

# Accepting the Challenge

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## Nuevo-Mantra

Since April of 1997 there has been a new mantra adopted in some Vaishnava circles. It's not quite as popular as the mahamantra, but considering how much it has been chanted in the last two years one might begin to think that Srila Prabhupada failed to teach it to us. This magical mantra has the powerful ability to free the practicing yogi from being exposed to any dissenting opinions so he can fix his mind on one thing without interruption. It is known as the RFO mantra and is regularly chanted whenever a traditional devotee attempts to respond to the request for dialogue with a disenfranchised devotee. As soon as there is some difference of opinion the RFO-jvara is invoked. At that time the wind stops blowing, the earth stops turning and the demigods assemble in an attempt to decipher the sound vibration that can be heard rising up to the heavens: *“Read Final Order! - Read Final Order! - Read Final Order!”*

OK ladies and gentlemen I'm sorry. I read the Final Order (FO). The first time was shortly after it was compiled in April 1997. Back then it intrigued me, but I never took it very seriously because I was uncomfortable with the way words were dissected for the purpose of arriving at what seemed to be a lot of forced conclusions necessary to support a contrived hypothesis.

About a year later I was surprised to discover how many intelligent devotees were taking the FO so seriously. I decided to read it again in order to understand what captivated them so much and in doing so I developed more appreciation for how the document was crafted but remained unconvinced that it properly represented Srila Prabhupada's wishes.

Now the disciples of Srila Prabhupada are absorbed in a full-blown not-so-civil-war and a big part of the reason for this war is the hypnotic potency of the RFO mantra and the FO-Sastra. The practitioners of this new mantra apparently believe this document is flawless and that it remains philosophically undefeated. This viewpoint is maintained despite the numerous arguments that have been presented with equally convincing evidence which points to completely different conclusions. So what to do?

## The Curtain of Sanctimony

I have avoided the ardent task of pinpointing just what it is about the FO-Sastra that doesn't hold together because devotees who are far more qualified than I have already presented so many good papers on the subject. I didn't feel I could be any more convincing than they were. I was also reluctant to spend the tremendous amount of time that is necessary to undertake such a task properly. But in the process of studying the whole guru/rtvik controversy I found myself getting drawn into the challenge because so many devotees I truly admire and respect have taken the FO-Sastra so seriously. So I decided that I would read it once again for the third time. My objective was to either allow myself to become convinced of its conclusions, or identify what it is specifically that keeps me from joining the RFO choir.

I apologize to those of you who may be offended by the pasquinade style of writing I use to convey my conclusions. Unfortunately there is nothing humorous about the ugliness that has driven devotees who once served each other prasadam into opposite sides of the courtroom. If our branch of the Vaishnava tree were not so tragic it would be amusing. But it is true that sometimes the most effective way to identify an inconsistency in ourselves is to extend the attitudes we have habitually adopted past the dimensions we are familiar with. The extremists may roar and declare foul play, but those who remain open to objective thinking might just find enough reality hidden in a caricature of ourselves to come out from behind the curtain of sanctimony.

So let's begin this endeavor with.... well how about the very beginning!

## Among Titles I Am Four Syllables Joined By Two Words

The "Final Order" is an excellent name for this Neo-RtVik study because it is very emotionally compelling. The name alone practically demands the attention and respect commanded by other high profile documents like: "*The TEN Commandments*" or the "*Constitution Of The United States*". Considering how many people who have become captivated by the FO-Sastra, one almost expects to find the title embossed diagonally across it's front in military-font, fire-engine-red letters similar to strategic national defense orders stamped: "**TOP SECRET**"

I must complement the authors for coming up with such a dramatically effective name. But if we set aside the action packed title for a moment, and take a closer look at how the FO-Sastra is written, we discover that the July 9<sup>th</sup> letter is constantly being referred to as a direct "ORDER" from Srila Prabhupada.

This is rather peculiar considering the fact that His Divine Grace never indicated that his July 9<sup>th</sup> letter was either an "Order" or the last thing he would do. Later on we discover that the same authors get very picky about what is to be considered an "Order" in regards to Srila Prabhupada "ordering" someone to become a Guru. Here they even concede that they would accept the conclusions of the GBC if Srila Prabhupada "... said something (very specific) like 'I am now ordering you...'"<sup>1</sup> But because the RtViks have not found such clear and literal statement they contend that their suggested system must be correct and should prevail.

Considering how meticulous the authors of the FO-Sastra are at interpreting how everyone else uses the English language the title they have chosen indites them of practicing a double standard. When it's advantageous to adopt a strict interpretation of the word "order", nothing less than the most precise, literal, and exact use of the word will be accepted. But when it's time to generate powerful propaganda, a loose interpretation is applied to the same word and the end result is a title that is printed very authoritatively across the cover in...

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<sup>1</sup> Page 23. Paragraph 10 "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 MASS doctrine. However, as can be seen, nothing even remotely resembling such a statement can be found anywhere in the May 28 conversation."

# ...34 POINT BOLD TYPE.

It appears the FO-Sastra got it's mighty title because the authors subjectively decided to join the word "order" with the word "final". In reality we find that this particular combination of words were only used by His Divine Grace twice and in both cases they were in reference to surrendering to Krishna, not to the task of appointing RtVik Gurus.

*"The Lord's **final order**, or law, is that every conditioned soul surrender unto Him, learn to serve and love Him, and thus go back home, back to Godhead." - REF. SB 11.21.28 "*

*"'Always think of Me and become My devotee'—should be taken as the **final order** of the Lord and should be followed". - REF. TLC 11: Service to the Lord*

## **Playing By The Same Rules**

Using the same literal style of interpretation that the authors of the FO-Sastra apply to everyone else, we must conclude they believe Srila Prabhupada never issued any subsequent "orders" after July 9<sup>th</sup>. Of course the whole problem with this type of sterile approach to the language is that Srila Prabhupada was not a drill sergeant at a Marine Core boot camp and did not go around issuing orders to anyone. He simply presented the message of Godhead and taught us that if we really wanted to taste the nectar that the soul hankers for we should follow *his instructions*.

Yet despite this the authors evidently felt the *instructions* given on July 9<sup>th</sup> not only constituted a "order" but Srila Prabhupada very last one! If we adopt clinical RtVik thinking we would naturally conclude that this is either an incredibly poor evaluation of what Srila Prabhupad did for the last 128 days of his life or intentionally misleading. Neither alternative reflects very well on those who are requesting us to accept their findings as logical, consistent, and without motive.

Later we find the same ones who took these journalistic liberties holding ISKCON lawmakers to a very rigorous legalistic interpretation of every statement they make or any scripture they present. But we need not look any further than just the title to see how the FO-Sastra very cleverly twists the vernacular use of the language into whatever interpretation that suits their purpose. At first glance it all appears very logical and convincing to the casual reader, but it is neither analytically consistent nor academically proper. To find such disparity on the first page renders the whole document suspect and makes is hard to take anything that follows the first few words very seriously.

*"Srila Prabhupada: If you miss one point, there is a mistake in your calculation. **Regardless of what you add or subtract after that, the mistake is already in the calculation, and everything that follows will also be faulty**". - SSR, Cp. 4. "Kishna, Christos, Christ"*

Under normal circumstances we would consider that the authors took some "Poetic License" for the purpose of dubbing the document with a **LARGER THAN LIFE** Madison Avenue like title. But the followers of the FO-Sastra are not just ordinary folks who communicate like the rest of us. These are the pundits of clinical interpretation and hidden meaning. If we apply equal ground rules for how things are to be understood it certainly appears that we have identified a glaring hypocrisy already in just the commanding title.

There will undoubtedly be those who will get upset with this observation, insist I am being unfair, and may even accuse me of being a bit fanatical myself for presenting such a terse analysis! I agree that first impressions have a way of sometimes being misleading. So even though it required that I continue to descend into the plexus of the FO-Sastra, I decided to do so in order to reduce the chances of being subjected to the RFO mantra yet once again.

## The “G” Word

A careful reader will perceive the double standards and flip-flop reasoning that weaves through the FO-Sastra making it anything but a reliable representation of Srila Prabhupada’s wishes. There are numerous examples.

All the thrashing about over the word “order”, is really a ruse to dodge the fact that Srila Prabhupada did *instruct* his disciples to become Spiritual Masters.

*“At the same time, I shall request them all to become spiritual master. Every one of you should be spiritual master next. And what is their duty? Whatever you are hearing from me, whatever you are learning from me, you have to distribute the same in toto without any addition or alteration. Then all of you become the spiritual master. That is the science of becoming spiritual master”.* – Sri Vyasa Puja Lecture -- Hamburg, September 5, 1969

Notice that the word “Guru” is not used in this quote. Yet we find that the FO-Sastra has presented strategically selected quotes that contain the “G” word when it suits their need in order to play interpretation games on the term “Guru.

## Pin the Prefix on the Guru

Depending on the nature of the reference provided the ardent RtVik will mechanically paste the appropriate prefix *Diksa* or *Siksa* in front of it to arrive at the conclusion most desired. When it is said that the guru is a “*Mahabhagavat*”, should be accepted as “*God,s Representative*”, or is described as “*nitya siddha*” then the word gets the green light for being interpreted as “*Diksa Guru*”. The intended result is that the unsuspecting reader gets the impression that all the quotes where Srila Prabhupada said “You Become Guru” become watered down to mean “You become a RtVik priest”.

When the “G” word is used in reference to Lord Caitanya’s Instruction the *Siksa* prefix is pasted in front of it because the idea of every disciple becoming a *Spiritual Master* is apparently such a remarkable order that the only thing the authors can think of doing with it is reject it! But we are not interested in what others can’t comprehend. We are interested in what is being taught. The following reference is just one of the numerous places where Srila Prabhupada clarified what both he and Lord Caitanya wanted.

*“Therefore Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, amara ajnaya guru haya tara sarva-deca, tara ei deca. He’s asking everyone to become a spiritual master. So how everyone can become a spiritual master? A spiritual master must have sufficient knowledge, so many other qualifications. No. Even without any qualifications, one can become a spiritual master. How? Now the process is, Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, amara ajnaya: ‘On My order.’ That is the crucial point.”* – Bhagavad-gita 2.2 -- London, August 3, 1973

In this verse there is no opportunity to play “*Pin the prefix on the Guru*” game. Srila Prabhupada is distinctly stating that Lord Caitanya is *ordering* us all to become *Spiritual Masters*. He even repeats the Bengail words *amara ajnaya* which, when spoken by Lord Caitanya, literally means “**HE IS ORDERING**” us all to do this.. It is also ludicrous to suggest that Lord Caitanya gave this order and for some strange reason Srila Prabhupada is instructing us NOT to follow it. We shall see a little later just how silly this suggestion really is and discover that to shy away from the job is not even an option for a serious devotee. Interestingly this verse also happens to be the reference the FO-Sastra uses to build their hypothesis on.

## Feeble Argument

The FO-Sastra presents two very feeble and obscure references in an attempt to negate that Lord Caitanya authorized ALL his followers to become Spiritual Masters. The first one happens to be in the purport of the controversial “*amara ajnana*” verse. It is important to know that this sloka is found in the Caitanya Charitamrta where Krishna Das Kaviraga is telling the reader about a story of a Brahmana called Kumar who wanted to leave family life to travel with Lord Caitanya. In that purport Srila

Prabhupada elaborates on the personal instruction that Mahaprabhu gave the Brahmin in regards to not leaving his family in the name of religious duty.<sup>2</sup> This is quite evident to anyone who reads the text in context with the story that is being narrated. But by extracting this passage out of the frame it has been placed in, and focusing the reader's attention on it alone the way it has been done in the FO-Sastra, we get a distorted understanding of what is being conveyed. The skewed understanding is exactly the one the authors want the reader to have. We are then left to believe that this is the conclusive purport of this story. This suits the author's agenda quite well but is it really true?

Srila Prabhupada quoted the verse where this purport is found many times over the course of several years. Each time he would speak more about what it means and in doing so he literally expanded the purport all through the duration of his ministry. To get an idea of just how much he wanted us to take up this *order*<sup>3</sup> I queried the Folio to find out how many times the words "*amara ajnaya*" was found in the same record block as the word "*Guru*" and it indicated over 150 references. Knowing that there will be those who are habituated to playing the "*Guru Prefix Game*", I then substituted the word "*Guru*" with "*Spiritual Master*" and the following list emerged.

**References Where the Frequently Cited Caitanya Caritamrita Madhya 7.128 verse is specifically translated by Srila Prabhupada using the term *Spiritual Master*.**

- Preaching is the Essence 2.47*
- Lecture Bhagavad Gita 2.2. - London, August 3, 1973*
- Lecture Bhagavad Gita 4.14-19 - New York, August 3, 1966*
- Lecture Srimad Bhagavatam 7.7.25-28 - San Francisco, March 13, 1967*
- Lecture Bhagavad Gita 4.1-2 - Columbus, May 9, 1969*
- Initiation Caitanya Dasa & Wedding of Pradyumna & Arundhate – Columbus, May 14, 1969*
- Lecture Srimad Bhagavatam 1.5.13 - New Vrindaban, June 16, 1969*
- Room Conversation – San Diego, June 29, 1972*
- Sri Vyasa Puja -Hamburg, September 5, 1969*
- Lecture Srimad Bhagavatam 1.2.11 - Vrindaban, October 22, 1972*
- Sri Vyasa Puja -Hamburg, August 22, 1973*
- Lecture Bhagavad Gita 13.13. - Bombay, October 6, 1973*
- Morning Walk - March 9, 1974 Mayapura*
- Lecture Srimad Bhagavatam 7.9.28 - Mayapur, March 6, 1976*
- Lecture Srimad Bhagavatam 5.5.14 - Vrindaban, November 2, 1976*
- General Lecture, Unknow Date. - Folio Record 371,348*

I invite the skeptical reader to consult this list and check if for yourself. Srila Prabhupada *stated over and over again that he wanted us all to become Spiritual Masters based on Lord Caitanya's original order 500 years ago*. The FO-Sastra offers just one short sentence from the purport of this verse, along with an extremely distorted interpretation of what it means, in a very feeble attempt to rebut the avalanche of evidence that indicates something quite clearly to the contrary.

The second quote is even more interesting for us to consider.<sup>4</sup> First let us notice how the authors isolate the following eight words "*It is best not to accept any disciples*", and use it as a false stepping

<sup>2</sup> Section 7. Page 11. Paragraph 2. "*That is, one should stay at home, chant the Hare Krishna mantra and preach the instructions of Krsna as they are given in Bhagavad-gita and Srimad Bhagavatam.*" Caitanya Caritamrita Madhya 7.128 Last sentence of the purport.

<sup>3</sup> *yare dekha, tare kaha 'krsna upadesa amara ajnaya guru hana tara' ei desa "Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Sri Krsna as they are given in the Bhagavad-gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land."* – CC. Madya 1.128

<sup>4</sup> Section 7. Page 11. Paragraph 3 "One may remain a householder, a medical practitioner, an engineer or whatever. It doesn't matter. One only has to follow the instruction of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, chant the Hare Krishna maha-mantra and instruct relatives and friends in the teachings of

stone to conclude that Srila Prabhupada did not want us to become Spiritual Masters. The problem here is that this conclusion is a direct contradiction to all the quotes provided above. So how are we to understand it?

We all know that there are many things that have the potential to derail one's spiritual life. Associating with the faithless is one of these threats yet Srila Prabhupada sent his disciples into the mouth of Kali yuga everyday in the form of book distribution. Similarly we find in the Caitanya Caritamrta that it is forbidden for anyone to "...accept the order of Sanyasa".

*"In this Age of Kali, five acts are forbidden: the offering of a horse in sacrifice, the offering of a cow in sacrifice, the acceptance of the order of sannyasa, the offering of oblations of flesh to the forefathers, and a man's begetting children in his brother's wife." - Adi 17.164*

Yet we know that Srila Prabhupada not only took sanyasa himself but he also awarded it to many of his own students as well! What is evident by all this is that the dedicated followers of Lord Caitanya are willing to take very serious risks in the process of distributing the holy name.

*"Only the Vaishnava come, even at the risk of fall down—but they do not fall down. A Vaishnava is even willing to go to hell to deliver conditioned souls." - Matchless Gifts 2: "Getting Out the Material Mire"*

Accepting disciples is certainly a very dangerous risk for obvious reasons that we are all too familiar with. So it is not strange that Srila Prabhupad would remind us of how serious it is when one takes up the order to become a spiritual master by soberly pointing out: "It is best not to accept any disciples." It's also best not to go onto a battlefield because one could get very seriously hurt there, but it is the duty of the soldier to do that very thing despite the inherent dangers.

## Hermeneutics

The authors of the FO-Sastra are very willing to hone in on these eight words in an attempt to negate the order given by Lord Caitanya but mature readers familiar with the rigorous rules of Hermeneutics don't fall for such cheap tricks. The average devotee is not even necessarily familiar with this word or what it means and that may be a good explanation for why the FO-Sastra has been able to ply its way into appearing credible for so many. The point is that the ability to interpret religious scripture is a refined science that has established rules and procedures that must be adhered to if the resulting conclusions are to be considered credible. That science is called hermeneutics<sup>5</sup> and the type of things that we are pointing out in this paper violate these accepted standards so scandalously no religious scholar of any merit would take the FO-Sastra seriously.

Here is yet another startling example of what can only be considered very sloppy work or a politically motivated agenda. In the *VERY NEXT PARAGRAPH*, after we are told it is best not to accept disciples, Srila Prabhupad specifically states that *great souls DO take the risk of accepting disciples despite the inherent danger and this word of caution.*

*"Similarly, Narottama dasa Thakura and other great acaryas like Madhvacarya, Ramanujacarya and others accepted many thousands of disciples to induce them to render devotional service..."*

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the Bhagavad-gita and Srimad-Bhāgavatam. One has to learn humility and meekness at home, following the instructions of Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and in that way one's life will be spiritually successful. One should not try to be an artificially advanced devotee, thinking, "I am a first-class devotee." Such thinking should be avoided. It is best not to accept any disciples." – *Caitanya Caritamrta Madhya 7.130 Purport*

<sup>5</sup> **hermeneutics** 1. The art or science of interpretation, esp. of the Scriptures 2. The branch of theology that deals with the principles of Biblical exegesis, (critical explanation or interpretation, esp. of Scripture. To show the way, interpret.) [1730-40] 3. Interpretive, explanatory. - *Random House Websters College Dictionary 1991.*

It's easy to see why the RtViks would want to avoid paragraph two of the purport they were so anxious to extract just eight words from because just a little further along Srila Prabhupada *completely condemns those who oppose the idea of Vaishnavas accepting thousands of disciples*. He even goes so far as to call them *sahajayas* because they offend Lord Caitanya by criticizing those who are actually engaged in preaching!

*“...However, there is a class of sahajiyas who think that these activities are opposed to the principles of devotional service. Indeed, they consider such activities simply another phase of materialism. Thus opposing the principles of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, they commit offenses at His lotus feet. They should better consider His instructions and, instead of seeking to be considered humble and meek, should refrain from criticizing the followers of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu who engage in preaching. To protect His preachers, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has given much clear advice in these verses of Sri Caitanya-Caritamrta.” - Madhya 7.130 Purport, Paragraph Two*

What is easily missed with all the hair splitting that the FO-Sastra relies on is how carefully the quotations have been sifted over, censored and presented to lead the reader to a forced conclusion. At first glance the FO-Sastra appears to rebut the suggestion that that Srila Prabhupad wanted his disciples to become *Diksa* Gurus by only citing references where the word *guru* has been used and then pasting the *Siksa* interpretation on it. The FO-Sastra does acknowledge the personal letters His Divine Grace wrote to certain individuals stating that they could initiate, but then the instructions gets quickly dismissed as irrelevant because they were not presented as general instructions to the whole body of devotees.<sup>6</sup>

But a completely different picture emerges when we change our focus from the word “*Guru*” to the word “*Spiritual Master*.” The authors would like very much for us *not to notice* how they keep our attention on the battle over the interpretation of the word *Guru* while they surreptitiously elevated the term “*Siksa Guru*” to mean the same thing as “*Spiritual Master*.” The veil of distraction is made even greater when the authors intentionally slip in that both the “*Spiritual Master*” and the “*Siksa guru*” have the duty to spread Krishna Consciousness all over the world.<sup>7</sup> So what! An officer of the law and a school teacher also have the duty to speak truthfully, but in neither of these cases are the terms synonymous simply because they share some similar duties.

Let us remember here that the root meaning of the word *Diksa*, in Sanskrit, literally means “*initiation*” or “*one who initiates*”, and the word *Siksa* means “*one who teaches, instructs, or educates*”. When we have a proper understanding of what these Sanskrit words mean, we can see how they clearly point to the fact that it is the duty of the spiritual master to give initiation, and the duty of the “*Siksa Guru*” to give instruction. The term “*Siksa Guru*” is not upwardly compatible with the concept of “*Spiritual Master*.” no matter how much the FO-Sastra attempts to convince us that it is!

*“Srila Jiva Gosvami comments that the spiritual master is to be considered the atma, or the very life, of the disciple, since real life begins when one is initiated by a bona fide spiritual master. Although one may experience many seemingly wonderful or important events in a dream, one’s real life begins when he wakes up. Similarly, since the spiritual master gives birth to the disciple by awakening him to spiritual life, a bona fide disciple understands that his spiritual master is the very basis of his life.” - Srimad Bhagavatam 11.3.22*

Would the authors of the FO-Sastra dare to claim that this is the definition of a “*Siksa Guru*”, or would they try to convince us that Jiva Gosvami got it all wrong? It's essential for the authors of the FO-Sastra to blur the distinction between the term *spiritual master* and the term “*Siksa Guru*.” If they fail to do so their entire argument crashes pathetically to the floor and is exposed as the most incredible hodge-podge concoction of ideas ever to be suggested by a bewildered follower of Lord Caitanya! Once again

<sup>6</sup> “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 9<sup>th</sup> order since these instructions were not repeated to the rest of the Movement. The letters in question were not even published until 1986. “Section 7. Page 13, Paragraph 8.

<sup>7</sup> Section 7. Page 13. “The term ‘bona fide spiritual master to spread Krsna Consciousness throughout the whole world’ is equally applicable to a siksa guru.”

the Folio provides ample evidence where Srila Prabhupada clearly stated that his intent was for his disciples to become "Spiritual Masters". There is no opportunity here for the FO-Pundits to use their *Elmers Glue*.

### **"Everyone (can/will) become a spiritual master"**

- *Bhagavad-gita Lecture 4.34-38 -- New York, August 17, 1966*
- *Srimad Bhagavatam Lecture 1.2.2 -- London, August 10, 1971*
- *Bhagavad-gita Lecture 2.2 -- London, August 3, 1973*

### **"You become spiritual Master"**

- *Bhagavad-gita Lecture 4.1-2 - Columbus, May 9, 1969*
- *Sri Vyasa Puja Lecture - Hamburg, September 5, 1969*
- *Sri Vyasa Puja Lecture - Detroit, July 16, 1971*
- *Srimad-Bhāgavatam Lecture 2.3.1 - Los Angeles, May 19, 1972*
- *Sri Vyasa Puja Lecture - London, August 22, 1973*
- *Bhagavad-gita Lecture 2.19 - London, August 25, 1973*
- *Srimad Bhagavatam Lecture 2.1.1 - Delhi, November 4, 1973*
- *Srimad Bhagavatam Lecture 2.1.5 - Delhi, November 8, 1973*
- *Srimad Bhagavatam Lecture 1.15.28 - Los Angeles, December 6, 1973*

## **Manicured Quotes**

Based on the numerous references cited above it is completely deceiving to suggest to the innocent reader that such evidence was not "readily available in an authorized form"<sup>8</sup> when his Divine Grace left his body on November 14, 1977. The evidence has always been very much available and it is not limited to a few personal letters offered as conciliatory promises, to ambitious devotees, if they agreed to behave themselves! The list we have here is made up entirely of public lectures and when considered with the other list of references previously cited we find that there was plenty of evidence "readily available" and to mislead devotees into thinking anything less is "...recklessly inappropriate!"<sup>9</sup>

This is another reason why it is essential for the authors to re-direct our attention away from the term "Spiritual Master". By doing so they can drag the responsibility of the "Spiritual Master" down to the relatively simple role of a local instructing "Siksa Guru" priest.

Linguistic magic tricks and a few manicured quotes may befuddle the casual reader but the volume of evidence that has been cited here makes it very clear that the word "Spiritual Master" does not mean "Siksa Guru" and that Srila Prabhupada clearly wanted all his students to become "Spiritual Masters".

*"It is not that spiritual master is partial, he designates one and rejects other. He may do that. If the other is not qualified, he can do that. But actually his intention is not like that. He wants that each and every one of his disciple become as powerful as he is or more than that. That is his desire. Just like father wants every son to be as qualified or more qualified than the father. But it is up to the student or to the son to raise himself to that standard." -Room Conversation -- San Diego, June 29, 1972*

## **The Consequences of Challenge**

I really had no intention or desire to write such a technical article about the Final Order. I have stated all along that my interest in exploring the possibilities of an "Alternative Initiation Method" (AIM) has

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<sup>8</sup> Section 7. Page 13. Paragraph 9. "To form a case regarding what should have been done in 1977, one can only use evidence that was readily available in an authorized form at that time."

<sup>9</sup> We are borrowing this descriptive term from the FO-Sastra but applying it in what feel is a more appropriate way. Section 7. Page 13. Paragraph 10. "In light of the above, any attempt to modify the July 9<sup>th</sup> order on the basis of these hand full of letters can only be deemed recklessly inappropriate."

never been based on the FO-Sastra. My suggestion has always been strictly for logical, rational, pragmatic and intelligent preaching reasons alone. But one of the consequences of jumping into the debate has been that many devotees have requested me to comment specifically on the content of the Final Order. I have been challenged many times by devotees I have great respect for with the question. "Where is the Flaw? If you can not say what it is you object to, you must admit defeat!"

So I have accepted the challenge knowing full well that no matter what evidence I present there are some who will never acknowledge the conclusions it points to. I have no desire to try and persuade those who still believe in Santa Clause or the Easter Bunny that their imagination is greater than the intelligence. This work is not meant for them and I prefer they not even read it because it will just make them upset. This work is meant for all the devotees who read the Final Order and knew there was something wrong with it but couldn't quite put a finger on what it was or didn't feel like taking the time to do so.

I expect the defenders of RtVik philosophy will send out their damage control pundits to strategize on how they can obfuscate the simple observations I have made in this one short article. Those of you who don't feel a need to do that may be wondering if there are any other problems I encountered as a result of accepting the challenge to study the FO-Sastra. Quite frankly the answer is yes. There are so many anomalies, contradictions and misleading statements in the FO-Sastra that I am overwhelmed with the task of feeling obliged to offer it all to the greater public for their perusal.

So I suggest that the die-hard FO-Pundits consider waiting until I have had an opportunity to present the rest of my findings before they make the wrong assumption that this is the only material they will have to dream up ways to refute. I apologize to all my dear God-brothers who have invested so much energy, faith and effort in the veracity of the Final Order. As much as I respect your sincerity and commitment to Srila Prabhupada's mission I remain unconvinced that His Divine Grace wanted a RTVik system now more than ever. I have been challenged so many times to explain what it is about the FO-Sastra that I disagree with so now I am doing that. I hope you will all realize this paper is a response to that request that you have collectively made of me and it is only the tip of the proverbial ice burg. There are just so many problems with the FO-Sastra, I just can't accept it for anything more than recycled note paper. I am sorry that I must disagree with your conclusions. But despite this fact I will continue to pray that we share enough common ground to continue chanting, taking prasadam, and distributing Srila Prabhupada's divine message to the rest of the world side by side the best we know how.

Despite what others will accuse me of I did not set out to prove the RtViks wrong. I actually agree with the idea of reform that they have become instrumental in bringing to the forefront. But I feel the basis of that reform can not be founded on principals that are as equally unfounded as the misdeeds that have been done in the name of spreading Krishna Consciousness. We should not use a politically oriented faulty document to base change on or the result will be no better than what we currently have. The names may change and the offenses will show up in a different form, but the end result will be the same.

## **Nothing For A Guru To Gloat About**

If you are an ISKCON hard core reading this and gloating with ecstasy right now I request you please stop doing so. The society Srila Prabhupada has asked you to lead may be thriving in some places around the world, but many of his own disciples who have contributed to that success have been seriously mistreated and there is no way His Divine Grace would be pleased about that! As the Gaudia Vaishnava tree continues to grow the challenge for wise and mature leadership will become even more demanding. There is still much for us all to learn about the proper way to interface with the rare souls who surrender to the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord. The need to do so is compounded even more when other Vaishnavas disagree with us or happen to be situated on one of the many other significant branches of Lord Caitanya's family tree. There is nothing for any of us to become complacent or proud about. There is a whole world of people out there still waiting to hear the message of Godhead and until they do, they will continue to suffer beyond imagination.

I am actually very uncomfortable with the results of this analysis because I fear that the conclusions I have reached will only lead to further abuse and the same type of transgressions that have given ISKCON leadership such a bad name. The fact that Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has ordered all

aspiring devotees to take up the burden of becoming a Spiritual Master is a very serious request that can only be carried out properly if one is rigorously honest with oneself. If there is even the slightest tinge of personal ambition then the whole process becomes perverted. The imposter who does not remain true to paramatma runs the risk of being sent into the darkest regions of hell if he pretends to be anything more than he truly is.

Many devotees have rallied behind the guise of a *final order* not because it is philosophically sound but because there has been far too many transgressions in the name of spiritual leadership. These devotees have every right to be very upset and campaign for reform until the disciples entrusted to preserve Srila Prabhupada's reputation rise to a higher level of integrity than what has been demonstrated in the past. In the end, after we have completed the few short years we have been allotted to spend on this planet, each one of us will face the challenge of having to navigate our own atma back to Godhead. When that time comes the determining factors will not be how well one has performed the part of an "*enlightened soul*", but whether or not one has actually lived their life genuinely anxious to serve the servant of one who is engaged in serving the Supreme Personality Of Godhead.

*"In the Hamsa Gita section of Mahabharata and in Srila Rupa Gosvamis Upadesamrta, there are instructions regarding the sannyasa order of life. A conditioned soul who adopts only the external ornaments of tridandi-sannyasa will not actually be able to control the senses. One who takes sannyasa for false prestige, making a show of saintliness without actual advancement in krsna-kirtana, will soon be vanquished by the external energy of the Lord." - REF. SB 11.18.17*

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