupada who have deviated from his siksa, even to the point of posing as pure uttama liberated souls when they were and are not on that platform, and when they are not qualified. The result of this we have just recently witnessed again and again.

The question therefore comes to mind, what is the essence of the guru/disciple relationship? It is siksa, imbibing the mood and following the instructions of Srila Prabhupada and understanding his rightful position and 'initiating' others into this mood, thus spreading Krishna consciousness like wildfire again. It is really that simple.

And what are we initiated into? The Brama Madhava Gaudiya Sampradaya, of course. We are not initiated into ISKCON or some guru's ashram or project. No, we are actually linked and introduced into the pure transcendental disciplic succession. Moreover, this link can only be made by a pure, liberated uttama devotee like Srila Prabhupada. All siksa and vartma pradarsaka gurus are acting with this in mind. They bring everyone to the lotus feet of Srila Prabhupada, the 32nd link of the sampradaya coming from Lord Brahma, and thus increase the transcendental sampradaya. Beautiful!

Anyone who puts himself equal or higher than Srila Prabhupada and anyone who can't appreciate his position as the 32nd link of the sampradaya since Lord Brahma is immediately disqualified to act as siksa, or vartma pradarsaka guru even. Such a person is an imposter and cheater. Srila Prabhupada says in this connection:

"You can cheat, but it will not be effective. Just see our Gaudiya Matha. Everyone wanted to become guru, and a small temple and "guru." What kind of guru?"

Today the question should be asked: Is the latest fall from grace the final straw which changes forever the present understanding and practice of initiation in ISKCON? If not yet, then how many more have to fall from grace till the GBC understands the proper siddhanta? The community of devotees certainly understands by now.

Or has one of the really 'big' gurus to abandon the ship before things change? It may very well turn the entire Indian community against ISKCON, 'be mouse again', a laughingstock. 42 so-called pure devotee liberated diksa gurus fell down since Srila Prabhupada wound up his pastimes in this world, I have been told. This is almost a guru per year! What a track record. It's time for change.

And those who still think or allow others to think they are pure devotees on the highest platform of liberated uttama-adhikari, let them boldly proclaim they are the 33rd link of the eternal transcendental parampara since Lord Brahma. Who dares to take this position without proper qualification? I could not imagine anyone so audacious to do so.

I rest my case here and would love to see others tweaking and adjusting what I have put down. I feel the direction is right and similar to what others have recently expressed on this forum. The fog is gradually clearing regarding the proper understanding of guru-tattva. Thank you Srila Prabhupada, and thanks to all the assembled Vaishnavas.

Most of all, please forgive any offences I might have caused by expressing my thoughts and understanding of guru-tattva. I have no axe to grind, I have no hatred towards any individuals either, however, I am increasingly concerned about the direction ISKCON is heading in. I feel the ISKCON ship is off course and will quickly run aground if it keeps on going in this direction. We now understand the proper direction this ship should be going in for the benefit of humanity at large. Let's change course, let's do it before it is too late! We have done it once, we can do it again.