

# The Parampara Institution In Gaudiya Vaisnavism

–Jagadananda Das –

*Great philosophers could not reach the end of your glories, oh Lord,  
even if they should think on them with increasing joy for æonchars.  
For, in the form of the intelligence within and the teacher without,  
you destroy all inauspiciousness and reveal the way to attain you.*[\(1\)](#)

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## Introduction

One of the primary areas of concern in scholarly work surrounding new religious movements in the last decade has been that of succession. Since most new religions are centred about charismatic religious leaders, the death of a founder presents his or her followers with a crisis which is crucial for the survival of the sect he or she has created. In the context of those religions which have South Asian origin, the charismatic leader is given particular emphasis as the guru, who is often, as David Miller says,

... at the centre of sacredness. Sacred texts and the worship of deities are secondary matters compared with the centrality of the guru whose interpretations of the texts are often looked upon as more sacred than the texts themselves.[\(2\)](#)

In the Indian tradition, great importance is placed on the personal search for a guru; it is the divine mission of a seeker to encounter a knower of the truth.[\(3\)](#) Each individual guru is an institution in himself, whether he establishes one temple or monastery or many, and is obliged at the time of his death to seek some kind of continuity. Because of the individualistic nature of the guru/disciple interface, however, the tendency of Hinduism is to ever-increasing splintering of sectarian groups. This process has been characterized by David Miller as 'the core of living, ever-changing and ever-evolving Hinduism.'[\(4\)](#)

Though each guru or teacher in a tradition is technically independent, they usually claim loyalty to a particular sampradaya or spiritual family, to whose founder they

are linked through initiation (diksa) or 'ordination'. Neo-Hindu gurus like Aurobindo, Rajneesh, Sai Baba or Sri Chinmoy place less emphasis on such ordination, claiming the independence of their own realization, but such gurus are far less common than those who adhere to a specific line of disciplic succession. Though they may be individualistic, they generally adhere to and indeed claim complete loyalty to the teachings of their line. Initiation is the ritual legitimization of a disciple and qualifies him to carry on the tradition. Though there is generally no over-arching institutional authority or Church to discipline diverging religious opinions, sampradayas formed by an individual do have a theological coherence and a clear control of orthodoxy. Thus those gurus who would diverge from the orthodox line to form their own subsect are rarely so free from the weight of tradition that they can claim their own religious experience to be entirely independent of it. Injunctions to remain completely loyal to the teaching of the guru militate against wanton innovation in matters of doctrine.

In this paper I would like to examine the evolution of one branch of one Hindu tradition, that of Caitanya Vaisnavism or Gaudiya Vaisnavism, known to the western world through the institution of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), by looking at the history of its disciplic succession. Controversies which arose in the aftermath of the death of the founder of ISKCON, Bhaktivedanta Svami Prabhupada, have their preshadowing in the problems of succession which followed the death of his guru Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati who, though claiming adherence to the doctrine of Caitanya, made a trenchant break with the contemporary institutions of that tradition to form his own organization, the Gaudiya Math. This innovation within the Caitanyaite tradition has possible ramifications for the future of ISKCON and we look at it as an interesting case study.

### **ISKCON after the death of Bhaktivedanta**

In a volume of papers discussing the future of new religious movements in 1987, the question of ISKCON's future centred to a great extent around the problems of succession to Bhaktivedanta Svami Prabhupada, who had died in 1977. Rodney Stark, whose introduction set the parameters for much of the discussion, questioned the future ISKCON's ability to maintain coherency or unity. On the basis of earlier research by Larry J. Shinn, probably the foremost scholarly authority on ISKCON in North America, he concluded that 'for the Hare Krishnas, guru authority systems are inimical to effective organization and are subject to constant fission and schism, since members are committed to a particular guru, not to a larger organization.'[\(5\)](#)

In an article in the same volume, however, Shinn interestingly seems to have changed his opinion. Referring to the consolidation of the administrative power of ISKCON's leadership over the possibly anarchic forces of individual guruship, he concluded with the somewhat triumphal sounding sentence, 'To use Max Weber's categories, the charisma of the founder had been institutionalized.'[\(6\)](#)

No doubt a milestone of significance had been reached. Shinn's earlier view had been based on an interesting analysis of ISKCON in which he discerned an individualism in the spiritual life emphasizing private ritualistic practices such as chanting, etc., which in turn led to a prioritizing of a vertical relationship with the guru over the horizontal relationship with fellow practitioners. The first schism by

one of the successor gurus Jayatirtha, who had left with a number of loyal disciples, seemed to give support to this opinion.

By 1987, however, Jayatirtha's defection had failed disastrously and many of his supporters, including his own wife, had returned to the parent body, and furthermore, the institutional body known as the GBC (Governing Board Commission) had asserted its authority as the highest ecclesiastical body over and above those amongst them who had specifically been entrusted by Prabhupada as initiating gurus.<sup>(7)</sup> Discontent with the dominance of the eleven original gurus, caused by their premature appropriation of the trappings of charismatic leadership 'the guru is to be worshipped as God himself' even amongst their peers, and their monopolization of the initiating function, had been defused by democratizing the institution, allowing all of Prabhupada's disciples to become initiating gurus (diksaguru) if they lived up to the criteria of the society.

In the intervening years, ISKCON's institutional strength has apparently increased as the enlarged GBC has consolidated its centralizing powers in the absence of the founder Prabhupada. To a great extent it was helped by the weakness of the original 11 gurus, at least 6 of whom fell away from ISKCON's ranks, leaving behind them numbers of confused disciples. The resolutions of the 1993 annual meeting of the GBC show the complete control that it has over matters of initiation, etc. Every stage of development, from initiation to samnyasa to guruship is subject to GBC approval. The guru-disciple relationship may develop naturally and autonomously, but is subjected to numerous controls by higher or equal authorities.

Thus, the centrifugal forces which Prabhupada had apparently set into motion by appointing 11 initiating gurus at the time of his departure, as well as by establishing an autonomous and independent temple management structure,<sup>(8)</sup> have been brought into harness by the strong central authority. The vertical relationship between guru and disciple, to which Shinn gave prominence in his first article have not proved to be stronger than the horizontal networks formed amongst god-brothers in a society dedicated to the principles of their spiritual master. In sociological parlance, ISKCON turns out to be more of an evangelical movement than an introspective association of individualistic seekers. In ISKCON's terms, it is a society of *gosthyanandis* (those who take pleasure in association) rather than of *bhajanandis* (those who take pleasure in individual spiritual practice).

### **Schismatic tendencies in post-Prabhupada ISKCON**

One of the developments of the period following Prabhupada's death was the intellectual ferment which took place in ISKCON as devotees who were accustomed to accepting decisions made for them by their spiritual master were now forced to do some original thinking about and come to acceptable conclusions in matters of doctrine. Few if any of the society's leaders were equipped to understand the Gaudiya Vaisnava tradition in its source languages of Sanskrit and Bengali, as their preoccupations had always been with management of the society and mobilization of its members. Indeed, scholarly pursuits had for the most part been frowned upon and Srila Prabhupada's writings given unique and absolute authority. Prabhupada himself restricted such scholarship of the original texts, insisting to his disciples that he was their unique conduit to the knowledge of the disciplic succession: 'Even

if you read some books you cannot understand unless you understand it from me. This is called parampara system. You cannot jump over to the superior guru [parama-guru], neglecting the next acarya, the immediate next acarya.'<sup>(9)</sup>

Prabhupada had furthermore discouraged all external association with members of other Vaisnava groups in India: on the one hand, his own spiritual master had divorced himself from the hereditary traditional diksa-gurus and vairagi practitioners of the faith, and on the other, there was friction between himself and the great majority of his god-brothers. He had once stated, 'Not one of my god-brothers is fit to be acarya.'<sup>(10)</sup> Prabhupada was evidently somewhat apprehensive of potential attrition to other groups. At the root of this potential attrition was the very fact that he claimed to be the pure representative of a tradition for which India had many pretenders, all of whom similarly claimed to belong to the parampara.

In general, Prabhupada's exclusivist rhetoric was accepted by his disciples. When Prabhupada died, however, ISKCON devotees found themselves immediately in need of guidance in the matter of burial rituals (samadhi) for which they turned to Narayana Maharaja of the Kesava Gaudiya Math in Mathura, who had been a priest at Prabhupada's samnyasa initiation.<sup>(11)</sup> Not long afterward, leaders of the movement approached Prabhupada's godbrother Bhaktiraksaka Sridhara of Nabadwip when the first questions about the ritual treatment of the successor gurus arose. Sridhara Maharaja had enjoyed a more cordial relationship with Prabhupada than his other god-brothers and it appears that Prabhupada had allowed the possibility of his disciples seeking consultation with him after his death.<sup>(12)</sup> Sridhara Maharaja's answers, based on his own experience in the Gaudiya Math, were sanguine about the possibilities of numerous acaryas working cooperatively. Though he accepted the legitimacy of ritual worship of the new gurus, he admitted that this could be a cause of friction. He compared the guru-disciple relationship to a marriage. When one is married one wants to live in one's own house or at least have a separate room. ISKCON authorities found that this affirmation of the primacy of the vertical relationship undermined the coherency of their institution and rejected it. The schismatic tendencies of the Gaudiya Math had been repeatedly condemned by Prabhupada and were not to be given any room to develop. Once again, going to Prabhupada's godbrothers was discouraged.

The dam was broken, however, and Sridhara became a charismatic source of attraction to many who were impressed by his scholarship and who felt the need for further guidance. Later, the aforementioned Jayatirtha went to Sridhara for guidance with a number of his own disciples. Though his own association with him was brief, numbers of his disciples sought initiation with Sridhara after Jayatirtha's apostasy and a further group of dissatisfied ISKCON devotees came to him seeking samnyasa. Some of these samnyasins and other disciples of Sridhara have continued to work in cooperation with Sridhara Maharaj's other disciples, while some have formed their own society called the Gaudiya Vaisnava Society. As the name reveals, these individuals feel themselves to be somewhat closer in spirit to the traditions of the Gaudya Math than is ISKCON itself. They still consider themselves to be disciples of Prabhupada, but in general, their relations with ISKCON are distant.

Since Sridhara Maharaja passed away in 1992, a number of ISKCON devotees and other Westerners have turned to one of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati's few surviving

sannyasin disciples, Bhaktipramoda Puri, who is now 100 years old. Others have turned for leadership and guidance to the aforementioned Narayana Maharaja.

Other attrition from ISKCON took place to the vairagi community. These persons were primarily those whose interest in the esoteric aspects of Krsna devotion led them to seek instruction in those aspects of Gaudiya Vaisnava scripture. Many of these have gone on to life as academics, others are continuing on as practitioners, such as Gadadhara Prana Dasa, who lives in Mayapura, and Advaita Dasa who lives and publishes books on *raganuga bhakti* in Holland. Gadadhara Prana is one of a number of devotees who took initiation from Bhaktivinoda Thakura's son, Lalita Prasada Thakura. But others have been attracted to some of the learned individuals amongst the babajis and hereditary gosvamis also.(13) Advaita Dasa is a disciple of Nikuñja Gopala Gosvami, a hereditary gosvami of the Advaita family.

Each of these groups can be said to represent a historical moment in the disciplic chain, and those Western devotees who engaged in a research of Gaudiya Vaisnava tradition found themselves pushing back one, two or three steps along the disciplic line Prabhupada had presented to them in order to find a different version of the Caitanyaite vision of truth. It is these distinct visions of the disciplic succession which are the subject matter of this article. But before we go on in this direction, let us examine one attempt at solving the 'guru problem' which arose within ISKCON itself.

### **The first ISKCON heresy: rtvikvada or the doctrine of the 'monitor guru'**

Though they were by no means the only dissenters within ISKCON in the 1980's, Rupavilasa Dasa and Karnamrta Dasa were amongst the most original and articulate in their ideas. These were primarily elaborated between 1985 and 1990 in a number of articles which were published in the *Vaisnava Journal*, and later in the *Vedic Village Review*, both short-lived publications.(14) Their ideas developed in the fermenting period of difficulties when the new order of ISKCON gurus was trying to establish itself. As Karnananda Dasa wrote:

By 1986 it had become clear to the majority of the elder members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness that the system meant to perpetuate the disciplic succession as it was formulated in 1978 had gone seriously awry. We found ourselves with an elite group of initiating gurus, a majority of whom claimed to be the sole dispensers of initiation into the Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya sampradaya, who claimed vast tracts of the earth as their exclusive domains, who thought it appropriate that they be worshipped on a par with the maha-bhagavata Srila Prabhupada, and who did all they could to prevent their disgruntled brethren from tampering with the status quo.(15)

If the aggressive domination of ISKCON's initiating spiritual masters were not enough, the inability of a number of them to maintain the high standard of orthopraxy required by the society confirmed the doubts of the dissenters. A large number of disciples of lapsed spiritual masters were thrown into confusion. Pressure was placed on these disciples to enter the camp of one of the other leaders. The situation was further complicated by a number of individuals who had taken a first initiation (Harinama) from Prabhupada and then a second (often called brahmana or gayatri)(16) initiation from one of his disciples.

The first point which these dissenters wished to emphasize was that initiation or diksa was a function which could only be carried out by someone who had attained a fairly high stage of spiritual realization. Though it was commonly accepted in ISKCON that the task of guru is taken up by someone in the middle stage of realization, a madhyama adhikari,(17) Rupa Vilasa and Karnamrta followed the works of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati to give a very high status to this stage, equating it with nistha. They concluded, '...there is a type of siksa guru who is not liberated, but who can aid the aspirant in his advancement. However, no mention is made anywhere of an initiating guru who is not liberated....'(18)

ISKCON leaders felt that the order to become guru was universally incumbent upon them. They had all been given the order to preach and consequently to initiate.(19) But Karnamrta and Rupa Vilasa's original proposal was to relegate the diksa function of the new gurus to a more ceremonial status and to stress the siksa or teaching of Srila Prabhupada and the predecessor acaryas.

If we consider that Srila Prabhupada was aiming for his books to give spiritual guidance for the next 10,000 years... [he] may be seen to assume his position as instructing spiritual master for all Vaisnavas who in the next 10,000 years read his books and thus become his disciples... As the Brahma- Madhva- Gaudiya-sampradaya continues, it is not unreasonable to assume that, beginning with Srila Prabhupada, it will be known as the Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya-Bhaktivedanta-sampradaya.(20)

In the course of their research, Karnamrta et al made an important discovery about the nature of ISKCON's disciplic succession which to them confirmed this priority of siksa over diksa. Prabhupada's predecessor Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati had bequeathed to him a parampara consisting of a number of disparate individuals, each of whom had made important historical contributions to Caitanya Vaisnavism but who had no relation of initiation (See Chart 1). This was given the name of a siksa-sampradaya.(21) Sridhara Maharaja explains this as follows: 'In the disciplic succession, only the great stalwarts in our line are considered important.' He compares it to the historical development of science through Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Einstein: 'If their contributions are taken into account, then the whole thing is taken into account and lesser scientists may be omitted.'(22)

This was no doubt a great revelation to many of the devotees in ISKCON who had been led to believe that a more direct relationship existed between the various individuals in the ISKCON parampara. In the collection of Prabhupada's printed statements on the disciplic succession, *The Spiritual Master and the Disciple*, there is not a word anywhere defending the concept of a siksa-sampradaya, even though, as shall be shown later, it had been a matter of controversy in the period following Bhaktisiddhanta's disappearance. In his books, Prabhupada invariably confirmed the primacy of the initiatory relationship:

The relationship [with Krsna] is established by connecting oneself with the bonafide spiritual master who is the direct representative of Krsna in disciplic succession... The connection with the spiritual master is called initiation. From the date of initiation by the spiritual master, the connection between Krsna and a person cultivating Krsna consciousness is established. Without initiation by a bonafide spiritual master, the actual connection with Krsna is never performed.(23)

Though Prabhupada did speak of the possibility of spiritual perfection without initiation, he nonetheless frequently quoted a verse from the *Gautamiya-tantra* and found in Baladeva Vidyabhusana's *Prameya-ratnavali*, which states unequivocally that unless one is initiated by a bonafide spiritual master in the disciplic succession, the received mantra is without effect.(24)

Karnamrta et al held that since none of the ISKCON gurus could claim to be a stalwart like the others in the sampradaya, they should rather sit back and either wait for a 'self-effulgent acarya' to come forth, and act as siksa gurus or 'monitor gurus' in the meantime.(25) This early understanding later developed into the rtvik doctrine, or what one opponent called 'the Christianization of ISKCON.'(26) Based on Prabhupada's so called 'appointment tapes', it was contested that he had ever intended for his chief disciples to be independent gurus, but rather that they should be officiating priests or rtviks, initiating disciples on his behalf even after his death.(27) Prabhupada's English was never entirely unambiguous, and his broken sentences answering questions fired at him simultaneously by two different people while he was on his deathbed were susceptible to creative hermeneutics by these dissenters. Even so, the new interpretation of Prabhupada's deathbed instructions found an eager group of listeners.

The rtvik theory seemed completely out of line with what had been taught to ISKCON all along, however, and despite the attractiveness of the doctrine-- it would superficially eliminate need for a perfected devotee, the absence of which was painfully felt by all, including ISKCON's leaders-- it could not take root in the society. It was too much of an innovation to find success in a society which claimed faithful adherence to a long tradition. The traditional process of devotional service called for a guru/disciple relationship which needed ritual sanctification in initiation. Furthermore, ISKCON's leaders felt that sufficient practical improvements in the political situation had been reached through reforms which democratized initiation and eliminated the artificial zonal guru system. The rtvik-vadis, for their part, felt by this time that increasing the number of gurus merely compounded the problem if no one was authorized to initiate, making more unqualified initiator gurus was just making a bad situation worse.(28)

The net result of this disturbance in ISKCON dogma was that initiation was confirmed as the legitimizing principle of the disciplic succession. However, charisma had to be routinized through a formal initiation process which allowed the organization to take precedence. Though technically Rupa Vilasa et al were correct in assessing the heterodox nature of the parampara instituted by Bhaktisiddhanta, they were unable to convince others that the society could function around a principle of siksa-parampara. On the other hand, their arguments about the importance of Prabhupada to the society confirmed a trend which has never been reversed: Prabhupada is the unique anchor of the movement. Prabhupada's consistent denial of the existence of qualified spiritual masters other than himself coupled with the necessity for political consolidation of the world-wide organization, meant that Prabhupada's books were enshrined as the only canonical authority for the society. ISKCON's publication house, the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) and the Bhaktivedanta Archives have seen to the publication of all of Prabhupada's lectures, letters, etc. Thus, in a recent theological controversy over the original ontological status of the soul, Prabhupada's writings were considered to

be the highest authority over the theological works of Jiva Gosvamin, etc., who were founding members of the sampradaya, who are named in Bhaktisiddhanta's siksa-sampradaya and whose works are universally accepted by Gaudiya Vaisnavas of all sects as canonical.[\(29\)](#)

## NOTES

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(1) BhP xi.29.6.

(2) Miller, David. 'The Guru As the Center of Sacredness.' *Studies in Religion/ Sciences Religieuses* 6, no. 5 (1977), 528.

(3) *tad-viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya | upadeksyanti te jñanam jñaninas tattvadarsinah* || Gita 4.11.

(4) op.cit., 530.

(5) Rodney Stark, 'How new religions succeed,' in *The Future of New Religious Movements*, (ed.) David G. Bromley and Phillip E. Hammond, Macon Ga: Mercer University Press, 1987; 16. Reference is to Larry D. Shinn, 'Conflicting Networks: Guru and Friend in ISKCON', *Religious Movement: Genesis, Exodus and Numbers*, edited by Rodney Stark (New York: Rose of Sharon Press, 1984).

(6) Larry D. Shinn, 'The future of an old man's vision: ISKCON in the 21st century'; 128. Shinn's discussion of Weber's categories, see *The Dark Lord* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 39-40. See also, Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, Translated by A. M Henderson and Talcott Parsons (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1947), 341-369. Also *The Sociology of Religion*, Translated by Ephraim Fischhoff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 46ff.

(7) See Larry J. Shinn, *The Dark Lord*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987. 54-60.

(8) ISKCON's temples operate as independent legal entities and have no direct legal connection to the parent organization. The parent organization has no proprietary rights over any individual ISKCON branch, though it does have control in doctrinal matters, etc. Each temple is controlled by a board which includes both local members and GBC members who have wider powers. David Miller, in his above-cited article, identifies the decentralization of associate mathas as a characteristic of the Hindu sampradaya as compared with Christian and Buddhist monasticism. Op. cit., 535.

(9) Lecture by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Svami, delivered in Los Angeles, 12/8/73. Cited by Virabahu Dasa, *The Guru and What Prabhupada Said*, 46. It should be noted that Prabhupada said other things which are less strict on this point. Note the citations made by Rupa Vilasa Dasa in the essay 'Jumping Over' in *Living Still in Sound*, 74-89. Nevertheless, the quote supplied above is one which reflects more accurately what was generally considered to be Prabhupada's ruling on the matter.

(10) Letter to Rupanuga Das, 5/28/1974.

(11) This was done with the prior approval of Bhaktivedanta himself.

(12) Cf. B. B. Visnu, *Our Affectionate Guardians*, Eugene, OR: Clarion Call Publishers, 1996.

(13) Charles R. Brooks states that 23 non-ISKCON Westerners were living in Vrindavan in 1985, but not all of these were Vaisnavas. He does not seem to have looked outside the town of Vrindavan to Radha Kund and other places frequented by Vaisnava foreigners. *The Hare Krishnas in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 102. With the increase in the number of the groups described above, this number has also doubtlessly increased.

(14) These articles have been compiled in an anthology *Living Still in Sound*, Washington, MS: New Jaipur Press, 1990. The official position of ISKCON vis-a-vis the arguments of the rtvik-vadins is expressed in the ISKCON Journal, 1.1, specially prepared for the Gaura Purnima pilgrimage of 1990. Two important ISKCON publications which present the guru-doctrine according to Bhaktivedanta Svami are *The Spiritual Master and The Disciple*, a compilation of references to the issue from the published works of Bhaktivedanta, compiled and edited by Subhananda dasa Brahmachari (Steven J. Geldberg), (Bombay: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1990), and *The Guru and What Prabhupada Said*, a compilation of relevant quotes from lectures, informal conversations and letters of Bhaktivedanta Svami, by Virabahu dasa (Marcos A. Zafarani), (Los Angeles: Fondo Editorial Bhaktivedanta, 1988). I would like to thank Steve Rosen (Satyaraj Das) for having made these works available to me.

(15) Karnamrta Dasa, 'The Diksha Guru: A Pragmatic Definition', in *Living Still in Sound*. ed. Karnamrta Dasa. Washington, MS: New Jaipur Press, 1990. 186.

(16) This two-tiered initiation process, though in vogue elsewhere amongst Gaudiya Vaisnavas, appears to have been formally institutionalized in the Gaudiya Matha and its sister organizations. Generally, a disciple is expected to follow the regulative principles of ISKCON for a period of at least six months prior to receiving first initiation, at which time he is given a rosary or japamala which has been chanted upon by his spiritual master and his 'spiritual' name. The second initiation comes after another year of discipline. At this time he is given the seven mantras: the Vedic Gayatri-mantra, guru-mantra, guru-gayatri, Gaura-mantra, Gaura-gayatri, Krsna-mantra and Kama-gayatri. Male disciples are invested with the sacred thread (*yajñopavita*). All those with the second initiation become qualified to engage in deity worship, cook for the deities, etc. In one article Karnamrta argues that the receipt of Harinama constitutes real initiation in order to emphasize that those who had only taken Harinama from Prabhupada were in fact his disciples and not those of the guru who had given second initiation. ('Although others give help in showing the way to beginners, the guru who first initiates one with the mahamantra is to be known as the initiator.' CC. Adi 1.34, Prabhupada's purport.). From the early Gaudiya authority Jiva Gosvamin's comments on the issue, however, it appears that diksa refers specifically to the mantra initiation. This is generally because even though

Harinama is best received from a pure soul, it is said to act independent of the initiation process (Cf. *Padyavali*, 29, cited, CC Madhya 15.110).

(17) Cf. BhP xi.2.46 or *Upadesamrta*, 4.

(18) Karnamrta Dasa, op. cit., 192. The steps of attainment are given by Rupa Gosvami in BRS i.4.10: *sraddha* (faith), *sadhu-sanga* (association with pious persons, etc.), *bhajana-kriya* (engagement in devotional acts), *anartha-nivrtti* (cessation of unwanted involvements including sinful activity), *nistha* (fixity), *asakti* (attachment to devotional activities), *ruci* (a genuine taste for them), *bhava* (feeling), *preman* (love).

(19) Prabhupada often quoted Caitanya's instruction: *yare dekho tare kaho krsna-upades | amar ajñaya guru hoi' tarao ei des ||* 'Instruct whomever you see in [service to] Krsna. By my order become a guru and save this land.' CCA, ii.7.128.

(20) Rupa Vilasa Dasa, 'Who is Guru?', in *Living Still in Sound*, 2-3.

(21) The parampara, though not explicitly named as such, is listed in a poem at the beginning of Sarasvati's *Anubhasya* on the *Caitanyacaritamrta*.

(22) *The Guru and His Grace* (San Jose: Guardian of Devotion Press), 101.

(23) *Nectar of Devotion* (Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1970). Cited, *The Spiritual Master and The Disciple*, ed. Subhananda Dasa (Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1978), 363. Literally hundreds of such references can be found through Prabhupada's works, lectures and correspondence.

(24) *Gautamiya-tantra* 29.5. *sampradaya-vihina ye mantras te nisphala matah |* Baladeva attributes this line and several which follow it to the *Padmapurana* where they cannot be found. *Prameya-ratnavali*, 1.5. For other references from Prabhupada see *The Spiritual Master and the Disciple*, 242ff.

(25) The expression 'monitor guru' comes from an isolated passage by Prabhupada: 'A candidate who has successfully reached up to the twelfth stage can also become spiritual master himself just as a student becomes the monitor in the class with a limited number of disciples.' *Easy Journey to Other Planets* (Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1969). The reference is to a statement in BRS i.2.38 where Rupa Gosvamin cites the *Bhagavata-purana* advising the aspiring devotee against taking too many disciples. Prabhupada takes the verse in a positive sense rather than as an absolute prohibition.

(26) Satyaraja Dasa, in *The ISKCON Journal*, I.1. The reference is to the idea that the relation of each individual throughout history is with the unique and never to be equalled saviour, who like Christ is considered to be the sole source of spiritual succour.

(27) Prabhupada had, from early on in the history of ISKCON, authorized disciples to officiate at initiating ceremonies on his behalf, in his absence. Those initiated at these affairs were considered Prabhupada's own disciples. The term *rtvik*, however,

was introduced during Prabhupada's dying days, when he allowed a number of his leading disciples to take full responsibility for all aspects of the initiation with the same understanding, that those initiated were his disciples. This procedure was one of Prabhupada's many innovations. The term *rtvik* has no currency in the Gaudiya tradition.

(28) Something similar to the *rtvik* theory may be in operation in other Hindu-based movements in North America. Current leaders of the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Society based in Val-Morin, Quebec, do not initiate anyone as their own disciple, but as disciples of Swami Vishnudevananda, their guru in the line of Sankara and founder of the SYVC. They openly admit that they have not attained a level of spiritual realization to take such a responsibility as 'one must realize the mantra before giving it.' Devotees who have been so initiated seem to have no problem with being the disciple of a person who they had never met and indeed was dead before they had even heard of him. [I have subsequently come to find out that this has changed in the intervening period, but there is little or no cult surrounding the current initiating gurus.]

(29)

### **The origins of the siksa-sampradaya idea**

ISKCON's disciplic line, which we have here called a *siksa-sampradaya*,<sup>(30)</sup> is traced through Bhaktivedanta Swami to Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, then to Gaura Kishor Das Babaji and then to Bhaktivinoda Thakur. Bhaktivinoda (which is the title given to Kedarnath Datta, d. 1914) was the natural father of Bhaktisiddhanta, whose original name was Bimala Prasad Datt. In the disciplic line which was pruned by Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, Bhaktivinoda Thakur's spiritual master was Jagannath Das Babaji. It is known from Bhaktivinoda's own writings,<sup>(31)</sup> however, that he was initiated by Bipin Bihari Goswami, a descendant of Ramacandra, the adopted son of Jahnava and founder of a dynasty of initiating gurus based in Baghna Para, a village about 20 kilometres southwest of Nabadwip.<sup>(32)</sup> One of Bhaktivinoda's eight sons, Lalita Prasad, took initiation from him and preserved the disciplic line which Bipin Bihari Goswami passed on to Bhaktivinoda (See Chart II).

According to Rupa Vilasa, the initiative for the rejection of the *diksa sampradaya* came from Bhaktivinoda himself, who became dissatisfied with Bipin Bihari Goswami and rejected him in favour of Jagannath Das Babaji, another great contemporary renunciate, universally respected in the Vaishnava community. One accusation levelled at Bipin Bihari Goswami is that he did not accept the idea that a Vaishnava of any caste is spiritually superior to a brahmana, which in Bhaktisiddhanta's eyes made him unworthy.<sup>(33)</sup> This was vehemently denied by Bhaktivinoda's son and disciple Lalita Prasad<sup>(34)</sup> who held that Bhaktivinoda's respect for Jagannath Das as a *bhajana-siksa-guru* in no way implied a diminished respect for Bipin Bihari as *mantra-diksa-guru*.

Bhaktisiddhanta was a reformer who felt that the monopoly on the guru institution held by hereditary disciplic lines disturbed the flow of religious experience, was socially undemocratic and led to corruption. Not a brahmana himself, he led a determined crusade to break this monopoly. Through the Gaudiya Math he wished to transform the entire sociological face of Chaitanyaite religion through what he called *daiva-varnasrama* and the symbol of his break with contemporary Gaudiya Vaisnavism was the new understanding of the meaning of parampara. One Gaudiya Math tradition thus holds that Bhaktisiddhanta did not wish to take initiation from his own father despite his belief in his worthiness because this would have contravened his principled stand against such family connections. This led him to seek initiation from Gaura Kishor Das, a renunciate of great reputation in the Vaishnava world, living in Nabadwip at the time.

Whatever personal reasons may have contributed to Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati's rejection of Bipin Bihari Goswami, he and his followers found other reasons to diminish the value of his disciplic succession. This is explained by Bhakti-raksaka Sridhara:

We have to follow the spirit; otherwise after Jahnava devi, the wife of Lord Nityananda, up to Vipina [Vihari] Goswami, from whom Bhaktivinoda Thakur took initiation, there are so many unknown lady gurus. Through them, the mantra came to Vipina Goswami, and from him Bhaktivinoda Thakur received the mantra. We accept Bhaktivinoda Thakur, but should we count all those ladies in our disciplic succession? What was their realization?(35)

On the other side of the argument, Lalita Prasad claimed that Bhaktivinoda disapproved of Bhaktisiddhanta's militant attitude against senior Vaishnavas such as his own guru and in particular was angered by his show of disrespect to Bipin Bihari. He further denied that any formal mantra initiation was ever given by Gaura Kishor Das to Bhaktisiddhanta. In any case, even if such an initiation ever did take place, Bhaktisiddhanta did not recognize the disciplic succession into which Gaura Kishor Das had himself been given diksa (perhaps because this too was a line of caste gurus), for he never shared it with his disciples and as such it remains completely unknown to them.

The understanding of the siksa-sampradaya as current in the branches of the Gaudiya Math is thus summarized by Sridhara Maharaj as follows:

The very gist of the guru-parampara, the disciplic succession, is siksa, the spiritual teaching, and wherever it is to be traced, there is guru.... One who possesses knowledge of absolute divine love in purity he is guru. Otherwise the guru-parampara is only a body parampara: a succession of bodies. Then the caste brahmanas, the caste gosvamis, will continue with their trade, because body after body, they are getting the mantra. But their mantra is dead. We are after a living mantra, and wherever we can trace the living tendency for a higher type of devotional service, we shall find that there is our guru.(36)

### **The Gaudiya Math after Bhaktisiddhanta's death**

Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati left a council of three governors to handle the affairs of the Math, Ananta Vasudeva, Paramananda and Kuñjavihari, without designating

any of them as acarya. All three were brahmacaris, and with the presence of a sizable contingent of samnyasins, it does not seem that his intention was that this was anything other than an ad hoc group meant to handle the management of the properties and the continued publication of books. Nevertheless, Kuñjavihari (who upon taking samnyasa in 1948 became Bhaktivilasa Tirtha) and Ananta Vasudeva (who in 1943 became Bhaktiprasada Puri) had their individual charisma and each had his own group of dedicated followers. In an election that was held some time after Saraswati's death in 1937, Ananta Vasudeva was made acarya, but this was considered by Kuñja Vihari's followers to be contrary to the will of Saraswati who had seemingly given priority to Kuñja in his last statements and was familiarly called *guru-prestha* ('most dear to the guru'). Lawsuits, etc., followed and the disciples of Saraswati either fell into the camp of one of these two or left in disgust to strike out independently. Sridhar Maharaj, Kesava Maharaj, Madhava Maharaj, Goswami Maharaj, Bharati Maharaj, etc., all founded their own maths in the 1940's and 50's.

Puri Maharaj, or Puri Das as he later called himself, and his close associate Sundarananda Vidyavinoda took up a spirited regimen of scholarly criticism of their own movement. They abandoned secondary literature and concentrated on the primary works of the six Goswamis of Vrindavan. Puri Maharaj was particularly unhappy about the proselytizing work of the Gaudiya Math which he considered to have been overly zealous and ill-informed, offensive and against the true spirit of Vaisnavism. To a great extent these two leaders of the organization were disillusioned by the rapaciousness of Puri Maharaj's opponents in the math succession battles, which they came to attribute to the very nature of the math institution itself. *Yukta-vairagya* was a difficult discipline, indeed; the vices associated with wealth, reputation and power were not the monopoly of any religious school. Puri Maharaj gradually came to accept the necessity for initiation in an accredited disciplic line and advised all of his disciples to seek diksa from such gurus.<sup>(37)</sup> The position formulated on the basis of early writings of Chaitanya's followers was expounded in Sundarananda's treatise, 'The characteristics of the guru according to Vaishnava theology' (*Vaishnava-siddhante Sri-guru-svarupa*).<sup>(38)</sup>

Though Sundarananda's work is exhaustive in its critique of Gaudiya Math deviations from scripture and tradition (without ever once mentioning it or its founder by name), perhaps the most important problem underlined by him in his research is the need for the connection to the guru in order to engage in the service of Radha and Krishna in a spiritual identity. According to Jiva Goswami, at the time of initiation, the guru reveals this relationship along with the mantra.<sup>(39)</sup> This information is given the name of *siddha-pranali*, or otherwise as *ekadasa-bhava*. Bhaktivinoda himself wrote about this in several places in his works and there is little doubt that he adhered to this aspect of the tradition. The traditions of the renunciate Gaudiya community in Braj and Radha Kund hold that historically devotees would seek initiation from a family spiritual master from whom they would receive this *siddha-pranali*. Only then were they eligible to engage in the practice of *raganuga bhakti*. Legends which confirm the necessity of a bona-fide initiation to enter into the esoteric aspects of the religious life are many, such as the case of Madhusudan Das Babaji, who tried to commit suicide because he had not received *siddha-pranali* from his initiating guru and was thus refused instruction by

the leading teachers of Braj,(40) and that of Jayakrishna Das Babaji who sent a disciple back to Bengal to seek this data from his spiritual master, etc.(41)

Followers of the Gaudiya Math hold that the *siddha-pranali* tradition is not to be found in the earliest texts of the school. They have a very different idea of the practice of *raganuga bhakti*. The spiritual identity is something which comes out of one's inner being as a result of purification through spiritual practice and not through formal instruction. This implication is present in the following statement by Sridhara Maharaj:

To get the mantra from a sad-guru, a genuine guru, means to get the internal good will or real conception about the Lord.(42) The seed of a banyan tree may be a small seed, but the great big banyan tree will come out of that seed. The will with which the particular sound is given by the guru to the disciple is all-important. We may not trace that at present, but in time, if a favorable environment is there, it will express itself and develop into something great.(43)

## History of the parampara

Having already resumed far too much history in far too brief a space, I find that my task is not yet complete. Another brief look at an even lengthier chunk of history must be made before we can take a quick glance at the earliest texts of the tradition to see whether any light can be cast on the issues involved in this conflict between ideas on the nature of disciplic succession. Only then will we be able to make some conclusions about the possible ramifications for the future of ISKCON.

The word parampara, generally translated as 'disciplic succession', is found in the Bhagavad-gita (4.3), where Krishna says *evam parampara-praptam imam rajarsayo viduh*: 'This knowledge of yoga was passed down in disciplic succession and in this way the seer-kings knew it.' There Krishna reveals that the knowledge of the Gita being spoken to Arjuna is the same as that which he himself had taught to Vivasvant, who had told it to Manu, who had told it to Ikshvaku the first human in the line. In the course of time the message had been lost and he had become incarnate specifically to reestablish this knowledge by speaking it to Arjuna.

Though the great majority of Hindus today revere the Bhagavadgita, there are none who claim to be in a disciplic succession of teachers who have their origin in this conversation between Krishna and Arjuna. However, the principle itself is seen as being of imperative importance in the great majority of traditionalist Hindu groups. Most Puranas claim a rough disciplic succession for themselves. Their structure is nearly always in the manner of a dialogue in which the speaker answering inquiries by citing a higher authority, in the manner of, 'Interesting question. I heard Siva say the following about that to Parvati,' etc. In both these examples, disciplic succession is clearly one of a transmission of teaching, not of mantra.

The Gaudiya Vaishnavas, and I speak here specifically of the school which traces its origins to Chaitanya in all its manifestations including ISKCON, claim a disciplic succession which can be roughly divided into three or four historical periods as the name Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya-sampradaya partially indicates. The first is the mythological period of succession which begins with the creator god Brahma's

introduction of the teachings into the world of matter. The second is the historical period of succession which begins with the South Indian Madhvacarya. The third begins with the life and teaching of Chaitanya. The fourth period, only accepted by the Gaudiya Math and its branches, is that begun in the modern period by Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati.

The succession has mythical beginnings in the Bhagavata Purana. There Visnu speaks the catuh-sloki Bhagavata to the creator God Brahma. He in turn speaks a more elaborate version to his son, the sage Narada. Narada teaches Vyasa, who writes the Bhagavata down. His son Suka is his disciple and the speaker of the Bhagavata. This is clearly not a diksa succession, but one based simply on the transmission of knowledge.

Ananda Tirtha or Madhvacarya (d. 1300) claimed to be the direct disciple of Vyasa, receiving the Vedanta teachings from him. Once again, his relationship with Vyasa is nowhere stated to be one of initiation. His initiation is described as having come from the Sankara line. Madhva established a monastery in Udipi in modern Karnatak, where a rigid system of succession is in place.

Though it would appear at first that the third phase of the succession begins with Chaitanya, it in fact starts with Madhavendra Puri, who initiated several of Chaitanya's associates such as Advaita and Nityananda, as well as Chaitanya's own guru, Isvara Puri. Chaitanya did not himself formally initiate anyone, and indeed it is stated by Sanatana that, as an incarnation, he would not so do.(44)

At some point in history, the followers of Chaitanya became identified with the Madhva line. This identification has been contested by many, and for many reasons. Arguments have been put forth by various scholars, and there is little time to go into this here.(45) Certainly, there is little direct connection with Madhva teaching, nor any by initiation, for the mantras given in the Madhva line are different from those which were given by Madhavendra Puri and his disciples. Indeed it seems more likely that these mantras and a great deal of the ritual came from the Nimbarka sampradaya's *Kramadipika*, much of which has been incorporated by Gopala Bhatta into *Hari-bhakti-vilasa*.(46) Even a connection through samThe Parampara Institution in Gaudiya Vaisnavismnyasa initiation seems impossible since the Tirtha title is the only one used in the Madhva line and samnyasa is limited to only a few select individuals. This apparent absence of any real connection with the Madhva line leads many to conclude that an affiliation was artificially constructed for convenience's sake. There does indeed appear to have been pressure in the 18th century for the followers of Chaitanya to be affiliated with one of the four major Vaishnava sects, the *cari sampradaya*: those of Nimbarka, Madhva, Ramanuja and Visnusvami. A number of works dated to this period tie the Gaudiyas to Madhva, especially Baladeva Vidyabhusana's *Prameya-ratnavali*, which also tries to draw a doctrinal connection to Ananda Tirtha.(47) Baladeva was known to have had connection with the Madhva line in his youth, coming to the doctrinal position of the Gaudiyas only later in his life. However, it is difficult to prove that certain passages in the text of Karnapura's *Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika* or Harirama Vyasa's *Nava-ratna* are interpolated as is suspected by many, including this author. We will thus leave the argument here.

Subsequent to Chaitanya, initiation in Bengali Vaisnavism was more or less a monopoly controlled by those whom Bhaktisiddhanta disparagingly called *jati gosāñi*. These were members of brahmana, or less frequently vaidya or other families, who traced their lineage to direct associates of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Chief amongst these was the family of Nityananda, who according to the *Nityananda-vamsa-vistara* was instructed by Chaitanya himself to marry and establish a family precisely as an institutionalization of the succession. This tradition holds that this took place when Chaitanya established Nityananda's preaching mission, otherwise what was the need of Nityananda to get married?(48) The charismatic Nityananda is generally accepted as *adi-guru* in the *Chaitanya-bhagavata* and *Chaitanya-caritamṛta*. His wife Jahnava continued the work of initiating after his death, and her stepson Virabhadra and adopted son Ramacandra became her disciples and established temples and spiritual dynasties.(49) In none of these lines is any parampara line prior to Chaitanya considered to have any importance; not even Madhavendra Puri or his disciple, Chaitanya's guru Isvara Puri, are counted as part of the disciplic line.

It should be emphasized that this method of continuing the disciplic succession was the only one in vogue in the post-Chaitanya period. Those in the renounced order such as the Six Goswamis did not take many disciples in keeping with the injunction found in BhP vii.13.8 and stressed by Rupa Goswami in *Bhakti-rasamṛta-sindhu* (i.2.110). Where they established temples, they assured the continued service to the deities by turning them over to householders who were expected to maintain them through the generations. These families, centred around the great temples, also became important initiating spiritual masters of the sampradaya. Other Vaishnavas who never married but were engaged in preaching work, such as Gadadhar Pandit, Narottama Das, Ramacandra Goswami of Baghna Para, etc., similarly established spiritual dynasties through their own householder disciples or through family members. There are very few examples of disciplic lines which consist wholly of renunciates.

To summarize, it would appear that wherever a major change in the disciplic succession exists, i.e., with Madhva, Chaitanya and Bhaktisiddhanta, teaching is given precedence over initiation. Madhva rejects monistic teaching and establishes a new line on the basis of dualism. Madhavendra, apparently externally accepting Sankara samnyasa, as did Chaitanya, adheres to an emotional bhakti of the Alvar type. His antecedents are not properly known, and with the appearance of the highly charismatic Chaitanya and Nityananda, no one really cares until social pressure requires the legitimacy of adherence to one of the four accepted Vaishnava lines. Even then, expediency demands adherence to the Madhva line, for Madhavendra Puri's disciplic line is lost. With Bhaktisiddhanta, the institutional superstructure already in place (and accepted, at least tacitly by his father, Bhaktivinoda) to maintain the teaching is rejected for having become corrupt. Each of these charismatic reformers nominally accepts an initiation, but functionally they and their descendants act independently of their antecedents. The question of diksa and disciplic succession, though written large in the tradition, appears to be superseded by charisma, i.e., spiritual power. As we would expect, each revolution is followed by a new institutionalization which includes a system of initiation, but the disciplic line is for all intents and purposes a new one, its initial point being the charismatic founder.

It will come as no surprise that each of these charismatic founders is awarded a superior ontological status: Madhva is said to be an incarnation of Vayu, Chaitanya and his followers to be Krishna himself and his associates, and Bhaktisiddhanta, 'a ray of Visnu.'

## Initiation in the Bhakti-sandarbha

Before arriving at any conclusions, only one further area must be examined. What does scripture say? Gaudiya Vaishnavas pride themselves on having a rich written tradition based on revealed sources such as the Bhagavata. Can any answers to the questions which have been raised in the preceding pages be found in the writings of the six Goswamis, the primary theological authorities for all Gaudiya Vaishnavas?

Rupa Goswami makes it clear that surrendering to a spiritual master and taking initiation from him are the first steps in devotional practice.<sup>(50)</sup> Jiva goes into the matter in greater detail in his *Bhakti-sandarbha*,<sup>(51)</sup> his treatise on the practice of devotional service as a means to perfection (*sadhana-bhakti*). Neither of these authorities explicitly discuss the concept of a disciplic succession in their works. In his *Hari-bhakti-vilasa*, on the other hand, Gopala Bhatta Goswami uses word *amnayagata* ('coming in sacred tradition') in connection to the guru, which Sanatana glosses as *kula-kramagata* ('coming in a family line') or *veda-vihita* ('ordained by the scripture').<sup>(52)</sup> Gopala Bhatta also says that at the time of initiation the guru bestows the tilaka of the school upon the disciple, using the word *sampradayika* which Sanatana glosses *parampara-siddham*, 'authorized by the line of spiritual masters.'<sup>(53)</sup> *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* also requires other qualities such as that the guru be a brahmana handsome, a family man, and a number of other things which are customarily ignored as they are considered secondary to the essential qualities described in the Bhagavata-purana: *sabde pare ca nisnatam brahmany upasamasrayam*: the guru should be fully versed in the Vaishnava scriptures which present the highest truth and himself have direct experience of the Supreme Truth, having ended all attachment to sensuality for its own sake.<sup>(54)</sup> It remains to be proved whether being a member of a disciplic succession (*diksa-sampradaya*) can be considered a secondary and optional requirement. Needless to say, the above scriptures are taken seriously by the householder gurus or *prabhu-santanas*, especially in view of the corollary prohibition for renunciates to take many disciples.

Like Rupa, Jiva places association with devotees (*sadhu-sanga*) prior to the commencement of devotional practice (*bhajana-kriya*). Taking shelter of a guru is the beginning point of such a practice. Jiva Goswami states that the highest standard of perfection must be sought in the teaching spiritual master, whom he calls the *sravana-guru*, for realization of the scriptural meaning is only possible through him. This individual generally becomes the *bhajana-siksa-guru*. There may be a multitude of such gurus.<sup>(55)</sup> If one is unable to find such a guru, he may approach many teachers out of a desire to know the different logical arguments (*yukti-bheda*): 'Firm and clear knowledge cannot be had from one teacher alone. The supreme truth is one, but is described by the seers in many ways.'<sup>(56)</sup>

Thus the *siksa-guru* is essential, but nonetheless, Jiva stresses that the *mantra-guru* is even more so (*ato mantra-guror avasyakatvam sutaram*). The *mantra-guru* is only one

in contrast to the many siksa-gurus allowed above. Problems arise if one abandons this guru. If one is unsatisfied with this guru for some reason and takes mantra from another individual, then by definition the first one has been abandoned or rejected.(57) However, Jiva does point out that if one has been initiated by a non-Vaishnava, one 'goes to hell' and that rather than suffer such a fate, one should take initiation from a Vaishnava according to the proper rites.(58) He also points out that when one finds the *paramarthika-guru*, one has no more need for other, functional authority figures (*vyavaharika-guru*) such as parents, teachers, etc. These verses have customarily been used in the Gaudiya Math to persuade people initiated by family gurus to abandon them and retake initiation from its own leaders. In this spirit of competition, the family gurus, even when belonging to a long and venerable tradition, might well be called non-Vaishnavas or *vyavaharika-gurus* because of any number of deviations from the Math's own ascetic standards. On the other hand, failure to adhere to the disciplic succession renders Gaudiya Math disciples non-Vaishnavas to those who do, citing Gopala Bhatta's minimum definition of a non-Vaishnava as one who has not taken initiation in the Visnu mantra.(59) As a result, both groups generally require reinitiation for those who wish to fully participate in their activities.

When writing of the benefits which accrue from service to the guru (either siksa or diksa), Jiva stipulates another criterion which permits the radical step of abandoning the guru. The initiating guru should not interfere with the disciple's association with other advanced Vaishnavas since such association is an essential part of his spiritual life. And although it is better if one should serve other Vaishnavas with the permission of the guru in such a way that one's service to him is not adversely affected,(60) certain considerations must be taken.

One who has taken shelter of a guru who does not possess the qualities described in the verse *sabde pare ca nisnatam*, etc., and then cannot get permission from him to serve great devotees due to his enviousness (*matsaradi*), is not considered in this injunction because he had abandoned scripture to begin with. The disciple will be caught in a dilemma, incurring fault both by acting against the wishes of his guru and by not serving great devotees. This is the meaning of the scripture, 'Both the guru and the disciple whose relationship is based on dishonesty are destined for hell.' Therefore such a guru should be worshipped from a distance. But if he is a hater of devotees then he should definitely be rejected. Due to his lack of Vaishnava character, he is not to be considered a Vaishnava. As stated in the previously quoted verse from *Narada-pañcaratra*: 'The mantra received from a non-Vaishnava will lead one to hell. One should therefore take the mantra again from a Vaishnava guru, according to the proper rites.'(61)

The statement 'worshipped from a distance' (*ata eva durata evaradhyas tadrso guruh*) is significant and reminds one of Jiva's earlier line about dissatisfaction with his guru: if the guru interferes with one's advancement in devotional life then he is not to be renounced, but one should simply distance himself from him and continue to associate with advanced devotees.(62) This is true even when the guru is possessed of unpleasant qualities such as enviousness. The Puranas and popular literature abound with warnings about abandoning gurus possessed of failings; it is apparent that in principle Jiva is in agreement with them though he has avoided quoting them.(63) Thus, although it is generally allowed that only a Vaishnava who has attained direct experience of the Supreme Truth should initiate, one who is not so

advanced could legitimately initiate a disciple as long as he recognizes that such a disciple needs to seek out the association of Vaishnavas on a higher stage of realization in order to perfect himself. This in fact is the current *sadacara* in Vrindavan, where there is a large community of Gaudiya Vaishnava renunciates. I have met individuals amongst these *vairagis* who have a feeling that their initiating spiritual master is not necessarily a very advanced devotee, but they nevertheless continue to give him the respect he is due, even while placing a higher practical emphasis on their association with siksa-gurus in the renounced community.

Jiva discusses the act of initiation itself in several places. Having already discussed the sovereign importance of the holy names of Krishna, for which initiation is not necessary, in the spiritual life of a devotee, he considers the possibility that initiation in the mantra is not necessary either:

Now consider the following: the mantra itself consists of names of the Lord. Added to that are words indicating submission such as *namah* or *svaha*, etc., through which the Lord and the seers have endowed the mantra with some special potency. Furthermore they are capable of awakening a specific personal relationship with the Lord. [Of all these ingredients] in the mantra, the names of the Lord alone are capable of independently giving its reciter the supreme goal of life [i.e., *prema*]. Thus we find that in the mantras there is an even greater power than can be found in the name alone. In view of all these considerations, why then is there any necessity for initiation? The answer is as follows: there is no fundamental necessity for initiation. Nevertheless, because people are generally by nature caught up in bad habits and are unable to concentrate due to bodily associations, etc., the great seers and others have on occasion established some fundamental regulations here and there calling for the performance of worship of the deity (*arcana-marga*) in order to reduce such bad habits and lack of concentration. For this reason, the scriptures call for the performance of penances as an atonement for the non-performance of such deity worship. Where neither of these faults (bodily and mental aberrations) are not prominent, there is no need for initiation. The regulations spoken of are found in the following verse from *Brahma-yamala* which states that exclusive devotion to Hari which is independent of the injunctions of the scriptures only causes a disturbance.(64)

Once again, initiation from the guru is not given primary status by Jiva: it is not a magical act like the *sakti-pat* of the Kasmiri Saivas. It is functional in that it opens the door to the performance of deity worship, through which one can become purified and strengthen one's sense of identity in relationship to the Lord. Jiva elaborates on this later on, maintaining the same tension between the absolute powers of any devotional act and the necessity of initiation and worship of the deity.

Even though in the opinion of the Bhagavata there is no imperative for the performance of deity worship, as there is in the Pañcaratra and other systems, and that one can attain the supreme perfection of life through the performance of any aspect of devotion beginning from self-surrender (*saranapatti*), nevertheless those who follow in the path of Sri Narada, etc., and who wish to establish a particular relationship with the Lord bestowed by the guru through the process of initiation, should certainly engage in deity worship once they have thus been initiated.(65)

'Because it bestows divine knowledge and destroys sin, it is called *diksa* by the learned scholars. Therefore one should humble himself before the guru, offer him

all one's wealth and take the Vaishnava mantra from him through the authorized process of initiation.'<sup>(66)</sup> The term 'divine knowledge' here refers to the knowledge of the specific form of the Lord contained in the holy syllables of the mantra and knowledge of a specific relationship with that Lord.<sup>(67)</sup>

The significance of the idea of 'a specific relationship' (*sambandha-visesa*) is confirmed in relation to the idea of 'purification of one's being' (*bhuta-suddhi*) which is integral to deity worship.

The purification of one's existence (*bhuta-suddhi*) indicates that one should meditate according to convenience upon one's own spiritual body as an associate of Krishna, suitable for the performance of a service for which one has a personal desire. Thus, wherever it is ordained that one should meditate on one's object of devotion, one should also think of oneself in the form of an associate of that deity.<sup>(68)</sup>

The idea of such a spiritual identity has special significance in the light of another statement by Jiva that efforts to engage in devotional activities can be dispensed with if one simply identifies strongly enough as a servant of God; through such identification alone one can attain perfection.<sup>(69)</sup> Indeed, the whole idea of *raganuga bhakti* can be seen in terms of developing this specific identity without which it is meaningless.

To summarize: Though the idea of disciplic succession is not mentioned by Jiva in his discussion of initiation, it would seem that a chain of initiatory relations is a logical necessity. The statements of the *Hari-bhakti-vilasa*, *Gautamiya-tantra*, *Padma-purana*, etc., in this matter must be accepted as having a great deal of weight. On the other hand, Jiva does admit the possibility of an exception to the rule of initiation and deity worship in the case of some extraordinary individuals. In the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition predating Bhaktisiddhanta it was felt that one could attain perfection in this manner, but was not then oneself permitted to initiate.<sup>(70)</sup> As a result, in the view of the traditionalists, Bhaktisiddhanta's unorthodox approach to initiation was a disruption in the path of devotion (*utpatayaiva kalpate*). What was unusual in Bhaktisiddhanta's approach was his claim to more accurately represent the spirit of Chaitanya and his followers than those who traditionally did so in that he put the accent on proselytization. The promulgation of the *siksa-sampradaya* idea, in which the spirit of the law takes precedence over the letter may partially have been promulgated with the goal of overcoming sectarianism within the Gaudiya school,<sup>(71)</sup> but other innovations in the Gaudiya Math movement made such spiritual unity difficult if not impossible. It appears rather more likely that the rift between the Gaudiya Math and the rest of the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition was intentional and is probably irreparable. Those in the Gaudiya Math tradition must therefore come to terms with this and recognize the exceptional status of their founder and the fact that their disciplic succession has taken a new beginning from him. It would thus be historically more accurate to call this particular branch of Vaisnavism (notwithstanding Rupa Vilasa's suggestion noted earlier) the Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya-Sarasvata-sampradaya, 'Sarasvata' being a reference to Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati. If Bhaktisiddhanta's innovations which to Chaitanyaite traditionalists have a sacrilegious and disruptive character, make Chaitanya Vaisnavism more universally accessible and acceptable, the continued flourishing of the various Gaudiya Math branches will no doubt lead to the progressive marginalization of the issues raised in this article. In the broader perspective of Hinduism and free-market religiosity, success is the only measure of authenticity.

## Conclusions

ISKCON's first well thought out 'heresy', the doctrine of the *rtvik* (i.e., 'officiating priest, deputy', claimed that no disciple of Prabhupada was qualified to handle the position of spiritual master and that those who led the movement were mere caretakers or 'monitor gurus' until the arrival of a qualified, 'self-effulgent' *acarya*. The hold of this doctrine is strong, and even in the 1993 meeting, one initiating master, Gaura Govinda Svami, denied officially any claims ostensibly being made by his disciples that he was such a *nitya siddha uttama adhikari*, 'superior guru', and that he was the *siksa-guru* of all the rest of ISKCON.[\(72\)](#)

However, though the 'monitor guru' and *rtvik* guru doctrine may have been officially eliminated by ISKCON, it has, in a sense, been accepted through undermining the traditional autonomy of the guru. Nevertheless, the importance of guruism as an institution of Hinduism itself and its decentralizing, destabilizing power, the importance of the myth of the guru-relationship in the Hindu aspirant's spiritual life, the guru archetype as a functioning psychological reality, would all indicate that despite the evident strength of ISKCON, there will be a tendency to fragmentation particularly in future generations, as individual styles become more prominent. It is also likely that ISKCON itself will gravitate towards the hegemony of a small group of powerful gurus, or one individual.

It can be stated with some confidence, however, that the following areas will be sure to cause continued problems:

(i) Lack of confidence in the level of spiritual achievements of the leaders the 'priests' of the movement in Weber's terminology, who possess purely institutional charisma. They may well be considered inadequate even from the point of view of their priestly function, as their scholarship (which in a text-rich tradition like Gaudiya Vaisnavism is not to be underestimated in importance) is found lacking. The lack of *raganuga bhakti* culture in ISKCON, though certainly not an immediate problem for its younger members, is in the long run bound to create a vacuum for those who are well-read in the works of the tradition. One cannot consistently appeal to the members' commitment to evangelization without taking note of their individual spiritual appetites, whetted by the cornucopia of spiritual material lying outside the corpus bequeathed by Bhaktivedanta.

(ii) Problems arising from the emphasis in Prabhupada's writings on disciplic succession and the accent on initiation as the token of participation in that succession, contrasted with the absence of such participation in the current line. This will prove particularly important for those who develop a desire for *raganuga bhakti*, who will come to seek the 'special relationship' which is said to come through initiation.

(iii) If, as in the Gaudiya Math, emphasis is made on the concept of the *siksa-sampradaya*, those aspirants who have the courage will feel that they are free to make the individual search and will be led outward towards other sources of knowledge. The institution, seeking to protect itself by preventing such association outside the parameters it sets (i.e. *extra ecclesiam nullum salus*) will eventually lose

credibility for such aspirants. Building walls, as in Berlin, will likely prove ineffectual and counter-productive in the long run.

For a large number of Prabhupada's disciples, however, the rtvik option or variations thereof will continue to be attractive. It continues to have resilience amongst those disaffected by the current leadership and who look back to the days of Prabhupada's presence as the golden age. ISKCON itself is taking on more and more the form of a horizontally rather than vertically-based society (to use Shinn's terminology). Those who have found power within the structures of the movement have strengthened horizontal relationships with their own disciples at the expense of their relationships with their godbrothers. The ratio of original Prabhupada disciples continues to diminish and many of these people are left to their own devices: either to abandon devotional life altogether or to seek succour in some other spiritual discipline or Vaishnava group.

The success of the ISKCON institution itself depends to a great extent on charismatic leaders who genuinely possess the characteristics expected of someone advanced in spiritual life. If this quality can be achieved, even by a few of its leaders, even in the face of the inevitable political difficulties caused by the preeminence which will result from it, inconsistencies in matters of doctrine can no doubt be overcome. In the absence of such charisma, the inherent contradictions in the guru-parampara issue will continue to confuse and weaken the movement.

Similarly, the success of the rtviks and other splinter groups of Gaudiya Vaisnavism which have arisen out of Bhaktivedanta's preaching efforts will depend greatly on the charismatic powers of the individuals who lead them. In the race between these groups, the initial lead is with the more powerful and wealthy and still more cohesive society, ISKCON. Whether it will be able to maintain this lead in the long run remains to be seen.

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## NOTES

(30) This idea of siksa-sampradaya should not be confused with that which is prevalent in the sahajiya schools of Vaisnavism, where diksa is identified with the exoteric aspects of religious practice and siksa with esoteric and tantric practices which were grafted onto the tradition. The siksa-sampradaya of the Sahajiyas is normally traced through Kalacand Goswami and back further to Rupa Kaviraja. The siksa relationship here constitutes in fact a separate initiation rather than a teaching as such, and the sampradaya consists of a series of empiric personal relationships. In this siksa initiation, the *kama-gayatri* and *hamsa* mantras (*so'ham*) are given precedence.

(31) Brian Marvin, 'Bhaktivinoda Thakur,' PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 1996.

(32) Ramacandra was never married himself. Like the Goswamis of Vrindavan, he appointed a nephew to take charge of the temple he founded and it is the descendents of that nephew who are the current leaders of this much weakened line.

(33) *The Seventh Goswami* (Washington, MS: New Jaipur Press, 1989), 142-4. 'Bipin Bihari Goswami initially enjoyed a very sweet relationship with the Thakur, but later he is said to have been neglected by the Thakur due to a disagreement about the position of Raghunatha dasa Goswami. He also assisted the Thakur in his preaching work, but his spiritual advancement was not on the same level as the 'Commander-in-chief of the Vaishnavas,' as Srila Jagannatha dasa Babaji came to be called...'

(34) With whom I had the chance of having several personal interviews prior to his death in 1979. Although Lalita Prasad wrote much about his differences with his brother, most of it remains in manuscript form and is not available for citation.

(35) *Op. cit.*, 23-24.

(36) *The Guru and His Grace*, 22.

(37) All this appears to have been accompanied by personal problems. Ananta Vasudeva married one of his disciples. He liberated all his disciples to take initiation elsewhere, gave over the Gaudiya Mission to Bhaktikevala Audulomi Maharaj on the condition that he dress in white rather than the saffron of the Gaudiya Math samnyasins. He then left for Brindavan where he lived out the rest of his life more or less as a recluse. Ex-disciples of Ananta Vasudeva formed a large contingent of the renounced residents of Radha Kund and *Sri Krishna Chaitanya Gaura gunadhama*, the kirtana promulgated by Puri Das can still be heard there. (Puri Das also came to accept that the congregational chanting of the mahamantra was not authorized.) His abandonment of Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati made him an anathema in the rest of the maths, and left many of his admirers particularly disillusioned. Bhaktivedanta styled Tirtha as guru-bhogi, 'exploiter of the guru,' and Puri as *guru-tyagi*, 'renouncer of the guru.'

(38) Calcutta: Karuna Das, Sripata-Paraga, 1964.

(39) *Bhakti-sandarbha*, 283: 'The term "divine knowledge" here refers to the knowledge of the specific form of the Lord contained in the holy syllables of the mantra and knowledge of a specific relationship with that Lord.' *divyam jñanam hy atra srimati mantre bhagavat-svarupa-jñanam, tena bhagavata sambandha-visesa-jñanam ca |*

(40) See *Sri-Sri-Gaudiya-vaisnava-jivana* (Nabadwip: Haribol Kutir, 1975), 195-7.

(41) *Ibid.*, 128-130.

(42) An obvious reference to *sambandha-visesa-jñanam*.

(43) *Op. cit.*, 19.

(44) HBV, 2.1, commentary. *saksat tasyopadestrtrvasambhave 'pi cittadhisthatrtvadina sarvesam api parama-gurutayatmano 'pi sa eva guruh |*

(45) See S. K. De, *The Early History of the Vaishnava Faith and Movement*. Friedhelm Hardy, 'Madhavendra Puri', *JRAS*, 1979. Sundarananda Vidyavinoda in particular points out that the list of disciples given by Baladeva and Karnapura does not match that given by the Udipi matha. *Acintyabhedabheda* (Calcutta: Gaudiya Math, 1956), 86.

(46) In particular, Gopala Bhatta describes the process of initiation according to *Krama-dipika* (HBV 2.2). In *Brahmasamhita*, Brahma is said to have received diksa in *astadasaksara-mantra*. Krishna-mantra is given him by Saraswati and then the Kamagayatri mantra is revealed to him through the sound of Krishna's flute. Neither this book, nor *Gopalatapani Upanisad* which also discusses these mantra, are anywhere in use in the Madhva line. They both contain information about these mantras which are given special status in the Chaitanya line. See Guy L. Beck, 'The Divine Names in the Gayatri Mantra,' *Journal of Vaishnava Studies*, 2.2, Spring 1994. 47-58.

(47) It is in this connection that the above-cited verse about the mantra having no effect has been quoted. The rest of the passage is as follows: *atah kalau bhavisyanti catvarah sampradayinah | sri-brahma-rudra-sanaka vaisnavah ksiti-pavanah || ramanujam srih svcakre madhvacaryam caturmukhah | sri- visnu-svaminam rudro nimbadyam catuhsanah ||* Needless to say, these verses are nowhere to be found in the *Padma-purana* from which they are cited, nor are they referred to anywhere in the writings of Chaitanya's contemporaries. It is probable, however, that they had a currency in the Vaishnava world in which Baladeva lived. They are followed in *Prameya-ratnavali* by the disciplic succession of Madhva up to Laksmipati Tirtha who is said to be the guru of Madhavendra Puri.

(48) Ramakanta Chakravarty, *Vaisnavism in Bengal, 1486-1900* (Calcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1985) 150.

(49) Ramacandra did not in fact marry. His nephew Rajavallabha, the author of *Murali-vilasa*, did have a family and his descendants still maintain the temple of Krishna and Balarama in Baghna Para.

(50) *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu*, i.2.74. *gurupadasrayas tasmad siksa-diksadi-sevanam|*

(51) ed. Chinmayi Chatterjee, Calcutta: Jadavpur University, 1980. Particularly sections 202-214 (pp. 104-8), 283-4 (pp. 144-7).

(52) *upadestaram amnayagam pariharanti ye | tan mrtan api kravyadah krtaghnan nopabhuñjate ||* 'Even the vultures will not eat the corpses of those ungrateful persons who abandon the guru coming in disciplic succession as is ordained by scripture.' HBV 4.363, quoted from *Brahmavaivarta-purana* (translation based on Haridas Sastri's Hindi version). The word *sampradayin*, 'belonging to a specific line of spiritual masters' as a characteristic of the guru is found in *Padmapurana*, Patala-khanda, 51 (See *Vaishnava-siddhante Sri-guru-svarupa*, 78).

(53) HBV 2.129. *sampradayika-mudradi-bhusitam tam krtañjalim | pañcanga-pramukhair nyasaih kuryat sri-krishna-sac chisum* || Thus each of the main Vaishnava sampradayas has a distinctive tilaka. Sub-groups or families (parivaras) of the Gaudiya sampradaya (such as Nityananda, Advaita, Narottama, Gadadhara, Vakresvara, Syamananda, Srinivasa, etc.) also have their distinctive markings. The tilaka markings of the Gaudiya Math resemble most closely those of the Narottama-parivara.

(54) BhP xi.3.22. Quoted in *Bhaktisandarbha*, 202.

(55) *Ibid.*, 208

(56) BhP xi.9.31. *na hy ekasmad guror jñanam susthiram syat supuskalam | brahmaikam advitiam vai giyate bahudharsibhih* ||

(57) Paras. 209-210.

(58) *BhaktiS* 207, quotation from *Narada-pañcaratras*. *avaisnavopadistena mantrena nirayam vrajet | punas ca vidhina samyag grahayed vaisnavad guroh* ||

(59) HBV 1.55. *grhita-visnu-diksako visnu-puja-paro narah | vaisnavo 'bhihito 'bhijñair itaro 'smad avaisnavah* ||

(60) *BhaktiS.*, p. 122. *sri-gurv-ajñaya tat-sevanavirodhena canyesam api vaisnavanam sevanam sreyaḥ. Anyatha dosah syat.*

(61) Para. 238, p.122.

(62) *Ibid.* *yathokta-laksanasya guror avidyamanayam tu tasyaiva mahabhagavatasyaikasya nitya-sevanam parama-sreyaḥ |*

(63) Gopala Bhatta quotes the *Aditya-purana* at HBV 4.359. *avidyo va savidyo va gurur eva janardanah | margastho vapy amargastho guru eva sada gatih* || 'Whether ignorant or learned, the guru is Janardana. Whether situated on the path or not, he is ever the goal.'

(64) *BhaktiS* 284: *nanu bhagavan-namatmaka eva mantrah*, etc. Note that Jiva finishes this section by quoting *sruti-smṛti-puranadi-pañcaratras-vidhim vina | aikantiki harer bhaktir utpatayaiva kalpate* ||(*Brahma-yamala*, also quoted at *Brs* i.2.10).

(65) *BhaktiS*, 283.

(66) *Ibid.* Quoted from the *Agamas*, also quoted in HBV, 2.9.

(67) *Ibid.*

(68) *Ibid.* 285 (p. 148).

(69) *astu tavat tad-bhajana-prayasah, kevala-tadrsatvabhimanenapi siddhir bhavati |* (*BhaktiS* 304, p. 159)

(70) The legend of Madhusudana Das Babaji, siksa-guru of Jagannath Das Babaji is often cited. Though he received initiation from a spiritual master, he did not get *siddha-pranali*, nor indeed did he know the identity of his guru. Later, he was given his siddha identity in a dream, and though this was accepted by Govardhana's Siddha Krishna Das Babaji, he was told not to make disciples himself. Cf. *Gaudiya Vaishnava Jivana*, 197. By way of contrast, Hita Harivamsa Goswami, the founder of the Radhavallabha sampradaya, claimed to have received mantra from Radha herself. Though there is reason to believe that Harivamsa had a close connection to the Gaudiya sampradaya, he is considered by the latter to be unorthodox primarily for this reason.

(71) It was with this goal that Bhaktivinoda Thakur started the Visva-Vaishnava-*raja-sabha* ('The World Council of Vaishnavas') which Bhaktisiddhanta maintained as his preaching organization until he founded the Gaudiya Math.

(72) Resolution 56, Resolutions of the Governing Body Commission, International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Annual General Meeting, Feb. 7-21, 1993, Mayapur, India. Gaura Govinda Swami, an Orissan, older than most of his ISKCON counterparts, has attracted a number of Western and Indian disciples. He is nevertheless greatly dependent on the society as a whole for financial aid toward the construction of a major temple complex in Bhubaneswar. Evidently, separation is not in his interest. His recent death (1996) has defused the problem in some ways, in others, the 'holy' circumstances of his passing away seem to have infused him with an aura that may continue to cause a certain friction.

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## Disciplic Succession

### Chart I

### The guruparampara of the Gaudiya Math

[The original expression of this disciplic succession is found in Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati's introductory comments to *Anubhasya*, a commentary on *Chaitanya Caritamrta*, 5th edition, Sri Mayapur: Sri Chaitanya Math, 1956 (Gaurabda 470), 1-3.] Bhaktivedanta Svami gives his list in the introduction to *Bhagavad-gita as it is*. Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1972.

1. Chaitanya (d. 1534)

2 Svarupa Damodara (d. 1540)

[Sanatan Goswami (1558)

Rupa Goswami (1568)](a)

3. Raghunatha Das Goswami (1586)(b)
4. Krishnadasa Kaviraja (1615)
5. Narottama Das Thakur (ca. 1650?)
6. Vishwanath Chakravarti (ca. 1710?)  
[Baladeva Vidyabhusana (1725?)](c)
7. Jagannath Das Babaji (1911)
8. Bhaktivinoda Thakur (1838-1914)
9. Gaura Kishor dasa Babaji (1915)(d)
10. Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati (1937)
11. Bhaktivedanta Swami (1977)

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(a) *tar mitra rupa sanatana*. Rupa and Sanatana are not designated as disciples of Svarupa Damodara, but as friends. Bhaktivedanta gives Rupa as the predominant disciple of Chaitanya and puts Svarupa Damodara and Sanatana in parentheses.

(b) *Rupapriya mahajana*. *Priya*, though non-specific, is the usual designation of a disciple. Bhaktivedanta adds Jiva Goswami here.

(c) Given in brackets in Bhaktivedanta's edition but not mentioned in Bhaktisiddhanta's introduction to *Anubhasya*.

(d) Bhaktisiddhanta makes no overt claim to discipleship to Gaurakisora here, including him simply as one amongst many: *ei sab harijan gauranger nijajan tader ucchiste jar kam*. 'I simply desire to take the remnants of all these devotees, who are the intimates of Gauranga.'

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## Chart II

### The gurupranali of Lalita Prasad Thakur

As presented by Gadadhara Prana Das, 'Raganuga Bhajan' In *Gifts of Sacred Wonder*, edited by Neal Delmonico, Calcutta: Subarnarekha, 1985. 105.

1. (Nityananda Prabhu) Jahnava Mata
2. Ramacandra Goswami

- 3 Rajavallabha Goswami
4. Kesavacandra Goswami
5. Rudresvara Goswami
6. Dayarama Goswami
7. Mahesvari Goswamini
8. Gunamañjari Goswamini
9. Ramamani Goswamini
10. Yajñesvara Goswami
11. Vipina Vihari Goswami (1850-1919)
12. Bhaktivinoda Thakur (1838-1914)
13. Lalita Prasad Thakur (1879-1980)