

Homages



Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

Bhakti Br̥hat Bhāgavata Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances in the most auspicious dust of your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you manifested your eternal pure devotional service to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in the form of your International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). You said that the way for us to develop the kind of love for Kṛṣṇa that the *gopīs* feel (*gopī-bhāva*) is to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. Therefore the form of your International Society for Krishna Consciousness is your *bhakti-kalpataru*, where we can develop our love for Kṛṣṇa by spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

Your Divine Grace said, “ISKCON and myself are nondifferent.” I know that if I want to enter into your manifest *līlā* and deeply enter into your association, which is exclusively available in your International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), I must continue to take shelter of and serve your servants and the servants of your servants in ISKCON. Thank you, thank you, thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for manifesting ISKCON as nondifferent from yourself.

I humbly beg to remain

A servant of your servants,

Bhakti Br̥hat Bhāgavata Swami



Bhakti Rāghava Swami

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-sālākayā
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

I was born in the darkness of ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torchlight of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him.

*mūkaṁ karoti vācāraṁ paṇḍurāṁ laṅghayate girim
yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande śrī-gururāṁ dīna-tāraṇam*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, the deliverer of the fallen, by whose mercy even a dumb man can become the greatest orator and even a lame man can cross mountains.

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who are forever inspiring so many hundreds and thousands of devotees around the world to take shelter of Kṛṣṇa’s holy names and the process of His devotional service. Without your divine presence and constant inspiration, we would be totally helpless and lost in this material ocean of nescience.

By your kind mercy I happen to be visiting here in New Vrindaban, the first *varṇāśrama* community

you established more than forty years ago. It brings back fond memories of my first *darśana* with Your Divine Grace, when I first visited this fledging community in the summer of 1974 and received *harināma* initiation from you. I remain ever indebted to you for giving me this opportunity to become connected with you and the divine movement of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. I had no idea then that one day I would become so much involved and concerned about developing what I have understood to be a very integral and most vital part of your preaching strategy to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world: the *varṇāśrama* mission.

I know that I can never repay you for what you have given me. I was hopelessly drowning in the ocean of nescience, not at all a happy soul, before coming in contact with your wonderful devotees. I say wonderful because that was one of the striking features I immediately recognized when in 1973 I first visited the Ottawa temple on Besserer Street, the small house behind Rideau Street, where I was to join as a full-time devotee a few months later. I had seen devotees before, but I had never had occasion to speak with them. Actually, I was afraid to approach the devotees, thinking that those strange people wearing some unusual mark on their forehead were too eccentric. It was only when my karate teacher pointed them out in Toronto as being very spiritual people did I develop some curiosity to one day approach them. Kṛṣṇa chose Sucāru Prabhu to be the first devotee who spoke to me. He stopped me on Rideau Street one fine day and invited me to visit the local temple. Other devotees such as Dharmarāja Prabhu, Bāla Kṛṣṇa Prabhu, and Adhiyajña Prabhu were to be my first mentors in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. After becoming a devotee, I have never regretted the momentous decision to leave the material way of life and simply surrender to the process you have given to us all. The wonderful qualities of devotees, I was to understand later, were just the natural reflection of your wonderful nature as a perfect spiritual master.

The whole material world presents increasing challenges for the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. The moral fiber of human society is quickly being vanquished and demolished as Kali-yuga progresses. Every day we witness more and more decay within society. The situation appears more and more hopeless. However, regardless of how fallen people become, and possibly because of their increased fallen condition, we should become as ever-determined as you always were in presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness as the only panacea for resolving all the problems of individuals and society.

I have absolutely no doubt that the solutions you have presented to us all constitute the only remedy for today's fallen condition. We simply need to learn how to present the perfect philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in such a way that more and more people will take to it. But for this we need to become blessed and empowered. As stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Antya 7.11), *kali-kālera dharma—kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana/ kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana*: "The fundamental religious system in the Age of Kali is the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. One cannot spread the holy name of Kṛṣṇa without being specifically empowered by Lord Kṛṣṇa."

I am therefore begging Your Divine Grace to kindly give me, as well as all those sincere sons and daughters you inspire daily, the strength, courage, and determination to push forward this great movement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Please forgive my various shortcomings and give me your kind blessings so that I can advance in devotional service and become a small instrument in your divine mission.

May your glories and fame become increasingly known all over the three worlds. May you ever remain the shining light and hope for our present suffering humanity. Without your divine inspiration there would be no hope for any of us.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. All glories unto you!

Your servant,

Bhakti Rāghava Swami



Bhakti Vighna Vināśa Narasimha Mahārāja

My dear spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Your transcendental feats in distributing the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness live in our hearts forever. We can never hope to repay you for everything you have given us, but your Vyāsa-pūjā festival is a small token of our love and appreciation for all you have given us.

Recently I was giving a morning class in your Kolkata center and happened to quote the words you spoke during a morning walk in Los Angeles in the year 1974. You said that there were two great battles in history. One was between Rāma and Rāvaṇa, and the other was at Kurukṣetra. The hero in both was a Vaiṣṇava. You then went on to say that we are going to produce such Vaiṣṇavas, not these dull rascals sitting down. We don't want these kinds of Vaiṣṇavas—sitting-down rascals. We want Arjuna or we want no one. That is a Vaiṣṇava.

At the end of the class, when I asked for questions, a devotee enquired how we could be expected to display the qualities of Vaiṣṇavas such as Arjuna and Hanumān.

In my reply I described how you had perfectly displayed such qualities in your devotional service. Did Hanumān not leap across the ocean to Laṅkā and then, upon finding Mother Sītā, proceed to wreak havoc on the kingdom of Laṅkā single-handedly? In the same way, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you crossed the ocean to the kingdom of many Rāvaṇas, single-handedly declared war on Māyā, and brought many hedonists out of their ignorance.

Just as Hanumān had only weapons of rocks and trees against the sophisticated armory of Rāvaṇa, in the same way you enlisted young people with little or no wealth or know-how and engaged them in preaching against consumerism and sensuality.

Prior to Kṛṣṇa's speaking the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Arjuna was unwilling to fight in the Battle of Kurukṣetra. He was thinking that he would do better to become a beggar. However, after Kṛṣṇa spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā* to him he changed his mind and took up the task. In the same way, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you told us that you were not willing to take *sannyāsa*. You were thinking that you would do business and just give money to your spiritual master. But he came to you in a dream again and again and told you that you must leave your home. You had to get out and take up his mission of preaching the message of Lord Caitanya to the world. Just as Arjuna surrendered to the desire of Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the same way you also surrendered to the desire of Kṛṣṇa and entered onto the field of battle.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are both Hanumān and Arjuna, and you are the hero of the battle against Kali. Thank you for all your mercy.

Please give us your blessings so that we can continue to assist you in your service.

Begging to remain a tiny servant of your servants,

Bhakti Vighna Vināśa Narasimha Mahārāja



A "never-wind"
electro-mechanical
clock, circa 1970.
(Item courtesy of Śrīla
Prabhupāda's Quarters,
New Dvārakā Temple)



Bhakti Vikāsa Swami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine*

*namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I desire to attain your full mercy by placing upon my head the dust of your lotus feet, and thereby receive the concentrated essence of all the mercy of all the Vaiṣṇavas that has ever been available in the history of the universe.

*bhakta-pāda-dhūli āra bhakta-pāda-jala
bhakta-bhukta-avaśeṣa, —tina mahā-bala*

The dust of the feet of a devotee, the water that has washed the feet of a devotee, and the remnants of food left by a devotee are three very powerful substances.

*ei tina-sevā haite kṛṣṇa-premā haya
punaḥ punaḥ sarva-śāstre phukāriyā kaya*

By rendering service to these three, one attains the supreme goal of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. In all the revealed scriptures this is loudly declared again and again. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya* 16.60–61]



Śrīla Prabhupāda, to receive the dust of your lotus feet on my head would be the ultimate perfection of my existence. But such a benediction is not easily attained. While it might be considered that disciples have an inalienable right to access the mercy of their guru's feet, and although some Māyāvādīs and *prākṛta-sahajiyā* “sādhus” unreservedly bestow their foot-dust even upon casual visitors, the *ācāryas* of our *paramparā* have been more circumspect.

In your purports to verses 17.244–45 of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta's* *Ādi-līlā*, you state:

This holding of a great personality's lotus feet is certainly very good for the person who takes the dust, but this example of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's unhappiness indicates that a Vaiṣṇava should not allow anyone to take dust from his feet.

One who takes the dust of a great personality's lotus feet transfers his sinful activities to that great personality. Unless the person whose dust is taken is very strong, he must suffer the sinful activities of the person who takes the dust. Therefore ordinarily it should not be allowed. Sometimes in big meetings people come to take the same advantage by touching our feet. On account of this, sometimes we have to suffer from some disease. As far as possible, no outsider should be allowed to touch one's feet to take dust from them. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally showed this by His example, as explained in the next verse.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is God Himself, but He was playing the part of a preacher. Every preacher should know that being allowed to touch a Vaiṣṇava's feet and take dust may be good for the person who takes it, but it is not good for the person who allows it to be taken. As far as possible, this practice should ordinarily be avoided. Only initiated disciples should be allowed to take this advantage, not others. Those who are full of sinful activities should generally be avoided.

Several devotees have confirmed that at least up until around 1970 it was fairly common that disciples and committed newcomers would touch your lotus feet. But that changed. Udayānanda Prabhu recalled

that in 1974, when he asked permission to touch your lotus feet after you had awarded him the Gāyatrī mantra, you smiled and replied, “That is not necessary.” By 1975, when I was mercifully accepted into ISKCON, senior devotees would routinely warn juniors not to touch your feet, informing us that you did not like it—which is understandable for a guru who has thousands of disciples.

And only to a fortunate few did Your Divine Grace award the massive benediction of placing your feet upon their head. You once did so in 1968 in Montreal, on the request of the three householder couples whom you had prepared for preaching in England.

The benediction of receiving the dust from the lotus feet of a *mahā-bhāgavata* is so rarely bestowed that apparently some special qualification—beyond formal discipleship—is required for achieving it. As Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once told some respectable ladies of Dacca who had come to worship him and who apparently expected to touch his lotus feet: “For those inclined to freely touch anyone’s feet, I recall the words of my *gurudeva*—‘Why do they so boldly stretch out their hands to take dust from the feet of a sādhu? Do they really consider themselves sufficiently qualified?’”

Although Śrīla Gaurakīśora Dāsa Bābājī always strictly forbade anyone to touch his feet, he once voluntarily placed them on Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī’s head. What was the difference between those who were refused such a benediction and that personage upon whom it was happily bestowed? What is the qualification for receiving the dust of a *mahā-bhāgavata*’s lotus feet?

A great pure devotee such as Your Divine Grace comes to this world out of his causeless mercy, with the sole intention to distribute mercy. Yet that mercy is more freely bestowed on some than others, for not all recipients are equally eager to receive it. Just as the duck who quacks the most insistently is given more food, devotees who sincerely cry out for special mercy thus qualify themselves for it by dint of their strong desire to be blessed with an opportunity for intimate service.

The devotees who were embarking for London in 1968 were on a mission most dear to you, yet apparently almost impossible to execute. They were attempting to emulate a feat nearly parallel to what Your Divine Grace had accomplished—to go to an unknown country, with no local friends or support and very little money, and introduce the foreign culture of Lord Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* movement. They were six, rather than being alone, as you had been. Unlike in your case, they were backed by a movement—albeit distant, fledgling, and unrecognized; they also had the example of your success.

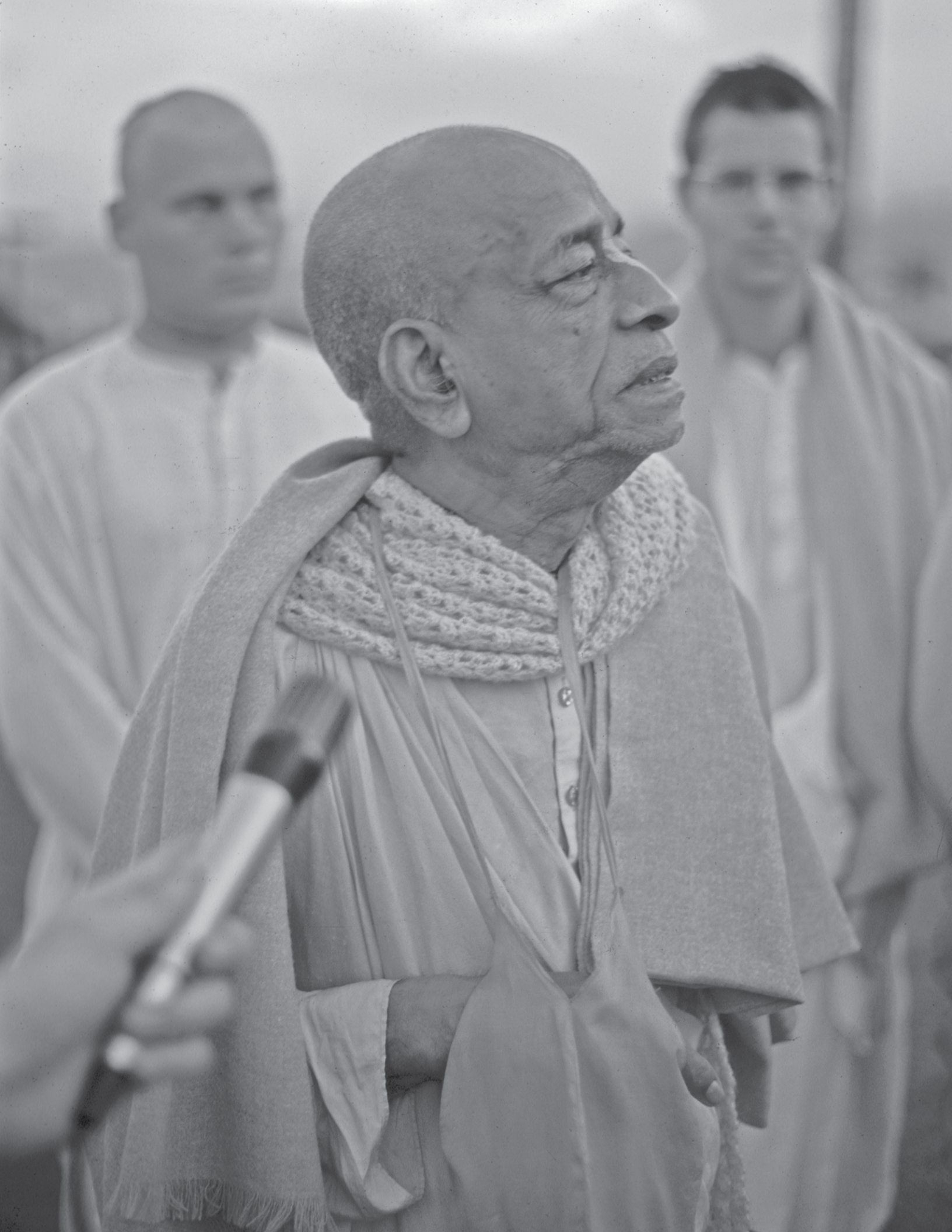
Still, the likelihood of their success might seem to have been even less than yours was when you set out for America, because they lacked your maturity, your lifelong absorption in the culture and philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and your zenith purity.

Both in your going to America and in your householder disciples’ venture to England, the crucial asset was total faith in the order of the spiritual master and the commitment to follow it against all odds. Such wholehearted faith in the spiritual master, and such determination to execute his order even in the most trying of circumstances, without consideration of personal convenience, loss, or gain, constitute in my understanding the essential qualification for attaining the spiritual master’s complete, unreserved mercy. A true disciple’s desire is one with that of his guru. Such a disciple maintains no doubts about his guru, nor any ambition other than to serve him. And when a spiritual master sees a disciple thus qualified, he voluntarily places his feet on that disciple’s head. Then the mercy flows unobstructed, and the seemingly impossible becomes a reality.

But such mercy is not easily attained. Surely, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the dust of your lotus feet is sought by great demigods and sages, yet even they find it difficult to achieve. Only upon those who strongly, unfailingly, and guilelessly seek the mercy of a pure devotee is it unreservedly bestowed. Udayānanda Prabhu related how he received your mercy—far beyond his expectation or imagination—in Vṛndāvana in 1977, when you were enacting your pastime of prolonged illness:

I had always had this desire to touch the lotus feet of the pure devotee, and this went back to the time when I was getting *brāhmaṇa* initiation in 1974. At that time I asked Śrīla Prabhupāda if I could I touch his feet, and Prabhupāda said, “No, that is not necessary.” So here I am in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s room, and I look over and I see Trivikrama Swami, and he’s massaging Prabhupāda’s feet. And I’m thinking, “Why is he getting all this mercy?” But then I’m thinking, “Oh, I don’t even deserve to be in this room.” And then all of a sudden Mahārāja yawned, and I said, “Oh, Kṛṣṇa!” So I humbly came over to Mahārāja and said, “Would it be okay if I took over and massaged





Śrīla Prabhupāda's feet?" And he said, "Okay." I thought, "Oh, my God, I don't believe this is really going to happen!" So then Maharaja showed me how to do the massage. I was so gentle as I massaged the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda, and I got to massage him for two and a half hours. Then at one point Prabhupāda looked up and asked, "Who is massaging my feet?" Tamāl Krishna Mahārāja said, "Oh, that's Udayānanda Dāsa." And Prabhupāda said, "Oh." And then there was this smile on Prabhupāda's face, as if after all these years he was fulfilling my desire. Then by the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda he allowed me to massage his feet every day for the next three weeks. At that time I thought I was the most fortunate soul in the whole universe.

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I most woefully deprive myself of your full mercy by not desiring it strongly enough. Although it is available to all, I have not taken it. Examining myself after all these years of supposedly preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I cannot but admit that I am still nurturing insane hopes for sense gratification. I am simply a pretender. Yet while lamenting my foolishness and hypocrisy, I must recognize that by your mercy there also exists within my heart a desire to be done forever with all my nonsense and to thus become your actual disciple.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, notwithstanding my stupidity, and knowing myself to be unqualified, I sustain the wish that you just once place your lotus feet on my head—this storehouse of wretched thoughts—and thus award me the kind of purification that cannot be attained throughout millions of lifetimes of other practices, not even by assiduously performing *sādhana-bhakti*. By the mercy of your feet, I will receive the mercy of all previous *ācāryas*, and of *sādvaitarṇ sāvadhūtārṇ parijana-sahitarṇ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-devaṇ/ śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pādān saha-gaṇa-lalitā-śrī-viśākhānvitāṁs ca*. Such an opportunity is worth waiting millions of lifetimes for. I might not qualify for that mercy very soon, but the hope of attaining it keeps me alive—though blundering—in service at your lotus feet. Praying to always have a place there,

Your aspiring servant,

Bhakti Vikāsa Swami



Candramauli Swami

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmīlitarṇ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, who has opened my eyes, blinded by the darkness of ignorance, with the torchlight of knowledge.

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this earth, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, beloved guide and eternal spiritual master,

The most holy and auspicious celebration of your divine appearance in this earthly realm is a grand opportunity to remind us of our good fortune of having meet Your Divine Grace by the mercy of the Lord, along with a reminder to renew and increase our commitment to fulfill your desire to spread Lord Caitanya's mission of reclaiming the fallen souls helplessly suffering in the jaws of the vicious dog of Kali.

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanah*"

"Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed." (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.38)

I have often thought, What is the actual meaning of this statement with regards to the words "Vedic knowledge automatically revealed"?

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 17.257, you clearly give the complete understanding. The purport of this verse is that one who is unflinchingly devoted to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, and similarly devoted to the spiritual master, with no ulterior motive, becomes a master of all knowledge. In the heart of such a devotee, the real essence of the Vedic knowledge becomes manifested. This essence is nothing but surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead (*vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*). Only unto one who fully surrenders to the spiritual master and the Supreme Lord does the essence of Vedic knowledge become manifested, not to anyone else. As long as there is an ulterior motive, one is not actually fully surrendered in devotion, and consequently Vedic knowledge remains hidden.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have full faith that you are fully capable of immediately removing any and all ulterior motives caused by our material tendencies born of material desires and false ego, and also that you can destroy the obstacles we encounter as we attempt to serve and surrender.



You mentioned that your pathway has become filled with stumbling blocks, but there are no stumbling blocks. I can kick out all those stumbling blocks immediately, provided you accept my guidance. With one stroke of my kick I can kick out all stumbling blocks. [Letter to Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, 9 September 1972]

Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, see me as one who is badly in need of your mercy and guidance, and therefore bring me to full surrender unto your lotus feet. Let me have complete faith in your instructions, and free me from ulterior motives as I endeavor to always remember your lotus feet in loving devotional service.

A poor beggar constantly in need of your mercy,

Candramauli Swami



A Grundig dictation machine used by Śrīla Prabhupāda. (Item courtesy of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Quarters, New Dvārakā Temple)

Candraśekhara Swami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine*

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

One might have never guessed at all,
in 1896,
that events exceeding worldly norm were due.
A humble place and time, it seemed,
by measure to us all,
and yet our fates were sealed at that time, too.

No fanfare on the Earth performed
that we could see or hear.
Māyā's hand had taken all that we could give.
One prophet predicts this child will cross
a deadly stormy sea
and build a house where all the world will live.

“Abhay,” a fitting name, is given
to this infant boy.
Fear not, but change the shape of things to come.
Those times then being foreign rule,
this India was not her own;
the West ruled now but soon would be outdone.

Gour Mohan's heart was set: his son
would preach the *Bhāgavatam*,
and prayed Rādhā Her blessings would bestow,
and arranged that he would learn to play
the *kartals* and the drum—
devotion in his heart was sure to grow.

Abhay would get a cart that was
a gift when he desired;
all local children came to pull the ropes.
As he led his small friends that day in
devotion 'round their home,
imagine this would reach a global scope.

To college, a young man, Scottish Churches';
impressions would unfold,
education meant to invoke the Christian view.
And Western science and values intending,
supplanting the culture of old,
to impress the children in this same way, too.

Soon he would marry and soon begin
his family life at home;
responsibilities begin to mount.
But deep within, his heart is searching
a goal beyond this world,
and precious above what most will ever count.

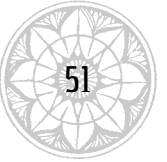
A friend insists that he must go
to Ultadunga Road.
Abhay knows bogus holy men abound.
But this happenstance reveals
the mission of his life,
and his gurudev, who is profound.

Initiation he will take
from Sarasvatī's hand;
Abhay Charanaravinda he'll be known.
His master's mission will come to be
the center of his life,
and books will be his center cornerstone.

“How shall I serve you?” he would think,
in household life he worked,
devotion to Kṛṣṇa the method he would preach.
After guru departed his pen became
a torch of knowledge bright,
as Bhaktivedanta he would be known in speech.

Back to Godhead, a paper to give
those in darkness some light,
started and published during World War II.
An effort in Jhansi to start a Mission,
a world-redeeming League,
a venture to reclaim both me and you.

In 1959 he takes
the order of *sannyāsa*,
in order to travel to save those in the West.
Bhaktivedanta Swami he now becomes,
the savior of the worst,
and schools them to become the very best.



Translation of the Bhāgavatam
was needed to be done,
a monumental task in sixty books,
a spotless Purāṇa locked in Sanskrit.
How to win the West
And open them to wisdom's true guidebooks?

Finally the fateful day had come,
to cross a troubled sea,
to bring a mission to a troubled land.
Death would try with two attempts
to stop this enterprise,
but Kṛṣṇa would protect with His own hand.

Late flowers bloom in isolation,
though not, in truth, alone.
The spiritual world had come with him that day.
Eleven years to build a movement
and turn the Earth toward good,

a blossom that persists to lead our way.

The knowledge of the West is grand
in technical account,
and controls the outward fiber of our lives.
Yet we do need not bread alone
but sacred expertise;
then courage of our soul again revives.

These words try in but small proportion
to show what can't be seen;
the crack in Māyā's wall is now more wide.
Our gratitude nowhere sufficient,
and still we try our full,
to grasp your love and mercy and there abide.

Your servant,

Candraśekhara Swami



Dānavīr Goswami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine*

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

To my dear beloved Guru Mahārāja, Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa Parivrājakācārya 108 Śrī Śrīmad A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, I offer my most respectful obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet. All glories, all glories, all glories to Your Divine Grace!

On this most auspicious day of the 114th anniversary of your dazzling appearance in this dark world, I humbly express some appreciation for a few of your gifts.

- Thank you for appearing like a charming saint disarming our atheistic pride.
- Thank you for steering us into a head-on collision with *māyā's* society, friendship, and love.
- Thank you for engaging ugra-karmic products in *yukta-vairāgya* service to Kṛṣṇa.
- Thank you for shaking up our comfortable illusions with your earthquakelike logic.
- Thank you for delivering the *mahā-mantra*, which tirelessly cleans our dirty hearts.
- Thank you for requesting summit cleanliness in all brahminical activities.
- Thank you for showing the simple life of land and cows.
- Thank you for serving us *prasādam*, which, when honored, frees us from all miseries.
- Thank you for devastating false philosophies with your hurricanelike arguments.
- Thank you for fanning the forest fire of *harināma*, which devours all sinful desires.
- Thank you for building households where *sannyāsīs* can travel carefree and preach.
- Thank you for devising the book distribution tsunami of transcendental knowledge.

- Thank you for retiring us from serving lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride, and envy.
- Thank you for sewing together the colorful global tapestry of sincere Vaiṣṇavas.

Dear Gurudeva, I do not know Lord Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lord Rāma, Sītā, or Hanumān. I cannot fathom Goloka, Vaikuṇṭha, Maheśa-dhāma, the *brahmajyoti*, or Svarga-loka. I am too abominable to associate with Lord Caitanya and the Six Gosvāmīs. Your Divine Grace is my only hope. Your causeless mercy is everything to me.

Therefore with all the humility at my command I prostrate myself at your effulgent lotus feet and beg for the mercy of eternal shelter as your direct assistant and the servant of your servants.

Yours,

Dānavīr Goswami

Gaṇapati dāsa Swami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine*

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

**The Greatest Story Ever Told
... and told again, and yet again.**



While Śrīla Prabhupāda only desired to narrate Kṛṣṇa's *līlā*, the *līlā* of the narrator himself infatuated his followers ... and their followers, and the followers after them.

Biographies abound in the form of diaries and histories of his transcendental movements. Most recently, we have been blessed with Ranchor Dāsa's *When the Sun Shines: the Dawn of Hare Krishna in Great Britain*. In it we learn of the amazing enthusiasm and sacrifice of Śrīla Prabhupāda's followers as they assisted him in unfolding his early mission. Two qualities stand out prominently in my mind: boldness and helplessness. And why should they not? Śrīla Prabhupāda was himself the embodiment of these qualities as he set out on the *Jaladuta* while observing his seventieth birthday ("without ceremony") at sea. No-frills Vyāsa-pūjā.

By boldness, I mean the recognition that since Lord Kṛṣṇa is the proprietor and controller of all existence, it is only natural that everything be utilized in His service. No holds barred. "Shoot for the rhinoceros." And helplessness means that beyond our best efforts, mega-management, and slick organization, it all boils down to Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Like the good Cardinal said: "We should work as if everything depended on us, but pray as if it all depended on God."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was the most organized person we had ever met. And he requested us also to give up our hippie ways and follow his example:

After the *Bhāgavatam* lecture, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked for questions. One of the long-haired boys asked, "Why do some people insist that spiritual life has to be something organized, like organized religion? Isn't the absolute spiritual nature different than that, different than following rules and running an organization? Do you have to be so organized?"

"Yes!" Prabhupāda answered loud and strong. "We have to be very organized! Very strict! We cannot deviate an inch! ..."

“We have a mission to cultivate all over the world,” he said. “We have to print and distribute books and open centers and train devotees, and we cannot do that unless we are very organized and efficient. If we are to conduct a mission to save the fallen souls, which is the desire of Lord Caitanya and the previous *ācāryas*, then we have to organize the *saṅkīrtana* movement very nicely. And we have to be strict devotees.” [*Life with the Perfect Master*, Chapter 2]

In his last days, he reiterated his emphasis on organization, coupling it with another favorable quality:

“Do you think this movement can go on without me?” Prabhupāda asked. Girirāja was astounded that Prabhupāda had called him in the middle of the night to ask him this.

“I think,” said Girirāja, “that as long as we are sincere and go on chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and follow the principles, the movement will be successful.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda was silent. When he spoke, each word seemed to come with great effort. He uttered the word *organization*. Then he said, “Organization and intelligence. Is there anything else?” [*Śrīla Prabhupāda Līlāmṛta*, chapter 54]

There are many meanings to “intelligence,” one of which is to use it to understand its own limitation, thus securely fastening our minds to Śrī Gurudeva’s *vāṇī*:

“This organization,” he said, speaking of ISKCON, “is not run by bylaws, meetings, or vouchers, but by following the instructions of the spiritual master with sincerity. Whatever success I have is due to that. To one with faith in the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa comes knowledge of the scripture. Without that faith and sincerity, bylaws are useless.” [*Life with the Perfect Master*, Chapter 2]



Those early days in London were filled with miracles and magic. Kṛṣṇa’s plans are always bigger than we give Him credit for. Organization is good, but it must be balanced with the intelligence to know who’s in charge. Although Einstein was no believer in a personal God, he was willing to put rationalism in its rightful place: “The intuitive mind is a sacred gift, and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.”

There is such a thing as over-organization. We must leave room for Kṛṣṇa to weave His magic.

At a time when the English devotees were living on whatever produce they could beg from the Covent Garden Market—sometimes stewed apples for a week at a time—while still offering Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa fresh garlands every day without fail, the following transpired:

Another day the landlord, who had not been seen for months, came to demand three months back rent—four hundred pounds. He gave Tribhuvanāth until the following day to find the money. That very evening a former member of the temple arrived unexpectedly from Brazil on his way to India.

“I had a dream,” he said.. “Kṛṣṇa told me to give you my savings,” and he wrote out a check for the full four hundred pounds. [*When the Sun Shines*]

Of course, there would have been no devotees and no temple in London were it not for the innovative thinking of the early *gṛhasṭha* preachers (one of them extremely pregnant):

Śyāmasundara saw that the focus of youth culture was shifting from San Francisco to London, where the Beatles were.

“Wouldn’t it be great to meet the Beatles and get them to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa?” he kept saying to Mukunda and Gurudās. [*When the Sun Shines*]

No money? No problem:

Just then an unexpected check arrived in the mail for Śyāmasundara: the return of almost two thousand dollars owed to him from two years earlier. [*When the Sun Shines*]

Śrīla Prabhupāda gave them the inspiration and with it the room to grow—and they blossomed. He also cautioned us about the opposite style of management:

Krishna Consciousness Movement is for training men to be independently thoughtful and competent in all types of departments of knowledge and action, not for making bureaucracy. Once there is bureaucracy the whole thing will be spoiled. There must be always individual striving and work and responsibility, competitive spirit, not that one shall dominate and distribute benefits to the others and they do nothing but beg from you and you provide.” [Letter, 22 Dec 1972]

Let every Temple President work according to his own capacity to improve the Krishna Consciousness of his center. So far the practical management is concerned, that is required, but not that we should become too much absorbed in fancy organization. Our business is spiritual life, so whatever organization needs to be done, the Presidents may handle and take advice and assistance from their GBC representative. In this way let the Societies work go on and everyone increase their service at their own creative rate. [Letter, 22 April 1972, written by Karandhara Dāsa, to all ISKCON T.P.s, approved by Śrīla Prabhupāda]

Only thing is, we must try to avoid becoming too much overly organized like the material businessmen. Our business is to ourselves become Krishna conscious, advance in spiritual life, and to preach to others how they can also take advantage and come to the perfectional stage of life. Too much business or paperwork, vouchers, plans, these things become too much cumbersome for our spiritual growth, they take us away from our real emphasis of work, namely, to go back to Home, back to Godhead. [Letter, 14 May 1972]

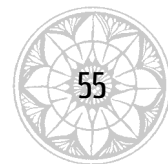
It seems that Prabhupāda’s spiritual master had much the same idea. He warned in no uncertain terms:

The idea of an organized church in an intelligible form marks the close of a living spiritual movement. The great ecclesiastical establishments are the dikes and the dams to retain the current that cannot be held by any such contrivances. They, indeed, indicate a desire on the part of the masses to exploit a spiritual movement for their own purpose. They also unmistakably indicate the end of the absolute and unconventional guidance of the bona fide spiritual teacher. [*The Harmonist*, January 1929]

The original purpose of the established churches of the world may not always be objectionable. But no stable religious arrangement for instructing the masses has yet been successful. The Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in pursuance of the teachings of the scriptures, enjoins all absence of conventionalism for the teachers of the eternal religion. It does not follow that the mechanical adoption of the unconventional life by any person will make him a fit teacher of religion. Regulation is necessary for controlling the inherent worldliness of conditional souls. But no mechanical regulation has any value, even for such a purpose. The bona fide teacher of religion is neither any product of nor the favorer of any mechanical system. In his hands no system has, likewise, the chance of degenerating into a lifeless arrangement. The mere pursuit of fixed doctrines and fixed liturgies cannot hold a person to the true spirit of doctrine or liturgy. [*The Harmonist*, 1932]

Based upon his spiritual master’s instructions, as well as his own experience of the Gauḍīya Mission’s collapse, Prabhupāda was concerned that his own society not degenerate into such a “lifeless arrangement”:

There is no doubt about it, to distribute books is our most important activity. The temple is a place not for eating and sleeping, but as a base from which we send out our soldiers to fight with maya. Fight with maya means to drop thousands and millions of books into the lap of the conditioned souls. Just like during war time the Bombs are raining from the sky like anything. [Letter, 3 August 1973]



Besides that, in our BBT it is clearly written that “Fifty percent for printing book, and fifty percent for . . .” So you cannot violate this. Those who can give voluntary service, “Welcome.” Otherwise we don’t require. At least they should not be given any salary. That is very bad. This is against principle. [Conversation, 28 April 1977]

Śrīla Prabhupāda criticized temple *seva*its for “bell-ringing” only, with no accompanying ringing of *karatālas* in the adjoining streets. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, witnessing missiles of diplomacy launched by one disciple against the other in newly constructed mansions of marble, advised Prabhupāda that he should rather use available funds to print and detonate book “bombs” on the nondevotees—advice that Prabhupāda passed down to us. And both *ācāryas* cautioned their followers not to become fat, lazy, and wealthy “renunciants” at the expense of honest-working *grhasthas*, who struggle to eke out a minimal standard of living while maintaining a spiritual life.

Meanwhile, the gears of *kāla* grind on, delivering severe reactions onto the laps of the conditioned souls, who are bereft of peace, piety, security, and healthful food and environment. In the midst of all this calamity, the modern-day representatives of *mahā-vadānyāvatāra* Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu must be careful not to cheat the public of their only chance to reverse their misfortunes.

Truth be told, multitudes are starving for Kṛṣṇa consciousness—some know it, some don’t. For many, all it takes is a little association to convince them of their hunger. The problem is that this association is rare. Unless we can create a project where the public is enthused to come to us (e.g., the Utah Kṛṣṇa temple), we should be making our presence felt such that it inspires faith in the public. As George Harrison admitted in those glorious early days: “I see you chanting in rain or snow. Always chanting up and down Oxford Street. Just seeing you there convinces me of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” By our following suit, many others, including we ourselves, will become convinced that Kṛṣṇa intervenes and that Śrīla Prabhupāda is still in charge of his movement. “Organization and intelligence” will work only if they are set upon the rock of boldness and helplessness.



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Wishing to become the servant of Prabhupāda’s servants,

Gaṇapati Dāsa Swami

Guṇagrāhi Dāsa Goswami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn iti nāmine*

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-salākayā
cakṣur unmilitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet.

Although I have been trying my best to serve and meditate upon you for over forty years, I am painfully aware that I still fall far short of the mark. In spite of my shortcomings, I am so grateful that you have had the tolerance and patience to remain in my heart. My situation is just one of millions; you have bestowed your infinite compassion upon countless rascals like me and continue to save us from



incalculable suffering. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja focuses on this quality of compassion in his glorification of Lord Nityānanda, highlighting it above all the Lord's other transcendental attributes:

*tānhāra caraṇe mora koṭi namaskāra
caitanyaera bhakti yeṇho laoyāila saṁsāra*

“I offer innumerable obeisances unto the lotus feet of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, who is so kind that He spread the service of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu all over the world. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 1.26) “Innumerable obeisances” indicate an overwhelming feeling of gratitude—the same feeling that Kṛṣṇadāsa, the *ācāryas*, and the Lord Himself surely have for you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

I, for one, never tire of seeing your mercy being distributed to the conditioned souls and always marvel at how, due to your magic, people become transformed before my very eyes. Your books, your *prasādam*, your chanting, your temples, your devotees—all are conduits for that transformation. And when they are at work, the whole world lights up. You also light up, and your *śikṣā* and *dīkṣā* disciples light up as well. We all light up together—just as we did decades ago—as you continue to grace us with your ecstatic transcendental presence. You have shown us that there is no joy greater than seeing someone coming to life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness after eons of slumber. It takes a lot to get a hard-hearted devotee like myself to shed a tear, but feeling your affection and seeing it acting upon the hearts of others has indeed caused some to fall. Thus, I sing all praise unto you in the same mood that Locana Dāsa Thākura glorifies his two Lords: “Within the three worlds there is no one like Lord Caitanya or Lord Nityānanda. Their merciful qualities are so great that upon hearing them even birds and beasts cry and stones melt.”

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who turned the hippies into happies and, as Kali-yuga progresses, are continuing to miraculously turn their modern-day counterparts, derivations, permutations, and whomever else into the future saints of this world!

Guṇagrāhi Dāsa Goswami



Hanumatpresaka Swami

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept our humble obeisances in the dust at your feet. In honor of your Vyāsa-pūjā we hope to say a few words to glorify your good self.

We feel that your intelligence is as incomprehensible to us as any saint's must be to any monkey. We can see ourselves only as a small group of monkeys milling around at your lotus feet as you sit in your rocker chanting on your beads. We are looking for seeds and other eatables, picking in the dust, and you are looking out over the ocean chanting the *mahā-mantra*.

Then, quite inconceivably to us, from time to time you motion to one of us and then put a message in a collar around our neck and say, “Rādhārāṇī, Subala, or Nandī-mukhī,” and off we go.

I have to say, in all my stupidity, that it all really seems to be that simple.

Simply aspiring to be of some service to you life after life in the association of your other servants,

Hanumatpresaka Swami

Hridayānanda dās Goswami

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine*

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I bow at your lotus feet.

In your purport to *Gītā* 3.30, you write, “The Lord instructs that one has to become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious to discharge duties, as if in military discipline.”

In our conditioned state it is natural that we, your followers, go through physical, emotional, and spiritual cycles in which our enthusiasm and energy for service wax and wane. Yet if we continue to faithfully serve you, we will steadily advance, even as we experience inevitable ups and downs.

With perfect purity, maturity, and compassion you, our loving spiritual father, guide us through life’s struggles and guarantee the ultimate victory of those who remain faithfully engaged in serving your mission.

You are not merely a glorious theological category. You are a charming, inspiring, liberated soul with your own unique Kṛṣṇa conscious personality. Learning to relate to you appropriately, we learn to relate to Kṛṣṇa and other liberated souls. We prepare for our eternal life.

As always, on this day we thank you best by rededicating ourselves to the fulfillment of your selfless desires, which are truly the desires of Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Thank you for everything, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your servant,

Hridayānanda dās Goswami



Janānanda Gosvāmī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this earth, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

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

I am sitting in Calcutta, your hometown, at 3C Albert Road. Your presence here is very strong. I feel inspired to write to you about what I perceive is happening here and in other ISKCON temples in India. Thoughts come to mind of how much you wanted other Indians to take up Lord Caitanya's mission:

So I require the cooperation of the Indian, especially young men, educated men. Come forward. Stay with us. Study *Bhagavad-gītā*. [Address at cornerstone-laying ceremony, Bombay, 23 January 1975]

For a long time it did not seem that your words were becoming reality. But here, right in front of my eyes, I see dozens and dozens of shaven-headed young Indian men dancing and chanting ecstatically. The words of a pure devotee never go in vain. I am transported back decades to the temples in the West, ablaze with enthusiasm to serve and preach.

About the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda temple on Albert Rd., Calcutta, the oldest ISKCON temple in India, you said, "You should never give up this place." You also said Calcutta is the most important city in India. The Calcutta temple, which ever since I can remember was not much more than a transit station for devotees—almost stagnant—has in the last few years seen a radical change. Not only here but in many other temples in India such transformations are taking place.

I hope, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are pleased that now this temple has become vibrant with the spirit you inculcated in the Western devotees many years ago. I wish that all devotees could feel this spirit. Maybe the packaging is a little different than in the 60s and 70s, the complexions a little darker, but it's just like "the good old days." ISKCON Calcutta is a breath of fresh air in the age of global warming, in an ISKCON where many of us have unfortunately become stuck in our ruts and staid ways of thinking, worrying about health, wealth, the climate, the events of this world, and numerous other externals. In such a life of struggle to keep going, the spirit for preaching goes into the background.

It was here in Calcutta, in 1922, where you first met His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura at Ultadanga Junction Road, on the rooftop of the small rented property which served as the Gauḍīya Maṭha. There you unwillingly, at first, again connected with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

At that first meeting he spoke to you those prophetic words which practically form the backbone of ISKCON and have changed the world: "You are educated young men. Why don't you preach Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's message throughout the whole world?" You were shocked then by these words, but in the future these words would shock the world. You alone of all your godbrothers took those instructions as your life and soul. You never put those words on the shelf.

In Jhansi you wrote:

EDUCATIONAL Wanted—candidates from any nationality to qualify themselves as real Brahmins for preaching the teachings of Bhagwat Geeta for all practical purposes throughout the whole world. Deserving candidates will be provided with free boarding and lodging. Apply: A.C. Bhaktivedanta, Founder and Secretary of the League of Devotees, Bharati Bhawan, P.O. Jhansi (U.P.)

Nothing much came of it. But was it not Lord Caitanya's order?

*bhārata-bhūmite haila manuṣya-janma yāra
janma sārthaka kari' kara para-upakāra*

"One who has taken his birth as a human being in the land of India [Bhārata-varṣa] should make his life successful and work for the benefit of all other people."

The Lord also predicted:

*prthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma
sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*

"In as many villages and towns as there are on the surface of the globe, everywhere this Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra will be preached."



You so much desired to fulfill the mandate of your Guru Mahārāja and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Now in India, what did not happen when you were there is becoming a reality. You wanted to preach in India. You wanted so much that Indians take up this process seriously and that they become preachers and travel the world. Is this not the beginning of the great wave of preachers coming out of this great land to save the world? In my heart it feels like this is to be. We see that so many young, educated, and well-behaved men have come to your lotus feet. Surely among them many will go to the West, the North, the South, and East to preach, and not just to the Indians there but to whites, blacks, yellows, browns—to one and all. Is this not your will, Śrīla Prabhupāda?

Maybe in many places we are scratching our heads—“What to do? How will we make devotees? Where have all the *brahmacārīs* gone?”

In a world of rampant materialism, where even in the devotee community there is much to be desired, we may ask, “What is the solution?” Is what we see before our eyes here in Calcutta the solution? Are these young devotees in India the future of the world? *Sannyāsīs* preaching in America, Europe, Africa, Australia, China—everywhere? This appears to be the plan of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and you, His dearmost servant. Of course, we should all do what we can to help the mission and the people of the world.

What is going on here (and not only here but in all Indian cities where intelligent student preaching is going on) is a credit to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and your sincere followers. I know you are proud of this. “These are educated young men. Why don’t they preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world?” In time I’m sure they will. The beautiful if somewhat rough garden planted and cultivated by you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is now looking more beautiful than ever.

There may be problems in ISKCON, such as in the administration of the society and in many other areas. But what I see here in Calcutta is a sign that your body is alive. A dead body has no problems. “Only one who has life can preach.” We are battling against the forces of Kali. Kali is an ocean of faults. Let us not unnecessarily be supporters of Kali by harping on them. Let’s see the flowers blossoming and growing strong in the jungle. Cāṇakya Paṇḍita said that “One blooming flower can refresh a whole forest.” As for me, I am surely refreshed seeing these glorious effects of your preaching, Śrīla Prabhupāda. By having firm faith in your movement and instructions, we can see how Kṛṣṇa reciprocates.

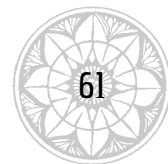
But let us not sit on our laurels. We all have your order to preach. We all have your order to blossom and bloom in our own ways. We can all play our parts. We have little time and no time to waste. No time to grumble and groan about the weeds within and without. We have no time to fight with each other.

So far as your fraternal quarrel is concerned, I may recite in this connection one story: An old father required massaging so all the children wanted to serve the father. The father divided the right and left portion of his body to be served by the children. Later, along with the service, there was some quarrel between the children, and they were competing by hitting the parts of the father which was assigned to the opposing party. So the father said that you are hitting my different parts due to your opposition to one another, but I am therefore dying. Similarly, either this department or that department, if you quarrel amongst yourselves it will be detrimental to my missionary ambition. Please therefore stop this unnecessary strain. {Letter to Rāyārāma, 20 February 1969}

Prabhupāda: These are all fanaticism. Real unity is in advancing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva . . .* In Kali-yuga you cannot strictly follow, neither I can strictly follow. If I criticize you, if you criticize me, then we go far away from our real life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. [Morning Walk, 10 March 1976, Māyāpur]

You have given us your order to preach. Let us get on with it. You have indeed given us everything, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Let us give others what you have given us. Let us revive the revolution you started. We have so much to do “toward bringing about a revolution in the impious lives of this world’s misdirected civilization.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.11)

The practical effect of our spreading the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world is that now the most degraded debauchees are becoming the most elevated saints. This is only one Indian’s humble service to the world. If all Indians had taken to this path, as advised by Lord



Caitanya Mahāprabhu, India would have given a unique gift to the world, and thus India would have been glorified. . . . Therefore it is now the duty of the leading men of India to consider the importance of this movement and train many Indians to go outside of India to preach this cult. People will accept it, there will be cooperation among the Indian people and among the other people of the world, and the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu will then be fulfilled. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu will then be glorified all over the world, and people will naturally be happy, peaceful, and prosperous, not only in this life but also in the next, for as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, anyone who understands Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, will very easily get salvation, or freedom from the repetition of birth and death, and go back home, back to Godhead. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu therefore requests every Indian to become a preacher of His cult to save the world from disastrous confusion. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 9.41, purport]

This should be the India's business. This whole world is in darkness, demonic civilization. And India, there is the remedy. So if the Indians take advantage and make his life perfect and then go to the Western countries and distribute this immortal knowledge, that is real business of India. Unfortunately, they are trying to imitate. [Lecture on *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 1.11, Māyāpur, 4 April 1975]

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will go down in history as having saved mankind in its darkest hour. [Conversation, London, 1973]

So this is a memorable day. What he desired, I am trying little bit, and you are all helping me. So I have to thank you more. You are actually representative of my Guru Mahārāja [Śrīla Prabhupāda starts to cry] because you are helping me in executing the order of my Guru Mahārāja. [Lecture on the disappearance day of His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, Bombay, 22 December 1975]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, may your will be mine. May I embrace your instructions as my life and soul and become a pleasing instrument to assist you in spreading the holy names to every town and village of the world.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your servant,

Janānanda Gosvāmī



Kadamba Kānana Swami

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

You once mentioned that the key to your success was that you “cent percent surrendered to your spiritual master.” We are by no means of that caliber, since our percentage of surrender remains on the meager side. But we cannot forget you and sink back in ignorance—or ignOrance, as you would pronounce the word, revealing that it had its roots in the verb “ignore.” We can never ignore you, because

you have awakened a spark of hope in our hearts, a hope that perfect happiness can actually be attained in this life through devotional service to Kṛṣṇa.

Even though it may be of poor quality, our connection with you is actually producing wonderful results in our life, as little by little we learn what it means to give ourselves in service. The vows of initiation are like the pearls that Kṛṣṇa planted and that produced bushes with many more pearls.

We cannot imagine how widespread the effect of this movement is. You once mentioned during a lecture that you didn't need a microphone but that you were using the microphone to purify the microphone's maker. Imagine every screw, every gadget, all the clothes, and even the children's tricycles—anything used by devotees purifies their makers. Smita Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja once mentioned that you said, “When the *harināma* party goes through the street, it doesn't just transform the people in the street, but it also transforms the street itself, so much so that even when people go later through that street after the *harināma* party has already left, they still become purified.”

And how deep does this transcendental knowledge enter into the heart? In your *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Antya 1.195) we read a verse that Rāmānanda Rāya recited to describe Rūpa Gosvāmī's poetry: “What is the use of a bowman's arrow or a poet's poetry if they penetrate the heart but do not cause the head to spin?” How deep are the qualities of *kṛṣṇa-prema*? We are simply watching in amazement from the sidelines—sidelines that are already wonderful—waiting for what more there is to be revealed.

In your “Concluding Words” to the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* you mention that not only is Kṛṣṇa present in the heart of his devotee, but He is there along with his full entourage, and thus the spiritual master is also present there. You are the spiritual master for all generations of ISKCON devotees, and therefore we are certain you are present in all of our hearts. For those who are not your direct disciples, the current spiritual master reinforces the connection with Your Divine Grace in devotional service.

Praying to remain always engaged in your service,

Your servant,

Kadamba Kānana Swami



Keśava Bhāratī Dāsa Goswami

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet, which are softer than the softest rose petal.

And again please accept my most respectful obeisances at the feet of your transcendental intelligence, which is sharper than the sharpest razor and more brilliant than a million suns.

And yet again please accept my heartfelt obeisances at the feet of your towering spiritual strength, by which you left your young disciples breathless as they tried to keep up with you, and by which you left the other spiritual authorities in India watching from the sidelines as you delivered Kṛṣṇa to the world.

Some years ago a senior Englishman, a Queen's Counsel (QC) who had to speed-read all your books while deliberating upon the Manor inquiry, challenged your followers. He said that we could not actually understand the greatness of what you had accomplished, but that he could. At first his statement seemed perplexing. We were Śrīla Prabhupāda's loyal followers, after all, and the QC was but an outsider. Surely only we could understand. But his explanation made sense. He was senior in age, more than seventy. Because we were young, he pointed out, we couldn't possibly comprehend fully what you had done.

Indeed, the extra dimension of appreciation the QC spoke of is beginning to dawn within me in my sixty-fourth year, despite my being such a dullard. The adjustments I have already had to make, not to mention those I'll have to make in the years to come in order to keep my service to you constant, shine

more light on the inconceivable things you did on an international scale after your seventieth year. No one has ever done such a thing. And no one ever will. What you did, Śrīla Prabhupāda, can only be done once.

This past year I continued my daily *sādhana* of listening to the available recorded material of Your Divine Grace in chronological order. I'm on my fourth time through, and each time I feel increasingly closer to you. It's as if I'm traveling with you, attending your morning walks and lectures, your room conversations, interviews, preaching programs, and so on. I pray that this feeling goes on increasing forever. The power of your voice's resonance, the solid logic of your arguments, the loving patience you displayed in constantly repeating the foundational principles of *bhakti* to insure that we became fixed up and did not jump forward prematurely, the sensitivity you showed to the cultural diversity you faced, and the adjustments you made to attract people from all walks of life in every country—all these and more set you apart from any other preacher from India, or from anywhere else for that matter.

My faith in your printed word also increased this year as the reports of my dear friend Vaiśeṣika Prabhu poured in from his efforts to push forward the distribution of your books. Especially inspiring are the stories he tells about the results of going door to door in America. He reports that in general the common man has never been so receptive to your message. And he should know, having been dedicated to distributing your books steadily since 1973. From the revolutionary motel *saṅkīrtana* party he heads up, reports are that some guests bring the *Bhagavad-gītā* from their rooms to the front desks of their motels to ask if they can purchase them after reading your classic introduction. How could this be happening if your message and method of delivery were not still pertinent?

You wanted us to write our realizations, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You once delivered an intense message to your peers: “But where are *their* books?” You especially wanted your *sannyāsīs* to leave transcendental literature to uplift future generations. My other closest friend, Śivarāma Swami, is engaging me in editing his books. The project we're working on now is proving to be of epic proportions. May your mercy descend upon us so that we may properly present what you have taught us and so that our effort to please you may bear fruit.

You taught us that serving the servant of the servant of Kṛṣṇa—the farther removed the better—makes us increasingly dear to Kṛṣṇa. So I beg you, Śrīla Prabhupāda: Please continue to engage me in serving the servants of your servants, and their servants.

As is natural in Kali-yuga, controversy still abounds. The history of splinter groups continues from the days of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's presence. When Lord Caitanya left Nadia to accept *sannyāsa*, the devotees were devastated. To pacify them the Lord reassured them that He would appear in two forms: *nāma-saṅkīrtana* and His Deity form. (*Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Madhya-khaṇḍa* 27.13) I can't help but notice that today's splinter groups tend to congregate at ISKCON's festivals to distribute their tracts. They seem to lack what it takes to put on such dynamic public events themselves. This seems to me evidence of the special empowerment you injected into ISKCON's *kīrtanas*. And as far as your *mūrti* in the temple goes, I myself have heard first-time guests ask how you can sit still for so long! Wherever these two manifestations of your preaching are, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the spiritual atmosphere is palpable, even to the uninformed.

The fact that you allowed your *mūrti* to be installed in your physical presence on Gaura-Nitāi's altar in the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir also testifies to the importance you placed on keeping your divine form in the center of ISKCON's worship. The memory of the installation of the small brass *mūrti* of Your Divine Grace at Rādhā-kuṇḍa just after your disappearance and the *parikramā kīrtana* around Govardhana Hill to celebrate the event remains vivid in my heart. I think it's safe to say that all of us who were fortunate enough to have participated in those historic events felt the special empowerment you injected into our *kīrtana* and your divine form.

In fact, the effulgence and standard of Deity worship maintained after all these years in your ISKCON temples is also distinct and palpable. For example, recently I made my first visit to the Punjabhi Bhag temple in Delhi. It isn't one of ISKCON's major temples, but I was struck by how effulgent the Deities and the entire altar are. Is not this evidence of the legacy you left to your loyal followers by your loving devotional service to the Lord? Who else has left such exemplary models of devotional service that engage devotees throughout the world in the loving service of the Lord?

And this brings me to my last observation. The effulgence of the ISKCON altars and *kīrtanas* also seems to me to be evidence of the descending potency coming through you to the savants of today's



ISKCON, the sincere, hardworking devotees who maintain your temples and programs worldwide. I have directly heard an opinion from one group that the descending potency from the Lord was lost in ISKCON when you physically disappeared.

Some years ago a young *sannyāsī* from a splinter group confronted me. His point was that the work we were doing on *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* was ascending because we no longer had you guiding our pens. His idea was that their work was descending, however, because they had their leader, the *mahā-bhāgavata*, physically present to guide them. This conversation took place before the first volume was published, so I had no hard evidence to show at the moment. I could only caution the devotee making the claim that Gopīparāñadhana Prabhu and Jayādvaita Swami not only were trained directly by you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, but also had been translating and editing transcendental literature for longer than the young *sannyāsī* had been alive. It seems that arrogance and disloyalty go hand in hand.

Later, however, when Gopīparāñadhana Prabhu, Jayādvaita Mahārāja, and I came to the last stage of the editing process of the first volume, a better answer came to me. I saw for myself how you impart the descending potency to us. As we sat together to make the final adjustments to the manuscript, sincerely trying to make the final result transparent to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, at times our eyes became misty when we found answers to especially difficult passages. There is no doubt in my mind that I was witnessing the descending potency as it was appearing. Now, every time I read that book with the devotees, a book you yourself said we must read, without fail the devotees listening are amazed at the clarity of the work and the uplifting effect the reading has on them. And from my side, I get the distinct impression that I had nothing to do with this work. The result was greater than even the synergy of our team's combined effort. In short, when we get together and cooperate to do anything that you wanted done, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the descending potency comes through that effort and wonderful things are accomplished.

For the past few years Vaiśeṣika Prabhu and I have been conducting hearing and chanting sessions of your books with devotees from around the world at your ISKCON Bhaktivedanta Ashram in Govardhana. Consistently the devotees who participate have told us that they feel their spiritual lives rejuvenated. They feel your transcendental presence. Again, my conclusion is that when we get together and sincerely try to do something dear to your heart, your presence is invoked and the internal potency flows through us.

There is no way that we can repay you for these gifts, for your agreeing to stay with us in all these ways. You are alive and well, Śrīla Prabhupāda. And all we can do is to continue to cooperate with like-minded devotees to fulfill your desires.

Please bless me, Śrīla Prabhupāda, so that I will always be able to live and associate with your loyal followers. In this way I can serve you forever.

Your servant,

Keśava Bhāratī Dāsa Gosvāmī



Krishna Dāsa Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace, who out of pure compassion descended on Earth/Bhāratavarṣa to reclaim countless fallen souls.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, this year Ranchor Prabhu wrote a wonderful book entitled *When the Sun Shines*, which describes your success in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the UK. In the book Ranchor describes his interviews with many of the fortunate souls who had your glorious association in the 1960s and 70s, and I feel extremely fortunate to be one of those souls.

Another recently published book, written by Frank Ward (Arjuna Dāsa) and entitled *No Time to Slumber for the Hindu Tiger*, recounts the pastime of saving your Bhaktivedanta Manor from closure in the 1980s.

Both these books reminded me of the glorious association I had with Your Divine Grace. My first face-to-face meeting with you took place at Bhaktivedanta Manor after witnessing your incredible pastime at the famous 1973 London Ratha-yātrā, where you danced along the whole route of the procession from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square. The meeting at Bhaktivedanta Manor was one of the most significant events of my life. I entered your room upstairs as a *grhastha*, and a few hours later I left as a *sannyāsī*.

When we met, you asked about my past. I explained that I was born in a *brāhmaṇa* Vaiṣṇava family and had accepted initiation from a Vaiṣṇava guru in 1950. You asked what disciplic line my guru belonged to. When I answered “the *Brahmā sampradāya*,” you became ecstatic and immediately requested me to help your movement. However, you went further and asked me to accept *sannyāsa* from Your Divine Grace. I was taken aback by your bold preaching, but after hours of discussion I was convinced. However, I said that although I accepted you as my *śikṣā* guru I would need the permission of my spiritual master before taking *sannyāsa*.

After the meeting, I wrote to my *dīkṣā* guru, informing him of your extraordinary work and devotion. He immediately replied that I should assist you in every way possible and accept *sannyāsa* from you. Śrīla Prabhupāda, since that amazing meeting at Bhaktivedanta Manor I have accepted you as my *śikṣā* and *sannyāsa* guru.

In *No Time to Slumber for the Hindu Tiger* Arjuna Dāsa explains in graphic detail the transcendental fight to save the Manor, and I was happy to play some small part in that pastime. Similarly, by your mercy I have been able to play a role in the development of preaching in various countries across the world. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I would like to thank you for allowing me to be engaged in your service, as well as the service of *gomātā*, Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Your humble servant,

Krishna Dāsa Swami



Lokanāth Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at the dust of your divine lotus feet on this most auspicious event of your 114th Vyāsa-pūjā.

I remember in 1976 a reporter in Delhi asked you, “Are you talking of some principle when you talk of God?” You replied, “Not principle, but a person like you and me.”

Māyāvādī impersonalists, on the other hand, say “God is love,” “God is light,” and so many other concepts. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you never just said “Kṛṣṇa.” Every time you talked of Kṛṣṇa, you qualified your statement by saying “Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” Other commentators have interpreted *bhakti* as devotion, something passive: you sit around having peace and love. However, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you did not just settle for that; you talked of *bhakti* as devotional *service* wherein we serve the Lord in all ways with love and devotion. Many people are trying to tear Kṛṣṇa apart—attempting to break Him to pieces, taking His limbs and scattering Them hither and thither—wanting to get rid of this personality. They want the kingdom of God, but without God Himself, so that they are answerable to no one. But you countered what you so correctly termed “all impersonal calamity” by establishing the personality of Godhead, for which Kṛṣṇa must have been extremely pleased with you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the fact is that you were the only person in India who openly criticized not only demigod worship and impersonalism but also everything else that fell short of complete surrender to Kṛṣṇa. Your Divine Grace never compromised in your preaching, saying, “Neither will I compromise, nor

should any of my students. We are firmly convinced that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality and all others are His part and parcel servants. This we must declare boldly to the whole world, so that they should not foolishly dream of world peace unless they are prepared to surrender to Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord.”

Girirāja Swami once revealed that before coming in contact with you his goal was to become perfect by becoming God. He wrote “You are God” in big letters on a sign and pasted it on his bathroom wall to remind himself of the goal he had set for himself. He was searching for someone to help him in this endeavor. Whenever he received news of any “godmen” coming from India he would inquire whether they could help him. With this in mind, he came to see you.

You observed him carefully, and recognizing his impersonal tendencies, you asked him, “Do you want to *be* God, or do you want to *serve* God? If you want to be God, then it means that now you are not God. One who is not God can never become God. God is always God; God never becomes God. So you can never become God. But if you want to serve God and you sow the seed of devotional service and water it by chanting, God will provide the sunlight and all other favorable conditions to make the creeper of devotion grow. But if you want to become God, then why should God help the competition?” Then he said, “God is in your heart. He is ready to help you. You can become godly—but you cannot become God. If you want to become God, you are only cheating yourself. So what is your decision,” you concluded, “do you want to serve God, or do you want to become God?”

Ashamed, Girirāja said, “I want to serve God, but I can see that I was trying to become God.”

“Yes!” you replied with a smile, and Girirāja offered you his obeisances, having found his spiritual master.

Often your greatness is spoken of in terms of your having founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. You translated and wrote over seventy books, initiated five thousand disciples, opened more than one hundred temples, and set up many farm communities, all in a matter of a little over a decade. However, an aspect of your greatness not discussed so frequently is your possessing all wonderful personal qualities. Dear Prabhupāda, you had all the divine qualities, the twenty-six qualities of a pure Vaiṣṇava. Everyone can understand just how compassionate, kind, caring, friendly, and expert you were.

You will be known as Jesus Christ is known, or even more so. We know Jesus had some eleven disciples, but he did not open monasteries, write books, or travel around the world. His spiritual qualities are well known, especially his compassion. But your compassion is no less.

You were there for everyone on the planet, even the animals. You loved their very souls. You said for the record that cows are also citizens and have the right to live. Cows, despite being very dear to Kṛṣṇa, cannot speak, and so you spoke on their behalf.

Similarly, you wanted to save the trees from harm. For instance, when our Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple was being constructed in Vṛndāvana, you took great pains to ensure that the *tamāla* tree was preserved in the courtyard. In fact, you had the courtyard built around the tree, rather than simply cutting it down, which was the easier and hassle-free option. You could see the folly of cutting trees for paper to print news of sex and violence, and so you recommended in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.2.12 that “paper mills should manufacture paper only for publication of ISKCON literature because ISKCON literature is published for the service of Lord Viṣṇu.”

Although you were born in India, your vision was all-encompassing. Thus you stated, “I am an Indian, but my plans are all American.” Your movement has Westerners and Easterners, individuals like Ambarīṣa Prabhu, the great-grandson of Henry Ford, and people like me, a simple village boy. Yet you cared for us equally. Bhakti Tīrtha Swami said he never felt for even a moment that you discriminated against him because of his color. When the *brahmacārīs* and *sannyāsīs* wanted to get rid of your women disciples, you did not allow that, saying, “They also came. How could I refuse them? They are also attracted to Kṛṣṇa.” This proves that you were transcendental to bodily designations and were willing to help anyone on the journey back home, back to Kṛṣṇa.

You were a kind father, always concerned about our well-being. At the opening of the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple you insisted that the leaders should arrange that we be given cow’s milk to drink and not buffalo’s milk. Śrutakīrti Prabhu recalls how, despite his being your personal servant, while in India you went out of your way to instruct the person arranging your cooking to see that he got oatmeal and fruit in the morning and steamed vegetables and cheese in the afternoon. “Let him have whatever he requires to stay healthy.” He recalls, “Śrīla Prabhupāda nurtured me not like a father but more like a loving, concerned mother.”



In 1967, after a period of less than two years with your followers, due to illness you left America for India. Rūpānuga Prabhu said there was a tremendous outpouring of feelings of separation and grief at your departure. Your disciples all felt that you were their life and soul, and none of them were sure they would ever see you again.

Subsequently, you resumed your preaching and made many thousands of disciples, and we all feel precisely the same way as your first disciples did! You are our life and soul! Even those of us who have not had the privilege of extended association with you cling to the memory of those special moments we had with you—a smile or simply something you said or did—and this enables us to carry forward in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Even when you chastised us, we were always convinced your chastisement was a manifestation of your love and concern for us, and we wholeheartedly accepted it as your blessing. During those intimate moments you would become *my* Prabhupāda, and these are moments I cherish.

It was not by accident or chance that you were born on the day after Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī. You were following in the footsteps of your dearest Lord, and Kṛṣṇa wanted His pure devotee to be born on the day after His own birthday. I can see the hand of the Lord in this, and your intimacy with the Lord is the proof. In the life of an ISKCON devotee, Janmāṣṭamī and your appearance day are the two most important days. Thinking of your appearance in this way is a very wonderful way to meditate on these days.

You traveled by boat to America, paying little heed to your health. You had no money (only forty rupees), no friends, and not even anyone to receive you. Your notes in your *Jaladuta* diary reveal that America was such an alien land to you that you did not know whether to turn left or right upon disembarking. But you had Kṛṣṇa; He was your friend and guide. You went to a country to spread the gospel of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, where practically no one had heard of Kṛṣṇa. Ultimately you attracted the attention of the world because you succeeded against all odds. They would probably have cared less if you had flown to America, been picked up by a limousine, and taken to a five-star hotel.

With mundane relatives, you can always find someone else. You can find another girlfriend or boyfriend, adopt a mother or be adopted by someone, find another somebody. Life goes on. But we cannot replace you with anyone. In general, the affection of your disciples and followers is intact. In fact, in most cases it is an ever-increasing and ever-satisfying experience.

Once, many people gathered to try to make an egg stand on end. Many tried and failed. Christopher Columbus made a dent on one end of the egg—just enough so that it did not lose its contents—and it stood. People said that anyone could have done it! In hindsight, people may state that anyone could have done what you did, but the fact remains, dear Prabhupāda, that no one other than you could have done what you did, as you were chosen by Caitanya Mahāprabhu as His *senapati-bhakta*.

This offering is a meager attempt to describe some of my realizations. Every bird flies according to his capacity. I have my level, and from wherever my present elevation is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I'm trying to describe what I see. Knowing the spiritual master is like trying to know Kṛṣṇa. There is much more than meets the eye, unfathomable depths. I wish I could have glorified you to the fullest extent, but what could I do? I am crippled by my limitations, but I hope and pray that this offering will further purify me and be pleasing to you.

Your humble servant,

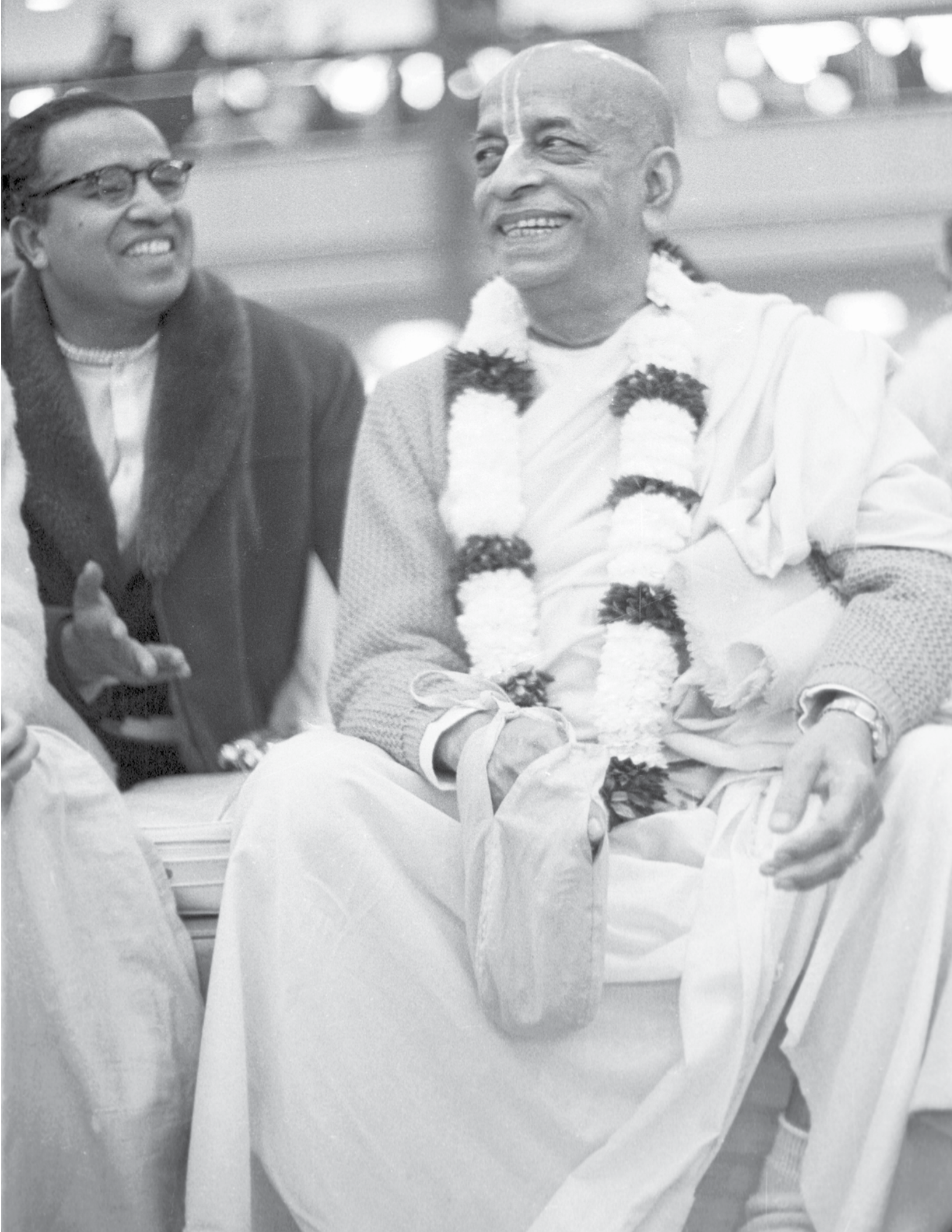
Lokanāth Swami

Nava Yogendra Swami

My dear Gurudeva Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, our loving spiritual master, savior of the whole world, who are spreading *sanātana-dharma* throughout the whole world.





Today, on the day of your appearance, I desire to offer you something, but I am unable to decide what. I know that preaching is very dear to you, so I am trying to do that by following in your footsteps. You used to say that “Preaching is the essence” and that one who preaches to Muslims is dear to you. I have tried to establish one of your centers in Udhampur, in Jammu and Kashmir, which is a Muslim-dominated state. Only your causeless mercy enables us to preach.

You preached Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. You could do it because you are an empowered representative of Lord Caitanya. I beg for your mercy: please make me a little instrument in your divine mission to save humanity. *Kṛpā-bindu diyā, koro’ ei dāse, tṛṇāpekṣā ati hīna*. Gurudeva, please bestow upon me a drop of your mercy so that I can carry out your order up to the last breath of my life, both here and in the hereafter.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, Vaiṣṇava *bhajan*s are very dear to you. It is the following *bhajan* by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura that I am offering:

(prabhu he!)
*emona durmati, saṁsāra bhitore,
 poḍiyā āchinu āmi
 tava nija-jana, kono mahājane,
 pāṭhāiyā dile tumi*

O Lord! With such a wicked mind as this I have fallen into the material world, but You have sent one of Your pure and elevated devotees to rescue me.

*doyā kori’ more, patita dekhiyā,
 kohilo āmāre giyā
 ohe dīna-jana, śuno bhālo kathā,
 ullasita ha’be hiyā*

He saw me so fallen and wretched, took pity, and came to me saying, “O humbled soul, please listen to this good tidings, for it will gladden your heart.

*tomāre tārīte, śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya,
 navadvīpe avatār
 tomā heno koto, dīna hīna jane,
 korilena bhava-pār*

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya has appeared in the land of Navadvīpa in order to deliver you. He has safely conducted many miserable souls such as you across the sea of worldly existence.

*vedera pratijñā, rākhibāra tare,
 rukma-varna vipra-suta
 mahāprabhu nāme, nadīyā mātāya,
 saṅge bhāi avadhūta*

“To fulfill the promise of the *Vedas*, the son of a *brāhmaṇa*, of golden complexion and bearing the name Mahāprabhu, has descended along with His brother, the *avadhūta*. Together They have overwhelmed all of Nadia with divine ecstasy.

*nanda-suta jini, caitanya gosāi,
 nija-nāma kori’ dān
 tārilo jagat, tumi-o jāiyā,
 loho nija-paritrān*

“Śrī Caitanya Gosāi, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself, the son of Nanda, has saved the world by freely distributing the gift of His own holy name. You also go to Him and receive your deliverance.”



Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

*se kathā śuniyā, āsiyāchi, nātha!
tomāra caraṇa-tale
bhakativinoda, kāṇḍiyā kāṇḍiyā,
āpana-kāhinī bole*

Hearing those words, O Lord, Bhaktivinoda has come weeping and weeping to the soles of Your lotus feet and tells the story of his life.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have given Vaiṣṇavism and Vaiṣṇava *bhajan*as to the whole world, and by singing these *bhajan*as you have purified the whole world. My desire is that by your causeless mercy I shall keep on singing these *bhajan*as and purify myself. These *bhajan*as, you said, can lead one to the ultimate goal of human life, i.e., *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

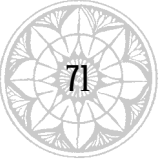
Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, give me strength so that I can keep on singing these *bhajan*as for your pleasure, for that is the only way to purify my existence. You are present here at Udhampur—many devotees have experienced this and shared their experiences. Otherwise it would be very difficult to maintain this center. Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, give us strength to carry on your pure mission as it is. That is my only prayer unto your lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda-*kī jaya!*

Your insignificant servant,

Nava Yogendra Swami

Pārtha Sārathi Dāsa Goswami



Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, my eternal spiritual master,

It's 2:00 in the morning . . . I've yet to take rest . . . as you know, insomnia is one of my many problems . . . I hear the buzz of a hostile mosquito . . . otherwise silence. The devotees of the South African *yātrā* have just completed their twenty-fifth Ratha-yātrā festival, with many of your disciples and granddisciples attending—an outstanding success. Yesterday the *yātrā* also launched the first BBT Africa meeting, with delegates from ISKCON centers all over Africa.

I have just returned from spending four months at Govardhana Hill. I've completed my feeble attempt at *bhajana*, and now I'm eager to preach. But preach what? What should be this year's theme? What should I stress? What do your followers need to hear? That ISKCON and you are the same. You wrote, "I walked through fire to create ISKCON." ISKCON is your personal contribution to the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya*.

As your obedient and faithful followers, we have a duty to protect your ISKCON mission. But the word "duty" sounds a little forced, somewhat dry. Rather it is our pleasure, our joy, our life's ambition to remain favorable to your personal mission. Whether we are ISKCON leaders, mainstream devotees, struggling devotees, congregational members, or even fallen devotees, it is our expression of our love for you to remain favorable to your ISKCON mission.

Every endeavor is covered with some fault, and ISKCON, forty-four years after you created it, has its faults. But still it's your personal preaching mission, and your sincere followers will cooperate to maintain and purify it.

What is ISKCON? It's a society of devotees who are trying to fulfill your instructions. You are the center, and your pleasure is our pleasure. Sincerity, which means devotion without pretense and duplicity, is the current of the river of ISKCON.

One of my favorite quotes is contained in a letter you wrote on 7 December 1973:

Now we have by Kṛṣṇa's Grace built up something significant in the shape of this ISKCON and we are all one family. Sometimes there may be disagreement and quarrel but we should not go away. These inebrieties can be adjusted by the cooperative spirit, tolerance and maturity so I request you to kindly remain in the association of our devotees and work together. The test of our actual dedication and sincerity to serve the Spiritual Master will be in this mutual cooperative spirit to push on this Movement and not make factions and deviate.

I like the word "maturity." As our Kṛṣṇa consciousness matures—which means as we progress from *anartha-nivṛtti* to *niṣṭhā* to *ruci* and *āśakti*, and then to *bhāva-bhakti*—so our appreciation of your mission will also proportionally increase. As the saying goes, "Time is the test," and with time maturity deepens. Some of your followers have been serving you for over forty years. That's a big chunk of one's life. I think of these Vaiṣṇavas as my superiors, and I daily pray: "If only I could please Prabhupada as they have."

In this Kali-yuga no one is able to remain aloof doing *bhajana*, as Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī did at Rādhā-kuṇḍa for forty-eight years. Let's be realistic: most devotees struggle to follow the four regulative principles, what to speak of rendering spontaneous devotional service. The vast majority of us haven't succeeded in properly following *vaidhi-sādhana-bhakti*.

Your worldwide ISKCON mission offers a practical paradigmatic infrastructure in which we can gradually elevate ourselves from *śraddhā* to the perfectional stage of *bhāva* and then *prema*.

Thank you for creating this society and empowering your sincere followers with the maturity to engage a mutual cooperative spirit in serving you by serving your personal mission.

Poem to His Divine Grace

You came in '75 to the apartheid land,
Where preaching equality was banned.
Morning walks on the Durban sand,
Hall programs in Johannesburg rand.

You took on the pain
To give the name
So we can gain
Kṛṣṇa-prema, the aim.

Your mercy like rain
For those who are vain,
Crazy, and insane—
You and ISKCON are the same.

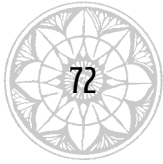
Begging to remain the eternal servant of your servants,

Pārtha Sārathi Dāsa Goswami

Prahlādānanda Swami

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine*



Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

*namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

The word “instrument” is one of the keys to ISKCON’s success. As Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (11.33):

*tasmāt tvam uttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva
jītvā śatrūn bhuṅkṣva rājyaṁ samṛddham
mayaivaite nihatāḥ pūrvam eva
nimitta-mātraṁ bhava savya-sācin*

“Therefore get up. Prepare to fight and win glory. Conquer your enemies and enjoy a flourishing kingdom. They are already put to death by My arrangement, and you, O Savyasācī, can be but an instrument in the fight.”

We have a choice: we can become an instrument of either the *saṅkīrtana* movement or the sense gratification movement. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in the *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* (2.9.29):

Brahmājī does not want to become a speculator dependent on the strength of his personal knowledge and conditioned to material bondage. Everyone should know in clear consciousness that one is, in the execution of all activities, an instrument. A conditioned soul is instrumental in the hands of the external energy, *guṇa-mayī māyā*, or the illusory energy of the Lord, and in the liberated stage the living entity is instrumental to the will of the Personality of Godhead directly. To be instrumental to the direct will of the Lord is the natural constitutional position of the living entity, whereas to be an instrument in the hands of the illusory energy of the Lord is material bondage for the living entity.

In ISKCON, the perfection of anyone’s service is to become an instrument of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the previous *ācāryas*, and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. How to become an instrument? We first have to accept that everything is the property of the Supreme Lord and must therefore be used to please Him. In this age, pleasing Him especially means to engage everything in Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s *saṅkīrtana* movement. In this way, we should try to convince people that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is our eternal master and that the real aim of life is reviving our relationship with Him and going back to the spiritual world. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote to me:

As Krishna sees that you are working very seriously to bring His other children back to the Spiritual Kingdom, then He will become very pleased and will bestow all blessings upon you. Krishna is never ungrateful for our efforts to serve Him, rest assured. [29 July 1969]

On the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, Lord Kṛṣṇa directly instructed Arjuna. But if Lord Kṛṣṇa is not personally present, how will we know what He wants us to do? In his purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.57, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that if we work according to Lord Kṛṣṇa’s instructions in the *Bhagavad-gītā* or follow those of His representative, the result will be the same. Without any adulteration, an actual bona fide representative of Lord Kṛṣṇa repeats according to his own realization the message that comes down in disciplic succession.

To become a pure instrument of Śrīla Prabhupāda, one must hear, study, assimilate, and apply the teachings and example he gave. When a devotee renders such sincere devotional service, Lord Kṛṣṇa and our *ācāryas* will become pleased and will give their blessings. Thus, spiritual realizations will flow within our hearts. However, if one relies on one’s own intelligence and abilities without a humble service attitude or respect for the founder-*ācārya* and his predecessors, although one may gain some temporary material acquisitions and success, one will not get spiritual realization and make advancement.

As followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda, we must try to become his instruments by basing our lives on his teachings. The GBC must also carefully examine those teachings, and after trying to assimilate them to the best of their ability, they must then present them to ISKCON’s members. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

There shall be a Governing Board Committee of trustees appointed by the Founder-Acharya His



Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda according to the document Direction of Management dated July 28, 1970. The GBC is to act as the instrument for the execution of the will of His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda. [Amendments for Official Documents, New York, 22 July 1974]

Therefore, the members of the GBC must become learned in the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda. They should know his books just as a lawyer knows the lawbooks. Śrīla Prabhupāda said:

That is our Vedic evidence. Whenever we speak something, immediately quote from *Vedas*. This is our process. If it is accepted by the Vedic process, then it is perfect. Just like in the law court. You are lawyer. You are arguing. When you quote from a judgment, previous judgment, it is accepted. Similarly, when you give authoritative statement in support of your talking, then it is perfect. That is the way. Otherwise, what for these books are there? If it is mental speculation, what is the use of these books? But as soon as we speak something, we immediately support by quoting from Vedic literature. And that is perfect. [Room Conversation, London, 2 September 1973]

Those who serve as initiating spiritual masters in ISKCON must also strive to become perfect instruments of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his teachings. One who believes that he has become the master of his disciples rather than simply a humble servant of his guru and others is bewildered by illusion. In a lecture in Vṛndāvana Śrīla Prabhupāda said:

But the spiritual master does not think of himself as Hari. Although he's offered the respect of Hari, he thinks himself as humble servant of Hari and all others. A spiritual master takes his disciples as his spiritual master. That is the position. He thinks that "Kṛṣṇa has sent me so many spiritual masters." He does not think himself as spiritual master. He thinks himself their servant. Because they have to be trained. Kṛṣṇa has appointed him to train them. Therefore he thinks himself as servant of the disciples. This is the position. [Lecture, Vṛndāvana, 23 October 1972]

Similarly, in *The Nectar of Devotion* Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

The author of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, very humbly submits that he is just trying to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world, although he humbly thinks himself unfit for this work. That should be the attitude of all preachers of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, following in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. We should never think of ourselves as great preachers, but should always consider that we are simply instrumental to the previous *ācāryas*, and simply by following in their footsteps we may be able to do something for the benefit of suffering humanity. [Introduction]

In material illusion, one becomes materially entangled by accepting offerings of followers in a spirit of enjoyment. Hence one's spiritual inspiration diminishes and one's devotional service slackens. Therefore, one of the essential duties of ISKCON's leaders is to protect the devotees from such illusion and make sure that they are using all the assets of the Society in the mission of Lord Caitanya and Śrīla Prabhupāda.

To become an instrument of a spiritual master who is himself aspiring to become an instrument in the hands of his perfect spiritual master is the perfection of one's discipleship. On his arrival in Boston harbor in 1965 aboard the *Jaladuta*, Śrīla Prabhupāda exhibited this perfection when he wrote:

O Lord, I am just like a puppet in Your hands. So if You have brought me here to dance, then make me dance, make me dance, O Lord, make me dance as You like. [*Mārkine Bhāgavata-dharma*, Verse 14]

Before departing on His journey to South India, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the perfect example of a devotee, told His followers:





I am simply a dancer, and You are the wire-puller. However You pull the wires to make Me dance, I shall dance in that way. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 7.18]

In conclusion, as members of ISKCON, we should always remember that we are spiritual souls aspiring to become instruments of Lord Kṛṣṇa through following His instructions and those of our previous *ācāryas*, as presented to us by Śrīla Prabhupāda. Members of ISKCON can always expect material problems and opposition from those who are envious of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. However, if we have spiritual problems, if we are not happy and enlivened in our devotional service, such problems must be due to our lack of realization and application of Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings. We must have the confidence that if we become perfect instruments in the hands of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His followers, all perfection will follow.

Prahlādānanda Swami

Śacīnandana Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn iti nāmine*

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

Today I heard one of your dear disciples glorifying you. Among many things he told us, he remembered an incident where one of the early devotees asked you curiously, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, Kṛṣṇa as Paramātmā is in our heart. Are you also?” You answered him very matter-of-factly: “Only if you let me in.”

What a profound answer.

Today I am meditating on gratitude as a means of inviting you into my heart. As long as one is grateful to a person, one remains mindful of that person's gifts and acts of kindness and thus keeps him in his heart. Actually, it is not at all difficult to feel gratitude toward you—it comes as natural as breathing—because, simply put, by your gifts to me I am alive. Without your continuous investment in my life, I am simply dead.

My list of gratitude:

I am grateful to you because you have raised me from among the sleeping souls by awakening my inclination to serve Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana.

Thank you for introducing me to the real world and my eternal home.

Somehow I feel that you will be there when finally—one day—my name as a new servant will be told to the Divine Couple. Only by your mercy could this hope somehow grow in my desertlike heart.

Thank you for the innumerable opportunities for service in your mission. Some services are very difficult and demanding, but most of them are simply nectarean.

Thank you for the many corrections, deep insights, and tears of happiness.

Thank you for sustaining and maintaining me throughout all these years with your blessings, and for never turning your back on me even when you see all those disappointing signs of a very slow learner.

Thank you also for sending wonderful souls to assist me in my humble attempts to serve you. I am painfully aware that I have not yet done anything significant—only big visions and desires to offer the world to you and those you love. What to do? I am an impractical dreamer, but maybe with the help of all these wonderful devotees my little *seva* can make you smile one day. I really want that with all my heart.

Kindly allow me to end with a prayer:



Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Today I offer the flowers of my faith to your lotus feet.
Whatever you find of value in me are gifts given by you.
I sincerely fall down before your lotus feet and beg you:
Kindly help me not withhold anything from you and the Divine Couple.
Please give me strength and love
so I can wholeheartedly offer all my words,
acts, and thoughts for your service.
Thank you so much.

Your humble servant,

Śacīnandana Swami

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami

*nama oṃ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn iti nāmine*

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*



Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You saved my life and I am very grateful to you. You have saved the lives of thousands of persons, and you continue to do so through the missionary work of your followers. You teach the way to escape reincarnation, coming back to another material life for birth, death, disease, and old age. You are the greatest teacher in the world. You also teach that more important than liberation is serving Kṛṣṇa and pleasing Him. I am trying to learn this lesson. With your help I can make advancement toward this goal. You are not just the best teacher but the best friend. Please bring me to you to learn more about serving Kṛṣṇa and inspire me to work in your mission.

Your lowly but loyal servant,

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami

Meditation on a Photo of Prabhupāda Walking Alone in New York City

Prabhupāda is walking on a city street in a long black coat. I don't know much about this picture. I will make an imaginative meditation about it, and if someone sees it and knows more about it they can write to me.

I think it is one the earliest pictures of Prabhupāda taken in New York City. I think it was taken before he moved to 26 Second Avenue in the summer of 1966. This looks like a bitter winter picture taken when Prabhupāda was living alone. The neighborhood looks so trashy—it may be the Bowery. Where did he get the long black coat? He didn't have enough money to buy a winter overcoat in a men's clothing store. It might have been a donation or a purchase in a thrift store. The same with the black shoes. He looks very somber, not lighthearted. We know that in the winter of 1965–66 he did not make much progress in his preaching and he was poor. He was often thinking of returning to India and would consult the



Scindia steamship lines to find out when they had another ship sailing back to India. He might have been thinking of that. But he was also corresponding with a very wealthy man in India, asking him to donate for purchasing an expensive building in Manhattan to start a Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple. Those negotiations never got very far.

He wants to stay and start something in America. If only Kṛṣṇa would give him a place where he could hold *kīrtanas* and give lectures, then he could start a movement. He has seen how the yogī Dr. Mishra has gathered some followers. And he had attended a well-received dance by an Indian dancer. There is interest in spiritual India in America. He is writing his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He hopes to get some help typing and some interest in publishing. His books are not selling quickly in the bookstores where he has placed them on consignment.

He does not look very physically strong as he walks down the street with his cane. But he is patient and determined, humble and fixed on Kṛṣṇa. The cars roll by. He is completely fixed on Kṛṣṇa, and that is the most important of the twenty-six qualities of a devotee.

Please, Kṛṣṇa, give him hope, give him an opening, or we will all die waiting.



Subhāg Swami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine*

*namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the dearest person in our lives. Please accept my most humble obeisances

at your lotus feet. By your mercy I am still trying to follow your instructions and do preaching work, especially in Bangladesh, but also in some other countries, as far as I can.

As far as Bangladesh is concerned, since I went there in the early '80s, a lot has changed. In those early days we used to move about almost incognito. Devotees used to live in a small rented house in Dacca. Later a lot of preaching was done in pandal programs, sometimes presenting Western devotees and doing book distribution, etc. Now, nearly thirty years later, we are witnessing dramatic changes. The Bangladesh *yātrā* is flourishing, developing more and more, day by day. So many temples, so many devotees, so many programs. You, I am sure, must be seeing all this from the spiritual world and must be joyful to see such a revolutionary change, which no one could have imagined.

You know our past, present, and future. I remember when you went to Russia. At that time you just sowed the seed, made one devotee. And now in Russia, and in so many formerly communist countries in eastern Europe, so many persons are becoming devotees. Your disciples, trained by you, following your instructions, are trying to fulfill your desire by increasing the number of devotees more and more. I heard that in Ukraine every year thousands of devotees gather in big festivals and get so much joy, become so blissful. In 2009 I tried to go to Ukraine, but poor health prevented me from traveling so far.

But I have been going to Bangladesh every year. So many programs—Janmāṣṭamī, Pānatīrtha in Sylhet. Most attractive is Ratha-yātrā, where innumerable persons join, irrespective of faith, community, or race.

Bangladesh is a difficult place to preach, but by your mercy preaching is going on wonderfully now because of the efforts and expertise of your well-trained leaders—His Holiness Jayapatāka Mahārāja and His Holiness Prabhaviṣṇu Mahārāja—and the enthusiasm and hard work of other devotees. You knew all these things would happen. We didn't. If we simply carry out your instructions, your dreams will come true. We simply have to be your faithful servants. Then by your desire the Lord will get things done, make the impossible possible. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

So, Śrīla Prabhupāda, please let the preaching expand more and more so you can kindly deliver the whole of Bangladesh. The people of other faiths, who outnumber us, relish our *prasādam* so much that they come often to buy *prasādam* from our shops and restaurants. We look forward to the day when we will see them purified—when they will come closer to us and cooperate with us in serving the Lord. We wish that they accept this mission and joyfully serve the Lord of the universe, Jagannātha. Someday, we hope, by your grace and the Lord's desire things will change; they will surrender unto the Lord, and thus you will unify all into one family of Lord Jagannātha.

The number of Ratha-yātrās in different temples is increasing more and more. Unbelievable numbers of people gather for the festivals with so much enthusiasm. They are so blissful to work for Lord Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā. Oceans of people gather for these festivals. They listen to the lecture also. Sometimes they ignore heavy rain. Nobody leaves. I have seen people paying *daṇḍavats* in the street to lord Jagannātha, lying flat though torrential, incessant rain. Men, women, kids, old people—not only in the streets but also on balconies and in windows of the big buildings on the most important road in Dacca—take *darśana* of their Lordships. They wholeheartedly and cheerfully welcome the Lord and accept His *prasādam*.

In Brahmanbaria, after a function, when I was going to another place, a gentleman of another faith came up to me and said, "I like ISKCON so much that I put my only son in the educational institution of your organization."

Spectacular, wonderful distribution of *prasādam*—wonderful. Ultimately, everything is wonderful because of you, Prabhupāda. This is all your gift to the fallen humanity of the world. Thus you are delivering them by giving them the mercy of Lord Caitanya. Because you are wonderful. I wonder when that day will come when the whole of Bangladesh will be inundated by your mercy and by the mercy of Lord Caitanya.

All of this proves that if we follow your instructions everything becomes wonderful.

Your worthless servant,

Subhāg Swami



Trivikrama Swami

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your personality is very difficult to fathom. Each facet of it is deep and wonderful. No one could know your mind or predict what you were going to do or say. Of course, we could know for sure that you were our well-wisher in all circumstances, but how you demonstrated that care and affection could not be stereotyped. Sometimes it would come in the form of a thunderbolt of strong words, another time as a solid acknowledgement for something that you approved of. Mundane morality wasn't a consideration in your decision-making; you were always directed from above by that sweet Autocrat, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore, having your personal association was always an adventure. We all had to be careful about what we said in your presence. I remember once I made a complaint to you that the devotee in Japan, where I had served a number of years, had been deported. I was annoyed because in my mind it was something that could have been avoided. As soon as I brought this to your attention you became thoughtful and said, "I did not want that this should happen." Then you looked at me and said, "OK, you can go back there." I was literally stunned! I had no desire to return there, but soon I was on a train leaving Vṛndāvana, heading to Delhi to catch a plane to Tokyo.

Now, without your personal presence we are missing that element of unpredictability. We tend to fall into our comfort zones and hesitate to take all risk for spreading Lord Caitanya's mission. We think we know how this world works and thus become worldly in the conceit that we are wise discriminators.

Please shake us out of this complacency and make us fit to do something substantial in assisting you in your mission.

Your lowly servant,

Trivikrama Swami



Varṣāṇā Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful and humbled obeisances. All glories to the most blessed event of your Vyāsa-pūjā.

Your appearance in our world awakened our dormant propensity for serving, awarded us tangible experiences of the ultimate spiritual dimension, and provided a personal form of the Indwelling Guide. That inner voice of the *caitya-guru*, who had been guiding us all along, revealed His living and loving personality in you.

Descending from the eternal realm of song and dance, you introduced us to the essence of *vraja-śakti*, whose mellows naturally draw out our eternal gratitude and graceful submission to Kṛṣṇa.

Taking an active interest and role in our lives, you, like a puppet master, pulled the strings that made us dance in various wonderful ways.

When Kṛṣṇa called you back to Goloka, we, unprepared for your return to the Lord's *aprakṛta-līlā*, were stunned by our sudden orphanhood. On the day of your disappearance, immersed in the thought that we had forever lost the presence of our closest friend, ever well-wisher, and guardian, we saw all of nature reflecting our sorrow. The sky grew dreary, the breeze sighed heavily, and flowers shed their petals on the path where your footprints still lingered. That night the devotees gathered at your Palace,

congregating before the altar where your *mūrti* is now enthroned, and took shelter of *kīrtana*.

The prayers of invocation evoked deep emotion leading into the *mahā-mantra*. As the current of the *kīrtana* drew the assembled Vaiṣṇavas into unprecedented depths of separation, devotees literally held one another up as their tears fell and their steps faltered.

We were inundated by the devastating waters of *vipralambha*. Just when it seemed that we would surely perish in that ocean, the tide shifted. The *kīrtana*'s changing mood was the first indication that something powerful was unfolding. From the sorrowful strains prevailing that longest night, a jubilant melody, which at first seemed quite out of place, arose.

There was one devotee who was so conditioned to a spiritual tradition of gravity that his movements in *kīrtana* had always been tempered. When he began to dance exuberantly for the first time ever, it became unmistakably clear that something exceptional was happening. As the *kīrtana* reached a surging crescendo, the devotees erupted into dancing so joyful and *kīrtana* so lively it seemed almost inappropriate. For was this not the night that you, our beloved Gurudeva, had departed? Yet it was so natural and spontaneous. Words alone could never sufficiently convey our being borne aloft on the perennial tide of the Lord's promise that His devotees never perish.

The significance of what transpired that evening will forevermore be growing in our consciousness. The Palace was our offering to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. The devotees who built it had hoped you would accept it as a token of gratitude and love. They cherished the thought of you living and translating there for years to come. Your departure from this world before its completion seemed to extinguish any chance of that aspiration being fulfilled.

It was, however, in the fire of separation that we discovered that your presence is not frozen in a specific form or time period. Your *vāṇī* is an ongoing reality to be further deciphered as your instructions enter our hearts and souls, allowing us to recognize you in the present. If we can only be fully present to such moments of transformation when life takes on true quality due to awareness of being accepted by Kṛṣṇa's representative, we are free to go beyond attachment to your mortal form and more deeply embrace the essence of your teachings.

As the devotees danced in the ecstasy of that realization, material existence, along with all its limited conceptions, faded into oblivion. As we became intoxicated with the bliss of realizing you had entered our hearts as well as taken up residence in the Palace—your *samādhi* in the West—our suffering evaporated. It was reminiscent of Kṛṣṇa's taking up residence in the hearts of the *vraja-vāsīs*, reciprocating with them internally while His visible form resided elsewhere.

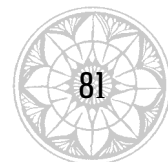
Over the next few days, as the devotees conversed about this epiphany, they found that they had all shared the phenomenon of feeling your direct presence, Śrīla Prabhupāda, more intimately than ever before. Even those who had spent considerable time in your personal presence were impressed by how extraordinary this experience was.

It was as if we were reliving the *līlā* of Queen Vaidarbhī as she lamented her *svāmī*'s departure and prepared to enter his funeral pyre. Such a fate was her preference to weakening in her resolve to remain chaste to his instructions. Just as the *brāhmaṇa* appeared to pacify Vaidarbhī at that time, you appeared in our hearts. Within your instructions to take shelter of the Name, we were united with you in a realm where death has no access and darkness cannot enter. It was dramatic evidence of the sacramental nature of your words, which crystallize into the reality they convey. Discerning your living presence in sound transformed our sorrow into joy, our cries into song, our mourning into the first steps of dance.

This episode taught me that dance is as natural to spiritual growth as is prayer or *japa* or other spiritual disciplines. Fortifying our paths lest we veer into isolation, dance is the inner life seeking integration and fellowship with those we love. As we dance with outstretched arms, we are uplifted above and beyond what we believe to be possible or attainable.

With Kṛṣṇa's holy name dancing on our lips, we feel and express the creative power of the divine reciprocating your matchless gift and seeking expression within and between us. It is the Name dancing upon your lips that has penetrated even the most rigid coverings and defenses to melt our hearts and reconnect us as a family.

Most of all, when we dance together we feel your presence, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You accompany us internally, from where we hear your admonishing words, see your personal form in remembrance, and participate in your ongoing pastimes. Only you can unify and harmonize even the most ordinarily incompatible persons.



With the *kīrtana* of that evening still resounding gently in my ears and the dancing of the devotees moving within my heart, I will only add that the significance of your appearance day expands each year. To external perception your disappearance pastime closed a special chapter in which we were blessed to serve. But to eyes that remain open to the torchlight of knowledge and anointed by the salve of the Holy Name, you appear in our hearts as *vāñī*, continuing to inspire us in ways beyond description. If only words were able to convey our gratitude. But they cannot; they must be accompanied by the dancing of our hearts. Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for appearing before our eyes to sing and dance for some time and to leave the footprints of your words behind, to lead us back home.

Varṣāṇā Swami

Vedavyāsapriya Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn iti nāmīne*

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāñī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*



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Please accept my most prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet so that I can receive at least a slight sidelong glance from your merciful eyes.

When an elephant walks, smaller animals like dogs start barking. Your ISKCON has become big like an elephant despite some rough times after your physical absence. But it has not only survived; rather, it has had a tremendous impact on the minds of young people everywhere who are in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You will ever remain the backbone and behind-the-scene leader for all of us.

But some people of professed but half-cooked devotion are re-evaluating your divine magnanimity by comparing your outward accomplishments during your physical presence and those after your departure. They think that they have become well-qualified to evaluate your contributions in the realm of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—contributions they were unable to estimate at all while they were in ISKCON. After the kill a lion eats its fill and walks away satisfied, and then the scavengers come to eat what's left. Similarly, the so-called followers of abovementioned intent try to put words in our ears backed by misinterpretation of your instructions and accomplishments, concluding that you had some inabilities and weakness, in order to demoralize ISKCON's leadership and make it ineffective so that their chosen leader may become your real successor. The ritvik group tried something similar but ended up in offensive behavior. This new group's uproar will also subside as time passes.

We stand confident in your instructions and maintain our fidelity to you alone. Well, the proverb says that barking dogs seldom bite. Similarly, we will remain undisturbed but keep a constant vigil, like an elephant. Our relationships with you are unchallengeable and undisturbed. Our commitment to the mission of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and you is unmotivated and uninterrupted. You are at the center of our consciousness. Please be merciful so that we may become instrumental to the healthy growth of your movement and stand proud in this world of opposites.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. We beg your forgiveness and pray to remain loyal to you alone.

Your servant,

Vedavyāsapriya Swami

Yadunandana Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet many thousands of times on this most auspicious Vyāsa-pūjā day. All glories to Your Divine Grace, to the previous *ācāryas*, and to those devotees who have dedicated their lives to serving you.

This year I would like to glorify you by reflecting on your unique position as the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu chose you to become the empowered *ācārya* who would spread the holy name of the Lord all over the world, and who would establish a solid foundation for the future generations of Vaiṣṇava preachers. As no commentator can please Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu without honoring Śrīdhara Svāmī's position as the original commentator on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, so no Vaiṣṇava preacher can get the blessings and approval of Śrī Gaurāṅga without first acknowledging and glorifying your unparalleled achievements of inaugurating the *saṅkīrtana* movement in the most extraordinary places around the world. By dint of your firm faith in Kṛṣṇa's holy names and your burning desire to please your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, you attained success in every major region of the world: North America, Europe, Africa, Russia, India, Australasia, Asia, South America. It is even more amazing that your achievements took place in only twelve years, during your advanced old age.

In regards to keeping in mind and heart your position as founder-*ācārya*, I'm reminded of the following verse:

*ācāryaṁ māṁ vijānīyān navamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta sarva-deva-mayo guruḥ*

“One should know the *ācārya* as Myself and never disrespect him in any way. One should not envy him, thinking him an ordinary man, for he is the representative of all the demigods.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.17.27)

Although this verse generally refers to any bona fide spiritual master, it is also especially applicable to you as ISKCON's founder-*ācārya*. Every preacher, every guru, every devotee occupying a position of responsibility within the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, should remember that you are the *Ācārya* with a capital “a.” Both Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Your Divine Grace have instructed every one of their followers to become a spiritual master and hence an exemplary *ācārya*. We'll be able to properly fulfill this order only when we remember our position as small servants of the big *Ācārya* and Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu.

More than thirty years have passed since you left us in your *vapu* form. The world is changing very fast. Atheistic secularization and sophisticated sinful life continue to spread everywhere. There is a need to expertly present Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's pure message in ways that are appealing to both the leading members of society and the masses of people. It is a challenging mission, a war with the forces of Kali. Śrīla Prabhupāda, we need your empowerment to succeed. You showed us how to innovate without changing the pure message—old wine in new bottles. Please give us pure intelligence, strong faith, and firm determination to establish and consolidate the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in each and every country of the world, in each and every province of every country, and in each and every town and village of every province. It is an arduous task, which can be accomplished only by the divine blessings and empowerment of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, our founder-*ācārya*.

In service of your servants,

Yadunandana Swami



