

THE GURU APPOINTMENTS

by

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A CRITIQUE OF "UNDER MY ORDER"

In view of the criticisms leveled against Ravindra Svarupas paper "Under My Order," on the part of the European Continental Assembly, I consider it necessary to focus in on these criticisms and further explain them.

In the minutes of the Nov. 1985 ECA meeting it was pointed out that Ravindra Svarupa "obscured the reality of Srila Prabhupada's selecting disciples to initiate their own disciples." This criticism is based on the following observations.

On page two of his paper Ravindra Svarupa states: "Most devotees who have studied this transcribed conversation agree that it is reasonable to conclude that Prabhupada expected those who officiated as rtviks in his presence would continue after his disappearance as diksa-gurus under his order." From this statement it appears that Ravindra Svarupa is actually in agreement with the fact that Srila Prabhupada did appoint diksa-gurus. Yet on page three Ravindra Svarupa states:

"At the same time, one must clearly understand that the appointment of rtviks was not an appointment of diksa-gurus. The word 'appointment' is inapplicable in the second case. 'Appointment' means, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, 'The action of nominating to, or placing in, an office.' Rtvik-guru is an office: as Prabhupada says, 'officiating acarya.' But one is diksa-guru, in contrast, not by occupation of an office. A rtvik has powers by virtue of the office conferred upon him. He is qualified by appointment. But one who is 'actually guru' (Prabhupada's terms) -- whether diksa or siksa -- is qualified by virtue of his own spiritual realisation: 'one who understands his guru's order, he can become guru.' Prabhupada's rtvik appointment, therefore, indicated those whom he hoped would be able to become actual gurus; but he did not appoint them gurus."

*1/2 hrs in original*

Upon reading these passages one is struck, at first, by the apparent contradictions contained in these two statements. After reading on, it becomes clear that Ravindra Svarupa's real opinion is expressed in the second statement. I will analyze the arguments that support his opinion, as well as the reasons for the apparent contradiction.

The meaning of 'on my order'

Ravindras arguments are based on two principles. Firstly, he replaces the primary meaning of Srila Prabhupada's phrases 'by/on my