

**Homages from Ministries**





# ISKCON

## Congregational Development Ministry

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

ISKCON belongs to you; it's yours. The ISKCON Congregational Development Ministry is also yours, and we want to exclusively work for you, helping to realign ISKCON's individual and community dynamics to your vision and values.

The Ministry doesn't have any administrative power; our only "weapons" are your words and our attempts to represent their spirit in our words, through seminars and publications. The Ministry functions as a cultural operation, working to shape assumptions and perceptions in the field of congregational development, according to what you offered as the blueprint for your ISKCON.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you kindly provided extensive directions in this field, but unfortunately your instructions are sometimes unknown or willfully neglected. Just to give an example: By definition, the "congregation" consists of financially self-sufficient, home-based devotees; therefore charity is a central aspect of their life. "Charity is meant for the householders," as you state in your purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 16.1–3. In that same purport—and in many other passages in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, as well as in conversations and letters—you kindly provided guidance on how much should be donated and for what purpose: "The householders should earn a livelihood by an honorable means and spend fifty percent of their income to propagate Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world."

There is no lack of instructions from your side on the "50% principle." You specifically, consistently, and repeatedly promoted it. Nonetheless, the practice is hardly a common standard in your Society. Some of your followers have started advocating giving ten percent instead, in direct disregard of your words. Of course, they might be motivated by apparently legitimate rationalizations; perhaps they are not clear on the meaning of "income" (before or after expenses?); perhaps they have concluded that 50 percent isn't a practical guideline; perhaps they are trying to imitate following some of their local religious organizations. For whatever reason, your instructions are eclipsed by other ideas or by materialistic doubts on their efficacy and pertinence.

Actually, when we realize that you were talking about the accumulated money—not one's full salary—giving fifty percent is revealed as practical and affordable. You wrote in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* 1.17.42: "As we have suggested before, one's accumulated wealth may be divided into three parts for distribution, namely fifty percent for the service of the Lord, twenty-five percent for the family members, and twenty-five percent for personal necessities."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your ideas are the best and are most practical. In this as in other areas, your servants at the ISKCON Congregational Development Ministry would like to see your movement enthusiastically realigning with your directives. Today, on the day of your holy appearance in this world, we beg you to kindly improve your servants' faith in your instructions; to mercifully increase our wisdom and discrimination so that we can apply your vision in externally changing circumstances; and to compassionately bless us with the determination to stick to your teachings, regardless of their circumstantial unpopularity.

ISKCON is yours, and the ISKCON communities that are expanding all over the world should stay firmly at your lotus feet. We are honored and privileged to play a role in this project.

*Your servants at the ISKCON Congregational Development Ministry.*

(written by Kaunteya Dāsa)

# ISKCON Daiva-Varṇāśrama Ministry

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace. Kindly accept this humble offering from our fledgling national ministry promoting the *varṇāśrama* mission.

In this offering we will briefly summarize what is taking place regarding *varṇāśrama* development here in India and, to some extent, around the world. You expressed such a strong desire that your ISKCON society advance the cause of *varṇāśrama* that, although these are but meager developments, I am confident they will be pleasing to hear.

I must first inform you that our ministry held two successful ISKCON LEADS seminars for the North and West Divisions of ISKCON India, both of which were well attended by some forty responsible devotees, representing a total of fifteen temples. We heard comments such as “before the seminar I must admit I was a little sceptical, but after the second day it all became so clear and obvious.” We have heard many similar statements from devotees who initially doubted the import of this crucial element of your preaching mission. These two seminars gave the devotees serving in the ministry additional strength and inspiration to push forward toward achieving the objectives of the *varṇāśrama* movement.

Another important development that took place in both Mumbai and Māyāpur was the formation of the *varṇāśrama* initiative committee. Although we are not allowed to openly call it by that name, but rather “rural development initiative committee” or the “village initiative committee,” those of us involved in setting up this global committee are happy that such a development is taking place. This was made possible by the good will of the members of the Strategic Planning Team, who are working closely with the GBC body in helping to push forward your movement. I believe you will be most happy to hear that one of our identified “smart goals,” which we have started to promote, is producing a well-prepared curriculum for establishing *varṇāśrama* colleges. Yes, finally. In this context, we are very pleased to inform you that some of the Vṛndāvana devotees working at the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma *gośālā* have agreed to start the Vṛndāvana Varṇāśrama College, which will initially offer courses on making various cow medicines. By October this year we should be coming out with our initial draft of what will soon become a comprehensive curriculum and syllabus booklet to help devotees and communities from any part of the world begin establishing *varṇāśrama* colleges, as you requested us to do so many years ago.

In the latter part of 2010 we established a new national department of the ministry called “Protection, Administration, and Welfare: the Kṣatriya-Dharma.” You so clearly explained that both *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas* are needed for society to function properly. We will soon be making a presentation about *kṣatriya-dharma* at the upcoming meetings of the leadership here in India. We beg your kind blessings for this to move forward.

The Varṇāśrama Initiative Committee is a committee of fifteen devotees from many different countries. We have selected a small executive committee to begin conference calls this month.

Although these small developments are in their initial phases, they have great potential to inform many devotees of the urgency of promoting the *varṇāśrama* mission.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, there are many other important developments taking place, but I cannot share all of these in this brief report. But two small developments worthy of mention are the opening of our first regional office in Śrī-dhāma Māyāpur, in February of this year, and the fourth annual global *varṇāśrama* seminar in Māyāpur, in March. You have many sincere devotees working in different countries to push forward the *varṇāśrama* mission. If I were to list all their names and activities, this offering would become too long.

Other developments include the publication of several new titles: “Ministry Guidelines,” “Make Vṛndāvana Villages” (second edition), “Questions and Answers,” and “Traditional Education—Selected Interviews.” We also have a series of documentaries coming out within a month, covering various aspects of the *varṇāśrama* preaching mission.

I feel encouraged by many recent developments, and I am hoping that you are also happy that these are taking place. We should be doing so much more to please you, and I beg to be forgiven for all my

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shortcomings in not promoting this aspect of your mission more vigorously. There are many sincere devotees working for the *varṇāśrama* mission, but we need to increase their number many times. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for your constant guidance and encouragement. Kindly shower your mercy so that we can push forward your *varṇāśrama* mission. The world is severely afflicted today and is more and more in need of the simple remedy you have so nicely introduced: the *daiva-varṇāśrama* lifestyle.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You remain my constant inspiration and guide.

*Your servants at the ISKCON Daiva-Varṇāśrama Ministry.*

(written by Bhakti Rāghava Swami)

## Vaiṣṇavī Ministry

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

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

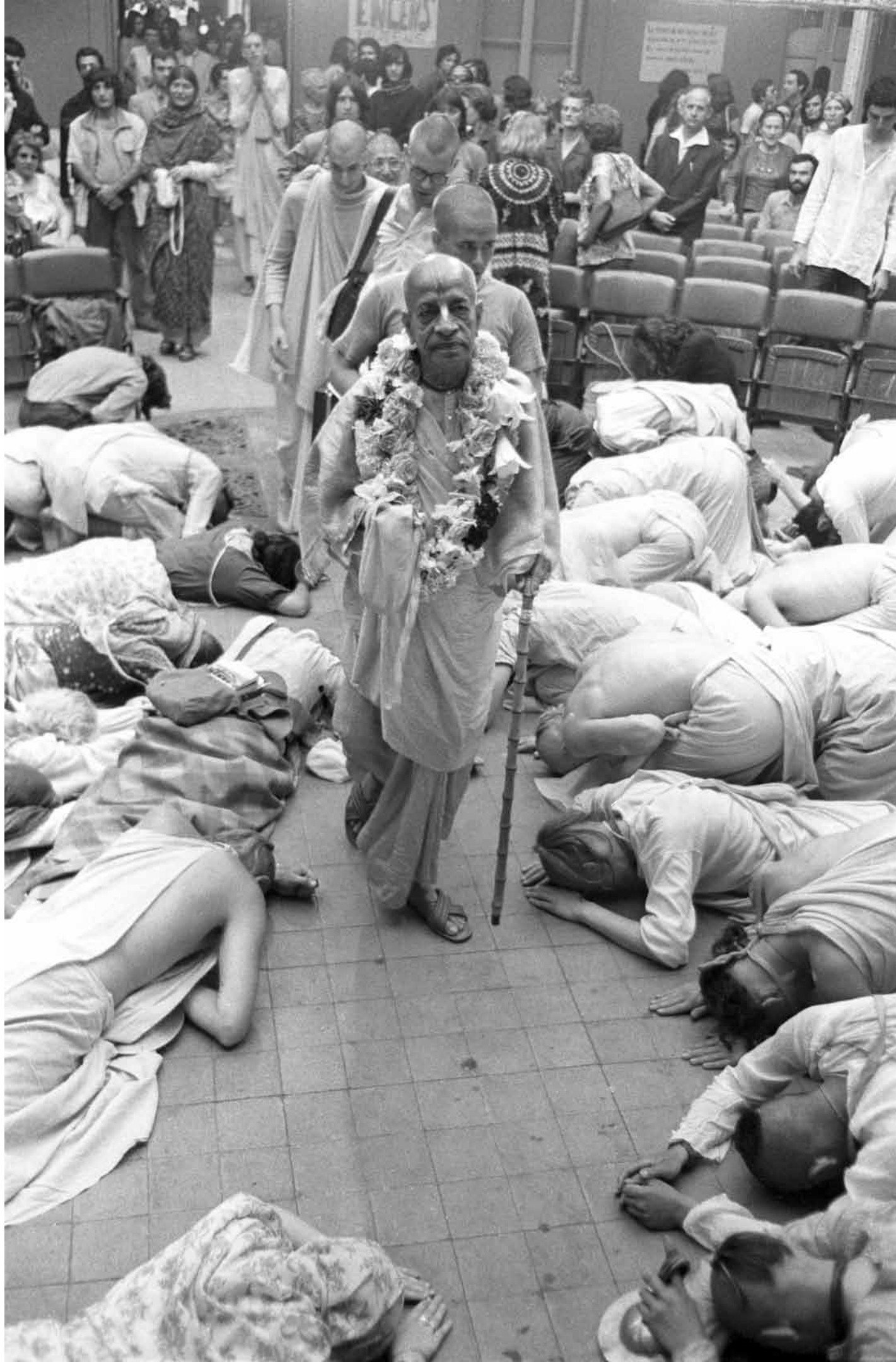
Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

It is very hard to decide what to say when you are writing on behalf of half the ISKCON population. I was selected to write this year's Vyāsa-pūjā offering to Your Divine Grace on behalf of the Vaiṣṇavī Ministry. It happened around six weeks ago in Māyāpur, just before the festival. Mother Mālatī personally invited me to the Vaiṣṇavī Ministry meeting, and she told me to invite whoever I saw. Since this was my first Ministry meeting, I didn't know what to expect. There were about sixty women packed into a small room in the Conch Guesthouse. After each *mātājī* introduced herself, Mother Mālatī asked several of them to speak about their service to your movement. I was blown away by the dedication of the various *mātājīs* who told about their preaching projects. One is running a project that is attracting new people through yoga classes. Another is successfully training female devotees in a first-class *āśrama* for women. Others are selflessly managing major temples around the world. Some senior women are GBC members.

One thing I liked about the meeting was that the women were very humble. They were dedicating their lives to your mission. I also liked the mood. One lady pointed out that this ministry is about what we as mothers and women can do for you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. The mood was about inspiring each other to serve you to our fullest capacity. It was about being the best we can be, and it had nothing to do with "women's lib." You have given us real liberation by giving us knowledge about how to live as devotees of the Lord. Secondly, you have told us how to be chaste women and how to live peacefully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness with husband and children. I should point out that the women taking on the above-mentioned tasks were either young, unmarried women or senior women with grown-up children. As for women in between those two age groups, you always encouraged them to make their priority raising their Kṛṣṇa conscious children. If we make our children our priority and give them our love and a Kṛṣṇa conscious upbringing, down the road we will see the ripened fruits of our endeavors. It is all by your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda.





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Last year I heard Mother Mālatī relate a very special pastime with you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. It was in the early days in Māyāpur, and things were very austere. Mālatī had to cook for you and your godbrothers. It was a great challenge, with many hurdles she had to cross, but she did it. During the meal Mālatī came out to serve something. She was trying her hardest not to be seen, and so she covered her whole head with her sari. But you told your godbrothers, “She would slit her throat for me, and I would do the same for her!”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on behalf of the Vaiṣṇavī Ministry, I pray that we may all become surrendered servants to you throughout our lives. We each have our particular challenges and services and duties, and we each live in the material world. It is not always easy to be so great and so Kṛṣṇa conscious, but if we have the association of advanced devotees, we can become very strong. Please bless us that we may always progress on the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and that we may give our dependents the same mercy you have shown us. Although you have not been physically present for thirty-four years, it is obvious that you have empowered sincere souls to push on this movement. You reciprocate with whoever sincerely takes up this process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for taking care of us, and for allowing us to be a part of this *saṅkīrtana* mission.

*Your spiritual daughters and granddaughters at the Vaiṣṇavī Ministry.*

