



Homages from the GBC

Homages from the GBC

Anuttama Dāsa

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

“Kṛṣṇa is the person we are all looking for.”

One of your disciples spoke these words to me when I first visited a Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in 1974. They weighed heavily on me. I was looking for something or someone to give purpose to my life. But everything I had tried was shallow and unfulfilling. Every experience promised much and provided little.

You shined hope into my heart on that day, and you have continued to do so throughout my life. Today, on your Vyāsa-pūjā day, I offer my gratitude for your kindness, light, and guidance.

As you describe in the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, the world is moving at an ever-increasing pace. The measure of success is now defined by the mode of passion. People today are on call 24/7. We communicate nonstop, but have no time to reflect. We rush ever faster without considering our goal. We chase products without consideration of purpose. So-called success breeds more and more stress.

As this age progresses in complexity, it is disturbing to see how much of the world’s strife is seeded by religious people with seemingly good intentions. While knowledge of God and transcendence should evoke saintly qualities and a reduction of conflict, it is not always so.

From Purī to Jerusalem, I have sadly observed how *pūjārīs* and priests often abuse their positions and the pilgrims who come to them. All over the world, in the name of holy righteousness, purity, and the execution of “God’s will,” extremist Hindus battle extremist Muslims, who battle extremist Christians, who battle extremist Jews, and on and on.

In service to you, the devotees serving with ISKCON Communications have entered into a dialogue with anticult groups, who have the power to harm us (as in the recent attack on your *Bhagavad-gītā* in Russia). These exchanges offer us the opportunity to listen and respond to our harshest critics. We are trying to learn how ISKCON can avoid the traps of isolation, sectarianism, and extremism that plague religious societies in this age.

The solution, I believe, lies in humbly following you. We need to be honest with ourselves about our shortcomings while remaining open to being corrected by you and your representatives, again and again. If we are not cautious, we can be easily deviated from the path you have laid out for us. As you instructed, spiritual life is a razor’s edge. This applies not only individually but communally as well.

If we do not carefully follow in your footsteps we risk becoming another arrogant, myopic community without global impact and the purity to bring about real change. Therefore, your presence and example must remain central in our hearts, in our daily decisions, and in the systems and structures we create. You taught us not just through your words but in the very ways you lived Kṛṣṇa consciousness in every word and action:

- You had the humility and compassion to live with hippies—the young, lost, and often deranged of New York and San Francisco—as you carefully planted the seed of *bhakti* within their hearts. You did not judge them; you served them as guru, loving friend, and caring parent.

- You had the patience to train and endlessly correct your early leaders, who struggled to represent you. You did not lose hope for them; you gave them carefully crafted direction and more opportunity for service.

- You had the determination to build a global society and organization despite all obstacles and

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

challenges, welcoming all castes, creeds, and nations. You did not gloat over your success; you always considered yourself a simple servant of your Guru Mahārāja.

- You had the broadmindedness to tell priests in Australia that Jesus is our guru. You did not minimize their faith; you respected it. Yet you urged the religious to take their own principles more seriously, while asserting that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

- You had the faith to instruct your followers to become gurus, as ordered by Lord Caitanya. You believed in them. Yet you told them they must submit to a shared authority and cooperative endeavor.

- You had the vision to establish ISKCON's Governing Body Commission and willed it to be the "ultimate managing authority" of your society. Yet you affirmed that its authority rests in allegiance to our founder-*ācārya* and that its members, as good disciples, must set an example as "perfect gentlemen [and ladies]."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please always show us the way forward by your teaching and example. As each year passes we realize again how dependent we are upon your mercy and how fortunate we are to have you, forever, as our founder-*ācārya*.

Your servant,

Anuttama Dāsa

Badrinārāyaṇ Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Once, when asked to describe your own spiritual master, you replied, "What can I say? He was a *Vaikuṇṭha* man."

The same holds true for you.

To my understanding, "*Vaikuṇṭha* man" indicates one of those rare souls who is beyond the modes of material nature and infused with all the qualities of a most elevated Vaiṣṇava. One of those qualities is *kavi*, or being a learned poet who can deftly explain the essence of things.

You once said in a *darśana*, "Our Gauḍīya *siddhānta* is like a jewel. If you turn it in your intelligence, you will see how it catches the light from different angles." The following are three different ways you answered the same question.

As one of your many gifts to help us understand the world around us, you gave us this measure: "By testing one grain of rice, you can understand whether the whole pot is cooked." Using that method, may these few examples of how you are a *kavi* par excellence help paint a picture of you as a certified "*Vaikuṇṭha* man."

Often you were asked, "Can you see God?"

One time you answered, "This is not the right question. The question you should be asking is why *you* can't see God? He is all around you if you have the eyes to see."

Homages from the GBC

We were often reminded of how you exemplified this quality of seeing Kṛṣṇa's presence everywhere. Once you were sitting with some devotees in your *darśana* room at your Los Angeles temple. It was a cold and overcast day. Then for a moment the clouds parted and a golden shaft of sunlight came streaming through the window, bathing only you in its warmth. Acknowledging the sweet scene, you remarked to the others in the room, "Yes, someday you will feel this sunlight like your lover's embrace."

Once when preparing to eat a tangerine, first peeling its skin and then breaking it into individual segments, you remarked, "How can they say there is no God? This fruit comes so nicely packaged."

In Los Angeles you told us, "You may think you are sitting on the floor, but I am sitting in the hand of Kṛṣṇa."

Here is another way you answered this same "Can you see God?" question. I was at an airport reception when you were challenged by a young man: "Can you see God?"

You replied, "Will you take my answer?"

The man said, "Yes."

Then in a powerful and convincing voice you replied, "I am seeing God at every moment."

The man continued, "Then can you see Kṛṣṇa in your heart? If so, what is He doing right now?"

Usually, you would put such a line of inquiry in its place with something like "What is the use of such a question?", but in this particular case you closed your eyes in meditation, went silent for a few moments, and then, upon opening your eyes, replied with deep conviction, "Ahhh, He is sitting."

You once answered the same "Can you see God?" question in yet another way when you were at your Bhaktivedanta Manor in the UK. The temple room was packed. You sat on your *vyāsāsana* in the back of the temple room, facing the Deities. During the question-and-answer period after class, a man stood up in the middle of the temple room and challenged in a very arrogant tone, "Can you see God?" You gestured toward beautiful Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gokulānanda and replied, "Yes, but you are standing in the way."

Sweet recollections like these come to me every day. They remind me of my inconceivable good fortune of having met a "Vaikuṇṭha man" and how, if I just follow your instructions, you will lead me out of this dark world, where there is danger at every step, to Vaikuṇṭha, to that place where there is no more anxiety: *padarṇ padarṇ yad vipadāṇ na teṣām*. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.14.58)

It is also stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.2.31), "When ācāryas completely take shelter under Your lotus feet in order to cross the fierce ocean of nescience, they leave behind on earth the method by which they cross."

For me, an essential part of that method is remembrance of your "Vaikuṇṭha man" qualifications. Such mercy is all I am made of.

Your insignificant servant,

Badrinārāyaṇ Dāsa

Bhakti Caitanya Swami

My dear lord and master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you and your mission of delivering the universe.

Your program for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world is unfolding before our eyes on a daily basis. Everything is increasing in wonderful ways, and I feel so inspired by it all. Your mercy is gradually inundating this world more and more.

Recently we were in Śrī Māyāpur Dhāma and saw the development of the Temple of the Vedic

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

Planetarium. The impact this will make on the world is going to be very great, probably more than anything your movement has done before. Just recently here in Durban, South Africa, we had our biggest Ratha-yātrā festival ever, attended by well over a hundred thousand people over four days. Right now there is a major *kīrtana* festival going on in the temple here, with hundreds of young devotees drowning in the ocean of the holy names. It's truly wonderful.

All these things, and so many others, are unfolding from the transcendental depths of your heart, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Your heart is like an unlimited mine of nectar and mercy, because it is full of love for Kṛṣṇa, and He is therefore happily residing there. The heart of a great pure devotee like yourself is the most amazing thing there is. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 17.186) Lord Caitanya quotes the *Mahābhārata*:

*tarko 'pratiṣṭhaḥ śrutayo vibhinnā
nāsāv ṛṣir yasya mataṁ na bhinnam
dharmasya tattvaṁ nihitaṁ guhāyāṁ
mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ*

“Dry arguments are inconclusive. A great personality whose opinion does not differ from others is not considered a great sage. Simply by studying the *Vedas*, which are variegated, one cannot come to the right path by which religious principles are understood. The solid truth of religious principles is hidden in the heart of an unadulterated, self-realized person. Consequently, as the *sāstras* confirm, one should accept whatever progressive path the *mahājanas* advocate.”

Yours is the heart Lord Caitanya was referring to when He quoted that verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda. We just need to stick to the service of your lotus feet, and then from your heart everything will become manifest to us. In the *Bhakti-sandarbha* Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī quotes the line *mad-bhakta-pūjābhyadhikā*, spoken by Lord Kṛṣṇa at *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.19.21, and comments on it as follows: “With these words the Lord declares, ‘By worshiping My devotees one attains more intense love for Me than by worshiping Me directly.’”

In the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (*Antya* 3.486) Vṛndāvana Dasa Ṭhākura quotes the following verse from *sāstra* (*Śāṇḍilya-smṛti*):

*siddhir bhavati vā neti saṁśayo 'cyuta-sevinām
niḥsaṁśayas tu tad-bhakta- paricaryā-ratātmanām*

“There may be a doubt whether the servants of the Supreme Personality of Godhead will attain perfection, but there is absolutely no doubt that those who are attached to serving the Lord's devotees will attain perfection.”

It is impossible for me to comprehend the extent of the mercy I have received from your kind heart. The mind boggles just beginning to think of it. But I have firm faith that if I remain engaged in your service everything will come to me.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for everything.

Hoping this meets you well,

Your servant,

Bhakti Caitanya Swami

Homages from the GBC

Bhakti Chāru Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet and allow me to remain there forever as an insignificant speck of dust.

It is my inconceivable good fortune that I came to the shelter of your lotus feet and became an object of your causeless mercy. You delivered me from an extremely miserable condition and blessed me with a life full of indescribable joy. You literally picked me up from the gutter and made me whatever I am today. You gave me so much, and I am eternally indebted to you for that.

When thousands of devotees from all over the world were prepared to travel for thousands of miles to get a moment of Your Divine Grace's association, you allowed me to be with you all the time although I was just an insignificant newcomer.

You considered translating your books into Bengali one of the most important tasks, and you offered that service to me. You told me that in Bengal Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism was well known and that the people there were already well acquainted with that philosophy through the writings of our previous *ācāryas*. Therefore, this translation had to be of a high standard if they were to recognize and respect it. I expressed my doubt about my ability. However, you just smiled and assured me that I would be able to do the task. Little did I know at the time that by your mercy a lame man can literally cross a mountain and a blind man see the stars.

You told me to offer this life to Kṛṣṇa and explained in detail how vicious this material world is and how precarious is our condition here. I naturally resolved to do that with a grateful heart, and you allowed me to taste the ecstasy of the spiritual life. To close all the doors behind me, you decided to give me *sannyāsa*. However, at that time some leading devotees expressed their apprehension about my getting *sannyāsa* so quickly. But you stayed firm in your decision and assured them about your confidence in me.

Although I was an extremely new devotee, you made me your secretary, the highest position one could get in ISKCON at that time, and allowed me to stay with you all the time. You mentioned that "secretary" means the one who knows the secrets and confidential matters and knows how to keep them secret.

Once, when a senior godbrother of mine chastised me quite heavily for some minor mistake, you heard everything while sitting in the next room. When I went to you after that incident, my heart was heavy with humiliation and pain. The way you spoke to me soothed my aching heart: "The sign of real advancement is not in the position we hold but in being tolerant in all circumstances and remaining unperturbed in every situation." Then you explained that happiness and pain, honor and disgrace, are simply due to the results of our past deeds, but we must transcend that duality and remain unaffected by them.

When you did not eat for days together, you asked me to go and find out what kind of *prasādam* the devotees were getting. When I came back and told you that the quality and standard of the *prasādam* was not very good, you called the temple president and chastised him. I felt bad that because of me he got chastised. When everyone left the room you told me, "Make sure that the devotees get nice *prasādam*. That is the only sense gratification they have." Then you explained to me that the first and foremost responsibility of a leader is to take care of his followers. You said, "You take care of them and they will do anything for you."

You are the perfect example of such a leader, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You took care of your followers in the most wonderful way, and that is why they were prepared to do anything for you and offered themselves completely to your service.

One day you asked me not to cook for you, saying, "You can see that I can't eat anything. Still, why are you cooking? You have so many things to do. Why are you wasting your time cooking for me?"

I told you, "I cook, hoping that someday you will feel better and would like to eat something."

You replied, "I will get better only when I leave this world."

I broke down crying. In a very soothing voice you said, "Is this what you learnt from me? Is this what

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

I taught you? Didn't I say, didn't I teach you that the spirit soul is immortal and never-changing. It is only the body that changes and finally dies when the soul leaves the body."

When you left this planet, those instructions remained as my guiding beacon. Although my heart ached with constant agony due to your separation, I tried to remember that you were always there. At that time I used to imagine that just as a mother sometimes hides while teaching her son to walk, urging him to start walking by searching for her, similarly you are hiding behind some invisible curtain so that I will search for you and thus develop my ardent desire to go where you are.

Those days I used to think I had so many things to do here. Therefore, I needed to stay. Now that I have done whatever you wanted me to do, please allow me to go back to you. You have already called back so many of your dear children. Now please allow me to have this good fortune.

Aspiring to be your eternal servant,

Bhakti Chāru Swami



Homages from the GBC

Bhaktimārga Swami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept this offering for 2012.

For Many Generations

For many generations
And thousands of years,
People will shelter
Under your guardianship.

They will walk your line,
They will see the need
For one fatherhood,
One major thrust,

For one mantra, one God,
One book, one system—
A system which puts out
A name, soft or as a shout.

They will engage and work
Beneath one umbrella,
With distinct slowness,
With passion and goodness.

Doors will be open;
Walls will then fall.
For Kṛṣṇa they'll clamor
And see a new glamour.

You will make earth happy—
Su-sukhaṁ kartum—
With a life deep and full,
A lessening of the mundane pull.

Your compassion is such
That everyone must
Taste *bhakti*, as accessible
As it is sweet and simple.

You feel some things must go—
Illicit this, illicit that.
Parties will be bumped,
And *kīrtans* will be trumped.

You invoke a clear vision,
One we must inherit.
We must then act
And see that it becomes fact.

The public will know “Founder”
And remain curious about “*ācārya*.”
We'll say, “Action speaks louder than words.”
We'll repeat—“Louder than words!”

Your servant,

Bhaktimārga Swami

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

Bhaktivaibhava Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

On this auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā celebration, I would like to express my deepest gratitude for your saving me in the darkest hour of my life. I feel blessed by Your Divine Grace that this feeling of gratitude accompanies me constantly in my activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is indeed the greatest blunder if someone does not acknowledge the good done to him by others. Amazingly, I came across the following quotation from the *Vāmana Purāṇa* that confirms this fact in a most graphic way:

Those who are ungrateful and thus condemned by people in general are always punishable. As Janārdana is the foremost of Lords, as the Himālayas are the best of mountains, as Sudarśana is the chief weapon, as Garuḍa is the foremost of birds, as the Gaṅgā is the best of all rivers, as Ananta is the chief of all serpents, as the lotus is the most glorious flower, as Nandana is the best of all celestial forests, as the abode of Brahmā is the best planet within the universe, as Agastya is the foremost of sages, as the moon is the foremost luminary in the sky, as the ocean is the greatest reservoir of water, as the *brāhmaṇas* are the best of human beings, as Kāñcī is the best of all cities, as the lion is the king of beasts, as the mango is the king of fruits, as the banyan is the foremost of trees, as Pārvatī is the best of all chaste women, as Vaitaraṇī is the most terrible hell, those who are ungrateful are the most heinous among sinners.

One can atone for the killing of a cow or a *brāhmaṇa*, but a person who does not acknowledge the good done to him by a friend or well-wisher cannot atone for that sin even in millions of years.

This feeling of gratitude and your blessings give me the strength to deliver your teachings to far-away countries. You might be pleased to hear that in the middle of Ulan Bator, the capital city of Mongolia, we acquired a piece of land and are planning to construct a temple there. The Mongolian devotees are very enthusiastic to translate and print your books. More than fifteen titles have been printed so far, including *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and *Kṛṣṇa* book. All the devotees of the Mongolian *yātrā* are bowing down on this auspicious day to offer their gratitude to Your Divine Grace. Let your fame be spread all over the three worlds.

Your grateful servant,

Avināś Candra Bhaktivaibhava Swami

Homages from the GBC

Bīr Krishna dās Goswami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

It is important for all members of ISKCON to recognize that they have a deep, personal, direct connection with you. Whether one is a *dīkṣā* disciple of yours or a *dīkṣā* disciple of one of your disciplic descendants, the connection is there. Every ISKCON devotee has an equal opportunity to take shelter of you, understand you, and serve you directly.

So that we may all take advantage of this opportunity, you have given us service to your mission and service to your *vāṇī*.

Service to your mission means to remain a faithful member of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and endeavor to the best of one's capacity to assist in the spreading of this organization in a way that pleases you.

In your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.51 you state:

In conclusion, if a disciple is very serious to execute the mission of the spiritual master, he immediately associates with the Supreme Personality of Godhead by *vāṇī* or *vapuḥ*. This is the only secret of success in seeing the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Instead of being eager to see the Lord in some bush of Vṛndāvana while at the same time engaging in sense gratification, if one instead sticks to the principle of following the words of the spiritual master, he will see the Supreme Lord without difficulty.

Service to your *vāṇī* requires regular study of your books, recorded teachings, letters, and other transcendental sounds that have emanated from your lotus mouth. Also, studying your pastimes while you were with us is service to your *vāṇī*.

You have told us many times that the connection through sound vibration is most important:

Physical presence is immaterial; presence of the transcendental sound received from the spiritual master should be the guidance of life. That will make our spiritual life successful. [Letter to Brahmānanda, Hayagrīva, Kirtanānanda, Satsvarūpa, Gargamuni, Acyutānanda, Jadurāṇī, 19 January, 1967]

We are not separated actually. There are two—*vani* or *vapu*. So *vapu* is physical presence and *vani* is presence by the vibration, but they are all the same. So Kṛṣṇa when He was physically present before Arjuna is the same when He is present before us by His *vani* of *Bhagavad-gītā*. So far I am concerned, I do not factually feel any separation from my spiritual master because I am trying to serve him according to his desire. That should be the motto. If you kindly try to fulfill my mission for which you have been sent there, that will be our constant association. [Letter to Haṁsadūta, 22 June 1970]

Form is called *vapu* and teachings is called *vani*. Both should be worshiped. *Vani* is more important than *vapu*. [Letter to Tuṣṭa Kṛṣṇa, 14th December, 1972]

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

There are two ways of associating, by *vani* and by *vapu*. *Vani* means words and *vapu* means physical presence. Physical presence is sometimes appreciable and sometimes not. Therefore we should take advantage of the *vani*, not the physical presence, because the *vani* continues to exist eternally. [Letter to Śuci, 4 November 1975]

I pray that you give me the ability and intelligence to facilitate devotees in establishing a profound relationship with you. That will be my success in serving you.

Your servant,

Bīr Krishna dās Goswami

Devāmrita Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

There is a land where we'll never, ever grow old. Nongeographical in the ordinary sense, this place is not situated in time or space. To attain it, we don't have to travel to another continent or planet. This land of agelessness obviously can't be physical, since the time factor deteriorates anything material.

So where is this land of ever-freshness and newness? It's the spiritual world that's contained in your service. The more our expertise in your service seems to increase, the more we realize how much better it could be. As His Holiness Bhakti Tirtha Mahārāja commented to me before his departure, the more service we do, the more we realize there's so much more service to be done. Our service cravings multiply, while simultaneously our abilities to recognize service opportunities expand.

Undoubtedly the body will end, but devotional service to your mission keeps snowballing, whether quantitatively or qualitatively. We may take for granted (considering them elementary) Rūpa Gosvāmī's teachings on artificial and real renunciation of the material world—lessons you so vividly confirmed. But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, in his Eleventh Canto commentary (11.7.12), calls this knowledge of *phalgu-vairāgya* and *yukta-vairāgya* “confidential purports of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* meant for the understanding of fortunate living entities.”

Surveying your devotees, with their multifarious scintillating aspects of *bhakti* skills, I can easily remain humbled. How amazing it is that whatever service we may perform nicely for your pleasure, we can be sure that at that very moment, somewhere in the huge world of ISKCON, someone is doing it better—whether the devotee is celebrated or unsung.

I have learned that it's the non-neon devotees in your ISKCON one has to especially watch out for—the *prabhus* faithfully serving “behind the scenes.” Somehow they seem to enter the ultimate scene, back to Godhead, via the most amazing final moments.

Please accept this personal anecdote, submitted for your pleasure, since you would often spice your morning walks and lectures with striking tidbits from the cultish realm of *māyā*.

Four years ago, after the USA elected a president with a partially different body color, my youngest brother, at significant expense, packed up his beige-skinned family of five and scurried all the way from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C., to attend what the media touted as a historic inauguration.

“Why did you do that?” I queried. “So much time and money just for such a hyped affair with such flickering, superficial consequences.”

Homages from the GBC

“Can’t you see it?” he exclaimed incredulously. “I want my children to know *there are absolutely no limitations!* Don’t you understand, big brother: *no limitations!*”

Oh, really?

This, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is just a small sample of the ignorance you saved me from—the pretentious little world of mundane sociopolitical variations and their hallucinogenic effects.

The Yamadūtas, in their conversation with the Viṣṇudūtas in the Sixth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* (6.1.52), explain:

The foolish embodied living entity, inept at controlling his senses and mind, is forced to act according to the influence of the modes of material nature, against his desires. He is like a silkworm that uses its own saliva to create a cocoon and then becomes trapped in it, with no possibility of getting out. The living entity traps himself in a network of his own fruitive activities and then can find no way to release himself. Thus he is always bewildered, and repeatedly he dies.

Without the guidance of Your Divine Grace, I would have known nothing about the omnipresent cosmic low ceilings—limiters far more stringent than class, race, and gender. I would have lived my whole life oblivious to the three modes and karma. Perversely seeking knowledge and pleasure through my distorted senses, I would have surely disregarded time, manifesting as the consummate barriers of birth, death, old age, and disease. Echoing King Mucukunda, I was habituated to forgetting about time, yet time would certainly not ignore me.

After the U.S. presidential hoopla, one of my senior relatives remarked to me: “Just see the successes, all around. Your middle brother, the doctor, is CEO of a medical foundation backed by investments worth 200 million dollars; your youngest brother, the Harvard lawyer, is a board member for Toyota. And you . . . er . . . uh . . . well . . . you could have been up there too . . . but . . .”

Up *where?*

Horse eggs . . . sky flowers . . . as the *śāstra* says.

Gandharva-nagara: the fantasized sight of palaces or cities deep in the dense forest.

I can just see you on a morning walk at Santa Monica Beach, suddenly stopping, turning to the devotees, planting your cane, and issuing an all-conquering commentary, protecting your devotees from such well-intentioned yet utterly hollow quests for fulfillment and wholesomeness through material acclaim, corporate climbing, and social mobility.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.12.15 states: “Śrīla Dhruva Mahārāja realized that this cosmic manifestation bewilders living entities like a dream or phantasmagoria because it is a creation of the illusory, external energy of the Supreme Lord.”

How is it that I am chanting Hare Krishna more and still loving it more, with each passing day?

Why is it that for almost forty years I’ve read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and especially *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* over and over, and still I think I’ve barely touched their depths?

What kind of hankering is it, that I beg for intelligence from the Supersoul to better serve you any way you want?

Where does the mercy come from, that a formerly self-indulgent New Yorker can look at your devotees and think, “How would Prabhupāda see him or her? What delight Prabhupāda would take in this devotee’s devotional service!”

And to top it all off, before you rescued me I had embraced as the highest realm, the supreme abode . . . Manhattan! Frenzied, maddened, I saw it as the inner whorl of the lotus flower known as New York City. Now, by your dispensation, I long for the divine intimacy of Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana: *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya rādhā-kṛṣṇa nahe anya*.

Let us proclaim it to the three worlds: your devotional service has no limitations, in either this world and body or the next.

Your devotees are truly “up there” as long as they endlessly strive to please you.

In your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.30.33 you write so beautifully:

Out of humility, a devotee considers himself unfit to be transferred to the spiritual world. He

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

always thinks himself contaminated by the modes of material nature. Nor is there any need for a devotee to ask to be freed from the modes of material nature. Devotional service itself is in the transcendental position; therefore there is no question of asking for this special facility. The conclusion is that a pure devotee is not anxious to stop the repetition of birth and death, but is always eager to associate with other devotees who are engaged in chanting and hearing about the glories of the Lord.

May that be my standard, and when this present body has done its dash, I look forward to starting off from the very beginning with you, wherever you want, however you want it.

Your insignificant servant,

Devāmrita Swami

Dīna Sharaṇā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this very glorious and auspicious day of your appearance, please accept my most fallen obeisances!

Again this year has shown how all-pervading your presence is in this world and in the life of the devotees.

ISKCON SPT organized the ILS meeting. After a long time, the GBC has again met with the leaders of our movement. By this step the attempt to narrow the gap between the GBC, the leaders in the movement, and the rank and file devotees worldwide was a success. This is an important steppingstone for future events that will further attempt to bring all ISKCON devotees back to a common cause despite the diversity of opinions.

This year was also a very moving year.

This is the story of Anne and her son.

It was Rādhārāṇī's Appearance Day 2005. I was getting ready to take a shower to cook a feast in Her honor when the bell rang. Anne and her son had just arrived from Ukraine and were looking for a Hare Kṛṣṇa temple. They found my private address on the Internet, walked some ten miles to the top of the hill where I lived with my husband, and stood at the door. We had a wonderful day together celebrating Rādhāṣṭamī.

Some years later Anne showed up again. Her struggle against cancer had left her skinny and pale. She had intensified her relationship with her native religion, the Christian Orthodox belief. "I did not have the good fortune to meet His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda," she once said to me. "But you are his disciple. You are serving him. I cannot do what you do. So please serve him also for me."

Again she did not show up for some time. Two weeks ago she had her boyfriend call us: "She is asking for you to come visit her in the hospital. She is not feeling very well." My husband Cakravartī Prabhu and I had just returned from the Māyāpur GBC meeting and Vṛndāvana. So I threw a little picture of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī, a bottle of Rādhā-kuṇḍa water, and a few Tulasī *mahā* leaves in my bag as a present for her, and off we went.

On the hospital bed Anne was lying moaning because of intense pain. Her face lit up when she saw us. My husband and I chanted softly and massaged her feet to give her a bit of relief. I reminded her

Homages from the GBC

about how we had first met on Rādhāṣṭamī back in 2005. I put a few drops of Rādhā-kuṇḍa water and Tulasī leaves in her mouth. Her eyes opened wide with satisfaction. Then Cakravartī thought of calling her son in Ukraine and told her: “I will look after him.” She whispered, “I know.” As he went out of the room I started a louder *kīrtana*, clapping my hands softly, as an offering to the Lord. Her attention on the holy name became visibly enhanced; it appeared as if she was trying to sing along, although she could not speak. Cakravartī Prabhu returned with Anne’s son on the line. After he spoke to his mother for a few minutes, her breath calmed down . . .

The nurse told me, “Now you can close her eyes.”

I was shocked! I had not understood she had already departed!

After a few moments of silent reflection, my husband Cakravartī Prabhu called Anne’s son again. From the phone’s speaker I could hear him loudly exclaiming, “This is Kṛṣṇa’s arrangement! This is Śrīla Prabhupāda’s arrangement! For my mother and for me, thank you! Thank you, Kṛṣṇa! Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! This is glorious! I was able to tell her everything I always wanted to tell her! Thank you! Thank you!”

Anne departed last Sunday, on Rāmacandra’s appearance day, at noon. The sun was flooding the room with a bright white light. The sound of the holy name of the Lord was floating in the air . . . Invisible gentle beings surrounded us . . .

*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

“Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear.”

Anne was Orthodox Christian. She was not serving in ISKCON; she had no regular *sādhana*. But at the critical time she remembered you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and had the presence of mind to called upon your disciples to assist her.

*nehābhikrama-nāśo ’sti pratyavāyo na vidyate
sv-āpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*

“In this endeavor there is no loss or diminution, and a little advancement on this path can protect one from the most dangerous type of fear.”

My husband Cakravartī Prabhu and I had just come for a hospital visit . . .

In the middle of this immense universe, where material nature can be like an uncheckable tsunami wave, you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, stand firmly on the rock of devotion, like a torch spreading its light far and wide into the world for all the lost entities to see.

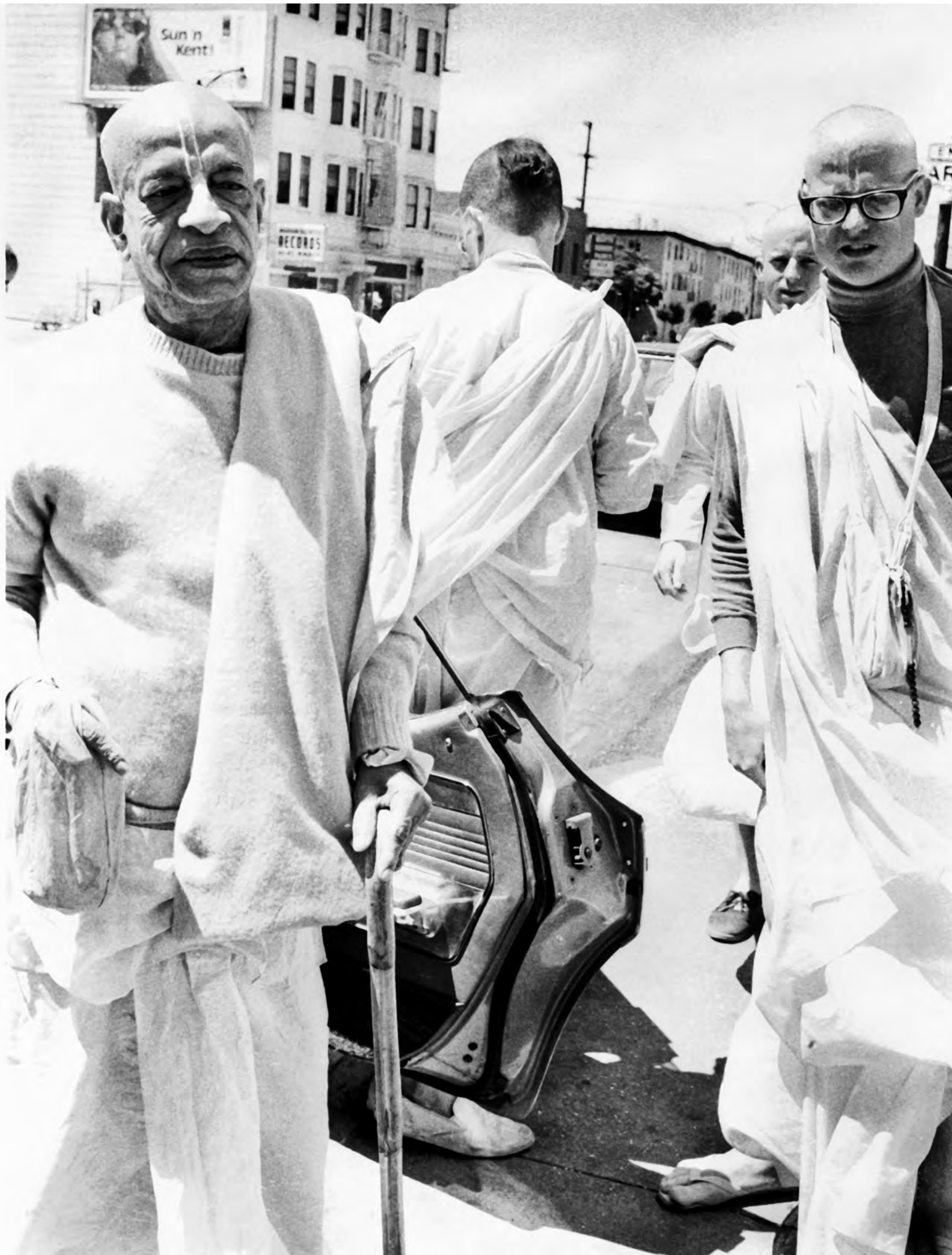
Again and again I am wondering how it is that I had the good fortune and the presence of mind to recognize you some forty years ago and understand the urgency of surrendering to your lotus feet. Your glory is so inconceivable that even the most insignificant of your disciples can reflect it and make it accessible to others.

*daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te*

“This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.”

*ananyāś cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣāṁ nityābhīyuktānāṁ yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy aham*

“But those who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditating on My transcendental form—to them I carry what they lack, and I preserve what they have.”



Homages from the GBC

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, have shown us how to surrender.
May I be able to continuously surrender unto your lotus feet and serve you eternally.

Your fallen servant,

Dīna Sharaṇā Devī Dāsī

Giridhārī Swami

Hard Learned Lessons

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

When my health failed me from 2005–2010, I kept wondering what lessons you and Kṛṣṇa wanted me to learn. It was a difficult period. Practically all my service was taken away from me. Overnight I ceased to be an active GBC member and traveling *sannyāsī*. Even service to those who had taken shelter of me was curtailed. I could do little more than hear and chant. All the while, I meditated on one verse:

*tat te 'nukampāṁ su-samīkṣamāṇo
bhuñjāna evātma-kṛtāṁ vipākam
hṛd-vāg-vapurbbhir vidadhan namas te
jīveṭa yo mukti-pade sa dāya-bhāk*

“My dear Lord, one who earnestly waits for You to bestow Your causeless mercy upon him, all the while patiently suffering the reactions of his past misdeeds and offering You respectful obeisances with his heart, words and body, is surely eligible for liberation, for it has become his rightful claim.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.8)

I soon learned, though, that meditation and realization are two very different things. It is easy to repeat verses and even to meditate on them to some extent, but to realize their purport is something much deeper.

Near the end of 2010 the focus of my prayers became very narrow and specific. My simple prayer was: “Śrīla Prabhupāda and Lord Kṛṣṇa, I beg you to please allow me to serve your devotees in any way you would like me to.” This prayer was offered with as much sincerity as I could muster—often with tears in my eyes.

Soon thereafter, in early 2011, my health mysteriously began to improve. The change was dramatic and quick, but would it last? I had my doubts and decided to take a conservative approach, watching and waiting patiently.

My health, strength, and energy levels continued to improve. Your dear servant Bhūrijana Prabhu, one of my closest friends, visited me during this period. He had been teaching the *Uddhava-gītā* in Vṛndāvana and brought with him some special spiritual potency. By the end of his short visit I had undergone some sort of spiritual transfusion. He gave me something very special, and whatever it was I was transformed—both physically and spiritually.

With regained health and vigor I made a plan, in consultation with Bhūrijana Prabhu, consisting of

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

steps I could take to resume some level of active service. We decided that my first step would be to leave Bhaktivedanta Hospital and visit ISKCON Hong Kong for a week. Then I would travel to the Philippines and base myself there for some time. With the guidance and support of Bhūrījana Prabhu, I made a plan to depart from Mumbai for Hong Kong on April 3, 2011.

The long-awaited day came, and the trip to Hong Kong was smooth. There, as planned, I gave my first two public preaching programs in over five years. I was apprehensive, and I felt deeply dependent on your mercy. All went surprisingly well.

Today, more than a year later, I have been able to resume much of my prior service—including a fair amount of traveling.

The hard lessons that I strongly believe you wanted to teach me are four.

First, keeping close and loving relationships with dear godbrothers is essential to progressive spiritual growth. I must associate with and serve my godbrothers as often as possible.

Second, the opportunity to serve the Vaiṣṇavas is most precious. I should never take it for granted. I must serve the Vaiṣṇavas as often and as much as possible—without reservation.

Third, *nāma-bhajana* is my most important service, and everything else is secondary. *Harināma* is what you came to give. You wanted us to “just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.” But you also wanted us to chant with love. I therefore pray that you bless me to chant without offense, with full attention and genuine love in my heart, praying for the mercy of Your Divine Grace, the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas, and the mercy of Kṛṣṇa.

Fourth, service to Kṛṣṇa is a rare opportunity. After so many lifetimes, somehow or other I have been given this gift. I must never take it for granted or regard it as some mundane duty or obligation. I must take full advantage. With great determination, patience, enthusiasm, and love I will strive to perform whatever service is given to me.

With a straw between my teeth, I beg you to please bless me to always remember these four hard learned lessons for the remainder of my life. My only desire is to serve you sincerely and without reservation by following what you taught me. Please accept this humble service of mine.

Your aspiring disciple,

Giridhārī Swami

Girirāj Swami

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda—A Vṛndāvana Man

It was April of 1977, in Bombay. You were living in your new quarters on the top floor of the west tower in Juhu, so ill that you never left them, and no one was allowed to visit you. I had become sick and practically just lay on the floor in my little office. My policy had been to listen only to the songs you had given us, the ones in *Songs of the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas*. Someone had handed me a tape of Maṅgalānanda Prabhu singing original songs, and somehow I thought, “Okay, maybe I’ll listen.” One song particularly affected me, and I listened to it again and again.

Homages from the GBC

The words were about going back to Godhead, and while listening I would think of you. I would feel happy, because clearly you were soon going back to Godhead—although in one sense you already were, and always were, back to Godhead. And I felt, “This is also my destination. One day I am destined to also go to the same place.”

After that period in 1977 I never listened to the song again, out of fear that it would bring back the memory of those days too intensely. But today the words strike me as relevant, for they remind me of you—what you were like and where you were going. They also suggest, as they did when I first heard them, what I should become like and, if I do, what destination I will achieve—all by your grace.

The song begins with a wonderful description of devotees—of you—and what happens to them:

Selflessness relieves distress.
The gentle rain of happiness
Puts out the burning fire of life,
Transports the soul beyond all strife,
Past starry night and cruel death
For those who give their living breath,
Upon their lips the holy name
In praise of Him who came.
To them a store of bliss is known,
And hidden worlds to them are shown.

And it concludes with a beautiful description of the spiritual abode and the life that awaits us there, which is our goal:

Where the Supreme Lord fills every eye
Sweet jubilation fills the sky
As dancing milkmaids and cowherd boys
Play in forests green with joys
Of bael and jackfruit lily white—
An endless full-moon nectar night
Of dancing magic loving smiles
And gopī damsels’ playful wiles.
They sport in lotus lakes with He
Whose glances taste of ecstasy.

Back in April 1977 I knew that you would probably be leaving us soon. And so I was thinking, “What will happen after you leave?” Once I even thought, “What will happen to *me*?” You had always personally protected me, so I wondered, “What will happen to me after you leave?” And I would listen to the song again and again.

I knew that you were going, and I knew that what was described in the song was my goal and ultimate destination, but I had no idea when I would reach it.

Thirty-five years have passed since then, and so much has happened—to me individually, to us collectively, to the movement, and to the world. And that goal, or destination, which seemed so immediate when we first met Your Divine Grace and joined you, now seems more and more distant—almost unattainable.

We know that your mercy is always there, and so there is always hope, but last year your mercy was manifest to me in a somewhat unexpected way, which made me feel new hope.

Last October you brought me to Vṛndāvana, and in Vṛndāvana to the association—the shelter and guidance and support and friendship—of many of your dear disciples. And that combination—Vṛndāvana with the association of close godbrothers—proved to be especially powerful.

As stated in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Madhya 22.128–29), five items of devotional service are especially potent:

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

sādhū-saṅga, nāma-kīrtana, bhāgavata-śravaṇa
mathurā-vāsa, śrī-mūrtira śraddhāya sevana

“One should associate with devotees, chant the holy name of the Lord, hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, reside at Mathurā, and worship the Deity with faith and veneration.”

And:

sakala-sādhana-śreṣṭha ei pañca aṅga
kṛṣṇa-prema janmāya ei pāñcera alpa saṅga

“These five limbs of devotional service are the best of all. Even a slight performance of these five awakens love for Kṛṣṇa.”

Somehow, although I am so unqualified, you arranged for me to stay in Vṛndāvana, in the association of dear godbrothers, continuously for months—much longer than ever before. And I gained hope that I might one day, somehow, attain my eternal service, in my eternal home, with you.

Akrūra’s words as he approached Vṛndāvana suddenly seemed more relevant, more true:

maivāṁ mamādhamasyāpi syād evācyuta-darśanam
hriyamāṇaḥ kālā-nadyā kvacit tarati kaścana

“‘Because I am so fallen I shall never get a chance to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead.’ This was my false apprehension. Rather, by chance a person as fallen as I am may get to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Although one is being carried away by the waves of the river of time, one may eventually reach the shore.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.38.5, as cited at *Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya* 22.44)

Of course, I do not know when I will ever see the Supreme Personality of Godhead directly, but I did feel that “by chance a person as fallen as I . . . may eventually reach the shore.” Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, your mercy was bringing me closer.

I felt at home in Vṛndāvana and could relate to one of your descriptions of Vṛndāvana in *The Nectar of Devotion*:

“I remember the Lord standing by the banks of the Yamunā River, so beautiful amid the *kadamba* trees, where many birds are chirping in the gardens. And these impressions are always giving me transcendental realization of beauty and bliss.” This feeling about Mathurā-maṇḍala and Vṛndāvana described by Rūpa Gosvāmī can actually be felt. . . . The places in the 168-square-mile district of Mathurā are so beautifully situated on the banks of the river Yamunā that anyone who goes there will never want to return to this material world.

As my stay in Vṛndāvana was extended by your causeless mercy, week after week, I wondered how long you had willed me to remain there—secretly hoping it would be forever.

* * *

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, were a resident of Vṛndāvana, but you left. Why, and how could you tolerate the separation?

You explained in an early talk in New York City:

I shall be very happy to return to my Vṛndāvana, that sacred place. “But then why you are . . . ?” Now, because it is my duty. I have brought some message for you people. Because I am ordered by superior, my spiritual master, that “Whatever you have learned, you should go to the Western countries, and you must distribute this knowledge.”

If you had not left Vṛndāvana, how would we ever have come to know about that most sacred of

Homages from the GBC

places—much less gotten the chance to serve there?

In leaving Vṛndāvana, you exemplified the mood of Śrī Prahlāda:

*naivodvije para duratyaya-vaitaraṇyās
tvad-vīrya-gāyana-mahāmṛta-magna-cittaḥ
śoce tato vimukha-cetasa indriyārtha-
māyā-sukhāya bharam udvahato vimūḍhān*

“O best of the great personalities, I am not at all afraid of material existence, for wherever I stay I am fully absorbed in thoughts of Your glories and activities. My concern is only for the fools and rascals who are making elaborate plans for material happiness and maintaining their families, societies, and countries. I am simply concerned with love for them.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.43)

*prāyeṇa deva munayaḥ sva-vimukti-kāmā
maunaṁ caranti vijane na parārtha-niṣṭhāḥ
naitān vihāya kṛpaṇān vimumukṣa eko
nānyaṁ tvad asya śaraṇaṁ bhramato 'nupaśye*

“My dear Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, there are many saintly persons indeed, but they are interested only in their own deliverance. Not caring for the big cities and towns, they go to the Himalayas or the forest to meditate with vows of silence [*mauna-vrata*]. They are not interested in delivering others. As for me, however, I do not wish to be liberated alone, leaving aside all these poor fools and rascals. I know that without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, without taking shelter of Your lotus feet, one cannot be happy. Therefore I wish to bring them back to shelter at Your lotus feet.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.44)

Prāyeṇa deva munayaḥ sva-vimukti-kāmā—almost all the great saintly persons we find in India are interested in their own liberation. *Maunaṁ caranti vijane na parārtha-niṣṭhāḥ*—they wander silently in the Himalayas or forests, not working for the welfare of others.

When I first arrived in Bombay with a group of devotees in 1970, there was a gathering of sādhus, saintly persons, in a large hall along Marine Drive. There were long lines of tables set up next to each other, and sitting cross-legged on the tables were various yogīs and *munis* in different types of attire (or lack of attire), with different types of *tilaka* and other markings and symbols—some with matted hair, some with flowing long hair, some with no hair—all engaged in different processes meant for their elevation, and I was quite impressed. Having been a spiritual seeker and read *Autobiography of a Yogi*, I was very intrigued by tales of saintly persons in India.

But when you arrived it became clear to me that you stood out from the rest. You were in a completely different category. You were like the sun, as effulgent as the sun, and in comparison the others were like little stars. Your mood was different from theirs: you did not want to go back home, back to Godhead, alone, leaving aside all the poor fools and rascals—in other words, us. And if that had not been your mood, where would we be? I shudder to think of it.

You imbibed that mood through the *paramparā*, the disciplic succession, from your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and his father and *śikṣā-guru*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. And in your service to them, you were unparalleled.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī wanted his disciples to go to the West and preach. At great expense, he even sent some to London, and they met some people and gave some talks, but somehow they did not have much effect. And eventually Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta called them back.

When they returned, there was a nice reception for them. Soon thereafter, during the Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta again expressed his ardent desire—and hope—that someone would deliver Kṛṣṇa consciousness—the teachings of Lord Caitanya and the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*—to the people in the Western world. Śrīpāda Nayanānanda Dāsa Bābājī, a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, relates:

The last year that our *gurudeva* organized and performed Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*, thousands

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

of pilgrims assembled at our Canpahati temple. There was an entire village of tents stretching in all directions. On the afternoon of the last day, one of our godbrothers had just arrived in Navadvīpa, recently come from London by ship. He had gone there to preach but had returned without meeting full success. That evening during his lecture, Guru Mahārāja explained his earnest desire that Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings be spread in the Western countries. He said that this was the last request of his mother, Śrīmatī Bhāgavatī Devī, to him before she left this world, and that indeed it would happen. Consequently, he had been willing to take the lifeblood of the Gauḍīya Maṭha funds to send devotees there, yet their attempts had been largely unsuccessful.

At that point in his talk I noticed something mysterious happening. Guru Mahārāja had been looking out at the packed crowd of devotees, especially in the front, where all the *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* in red cloth were. Then he turned his head and looked over to his left side, where I was standing. He was looking intently at someone and became silent for some time. I happened to look behind me and saw that the person with whom he was making eye contact was Abhaya Charanaravinda Prabhu [known after *sannyāsa* as A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami]. I felt that they were looking at each other in a special way. Then Guru Mahārāja turned and again addressed the audience in front of him and said, "But I have a prediction. However long in the future it may be, one of my disciples will cross the ocean and bring back the entire world."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, without your having taken up this mood from your Guru Mahārāja, where would we be?

In your purport to Prahāda's prayer in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, you explain his—and your—determination:

Prahāda Mahārāja says clearly, *nānyarṇ tvad asya śaraṇarṇ bhramato 'nupaśye*: "I know that without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, without taking shelter of Your lotus feet, one cannot be happy." One wanders within the universe, life after life, but by the grace of a devotee, a servant of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, one can get the clue to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and then not only become happy in this world but also return home, back to Godhead. That is the real target in life.

This is the decision of the Vaiṣṇava, the pure devotee of the Lord. For himself he has no problems, even if he has to stay in this material world, because his only business is to remain in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The Kṛṣṇa conscious person can go even to hell and still be happy. . . . [H]is interest is in the busiest part of the world, where he teaches people Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

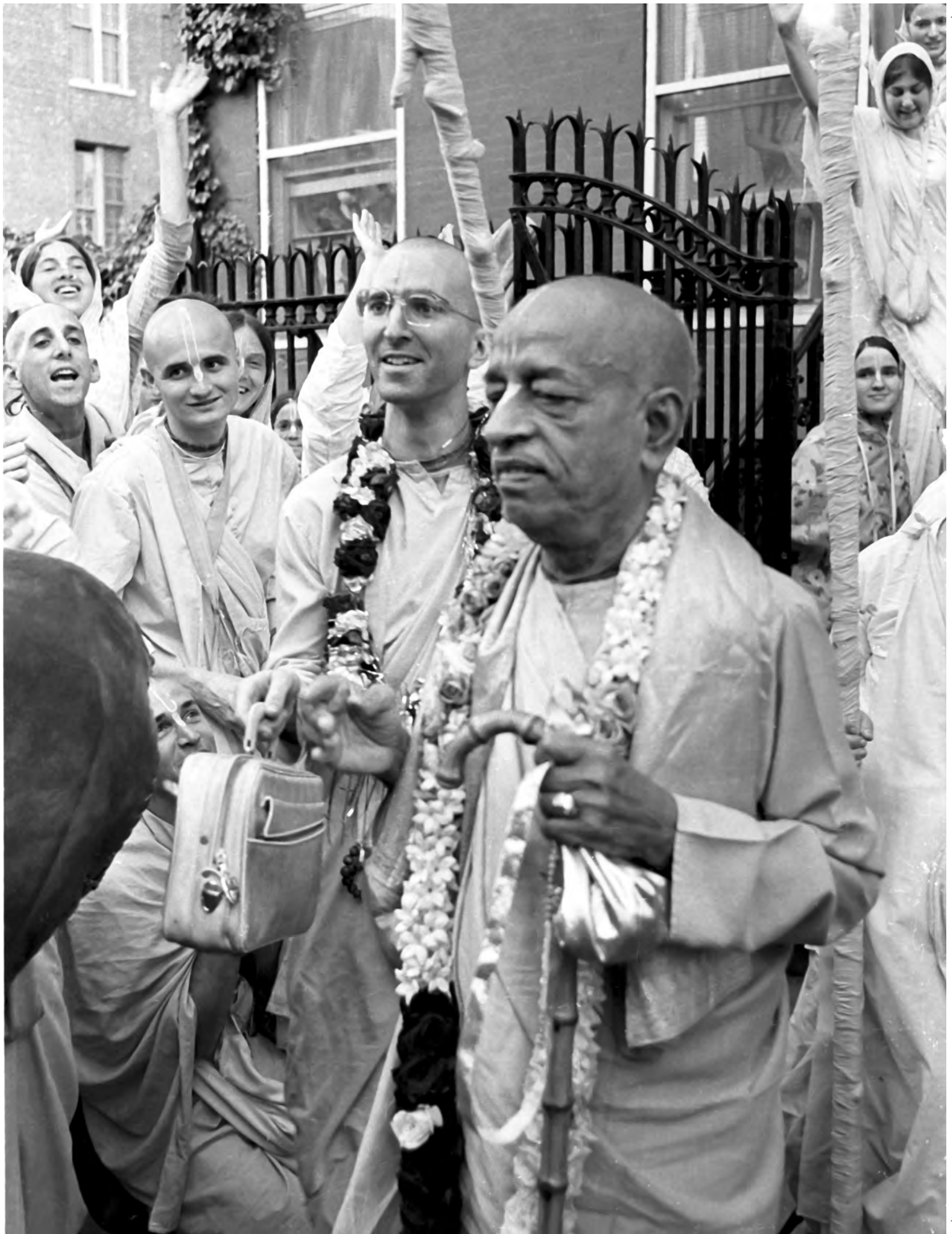
Śrīla Prabhupāda, in coming to deliver us you practically walked through hell—and still you were happy. Mukunda Goswami, in *Miracle on Second Avenue*, describes one incident when you were in San Francisco, in Haight-Ashbury, the center of the hippie movement. The devotees then were friends with two brothers, early supporters of your mission, who owned the Psychedelic Shop. Several times the brothers had invited the devotees to bring you to the program they held every Saturday evening in the meditation room at the back of their store, but the devotees had always refused, not wanting to subject you to the atmosphere there. But eventually they accepted.

And so you walked along Haight Street, accompanied by six devotees. The Haight was like a carnival—people in all sorts of dress, with different styles of hair and costumes, some singing and playing music, some drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana, or taking some other drug. Mukunda was concerned about your walking through that whole scene, which must have appeared so decadent to you, and to break the silence he ventured, "It's a beautiful night."

As Mukunda Mahārāja describes,

[You] scrutinized the street sellers, looked at passing smokers and bongo players, people with painted faces and wild, brightly colored costumes. [You] appeared to smell the air, taking in the burning odor of marijuana and the sharp putrid stench of alcohol, which was tempered by the fragrance of roses and carnations. [You] turned, smiling, and said, "*Everything* is beautiful."

And Mukunda Mahārāja reflected on your statement:



Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

There was no good or bad from the pure angle of vision—everything and everyone in every part of creation was Kṛṣṇa’s energy, and because the swami was in touch with that energy, he saw this beauty. The people were beautiful because they were all potential devotees. Everything was beautiful because everything was connected to Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your mercy—your vision—is inconceivable. No matter where you were, even in the Haight, you were happy, because you were spreading Kṛṣṇa’s glories and pleasing your superiors.

* * *

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said that the best *goṣṭhyānandī* is a *bhajanānandī* who preaches. Before you came to America you prepared yourself by intensely chanting and studying and praying for the power to preach. Then you left Vṛndāvana for New York, San Francisco, and the world. And you were fully absorbed in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and your spiritual master’s mission.

Still, you hankered for Vṛndāvana.

In your Los Angeles headquarters one afternoon, after dealing with various managerial problems, you leaned back on the bolsters of your *āsana* and quoted a verse by Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura: *viṣaya chāḍiyā kabe śuddha habe mana kabe hāma heraba śrī-vṛndāvana*—“When will I give up material sense objects, and when will my mind become purified? Only then will I be able to behold Vṛndāvana.” Then you added, perhaps for me to hear, “Of course, it is not *viṣaya*, material; it is Kṛṣṇa’s service. But still, I wish to be freed. I am hankering for Vṛndāvana.”

Thus you showed us the perfect example. You relished Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Vṛndāvana; you left Vṛndāvana to preach, to fulfill the orders of your superior authorities; while outside Vṛndāvana you always remembered Vṛndāvana, hankered for Vṛndāvana; and in the end you returned to Vṛndāvana—back to your home, back to Godhead.

Just as Kṛṣṇa does not take a step away from Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa’s devotee also does not like to leave Vṛndāvana. However, when he has to tend to Kṛṣṇa’s business, he leaves Vṛndāvana. After finishing his mission, a pure devotee returns home, back to Vṛndāvana, back to Godhead. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 13.156 purport)

On this occasion, I pray to follow you—wherever you are, whatever your service. You said of your spiritual master that he was “a Vaikuṇṭha man” and that he came to this world to execute the mission of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. “So he executed it. And when it was required, he left this place and went to another place to do the same business.”

You, too, were a Vaikuṇṭha man, or more specifically, a Vṛndāvana man.

In her offering to you on your disappearance day in 2003, your disciple Daivīśakti Devī Dāsī described your special relationship with Gita Devi Saraf, who donated the land for your Vṛndāvana temple. One evening Gita Devi confided in her:

She said, “You know, Śrīla Prabhupāda was just like my own father.
He cared for me, and that was why I gave to him and no other.
He told me a secret once, when we were all alone.
I’ll tell you what he said to me; it’s something you should know.

“I came to see him one evening. He was sitting in his garden.
Devotees sat by his feet, secretary and servants all around.
As I came close he smiled at me and told them all to go.
I sat nearby his lotus feet, and this is what he told.

“Kṛṣṇa sent me here to preach. He sent me from above.
With English, Bengali, and Hindi I could preach all over the world.

Homages from the GBC

I've almost finished my task, and soon I'll return to Him.”
He told her this in 1976; soon our lives went dim.

I was amazed at what Prabhupāda had revealed to her alone.
She knew he came from Kṛṣṇa and would soon be going home.
Such wisdom was not wasted on an ordinary *jīva*.
This blessing was hers from Prabhupāda—confidentiality.

As we drove, she took my hand and made a simple wish.
She asked me in sincerity, “Please teach me to speak English.”
“But Gita Devi, you're so old, your precious time will be wasted.”
“No,” she said, “I also want to preach as Prabhupāda did.”

I looked at her in amazement; she really wanted to preach.
She had been transformed by Śrīla Prabhupāda's grace.
By associating with fire one becomes like fire; I saw
Her desire to preach like Prabhupāda in an old woman bereft of all.

The inspiration she received from a moment of Prabhupāda's love
Reminds us how compassionate he was to come here from above.

Śrīla Prabhupāda—I, too, aspire to follow you, internally and externally, but I can do that only by
your mercy, and by the mercy of those dear to you, who carry your mercy and love.
Please help me.

Your dependent servant,

Girirāj Swami

Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. Once again on your auspicious Vyāsa-pūjā day we have the opportunity to remember your transcendental achievements.

It is inconceivable that you came to the West at such an advanced age to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the fallen souls of Kali-yuga. You struggled to establish Kṛṣṇa consciousness in India, and then you struggled in America. With full faith in the instructions of your spiritual master, you departed from India on a cargo ship with only \$8 worth of rupees in your pocket. You were the transcendental general that Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda had predicted would appear to take Kṛṣṇa consciousness to every corner of the globe.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are a Vaiṣṇava of the highest order. You were the personification of determination. One day, while distributing the *Back to Godhead* magazines in 112-degree heat in Delhi, you suffered a severe heatstroke and became unconscious. But as soon as you were brought back to consciousness, you resumed your transcendental distribution.

You taught us that the Supreme is a sentient being and not impersonal. You gave us transcendental literature that explains the purpose of human life and the importance of devotional service. Your books

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

have been translated into more than seventy languages. Your books will be able to guide society for the next ten thousand years. Following in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya, you emphasized the importance of preaching. You wanted us to study your books and at the same time distribute your books. Recently in the Russian city of Tomsk an attempt was made to ban the Russian *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Due to the sincere attempts of the devotees in Russia, and to some extent in India, the plan to ban the *Gītā* was defeated.

Due to your causeless mercy, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is continuing to expand in India and other parts of the world. More and more temples are being built. These temples are spiritual hospitals. They are attracting huge crowds and are powerful outlets for book distribution. Residing in Vṛndāvana, you would regularly come to Delhi to collect funds, publish your books, and distribute them. We now have eight temples in the greater Delhi area. Yesterday the deputy prime minister of Hungary, the deputy speaker of the Hungarian parliament, and the Hungarian ambassador to India visited your Delhi museum and temple for two hours. They were very impressed by your Delhi project. In my Indian zone we have started new projects in Ludhiana, Rohini, and Karghar. Very soon we will also start projects in Gurgaon and Dwarka. I pray that you please empower your representatives in these areas to work hard and complete these projects for your glorification. May your fame continue to expand every day.

Thank you millions of times for showing the world the path of devotional service. Please forgive me for my offenses. I pray for your causeless mercy so that I may become fixed in executing your divine instructions and in helping propagate the *saṅkīrtana* movement.

Your eternal servant,

Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami

Guru Prasād Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet. I beg you to make me an insignificant particle situated there eternally. I can find nowhere else in the three worlds that is safer or more secure. All glories to you, and all glories your mercy, which has flooded the world with Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I continue my ongoing effort to express in my offering a particle of the vast and expansive qualities that adorn you. This year I am contemplating how you perfectly exemplify the Vaiṣṇava qualities of *akāma* (desirelessness) and *anīha* (indifference to material acquisitions).

You often said that there is no such thing as being entirely desireless. As Rūpa Gosvāmī says,

*anāsaktasya viṣayān yathārham upayujjataḥ
nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe yuktaṁ vairāgyam ucyate*

“When one is not attached to anything but at the same time accepts anything in relation to Kṛṣṇa, one is rightly situated above possessiveness.” In other words, since the living entity must have desires, detachment from material desires and this world is best achieved by replacing material desires with desires to serve Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, since one’s degree of “desirelessness” is proportionate to the extent of one’s desire to serve Kṛṣṇa and your desire to serve Kṛṣṇa is unlimited, you perfectly showed the quality of *akāma*. You constantly “shot the rhinoceros,” wanting everyone to see the immeasurable opulence of Kṛṣṇa. Your ardent desires to see that everything be offered to Kṛṣṇa and to see the holy name spread

Homages from the GBC

to every home are spiritual desires that reflect your *akāma*.

You demonstrated the principle of *anīha* as the personification of *yukta-vairāgya*, following in the footsteps of your Guru Mahārāja, who defied the limited perception of renunciation by using everything—modern conveyances and clothing, money and printing presses—for preaching. However, at the same time, sometimes your *dhoti* would have holes in it. As you said many times, “Everything for Kṛṣṇa, but not a farthing for sense gratification.” You were given expensive watches, rings, and other items, only to give them away to your disciples or have them sold to print books or to finance other preaching programs.

Thus you perfectly exemplified, to the highest degree, the principle of detachment from anything not related to Kṛṣṇa while seeing everything in relation to Him. Only by holding on to your lotus feet can I be pulled away from my attachments. As you said, sometimes a *sannyāsī* is attached to his paraphernalia: “Sometimes, even after renunciation, one becomes attached to a temple or to the few things that constitute the property of a *sannyāsī*.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.5.8, purport)

Only by your guidance can I hope to understand, in practice, that nothing is mine except the causeless mercy you are kindly extending to me. That possession is worth more than all the material wealth and property in the fourteen worlds, and I must protect it by obeying your every instruction. By your transcendental influence I can become so attached to this valuable gem that I will never allow *māyā* to steal it away.

Your aspiring servant,

Guru Prasād Swami

Hṛdaya Caitanya Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

The world is becoming a more intense place to live, and the economic crisis pervades all the places I visit regularly, especially Spain and Portugal.

Although the world is more and more in the grip of Māyā, you requested us to remain true soldiers in Kṛṣṇa’s army and continue to serve patiently and with determination, simply seeing how Kṛṣṇa is using us as instruments in His service. You explained to your disciples that devotees do not need to be afraid, either of living or of dying, because we will either serve Kṛṣṇa on this planet here and now or serve Him in the spiritual world after leaving our body. There is no difference; it is simply a continuation.

During Gaura Pūrṇimā this year, my service as GBC chairman ended. Serving as GBC chairman was a challenging experience. Among the Executive Committee members and the secretary we had a nice synergy, but it was hard to do this service along with my already existing duties. More importantly, because I was not a transparent servant, some of the stress affected my health, which I am still working to improve.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your words are so transcendental. In all circumstances you were able to speak supportive and encouraging words of transcendental knowledge; you were able to make perfect interfaith statements without offending anybody, instead encouraging the members of a different faith to practice their faith more sincerely. Also, you would make perfect statements about *brahmacarya*, inspiring your *brahmacārī* disciples to enter deeper into their commitment to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the *brahmacārī āśrama*. You did this in many different circumstances.

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

Whenever I am requested to give class, I do research in the Bhaktivedanta VedaBase. Then, even if I lack inspiration at first, very soon I feel plugged into such a wealth of ecstatic realizations—it is like an ocean of transcendental nectar that overflows as soon as one connects to it.

Mahārāja Pṛthu asked the Lord’s benediction to have a million ears so he could hear the glories of the Lord’s lotus feet from the mouths of His pure devotees. Śrīla Prabhupāda, because you are a pure devotee, you always speak from the core of your heart and the transcendental vibration coming from your mouth is so powerful. In this way you are reviving our memory of our eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Recently, at the Japa-Kīrtana Retreat facilitated by Śacīnandana Swami, I realized that I am not even using my two ears properly to hear the Lord’s holy names while chanting. I pray for your mercy to have the determination to improve the quality of my chanting.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I look forward impatiently for the day when the whole world will recognize you for who you are and what you did.

May I always be allowed to be the servant of your servants.

Hṛdaya Caitanya Dāsa

Jayapatāka Swami

My dear spiritual father,

Please accept my respectful obeisances.

On the occasion of your annual Vyāsa-pūjā, I would like to offer you an homage. This time I wrote a Bengali poem in the form of a song. I was inspired by a song about Lord Caitanya written by Vāsudeva Ghoṣa and titled “If There Were No Gaura, What Would There Be?” I was thinking, “If you had not come, if you didn’t exist, who would have given us all the mercy?” I think that devotees should meditate on how much they have received from you and how much we are indebted to Your Divine Grace. I personally have been so much benefited by your mercy. You gave me mercy when I was in Canada, in America, and in India.

Again and again I got your mercy. You have given me many instructions and many devotional services to complete. Now I am handicapped to some extent. Still, you allow me to engage in your devotional service. So please accept this Bengali song in your honor. I hope that it will be a source of pleasure for you and your followers.

I beg to serve your lotus feet life after life, however you want.

Your insignificant servant,

Jayapatāka Swami

Śrīla Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda Mahimā

(যদি) প্রভুপাদ না হইত তবে কি হইত
(এ) জীবন বহিতো কিসে?
নিতাই-গৌরের অপার করুণা
কে দিতো সকল দেশে ॥

Homages from the GBC

(yadi) prabhupāda nā haita tabe ki haita
(e) jivana bahita kise?
nitāi-gaurera apāra karuṇa
ke dita sakala deśe ||

If Śrīla Prabhupāda had not come, what would have happened? How would we have passed our lives? Who else would have distributed the unlimited mercy of Lord Nityānanda and Lord Gaurāṅga all over the world?

পাশ্চাত্যের যত পাপী দুরাচারী
শূন্যবাদী মায়াবাদী ।
তাদের উদ্ধার করিবারে মন
হেন কোন্‌ দয়ানিধি ॥

pāścātyera yata pāpi durācārī
śūṇyavādī māyāvādyī
tādera uddāra karibāre mana
hena kon dayānidhi

Which other compassionate person would have endeavored to deliver the Westerners, who include sinners, impersonalists, voidists, and gross materialists?

তাদের নিকটে কোন্‌ জনা আসি
বিলাইতো হরিনাম ।
সভ্য জীব রূপে গড়িতে তাদের
কে হইত আগুয়ান ॥

tādera nikaṭe kon janā āsi
bilāita harinām
sabhya jīva rūpe gaḍite tādera
ke haita āguyān

Who else would have come to give us his association and distribute the holy name? Who else would have come forward to give us a cultured spiritual life?

দেশে দেশে হরি- বিগ্রহ সেবা
আরতি রাত্রি-দিনে ।
রথ যাত্রাদি মহোৎসব সব
শিখাইতো কোন্‌ জনে ॥

deśe deśe hari- vigraha sevā
āratī rātri-dine
ratha yātrādi mahotsava saba
śikāita kon jane

Who else would have established Deity worship all over the world, including āratīs and kīrtanas from morning to night? And who would have taught us how to observe Ratha-yātrā and other transcendental festivals?

গীতা-ভাগবত চৈতন্য চরিত
প্রেমামৃত রসসার ।
কত না সুন্দর সরল করিয়া
কে বুঝাইতো আর ॥

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

gītā-bhāgavata caitanya carita
premāmṛta rasasāra
kata nā sundara sarala kariyā
ke bujhāita āra

Who else would have translated and explained the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, containing the essence of the nectarean mellows of love of Godhead, in such a clear, simple, and beautiful way?

কত কষ্ট সহি প্রীত মনে রহি
কে বা দিতো হরিনাম ।
কে দিতো মোদের পুরী বৃন্দাবন
মায়াপুর মতো ধাম ॥

kata kaṣṭa sahi prīta mane rahi
ke vā dīta harinām
ke dīta modera purī vṛndāvana
māyāpura mata dhām

Who else would have tolerated so many difficulties and distributed *harināma* with such a compassionate and loving heart? Who would have given us the holy *dhāmas*, such as Māyāpur *dhāma*, Vṛndāvana *dhāma*, and Jagannātha Purī *dhāma*?

পরম মঙ্গল শ্রীচৈতন্য মহা-
প্রভুর শিক্ষা ধন ।
আচারে প্রচাণ্ডে সদা আমাদের
কে করিতো নিয়োজন ॥

parama maṅgala śrī-caitanya mahā-
prabhura śikṣā dhana
ācāre pracāre sadā āmādere
ke karita niyojana

Who would have given us the incomparable treasure of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings and engaged us in practicing and preaching them?

প্রেমকল্পতরু নিতাই গৌরের
কৃপা কণা লভিবারে ।
নিরবধি জয়- পতাকা হৃদয়
তোমারে শরণ করে ॥

premakalpataru nitāi-gaurera
kṛpā kaṇa labhibāre
niravadhi jaya- patākā hṛdaya
tomare śaraṇa kare

Desiring a drop of mercy of Nitāi-Gaura's wish-fulfilling tree of love of Godhead, with all his heart Jayapatāka incessantly takes shelter of Your Divine Grace.

Homages from the GBC

Kavicandra Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

You kindly taught us that human life begins with spiritual pursuits, preparing for dying properly. Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja stated that the most amazing thing in this world is that most people do not prepare for death but try to make a permanent residence here:

*ahany ahani bhūtāni gacchantīha yamālayam
śeṣāḥ sthāvaram icchanti kim āścaryam ataḥ param*

“Every day, hundreds of millions of living entities go to the kingdom of death. Still, those who are remaining aspire for a permanent situation. What could be more wonderful than this?” (*Mahābhārata, Vana-parva* 313.116)

Recently I have been thinking more seriously about my inevitable death. Many of your disciples are leaving their bodies. In the past year two of your very dear and prominent disciples, Gopīparāñadhana Dāsa and Yamunā Devī Dāsī, were called away from us. All of us became absorbed in remembering their sublime qualities and dedication to serving your mission. I found great bliss in hearing about their qualities and service. That was very purifying, in that I realized more how much I am not ready, not having done much loving service.

I recalled *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* 17 and 18:

*vāyur anilam amṛtam athedaṁ bhasmāntaṁ śarīram
om krato smara kṛtaṁ smara krato smara kṛtaṁ smara*

“Let this temporary body be burnt to ashes, and let the air of life be merged with the totality of air. Now, O my Lord, please remember all my sacrifices, and because You are the ultimate beneficiary, please remember all that I have done for You.”

*agne naya supathā rāye asmān
viśvāni deva vayunāni vidvān
yuyodhy asmaj juhurāṇam eno
bhūyiṣṭhān te nama-uktiṁ vidhema*

“O my Lord, as powerful as fire, O omnipotent one, now I offer You all obeisances, falling on the ground at Your feet. O my Lord, please lead me on the right path to reach You, and since You know all that I have done in the past, please free me from the reactions to my past sins so that there will be no hindrance to my progress.”

Although I recite these *śloka*s almost daily, I have only recently seriously contemplated them. I am

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

a fool who, although always talking about the surety of death, live as if I were not aware that at any minute my time may come.

I am understanding more and more that my entire life is only due to your mercy. Kindly let me take these prayers to heart and dedicate my life for your pleasure so that when death comes I will be depending upon your mercy.

It seems you are calling many of your best to join you in your mission somewhere else. When my time comes, I pray to be begging for the association of your followers, who will beg you to have mercy on me.

Your aspiring servant,

Kavicandra Swami

Madhusevita Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

My most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. May those feet keep protecting me till the end of this lifetime and grant me eternal residence where the *ācāryas* live in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Going over again the phases of this life, both before joining the movement and after, I cannot but realize how you were always there to protect me. Your descent to this world is what caused the Supreme Lord to maintain alive unworthy people like myself so that we may meet you one day.

You protected me from the anguish caused by the untimely death of my mother, from the insensitivity of relatives, from the concupiscence of greedy people, from the hypocrisy of friends, from the illusory love of the opposite sex, from drugs, from the desire to end my life, from cheating religions and philosophies, and from my uncontrolled mind.

My ability to remain engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness remains solely due to your protection, tolerance, and affectionate mercy.

As you well know, I have no merits, and when I see valuable devotees becoming victims of the illusory energy, I pray to Lord Nityānanda to bless me with a great anxiety about losing your protection, which is my only hope.

Some months ago I wrote a song that depicts both the mood I am in and what I should at least try to achieve in this lifetime.

Please accept it.

Your worthless disciple,

Madhusevita Dāsa

I Shouldn't Have You Come Save Me Again

Dear body and mind, so much love I gave you throughout my life—
I washed you, fed you, served you, and took care of you as if you were myself. . . .

Now that you are old and crippled and almost dying by will of time,
I recall my Master's words: "For one who is attached, his life will
end in pain."

Homages from the GBC

Oh Śrīla Prabhupāda, you said if one does not complete his course and then is born again, the Master out of mercy may come down to rescue his son, but no . . .
I shouldn't have you come save me again, I shouldn't have you come save me again. . . .

For so long I was engaged in idle talks and useless thoughts—
I could have better served my Master, but my mind just kept pushing me down. . . .

Now that the end is near I realize I served just lust and greed—
my only hope my Master's mercy, which can liberate even a fool like me. . . .

Whatever time is left I'll dedicate fully to you. It's late, I know—I feel ashamed. Still I should try to complete my work within this present life because . . .
I shouldn't have you come save me again, I shouldn't have you come save me again. . . .

Please allow me
to join you again, to join you again, to join you again;
there's no other place I'd like to go—the world is void without your Feet.
Please allow me to join you again.

So still there is hope, Oh Śrīla Prabhupāda, because of your unprecedented mercy, and if I do sincerely try to serve you and love you, then I am sure . . .
You will not have to come save me again, you will not have to come save me again. . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrīla Prabhupāda, please allow me at the end of life to join you again. . . .

Mālatī Devī Dāsī

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Your ever-present beauty remains highlighted by your loyalty to your most revered spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who you referred to in your 1936 Vyāsa-pūjā address as “the present *ācāryadeva*,” who is the “tenth disciplic representative from Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, the original representative of Śrī Caitanya who preached this transcendental tradition in its fullness.” Your Divine Grace, our own Śrīla Prabhupāda, are the eleventh representative. Then you wrote, “The knowledge that we receive from our *gurudeva* is not different from that imparted by God himself and the succession of the *ācāryas* in the preceptorial line of Brahmā. We adore this auspicious day of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā-tithi because the *ācārya* is the living representative of Vyāsadeva, the divine compiler of the *Vedas*, *Purāṇas*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Mahābhārata*, and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.”

Yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you remain our perfect representative of God, living forever in our hearts. As such, we very much adore your Vyāsa-pūjā, for it gives us an opportunity to surrender ourselves again

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

at your lotus feet for (in your words) “the elimination of all our differences bred by our unsubmissive attitude.” You urged your godbrothers to completely surrender to the real *ācārya* in a spirit of ardent inquiry and service, as Śrī Kṛṣṇa instructs in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. You pointed out that Vyāsa-pūjā is an opportunity “for offering our humble services and homage to the feet of the *ācāryadeva*” and for being “favored with the capacity of assimilating the transcendental knowledge so kindly transmitted by him to all persons, without distinction.” You perfectly followed in his revered path by showering the same mercy upon us and all others, “without distinction.” You went on to emphasize that “we should hear him patiently, follow him in the measure of our conviction, and bow down at his lotus feet.” May this same request become your order to us, because anyone who does so, you assured your listeners, would gain release “from our present causeless unwillingness for serving the Absolute and all souls.”

I am embarrassed, as I bow before you, to once again request your causeless mercy. Yet I have no other recourse. I remain in the category of “ignorant children” that you referred to, but by your causeless mercy the torch of truth coming from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, carried forward by the previous *ācāryas* and placed in your precious lotus hands, has “kindled a small fire within [me] to dissipate the invincible darkness of empirical knowledge” that covers my heavy heart. “The *ācārya*’s message is to take us back to our original home, back to God,” and our humble duty is to accept this message with a grateful heart and follow the life-saving instructions it conveys.

While you called your spiritual master “an eye-opener,” you not only opened our eyes but also our hearts with your divine love. Your humility, as expressed in this homage, is soul-rending: “[L]et me with all my earnestness pray at the lotus feet of my divine master to allow me to suffer the lot for which I am destined due to my past misdoings, but to let me have this power of recollection: that I am nothing but a tiny servant of the Almighty Absolute Godhead, realized through the unflinching mercy of my divine master. Let me therefore bow down at his lotus feet with all the humility at my command.”

May I always remain attached to bowing down at your lotus feet with humility, hoping for that joyous day when we will meet again.

From a fallen devī dāsī,

Mālatī Devī Dāsī

Mukunda Goswami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my humble obeisances.

What more can I say?
The bird is in flight;
He’s still in the night,
Alive in the day.

Homages from the GBC

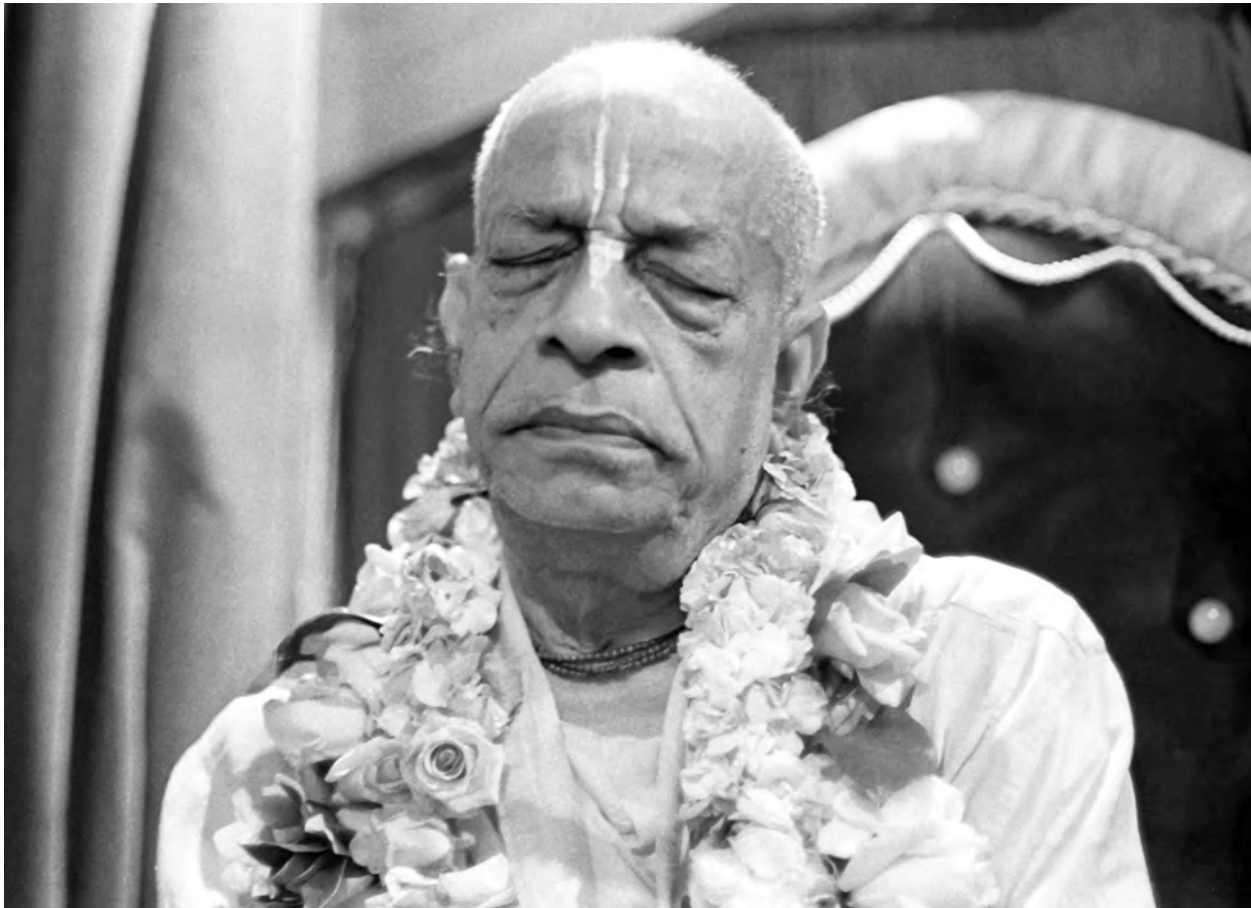
You wrote as we slept—
Books by the dozens,
Giving deep teachings
To white-faced cousins.

The sweet things in life
To us were just loaned,
So how could we lose
What we never owned?

I walked book in hand,
Reading in traffic,
Inured to bland stares
And trucks on land

That zoomed all around,
Almost hit and run,
Not caring for life,
Lost in the sound

Of your words
In books that
Sung like angels
And rounded up herds



Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

Of wrecks like me,
Lost and entangled
In outer darkness,
Adrift on the sea.

Your wake-up call
Came suddenly—
Time to know,
Too late to fall.

Isolating and repeating a statement by Śrīla Prabhupāda can result in a major catastrophe. Nonetheless, I can't resist quoting a sentence from one of your lectures, when you said, "This is the definition of our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement." These were the very first English words you uttered after first saying *prasaṅgam aṅgaṁ pāśam ātmanaḥ kavayo viduḥ/ sa eva sādhuḥ kṛto mokṣa-dvāram apāvṛtam*. You spoke these English and Sanskrit words on 20 November 1974, in Mumbai (then Bombay). The English translation is written in your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.20): "Every learned man knows very well that attachment for the material is the greatest entanglement of the spirit soul. But that same attachment, when applied to the self-realized devotees, opens the door of liberation." These two sentences are what you declared publicly to be "the definition of our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement."

In a sense, your greatest gift to the world was knowledge of "dovetailing," or doing what you're good at, or love to do, but doing it for Kṛṣṇa. The principle is enunciated in Rūpa Gosvāmī's famous *yukta-vairāgya* verses, translated (by you) as "When one is not attached to anything but at the same time accepts everything in relation to Kṛṣṇa, one is rightly situated above possessiveness." And "One who rejects anything without knowledge of its relationship to Kṛṣṇa is incomplete in his renunciation."

You taught that one could use expertise in automobile mechanics or toilet plumbing as pure devotional service. You taught that such seemingly unlikely activities could become *bhakti*. Hundreds and thousands of seemingly uncultured candidates became your disciples because they found they could dovetail their propensities in a way that would please you and Kṛṣṇa. Because you wholeheartedly accepted such outwardly nonphilosophical activities as service to the Supreme Lord, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement took root in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, a part of the world then thought to be a marginal realm of alternative and rebellious thinking.

The principle of *yukta-vairāgya*, in defiance of many strict Indian *brāhmaṇas*, became reality as Westerners began to take the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa seriously. Thus the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement began in the West.

Your accepting attitude toward everyone endeared you to such unlikely persons as professed atheists, practitioners of non-Hindu faiths, high-ranking politicians, scholars, police officers, and quite a few media representatives.

How was it possible to start a spiritual movement in the West, a movement that was oblivious to the deceitfully alluring advances in education, medicine, travel, and communication, a movement that uncompromisingly defied the so-called good things in life? The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement was based on a religious philosophy that espoused voluntary austerity, requiring its dedicated followers to renounce intoxicants, gambling, meat-eating, and illicit sex.

You gave the West the gift of *yukta-vairāgya*, doing everything for Kṛṣṇa. This—in many ways—was the secret of your success.

Your servant,

Mukunda Goswami

Homages from the GBC

Rādhānāth Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful obeisances.

Since the moment of your physical departure, we have been left here, in the material world, depending upon your extraordinary legacy of service in separation.

Twenty-nine years after the disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, at the age of sixty-nine, with no money or assistance, you set out to cross oceans, seas, and continents to fulfill his will.

While aboard a cargo ship, in the wake of heart attacks, you wrote in your diary,

I am feeling separation from Śrī Vrindaban and my Lords Śrī Govinda, Gopinath, Radha Damodar. The only solace is Śrī Chaitanya Charitamrita in which I am tasting the nectarine of Lord Chaitanya's Leela. I have left Bharat Bhumi just to execute the order of Śrī Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati in pursuance of Lord Chaitanya's order. I have no qualification, but I have taken up the risk just to carry out the order of His Divine Grace. I depend fully on Their mercy so far away from Vrindaban.

You once told us that through the insurmountable challenges you faced, as well as through your incredible accomplishments, at every moment you felt the presence of your Guru Mahārāja. In these words we find shelter, a place where we can connect to the sweet abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, beyond the raging fire of material existence.

We especially feel the touch of your grace in those who you personally inspired. As the years pass, your beloved associates are being called to serve you in the spiritual realm. Earlier this year, a treasure house of your divine grace, Yamunā Devī, was called. Her love for you and her dedication to you were unique. In everything she did, she strived for perfection, down to the minutest detail. This was one way that she expressed her love for you. Through your beloved daughter Yamunā Devī you conquered our hearts through her singing, intoxicated our minds through her cooking, and blessed our souls through her wisdom and kindness.

While unparalleled in everything she did, Yamunā Devī chose to remain far in the background, deeply absorbed in *bhajan* and *sevā*. Yet wherever she dwelled, her extraordinary spiritual power infused us with her indomitable devotion. She was a pioneer at every stage of her devotional life, leading us into higher realms of *bhakti*. On your behalf she was everyone's well-wisher.

In separation from your beloved associates, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we feel that you are forever with us, beyond time and space, in Kṛṣṇa.

With my sincerest prayer to be the servant of your servants,

Rādhānāth Swami

Rāmāi Swami

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

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

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

* * *

*tāte kṛṣṇa bhaje, kare gurura sevana
māyā-jāla chuṭe, pāya kṛṣṇera caraṇa*

“If the conditioned soul engages in the service of the Lord and simultaneously carries out the orders of his spiritual master and serves him, he can get out of the clutches of *māyā* and become eligible for shelter at Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 22.25*)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are my only means of shelter at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. I am not qualified for anything, but by your mercy I can try to help you in your mission of reclaiming the conditioned souls of Kali-yuga.

Some say 2012 is a year of disaster—
Civilization will cease forever after.
We don’t think this to be the case:
Prabhupāda is here to save our race.

Who else can help suffering humanity—
Bring them to transcendent eternity?
The effects of Kali are here a while more,
Extending to every land and shore.

Thousands of years are still to come,
With quarrel and fear for everyone.
The personality of Kali is not done yet—
There are elaborate plans that must be met.

Weaving his mesh throughout the land
With consummate ease and skill of hand—
This has been done many times before;
Now he has come for one time more.

Though the world is tremendous and vast,
Kali’s arrangement is set and cast.
Being possessed of boundless might,
All that is good he continues to fight.

Just like Parikṣit from days gone by,
Prabhupāda is here to turn the tide.
His voice is drumlike, loud and low,
His face suffused with rosy glow.

He shines with many a lucky sign
And many an ornament so divine.
Although not towering in his height,
He is a tiger in gait and might.

No precious mine more rich could be,
No burning flame more bright than he.
With devotees and friends he has begun
Implementing his plan for everyone.

Homages from the GBC

With astounding power this great saint
Has done what others fear to contemplate.
Confronting Kali straight and true,
He turned his plans completely askew.

Continuing on and pushing deep,
He will not tire nor ever sleep.
One may ask how the age will go on
In front of someone so right and strong.

He is possessed of great compassion.
Kali too will benefit in a fashion:
He will see his divine face
And get the mercy of His Divine Grace.

'Tis proper and right in many a way
That I to him should honor and pay.
Forget not all the words I say,
Nor let the occasion slip away.

We offer water to his lotus feet,
The gift of honor and a high seat.
The arm of fate, the arm of the Lord—
Immense power in him is stored.

To follow him is my only hope;
Otherwise it is difficult to cope.
He picked me up like magic art;
I dread to think we could be apart.

Thank you, Prabhupāda, for all you've done.
Please keep me close, your most fallen son.
If it weren't for you, where would I be?
I'd probably drown in the Kali sea.

Let us rejoice and chant his name.
The spiritual world is ours to gain.
Who but him can allay our fear?
All his glories the world should hear.

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!
May we be with you forever.

Your lowly servant,

Rāmāi Swami

Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa

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

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

The founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, who is the indwelling animating spirit of our institution and the ever-gracious guide for all members who strive resolutely to perfect their *vāṇī-sevā* to him—that personage blessed us with this instruction during his last days: “Your love for me will be shown by how much you cooperate to keep this institution together after I am gone.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke often on the theme of cooperation. The English word is derived from a Latin verb meaning “to work together with,” but a study of Prabhupāda’s use of this term reveals it to be for him—and us—a concept enriched with profound spiritual import. In a lecture delivered in Seattle in 1968, Śrīla Prabhupāda conveyed this import with characteristic simplicity: “When you do something in cooperation with the Lord, that is called *bhakti*.” Adding a little fine tuning to it—for even those who refuse cooperation with the Lord remain subject to His control—Prabhupāda said, “So automatic [i.e., voluntary] cooperation is *bhakti*, and forced cooperation is *karma*.”

Cooperation is the vital principle of healthy social relationships, and as such it has its highest application in divinity. Since God is supremely personal (“the Supreme Personality of Godhead”), then He is supremely social, for personhood becomes manifest only in relationships with other persons. For that reason, as Prabhupāda said many times, “Kṛṣṇa is never alone.” His devotees become part of his own identity: “When we speak of Kṛṣṇa, ‘Kṛṣṇa’ means Kṛṣṇa with His devotees,” Prabhupāda said in Los Angeles in 1969. He explained:

Kṛṣṇa is never alone. Kṛṣṇa is with Rādhārāṇī. Rādhārāṇī is with the *gopīs*. And Kṛṣṇa is with the cowherd boys. We are not impersonalists. We do not see Kṛṣṇa alone. Similarly, “Kṛṣṇa” means with Kṛṣṇa’s devotees.

Although the Supreme is one without a second—in other words, absolute—as the supreme person He is also supremely relative, entering into relationships with many, many devotees by means of His multitudinous divine forms. Herein lies his inconceivable greatness: Not only is he supremely absolute, but he is at the same time supremely relative. (In fact, we know his relatives by name—Yaśodā, Nanda, Balarāma, etc.) In such a way, a transcendent relativity is manifest as a society of the utmost cooperation, and through the conduct of those relationships the Lord eternally increases in beauty, opulence, bliss, and knowledge.

The highest calling of the self-alienating living entities is to become full members of that society. *Bhakti-yoga* is the practice by which we become prepared to join it. Cultivating our aspiration, we await that day we may be so favored as to be invited in.

We can therefore understand salvation as ultimate social integration. Conversely, damnation is ultimate isolation.

By cooperation, by *bhakti*, we become increasingly integrated into the divine society, closer to Kṛṣṇa and closer to His associates, and at the same time we try to bring others with us.

“And this is the highest yoga,” Śrīla Prabhupāda said in 1968 in San Francisco.

If you push on this movement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then you’ll be performing the highest type of yoga. Don’t be misled by so-called ‘yogas.’ *This* is yoga. Yoga means cooperation, cooperation with the Supreme.

Homages from the GBC

Here in this age of dissension we are to cultivate the *yuga-dharma*, which is the yoga of cooperation. Making the satisfaction of Śrīla Prabhupāda our common and unifying aim, we become closer to each other and, by the self-same effort, to Śrīla Prabhupāda, to the Six Gosvāmīs, to Śrī Caitanya, to Śrī Kṛṣṇa . . .

Prabhupāda therefore put much stress on this principle of cooperation. When internal dissension threatened his own organization in 1973, he wrote to Kirtanānanda Swami:

Now this displeasing of godbrothers [within ISKCON] has already begun and gives me too much agitation in my mind. Our Gaudiya Math people fought with one another after the demise of Guru Maharaja but my disciples have already begun fighting even in my presence. So I am greatly concerned about it.

He followed with a now famous disquisition on the principle of unity in diversity:

Material nature means dissension and disagreement, especially in this Kali-yuga. But, for this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement its success will depend on agreement, even though there are varieties of engagements. In the material world there are varieties, but there is no agreement. In the spiritual world there are varieties, but there is agreement. That is the difference. The materialist without being able to adjust the varieties and the disagreements makes everything zero. They cannot come into agreement with varieties, but if we keep Kṛṣṇa in the center, then there will be agreement in varieties. This is called unity in diversity. I am therefore suggesting that all our men meet in Mayapur every year during the birth anniversary of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. With all GBC and senior men present we should discuss how to make unity in diversity. But, if we fight on account of diversity, then it is simply the material platform. Please try to maintain the philosophy of unity in diversity. That will make our movement successful.

The principle of cooperation, then, is the driving force of unity in diversity. And the principle of unity in diversity, affirmed Śrīla Prabhupāda, is “philosophically known as *acintya-bhedābheda*—simultaneous oneness and difference,” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 10.113, purport)

In the aesthetic realm as well, beauty is unity in diversity. And the greater the diversity, the greater the value of the unity. (The divine society maximizes both.) Prabhupāda employed an aesthetic example to explain the potency of cooperation in *saṅkīrtana*. Speaking to devotees in Māyāpur in 1976, during a time of dissension, he stressed how cooperation is the essence of our movement. He explained that Lord Caitanya Himself is pleading for our help, our cooperation, and similarly he, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is making the same plea:

You are cooperating; therefore I am getting the credit. Otherwise alone what could I do? *Ekāki āmāra nāhi pāya bolo*. Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself wanted our cooperation. He is God, Kṛṣṇa. And therefore cooperation is very important thing. Nobody should think that “I have got so great ability, I can do.” No. It is simply by cooperation we can do very big thing. “United we stand; divided we fall.”

Saṅkīrtana, Prabhupāda went on to explain, means that many varieties of people are coming together:

That is Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mission, combined together. All nations, all persons, they should combine together. There is hope in our society, combination. There are Hindus; there are Muslims; there are Christians; there are black, white. Combine them.

And then he gives the example of a bouquet assembled from diverse flowers. When the individual flowers are all thus unified, each becomes enhanced in its own beauty—even if by itself it had not seemed so attractive.

Each and every flower take alone—it is not beautiful. But when they are combined together, it

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

looks very beautiful. It is attractive. And that is wanted. Because from the spiritual platform we are all working. *Pañḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*. Spiritual platform, every one of us, we are servant of Kṛṣṇa.

Here, then, through the principle of cooperation, the highest principle of divinity is made manifest in this world by Lord Caitanya as the most exalted antidote to this most debased age of dissension.

Śrīla Prabhupāda did not want our individuality suppressed. Quite the opposite. Yet when there is individuality there will inevitably be disagreement. Acknowledging this, he coached us in ways to repair any breaches. When the *Bhāgavatam* relates the moving reconciliation between Mahārāja Pṛthu and Indradeva after their fierce conflict, Prabhupāda remarks (in his purport to *Bhāgavatam* 4.20.18):

Both King Indra and Mahārāja Pṛthu were envious and angry with each other, but since both of them were Vaiṣṇavas, or servants of Lord Viṣṇu, it was their duty to adjust the cause of their envy. This is also a first-class example of cooperative behavior between Vaiṣṇavas. In the present days, however, because people are not Vaiṣṇavas, they fight perpetually among one another and are vanquished without finishing the mission of human life. There is a great need to propagate the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in the world so that even though people sometimes become angry and malicious toward one another, because of their being Kṛṣṇa conscious such rivalry, competition, and envy can be adjusted without difficulty.

Bhakti is the yoga of cooperation; it is social yoga. It is to be cultivated in and exemplified by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. To be sure, we are a highly diverse group, with many members of distinct individuality, sometimes richly ornamented with idiosyncrasies. Yet as we become unified through our love for Śrīla Prabhupāda, we will realize the blessings of this yoga. Of course, as yoga, our discipline requires some austerity, as described by Caitanya Mahāprabhu. We must aspire after the humility of the grass underfoot by not seeking or welcoming any praise, honor, or recognition from others. In *bhakti*, the way up is the way down. We must seek the forbearance and magnanimity of the fruit tree by offering to others all respect and appreciation. We wish to remain undisturbed even when there is every reason to be disturbed. In this way, we will remain fixed and steady in our practice and so become increasingly close to each other, to Śrīla Prabhupāda, and through him to all the previous *ācāryas* and saints, and to Śrī Kṛṣṇa with his beloved associates. Moreover, with the powers and virtues thus acquired, we will transform ourselves, as individuals and as a society, so as to be able to encompass the entire world within the embrace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, fulfilling the destiny seeded within the name “International Society for Krishna Consciousness.”

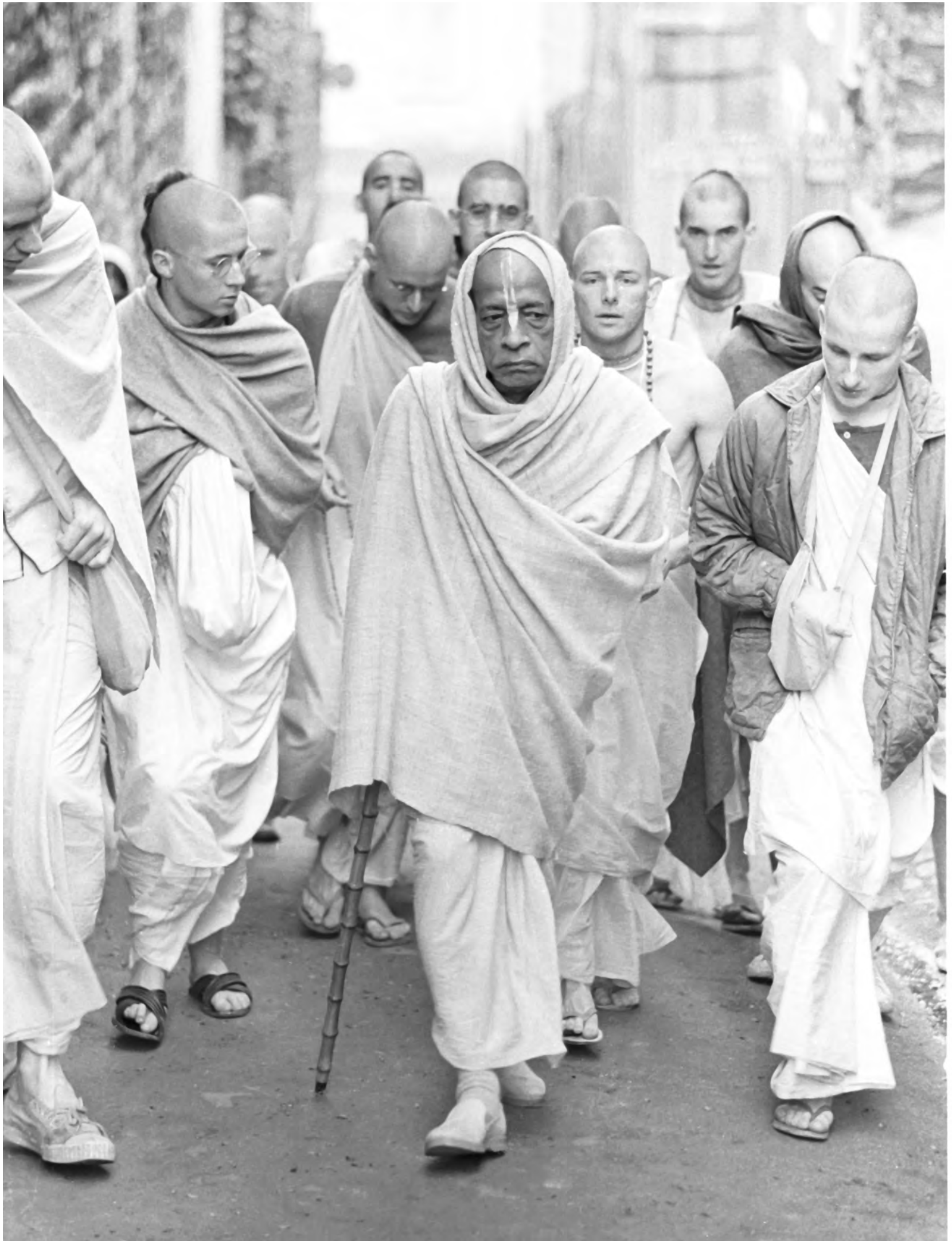
Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa

Romapāda Swami

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

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

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



Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

*mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ paṅguṁ laṅghayate girim
yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande śrī-guruṁ dīna-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!

Even before you ventured onto Western soil on the order of your spiritual master, you had an expansive vision of a vibrant worldwide *saṅga* of Vaiṣṇavas spanning all cultures, languages, nations, races, and ways of life. This vision was inherited from your Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who in turn received this vision from the brilliant luminary Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. On the cusp of ISKCON's fifty-year Golden Anniversary, we can only admire with utmost reverence and appreciation the work you have accomplished in manifesting such an enormous vision. In your own words to us, your disciples, this was made possible *only* by your placing implicit faith in the words of your spiritual master. May we steadfastly follow the essence of your personal example by likewise internalizing *your* words with implicit faith!

The expansiveness of your eleven years of divine missionary work in establishing ISKCON worldwide is unprecedented in world history. To enhance your pleasure, I am delighted to report that the diversity of languages and cultures reached by the message of *bhāgavata-dharma* has expanded in vast degrees since your departure from this world thirty-five years ago. Proportionately, the range of types of individuals your ISKCON has attracted is likewise so diverse! Similarly, the ways of conducting outreach activity to bring the message of pure *bhakti* to diverse audiences have also become enormously diverse.

As this diversity grows and grows over time, your early instructions regarding how to maintain ISKCON's unity provide essential keys as to how integrity with the message you have given can be preserved.

One such instruction came in a letter to Kirtanānanda Swami dated 18 October 1973:

Material nature means dissension and disagreement, especially in this Kali-yuga. But, for this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement its success will depend on agreement, even though there are varieties of engagements. In the material world there are varieties, but there is no agreement. In the spiritual world there are varieties, but there is agreement. That is the difference. The materialist without being able to adjust the varieties and the disagreements makes everything zero. They cannot come into agreement with varieties, but if we keep Kṛṣṇa in the center, then there will be agreement in varieties. This is called unity in diversity. I am therefore suggesting that all our men meet in Mayapur every year during the birth anniversary of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. With all GBC and senior men present we should discuss how to make unity in diversity. But, if we fight on account of diversity, then it is simply the material platform. Please try to maintain the philosophy of unity in diversity. That will make our movement successful.

Unity in diversity—very simple, and absolutely sublime! Without the proper center, however, diversity breeds dissension.

Individual personalized expression of the essence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is perfectly natural. Only impersonalism would dictate otherwise. When the expression of one's individuality is encouraged in spirit, it is natural that such a devotee will be highly productive and enlivened. Honoring the merit of individual expression, you wrote to Karandhara Dāsa on 22 December 1972:

So the future of this Krishna Consciousness movement is very bright, so long the managers remain vigilant that 16 rounds are being chanted by everyone without fail, that they are all rising before four morning, attending mangal arati—our leaders shall be careful not to kill the spirit of enthusiastic service, which is individual and spontaneous and voluntary. They should try always to generate some atmosphere of fresh challenge to the devotees, so that they will agree enthusiastically to rise and meet it. That is the art of management: to draw out spontaneous loving spirit of sacrificing some energy for Krishna.

Homages from the GBC

Then comes the next challenge: how to harmonize multiple simultaneous expressions of individuality. Entropy needs to attain harmony. Such a challenge is met by taking advantage of “the form direction of the Lord,” or intelligence (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.2.25, purport), by being respectful toward God’s individual gifts to others, and by remaining motivated by a pure, sincere desire to please you (our founder-*ācārya*) and Kṛṣṇa.

Pleasing Kṛṣṇa must be consciously accepted at the very center of each soul’s expression of individuality. You write:

Since the living entities are very small, they are sometimes described as the marginal energy of the Lord. But the mystic yogīs consider the living entities and the Supersoul, Paramātmā, to be one and the same. It is, however, a minor point of controversy; after all, everything created rests on the gigantic *virāṭ*, or universal form of the Lord. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.6.8, purport]

My personal dedication in my service to you this year has been to extend maximum effort in fostering loving relationships among devotees with whom I am in contact. Your above instructions provide powerful tools to bring this focus into reality. I pray at your lotus feet for the requisite purity, strength, and intelligence to assist you in this way.

Please accept my prostrated obeisances again and again.

Aspiring for your eternal service, I remain

Your humble disciple,

Romapāda Swami

Śivarāma Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

On this occasion of your divine appearance, please accept by humble obeisances at your Vraja-dust-laden lotus feet and allow me to offer the following paltry words in praise of you and your mission.

Your eternal servant,

Śivarāma Swami

* * *

Chanting *japa*, I walk along the dirt road from Sunrakh to Garuḍa-Govinda in Vṛndāvana, Govinda Mahārāja ten paces ahead of me, the late morning sun beating down from above, the silence of the *dhāma* all around. Birds sing in the trees, a herd of blue cows graze nearby, and the silence is broken by the occasional gust of wind shaking the leaves on the trees. I see the banyan tree where the cowherd boys would rest and the ruins of the large *kuṇḍa* where the cows would bathe. I feel the transcendental atmosphere unique to Vṛndāvana-dhāma—a pervasive sweetness that invokes memories of the divine cowherd prince, of His exploits and His exchanges of love with His associates.

As that sweetness mixes with the sound of my chanting and the sights of the *dhāma*—completely captivating my heart—a very different picture suddenly comes to mind. A picture in a faraway land, and

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

yet a picture pervaded by the very same Vṛndāvana atmosphere in which I walk.

It is Montreal, 1976. Śrīla Prabhupāda and the devotees are sitting at Dorval Airport, waiting for the departure of the plane that would take His Divine Grace to New Delhi and a meeting with Indira Gandhi. Śrīla Prabhupāda sits in a chair fingering his beads, and we devotees sit around him chanting.

Suddenly I feel a wave of spiritual energy that seems to wash away not only the sounds and sights of the airport but the influence of the modes of nature from my heart. Suddenly I am seated in another land. I experience freedom, lightness, happiness, and sweetness—inexplicable sweetness. Where does it all come from? The compass of my being spontaneously points to Śrīla Prabhupāda, a waterfall of bliss cascading wave after wave of transcendental emotion that transforms the waiting room into Vṛndāvana, the same Vṛndāvana in which I now walk to Garuḍa-Govinda.

How wonderful! But how is it possible? Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja explains:

*bhavad-vidhā bhāgavatās tīrtha-bhūtāḥ svayaṁ vibho
tīrthī-kurvanti tīrthāni svāntaḥ-sthena gadābhṛtā*

“My Lord, devotees like your good self are verily holy places personified. Because you carry the Personality of Godhead within your heart, you turn all places into places of pilgrimage.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.13.10)

Because Kṛṣṇa always resides in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s heart, wherever Śrīla Prabhupāda goes is Vṛndāvana; he transforms whatever place he visits into that sweetest place of pilgrimage. In turn, the people in those places also become purified, and in time they themselves become places of pilgrimage—residents of Vraja.

On that day at Dorval Airport, out of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s boundless grace, I became intensely aware of his Vṛndāvana presence. It was an experience not to be forgotten. It made me understand that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s traveling and preaching was taking Vṛndāvana all over the world, and turning the entire planet into a place of pilgrimage.

But as Govinda Mahārāja and I neared Garuḍa-Govinda, I recalled how Śrīla Prabhupāda also wanted all his followers—especially *sannyāsīs*—to help him in distributing the sweetness of Vṛndāvana. He did not take such a responsibility exclusively as his own. Śrīla Prabhupāda had said,

[T]īrthī-kurvanti tīrthāni svāntaḥ-sthena gadābhṛtā. Because a pure devotee carries Kṛṣṇa within his heart, therefore wherever he goes he makes a holy place. It is said in the *śāstra*. So not me, but everyone of you, if you are pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, then wherever you’ll go, that is a holy place. *Tīrthī-kurvanti tīrthāni* . . . To become *sannyāsī* means that, that he’ll be pure devotee, and wherever he will go, he will purify. That is [what] *sannyāsa* means. [Morning Walk conversation at Marina del Rey, Los Angeles, 14 July 1974]

His Divine Grace ordered us to become pure devotees and transform into Vraja all the places we travel to and live in.

I take a deep breath, as if to inhale the Vṛndāvana atmosphere around me. In Dorval, Śrīla Prabhupāda inexplicably revealed to me a glimpse of what it means to be Kṛṣṇa conscious and to be an emissary of the spiritual world. It will take more than deep breaths to become the pure-devotee/*sannyāsī* Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke of. But it would be possible by repeated showers of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mercy, the grace of Vṛndāvana itself, and the power of the holy names he has given.

Although this year has not blessed me with such a transformation, I pray that one day I may honor Śrīla Prabhupāda’s appearance day by having become the devotee/*sannyāsī* who converts every place he goes into Vṛndāvana. When that personal transformation does come, when I one day join the ranks of such similarly accomplished godbrothers and godsisters, that day will have been a suitable offering to His Divine Grace. He is most pleased when the Kṛṣṇa consciousness he brought matures in his followers.

O gentle Vaiṣṇavas who celebrate the appearance day of our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda! O Garuḍa-Govinda! O divine land of Vraja! Please bless me to one day offer a spotless Vṛndāvana-heart at the feet of His Divine Grace, our ever well-wisher.

Homages from the GBC

Tamohara Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

There is no doubt that you are the empowered representative of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, sent to establish the *saṅkīrtana* movement throughout the world. During your physical presence with us, we often thought that our main duty as disciples was to follow your instructions and try to please you and assist you in this mission. After your departure from this world, we realized that our duty was to not only preserve your movement but to continue and even increase your mission to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world.

Now, after many years, it has become clear that any accomplishment we may achieve in continuing your glorious work is dependent on the degree that we take shelter of you. The success of this movement depends on realization of your unique position as founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Our success depends on acting as your instruments and on our complete fidelity to you. We must firmly establish your teachings, your instructions, your mood, and your vision as the fundamental guiding principles for this movement.

You often said that your only qualification was following the orders of your spiritual master with faith and conviction. You presented your *Bhagavad-gītā* “as it is,” without changing or interpreting the words of Lord Kṛṣṇa. If a pure, empowered devotee such as you was so diligent to not alter the essential philosophy and practices given by the guru and the *ācāryas*, then how careful we must be to preserve and transmit that same sacred message you have given us.

You told us to use our intelligence in spreading the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, and you gave many examples of how to preach according to time, place, and circumstances. You presented the ancient Vedic scriptures in a way that was accessible to us and that successfully related to our Western world experiences and consciousness. Yet you never compromised or changed the essential, eternal truths of devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. The practices of devotional service (*sādhana-bhakti*) were never watered down or carefully packaged to satisfy the Western consumers of spiritual life. You told us that if one is selling diamonds there may not be so many customers. And that is what you came to offer—the greatest jewels of *bhakti-yoga* and *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Rūpa Gosvāmī states in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that the five essential practices of *bhakti* have “amazing power.” These are the same practices you established in your temples—chanting the holy name, hearing the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, worshiping the Deity, associating with devotees, and living in a holy place. This simple and sublime method of devotional service purified the hearts and minds of those of us from the most fallen and materially attached backgrounds. As we were attracted to the purity and truth of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, so will many others be attracted. Despite our own impurity, as we give this pure process to others, the nondevotees continue to become attracted to the absolute truth of Kṛṣṇa.

So, we do not need to create something new or repackage Kṛṣṇa consciousness to be more modern or “relevant.” Rather, we need to deepen our faith and conviction in what you have given us. Our faith is in the words and instructions of Your Divine Grace, and our conviction is that through our service to you, anything is possible. Your spiritual power to make devotees will continue to work through your followers, to the degree that we live that faith which you gave us.

Your most fallen servant,

Tamohara Dāsa

