

Homages from the GBC

Anuttama Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

As your disciple, I regard it as my sacred duty to offer you praise on the anniversary of your appearance in this world. Yet as I ponder what to write I am aware that, beyond duty, this day offers an opportunity to meditate deeply upon you, the person who, more than any other, gave meaning to my life.

As I grow older, a deep sense of dependence upon you is beginning to awaken in my heart. Looking back on my adolescent and adult life, I'm inclined to say that I was always seeking God. It's more true to say that you called me out of illusion. You forced me off the path of material pursuits that was my destiny. I was truly lost, and you called me to you and set me upon a different path.

It was you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who inspired George Harrison to place the *mahā-mantra* in his hit "My Sweet Lord," a song that first haunted me, and later gave me comfort, wherever I went.

It was you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who sent a band of Hare Kṛṣṇas—with their shiny heads, nose-ring-laden ladies, and air of indifference to this world—that shook my seventeen-year-old suburban sensibilities and planted in my college-bound mind a doubt whether money, power, and prestige could ever appease the appetites of my soul.

It was you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who sent young Vaiṣṇavas to chant near campus walkways, enticing thoughtful students with transcendence and salvation, beyond what had become for me a tiresome struggle for grades, girls, and drug-induced highs that faded with the morning light.

It was you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who ordered your disciples to open temples in places like Denver, where their chanting, philosophical acumen, and affection for strangers convinced me there must be a Supreme Friend who desired my welfare.

And it was you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who allowed me to enter the sanctum of ISKCON by instructing your disciples to give everyone the chance to serve the Lord and to become part of your movement, no matter how deeply they were sunk into darkness, doubt, and delusion.

Recently I was enlivened by your presence while I read His Holiness Mukunda Mahārāja's beautiful memoir, *Miracle on Second Avenue*. I had little opportunity for personal service to you during your physical presence on earth—only a few fleeting moments across a crowded temple. Yet as I continue to try to understand you better and give my life to you, glimpses into your heart inspire me onward.

Among many wonderful pastimes retold in this book, one in particular has stayed in my mind and helped me see more clearly the wonderful person, spiritual master, and devotee that you are.

Mukunda Goswami writes that he had just recently been initiated as Mukunda Dāsa Adhikārī. Although now a disciple under vows, he and his wife decided on their own to travel to the West Coast from New York City, and then on to India. While you were aware of their inclinations, you were informed only a day or two before they were going that they were leaving behind their guru, the New York temple, and the entire Vaiṣṇava *saṅgha* in North America.

Mukunda Goswami details his last meeting with you in New York. After he announced his plans and exchanged a few awkward words, he prepared to leave:

There was a long pause. I wasn't sure how to say goodbye to him.

"California would be a good place for you to start a temple," I said at last. "There's lots of interest in India and spirituality in that part of the country, especially in Los Angeles. There's lots of open-minded people there. . . ."

"Well, I guess I'll go then," I said. "Hare Kṛṣṇa." I bowed down on the floor before him as I'd seen others do.

I heard the swami's voice behind me as I reached the door.

"Mukunda." I turned around. "Just see if you can start one center on the West Coast. It would be a very great service."

I smiled and gave a half-nod. “Okay,” I mumbled.

. . . I made my way back to our loft, wondering why the swami had mentioned opening a center *after* all the goodbyes. When I mentioned opening a temple in California to the swami, I had no intention of volunteering myself for the task.

History informs us that this gentle request weighed on Mukunda, and he and his companions soon changed course and opened a small temple in San Francisco, as you desired. Empowered by you, they would ride the wave of the 1960s youth movement and spread Lord Caitanya’s mercy in astounding ways.

What strikes me most in this exchange, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is your vast patience and intense spiritual desire to share love of Kṛṣṇa. Your vision for spreading the fledgling ISKCON society was so broad, yet who would help you? Here was a disciple, one of the few who had made *some* kind of commitment, who announces—not discusses, not requests, but announces—that he is leaving to roam whimsically.

Yet, sensing this new student’s vulnerability, you lovingly, gently, pleadingly ask him to change course, to take responsibility for a part of your vision and thus achieve spiritual greatness—all as he casually walks out the door.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pray that I too may stop whimsically walking out your door. Instead, please soften my heart and stiffen my resolve to stay fixed at your lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please bless me that I too might offer a drop of “very great service” unto you—you, who are that very great soul, pure devotee, and empowered spiritual master chosen by Lord Caitanya to deliver His message to the far corners of the earth.

Your insignificant servant,

Anuttama Dāsa

Badrinārāyaṇ Dāsa

*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*

When standing on a mountain, we see the rocks and trees but do not have a sense of the mountain’s true scope. Then, as we travel down the side of the mountain, we begin to get an idea of its size. But it is only with the benefit of distance, standing on the plain below, that we can get the full picture of how grand the mountain actually is.

It is the same with understanding the depth and importance of Śrīla Prabhupāda. With the benefit of the distance created by the passage of time, our appreciation of the scope of his accomplishments, personal character, and influence on the world’s stage has only increased.

A bird flies in the sky up to the limit of its ability. We see a jewel’s beauty by turning it so that its different facets catch the light. My inclination is to be a story-teller, so let me share the following few pastimes. May they catch the light of even a few of the sweet and inspiring facets of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda visited Detroit in 1976, just after purchasing the Fisher Mansion as the new temple, he met with the neighborhood Catholic priest. The man was initially quite antagonistic. His challenges were two: “What was ISKCON doing to help the poor?” and “What was Śrīla Prabhupāda offering that Christianity was not already teaching?”

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In response to the first challenge, Śrīla Prabhupāda quoted a Bible verse wherein Jesus, asked the same kind of question, replied, “The poor will always be with you.” That Śrīla Prabhupāda could quote the Bible, and in doing so undermine the priest’s argument, knocked the priest back on his heels.

Then Śrīla Prabhupāda asked, “If a parent feeds his children so that they are very robust but does not educate them, is that a very good proposal?” The priest agreed that a good parent must educate his or her children in addition to feeding them. Śrīla Prabhupāda then explained that the whole world is endeavoring to provide for the body, but where is the education about the soul? Where is the education about how to become permanently free from birth, death, disease, and old age? Śrīla Prabhupāda said that while welfare work has its place, there must also be an institution that educates the public about the soul. That institution is ISKCON.

The priest, again taken aback by this powerful logic, conceded the point but then countered that since the Christians were already doing this what was the need of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s coming to the USA?

Śrīla Prabhupāda asked the priest, “Do you agree that mankind is suffering?”

The priest agreed.

“Why is mankind suffering?” Śrīla Prabhupāda asked.

The priest said, “Separation from God.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda then asked, “What is separating man from God?”

The priest responded, “Sin.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda slammed his hand down on the table for emphasis and said forcefully, “That is my point. Why are you not teaching how to lead a sinless life? We are doing this.”

The priest was clearly defeated, and to his credit, he knew it. There was a change in his mood and he enquired submissively, “You have so many young people, and our churches are empty. What are we missing?”

All during the *darśana*, Śrīla Prabhupāda had been plying the priest with *mahā-prasādam*: *gulubjāmons*, *jelābies*, and pieces of *burfi*, and the priest was appreciating them very much.

Śrīla Prabhupāda leaned back, smiled, and said to the priest, “I understand that during your services you offer one dry wafer [Śrīla Prabhupāda was referring to communion]. You introduce these Bengali sweets and you will have full attendance.”

At this point Śrīla Prabhupāda had both philosophically defeated and completely charmed the priest. As he left, with Śrīla Prabhupāda’s garland around his neck, a *Bhagavad-gītā* under his arm, and a carefully cradled box of *mahā-prasādam* sweets in his hands, he closed the conversation by saying, “I feel like I have become one of your disciples.”

As the door closed behind the priest, Śrīla Prabhupāda quoted the first verse of *The Nectar of Instruction*:

A sober person who can tolerate the urge to speak, the mind’s demands, the actions of anger, and the urges of the tongue, belly, and genitals is qualified to make disciples all over the world.

Many years later, as a householder, I was selling oil paintings to support my family. With other devotees I would travel to oil refineries in remote corners of the world. Their rotating crews of workers, with nothing to do in their spare time and plenty of disposable income, made very good customers. One trip took me to Bintulu, a far-flung jungle outpost on the island of Borneo. To get there I boarded a jet, then a prop plane, then a ferry, and finally a bus that drove on the hard beach sand because there was no road. To my right I had the ocean, wild boars were running on the beach, and to my left were orangutans swinging through the jungle. I have always been an inveterate traveler. I had read about the jungles of Borneo as a child. Now here I was, out on edge of the world and feeling quite adventuresome. As I arrived at the oil refinery and walked up to the check-in desk at their small six-room guesthouse, I was struck with wonder when I saw that the receptionist sitting behind the desk was reading Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*. Here I was, feeling like Columbus exploring a new world, yet Śrīla Prabhupāda had arrived there ahead of me, and while I was there for business, he was there preaching.

Just this year, after the GBC meetings concluded in Māyāpur, I made a little personal pilgrimage to some of the holy sites near our temple. As I stopped at the gate to Śrīvāsāṅgam, the birthplace of

the *saṅkīrtana* mission, I heard ladies singing. Ordinarily, being a single man, I would have avoided the situation, but they were chanting Śrīla Prabhupāda's *praṇāma mantra* so sweetly and innocently that I was intrigued. What I found was a group of young women from a teachers' college in China. Their teacher was an ISKCON devotee, and she had made a number of her students devotees. Now she had brought them to Māyāpur for the Gaura Pūrṇimā festival.

Here they were, thousands of miles from their home, decades away from Śrīla Prabhupāda's physical presence, and yet they were dedicated servants of Śrīla Prabhupāda and so obviously deeply feeling his presence flowing in their lives.

I was moved to tears when I contemplated how Śrīla Prabhupāda's mercy and instructions continue to reach out beyond time, space, political borders, and diverse cultures to touch the lives of conditioned souls all around the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am reminded of how during your last days some residents of Vṛndāvana inquired if you were still living. You replied, "Tell them that I am still here and that I am still playing my *mṛdaṅga*." By "playing my *mṛdaṅga*" you meant that you were still speaking your Bhaktivedanta purports to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Although it's more than three decades since your physical departure, you are still here, and you are still playing your *mṛdaṅga* for all of us, whenever we open one of your books.

In your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.24.15, you write:

The disciple should not consider whether he is going back home, back to Godhead; his first business should be to execute the order of his spiritual master. Thus a disciple should always meditate on the order of the spiritual master, and that is perfectional meditation. Not only should he meditate upon that order, but he should find out the means by which he can perfectly worship and execute it.

May these words become the true and full measure of my own life. Thus may I then become a worthy disciple of such a glorious spiritual master.

Your insignificant and eternally indebted servant,

Badrinārāyaṇ Dāsa

Bhakti Caitanya Swami

My dear lord and master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you.

Yesterday was Rāma-navamī, and we were reflecting on parallels between your mission and that of Lord Rāmacandra. Of course, He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and you are His pure devotee, but despite that difference there is so much oneness between the two of you in terms of your moods.

Lord Rāma made such an effort to rescue Mother Sītā, showing how deep His transcendental affection for Her was. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you say in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.10.54:

When mother Sītā was kidnapped by Rāvaṇa and the Rākṣasas, Lord Rāmacandra, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, could have married hundreds and thousands of Sītās, but to teach us how faithful He was to His wife, He fought with Rāvaṇa and finally killed him. The Lord punished Rāvaṇa and rescued His wife to instruct men to have only one wife. Lord Rāmacandra accepted

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only one wife and manifested sublime character, thus setting an example for householders. A householder should live according to the ideal of Lord Rāmacandra, who showed how to be a perfect person.

This example is not limited just to householders. Mother Sitā is a pure devotee of Lord Rāma, and not simply His wife. He endeavored so hard to rescue Her despite so many difficulties, and you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, worked so hard to rescue us despite a vast range of challenges.

You were living happily in Śrī Vṛndāvana *dhāma*, at the lotus feet of Rādhā-Dāmodara, but still, knowing the mission of your spiritual master and Lord Caitanya, you made a great effort to save us from our entanglement in material existence. You didn't need to do that for yourself, but rather it was an expression of your selfless dedication to higher authority and your compassion for the fallen souls.

One of the six symptoms of surrender given by Lord Caitanya in His teachings to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is *ātma-nikṣepa*, which translates as "full self-surrender." You translated this term elsewhere as "having no interest separate from that of the Lord." Understanding the merciful mood of the Lord, you worked so hard to deliver us from *māyā*, putting aside any idea of personal comfort and pleasure.

Actually, you gave your life for us, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and now we must try to give our lives to your mission. We cannot repay you for your kindness, but at least we can give whatever we have for your mission, and this will be the perfection of our lives.

Your humble servant,

Bhakti Caitanya Swami

Bhakti Chāru Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet on this most auspicious day of your divine appearance.

I do not know how everyone felt at the time of your appearance on this planet. Naturally it must have brought immense joy to everyone's heart. At that time all the stars and planets must have adjusted themselves in such a way that everything became extremely auspicious, and demigods must have showered flowers from heaven. However, while reflecting on that occasion I tend to remember the day of your disappearance and lament my irreparable loss. I was blessed with such inconceivable good fortune to have your association, but I carelessly squandered it.

So many days and nights I spent with you, trying to serve you, but instead of serving I simply created disturbances for you. Those days I had such a wonderful opportunity to ask you so many relevant questions, but my stupid mind was so obsessed with its search for sense gratification that it did not allow me to recognize that rare opportunity. So many times you gave me so many profound instructions, but at those times I did not bother to press the recording button of the tape recorder lying just next to you, to immortalize those instructions. So many times you spoke about such important topics, such as *varṇāśrama*, initiation in ISKCON after your disappearance, and our relationship with the Gauḍīya Maṭha, but due to my immaturity I could not quite grasp them and they just went flying over my head. Today I lament missing all those golden opportunities and wish I could get them back once again.

When the heart is afflicted with such feelings of despair, I try to console myself by remembering your assurance that you would always be with us just as your spiritual master was always with you. You were never separated from him, even for a moment. Theoretically I understand that possibility, but due

to my countless offenses and heaps of impurities I fail to experience that. From your words and actions, the secret behind such a relationship has become obvious: Love.

I do not know whether I will ever be able to develop that kind of love and attachment for Your Divine Grace and be blessed with your constant presence in my heart. But then I remember your assurance that you would always be with us through your ISKCON. Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, allow me to realize that fact. Please let me become convinced without a shadow of doubt that you did not leave us, that through your ISKCON you are always present with us. Please let me realize that just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifested Himself in this age as His holy name and as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu manifested Himself in His *saṅkīrtana* movement, you have manifested yourself in your ISKCON.

You have been sent by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to fulfill His prediction that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement would spread all over the world, to every town and village. During your physical presence you spread it all over the world, but now, through ISKCON, you will take it to every town and village and literally fulfill that prediction.

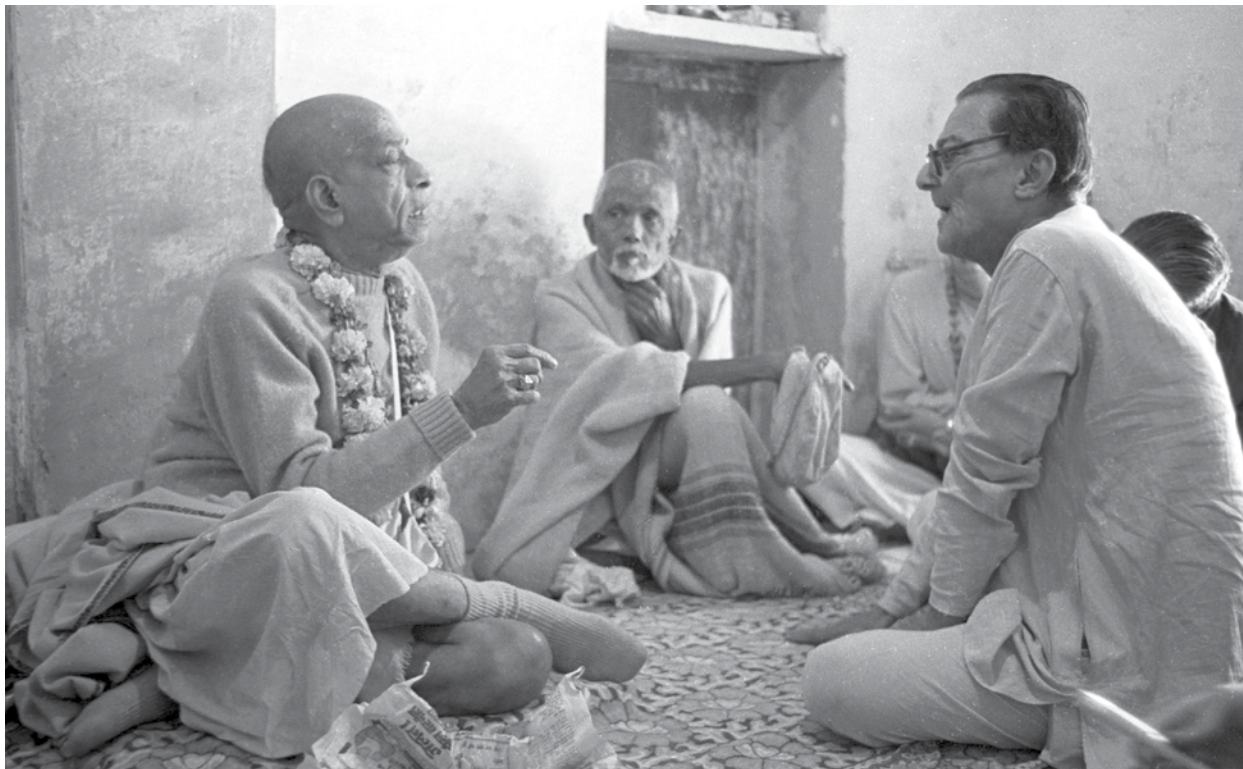
If the goal of my life is to serve you, then let me continue to serve, with all sincerity, this very special manifestation of yours. Serving your personal form was easy and ecstatic; now the time has come to show my love for you by serving your ISKCON, no matter how difficult it may be.

You gave us three instructions that enable us to successfully serve that very special form of yours:

1. "No matter what happens, don't leave ISKCON."
2. "Your love for me will be shown by how you cooperate with each other [to further the mission of ISKCON]," and
3. "Always consider the GBC the ultimate managing authority of ISKCON [and follow that authority.]"

Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, guide me in my spiritual journey and never allow me to deviate from this wonderful goal. I have come to you to learn how to love. Please allow me to love you in this very special way and achieve the ultimate perfection of my existence.

Your insignificant servant eternally, Bhakti Chāru Swami



Bhaktimārga Swami

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

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

Holy Praises

Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Engrossed we were in toasts to boasts
Of Māyā, the most of big-time ghosts.

In us you saw the obvious flaw:
We had this awe for the flesh and the raw.

We had this thirst for the very worst.
We were cursed (weak) like a bubble to burst.

To hell we would go, our life was so low.
You then came to show the best course is NO!

But YES to what's true, be fresh and be new.
It's *bhakti* we do for the One who is blue.

Succeeding to endure Māyā's overture,
With devotion mature on the track of the pure,

We do once a year lend an open ear
To words we hear that conquer our fear.

Beyond balmy blazes and dreamy dazes,
We hear golden phrases of your holy praises.

We hear the most beautiful words at your Vyāsa-pūjā.

Bhaktimārga Swami

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2011

Bhaktivaibhava Swami

I am offering this song as my humble obeisances to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who saved this world in its darkest hour.

A world full of sorrow,
A world full of pain,
Nothing for nothing,
Nothing to gain.

Warfare for power,
So selfish, unkind.
They'd promised the earth,
Nothin' but lyin'.

Cheated by cheaters,
Stripped naked and blind,
Thrown in the gutter,
Left nothing behind.

Songs of freedom
Washed to the sea.
Pleading and weeping—
Mankind's history.

Seeking salvation,
A venture of faith.
Suspended question:
Is suffering God's grace?

Oneness and voidness,
The soul in despair,
No direction home,
Illusion's last snare.

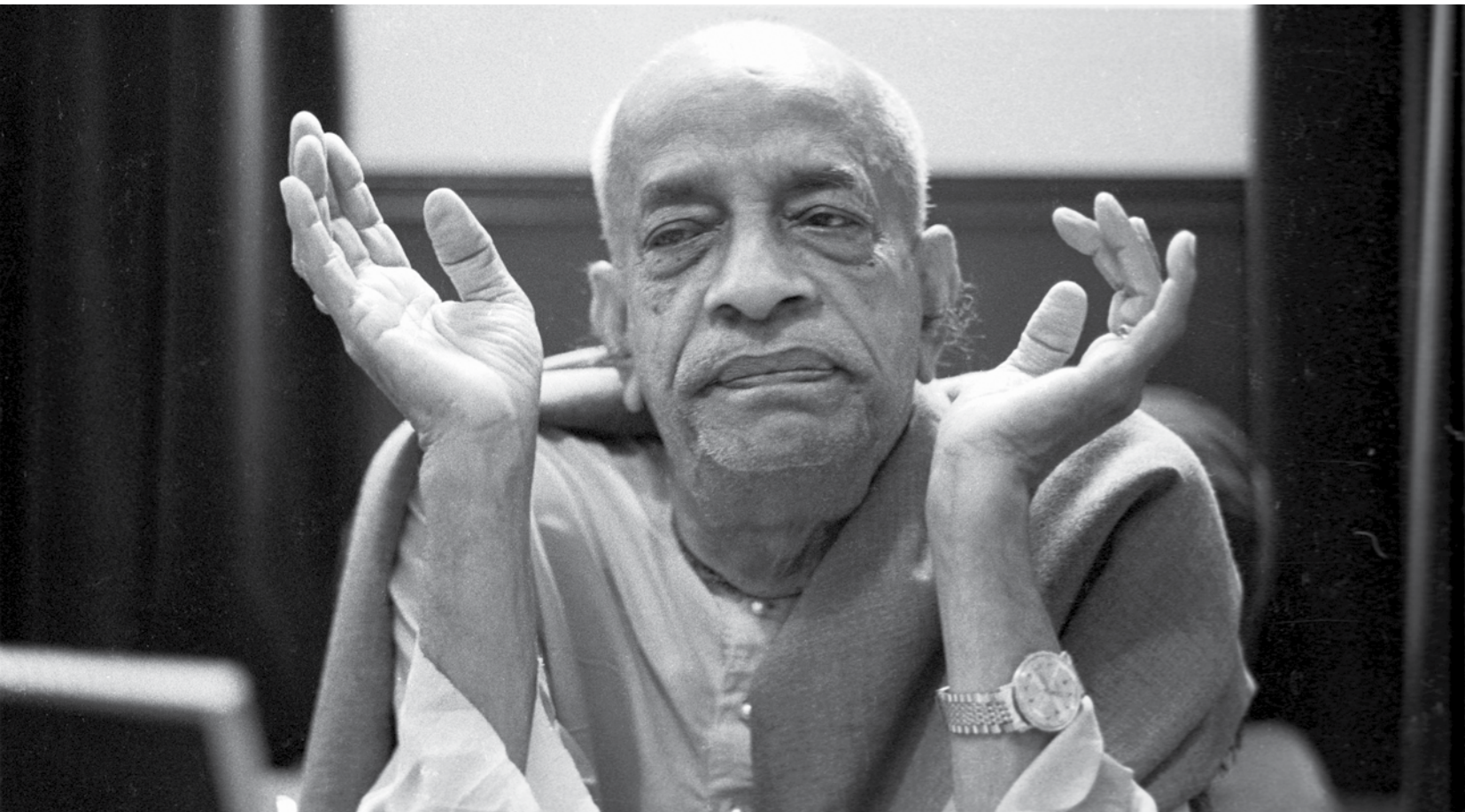
The dawn of a New Age,
"Enlightened" and "wise"—
Same old wine
In another disguise.

We were hopelessly doomed
If you'd never come.
You dispelled the darkness
Like the rising sun.

Father and guardian,
Like sheltering seaways,
Worshiped by all,
Your Divine Grace.

The servant of Śrīla Prabhupāda,

A. C. Bhaktivaibhava Swami



Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you!

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of your short visit to Moscow. You spent just a few days in this city and weren't even able to address a group of people. Yet isn't it amazing how much has happened because of this short and seemingly uneventful visit? Lord Kṛṣṇa, reciprocating with your ardent desire to give the people of this country Kṛṣṇa consciousness, arranged that the seed you planted forty years ago has produced so many wonderful fruits. Among these fruits are temples and preaching centers, *bhakti-urkṣa* groups, your books translated into Russian and other languages of this land, *harināma* parties in practically every town, etc. Very soon the big temple you wanted will be built in Moscow, since practically all the paperwork has been completed. But the most amazing fruits of your endeavors to preach in Russia are, of course, the Russian devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Everything else is just a means, but the real goal of our movement is to change the hearts of people, making them pure and as soft as fresh butter.

On this day of your Vyāsa-pūjā I want to tell you about one such devotee among countless others, hoping that the story of his life will give you pleasure and joy. This year Rādhikā-ramaṇa Dāsa, the disciple of your dear spiritual son Bhakti-bhṛṅga Govinda Mahārāja, unexpectedly left his body in Vṛndāvana. He was only twenty-nine years old. For the last five years of his life in this world he distributed your books on the streets of Moscow and other Russian cities.

It is amazing how within such a short time this simple Russian boy from a remote corner of the country became such a pure and dedicated servant of the Lord, without pride and envy and with a tremendous desire to serve everyone. Last January, after the December marathon, in which he won first place among all Russian book distributors, he had a dream. He saw himself in a huge, wonderful temple hall with thousands of devotees around him roaring in *kīrtana*. He thought that perhaps it was the new temple in Māyāpur. After the *kīrtana* there was an announcement in the temple glorifying a devotee who had distributed forty thousand books. Loud cries of jubilation, the tumultuous sound of *mṛdaṅgas* and *karatālas*, and the blowing of many conch shells greeted this announcement. He woke up in a happy mood and told his driver about the dream, wondering what it meant and who the glorified devotee was.

Then he went to India, visited the holy places Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas generally visit— Jagannātha Purī, Māyāpur, Vṛndāvana. He performed all the *parikramās*, attended classes, and led *kīrtanas*. And just a few days before his scheduled departure back to Moscow, he was bitten by a snake in the holy river Yamunā and left his body. Of course, at that time devotees remembered the saying that a death in Vṛndāvana caused by the river Yamunā, snakebite, or lightning is personally arranged by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. Still, everyone who knew him and served with him was shocked and grief-stricken by his sudden departure.

When all the devotees returned to Moscow, we arranged the memorial services in the temple room, and the *saṅkīrtana* bookkeeper calculated how many books Rādhikā-ramaṇa Prabhu had distributed during the five years of his service. Well, it was exactly forty thousand books! When this figure was announced, Rādhikā-ramaṇa's driver related the dream Rādhikā-ramaṇa had told him about. The meaning of his dream was now clear. It was Rādhikā-ramaṇa himself who was being glorified in the wonderful temple and whose service was graciously accepted by Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and recognized by the thousands of devotees. What he saw in his dream was the welcoming party arranged for him, who had successfully passed all the tests and purified his desire to personally serve the Divine Couple.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, when you were asked to show miracles, you used to point to your disciples, indicating that the Western "boys and girls" whom you had converted into pure Vaiṣṇavas were your real miracle. Indeed, this is the greatest miracle you performed and are continuing to perform till now. Thank you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, for allowing me to be a dumbfounded witness to this miracle. It gives me real hope that by your causeless mercy I will one day also become free from all *anarthas* and you will recognize me as your real servant.

Aspiring to become the servant of your servants,

Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami

Bhūrijana Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Early on—Boston in 1969—you stated that the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is “simple for the simple, but it is very hard for the crooked.” What is difficult for me, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is being simple and sincere. Simply sincere, simply convinced, and simply dedicated to pleasing you. Clearly my line to the pleasure of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa begins with pleasing you. Whatever little sincerity I have in that attempt is my *bhakti*.

The teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu that you have handed me in disciplic succession are philosophically complete and sophisticated, yet my practice for advancement is ultimately simple: sincerely becoming absorbed in actions meant for your pleasure. This style of *bhakti* is the essence of the mood of Vṛndāvana and its residents.

The residents of Vṛndāvana were purely absorbed in thoughts of pleasing Kṛṣṇa due to their spontaneous love for Him. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu both taught and relished a similar absorption by His chanting of Kṛṣṇa’s holy names and his constant remembrance of Kṛṣṇa in the mood of the *vraja-gopīs*. That same mood was carried by His immediate followers, the Six Gosvāmīs. Updating the same, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was absorbed fully in the mission of his masters. And you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, with your awesome vision of making everyone within the universe Kṛṣṇa conscious, were similarly absorbed twenty-four hours of every day.

Your gifts to us, Śrīla Prabhupāda—the holy names of Kṛṣṇa, books about Kṛṣṇa, instructions so that we may live a Kṛṣṇa conscious life, and preaching Kṛṣṇa’s message—are both vast and deep. And based on them, your mission is infinitely expandable. The entire universe can indeed become absorbed in thoughts of pleasing the *guru-paramparā*, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Lord Kṛṣṇa, and the residents of Vṛndāvana—just by thinking of how to please you.

So powerful and yet so simple!

But that which is simple for the simple is difficult for the crooked. And unfortunately I am clearly crooked. So much mercy from you is required to rectify my crooked, insincere heart so I can simply and sincerely serve you. Kindly grace me with your merciful glance.

Your dependent son,

Bhūrijana dāsa

Bīr Krishna Dās Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

You taught us that there are two types of service to the spiritual master: *vapu-sevā* (service to the form of the spiritual master) and *vāñī-sevā* (service to the words of the spiritual master).

You instructed us that our love for you would be demonstrated by our cooperating with each other. Cooperation requires common interests and a common goal. Our common interest should be to please you, and our common goal should be to expand and maintain your society, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

When we speak of expanding and maintaining your society, we are not simply speaking in numerical terms, i.e., numbers of devotees, temples, etc. We must be cognizant of quality—that is, quality of devotion and the dedication of the members of the society.

Quality of devotion, dedication, and unity of purpose can be achieved only by *vāñī-sevā*. Therefore it is essential for the members of ISKCON to become absorbed in your words by regularly reading your books.

When I joined your society in 1971, the devotees were enthusiastic to read your books continually. Indeed, we could even say that they were hungry for your books, devouring the transcendental words therein. We would regularly engage in sharing whatever we had read with the other devotees. There was always excitement in the air due to this. The mood was one of spiritual exploration, with you as our guide.

As I travel in the course of my service to you, I encourage and exhort the devotees to dive into the transcendental ocean you have given us in the form of your books. Modern media may vie for our attention, like the siren's song, or we may be inclined in other ways, but we should utilize our intelligence to refocus our attention on your words.

I pray that the devotees realize the treasure in your books, and that you give me the intelligence to increase the devotees' enthusiasm for taking shelter of your words. I am convinced that this will ensure your pleasure and our success.

I remain your eternal servant, praying to always remain at your lotus feet.

Bīr Krishna Dās Goswami

Devāmrita Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Your mercy penetrates to the lowest strata of Kali-yuga.

As a five-year old, standing before my church congregation, parents beaming proudly, I recited a Bible verse by rote: "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Next came the church barbecue.

At eight years I lamented I was not born on earth during the time of a magnificent religious founder—Jesus, Moses, Mohammed, someone, anyone. Early teen confusion buried this sentiment.

Later, as a university student, brain-drained by the finest speculators academia could provide, I would bus from New Haven to New York City, to the East Village. Particularly, I roamed the Second Avenue area

at night, desperate to find something that could save my life.

I even did the unthinkable, determined to resolve my mysterious Second Avenue fixation. Slipping away from my classmates during a day trip to the East Village, I walked into the New York University admissions office and asked to transfer there. Taken aback, the admissions officer pulled me up short: “You want to transfer from Yale! Young man, have you discussed this with your parents? We’ll certainly take you, but we can’t match the money you’re getting.” That ended that, but not my strange obsession with the Second Avenue locale.

Your Divine Grace finally saw fit to salvage me after the New York temple moved to Henry Street, in Brooklyn. I was shocked to learn of your Second Avenue beginnings during the very time of my wanderings there.

Four decades have passed, and a greater amazement has gradually dawned: the earth has been invaded by Vaiṣṇava denizens.

You are the emissary from the spiritual world that humanity and I have longed for.

About your predecessor, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, you summarized, “What can I say? He was a Vaiṣṇava man.” His fine biography by your disciple Bhakti Vikāsa Swami drives this reality into our depths. When we read therein what your Guru Mahārāja said about his predecessors, Śrīla Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābājī and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the Vaiṣṇava conspiracy becomes even clearer.

Thank you for coming to this mad world, with your books.

For Kṛṣṇa so cherished His separated parts and parcels that He sent from His special entourage *nitya-siddha* devotees, that whosoever serves their mission should not degrade into the animal species but attain eternal devotional service.

Trying to be a genuine disciple,

Devāmrita Swami

Dīna Śaraṇā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, disciple of the illustrious saint and scholar His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, exalted member of the disciplic succession of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the Six Gosvāmīs, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, great saint the end of whose glories cannot be reached though sung by millions for millennia . . .

Please accept my prostrated obeisances!

Your inconceivable mercy transcends all the regions of the cosmic manifestation and pierces through the deepest layers of material existence.

In the light of your glory and the glory of your disciples,
my dear godbrothers and -sisters,
imbedded as I am in ignorance,
devoid of love of God,
and being deeply fallen,

I realize my ignorance and wonder by which turn of good fortune
was I allowed to have sufficient presence of mind to perceive the urgency of the moment
and the presence of Your Divine Grace . . . now some forty years ago.

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This good fortune can be due only to the causeless mercy of the Lord and His pure devotee—you, my beloved spiritual master, whose love illuminates my heart and soul.

By opening my eyes with the torch of knowledge, your books have become the gateway through which you are allowing me a glimpse into the reality of the nectar of devotion.

May I be allowed to serve you by serving your mission and its members, and may I thus become eligible to receive your divine grace.

Your most fallen servant,

Dīna Śaraṇā Devī Dāsī

Giridhārī Swami

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Depth of Compassion

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Over the past year I have been thinking a lot about the depth of your compassion. In an endless variety of ways, your compassion seems to have depth beyond comprehension.

One verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.8.10) nicely describes your position:

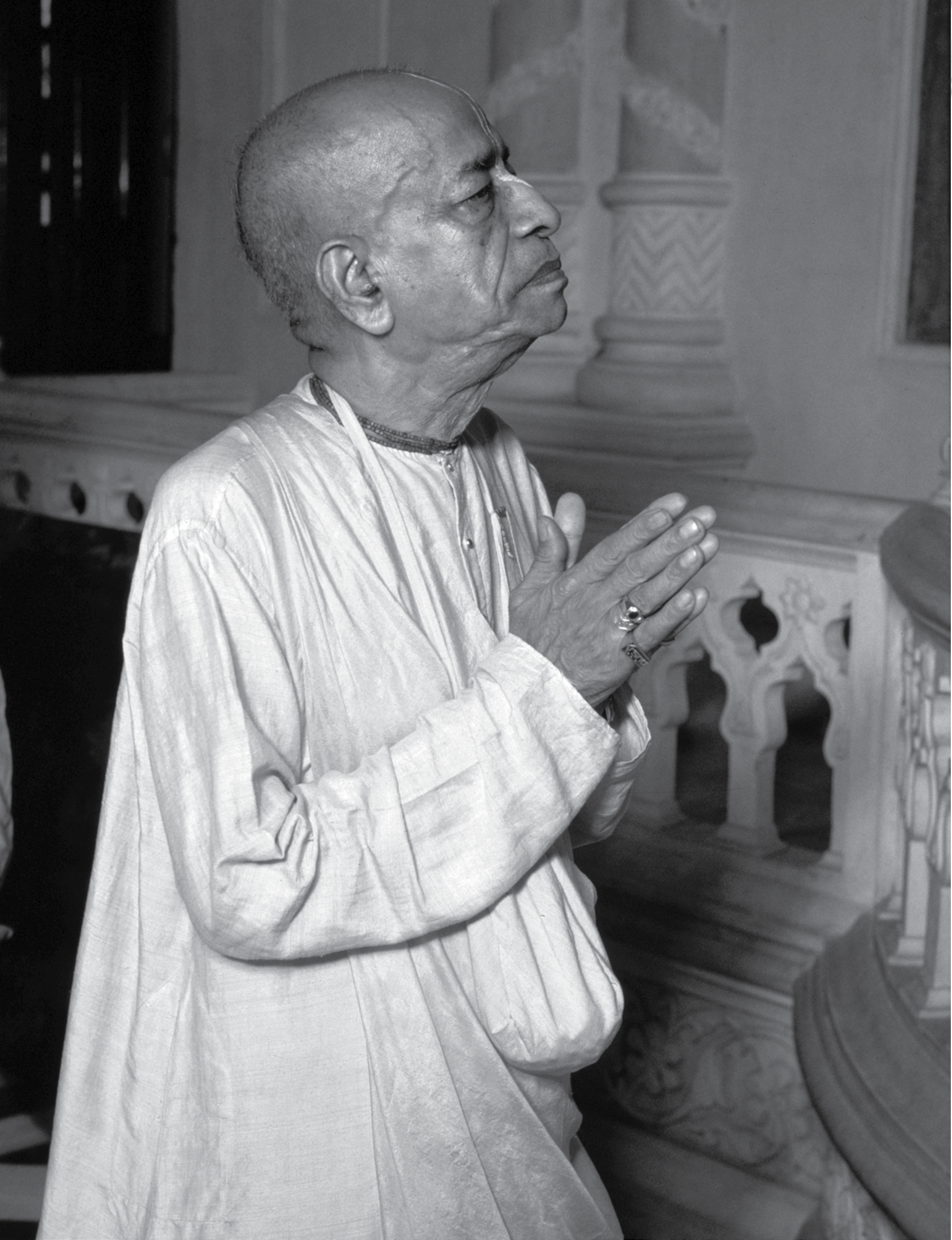
Even though one is in the renounced order, one who is advanced certainly feels compassion for suffering living entities. One should certainly neglect his own personal interests, although they may be very important, to protect one who has surrendered.

While you were physically with us, you gave up all personal interest and worked tirelessly to relieve the suffering of others. You continue to do that by inspiring your disciples and granddisciples. So many of your followers have inherited your mood of compassion and sincerely strive to relieve the suffering of others. But it is clear that the source of that compassion is you.

I have personally experienced many facets of your compassion while staying at Bhaktivedanta Hospital for treatment. Your presence is felt so strongly here.

In the form of your *mūrti* you give *darśana* to every soul that enters the hospital. Your lectures and *bhajans* are broadcast throughout the entire hospital twenty-four hours a day. All the staff members are devotees or are favorable to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Most wear neck beads and *tilaka*. The entire staff chants the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* prayers at 10:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., and 9:00 p.m. each day. One senior devotee then speaks on a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or *Śikṣāṣṭaka* verse, while everyone listens attentively. Small deities of Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā are taken on a rolling cart to all the hospital patients in turn so they can take *darśana* and make an offering of flowers if they wish. All of this combined makes the atmosphere spiritually powerful, just like in one of your temples.

Your dear disciple Rādhānātha Swami, who is carrying you in his heart, is the inspiration for all of this. He told me, "The devotees of Bhaktivedanta Hospital feel honored to serve you." I have personally realized this.



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Over the past six months I have met many doctors, nurses, and devotees from various departments. All of them have inherited a large measure of your compassion and are continually delivering it to every soul they come in contact with. I have never met such loving, caring, and truly compassionate devotees in my life. Their entire being is enveloped in the mood of offering service to everyone without exception.

This has also been the experience of godbrothers, godsisters, and other devotees who visit. While I have associated with them, the topic of compassion and the service attitude of the Bhaktivedanta Hospital devotees naturally comes up. Śrīla Prabhupāda, they see you as behind all of this. Many of them are reminded of how you displayed this same mood of compassion. They have shared many wonderful pastimes with me. The most notable and relevant pastime is one that your disciple Yamunā Devī Dāsī recently shared with me.

In the fall of 1970 Yamunā Mātāji was serving in Delhi. One day she received a telegram from you requesting her to come join you in Indore. You wanted her to lead *kīrtana* at the preaching programs that were being arranged. She traveled by train from Delhi to Indore. When she arrived in Indore, you and Devānanda Swami were waiting on the station platform to receive her. You personally garlanded her and welcomed her to Indore. You then led her to the car that would take the three of you to the place where you were staying. Yamunā Mātāji and Devānanda Swami sat in back and you sat in front. When you arrived at the *āśrama*, a four-sided compound, you took Yamunā Mātāji to her room. You took a key out of your pocket and opened the room. The room was simple, and you asked Yamunā Mātāji if everything was all right. Yamunā Mātāji saw that there was a bed, a metal cabinet, and a vase of flowers on a table. You then enthusiastically pulled another key out of your pocket and said that this was for the metal storage cabinet. You told Yamunā Mātāji that she could place her valuables there. Yamunā Mātāji was overwhelmed by your kindness and thanked you for being so considerate.

You held up to five programs a day in Indore. You often didn't take rest till after 11:00 at night, but you still rose at 1:00 a.m. to begin your translation work. While in Indore, you translated in one corner of a large hall in the compound where you were residing.

Yamunā Mātāji took every opportunity she could to be near you during those early-morning hours. She found a back door to the hall and would come in quietly to sit in the back, in a dark corner of the room. There she quietly chanted her rounds with closed eyes. This went on for several mornings. She didn't think you knew she was there. So she was surprised when one morning she felt your presence near her. When she opened her eyes, she saw you standing right in front of her. You had walked straight to the back of the hall, where she was sitting, and said, "Thank you for chanting like that. Thank you very much." You said nothing more and walked back to your translation desk.

Later that same week, after Yamunā Mātāji had finished her rounds, she was reading *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* in dim light from an old lamp she had found. Again you walked straight up to her and said, "Thank you for reading my books. Thank you very much." You then walked back to your translation desk and said nothing more.

From this very intimate and sweet exchange it is obvious that you deeply cared about each and every aspect of your disciples' lives. You were most loving, caring, and compassionate. You truly cared about the welfare of not only your disciples but all mankind. Your every thought, word, and deed were expended in the service of others. As the *Bhāgavatam* verse above says, you sacrificed your personal interest to give shelter to anyone who would accept it.

Whatever we have understood about compassion has come from studying and following your example. We are undoubtedly far from your standard of compassion. But whatever measure of compassion we have inherited from you can melt the hearts of many souls.

I stand before you this Vyāsa-pūjā day as a humble beggar. I beg for a single drop of the compassion you had for others. If you will grant me this wish, I vow to use this gift in service to you. Let me serve others wholeheartedly, without any thought of self-interest. And let me offer the results of this service to your lotus feet.

Your servant,

Giridhārī Swami

Girirāj Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your transcendental lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

For your Vyāsa-pūjā this year, I wish to speak about your dear friend and staunch devotee Mr. P. L. Sethi. Much of what I shall narrate I have experienced personally; the rest I have heard from Mr. Sethi himself, except the description of his last days, which I heard from his family. For your pleasure, I shall address my words to your followers.

A Special Recipient of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Mercy

When Śrīla Prabhupāda first came to Bombay with his disciples from America in 1970, Mr. Sethi read a notice about them in the newspaper, which said that Śrīla Prabhupāda had arrived with *sādhus* from foreign countries who chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. Mr. Sethi was part of a group that also chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa; so he wanted to meet Prabhupāda, and he got the address and came to see him.

At their first meeting, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked Mr. Sethi what he did during the day, starting from when he woke up in the morning. Mr. Sethi began, "I get up, brush my teeth, take my bath, have a cup of tea and a piece of toast, read the newspaper, and go to work."

Śrīla Prabhupāda responded, "What is the difference between you and a pig?"

Mr. Sethi thought about it and seemed to agree: there was no difference. So he asked Prabhupāda, "What should I do?"

Prabhupāda replied, "You should invite the devotees to Goregaon [the northern suburb of Bombay where Mr. Sethi lived] early every Sunday morning to do *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, and then you should feed them sumptuous *prasādam*." And this became a regular practice.

Later, when Śrīla Prabhupāda got the Juhu property, Mr. Sethi bought some land behind it and built a house for his family. In India people often give names to their houses and office buildings, and he named his new home Vṛndāvana.

Śrīla Prabhupāda underwent a great struggle to get the Juhu land and then to get the permissions to build on the land. Mr. Sethi was a building contractor, and Śrīla Prabhupāda engaged him in getting permits and doing some of the early construction. At the back of the land were six two-storey apartment buildings, and before we got permission to build the temple and main project, Mr. Sethi got permission to add one storey on top of each of the buildings at the back. The roofs of those old buildings were flat, with little white ceramic tile chips set in cement, and Śrīla Prabhupāda said that we should keep that flooring and build the walls and roof over it.

When the first additional quarters were ready, Mr. Sethi took Śrīla Prabhupāda on a tour. Śrīla Prabhupāda looked at Mr. Sethi with great affection and said, "Just as you are building these rooms for my disciples here, Kṛṣṇa is building your rooms for you in *Vaikuṇṭha*, the spiritual world."

But we still did not have permission to build the main project. Finally, Mr. Sethi told Prabhupāda, "Unless we pay them some money, we can't get the permission." He wanted to know if Prabhupāda was willing to do that.

Śrīla Prabhupāda asked, "How much?"

Mr. Sethi said, "Five thousand rupees."

Śrīla Prabhupāda asked, "How do we know that if we pay the money we'll get the permission?"

Mr. Sethi said, "The municipal commissioner is the final authority, and he seems to be a decent man, and this is how it works in Bombay."

Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "Let me think about it; I will tell you tomorrow morning."

After Mr. Sethi left, Śrīla Prabhupāda discussed the matter with me and maybe one or two other managers of the Juhu project. "So, what should we do?" he asked. And he raised another question: "What

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if we give the money to Sethi and he doesn't give it to the commissioner?" He quoted a Bengali saying that a goldsmith, while fashioning some gold his mother gave him to make into a ring, is thinking, "Should I use all the gold for the ring or put some in my pocket?" Prabhupāda said that this type of cheating is so much a part of the goldsmith's business that even if his own mother gives him gold to make an ornament, he will think, "Should I cheat and keep some of the gold for myself?" Prabhupāda said that the construction business—paying bribes and getting permits—is such that someone in it will automatically think, "Should I keep some of the money for myself?"—no matter whose money it is.

So there were many factors to consider—whether Mr. Sethi would give the money, or the full amount, to the commissioner, whether the commissioner, having taken the money, would in fact give the permission, or whether he might take the money and then ask for more and more and more—so many complexities. Finally Śrīla Prabhupāda decided, "We will not do this."

The next morning we waited anxiously for Mr. Sethi to arrive, being a little apprehensive about how Śrīla Prabhupāda would present his decision to Mr. Sethi and how Mr. Sethi would take it. Eventually he came and, as usual, sat on the floor before Śrīla Prabhupāda. "So, what do you think?" Prabhupāda asked. "Should we do it?"

Mr. Sethi replied, "Yes, because otherwise we are not getting the permission."

Prabhupāda immediately said, "All right"—just the opposite of the way the discussion had been going the day before. So Prabhupāda arranged the money, and we got the permission.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as the *ācārya*, was teaching us. He often told us that intelligence means to see the same thing from many points of view and that we should do everything very cautiously and carefully. I do not believe that he actually doubted his dear friend and staunch devotee Mr. Sethi, but he was teaching us to be circumspect and consider every proposal with keen intelligence.

In the course of the struggle, the municipality had demolished the semipermanent temple we had built for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī. At first we actively campaigned to get permission to rebuild it. But eventually we concluded that we didn't really need a permit to rebuild it because we already had permission and the municipality didn't actually have valid grounds for demolishing it. Still, the landlady, Mrs. Nair, somehow heard about our intention and went to court to get an injunction to stop us from rebuilding the temple. That was on a Friday, and the judge said he would not give the injunction without hearing us. She said, "Just give a temporary injunction for the weekend, and then you can decide on the permanent injunction."

But he said, "No, without hearing the other side I will not pass any judgment."

So we knew we had the weekend to rebuild the temple, because once it was rebuilt, the injunction would be meaningless.

In those days it was difficult to get cement, and a little hard to get bricks. The supply was less than the demand. And the government had imposed "cement control": to purchase cement legally, one had to procure a government-approved quota. But Mr. Sethi brought cement and bricks from his own construction sites so we could rebuild the temple over the weekend. While the work was going on, Mr. Mhatre, the local municipal counselor, who was in cahoots with Mrs. Nair, came to the site and demanded, "Stop the construction immediately."

Mr. Sethi replied, "No. Why should we stop?"

Mr. Mhatre threatened, "Well, you can build it up, but I will come in the night with fifty *gunḍās* [hooligans] and break it down."

Mr. Sethi turned to his son, who was by his side, and said, "Brij Mohan, bring my revolver and my rifle." Then Mr. Sethi said to Mhatre, "Don't bring fifty *gunḍās*. Bring a hundred. Bring two hundred. I have two hundred and fifty cartridges." He was that staunch. Then he and his son—Mr. Sethi with rifle in hand, his son with revolver—stayed up all night, in the pouring rain, to complete and protect the project. And no one came to disturb the work.

On Monday morning we appeared in court and told the judge that the temple had already been rebuilt. And the judge said to Mrs. Nair, "What is built is built. No one can destroy the temple."

Eventually we got permission to build the main complex. The question then became whether we needed piling. Piles are columns of reinforced concrete driven into the ground to support a building's foundation. Generally, to determine if you need piles or how strong the piles must be, you hire a

soil-testing company to drill into the earth and see how far down you have to go to reach bedrock. And because the Juhu land was near the beach, it was expected that the soil would be sandy, with water underneath, and that we would need piles, which would be quite an expense. Mr. Sethi approached Prabhupāda, who replied, “No, we don’t require piles.” Still, Mr. Sethi had some doubt, and he didn’t want to take any chances, so he hired a soil-testing company.

When the specialized machinery was drilling into the earth and had gone only about four feet deep, it hit bedrock. In fact, when it hit the hard rock, the drill broke. Nobody had expected to hit bedrock so soon. This was one of many, many instances that increased Mr. Sethi’s faith in Śrīla Prabhupāda. He felt that Śrīla Prabhupāda knew everything.

Once, Mr. Sethi approached Śrīla Prabhupāda to propose staging a charity benefit. The idea was that some famous performing artists—singers, dancers, musicians—would present an Indian cultural show, for which we would sell tickets, and the proceeds would go to the temple. Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “Yes, you can do. If you can make money from the performance, it will be most welcome.”

Then Mr. Sethi added, “The only thing, Prabhupāda, is that we will need some devotees to sell tickets.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “Our devotees cannot sell tickets. They are meant for selling books.” He said that if Mr. Sethi and his friends promoted the program and gave the profit to the temple, he would have no objection, but that the devotees could not be directly involved.

Another time, Mr. Sethi had some ideas for other ways the devotees could make money for the project. Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “Your ideas may be good, but if I tell my disciples, they will think, ‘I have come for *bhajana*, and now he wants me to do the same business again.’” Then Śrīla Prabhupāda told a story. Once, a boy was learning algebra and his mother saw him write $A + B = C$. Seeing the letters A, B, and C, she exclaimed, “Oh, you have grown so much, and still you are doing the same ABC?” She could not understand there was a gulf of difference between this ABC and that ABC, between a child’s learning to write the alphabet—ABC—and a young man’s doing algebra—ABC. Prabhupāda continued, “I can give my disciples so many ideas, but they will think, ‘I have come for *bhajana*, and again I am doing the same business?’ They cannot understand there is a gulf of difference between this business and that business—between working for Kṛṣṇa and working for *māyā*.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda knew our consciousness, the defects in our understanding. But he did not disturb us. He encouraged us to continue in devotional service, and he maintained faith that the process of hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa and serving Lord Kṛṣṇa’s mission would purify us and enlighten us in the proper understanding of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Eventually, we built the temple complex in Juhu, and Saurabha Prabhu arranged beautiful quarters for Śrīla Prabhupāda on the top floor of the west tower, facing the sea. After Śrīla Prabhupāda moved in, he invited Mr. Sethi to see his new accommodations. He told Mr. Sethi, “Just see what beautiful arrangements my disciples have made for me—spacious rooms with beautiful chandeliers and carved-wood furniture and marble floors.” Then Prabhupāda said to Mr. Sethi, “I always wanted you to live with us, but you always felt that the conditions would be too austere for you. You weren’t used to living so simply. So you come and live here in my quarters, and I will stay somewhere else.”

Mr. Sethi protested, “No, no, your disciples have made this for you.”

Prabhupāda said, “I am a *sannyāsī*; I can stay anywhere. You stay here.” That was Prabhupāda’s generosity of spirit and his graciousness toward Mr. Sethi.

The last incident I shall relate came toward the end, when Śrīla Prabhupāda was really quite ill, in 1977. From before Mr. Sethi had met Prabhupāda he had been associated with a group called the Radha Madhava Prema Sudha Sankirtana Mandala. Their *guru* was based in Vṛndāvana, and they chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. In Bombay they were all householders, and every Sunday they would have a twelve-hour *akhaṇḍa-hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*—continuous Hare Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana*—from six in the morning to six in the evening, followed by two hours of Vraja songs.

So, Mr. Sethi had the idea that instead of having the *kīrtana* in a home of one of their devotees, as they usually did, they could have it at Hare Krishna Land, in Juhu. So we arranged it, before the Deities in the small temple, beside the new complex that was nearing completion, just beneath Śrīla Prabhupāda’s new quarters. Although the construction wasn’t finished and the lift wasn’t working, Śrīla Prabhupāda had insisted on staying there. And ill as he was, he was listening to the *kīrtana*, reclining or lying down.

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The devotees in the temple really wanted to see him, but they were too many to come up, Prabhupāda was not able to come down, and anyway it would have been too taxing for him to meet them all. At one stage they were so eager that they came out of the temple and were doing *kīrtana* beneath Śrīla Prabhupāda’s balcony. Eventually Mr. Sethi helped Prabhupāda walk to the balcony. Prabhupāda glanced down upon them. They were in ecstasy. He stayed for a little while and then went back in. One highlight came at the end when a lady devotee sang, “*Jaya rādhe jaya rādhe rādhe, jaya rādhe jaya śrī rādhe. Jaya kṛṣṇa . . .*” Later, Mr. Sethi told us that when Prabhupāda was listening to that song, tears were streaming down his cheeks.

Soon thereafter, Śrīla Prabhupāda left this world, but Mr. Sethi continued his service. He arranged and paid for a beautiful, ornate pure silver *ārati* set for offering *guru-pūjā* to Śrīla Prabhupāda. And every year on Prabhupāda’s appearance and disappearance days he would sponsor a grand, opulent feast for everyone who came to the temple. Later, he created sizable fixed deposits in the bank, the interest from which would pay for opulent feasts on Prabhupāda’s appearance and disappearance days in perpetuity. And he contributed for the construction of two guest rooms, the rent from which would sponsor Śrīla Prabhupāda’s annual appearance and disappearance festivals.

Then, last year, Mr. Sethi became ill. He was eighty-eight, but he had no fear of death. He was completely detached from the body. Devotees constantly surrounded him with *kīrtana*. His spiritual and biological families—everyone—was so attached to him. It is really powerful when the head of a family is such a staunch devotee. Sethiji’s wife is also a very good devotee. His sons and daughters and grandchildren—the whole, large family—is Kṛṣṇa conscious. Their affection for him was exceptionally strong, with a familial relationship based on his being husband, father, and grandfather, and a spiritual relationship based on his bringing them to Śrīla Prabhupāda and inspiring them in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Then, on February 12, he began to say, “Prabhupāda is calling me. He is preparing a room for me, and when it is ready he will take me. I am going from where I came, back to my *guruji*.” On February 13 he insisted on going to the temple. And three days later, at 11 p.m., surrounded by devotees lovingly chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa in *kīrtana*, he left his body to rejoin Śrīla Prabhupāda. He was so fixed in service and devotion to Śrīla Prabhupāda that at the very end his mind was fixed on Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Once, Mr. Sethi told Śrīla Prabhupāda that sometimes devotees would ask him why he didn’t get initiated. Prabhupāda replied, “You are better than initiated. An initiated disciple can serve Kṛṣṇa, worship the Deity, but you are serving the servants of Kṛṣṇa, and that is higher.” And he quoted a verse:

*ārādhanaṁ sarveṣāṁ viṣṇor ārādhanaṁ param
tasmāt paratarāṁ devī tadīyānāṁ samarcanam*

“Of all kinds of worship, the worship of Lord Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa, is the topmost. But above even the worship of Lord Viṣṇu is the rendering of service to Vaiṣṇavas, who are related to Viṣṇu.” (*Padma Purāṇa*)

And Prabhupāda added, “Besides, I have much work for you. There may be things I want you to do that would be awkward for an initiated disciple, but as you are now, you can do them conveniently.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda was very liberal. He knew the heart—the devotion, the service—of the person, and he accepted Mr. Sethi as more than an initiated disciple. And there is no doubt that Mr. Sethi’s attachment to Śrīla Prabhupāda and to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s service and the fact that his consciousness was fixed on Śrīla Prabhupāda at the end have carried him to Śrīla Prabhupāda again.

This is the story of one sincere, humble devotee’s service to Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Prabhupāda’s immense mercy and blessings upon him. And somehow or other, that same immense mercy from Śrīla Prabhupāda is available to all of us who are serving him and his mission even now.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*

Mr. Sethi *kī jaya!*

Girirāj Swami

Gopāl Krishna Goswami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this most auspicious day I beg to offer my most respectful obeisances at your lotus feet. This year we are celebrating the 115th anniversary of your birth. Though you are not present in your personal *vapu* form, you are eternally present in your *vāṇī* form. Your *vāṇī* is available in your books, letters, videos, and lectures. They will continue to guide humanity for the next ten thousand years.

You appeared in order to illuminate the dark world with the transcendental knowledge of the *Vedas*. You were also able to fulfill Lord Caitanya's prediction that the holy name would be chanted in every town and village. In the brief span of twelve years, you wrote and translated more than fifty books and opened over a hundred temples. Due to your purity, the movement has continued to expand after your departure. Your books are now available in all the major languages. Temples have been built all over the world, especially in India. After a long struggle, land suitable for a major center has finally been allocated to ISKCON in Moscow. This year we will celebrate the fortieth anniversary of your visit to Moscow. Two weeks ago, on Rāma Navamī, we opened a major temple in Mombasa, Kenya. Mombasa has a very good climate, which you appreciated when you went there in 1971 to rest. The project is located next to the world-famous Nyali Silver Beach. This project was completed in two years. Their Lordships Rukmiṇī-Dvārakādhiśa were relocated from the old temple, and Sītā-Rāma-Lakṣmaṇa-Hanumān were installed on Rāma Navamī. The project includes a twenty-six-room high-class guesthouse, an auditorium, and a restaurant. At the entrance there is also a beautiful garden with a fountain. This new project is attracting both Africans and Indians and will help expand the preaching in East Africa and enhance your prestige.

In March a major conference was held at the prestigious Vigyan Bhavan in Delhi on the theme of "Spirituality and Science." I participated along with devotees of the Kolkata branch of the Bhaktivedanta Institute. The president of India inaugurated the conference, and I was pleased to see her offering flowers to your picture on the stage. The president's speech included statements based on the philosophy taught in your books. Your glories will continue to expand for the next ten thousand years.

Since you are a pure devotee, your concern was to save suffering humanity. The scriptures clearly explain that without devotional service one cannot be happy. The recent disasters, including the tsunami in Japan, remind us that in this Age of Kali material suffering will go on increasing due to the sinful habits of the populace. The current situation presents a good opportunity to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Once, when some of your disciples requested that you take a break from your strenuous schedule of traveling and preaching, you refused and told them not to take away your privilege of struggling for Kṛṣṇa. Even when you had health problems, you did not stop your preaching and translating. Just as Lord Caitanya was able to induce animals in the Jhārikhaṇḍa forest to chant, you were able to convert thousands of *mlecchas* into *brāhmaṇas*. You offered us the path of real happiness. You gave us the matchless gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I pray that I may be able to hold on to this matchless gift eternally and help you convert crowlike men into swanlike men.

Your eternal servant,

Gopāl Krishna Goswami



Guru Prasād Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Please accept my humble obeisances in the cooling shade of your lotus feet, the shelter for surrendered souls. All glories to you, who are the *āśraya* for all sincere souls seeking Kṛṣṇa's pure service.

As this year's offering, I want to discuss how you embody the quality of *kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa*, exclusive surrender to Kṛṣṇa. According to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, among the twenty-six qualities found in pure Vaiṣṇavas, surrendering exclusively to Kṛṣṇa is considered the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*, the essential quality. Indeed, *surrender* is the word we hear from your lotus lips more than any other.

Today is Rāma-navamī. We see how surrender is woven throughout the whole epic. Daśaratha surrenders to his promise, Rāma surrenders to his duty, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa surrender to Rāma, and finally Rāma surrenders to his obligation as king, giving it precedence over even family.

Yet there is another dimension to surrender, one that you demonstrated: a constant obedience to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

At your first meeting with your Guru Mahārāja he ordered you to preach—to teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the world—and you surrendered to his order, never deviating from that solemn commitment. The setting in which that order was given was such that most of us would have taken it as a theoretical appeal from a wise saint. But you took it as your life and soul, *vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ*. Your degree of surrender goes beyond that found anywhere else. A *mahā-bhāgavata*'s surrender reaches the point of beseeching and begging others to abandon their false hopes and attachments and serve Kṛṣṇa with no repayment other than His satisfaction, which is always your exclusive motivation.

That particular motive is characteristic of residents of Vṛndāvana like you. It is the apex of understanding of a fully surrendered soul: to cherish Kṛṣṇa's happiness as one's only desire. You have shown us that degree of unparalleled desire, which you wrote about in the Preface to *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*:

Lord Caitanya also taught that the mode of worshiping the Lord in the highest perfectional stage is the method practiced by the damsels of Vraja. These damsels (*gopīs*, or cowherd girls) simply loved Kṛṣṇa without any motive for material or spiritual gain.

One disciple said that he wanted to follow you, but he asked how far your instructions demand submission. You responded:

Prabhupāda: If you still cannot understand what is my instruction, then how can I help you? New students may say like that. You are intelligent, educated, old student. If you say . . . [long silence] Our movement is that beginning of spiritual life is to surrender. If there is no surrendering, then it is no advance. *Sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*. This is the beginning. If that thing is lacking, there is no beginning even, what to speak of advancement. [Room Conversation with Bhūrijana dāsa and disciples, 1 July 1974, Melbourne]

Surrender is what you taught and demonstrated throughout your life. Can I ever capture one particle of that loving devotion? I beg you to prod me on, even though I resist. My only hope is your surrender, for in my case only that superlative extent of mercy and compassion can awaken in me an ever-so-small desire to serve Kṛṣṇa's devotees. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your most undeserving servant,

Guru Prasād Swami

Hṛdaya Caitanya Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you on your most auspicious Vyāsa-pūjā day.

Your glories are chanted continuously around the globe, twenty-four hours a day. Yesterday in Amsterdam, on the country's national holiday, called Queen's Day, I participated in a *harināma* party in which Śācīnandana Swami and Kadamba Kānana Swami led two hundred devotees. It started at 10 a.m. and ended at 7 p.m. Every year on Queen's Day hundreds of thousands of youth from all over Holland assemble in Amsterdam looking for some type of satisfaction, and when they see our *kīrtana* party many of them become happy, and some of them even chant and dance with us. You gave us this sublime mission of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu to chant and dance and be happy. Of course, the chanting has to be performed for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa while being conscious of Him. You want us to hear Kṛṣṇa's name with attention. For the last four years, Śācīnandana Swami has been giving a very attractive Holy Name Retreat in Radhadesh, in which he teaches the art of chanting with attention, using many analogies, personal reflections, and realizations based on your teachings and those of the previous *ācāryas*. Due to my management services, however, I cannot participate in these seminars very much, and I feel a little like the bee licking the outside of the honey jar. At the same time, I am also confident that you appreciate all services done for the Lord and that temporarily we may have to do various services in order to push this movement forward.

Right now the world seems to be going through strong purification. There is a lot of karma being made in the form of abortion, cow slaughter, sense gratification, intoxication, abuse, etc., and thus naturally there are a lot of reactions in the form of earthquakes, tsunamis, nuclear meltdowns, wars, etc. It thus seems that your program of self-sufficiency, with the cow and bull in the center, is the future program for our Kṛṣṇa conscious communities, because whatever happens, this simple program of self-sufficiency will prevail above any other way of life. It seems that ISKCON is also undergoing a purification period, with some challenging questions being raised, such as the question of the actual meaning of your statement that "the GBC is the ultimate managing authority of ISKCON." While many of your senior disciples whom you trained are still among us, we should think about, deeply discuss, and resolve such issues before we are bereft of their direct association and wisdom.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are still with us, and you will always remain our foremost *śikṣā* spiritual master, our pure guide, and our shelter. We can always approach you and receive divine inspiration and encouragement from your teachings. I am eternally indebted to you, and I pray that I will never foolishly become disconnected from you or your disciples, especially my spiritual master and others who are my real well-wishers.

Your insignificant servant,

Hṛdaya Caitanya Dāsa

Jayapatāka Swami

My dear spiritual father, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

This very insignificant disciple of yours is taking this opportunity to offer you homage. During your manifested *līlās*, I offered myself to you, saying “I am yours,” and you said, “I accept you.” I was very much pleased to be your servant. Many disciples find it difficult to get some personal association with their guru or some direct instructions from him, but you were very kind to me and gave me many personal instructions. I do not remember all of them, but I remember some.

In 1968, in San Francisco, I was fortunate to be engaged by your representative His Grace Jayānanda Prabhu in building the *ratha* car, and on the Ratha-yātrā day he shaved me up. At that time he told me I should go to see you in Montreal. You were very kind to me when I traveled there and took shelter at your lotus feet. You engaged me as an assistant to your secretary. I had some meager duties—such as to stand near your room on call when the secretary went shopping. If you needed any help I would go in and help you.

At that time the devotees complained that I was chanting too loudly in the temple. You heard my reasons and said I should chant in the park. You approved my loud chanting but said I should not disturb others, so I was sent to the park to chant.

You also gave me the service of picking a rose for you every day. You said it would increase your longevity.

In this way, from the very beginning you showered me with instructions. At that time I was made the temple president in Montreal. I thought I was very young for such a position, but you told me not to be body conscious and take up the service. For your pleasure I took up the service, and you said, “Please open more branches. An astrologer told me I will open 108 branches.” You also instructed that I should train someone to take up the services I was doing and go out to open a new branch. So I trained someone and made them the president in Montreal, and then I went to Toronto to open a new center. I was the president in Montreal, but I handed over the charge of the temple to Jagadīśa Prabhu. Then you called me to LA and told me you were going to send me to India to help Acyutānanda Prabhu.

At that time you instructed that I should treat your godbrothers with respect. You also said that in the future ISKCON would have many, many congregational devotees. While waiting for your order to actually depart for India, I went to Chicago to help Bhagavān Prabhu open a temple there. Then I received a call that I should go to India. I went to Canada, then London, and then India.

At first I stayed in the Gauḍīya Maṭha, and at that time I met some of your godbrothers. You wrote to me that now that I had come to Calcutta, we should have our own place. We got a place in south Calcutta, and soon thereafter we received you at the airport. You said that you had already given nine devotees *sannyāsa*, and Acyutānanda and I were also on the list for *sannyāsa*. So on Rādhāṣṭamī, 1970, Acyutānanda and I were given *sannyāsa*.

Then I was made the first temple president in Calcutta. In Calcutta you gave me many instructions. You said we should put on a Ratha-yātrā, always in a very big way. In fact, you said, it should be the biggest in the world. Also, you instructed that your birthplace should be developed and maintained, and that we should never give up preaching in your birthplace city, Calcutta, because it was very special to you. You also told me I had previously been a devotee born in India. I said, “I am very fallen. I don’t

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deserve this,” but you raised your voice and said, “Don’t doubt the words of the guru,” and I understood that I had to accept what you are saying. I had been chanting thirty-two rounds a day, but you told me that I should just chant sixteen rounds and preach. Then you sent me to Māyāpur.

I was the first president in Māyāpur. I was living in a grass hut and you came and blessed me with your association. You said that living like this was sattvic, but that no one would come and live with us. So we have to use steel, cement, and bricks to develop Māyāpur. This is rajasic, you said, but in this way people will come and stay here.

You would come to Māyāpur twice a year, once in the cold months and once at Gaura-pūrṇimā time. Over the years you gave me many instructions. You told me, “I have given you the spiritual world. Now you develop it!” You also said to do *saṅkīrtana* and to distribute 10,000 big books and 100,000 small books a month. You told me to publish books and head up a BBT in eastern India. You also said we should build a city for 25,000 to 50,000 people. You gave some Vedic and town-planning designs, which will help with the building of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium. You told us to study the Fifth Canto and understand the universe according to the Vedic version.

You also said that we should build tall buildings and that there is no difference between building the buildings and reading the books. You said I should chant my rounds, attend *guru-pūjā*, and build. Sometimes you gave instructions that seemed very hard to carry out, like the instruction to build a long building, which is now known as the Chakra Building, in six weeks. Then you said I needed to immediately start devotee care.

In this way I remained under your direct guidance, and it was very blissful.

Every day I thank that devotee who once told me I should go before you and humble myself, praise you, and ask for some blessings. So when you were with me, every day I would come before you and follow this formula. A few times you said things that were very humbling, which was your mercy on me. Once I said “I am a fool—” and you immediately interjected “Yes!” I said, “I am the most fallen” and you replied, “You are not the most anything.” Another time I said, “I want to serve you life after life,” and you interjected, “But don’t make me come back!” In this way, every day you gave me some unexpected response, and I learned that the relationship with the spiritual master is very personal; it is not mechanical.

You also gave me so many little instructions, which I won’t recount here. I’m just recounting some of the main ones.

Later you made me Co-director of Māyāpur with Bhavānanda Prabhu. You said that as Co-director I should not be in charge of anything but should oversee everyone and see that they do their services. You also said that all the land in Māyāpur should be utilized and that the place should be kept very clean. One day you held me by the arm and told me, “You can be a little lenient in first initiations but you should be very strict when recommending devotees for second initiation.” Later I found that this instruction was for all of us now as well. Once I said, “We have so many devotees in India; they should be somehow engaged in the *saṅkīrtana* movement.” You said we should expand the congregation and bring them to our temples. And that is how we do things to this day. We train them for few days and then send them back to practice in their own homes. In this regard you instructed that we should follow the model of Hare Kṛṣṇa Nāmaḥaṭṭa as given by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. This has proved very useful.

When you said, “Develop Māyāpur,” I replied, “Well, that means there will be many *grhasthas*.” You said, “Yes, the *brahmacārīs* will be managed by *grhasthas*. We have to think big; we have to think broad and wide.” On one occasion you described how I should care for your many disciples and engage them in Kṛṣṇa’s service.

One day you called all the *sannyāsīs* and GBCs together and said that you were sending Ghanaśyāma Dāsa, who later became Bhakti Tīrtha Mahārāja, on a very special mission, and you asked all of us to bless him. We said, “Well, when he has your blessings, what will our blessings do?” You said, “You are all devotees, and Kṛṣṇa will also see you blessing him. So you should bless him, because this is a very difficult mission.” So we blessed our dear godbrother for his special mission.

You also said we should build a little road to the Ganges so you could take a daily bath there. This would increase your longevity, you said. We failed to get the road built at that time, since then the Ganges was a long way from our property. But recently the Ganges has come very close, and now we have the road. Every year we take you for a bath in your *mūrti* form. You also said that if you were to leave your

body in Māyāpur we should build your *samādhi* there and your *puṣpa-samādhi* in Vṛndāvana, and that if you were to leave your body in Vṛndāvana we should build your *samādhi* there and your *puṣpa-samādhi* in Māyāpur. So we have built your *puṣpa-samādhi* in Māyāpur and your *samādhi* in Vṛndāvana. You also said we should have regular boat service between Calcutta and Māyāpur, with a stop in Pānihāṭi, where we should provide a breakfast of *ciḍā* and *dadhi*, and that we should also have a temple in Pānihāṭi. You also said we should develop the Navadvīpa *parikramā* and Gaura-maṇḍala-bhūmi and unite the Sārasvata family. For the latter purpose you established the Bhakti Vedanta Swami Charity Trust, of which you asked me to be the lifetime chairman. Sometimes you sent me on a special mission to recover disciples from other *mahārājas* or to develop some foreign place even though the person there was not always favorable. It was something very special to work under you directly.

Sometimes you gave me personal services. For instance, in Bombay you asked me to scratch your back because you were feeling itchy. In Māyāpur there was once a snake trying to bite you in your bathroom. You called for me and said “Help me!” I had to somehow figure out how to save you from the snake. There were many services like this.

You said Māyāpur should be ISKCON’s World Spiritual Headquarters, the United Nations of the spiritual world. You wanted us to unite all the different nationalities there and host everybody. You showed personally how to host VIPs, how to host guests in general, and how to distribute *prasādam*. You started the Food for Life program after seeing the hungry kids peeping into the garbage bins to get the remnants of *prasādam*. Seeing this, you started crying. You were so very kind and merciful to all devotees and the people at large, which was very much appreciated.

Sometimes you told us that you were about to leave this world and that you were very concerned about how the movement would go on after you had departed. You said, “At least try to maintain whatever I have given you.” At that time you had 108 temples. You said, “If you can expand, well and good. Very nice. But at least maintain it.” You knew that the missions of many other great spiritual leaders had split up. The Gauḍīya-maṭha has many different splinter groups; there are about forty different Gauḍīya *maṭhas*. You also told us that it was your guru’s order to establish the GBC and that you wanted to carry out your guru’s order. You also instructed us to print and distribute books, to do Navadvīpa *parikramā*, and to expand the Nāmahaṭṭas—all orders of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

You told us that we should have a GBC and should remain united. You also instructed all your followers that we would show how much we loved you by how well we cooperated after you were gone. You told us that we should all work under the GBC. You said, “Any one of you can fall, but I have faith that the whole GBC—the majority—will be ok.” And somehow the GBC has seen us through all the difficulties over the decades, and we are still mostly united, with over five hundred branches.

You appointed me a GBC and said I should serve the GBC. In the beginning I was assigned the duty of overseeing Bengal and Orissa. Gradually the GBC and you also instructed me to preach in Bangladesh and Nepal and to try to develop centers there. You emphasized that in Māyāpur you wanted to build a spiritual city. In Haridaspur and other such villages, you instructed us, we should make the existing village Kṛṣṇa conscious. In this way you had different plans for different places.

On some occasions you instructed your *sannyāsīs* to travel around the world and preach. You said, “I have accepted this curse from the parents of my devotees, so you should also accept this curse and travel.” So by your mercy I have been able to travel to many parts of the world and preach. You once told me to develop the Orissa preaching by supporting Gour Govinda Mahārāja in Bhuvanesvara and building a temple in Jagannātha Purī. I tried my best in this regard.

Your Divine Grace gave me so many instructions that sometimes I feel overwhelmed. Of course, there are also many, many instructions that you gave to all your disciples, such as the instruction to chant sixteen rounds and follow the four regulative principles. All these instructions I take on my head. Sometimes I think, “How will I do all these things? How will I follow all these instructions?” In fact, some of your instructions are open-ended—they can never be followed completely. For instance, you said, “I want you to expand Kṛṣṇa consciousness propaganda unlimitedly.” So, that is an unlimited order. Also, once you said, “Well, I have to make 10,000 disciples—and you should make 50,000 disciples.” In this way we were always encouraged by you.

You said that Māyāpur was the place where all your senior disciples could find some service, where

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they could use their intelligence and energy to serve Kṛṣṇa. So, now we are trying to engage more and more devotees. Ambarīṣa Prabhu has taken a very big lead; other devotees are also taking part. At this point I am not very well and am not able to do as much as you would like me to do. So I am appealing to my godbrothers and godsisters and my spiritual children, spiritual nephews, spiritual nieces, and spiritual grandchildren that they all work together and somehow help me follow all the instructions you gave me.

Your Divine Grace, my life is meant for your service. It has no other purpose. Sometimes people ask me why I still preach, why I don't retire. The GBC has asked me to try to regain my health, so I am undergoing some therapy, as much as I can. You did so much for us, gave so much, took so many risks—going across the ocean on the *Jaladuta*, being robbed, falling sick, traveling constantly at great personal comfort. When I first joined, my father said, "If you become a devotee, I will make sure that you serve in the American army and die in Vietnam." When I asked you what I should do, you said, "Better you join Kṛṣṇa's army." So you gave me the name Jayapatāka, meaning "victory flag of Lord Kṛṣṇa." You often said that name very affectionately. You told me that I should take up the service of staying in India and should become an Indian citizen. I did all this to please you, and by your mercy I am getting a little taste for chanting and for serving. I hope that I can always serve you and Lord Caitanya and Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and that I never have any other service!

All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Your humble servant,

Jayapatāka Swami



Kavicandra Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my obeisances. All glories to you.

Daily I try to glorify you and develop gratitude toward you, yet every year when the time comes for writing your Vyāsa-pūjā offering, I cannot get started. I am like a crow trying to follow a swan.

You became especially dear to your guru with the beautiful poem you wrote for his 1936 Vyāsa-pūjā. An excerpt:

Message of service
Thou hast brought,
A healthful life
As Caitanya wrought.
Unknown to all,
It's full of brace.
That's your gift,
Your Divine Grace.

Absolute is sentient
Thou hast proved.
Impersonal calamity
Thou hast removed.
This gives us a life,
Anew and fresh.
Worship thy feet,
Your Divine Grace.

Your unique ability to express the highest spiritual truths in such simple language is a special gift for us dull-brained fallen souls of the Age of Kali. Your books reach out to everyone. The simplicity of your use of language satisfies everyone, from university professors to half-educated fools like me.

And your humility is a special *śakti*, melting the hearts of anyone who contacts you.

Our presenting this matter in adequate language, especially a foreign language, will certainly fail, and there will be so many literary discrepancies despite our honest attempt to present it in the proper way. But we are sure that with all our faults in this connection the seriousness of the subject matter will be taken into consideration, and the leaders of society will still accept this due to its being an honest attempt to glorify the Almighty God. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.11, purport]

I will report just a few of the fields in which your followers are progressing under your divine guidance.

The most wonderful thing is that, by the intense devotion of your Ambarīṣa Dāsa, construction of the *adbhuta-mandira* in Śrīdhām Māyāpur is going on wonderfully. Whenever I see it I feel that you are very happy about this.

Last year saw a great increase in the distribution of your books. And so many books are being published in so many languages.

I was present when you spoke the following:

So kindly help me. This is my request. Print as many books in as many languages and distribute throughout the whole world. Then Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will automatically increase. [Arrival address, Los Angeles, 20 June 1975]

Homages from the GBC

So many of your disciples and granddisciples are working to fulfill this order. I have to especially note His Holiness Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami and our Minister of Book Distribution, His Grace Vijaya Prabhu.

There are so many Jagannātha Ratha-yātrās all over the planet. We just had our first one in Phuket, Thailand. We thank you for inspiring us to put on this all-attractive festival.

I can only pray that I will be able to always remain in the association of your followers and that I will be able to accept their kind attempts to engage me in your service.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Your aspiring servant,

Kavicandra Swami

Madhusevita Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to your Vyāsa-pūjā.

This year's offering is the latest song I composed, which is to be part of an album made for your glorification. The name of the album is *In Praise of My Spiritual Master*, and this particular song is called "Tompkins Square Dhām."

As you are well aware, I am less than a mediocre disciple, and the same is true for my being a musician and writer. Nonetheless, I have confidence in your compassionate heart and in that uniquely beautiful quality of yours: the acceptance of service even from the most undeserving souls. I hope you will be pleased with this effort.

Your humble disciple and servant,

Madhusevita Dāsa

Tompkins Square Dhām

Rubber slippers—lotus feet
Walking down the Bowery.
All the bums are giving way
To the sweet angelic saint.

All those who catch sight of him
Become suddenly serene.
His compassion puts to rest
Birth, old age, disease, and death.

Lower East Side,
A place of transcendental life.
Lower East Side,
Where revolution is divine.

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2011

Then he goes down to the park,
Starts to chant beneath the tree.
Low-class, high-class, we don't mind:
This vibration makes all free.

Sweetest *vande 'haṁ śrī-gurūn*,
Which attracts even the goons.
Puerto Ricans, hippies, blacks
are submerged in Holy Names.

Tompkins Square Park,
Because of Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Tompkins Square Park,
You've now become a Holy Dhām.

His radiant blissful smile
Then captures all their hearts.
The hippies dance in bliss
To Prabhupāda's beat.

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

He took the lowest beings
And gave them matchless gifts.
"Stay high forever, please,
But free of LSD."

Compassionately kind
And patient all the while.
No one compares to him;
To Kṛṣṇa he's most dear.

Jaya Prabhupāda!
You gave us transcendental life.
Jaya Prabhupāda!
Now love of God is in our hearts.

No boundaries anymore:
Your mercy's everywhere.
That chanting in the park
Has reached everyone's heart.

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

Mālatī Dāsī

To Your Beloved Divine Grace:

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

*namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāñī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādī-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

I place my fallen head and heart at your ever-fresh lotus feet, again and again.

The amazing saga of Lord Rāmacandra’s exile to the forest and subsequent victorious return to Ayodhyā is reminiscent of your own selfless acceptance of your Guru Mahārāja’s divinely inspired order for you to preach the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s *saṅkīrtana* movement in the West.

In your own manner, with absolute humility, you divested yourself of all personal consideration after winding up family affairs and business. Wearing the simple cloth of renunciation, you resided in the holy village of Śrī Vṛndāvana *dhāma*, completing the first stunning volumes of transcendental literature that would later bring you recognition as a world-renowned authority on Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, and *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* in particular. The setting was idyllic at that time, free from the encumbrances of modern life, especially pollution and noise. But a peaceful life in Vṛndāvana was not your intended goal, and so you soon left aside all simplicity and comfort and found yourself on a small cargo ship, crossing the sea on your way toward the uncivilized forest of the Western world.

Upon arrival, you could sense that demonic Rākṣasas predominated the entire scene. *Mlecchas* and Yavanas almost seemed elevated by comparison. Few took note of your arrival. On March 6th, 1966, you noted in your *Jaladuta Diary*:

According to Mayapur Panjika, today is Adhivas day of Gour Purnima. Devotees at Vrindaban and Nabadwipa are enjoying the celebration. I am here alone without any devotee companion. But I have come here to serve the Lord and not for personal happiness. I am prepared to live in hell even if I am able to serve the Lord. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu wanted that His mission should be propagated all over the world, and that is my objective. I do not mind the inconvenience personally felt.

Dressed as so-called learned ladies and gentlemen, respected for their foolish words and material accomplishments, speaking against the very existence of God, the “fools and rascals” in positions of power were given much prominence. Yet as Rāma had subdued mighty demons with a mere twang of his bow, you were able to subdue these sacrilegious agents of Kali with the mighty weapon of the *saṅkīrtana-yajña*. From the point you established the *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, miracles began to become manifest: these same barbarians became your followers—your students and disciples—coming to bow down to the Lord and to your lotus feet.

The treacherous forest began to exhibit beacons of light, signaling hope in the form of humble storefront hermitages. In a daring exploit, you sent a band of young followers across one of the same oceans that you yourself had crossed, into yet another forest of Kali-yuga madness, where, through your grace, the *saṅkīrtana* movement gained a further foothold.

Then, in a victorious gesture of divine compassion, you returned to your homeland, accompanied by your newly formed World Saṅkīrtana Party, your version of Rāma’s monkey army, whom you lovingly referred to as your “dancing white elephants,” and began to reawaken Lord Caitanya’s glories in the land of Bharata.

You were feted as a returning hero, greeted by famous dignitaries as well as sweet-hearted, simple *kṛṣṇa-bhaktas*, all of whom recognized your purity and astounding success. Garlands, footbaths, tributes,

and other recognitions were natural occurrences as you traversed the country, bringing joy and happiness to all. Whatever the storm, you were able to weather it and subdue it, while we, your sold-out dogs, followed along behind you, our amazing master, with love and wonder at our incredible good fortune.

On this occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā, I pray that I may remain a pleasing member of your World Saṅkīrtana Party here for eternity.

An insignificant soul,

Mālati Dāsī

Mukunda Goswami

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

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

It was said in the papers
That William Shakespeare
Won Millennium Man,
A title most dear.

But you, Prabhupāda,
Carved superior words,
Not caring for labels
Fleeting as birds.

From Bharat you brought
Things ascendant.
The first *mṛdaṅga*
Was bliss transcendent.

The Lord's gorgeous clothes
Never fail to capture;
All who see them
Partake of the rapture.

The magic you worked . . .
Best food on the planet.
Sparkling restaurants
So all could have it.

Singing and painting . . .
The culture conquest.
Plus troves of learning
That passed every test.

Kṛṣṇa's sweet realm,
Our natural place,
Brought here by your grace
To a lost human race.

Hundreds of temples
Throughout the globe;
Thousands of *bhaktas*
Donned the robe.

Your warmth and concern,
Unequalled on earth,
Gave love to your children
And filled them with mirth.

The knowledge you brought
Has no equal, not here,
Where so-called learning
Goes in circles, it's clear.

Homages from the GBC

Conclusions of seers,
The greats of the past,
You passed on unchanged,
With words built to last.

For thousands of years,
Even after the wars,
Your lawbooks will heal
This earth's many sores.

A miracle based
On transparent transmission,
Committed to give
The already given.

Yet to think on your feet
Always inspired
Thousands of people;
Such words they admired.

Rejoinders, one-liners
At ends of your talks,
Delighted your students,
Gave hecklers hard knocks.

Always new,
The teachings of yore,
Unrivaled philosophy
Written before.

Father to many,
Without a wife,
Your love for your children
Gave them new life.

The greats of the past
You revered to your last
Breath of spring,
Not yarning the past.

You talked with us often
While running ISKCON
Throughout the world,
Righting things wrong.

When money
And legal problems arose,
You'd write a letter
Solving all woes.

Each disciple you loved
Through and through,

Followed the way
Of Mahāprabhu.

Spreading His message
To each continent,
The words that you spoke
Made devotees abundant.

You knew how to capture
Those who were bound,
In novel ways
We never found,

Repeating a message
Many would heed.
"No miracle," you said,
Though hordes disagreed.

Great wisdom past,
Not current folklore,
From your wise guru
That went before.

To many lands
You'd fly constantly,
Spreading God's word
So confidently.

You never bragged
And never lagged,
Like a lofty soldier
Who never flagged.

Behind and in front,
Defense of your flock
Was a sine qua non,
Not a second thought.

Yet always the scholar
Who'd mastered Sanskrit;
Consummate knowledge
Brimming with wit.

Your favorite subject
A language profound
That made all others
Weep in their sound.

You wrote as we slept,
Books by the dozens,
Giving deep teachings
To white-faced cousins.

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2011

Earth dwellers were thinking
“All is well,”
But unfortunately
They all lived in hell.

A pinprick, you wrote,
Would deflate, not bloat,
A civilization
That had no vote.

When adversity struck
And threatened the core,
You won victory
And evened the score.

Leading all struggles,
You battled with brains,
Finding a way
To overcome pains

That attacked your ISKCON
So many times;
You fought them all,
Ousting their crimes.

Of the centuries past,
Real history shows
You achieved something
That more than glows.

Seers and sages
Like you, we’re told,
Gain lasting fame
In Lord Kṛṣṇa’s fold.

Mukunda Goswami



Prabhaviṣṇu Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

During the past few years, and especially during the past year, it has been very pleasing to see that the GBC has been involving more and more senior devotees in the process of strategic planning for the future development of ISKCON.

Your Divine Grace planted the seeds of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in many, many countries. You established ISKCON and the BBT to help you water and nurture those seeds. As a result, many sincere souls were attracted to become your followers and disciples and assist you in further spreading Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement far and wide, especially by distributing your transcendental books and opening temples.

Now most of your disciples are approaching old age, and indeed some of those great souls have already departed. Just as you often remarked that you would not remain long on this planet, in the same way all your disciples will also eventually have to depart. You established the GBC to help you manage ISKCON and to take on the role of leadership of the society after your departure. Another important task of the GBC is to plan for the future, so that the ISKCON will continue to function smoothly from generation to generation.

It is therefore very appropriate that a number of progressive and visionary senior devotees, some of whom are GBC members and some not, have been encouraging and pressing the GBC to give more and more attention to strategic planning for ISKCON's future. I must admit that I am not much of a visionary but rather just plod along trying to execute the vision and instructions of Your Divine Grace and the GBC. Nevertheless, I recognize the importance of the GBC's strategic planning initiative and wish it all success. I am quite sure that Your Divine Grace approves of and is pleased by this initiative. I sincerely pray that Your Divine Grace will bless this initiative and all the devotees involved in it, so that your ISKCON will continue to improve and expand more and more, as you so ardently desire.

I pray that I may continue to be of some small assistance to Your Divine Grace, the GBC, the devotees engaged in this initiative, and all the wonderful devotees of ISKCON.

Your insignificant servant,

Prabhaviṣṇu Swami

Praghoṣa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

I struggle so much every year to write a Vyāsa-pūjā offering to you. I don't know why, since you are the easiest person in the entire universe to glorify. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that although you have given me this most precious gift of real eternal life, a wonderful treasure that required extraordinary measures on your part to ensure that I and others received it, I know in my heart of hearts that my actions reveal the big gap between the incredible gift you have given me and my lack of genuine appreciation for that gift and what you did to get it to me.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please, if you see fit, bang my head, my heart, and my massive false ego until they all understand and surrender to how fortunate I am to still be able to serve in your ISKCON. This

chastisement will help them get off and stay off the platform of *ātmavān manyate jagat*, thus allowing me to serve you more deeply and follow more closely in your footsteps by serving jīvakind by spreading the message of *ahaituky apratihātā*, unmotivated and uninterrupted service to our Lord of Lords.

Your needy servant,

Praghoṣa Dāsa

Rādhānāth Swami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

While masses of people struggle for relief from endless sufferings and aimlessly seek pleasure to compensate their empty hearts, we find sweet shelter in your wisdom and love.

The past year was marked with striking events that shook the earth. A massive tsunami devastated Japan, and soon thereafter unprecedented tornadoes ripped through the southern states of the USA. Riots, demonstrations, and killings sabotaged the Middle East as governments crumbled. A ten-year manhunt culminated as the savage terrorist Osama Bin Laden was shot dead and dumped into the sea, while his cohorts vowed revenge. Prominent nations were thrashed by the plummeting economy, while the United States increasingly resembled the third world. Meanwhile, the world helplessly looked on as Pakistan continued to expand its nuclear arsenal, and we watched our beloved Vṛndāvana being torn apart by senseless greed.

Surrounded by hopelessness, confusion, and despair, we are reminded of the simple truth that you imparted: “Godhead is light. Ignorance is darkness. Where there is Godhead there can be no darkness.” Kṛṣṇa’s grace is everlasting and limitless, while in comparison the entire creation is but an evaporating cloud in the spiritual sky. On the path of devotion there will always be infinite hope and joy. Your life is a testimony to this blessed truth.

This year also marks an event that endears our hearts to you. Forty years ago you demonstrated the power of your relentless compassion. In the summer of 1971 you quietly entered Moscow at a time when the crushing oppression of communism was at its summit. The government restricted your actions and monitored your every move. But they could no more check your compassion than they could quell a tsunami—in this case a tsunami rising up from the fathomless ocean of Kṛṣṇa’s grace.

In those few days in Russia, sitting in a dingy little hotel room with only your secretary and one stranger as your audience, you launched a spiritual revolution that shook nations and affected millions of lives.

These incredible acts of love were your mission. Only six years prior to your miracle in Russia, at seventy years old, alone and penniless, you quietly stepped off a cargo ship in New York. It appeared that the only support you had was a simple wooden cane, scratched and dented by your years of struggle in Kṛṣṇa’s service. That small-framed, unassuming saint was about to reveal to the world, through hundreds of centers and tens of millions of books, the most intimate nature of God’s love.

Homages from the GBC

I pray that we may strive to express our gratitude to you by following in your holy footsteps and focusing on the essential truths you came to give the world. In these turbulent times, when humanity is desperate for real solutions and starving for God's grace, I pray that we may rise above the entangling distractions and petty disputes that will inevitably come and be united to dedicate ourselves as instruments of Your Divine Grace.

My beloved Guru Mahārāja, this lowly servant's heart belongs to you.

With endless gratitude,

Rādhānāth Swami

Rāmāi Swami

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

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

For my Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the most inspiring person I have ever known.

Prabhupāda promised to allay all fear.
To those who lent a willing ear
He came like Rāma, strong and brave,
A guardian soul to help and save.

Many who told him of their grief
Saw him as savior, a powerful chief.
Suffering they had borne for so long;
Now the chance to right the wrong.

Prabhupāda warned of Kali's might.
There would be a tremendous fight.
The spiritual world was there to gain
When Kali's effects were thwarted and slain.

Do not be afraid of the task and size;
They're nothing at all in Kṛṣṇa's eyes.
Prabhupāda could help to caste them away,
Even if for years they did lay.

Facing the challenge, our glorious saint,
Pure from all spot of earthly taint,
Forward he went with delighted mind.
Evils of the world he surely consigned.

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2011

The world was given a priceless boon
More glorious than the brilliant moon,
Received this mercy from his hand,
Son of Kṛṣṇa, noblest in the land.

From everywhere, in form and frame
Before Prabhupāda they hurriedly came.
They stood and spoke in reverent guise
To him with exulting cries:

“O merciful master, please just see
How lowly, fallen, and lost are we.”
With joyful heart and eager hand,
Prabhupāda embraced this wondrous band.

Thus with words of welcome he cried,
“To my will please abide!”
Everyone hastened to follow his way;
With Prabhupāda they wanted to stay.

Marching forward, swift of pace,
They all looked to his sweet smiling face.
“Please stay awake and slumber not.
We have to be pure, right on the spot.”

Throughout the world the weapon was named:
“Spread *harināma* and you will truly be famed.”
That holy name has many great charms;
It can restrain the most deadly of arms.

Attracted by the words or the book,
People came to hear and to look.
Celestial devotees in their bright attire
Shone like coals of a burning fire.

As devotees advanced right into the fray,
Kali’s cohorts went far away.
Strength from Prabhupāda, they were empowered.
Kali himself kept low and cowered.

Prabhupāda, we are praying to assist,
To cut through this dusky mist.
We are still here, left to stand.
Please instruct us: we obey your command.

To follow you is the goal of our life.
Full of nectar and not of strife.
Be present in our minds, with great speed
Please aid us in our hour of need.

Listen, all, and my tongue shall tell
In what great person great virtues dwell.

Homages from the GBC

It is Prabhupāda, with such rare grace,
Liberator of the human race.

Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*

Śrīla Prabhupāda's *lowly servant*,

Rāmāi Swami

Ravīndra Svarūpa Dāsa

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn̄ iti nāmīne*

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most fallen obeisances at your lotus feet, which tirelessly traversed this world, shedding the mercy of Lord Gaurāṅga at your every step among the condemned internees of this prison camp.

A number of years ago I undertook an especially sustained effort to fix my attention on the holy name during *japa*. Whenever my mind wandered, I brought it back, again, and again, and again . . . This wrestling match with the mind kept on for many, many rounds, day after day. It seemed not to become easier. At last I noticed that my mind was veering away from the *mahā-mantra* not out of an attraction to some object of interest but rather from an avoidance of a strange, entirely mental sensation of discomfort or distress, which would disperse upon a slacking of concentration.

Why would the *mahā-mantra* cause distress? I puzzled over this for some days. I'd never heard of such a thing. I feared something was profoundly wrong with me. I feared I might be a demon. In any case, what should I do?

I decided that I would simply put up with it; I would keep my attention focused on the holy name and just endure the distress. And see what would happen.

The distress did not go away, and I persisted in the face of it. Finally, after a week or two, something happened. Without warning, the pressure of the distress abruptly soared, and an overpowering *grief* poured unceasingly from some newly unstopped valve in my heart, as water gushes from an opened fire hydrant.

It was as if this grief had been always somehow contained, under pressure, inside me, and now it was stunningly released to my consciousness. And while I had been unable to discover the source of my mental discomfort, I knew at once the cause of my grief: I had turned away from Kṛṣṇa; I had broken away from Him, abandoned Him, and had departed for this material world.

Of course, I had believed this teaching for a long time. But that was theoretical. Now I underwent the reality. As the grief of the heart flowed on and on, there came along with it a revelation in all fullness of the enormity of my crime.

It was unforgivable. For now I understood completely that Kṛṣṇa was perfect and flawless and gracious

in every respect. He was utterly wonderful, through and through. Here, in this world, if a pair of friends, relatives, or colleagues experience a ruptured relationship, a mediator or counselor enlisted to aid in repairing the breach will inevitably announce that *there are faults on both sides*. In this case, however, in the case of my alienation from Kṛṣṇa, it was starkly evident that the fault was all on my side. Kṛṣṇa was full of goodness, grace, and charm. There was no fault in Him. The break was all my doing, and I had to gaze on it without any relieving blurring, acknowledge the full hideousness, the nastiness—the sheer spitefulness—of my deed.

For the first time I understood the impulse toward suicide. I was wretched beyond all measure. I saw no relief, and I was completely isolated in my suffering. Our movement’s vaunted slogan was “Chant and be happy!” No one ever said, “Chant and be miserable.” I thought, therefore, I was an anomalous case; if I shared what I was going through with another devotee, he would surely tell me what I already knew: I was different. I was a demon.

Yet quickly relief came. Grief remained and engendered joy.

It occurred to me that I felt such grief only because I was chanting Kṛṣṇa’s name. Light dawned: if so, then although I had turned away from Kṛṣṇa, he had not turned away from me. I had already been granted a sense of the wonderfulness of Kṛṣṇa, and that sense also disclosed my own contrasting vileness to me, and now I saw even more of Kṛṣṇa’s perfection: however monstrous I had been in rejecting him, he did not reject me. I saw nothing worthy in myself. Kṛṣṇa cared for me nevertheless. I couldn’t see why, but He did. That is simply the way He is.

I felt gratitude as great as my grief. And then the full range of Kṛṣṇa’s care became clear to me. For how was I able to chant the *mahā-mantra*? Kṛṣṇa had sent you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to bring it to me. I recollected all the difficulties and trouble you underwent to come to America. I recalled your preparations in starting the English-language *Back to Godhead* in India (in 1944—the year of my birth!), in the long and solitary undertaking of translating and printing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in your arriving in America in your seventh decade, without money, without good health, without institutional support: your one asset your commitment to the mission of causeless mercy, to the order of your Guru Mahārāja. I thought of all the ceaseless effort, your gifts to the unworthy. And I saw you as the embodiment of Kṛṣṇa’s care. You are proof. And so my gratitude grew and grew.

I should note that I received, years later, an explanation of my first great emotional experience of the holy name. I was studying the final chapter of your *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, in which Lord Caitanya recites the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* verses to Rāmānanda Rāya and Svarūpa Dāmodara. He recites each one in Sanskrit and then explicates them in Bengali; Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja also names the various emotions Mahāprabhu underwent as He recited each verse. The second verse—which describes *anartha-nivṛtti*, or the stage of chanting while clearing up offenses—presents a stark juxtaposition between acknowledgement of the Lord’s mercy (*tava kṛpā*) and the speaker’s sense of his own misfortune (*mama durdaiva*). Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja writes that when Lord Caitanya recited this verse, He felt two emotions: lamentation (*viṣāda*) and humility (*dainya*). When I saw the word “lamentation” my heart jumped. I thought, “It’s bona fide!” And so I understood that my own grief was not anomalous after all.

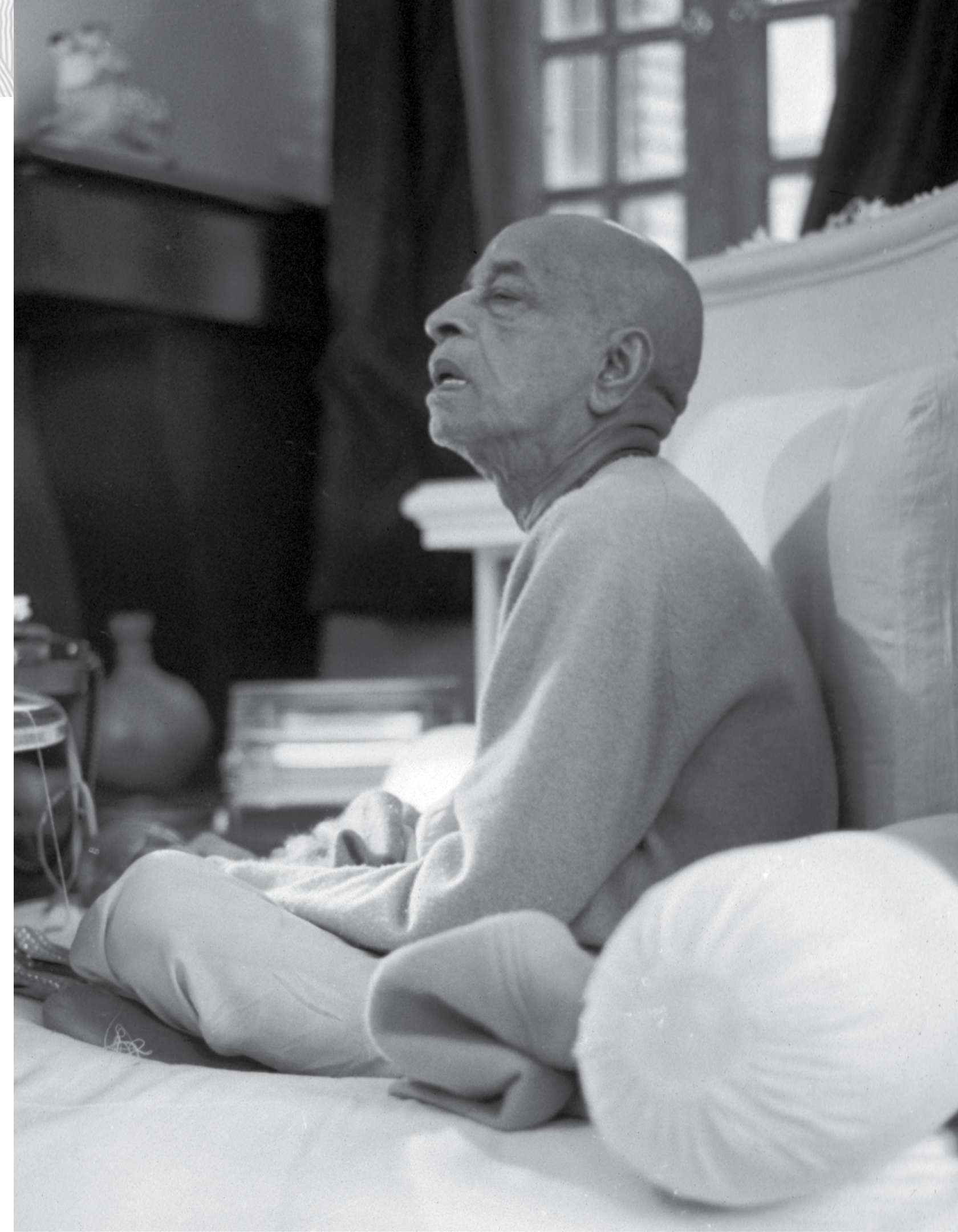
It is clear that you have given us everything, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and spared no effort. Once you told a reporter in Hong Kong:

They have forgotten Kṛṣṇa, they have forgotten God, and I am trying to make them Kṛṣṇa conscious. It is a very difficult job. I have to shed my blood three tons before I make one convinced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is my experience. I have to talk with them, especially these Europeans and Americans.

Please bless us that we may do for others what you have done for us.

Aspiring to be your most unworthy servant,

Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa



Romapāda Swami

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

*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*

*mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ paṇḍurṁ laṅghayate girim
yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande śrī gururṁ dina-tāraṇam*

My dear and most respected spiritual master and eternal father,

Please accept my most humble and respectful obeisances in the dust of your most merciful lotus feet! All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

The mercy of a pure devotee is inconceivable and unfathomable. As Kṛṣṇa is *svarāt*, fully independent, and is possessed of *acintya-śakti*, so also are you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, His empowered representative. This is the mystical fruit of empowerment, through His descending mercy.

You *are* uniquely empowered, Śrīla Prabhupāda, a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*. You have been empowered by Kṛṣṇa to an unprecedented degree, empowered to manifest *bhakti* in the hearts of the whole world, the only prerequisite being the recipient's willingness to accept and act upon your descending mercy.

Following the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, on the order of your Guru Mahārāja you sacrificed everything to receive everything, and then you compassionately continued to give the same fullness of Kṛṣṇa's mercy to all—in the form of His holy name, imbued with *vraja-prema*.

*kali-kālera dharma—kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana
kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana*

[Vallabha Bhaṭṭa said to Lord Caitanya:] “The fundamental religious system in the Age of Kali is the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. Unless empowered by Kṛṣṇa, one cannot propagate the *saṅkīrtana* movement.

*tāhā pravartāilā tumi,—ei ta ‘pramāṇa’
kṛṣṇa-śakti dhara tumi,—ithe nāhi āna*

“You have spread the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore it is evident that You have been empowered by Lord Kṛṣṇa. There is no question about it.” [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya* 7.11–12]

Moved by inexorable compassion, you liberally distributed *your* empowerment to all who would receive it. You even detailed the process of how to best receive it! Here is one example:

Practically everything depends on practice. *Abhyāsa-yoga-yuktena cetasā nānya-gāminā. Abhyāsa-yoga. Abhyāsa-yoga* means yoga practice . . . Practice it. So this whole Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is to practice transferring from one kind of consciousness to another. So we require practice. Just like one man can run few miles. I cannot run even one mile. He has practiced. We see some boys, they run, run on. They practice. Practice it. Strength of the heart increasing by practice. And if I run, my heart will be palpitating. Because I have no practice. So by practice, everything

Homages from the GBC

can be attained. Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare. [break] . . . determination. So our method is to pray to Kṛṣṇa to give us the necessary strength. That's all. Otherwise, by regular practice, this age is very difficult. Unfavorable. First thing is memory is very short. We cannot remember. Life is very short. Life is short, at the same time, so much disturbed by anxiety, by disease, by natural disturbances. *Roga-śokādibhiḥ*. Short life; that is also disturbed by disease and lamentation. Every moment there is something for which you have to lament. "Oh!" *Roga-śokādibhiḥ*. And disease. This body is a breeding ground of all kinds of disease. Life is short and it is so much disturbed. So how it is possible to practice? Therefore, this one practice—chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, and hearing—that is very nice. And praying to Kṛṣṇa, "Please give me strength." Hare, "O Energy of Kṛṣṇa, O Kṛṣṇa, I am fallen, I have no strength. Please accept me." That's all. "I have no qualification. I am frail. I am trying, but I am failing." All these appeals should be made. And Kṛṣṇa is all-powerful, He can do anything. Even we, we do not perform, trying our best, if we fail, Kṛṣṇa will help us. Just like a child tries his best, but he falls down. The mother takes up and, "All right. Come on. Walk." Like that. Yes? [Morning walk at Stowe Lake, San Francisco, 23 March 1968]

Merely existing in Kali-yuga places all of us in an atmosphere oppressively replete with strife, surcharged with opposition to any effort toward progressive spiritual life. Kali-yuga is but an ocean of faults. Merely finding faults is something any teenager anywhere in the world can do, effortlessly and abundantly. But who is the rare soul in this age who can administer the remedy for those abundant faults?

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, have given us that remedy, and with it your mercy to cross to the other side of this ocean of faults. My heart is filled with gratitude in recognition of your inconceivable kindness and purity.

The fruit of your mercy-creeper has manifested as multitudes of happy devotees worldwide, and the numbers continue to increase.

You wrote in your Bhaktivedanta purports: "A pure devotee of the Lord, being cognizant of the facts of the particular time, object, and circumstances, always desires to expand the number of devotees of the Lord in various ways." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.9.34)

From the same compassionate heart you created a very wonderful structure to extend care and well-being to your burgeoning Society of devotees. Brilliantly, your vision of this structure included the very means of extending all requisite spiritual care for preserving and furthering the spiritual progress of all those who accept the fruit of your compassion. To achieve this end, you expertly considered *kāla*, *deśa*, and *pātra*, just as you did with your preaching plans. In my service to you and your devotees, one of the most exciting and important endeavors I find myself engaged in is both the global and the local efforts of ensuring a secure, long-lasting future for the very ISKCON that you wished it to be.

Just as you were so innovative in your intense desire to give all souls the seed of *bhakti*, then in turn to see that the *bhakti* creeper, when received, was effectively nurtured, so you also innovatively expanded your systems for maintaining the standards of pure devotional service—on all levels! Your GBCs have committed to working on this important project, which is intended to leave behind us a well-thought-out structure for preserving and protecting for posterity the international Society of devotees of Kṛṣṇa that you so munificently bestowed upon the world. Our duty is to carefully preserve, protect, and expand what you have given us. Collectively, your GBCs are warmly embracing this obligation. We sincerely pray to you for all requisite empowerment and strength to accomplish this task to your full satisfaction and approval. Personally, as one of your GBC Zonal Secretaries, I take this service very seriously.

I beg to remain fully and unconditionally engaged in your sacred service, now and forevermore. Kindly bless me by fulfilling this one request: May I always remain humbly engaged in your personal service, eternally.

Your humble servant,

Romapāda Swami

Śivarāma Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet, lotus feet that carried you all over the world so that your divine words and countenance could liberate those who heard from you and saw you.

Dear master! Allow me to briefly glorify the benefit accrued to those who have had your *darśana*, the vision of your transcendental form, which also includes having heard from you. In Kṛṣṇa's words, such fortunate souls are freed from material entanglement, qualified to develop love for the Lord, to see Him, and to return back to Godhead. Such is the power of seeing you!

Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes how the sons of Kuvera—Nalakūvera and Maṇigrīva—were confined by Nārada's curse to the form of trees on the bank of the Yamunā in Gokula. On the Dīpāvalī day, Mother Yaśodā tied her child to a mortar. He then crawled between the trees and the mortar got stuck. Kṛṣṇa tugged on it and toppled the trees, freeing the two demigods. After the celestials offered the Lord prayers, Kṛṣṇa replied:

*sādhūnām sama-cittānām sutarām mat-kṛtātmanām
darśanān no bhaved bandhaḥ puṁso 'kṣṇoḥ savitur yathā,*

“When one is face to face with the sun, there is no longer darkness for one's eyes. Similarly, when one is face to face with a *sādhū*, a devotee, who is fully determined and surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one will no longer be subject to material bondage.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.10.41)

Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura cites another reading of this verse, which says that “until” one is face to face with a *sādhū*, liberation remains out of one's reach and material bondage must continue.

In your own commentary, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you say that by seeing a *sādhū* like Nārada—or in my estimation a *sādhū* like you—one is delivered from material bondage. But for those who commit *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*—or in the opinion of Cakravartī Ṭhākura, *nāma-aparādha* in general—liberation will take some time. Whereas for the offenseless it is very quick. Being offensive is likened to blindness. Even if the sun rises, a blind man cannot see it until his eyesight is restored.

After they were freed from their imprisonment, and after they saw Kṛṣṇa, the two sons of Kuvera returned to their abode with the gift of love of God.

Similarly, devotees who have had your *darśana* will also be freed from imprisonment in their material bodies and attain love for Kṛṣṇa, along with the transcendental benefits that accrue from *prema*.

My conclusion is that since I had the great fortune of seeing you and hearing from you, it can only be due to the results of my offenses that I am still confined in this treelike body and deprived of Kṛṣṇa's *darśana* and of love for Him.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda! I have full faith that by continuing to stand upon the divine soil of your ISKCON, beside the ever-flowing river of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, from where I can see in the distance the Deity forms of the Lord, the effects of my offenses will one day be nullified. And because I was fortunate enough to have seen you, who are fully surrendered to Him, Kṛṣṇa will surely free me from this material confinement.

Thank you! Thank you for inconveniencing yourself by traveling all over the world so that I could be among those who saw you and heard from you. Forgive me! Forgive me for not taking full advantage of what I saw and heard. Bless Me! Please bless me that Kṛṣṇa's mortar will soon touch me and transform me into what you laboured so hard to make me—a pure devotee.

Your servant,

Śivarāma Swami