

Homages from the GBC



Anuttama Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. All glories unto you, my eternal master!

Another year has passed, and by your grace I remain engaged in your service and in the service of your ISKCON society. It is a wonder that I am able to do so, being so full of materialistic tendencies. That I am still in the association of the devotees is a testament to the power of your causeless mercy, the holy name, and the processes of devotional service you kindly engage me in.

This past year the Governing Body Commission (GBC) issued an important official statement about your eternal and primary position as ISKCON's founder-*ācārya*.

This statement is an important historical and philosophical document. It is meant to help members and friends of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement better understand your preeminent position, as well as our individual relationships with you. It clarifies our continued dependence upon you and formalizes the principle that all gurus within ISKCON, now and in the future, must act in that capacity only as your servant, for your pleasure, under your order, to promote the mission of our *guru-paramparā* and Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

This document is far beyond any kind of appreciation that I could personally offer to you. Thus, although I am but one member of your GBC, I offer this official statement to you in its entirety, on their behalf, as my Vyāsa-pūjā offering this year.

Your humble and obedient servant,

Anuttama Dāsa

Statement of the Governing Body Commission (GBC) of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). Adopted March 9, 2013.

As the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and the preeminent teacher and ultimate authority within our society, Śrīla Prabhupāda has a unique relationship with every ISKCON devotee.

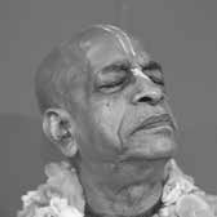
Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the original guru, whose divine grace descends through the medium of the *guru-paramparā*. Thus a devotee is ultimately delivered by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, acting through a combination of various manifestations of His mercy. These include, but are not limited to, the *caitya-guru*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the *guru-paramparā*, one's *dīkṣā-guru*, other *śikṣā-gurus*, the holy name, *śāstra*, and the nine processes of devotional service.

Within these cooperative elements, Śrīla Prabhupāda, as the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, is the preeminent guru for all members of ISKCON. All members of ISKCON, for all generations, are encouraged to seek shelter of Śrīla Prabhupāda. All members of ISKCON are entitled and encouraged to have a personal relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda through his books, his teachings, his service, and his ISKCON society.

All members accepting leadership roles within ISKCON, including *dīkṣā-gurus* and *śikṣā-gurus*, have the duty of serving together under ISKCON's Governing Body Commission (GBC) to fulfill Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions as he has given them in his books, lectures, and personal communications.

Overall, the primary duty of all *dīkṣā-gurus*, *śikṣā-gurus*, and others in leadership positions is to assist Śrīla Prabhupāda in his service to his Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura, and our Brahma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya-sampradāya.

Both in their words and their personal behavior, those who accept the service of *dīkṣā-guru* or *śikṣā-guru* in ISKCON are required to be exemplary in representing Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings. The *śikṣā-guru* gives spiritual instruction and inspiration on behalf of Śrīla Prabhupāda and our *guru-paramparā*.



Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2013

The *dīkṣā-guru* gives spiritual instruction, inspiration, formal initiation, and a spiritual name, and later imparts the sacred Gāyatrī mantras to a qualified disciple as a service to Śrīla Prabhupāda and our *guru-paramparā*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda has clearly explained that devotees who are strictly following the Kṛṣṇa conscious principles are acting on the liberated platform and, as such, are pure devotees, even though they may actually not yet be liberated. (Such unalloyed devotional service is not necessarily determined by one's role or position of service, but by one's realization.)

Those who accept the service of *dīkṣā-* or *śikṣā-guru* within ISKCON are mandated to be strict followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions, and as long as they follow they are acting on the liberated platform. Thus they may serve, as Śrīla Prabhupāda ordered, as bona fide representatives of the Lord and the *guru-paramparā* and be media of their mercy. Yet it should be clearly understood that if such *dīkṣā-* or *śikṣā-gurus* deviate from strictly following, they may fall down from their position. Thus, to act as a *dīkṣā-guru* in ISKCON means to serve under the GBC and in cooperation with other ISKCON authorities by functioning as a "regular guru," as Śrīla Prabhupāda has directed.

This statement, while conclusive, is not exhaustive in its discussion of these principles. The GBC may authorize additional statements and papers in the future to further explain the preeminent position of our founder-*ācārya*, Śrīla Prabhupāda; the role and responsibilities of those who serve as gurus in our society; and the related duties of ISKCON members and initiates.

For the education of all ISKCON members, all GBC members must distribute this resolution to all ISKCON temples, communities, and congregations via all appropriate means of communication. This statement shall also be studied in ISKCON courses, including introductory courses, the ISKCON Disciple Course, the Spiritual Leadership Seminar, and other relevant venues. Reading this statement, and affirming it has been read prior to initiation, shall be part of the test for all prospective initiates.

Badrinārāyaṇ Dāsa

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

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

As I sat down to write this offering, a series of scenes of Śrīla Prabhupāda came to mind. What follows is my attempt to string those remembrances and their purport together.

The first scene is of peaceful, rural Vṛndāvana of the early 1960s. We see Śrīla Prabhupāda sitting alone in his small rooms at the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple. He is looking out the window at the *samādhi* of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and deeply meditating on the order of his guru: "Go to the West. It will be good for you and good for others."

By this point in time, his spiritual master's mission had imploded due to infighting and neglect of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's order. Śrīla Prabhupāda is elderly, apparently impoverished, and not in the best of health. However, continually weighing on him is his Guru Mahārāja's order to leave the sheltering embrace of Vṛndāvana, make the difficult traverse across the ocean, and arrive in an unfamiliar and probably unwelcoming land—to present a message that by all indications the local population would not want to hear.

And yet, against all odds, he is determined to do it. Śrīla Prabhupāda has prepared as best he can by completing his three-volume set of the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He has found a sponsor,



has arranged free passage to the USA, and has a visa and his “P form” in hand. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s calculation is that in that foreign land, if necessary, he could survive on oats and potatoes—if not, “Let me starve”—but he must attempt to fulfill the order of his Guru Mahārāja.

Who can estimate the commitment and compassion of such a person? Others may say, “We could have gone,” but they didn’t. The Vānara chiefs sat on the shore ruing that they also could have jumped to Lañkā, but only Hanumān did it—certifying forever that he was the best servant of Lord Rāma.

In composing his own *praṇāma* mantra, Śrīla Prabhupāda chose as his distinguishing characteristic that he was first and foremost the surrendered servant of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. In his purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.41, Śrīla Prabhupāda reveals that this fixed determination to execute the order of one’s spiritual master is the secret of spiritual success.

The next scene that comes to me is of Śrīla Prabhupāda in New York City in 1966. He is giving class at 26 Second Avenue, in the sweltering summer heat. You hear dogs barking, trucks rumbling by, and boisterous children determined to play right outside. Over this irreverent cacophony we hear Śrīla Prabhupāda, his voice sometimes cracking with feeling, as he alternatively speaks forcefully and then pleadingly. His small audience consists of fledgling newcomers, barely in the house of *bhakti*, and eclectic seekers who have come to “check out the swami.”

Charmingly and convincingly, Śrīla Prabhupāda presents:

The whole point of Kṛṣṇa speaking the *Bhagavad-gītā* was to turn Arjuna from a “no man” to a “yes man.” At the beginning of the *Gītā*, Arjuna was saying “No, I will not fight.” At the end of the *Gītā* Arjuna is saying “Yes, I am now prepared to carry out your order.” [Lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 3.13–16]

For the first time, the audience was hearing that this state of saying “yes” to Kṛṣṇa is the true purpose of desire. It is the ultimate perfection of one’s individuality and the platform of eternal satisfaction. As confirmation of the possibility and benefits of achieving such a “yes man” state, there is Śrīla Prabhupāda sitting directly in front of them.

Later on that year, during one of the worst New York winters on record, Śrīla Prabhupāda (indifferent to the fierce cold due to absorption in fulfilling his Guru Mahārāja’s order) explains that “*Mahātmā* means ‘one whose heart is expanded.’” (Lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 8.28–9.2)

If compassion is the essence of a Vaiṣṇava, the true measure of a *mahātmā*, then who could doubt that Śrīla Prabhupāda was the exemplar par excellence?

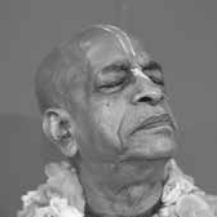
During his last tour of the USA, as his health was failing and devotees were begging him to stop traveling and to rest, Śrīla Prabhupāda responded, “It is glorious if a soldier dies on the battlefield. I want the benediction to fight like Arjuna until my last breath.”

Now the scene shifts to March of 1973 and I am in Māyāpur, walking alone through the temple and *āśrama* compound at Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s house. The place has the feel of being frozen in time. I am free to explore as I like, and pushing open a door, I find one of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s famous presses. At the opulent temple in Bagh Bazaar, Kolkata, he had the press placed in back of the temple room so that the Deities could hear the sound of it running—Their being serenaded by the playing of the *bṛhat-mṛdaṅga*.

But here the scene is dismayingly different. This press has been abandoned. It is covered with spider webs. The trays for holding the block type are cast here and there. Laundry is hanging over the press’s frame to dry.

How could things have come to this point? The scene serves as a cautionary tale. “There but by the grace of God go we”—unless we are sobered by this history.

In answer to “How this could have happened?” I am carried to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s visit to New Vrindaban in the summer of 1974. He is sitting outside for an intimate evening *darśana*. One devotee begins to make the case that he was young and full of new enthusiasm when he took his initiation vows. He says that now it is several years later and he is realizing how hard it is to maintain them. Even before this devotee can present the rest of his case, Śrīla Prabhupāda slams his hand down on the table in front of him and demands, “Then why did you promise? Only an animal cannot keep its promise.”



Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2013

Śrīla Prabhupāda is amplifying the thread running through his own life: our success depends on unflinching loyalty and faith in the instructions of the spiritual master.

My last scene takes place in Detroit in June of 1976. When asked during a *darśana* about the extent of the spiritual master’s mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda warned, “I will forgive you once. I will forgive you twice. The third time, I take off my shoe.”

A devotee responded, “But I thought that the spiritual master was unlimitedly merciful.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied “Yes, but do not take advantage.”

Great *ācāryas* can be soft as a rose and hard as thunderbolt. Manifesting the thunderbolt mood, Śrīla Prabhupāda went on to say, “As Lord Rāma conquered Laṅkā with monkey soldiers, I am working with monkey disciples.” We were stunned but had to admit to this frank analysis of our actual position.

To elaborate, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “I have created the structure. All you have to do is go and decorate it.” Knowing us and our propensity to charge off in the wrong direction, he then added, “Actually, I have also created the decorations. All you have to do is go and hang them.”

The first day you sat down on the *vyāsāsana* in Detroit to give class, you looked out at the audience. It was a colorful mix of hippies, college students, Indian families, professors, inner city street kids—a vast montage of humankind. In the “soft as a rose” mood, we could hear via the microphone as you chuckled to yourself and said, “Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet—they are big enough for everyone.”

Once in India a man was calling out to you as you were leaving a program: “Save me. Save me.” You turned to him and said, “Yes, I can save you, but you must do the work.”

When someone has fallen into a deep, dry well, there is no way they are going to get out unless someone else lowers them a rope. But even lowering that rope is not sufficient. The person has to grab it and hold on tight. Then he or she can be pulled out.

To get out of this material world and come back to Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, we need to hold on tightly to the rope of your instructions, your standards, and your vision for how to spread the mercy of Lord Caitanya’s mission. That fidelity will be the secret to our success.

Considering all the above, may I always hold fast to the rope of your mercy—as you have so carefully crafted it via your instructions. May I be of some small use to you as one of your “monkey soldiers.”

Your ever-grateful servant,

Badrinārāyaṇ Dāsa

Bhakti Caitanya Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you and your ISKCON!

Every year I tend to write something which reflects some of my thinking at that particular point in time. This year what is on my mind is that we are being tested by Kṛṣṇa in many ways. Sometimes we understand why we are being tested in a certain respect, and other times it is not so clear, although if we think very carefully about it we may be able to see.

Of course, Kṛṣṇa is behind all of this, but I think that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, must also be behind it, as you are our ever well-wisher who so much wants that we get out of *māyā* and become qualified to go back to Godhead. That would be the greatest achievement of all, and therefore it comes at no small price.

You address this in one of your conversations, Śrīla Prabhupāda:

Ātreya Ṛṣi: Is it true, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that Kṛṣṇa is testing us every day? We’re having tests, opportunities—



Prabhupāda: No, just like if you want responsible post, then there is question of test. If you want to become a vagabond, remain vagabond, where is question of test?

Ātreya Ṛṣi: No, for devotees.

Prabhupāda: Ah, for devotees, there is test. For devotees there is test. We see from the devotee's life, Prahāda Mahārāja, how much severe test he had to pass through. Bali Mahārāja, Nārada Muni.

Ātreya Ṛṣi: And the more advanced the devotee is, the more severe the test is, the more chance—

Prabhupāda: No, after you pass the examination, there is no more test. But before coming to the post of recognized devotee, Kṛṣṇa tests very severely. That one has to pass.

Hari-śauri: I read once in the *Bhāgavatam* in one of your purports, you said that *māyā* is there to test the sincerity of the candidate.

Prabhupāda: Yes, we see from the life of Bali Mahārāja, how he was put into difficulty. Even his spiritual master cursed him. [break] . . . put into test and still he remains in his determination, then he's passed. That is very natural. And there is a word "acid test"?

Hari-śauri: Yes.

Prabhupāda: For ascertaining real gold, the acid test one has to pass to become real gold.

Nava-yauvana: [break] . . . this test depends on one's faith in Kṛṣṇa?

The discussion then goes on to the point of faith, and then you bring it again to the idea of tests:

Prabhupāda: Faith means that you are meant for giving some service to Kṛṣṇa. You should stick to that service, that path, in spite of all impediments. That is the passing of test. Generally, just like we are meant for preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So there may be severe test, but still we shall remain determined. That is wanted. There may be so many impediments, punishment, still you should do that. That is wanted. That is test. Not that as soon as there is some difficulty I give it up. There may be severe test, but still we shall not give it up. We must go on. That is determination.

As you say above, Śrīla Prabhupāda, sometimes the tests may be severe, but they are required for getting us out of our comfort zones and into the zone of surrender and real devotional service. Sometimes I feel tests to be severe. Sometimes they are very difficult. But still it seems that if we surrender to the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, beginning with really trying our best to chant as properly as we can, Kṛṣṇa helps us and solutions are found for even seemingly impossible challenges.

I think this must be one of the greatest mysteries and, when we are Kṛṣṇa conscious enough, one of the most enlivening experiences in devotional service. I think this is what you meant, Śrīla Prabhupāda, when you said, "*Impossible* is a word in a fool's dictionary." Of course, I am a great fool, and so the word *impossible* is certainly there in my dictionary, but it seems to me that you want us to embrace challenges in our service to you in ISKCON to help us appreciate that if we try our best, Kṛṣṇa will help and the apparently impossible will become possible, or even sometimes simple. In this way we will feel Kṛṣṇa's presence more in our lives.

In my very small way I am trying to persevere, despite the challenges and my inabilities in dealing with them. I have no doubt that the only shelter through all of this is your lotus feet, Śrīla Prabhupāda. What to speak of serious challenges, without your lotus feet even relatively easy things would become impossible to handle.

So you are my hope, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I don't see anything or anyone else who could help.

Therefore on this sacred day of your appearance in this world, I throw myself at your feet and pray for your mercy in my attempts to render you service. May your glories be sung throughout the three worlds!

Your eternal servant,

Bhakti Caitanya Swami





Bhakti Chāru Swami

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most respectful obeisances at the dust of your divine lotus feet.

During my first meeting with you, you asked me to translate your books into Bengali. It was such a display of your causeless mercy upon this fallen soul. That service allowed me to approach you at any time, and eventually enabled me to become your Secretary for Indian Affairs.

Those engagements expanded further into cooking for you and taking care of your various other needs. I was not only busy throughout the day but also was able to be with you at night. Someone had to be with you all the time, and my shift was from midnight till two. So many nights, when you could not sleep, you spoke and I listened with rapt attention.

I remember one night in Vṛndāvana, a profound stillness prevailed everywhere, and from a distance we could hear the sound of a *kīrtana* softly floating through the serene silence of the night. You said, “This is India—wherever you go you can hear the chanting of the holy name.” You kept on speaking about the glory of this land. How fortunate are those who got the human form of life in this holy land! Even the demigods pray to Kṛṣṇa that if they have any piety left, then in exchange they desire to take birth in this holy land.

Then you described how in the Age of Kali everything turns upside down. The most holy places and the most exalted people become the first targets of Kali. That is why India is in such a pathetic state today. This most glorious land has become most degraded, and the most exalted people have become most fallen: the brahminical culture has become a rather demoniac culture in the form of the caste system.

That is why you had to go to the West—to the most degraded part of the world—to start your Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. To counteract Kali’s influence you started your mission from the extreme opposite end. Kali captured the place that used to be the center of the spiritual culture of this world, and therefore you decided to form your army from all over the world and move in toward that capital of Kali, to eventually crush him along with all his associates—lust, greed, anger, illusion, envy, and pride.

Then you assured me that in this battle Kali would not be able to win because victory is always there for Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. No matter how formidable our enemy may appear, we are fighting for Kṛṣṇa, and therefore our victory is guaranteed.

Another time, again when you could not sleep late one night, you were sitting up on your bed and I was massaging your feet. You just started to speak: “There is so much to do, and I am unable to do anything because of my bad health.”

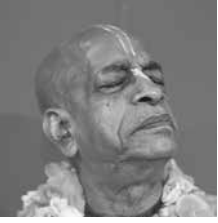
I tried to console you, saying, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, what you have done is inconceivable. No one has ever achieved what you have. Now you should just relax.”

You replied, “No, what I have done so far is just fifty percent. The other fifty percent is to establish the *varṇāśrama-dharma*. It is not that everyone will become a devotee. Those who won’t become devotees, for them we need *varṇāśrama*. It is not that everyone will be able to surrender to Kṛṣṇa completely. Those who will act according to the modes of material nature, for them we need *varṇāśrama*.”

You continued to speak. I understood some of what you said, but most of it flew well above my head. But today, so many years later, many realizations are beginning to dawn on me about what you said:

ISKCON is here to establish pure devotional service. However, everyone will not be able to come to that very lofty spiritual standard. In fact, most of the people in this world will not be able to follow the four regulative principles and chant sixteen rounds of the *mahā-mantra* every day. Rather, they will opt for a life of fruitive work and sense gratification. For them, the spiritual structure of *varṇāśrama-dharma* will be absolutely necessary.

In due course of time, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will spread all over the world, to every town and village. At that time the Vedic culture must be established everywhere, and *varṇāśrama-dharma* will be the means by which the entire human society will be structured according to that spiritual principle. And in that structure the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will be situated as its crowning glory. That is the only achievement that can ever come anywhere near matching your accomplishment.



Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2013

What will the world look like at that time? The powerful and righteous *kṣatriya* kings will be ruling the world, with a single sovereign head as the ruler of the entire planet. They will execute the royal responsibilities of protecting and guiding the society under the direction of qualified *brāhmaṇas*—the devotees of ISKCON.

The *vaiśyas* will cater to the needs of the society based on the abundant gifts from Mother Nature, through cow protection and organic farming. And the working class—the *śūdras*—will not be exploited through a heartless money-making racket, but will be taken care of by the senior members of the society, just as the elder brothers take care of the younger ones.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I do not know how much effort it will take to bring all this about, for how many generations. But I am confident that it will happen. And to make it happen you have given us ISKCON—a perfect arrangement to continue your mission. Please allow me to become an insignificant part of that arrangement forever.

Your eternal servant,

Bhakti Chāru Swami

Bhaktimārga Swami

*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*

You never did leave us:
Your books contain your spirit.
Your apparent departure—
A myth without merit.

You are alive as ever.
Mortality has no place
For the voice of truth
Within time and space.

Your teachings bear power,
Thrusting “real” enjoyment
And tightening controls
To sensual amazement.

They are for all times,
Nothing relative,
But relevant, teaching
The art that “we give.”

No truth superior,
Science of the self,
Most secret of secrets,
Not to stay on one’s shelf.

To live in this realm,
Entities do cry,
Deprived of peace,
And Māyā being dry.

Examining the real / surreal,
What to conclude?
That life is constant?
The Force to include?

The cosmic clock ticks,
Wearing us away,
Till we look to sport
With Him and to play.



We thank you for that
All mentioned above.
There is no repay
For this genuine love.

We have you and Him
Making it all whole,
Our final exam
Is reaching this goal.

Bhaktimārga Swami

Bhaktivaibhava Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Kindly accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Thank you for reminding us of the importance of cooperation throughout your personal letters, your lectures, and your room conversations, and in numerous places throughout your Bhaktivedanta purports. You guaranteed that if we cooperate with each other, this would please you very much.

We should not criticize each other, as Vaisnavas, because there is fault in everyone and we may be ourselves subject to criticism. Best thing is to be above suspicion ourselves, then if we see discrepancies and make suggestion the others will automatically respect and take action to rectify the matters. That is cooperation. And we must exist on such cooperation, otherwise the whole thing is doomed if we simply go on fighting over some small thing. So try to organize things and preach together in this spirit, and that will please me very, very much. [Letter to Madhumaṅgala, 18 November 1972]

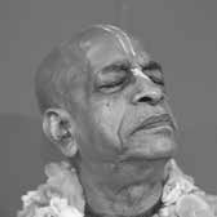
You further said that our actual dedication and sincerity to serve Your Divine Grace would be shown by how much we cooperate with one another.

Now, we have by Kṛṣṇa's Grace built up something significant in the shape of this ISKCON and we are all one family. Sometimes there may be disagreement and quarrel but we should not go away. These inebrieties can be adjusted by the cooperative spirit, tolerance and maturity, so I request you to kindly remain in the association of our devotees and work together. The test of our actual dedication and sincerity to serve the Spiritual Master will be in this mutual cooperative spirit to push on this Movement and not make factions and deviate. [Letter to Babhru, 9 December 1973]

You yourself saw with your own eyes and experienced in various ways how your Guru Mahārāja's powerful organization disintegrated due to a lack of cooperation between the leaders. You warned us that this could happen to us as well if we made the same mistake. Some have made the same mistake, but the majority have taken shelter in this most important instruction of yours—to not go away but rather to push on your movement by tolerance, maturity, and the cooperative spirit.

There are many reasons why projects or organizations (both simple and complex) fail. According to a recent survey, however, the most common reasons for failure are:

1. Undefined objectives and goals
2. Poorly defined roles and responsibilities
3. Poor management
4. Team weaknesses
5. Lack of management commitment



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6. Poor communication
7. Insufficient resources (funding and personnel)
8. Ignoring project warning signs

ISKCON is of course a spiritual movement and depends primarily on the spiritual practice and Kṛṣṇa consciousness of its leaders. Still, we can learn from the above-mentioned reasons, because out of eight, five are related to personal interaction, collaboration.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave us many goals, which are all contained in the “Seven Purposes of ISKCON.” You gave us roles and responsibilities and management principles. You gave us ample motivations to be committed, but we still have to work on the affection, friendship, and love among us.

You might be pleased to know that we are attempting to make progress in this direction. For the first time our GBC members and most of the temple presidents and other senior leaders, gurus, and *sannyāsīs* came together in Śrīdhām Māyāpur, in front of the awesome construction of your Temple of the Vedic Planetarium, and in a cooperative spirit we exchanged experiences, suggestions and also concerns related to important initiatives aimed at preserving and pushing on your ISKCON movement.

On this auspicious day of Your Divine Grace’s Vyāsa-pūjā, we fall at your lotus feet and beg for your blessings. Please give us the necessary intelligence, humility, and tolerance to continue our attempts at cooperating with one another so you will be pleased. Your pleasure will be the final success of your ISKCON movement, and our own spiritual lives.

Your eternal servant,

Bhaktivaibhava Swami

Bhūrijana Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Please accept my humble obeisances at your soft lotus feet.

In olden Vedic times, those who rejected *śāstric* authority were not reasoned with. They, along with their philosophical stance, were simply avoided; they were rejected from society. Yet you desired to bring to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s lotus feet those lacking even the *concept* of Vedic authority, what to speak of accepting it. Or even knowing of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Vṛndāvana, Girirāja Govardhana, the Yamunā River, or the Vraja *gopas* and *gopikās*.

You disregarded qualification or disqualification as your desire to spread the chanting of Kṛṣṇa’s names throughout the world ignited your actions and guided you. Your vision was decidedly far-seeing. During the 1970s, for example, you wanted your books translated into the languages of iron-fisted communist Europe, for you envisioned Kṛṣṇa consciousness spreading there: “Not difficult,” you said. “Nothing is difficult. For the time being, it is difficult, but in due course of time it will be very easy.” And you also desired Kṛṣṇa’s devotional service to gently slip beneath the bamboo curtain as well. Now both goals



have been accomplished and are taken for granted, viewed as old news, the sacrifice and struggle to accomplish them forgotten. Both have in fact become reality due to your pure, powerful desire and far-seeing vision.

And your vision expands still further. You told me in the Philippines in 1972 of your desire that everyone in the *universe* become Kṛṣṇa conscious. Even by you, now departed from this world for thirty-five-plus years, can that amazingly expansive desire possibly be fulfilled?

Yes, by the mercy of your far-seeing vision.

At *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.2.31 the *devatās* praise the functioning of *ācāryas* in relationship to the boat of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet: "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, and because You are very merciful to Your other devotees, You accept this method to help them."

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, our exalted founder-*ācārya*, have left behind the same unerring boat prescribed by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī:

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

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

"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. These five limbs of devotional service are the best of all. Even a slight performance of these five awakens love for Kṛṣṇa." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 22.128–29)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are gathering and leading countless souls into the boat of the association of devotees; you are teaching millions to chant Kṛṣṇa's holy names in *japa*, *kīrtana*, and *saṅkīrtana*; you are blessing the world with the crest jewel of literatures, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; you are attracting an increasing number of souls to the effulgent dust of Śrīdhām Māyāpur and Śrī Vṛndāvana *dhāma*; and you are distributing throughout the world Kṛṣṇa's worshipable, beautiful Deity forms to be served with devotion.

Your far-seeing vision is increasingly becoming manifest, due to both your potent gifts and your emphatic preaching desire:

kali-yuge yuga-dharma—nāmera pracāra
tathi lāgi' pīta-varṇa caitanyāvatāra

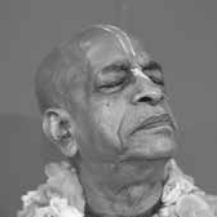
"The religious practice for the Age of Kali is to broadcast the glories of the holy name. Only for this purpose has the Lord, in a yellow color, descended as Lord Caitanya." [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi* 3.40]

yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa
āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra' ei deśa

"Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as they are given in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land." [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 7.128]

In awe, I watch you, as a servant of your Guru Mahārāja and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, even today transform individuals throughout the world through your inspired servants. Innumerable souls now board the boat of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. And you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, remain always their captain.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your vision is unique, broad, and ever-so-far-seeing. You are soft-hearted and compassionate and see good and service rendered, even in me, amidst an ocean of immaturity, insincerity,



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and faults. Your lotus feet, your service, and your affection-filled tolerance are my hope. May I hold tightly to *your* lotus feet in devotion and service. May your lotus feet and your gifts forever be my shelter.

Your servant,

Bhūrijana Dāsa

Bīr Krishna dās Goswami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

For many years we have used the term “founder-*ācārya*” without being aware of the full import of the term. Recently your dear disciple Ravindra Svarūpa Prabhu researched the topic as part of his *sevā* on the GBC and compiled a presentation on the subject that was backed up by research on the historical use of the term.

He discussed the original founder-*ācāryas* in the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* (descending from Lakṣmī, Brahmā, the four Kumāras, and Śiva). Then he presented the modern founder-*ācāryas* (Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhva, Śrī Nimbārka, and Śrī Viṣṇu Svāmī). He showed through his research that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not use that term for himself but planned to use it once he traveled to the West, which never happened.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you carried out that plan of your spiritual master’s, establishing Kṛṣṇa consciousness where there had been none. You fulfilled Lord Caitanya’s, Lord Nityānanda’s, and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s prediction that Kṛṣṇa consciousness would spread throughout the entire world (i.e., to every town and village).

You laid the groundwork and provided the inspiration for the construction of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium, which is the fulfillment of the previous *ācāryas*’ plans to demonstrate to the entire world that Śrīdhām Māyāpur is the entry point (Ravindra Svarūpa Prabhu used the term “portal”) for our voyage back to Goloka Vṛndāvana.

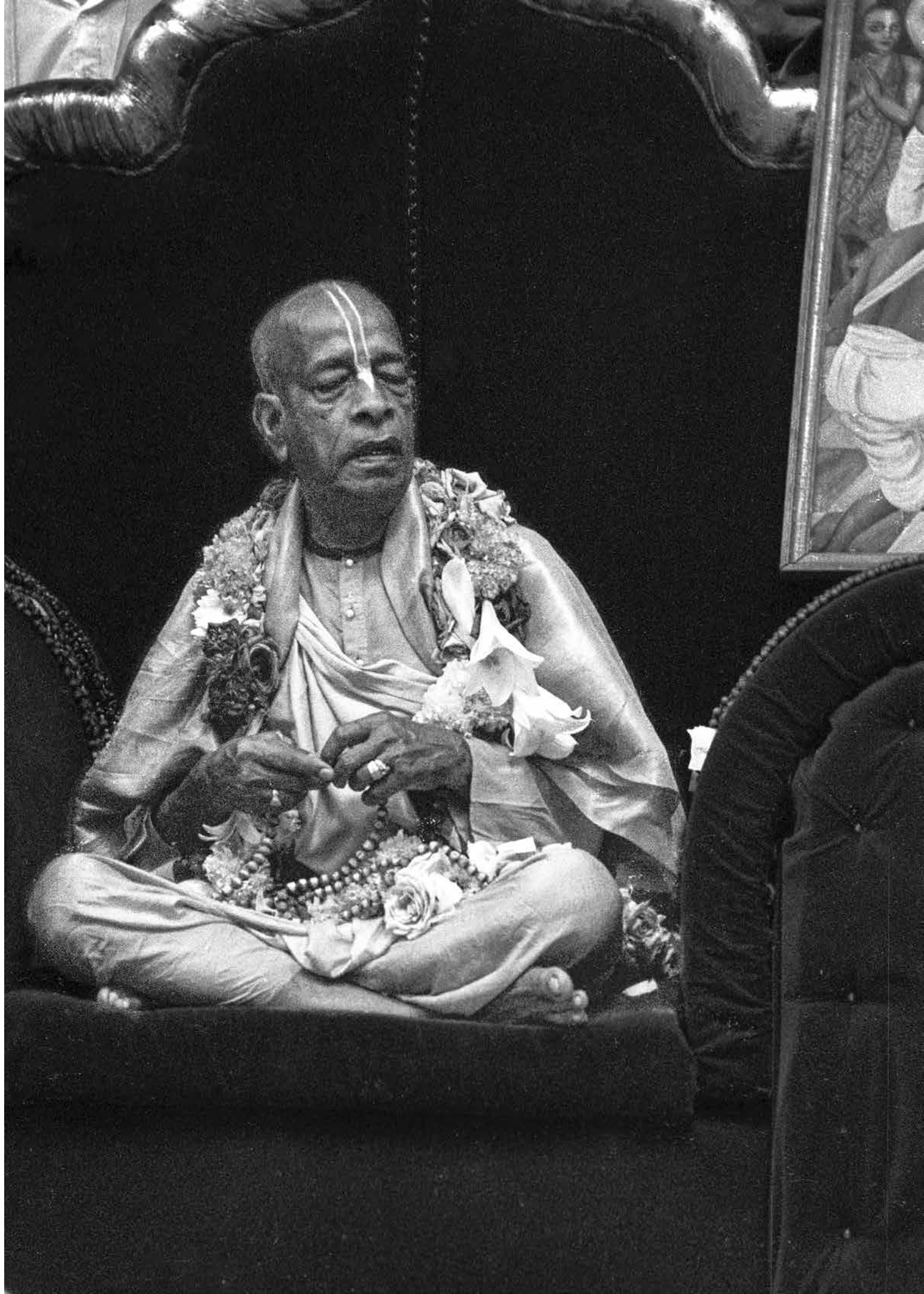
Hence it is perfectly appropriate for your name to appear among the names of our other illustrious founder-*ācāryas*. Ravindra Svarūpa Prabhu stated that you are the fifth founder-*ācārya* for the Iron Age (Kali-yuga). This an inspiring realization!

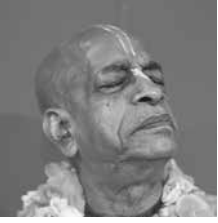
As I hear this glorification of you based on historical and scriptural references, my enthusiasm for serving Your Divine Grace increases exponentially. I am thankful to you for allowing me to associate with such exalted godbrothers, who are fixed in their determination to serve your lotus feet.

Please allow me always to associate with the great souls who are dedicated to serving you, allow me to serve your mission eternally, and allow me to inspire others to serve your mission.

Your eternal servant,

Bīr Krishna dās Goswami





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Devāmṛta Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

“It’s all your mercy” is common Vaiṣṇava parlance, in the ISKCON world and beyond. This catch-all response can be anything—from routine religious jargon, to heartfelt elegance, to the deepest realization of one’s utter spiritual dependency.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes in his song *Gurudeva!*: “When I examine myself, I find nothing of value. Therefore your mercy is essential to me. If you are not merciful, I shall simply weep and weep, and I shall not maintain my life.”

I often wondered about how he and, of course, you actually feel this declaration so extraordinarily, as your entire being.

As the years of my insignificant life roll by, I increasingly realize that any perceived faults are all mine, and any credit is all yours. Is this one short life enough to fully grasp at least half the extent of your mercy? What to speak of your disciples, even your granddisciples and their followers testify to your munificence in their lives.

During your days with us in the seventies, you once commented that physical association with the guru was for neophytes. I thought at that time, “Well, all glories to the sublime theology of *vāñī-saṅga*, but so that the physical association with your divine presence will always be mine, let me always remain a neophyte.”

Of course, better we hold to what you write in a purport (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 18.99): “Unless one is enlightened by the knowledge given by the spiritual master, he cannot see things as they are, even though he remains constantly with the spiritual master.”

In 1977, upon your departing the ordinary vision of this world, I was convinced I had failed to attain you. Concluding that any chance for a close relationship with you had left along with your physical presence, I resigned myself to helping the next generation of devotees not to miss out as I had. Vigorously urging your fledgling granddisciples to value the physical presence of their guru with utmost care, I would instruct them to seek every opportunity to have it.

After your departure, the constantly overpowering strains, agonies, and dangers of preaching behind the former Iron Curtain consumed my life—no time to continue lamenting about your disappearance. But during such bleak years there, when the atheistic communists, sure of their permanence, ruled their sealed-off kingdoms with iron fists of terror, your *vāñī* association caught this young foolish fugitive devotee by surprise.

In testimony to your kindness upon even such an insignificant *jīva* as me, I submit this poem written way back in the eighties, during my Iron Curtain years, for the glorification of your 2013 Vyāsa-pūjā.

* * *

East Europe Bhajana

Part One (1977)

Sailing with devotees on the ISKCON Los Angeles sea,
hoping His Divine Grace, the captain,
would personally lead me,

With good faith I endeavored
every day,
Sure that his pure glance
would soon be cast my way.



Then he left,
though I was still immature.
My hopes for his divine *saṅga*
crashed to the floor.

Too young to have been with him,
Too old to forget him,
Certainly this was a very precarious situation.

Alas, come what may . . .
the mission must push on.
Maybe in fifty lifetimes . . .
I'll again see his form.

Part Two (1978–79)

Sailing alone on a most dangerous sea,
with no hope that Śrīla Prabhupāda
would come and rescue me,

My ship is very tiny,
yet the ego-mast is tall.
I'm completely insignificant
and my service is so small.

Naturally Śrīla Prabhupāda ignored such a fool.
I wasn't worthy of the chance to be his tool.

Part Three (1980)

Sailing alone on a most dangerous sea,
certain that Śrīla Prabhupāda
will never find me . . .

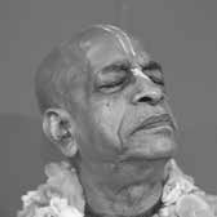
Smash!

Down comes the door to my
sealed-off heart.
“You can't come in here,” I protest,
“It's too late to start!”

“Surrender to your spiritual master,”
you majestically declare.
“About your rationalizations,
I definitely don't care.”

Part Four (1982)

Sailing alone on a most dangerous sea,
Sometimes does Śrīla Prabhupāda stand
right beside me?



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Becoming a little eager to serve him
according to his direction,
Why does Śrīla Prabhupāda shower
such care and affection?

Without his instructions
I'm a useless fool.
Maybe one day I can actually
become his tool.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda!
I write of your mercy out of
great astonishment.
Please forgive me, your aspiring servant, for my offenses.

* * *

Let us hope that, by your grace, I have made some advancement since those excruciating days. Now, more than a quarter century later, this microscopic servitor simply wonders what those who are your real devotees experience—what kind of nectar you shower upon them.

In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* Chapter 5, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī confesses that the attributes of Lord Nityānanda, who acted as his guru, have impelled him to become a madman writing of Lord Nityānanda's mercy.

Though we are nothing compared to Kavirāja Gosvāmī, yet, according to the measure of our own realizations, why don't we publicize the merciful presence of Śrīla Prabhupāda in every ISKCON devotee's life, through his *vāñī-saṅga*, especially via his books?

The Gosvāmī explains that generally it is not proper to reveal an account as spiritually esoteric as his, "for it should be kept as confidential as the *Vedas*, yet I shall speak of it to make His mercy known to all."

Similarly, whether highly advanced or neophyte, let us all broadcast the eternal relevance of Śrīla Prabhupāda's mercy for all generations of ISKCON devotees.

Clarifying his motivations, Kavirāja Gosvāmī explains: "O Lord Nityānanda, I write of Your mercy out of great exultation. Please forgive me for my offenses." He concludes, "Who in this world but Nityānanda could show His mercy to such an abominable person as me?"

Seeking to follow these perfect *paramparā* footsteps, in my imperfect capacity, I end: Who in this world but you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, could show his mercy and kindness to such a guilty transgressor as me?

Devāmṛta Swami

Dīna Sharaṇā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet!

From the ants to the demigods . . .

In all corners of the universe . . .

Condemned in the ocean of material miseries . . .

Millions of living entities are crying for relief



From the clutches of repeated birth and death . . .
If only they knew
That simply by crying
At the lotus feet of the pure devotee—
You,
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda—
Their call would be heard
By the Supreme Personality of Godhead . . .

As the thread invisible to the eye keeps the pearls in a row . . .
Without which there would be no beautiful necklace . . .
You,
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Continue to give us mercy and blessings.
This is the underlying fabric by which we are able to serve
For the pleasure of the Supreme Personality of Godhead . . .
And without which
We would only be
serving our insatiable senses . . .

As a mother duck is followed by her lined-up ducklings . . .
Without which there would be no leading the way in the field . . .
You,
His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,
Are heading up the Guru Paramparā,
Whose Vartmāna Gurus are marking the way for future disciples
For the pleasure of the Supreme Personality of Godhead . . .
And without which
We would only be
hopelessly disconnected individualists . . .

As the torch gives light on the way . . .
Without which there would only be deep darkness . . .
You,
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Have given us instructions and books
As the light by which we can understand the *siddhānta*
For the pleasure of the Supreme Personality of Godhead . . .
And without which
We would only be
Ignorant *sahajiyās* and impersonalists . . .

As the vase holds a nice bouquet . . .
Without which there would be only a useless bunch of flowers . . .
You,
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Have given us ISKCON
As the organization by which our *sādhana* and our governance is regulated
For the pleasure of the Supreme Personality of Godhead . . .
And without which
We would only be
A bunch of spiritual anarchists . . .



Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2013

As the palm holds the fingers that spread in all directions,
Without which there would be no useful hand . . .

You,
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Are the founder-*ācārya* whose disciples and granddisciples
Will guarantee the legacy for the next 10,000 years
For the pleasure of the Supreme Personality of Godhead . . .
And without which
We would only be
A personality cult . . .

Those who have served you over the years
In all the corners of this earth,
Condemned in the ocean of material enjoyment,
Are praying for relief from the clutches of repeated birth and death . . .

They know . . .
That if they simply pray
At the lotus feet of
The pure devotee—
You,
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda—
Their prayers will be heard
And their lives will be transformed to only serve
For the pleasure of the Supreme Personality of Godhead . . .

May I be an instrument in your hands; may

You,
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Use me to your heart's content . . .
For the pleasure of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Begging to become your servant,

M. Dīna Sharaṇā Devī Dāsī

Giridhārī Swami

Just Do It!

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Recently, one of your dear disciples and a close godbrother of mine asked, “How can we make advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness?” I answered that it depends upon our practice of *sādhana* combined with preaching. *Sādhana* inspires the mood of preaching, and preaching nurtures *sādhana*. This seemed like a reasonable answer at the time.

However, as I thought about his question more carefully, it seemed my answer lacked depth. I began



to ponder my godbrother's question and my answer more deeply.

You say in your *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*: "The seed of devotion cannot sprout unless watered by the process of hearing and chanting. One should submissively receive the transcendental messages from spiritually advanced sources and chant the very same messages for one's own benefit as well as the benefit of one's audience." (*Ādi-līlā* 2.117, purport)

To my way of thinking, you are saying that preaching is included as a part of *sādhana-bhakti* and that preaching therefore nourishes our own devotional creeper as well as the creepers of others.

Kṛṣṇa says something similar in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.68–69): "For one who explains this supreme secret to the devotees, pure devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me. There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear."

Lord Kṛṣṇa clearly favors the preacher, so much so that He "guarantees" pure devotional service and the privilege of returning to the spiritual realm.

In principle, then, the connection between *sādhana*, preaching, and advancement seems very concrete. Still, I felt something very significant was missing from my answer. What was it?

Sometime later I came across a passage from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that struck me:

Jñāna, or knowledge, means to understand one's constitutional position, and *viññāna* refers to practical application of that knowledge in life. In the human form of life, one should come to the position of *jñāna* and *viññāna*, but despite this great opportunity if one does not develop knowledge and practical application of knowledge through the help of a spiritual master and the *śāstras*—in other words, if one misuses this opportunity—then in the next life he is sure to be born in a species of nonmoving living entities.
[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.22.33]

Here you stress the importance of both *jñāna* and *viññāna*, knowledge and its practical application. Practical application is so essential that you say "if one misuses this opportunity, then in the next life he is sure to be born in a species of nonmoving living entities."

Throughout your teachings you repeatedly emphasize the importance of practical application:

O King, if you accept this conclusion of Mine, being unattached to material enjoyment, adhering to Me with great faith, and thus becoming proficient and fully aware of knowledge and its practical application in life, you will achieve the highest perfection by attaining Me. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.16.64]

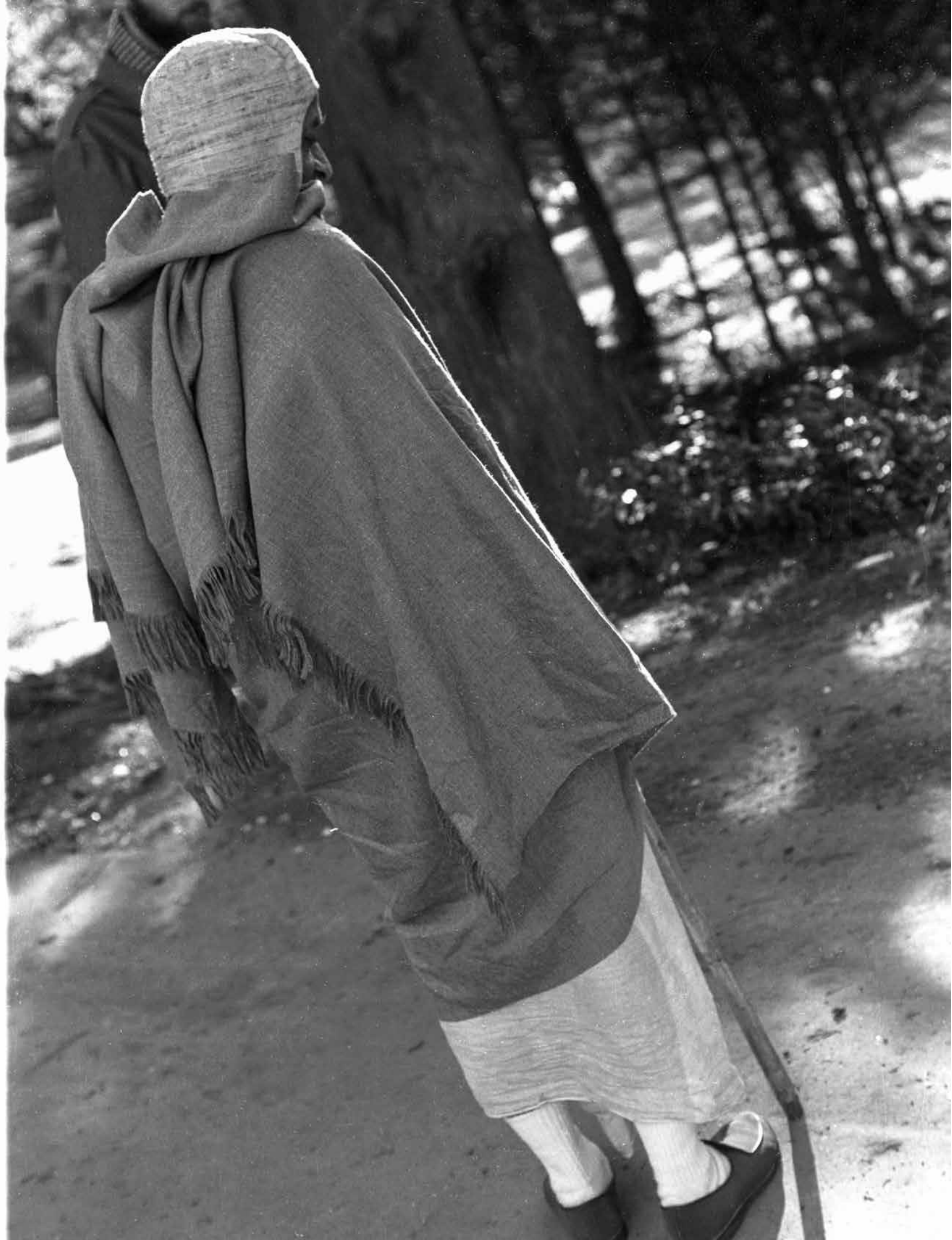
Our philosophy is practical. Actually, philosophy means practical application—if it is mere theory then it has no value. [Letter to Dānavīr, 12 December 1971]

The deeper and more complete answer to my godbrother's question was becoming clear. More important than the principle of preaching nourishing *sādhana* and *sādhana* nourishing preaching is *how* we practice *sādhana* and *how* we preach. Proper application of the principle is as important as the principle itself. Just understanding the theory without practical application has, as you say, "no value."

Practical application of the principle of *sādhana* being nourished by preaching and preaching being nourished by *sādhana* is therefore the real challenge. "Example is better than precept," you often taught us.

But alas, forty years have gone by and I have yet to come to the level of pure devotional service, as you desired. How to develop the level of sincerity required to fully apply the principles of devotional service? How to hear and chant without offense, with full attention, and with genuine love? How to be selfless in my service to you, your followers, and Kṛṣṇa?

Questions such as these repeated themselves again and again in my mind. I was feeling quite hopeless, but then I heard a story about you told by Śivārāma Swami. Mahārāja was describing an incident that occurred during your visit to Montreal in 1975. Your visit was brief—only a few hours—but you deeply touched the lives of several devotees that day. One such devotee was an Indian-bodied young man who had been coming to the temple for a couple of years. He was giving donations and also chanting sixteen





rounds. As you walked past this devotee, you turned to him and asked, “Are you chanting sixteen rounds?” This young man was awestruck that you had spoken to him, and he was at a complete loss for words. He answered, “I’m trying.” You then lifted up your cane, placed its point into his chest and starting pushing. He slowly backed up until he was pushed up against the wall of the temple building. You then told him, “Don’t try, just do it!”

Beyond the humor of this pastime, I thought about its gravity and how it could be applied to my situation. All I really needed was to “Just do it!” By pushing myself beyond the confines of material conditioning and practically applying the principles of devotional service, I could and would advance on the path to pure devotional service.

But this will not happen by my own meager endeavor alone. I need your mercy for empowerment. Otherwise, I will go on for many lifetimes and get nowhere.

On this day, I pray for a drop of your mercy. Please give me the strength to practically apply the principles of devotional service fully and thus advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I see nothing else of value in this world.

When I next see that godbrother who asked me how to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I will tell him that *sādhana* indeed nourishes preaching and preaching nourishes *sādhana*. But unless we get your mercy so that we can practically apply the principles of devotional service wholeheartedly, advancement will continue to elude us. Therefore, armed with your mercy, we must “Just do it!”

Your humble servant,

Giridhārī Swami

Girirāj Swami

Śrīla Prabhupāda, Spiritual Revolutionary

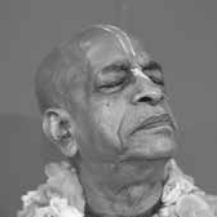
My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances in the dust of your divine lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, who can fathom your greatness, your accomplishments, your unbounded causeless mercy and love? In a letter to a sympathizer in India in 1966, you wrote of your experience of America:

The general people are all intoxicated and loafers. . . . You cannot imagine from there, how difficult it is to make them accept good *sad-acara* [behavior according to scriptural injunctions]. It is so much mercy from Śrīla Prabhupāda [Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī] that they are giving up illicit relationships, intoxication, marijuana, tea, coffee, everything. Having given up meat they are eating dal, chapatti, and rice and are very happy. They do *kirtana* and *hari-nama* every morning and evening, and do *sandhya* before Srila Mahaprabhu’s picture. To honor the *guru-varga*, as soon as they see me they pay obeisances. I never expected so much. . . .

It is not possible to beg here. It is not possible to run a *matha* or temple if money does not come from earnings. Here it is not possible to go from door to door to beg flour and rice. Without [advance] notice it is not possible to meet with any gentlemen. . . . Along with all this inconvenience, in this faraway foreign country, I am working alone, helplessly. My only hope is Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura. I have no one else. In my house my wife and son did not help me, so I left my home. I thought the Godbrothers would help me, but even that I did not get. . . . In my old age I have taken so much risk, but not to fulfill any of my own desires. Srila Prabhupada had desired this work, and I am trying to fulfill that desire according to my ability.



Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2013

Personally I have no ability. My only hope is Srila Prabhupada.

Some glimpse of your greatness—and your mission—is given in your translation and purport to *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam*, Second Canto, chapter four, text 18:

*kirāta-hūṇāndhra-pulinda-pulkaśā
ābhīra-śumbhā yavanāḥ khasādayaḥ
ye 'nye ca pāpā yad-apāśrayāśrayāḥ
śudhyanti tasmai prabhaviṣṇave namaḥ*

“Kirātas, Hūṇas, Āndhras, Pulindas, Pulkaśas, Ābhīras, Śumbhas, Yavanas, members of the Khasa races, and even others addicted to sinful acts can be purified by taking shelter of the devotees of the Lord, due to His being the supreme power. I beg to offer my respectful obeisances unto Him.” In your purport you explain:

The above-mentioned historical names are different nations of the world. Even those who are constantly engaged in sinful acts are all corrigible to the standard of perfect human beings if they take shelter of the devotees of the Lord. Jesus Christ and Muhammad, two powerful devotees of the Lord, have done tremendous service on behalf of the Lord on the surface of the globe. And from the version of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī it appears that instead of running a godless civilization in the present context of the world situation, if the leadership of world affairs is entrusted to the devotees of the Lord, for which a worldwide organization under the name and style of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness has already been started, then by the grace of the Almighty Lord there can be a thorough change of heart in human beings all over the world because the devotees of the Lord are able authorities to effect such a change by purifying the dust-worn minds of the people in general.

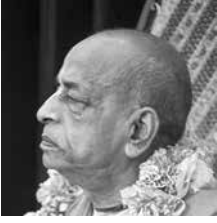
Your disciple and Sanskrit editor Pradyumna Dāsa, who had read many scriptures, commentaries, and works by previous *ācāryas*, told me that what struck him as unique about you was that you applied the principles of scripture beyond the individual practitioners’ efforts to the affairs of state and the world. You applied the same principles on a broad scale, as we see immediately in this purport.

The verse says that anyone who is sinful can at once be purified by taking shelter of the devotees of the Lord—which is very encouraging for us sinful souls. And you take the principle and extend it—that the whole world is suffering because people are sinful. As you have explained, all suffering is due to sin—transgressing God’s laws—and sin is due to ignorance. So if we become free from ignorance, we will become free from sin and suffering—which can be achieved by taking shelter of the devotees of the Lord.

Everyone is under the jurisdiction of some government. If the governments are guided by devotees of the Lord, there will be no more sinful activities, no more sinful reactions, and no more misery, and people will be peaceful and happy.

Continuing the purport:

The politicians of the world may remain in their respective positions because the pure devotees of the Lord are not interested in political leadership or diplomatic implications. The devotees are interested only in seeing that the people in general are not misguided by political propaganda and in seeing that the valuable life of a human being is not spoiled in following a type of civilization which is ultimately doomed. If the politicians, therefore, would be guided by the good counsel of the devotees, then certainly there would be a great change in the world situation by the purifying propaganda of the devotees, as shown by Lord Caitanya. As Śukadeva Gosvāmī began his prayer by discussing the word *yat-kīrtanam*, so also Lord Caitanya recommended that simply by glorifying the Lord’s holy name, a tremendous change of heart can take place by which the complete misunderstanding between the human nations created by politicians can at once be extinguished. And after the extinction of the fire of misunderstanding, other profits will follow.



The destination is to go back home, back to Godhead. . . .

As described by Lord Caitanya in His *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, the chanting of the holy name cleanses the mirror of the heart. And Śukadeva Gosvāmī recommends *yat-kīrtanam*—the same thing.

One may think of the verses of the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* in a very personal way, in terms of one's own spiritual advancement, but here you extend the principle: if the government leaders propagate *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, then all of the benefits mentioned in the first verse of the *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, such as extinguishing the blazing fire of material existence, can be achieved, not only on the level of the individual and family but also on the level of nations. On every level people can be delivered from the blazing fire of material existence by taking shelter of the devotees' instructions and performing *saṅkīrtana*.

A little further in the purport:

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.32) it is said by the Lord that there is no bar to becoming a devotee of the Lord (even for those who are lowborn, or women, *śūdras*, or *vaiśyas*), and by becoming a devotee everyone is eligible to return home, back to Godhead. The only qualification is that one take shelter of a pure devotee of the Lord who has thorough knowledge in the transcendental science of Kṛṣṇa (the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*).

Tamāl Krishna Goswami once dreamed that you were reporting to the previous *ācāryas* about the situation on the planet earth: "The people now have no good qualities. They have no background in pious activities, no background in Vedic culture, and no background in scriptural knowledge. But they do have one good quality: They have full faith in me, and whatever I tell them they do."

Hearing the dream, you smiled in agreement. "The only qualification is that one take shelter of a pure devotee of the Lord who has thorough knowledge in the transcendental science of Kṛṣṇa. Anyone from any part of the world who becomes well conversant in the science of Kṛṣṇa becomes a pure devotee and a spiritual master for the general mass of people and may reclaim them by purification of heart."

Here you are referring to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 8.128): "Whether one is a *brāhmaṇa*, a *sannyāsī*, or a *śūdra*—regardless of what he is—he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa." And you are extending the principle that regardless of one's background—no matter how sinful—if one takes shelter of a devotee of the Lord who is conversant with the science of Kṛṣṇa and learns the science from him, one in turn can become a guru, a teacher of the transcendental science.

"A Vaiṣṇava, therefore, can accept a bona fide disciple from any part of the world without any consideration of caste and creed and promote him by regulative principles to the status of a pure Vaiṣṇava who is transcendental to brahminical culture."

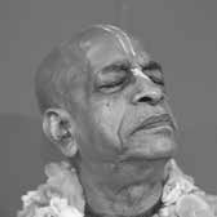
Your stance was revolutionary. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura enunciated the principle, with evidence from *sāstra*, that even a person not born a *brāhmaṇa* can become a Vaiṣṇava and that when one is actually a Vaiṣṇava he surpasses even the brahminical qualifications. And he implemented the principle in his *maṭha*, awarding the sacred thread to devotees not born in *brāhmaṇa* families.

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, extended the same principle even to those born outside India or Hindu society.

In India we met—and one still meets—people who objected to your awarding the sacred thread to those born outside *brāhmaṇa* families. In Madras Acyutānanda had an argument with our host, a so-called orthodox Hindu, who believed that you cannot be a *brāhmaṇa* unless you are born in a *brāhmaṇa* family. Still, he conceded, "You can be a Vaiṣṇava, and a Vaiṣṇava is more than a *brāhmaṇa*—but you are not a *brāhmaṇa*. To become a *brāhmaṇa* you have to take birth as a *brāhmaṇa* in your next life."

Acyutānanda explained, "One takes birth in a particular family according to his *karma*, his previous pious and sinful activities, and thus someone who has engaged in sinful activities may not take birth in a *brāhmaṇa* family. But by chanting the holy name of the Lord you can immediately eradicate all sinful reactions, without a change of body." In conclusion, he questioned our host, "What is stronger—the holy name or sin?" And the man had to admit that the holy name is stronger.

So by taking shelter of the holy name, under the guidance of a pure devotee, one can be freed from sinful actions and reactions, even without changing one's body, and thus transcend the position of even a material *brāhmaṇa*. One can become more than a *brāhmaṇa*—and also a *brāhmaṇa*.



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Further on in your purport:

So by the order of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the cult of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or the *Bhagavad-gītā* can be preached all over the world, reclaiming all persons willing to accept the transcendental cult. Such cultural propaganda by the devotees will certainly be accepted by all persons who are reasonable and inquisitive, without any particular bias for the custom of the country. The Vaiṣṇava never accepts another Vaiṣṇava on the basis of birthright, just as he never thinks of the Deity of the Lord in a temple as an idol.

Here you refer indirectly to a verse from the *Padma Purāṇa*: “One who thinks the Deity in the temple to be made of wood or stone, who thinks of the spiritual master in the disciplic succession as an ordinary man, who thinks the Vaiṣṇava in the Acyuta-gotra to belong to a certain caste or creed, or who thinks of *caraṇāmṛta* or Ganges water as ordinary water is taken to be a resident of hell.”

Just as the Deity is transcendental—not stone or wood or metal but Kṛṣṇa Himself—so too a Vaiṣṇava who has been reinstated in his or her constitutional position as an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa is not a *brāhmaṇa* or *vaiśya* or *sūdra* or *mleccha* or Indian or American or Chinese or man or woman. He or she is a Vaiṣṇava, servant of Viṣṇu.

Your purport continues:

And to remove all doubts in this connection, Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī has invoked the blessings of the Lord, who is all-powerful (*prabhaviṣṇave namaḥ*). As the all-powerful Lord accepts the humble service of His devotee in devotional activities of the *arcana*, His form as the worshipable Deity in the temple, similarly the body of a pure Vaiṣṇava changes transcendently at once when he gives himself up to the service of the Lord and is trained by a qualified Vaiṣṇava.

Here you refer to Lord Caitanya’s instruction to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya* 4.192): “At the time of initiation, when a devotee fully surrenders unto the service of the Lord, Kṛṣṇa accepts him to be as good as Himself” (not in quantity, of course, but in quality). And Sanātana Gosvāmī confirms the same principle in his *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (2.12), as you often quote: “As bell metal is turned to gold when mixed with mercury in an alchemical process, so one who is properly trained and initiated by a bona fide spiritual master immediately becomes a *brāhmaṇa*.”

Concluding your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.4.18:

The conclusion is that the Lord, being all-powerful, can, under any and every circumstance, accept anyone from any part of the world, either personally or through His bona fide manifestation as the spiritual master. Lord Caitanya accepted many devotees from communities other than the varṇāśramites, and He Himself declared, to teach us, that He does not belong to any caste or social order of life, but that He is the eternal servant of the servant of the Lord who maintains the damsels of Vṛndāvana (Lord Kṛṣṇa). That is the way of self-realization.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta indicates the value, or stature, or significance of someone—you—who can actually purify people addicted to sinful acts. That principle was there in the *Bhāgavatam*, but until you left India and crossed the ocean, it had not been done outside of India.

The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* describes the Caitanya tree, with Lord Caitanya being simultaneously the tree and the gardener tending the tree. Different branches of the tree are described, one as *sarvottama*, “the best of all”:

On the western side were the forty-third, forty-fourth, and forty-fifth branches—Śrī Sanātana, Śrī Rūpa, and Anupāma. They were the best of all. (Cc. *Ādi* 10.84)

By the will of the supreme gardener, the branches of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī grew many times over, expanding throughout the western countries [*paścima deśa*] and covering the entire region. (Cc. *Ādi* 10.86)



Reading these verses, we are struck by the resemblance between what Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī says about Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Sanātana and what we know to be true of you.

Rūpa and Sanātana are glorified because they spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the western regions of Bhārata (India). By the desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the supreme gardener, you went even further west, across the ocean to America, and across the next ocean, to China. Thus you are appreciated for *nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*: “delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.”

The people in general on the western side of India were neither intelligent nor well behaved, but by the influence of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī they were trained in devotional service and good behavior. (Cc. Ādi 10.89)

Such was the condition of the population on the western side of India during Lord Caitanya’s time—what to speak of the western hemisphere when you went. Still, you trained us in devotional service (*bhakti*) and good behavior (*sad-ācāra*).

As you yourself explain in your purport,

Until five thousand years ago . . . the Vedic culture was current everywhere. Gradually, however, people were influenced by non-Vedic culture, and they lost sight of how to behave in connection with devotional service. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī very kindly preached the *bhakti* cult in western India, and following in their footsteps the propagators of the Caitanya cult in the Western countries are spreading the *saṅkīrtana* movement and inculcating the principles of Vaiṣṇava behavior, thus purifying and reforming many persons who were previously accustomed to the culture of *mlecchas* and *yavanas*. All of our devotees in the Western countries give up their old habits of illicit sex, intoxication, meat-eating, and gambling. Of course, five hundred years ago these practices were unknown in India—at least in eastern India—but unfortunately at present all of India has been victimized by these non-Vedic principles, which are sometimes even supported by the government.

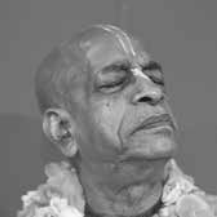
When you first returned to India and came to Bombay in 1970, there was a large gathering of *sādhus* at Chowpatty Beach. Many Māyāvādīs were on the stage, with thousands of people in the audience. The *sādhus* gave many longwinded, dry, impersonal, speculative discourses, and when finally your turn came, you spoke for only a few minutes:

The problem is . . . how we can make everyone accustomed to take up good habits—*sad-ācāra*. I think in this age, Kali-yuga, there are many faults.

You proceeded to explain the power of Lord Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* movement to clean the hearts of everyone, referring to the two great rogues whom Lord Caitanya had delivered, Jagāi and Mādhāi:

Now we are saving, wholesale, Jagāis and Mādhāis. Therefore, if we want peace, if we want to be situated on the *sad-ācāra* platform, then we must spread the *harināma mahā-mantra* all over the world. And it has been practically proven. The American and European Vaiṣṇavas who have come here, who have chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra—they were cow-flesh eaters, drunkards, illicit-sex mongers, all kinds of gamblers. But having taken to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, they have given up everything abominable. *Sad-ācāra* has come automatically. They are no more meat-eaters, no more gamblers, no more illicit-sex mongers, no more intoxicators. They do not even take tea or coffee, or even smoke, which I think is very rare to be found in India. But they have given up. Why? Because they have taken to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I do not feel that I have to say very much. You can see what is the result of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is not something artificial. It is there in everyone. I have not done anything magical. But this Kṛṣṇa consciousness is present in all of us. We simply have to revive it.



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Thus you did with people all over the world what Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī had done in the western regions of India—trained people who were neither intelligent nor trained in devotional service or good behavior.

In your talk, and in your purport, you boldly pointed out that your disciples had given up all these sinful activities because they had taken shelter of a pure devotee and engaged in chanting the holy name of the Lord. So, if we maintain that position of following the instructions of the pure devotee and chanting the holy names, we will have the strength to resist the force of previous bad habits and the false propaganda of materialistic leaders. It is not automatic; but if we make a conscious, deliberate effort to maintain the shelter of the pure devotee and the holy name, *māyā* will not be able to touch us.

Kṛṣṇa is like the sun, and *māyā* is like darkness. As long as we remain in the sun of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the darkness of *māyā* cannot touch us. And so we should continually chant, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, under your perfect guidance.

On this occasion we pray that we may always remain in the light of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and fulfill your words and desires.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your fallen servant,

Girirāj Swami

Gopāl Krishna Goswami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this glorious day of your appearance, I offer my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet again and again. As always, I find myself totally unqualified to glorify your unlimited transcendental qualities and achievements.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.5.3) the great sage Vidura speaks as follows:

*janasya kṛṣṇād vimukhasya daivād
adharmā-sīlasya suduḥkhitasya
anugrahāyeha caranti nūnaṁ
bhūtāni bhavyāni janārdanasya*

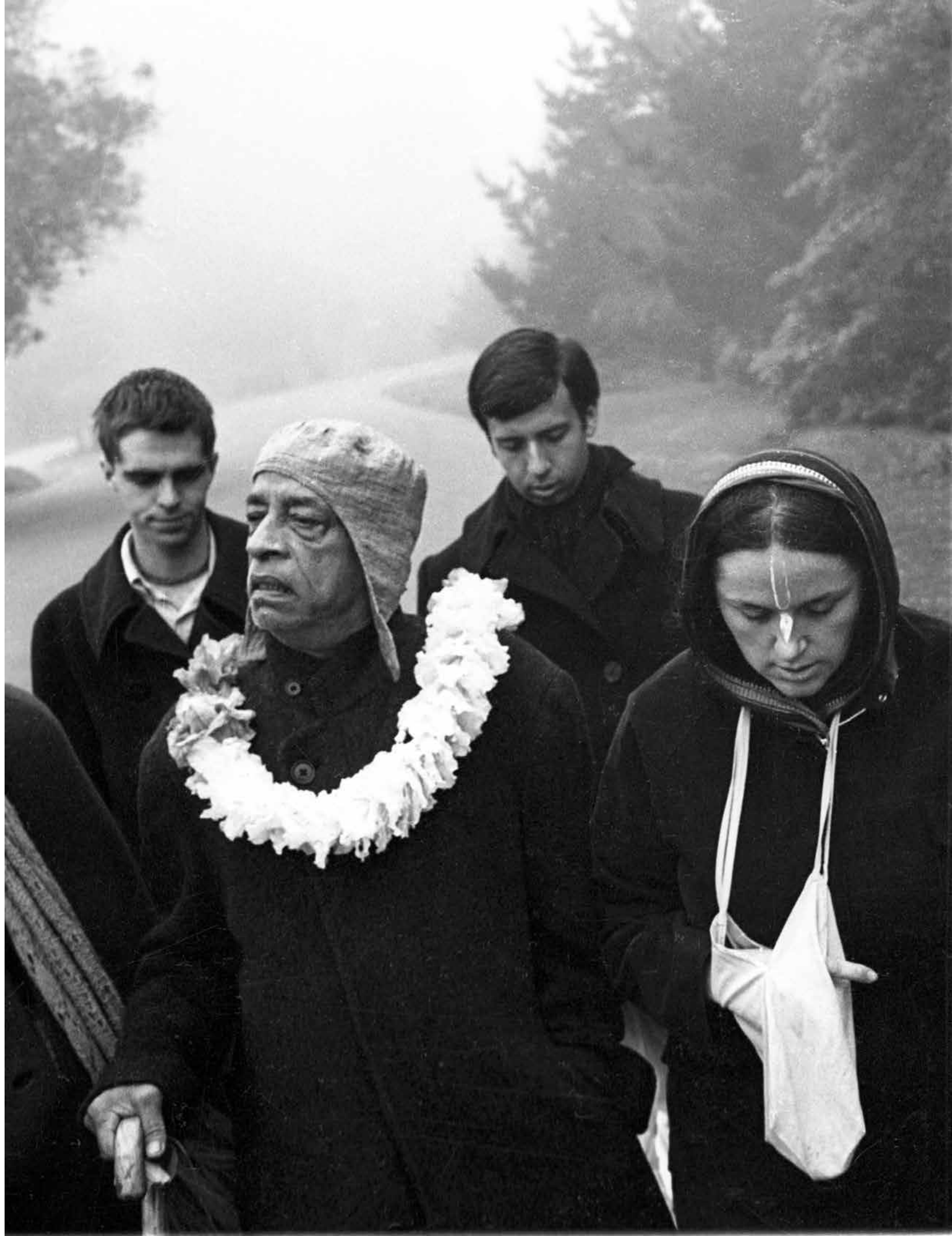
“O my lord, great philanthropic souls travel on the earth on behalf of the Supreme Personality of Godhead to show compassion to the fallen souls who are averse to the sense of subordination to the Lord.”

In the purport you state:

Great unalloyed devotees of the Lord are compassionate towards the fallen, and therefore they travel all over the world with the mission of bringing souls back to Godhead, back to home. Such pure devotees of the Lord carry the message of Godhead in order to deliver the fallen souls. . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are that merciful Vaiṣṇava who left Vṛndāvana in old age to execute your spiritual master’s order. You are a Vaiṣṇava of the highest order. Your every action was based on the teaching of the *ācāryas* and *śāstras*. In spite of having thousands of disciples, you were always a humble servant of Lord Caitanya. You poured mercy just like the rain clouds pour rain on the dry earth. You opened spiritual hospitals (temples) all over the world so that the conditioned souls could become enlightened about the importance of human life. In spite of many obstacles, you were determined to establish Kṛṣṇa consciousness on this planet.

You showed us how to push on Lord Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* movement by your own personal example.





Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2013

You taught us the sublime process of chanting, dancing, worshiping the Deities, and taking *prasādam* in the association of devotees. You established very beautiful temples all over the world. You emphasized the importance of visiting the *dhāmas* by establishing beautiful centers in Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana. You worked hard to translate the Vedic texts for the benefit of humanity. Your books are now available in over seventy languages of the world. You stated that these books will give guidance for the next ten thousand years. Every day we meet people whose lives changed after reading your books. Your books are the real time bombs. They can explode at any time. You wanted us to study your books and also distribute them. You emphasized that book distribution is the highest welfare activity one can engage in. You are continuing to preach through your books, videos, and recorded lectures. You are our eternal father, guide, and well-wisher. Once again I want to beg you to give me the strength and intelligence to remain engaged in service in your glorious ISKCON movement. Your movement is the only hope for suffering humanity.

Due to your purity, your Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement has continued to expand even after your physical departure. Book distribution is increasing in many parts of the world, and more and more spiritual hospitals are being built, especially in India. Due to your causeless mercy we now have five temples in Bombay and ten in Delhi. This expansion of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is happening only due to your dedication to fulfilling Lord Caitanya's prediction that the holy name would be chanted in every town and village.

Your insignificant servant,

Gopāl Krishna Goswami

Guru Prasād Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet, which are giving shelter to the whole world. Such mercy has never been seen before. All glories to you!

As I continue with my meditation on how you perfectly embody the twenty-six qualities of a Vaiṣṇava, the next quality I would like to consider is *sthira*, being fixed. "Fixed" means totally determined to please Kṛṣṇa. There are many determined persons in this world, but they almost always have some personal motive, either direct or extended. You have shown us, and the whole world, how to be fixed in only satisfying Kṛṣṇa. That type of determination is the most difficult to attain. As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.14):

*satataṁ kīrtayanto mām̐ yatantaś ca dṛḍha-vratāḥ
namasyantaś ca mām̐ bhaktyā nitya-yuktā upāsate*

"Always chanting My glories, endeavoring with great determination, bowing down before Me, these great souls perpetually worship Me with devotion." This type of determination is possible only for *mahātmās*, *mahā-bhāgavatas*. When you came to America, you revealed your total surrender to the holy name. And you demonstrated it in practice by spreading the holy name universally. In your *Upadeśāmṛta*, you define a *mahā-bhāgavata* as one who contemplates twenty-four hours a day how to spread the holy name. One of your godbrothers said that up to the point of your traveling the world and giving the *mahā-mantra* to everyone, he and others thought that *pr̥thivī āche yata nagarāḍi grāma/ sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma* was an aphorism but not a prophecy. However, you proved it a reality.

You were fixed in giving a personal example of how to conduct the daily practice of *bhakti*. You would arrive at a temple after a very long trip and continue your regular schedule, as if you had only come



from the next town. Devotees who accompanied you on preaching tours would be exhausted the next morning, and sometimes you would have to awaken them and stress the importance of rising early no matter what the circumstances.

In every area of endeavor you showed by your personal example how to be fixed, determined, and persevering. As with all the Vaiṣṇava qualities you manifested in your *prākṛta-līlā*, you demonstrated these qualities to depths hardly imaginable. Only by striving to serve your lotus feet can I ever aspire to show an inkling of the resolve that is so natural to you. I beg for your mercy again and again.

Your servant,

Guru Prasād Swami

Hṛdaya Caitanya Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

O glorious spiritual master of the world, every year you allow me to understand you a little bit more—who you are, how great your mission is, the currently manifest impact of what you have given to the world, and the impact that your preaching will have in due course of time, when the world has some basic understanding of your great gift of transcendental knowledge.

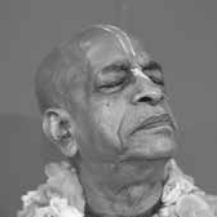
You have shown us what it means to be a perfect disciple: independently thoughtful, yet always having the instructions of your spiritual master in your heart and mind. When your godbrothers didn't come forward to help you fulfill the instructions of your spiritual master, you tried harder to engage them and regretted their lack of cooperation. But you when they remained indifferent to your efforts you didn't give up: with determination you moved forward without their help. Thus you became the guru of the world, the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON, and the pre-eminent *śikṣā-guru* for all your spiritual descendants for generations to come.

Your dependence on Kṛṣṇa is full of transcendental realization. Whatever happened, you connected it to Kṛṣṇa, and you never evaded the issues at hand. You were fearless because you were directly in contact with Kṛṣṇa, who is feared by fear personified. In eleven short years you established a worldwide movement that will last for ten thousand years. News reporters sometimes tried to trick you with their questions, but your wit and directness provided perfect answers that baffled them and made them speechless.

How could we ever understand the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* without your purports? How could we ever understand verse 18.66 of the *Bhagavad-gītā*: “Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear”? Your purports are Kṛṣṇa's words spoken through you. You are the living example of the ideal practitioner of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and the ideal example of the preacher who practices what he preaches.

The world is becoming increasingly crazy. Some examples: atomic bombs are in the hands of unstable regimes; religious leaders abuse children; India has become the world's second biggest beef producer; every now and then a crazy person machine-guns scores of innocent children and adults; working people can have their savings decimated to bail out irresponsible governments; religious symbols and ceremonies are banned in public places.

I do not know what Kṛṣṇa's plan is with the world economy, but at least in Europe things look pretty bleak, with politicians blowing on the boils. Perhaps all this economic suffering is Kṛṣṇa's way of helping people become more reflective, so they will take more seriously the ideas of simple living and high



Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2013

thinking and ultimately embrace Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for saving us. We pray that whatever happens we will be able to help ourselves by being Kṛṣṇa conscious and help the innocent people by giving them Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Your servant,

Hṛdaya Caitanya Dāsa

Jayapatāka Swami

My dear spiritual father Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful obeisances.

Recently I was thinking how you have delivered Lord Caitanya's process all over the world, to every continent of the world—how you represented Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu with so much mercy. I also could not help but think how you lived and gave us instructions to satisfy the previous *ācāryas*. You said that the secret of success is to satisfy the previous *ācāryas*. That's how you led your life. You connected us to the disciplic succession through the previous *ācāryas*. The process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to practice very carefully, being completely Kṛṣṇa conscious, and to give our homages and respects to the previous *ācāryas*.

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura tells us that to establish a high standard of Deity worship around the world, it is essential to have second-initiated devotees, or *brāhmaṇas*. He taught us that the qualities of a *brāhmaṇa* are included in the qualities of a Vaiṣṇava, i.e., that a genuine Vaiṣṇava is automatically a *brāhmaṇa*. Thus he awarded his strict disciples who had been born in lower castes the sacred thread, (*upanayanam* or *yajña upavīta*). You followed in his footsteps when you gave second initiations to Westerners and established a high standard of Deity worship.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have told us that we should also meditate on the previous *ācāryas* at the time of Vyāsa-pūjā and disappearance festivals. Last year I was meditating on you. This year I wanted to meditate on you and the four immediate previous spiritual masters, but it has not been possible so far to get a satisfactory Bengali poem written. So I am writing my realizations here and will try to get the poem done as quickly as possible. You have dedicated your life to following in the footsteps of the previous *ācāryas*. May we also be empowered to practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness in such a way that we will be able to follow you and thus follow the previous *ācāryas* through your mercy.

I remember a class you gave in Māyāpur in which you told us how each of the previous four *ācāryas* made some practical contribution to developing the holy *dhāma* of Navadvīpa and the birthplace of Lord Caitanya, and how you also were trying to do something for the holy *dhāma*, following in their footsteps, and how you were grateful to all the devotees who were helping you. Then you choked up and couldn't speak anymore.

In this way and other ways we can see how the previous *ācāryas* prepared the world for your arrival so you could spread Lord Caitanya's message and the holy name all over the world. May we always be surrendered at your lotus feet and try to satisfy you. In this way the previous *ācāryas* and Lord Kṛṣṇa will be satisfied, and our life will be perfect.

A soul surrendered to you lotus feet,

Jayapatāka Swami



Kavicandra Swami

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

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Lately we have been meditating deeply on the importance and meaning of your being known as the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON. As with everything you did, there are innumerable reasons why you took that title, not the least of which is for our protection. Founder-*ācārya* means “original”; no one else can be the founder-*ācārya*. There can be so many *ācāryas*, on so many levels, but there can be only one founder-*ācārya*. I pray that I can focus on your example of humility, which is exactly in line with the examples of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

O Lord Kṛṣṇa, son of Nanda, accompanied by the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu, please be merciful to me now. O Lord, please do not push me away from Your reddish lotus feet, for who is my beloved except for You? [*Iṣṭa-deve Vijñapti* 4, from Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura’s *Prārthanā*]

Were You to judge me now, You would find no good qualities. Have mercy and judge me not. Cause me to drink the honey of Your lotus feet and thereby deliver this Bhaktivinoda. [*Dainya*, Song 5, from *Śaraṇāgati*]

Ruined by laziness and sleep, I resist all pious deeds, yet am very enthusiastic to perform wicked acts. For the sake of worldly fame and reputation I engage in the practice of deceitfulness. I am victimized by my own greed, being always lustful. [*Dainya*, Song 4, from *Śaraṇāgati*]

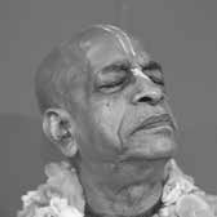
You explain that when these *mahā-bhāgavatas* lament like this, they really feel it. They are not like me, just pretending in order to get some attention.

I am always embarrassed to write for your Vyāsa-pūjā book, since so many others write with real love for you. While on Jagannātha Ratha-yātrā in a tourist area of Thailand, I saw an amusing sign in a shop window. It said “Genuine Fake Watches.” I thought, “That is me, a ‘genuine fake devotee.’” I am not like Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who said he was a pretender just to teach us humility. I am really so far, far from being a devotee.

*na prema-gandho 'sti darāpi me harau
krandāmi saubhāgya-bharaṁ prakāśitum
vaṁśī-vilāsy-ānana-lokanarṇ vinā
bibharmi yat prāṇa-pataṅgakān vṛthā*

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu continued, “My dear friends, I have not the slightest tinge of love of Godhead within My heart. When you see Me crying in separation, I am just falsely exhibiting a demonstration of My great fortune. Indeed, not seeing the beautiful face of Kṛṣṇa playing His flute, I continue to live My life like an insect, without purpose. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 2.45]

*dūre śuddha-prema-gandha, kapaṭa premera bandha,
seha mora nāhi kṛṣṇa-pāya*



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*tabe ye kari krandana, sva-saubhāgya prakhyāpana,
kari, ihā jāniha niścaya*

“Actually, My love for Kṛṣṇa is far, far away. Whatever I do is actually an exhibition of pseudo love of Godhead. When you see Me cry, I am simply falsely demonstrating My great fortune. Please try to understand this beyond a doubt. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 2.46*]

*yāte vaṁśī-dhvani-sukha, nā dekhi’ se cāṇḍa mukha,
yadyapi nāhika ‘ālabhana’
nija-dehe kari prīti, kevala kāmara rīti,
prāṇa-kūṭera kariye dhāraṇa*

“Even though I do not see the moonlike face of Kṛṣṇa as He plays on His flute, and although there is no possibility of My meeting Him, still I take care of My own body. That is the way of lust. In this way, I maintain My flylike life.”

[Purport:] In this connection, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura says that the lovable Supreme Lord is the supreme shelter. The Lord is the supreme subject, and the devotees are the object. The coming together of a subject and object is called *ālabhana*. The object hears, and the subject plays the flute. That the object cannot see the moonlike face of Kṛṣṇa and has no eagerness to see Him is the sign of being without *ālabhana*. Externally imagining such a thing simply satisfies one’s lusty desires, and thus one lives without purpose. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 2.47*]

I have to thank you for your unlimited compassion and patience with me. You have inspired so many to genuinely serve you unconditionally, and, like you, they keep encouraging me and giving me opportunities for service to your mission.

When I see how the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium is coming up in Māyāpur *dhāma*, I know that you are very pleased.

There are so many “miracles” happening, by your divine desire, all over this earth planet. Your book distribution is increasing, and more and more souls are taking to the genuine practice of *bhakti-yoga as it is*.

Aspiring to become the servant of your servants,

Kavicandra Swami

Madhusevita Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

A breeze of renaissance is pervading your ISKCON movement nowadays. It is characterized by a deeper and deeper understanding of your position as the founder-*ācārya*.

Your GBC Body is leading this “Prabhupāda’s position” renaissance.

You are not just the great soul that came and founded ISKCON and gave an immense treasure of



instructions, clear directions for expanding the preaching, and the perfect example of an unalloyed devotee. You are also the ever-present, most compassionate friend of all the devotees—past, present, and future—and the liberator of the struggling conditioned souls of this world.

“The preeminent *śikṣā-guru* in ISKCON” is not merely an epitaph meant to glorify your having left a set of instructions to be followed by all generations to come. It is the recognition of your vivid presence permeating and sustaining the consciousness, intelligence, mind, and activities of every ISKCON member; it is the recognition that you are still actively preaching and liberating souls in ways we cannot even imagine.

As we are not aware of how our bodies are working by virtue of myriad interrelated functions governed by higher authorities, we are similarly amazed to witness the many wonderful ways you ignite, care for, and preserve the Kṛṣṇa consciousness of those who come under your shelter. We are all but mercy cases and instruments in your expert hands.

The future of this movement as a whole, as well as of our individual spiritual lives, rests on your compassion alone.

The compassion of a *mahā-bhāgavata* is no ordinary compassion: a small drop of it restores the immortality of the soul in loving service to Kṛṣṇa.

Even those who come in touch with your ISKCON movement very briefly are cared for and protected from the most dreadful dangers.

The following story exemplifies and proves the power of your mercy.

Some thirty-five years ago a boy became attracted to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and, as is often the case, his parents became enraged. They even planned to engage deprogrammers to have their son kidnapped and forced to stop becoming a devotee. The mother was particularly attached to the son and vehemently cursed the devotees. But eventually she and her husband cooled down a bit and didn’t engage the deprogrammers.

Over the course of the following years the parents mellowed out and became favorable, to the point of inviting devotees to their home for lunch. The mother, a very expert cook, took special care in cooking and serving the devotees delicious food. She even started to chant rounds and to offer various services.

But bad association can often deprive one of the greatest fortune. And so it was that some fanatic relatives belonging to an evangelistic cult convinced the couple to join their camp, and consequently they both distanced themselves from devotional service. A strongly antagonistic attitude surfaced again.

Eventually the mother became ill, and her days were numbered. But then a very wonderful thing happened: she lost her short-term memory, and thus she forgot her affiliation with the evangelistic cult and her recent antagonistic attitude toward the devotees! Her long-term memory remained, however, and so she could remember the period of her life when she was regularly chanting her rounds, cooking for the devotees, and offering various services. Therefore she left her body glorifying Kṛṣṇa and the devotees. In other words, she left her body as a devotee!

Needless to say, the evangelists were shocked and dismayed.

How fortunate are those souls who come in touch with your compassion through your ISKCON movement! Kṛṣṇa feels obliged to help those who come under your care, and we are the most fortunate to be engaged in your service within your wonderful movement.

My humble prayer is that you keep me engaged in your service till my body drops dead and that I may forget everything and anything not related to you.

You are Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s mercy personified, and notwithstanding my numerous faults, I am confident that you will grant me this wish.

Your worthless servant,

Madhusevita Dāsa

Mukunda Goswami

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

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

Repartee '67

In the big darkened hall
You spoke with a voice
Pleading and strident,
And all by choice.

No one could be seen,
But thousands were breathing.
To them you were preaching;
Not a soul was leaving.

The spotlight shone bright—
Only you were in sight
In front of the mike.
We shadowed like night.

With you on stage
We sat silently.
You spoke without doubt,
Powerfully.

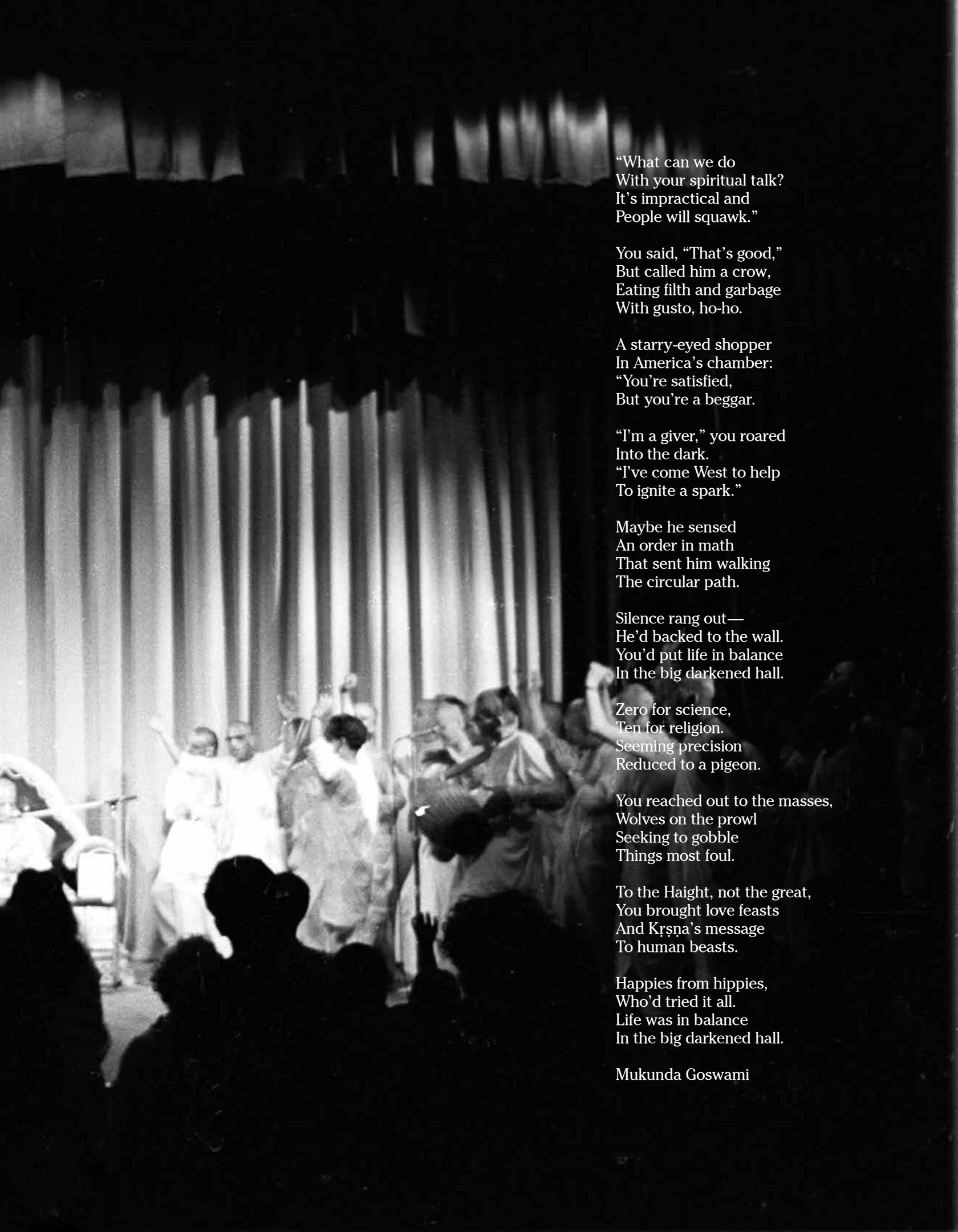
At the end of your talk
One could hear from the rear
An Indian accent,
Not seen yet clear.

The vent of a student
Attacked what you said.
He probably thought
You'd be better off dead.

He'd come from your land—
No question mark there.
You knew this for sure;
He barked into air.

"I study space
And technology.
And with my degree
I'll fight poverty.





"What can we do
With your spiritual talk?
It's impractical and
People will squawk."

You said, "That's good,"
But called him a crow,
Eating filth and garbage
With gusto, ho-ho.

A starry-eyed shopper
In America's chamber:
"You're satisfied,
But you're a beggar.

"I'm a giver," you roared
Into the dark.
"I've come West to help
To ignite a spark."

Maybe he sensed
An order in math
That sent him walking
The circular path.

Silence rang out—
He'd backed to the wall.
You'd put life in balance
In the big darkened hall.

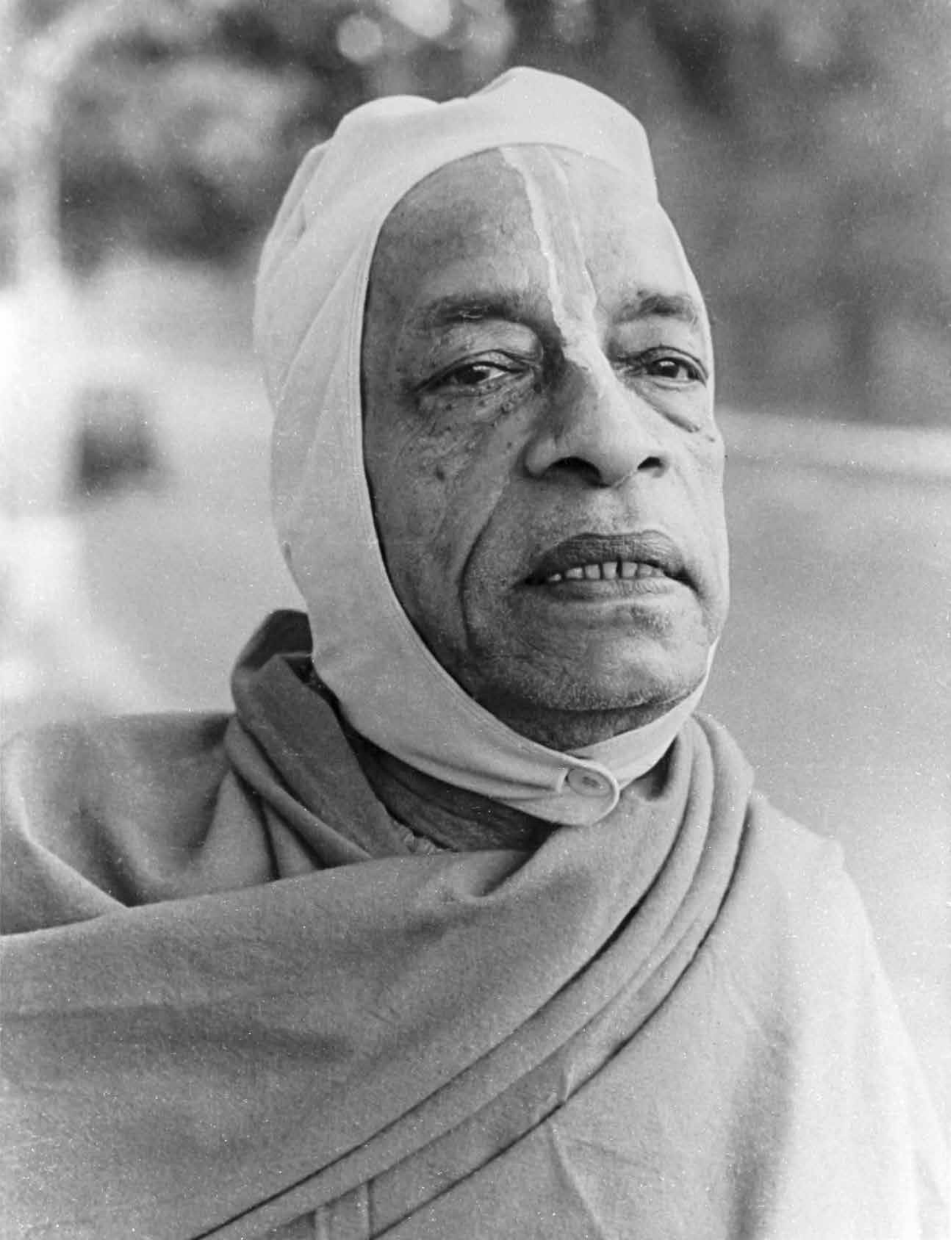
Zero for science,
Ten for religion.
Seeming precision
Reduced to a pigeon.

You reached out to the masses,
Wolves on the prowl
Seeking to gobble
Things most foul.

To the Haight, not the great,
You brought love feasts
And Kṛṣṇa's message
To human beasts.

Happies from hippies,
Who'd tried it all.
Life was in balance
In the big darkened hall.

Mukunda Goswami





Rādhānāth Swami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Earlier this year, at Keśīghāṭa in Vṛndāvana, on a beautifully decorated rowboat in the Yamunā River, we offered your beloved daughter Yamunā-devī's ashes into the sacred current. With tears of both separation and gratitude, I felt that moment to be inconceivable, yet an intimate offering to you. She had dedicated every detail of her life to please you and has surely entered into the realm of your eternal servitude.

Etched deeply in my soul is that moment in 1977 when I received the news that you had physically left us. The world seemed to have fallen into an abyss of heartbreak and confusion. What were we to do without your smile of encouragement, your gaze of resolve, or the knowledge that you were coming to see us to accept our offerings?

Over time, we are realizing the sweetness of service in separation and feeling Your Divine Grace guiding, protecting, and empowering us to serve in ways that are beyond our imagination. Your Divine Grace is especially present in your books, the projects you inspired, and the hearts of those who love you.

As the years pass, more and more of your loving followers are disappearing from this world and entering the realm of your eternal service. With the loss of these blessed souls, we are left in an immense void that can only be overcome by relinquishing our complacency and wholeheartedly taking shelter of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, by hearing your words, chanting Kṛṣṇa's names, and serving your mission. I have come to realize that your presence is especially felt when I can sincerely appreciate the sacrifice of those devotees who have been touched and inspired by Your Divine Grace.

I pray to forever remain the servant of your beloved servants,

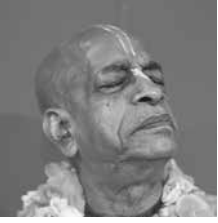
Rādhānāth Swami

Rāmāi Swami

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupada, in chapter 7 of *The Science of Self-Realization* you state:



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In a chaotic condition, in a confused state of life, one should approach another, who is in full knowledge of the matter. You go to a lawyer to solve legal problems, and you go to a physician to solve medical problems. Everyone in the material world is confused about spiritual identity. It is therefore our duty to approach a bona fide spiritual master, who can give us real knowledge.

High fame be thine for endless time
Because, Prabhupāda, you were divine.
You throughout this earth did go
And told it forth that all may know.

You told your message bold and clear,
Dispelling ignorance and all fear,
Sweet to recite and sweet to sing.
Great joy to all you did bring.

By nature wise, a teacher's skill
Subdued our strong rebellious will.
I recall your words—you measured each;
You pondered long on every speech.

A speedy envoy, you hurried forth
Eastward and westward, south and north.
You crossed the sea with words as bright
As sunbeams in their summer height.

Scholars praised you for your eloquence—
It was such a natural consequence
Of your strong, brilliant presentation.
Who could have any hesitation?

Many proclaimed you a saintly guide
Who spread good will on every side,
Respected and honored with worthy meed.
Who can recall each glorious deed?

After many days and nights had past,
You became ill and began to fast.
“I'll leave my body,” you began to say.
“No one can live and forever stay.”

In the end you did depart
To the Lord's abode with joyous heart.
We felt great love and tremendous pride,
But filled with sadness, we simply cried.

* * *

To know such a man was indeed a gift.
Without him we were lost and adrift.
Remembering his counsel, wise and good,
To follow his instructions we knew we should.

The disciples whom he loved so much,
Moved by compassion's gentle touch,
Gathered strength and felt renewed
With deep commitment and gratitude.

Let us be ready to fulfill his desire
By giving what the coming years require.
This offering I announce today;
To all his followers I humbly pray.

Push forward this movement of the Lord;
To not do this we cannot afford;
The ocean of nescience has to be crossed;
This sacred work should never be lost.

Never mind fiends who watch with spite,
Waiting eagerly to spoil this rite.
Success will attend our divine aim
If we have faith in the holy name.

Many opponents who raised their voice loud
Will surrender their heads upon the ground.
Lord Caitanya's mercy's like a rising tide:
Kali-yuga's net will be pushed aside.

The whole world is beginning to see—
Who is so foolish as to disagree?—
What a great man our Prabhupāda was:
Noble, in the transcendental cause.

* * *

Grant, saint divine, the boon I ask—
For thee, I ween, an easy task—
To whom the power you gave to know:
Please keep me close, don't let me go.

Your unworthy servant,

Rāmāi Swami



Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Although in one sense you have been absent from this vale of tears for three decades and a half, in another—and more important—sense, you remain with us. And not merely remain, but marvelously increase your awesome presence to all who reverently serve you.

You have left behind for us your instructions, your writings, and the very special society you created. Those who associate properly with these associate with you, and by that association they discover more and more and more of your greatness. You live in your legacy, beyond the reach of devouring time, and, like the realm you inhabit, you endlessly increase.

In 1972 you referred to this realm in a letter to one of your disciples. “We will have,” you noted, “another ISKCON there.” You yourself abide within that “ISKCON there” (“there” indicating the Śvetadvīpa of the spiritual cosmography), and from there you perpetually oversee and protect the ISKCON here.

You have woven a living, ever-growing network of temples to swathe this globe, this Bhu-goloka; within that web or network all lines converge upon its hub at Navadvīpa. There, at our “world headquarters,” you directed us to construct an Adbhuta Mandira. Navadvīpa itself is the descended spiritual realm; as a *tīrtha*, it is a crossing place between the lower and higher world. And from your eternal seat in that higher world, you so arranged it that the Adbhuta Mandira, the amazing “Temple of the Vedic Planetarium,” would rise up immediately adjacent to your *samādhi* seat in Navadvīpa, West Bengal. That marvelous temple shows and explains the connection joining this and the spiritual world, for it depicts in detail the pathway that was the subject of your first published book, *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, a pathway you indicated by the very title of the magazine you started in 1944: *Back to Godhead*.

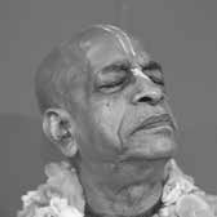
As the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON, you yourself have opened up a most capacious and magnanimous pathway back to Godhead. The ISKCON temples, centers, and gathering points around the world are entrances to the path, and all converge upon the center at Navadvīpa. And at the center the temple, being a spiritual entity, is both a map of the path and the path itself: a portal or gateway to the transcendent world. Seated there, you personally preside over your creation, an ever-alert guardian and maintainer of the pathway you have made for us.

Please give us your mercy. We pray that you will bless us to continue to help you in your wonderful work.

In unending gratitude,

Your most fallen servant,

Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa



Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2013

Romapāda Swami

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

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

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

*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!

The very life of your faithful followers and disciples is carrying within the core of their heart the instructions emanating from the lotus mouth of Your Divine Grace.

*guru-mukha-padma-vākya, cittete koriyā aikya,
ār nā koriho mane āśā*

I have always consciously tried to apply your teaching found in the purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.41: “[T]o be well versed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness one has to act firmly and obey the representative of Kṛṣṇa, and one should accept the instruction of the bona fide spiritual master as one’s mission in life.” Many times you have referred to this singular principle as “the key to success in spiritual life.” I have absolute faith in this statement. By it, you have placed the key to the spiritual world in our hand! Absolute submission unto the bona fide spiritual master’s instructions and his mission offers one absolute freedom.

One of your many instructions has served as a particular inspiration for me this year. On 17 October 1967 you wrote to Pradyumna Dāsa:

Brahma Samhita is the gist of the Srimad-Bhagavatam. In the Bhagavad gita as well as in the Srimad-Bhagavatam, Krishna is accepted as Supreme Lord & everything about him is nicely described there, similarly in the Brahma-Samhita everything about Krishna is perfectly described. In the very beginning of the book, Krishna is accepted as the Supreme Lord existing eternally in his transcendental form and is the cause of all causes. One who reads Brahma Samhita very carefully & scrutinizingly can understand everything of Krishna without any fault. I recommend, therefore, that all my students read Brahma Samhita very carefully—especially because it was translated personally by my spiritual master Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Maharaja.

There are many amazing spiritual insights to be found in this awesome literature! While the language of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura is often intimidating and seemingly forbidding, his penetrating eloquence has always left me feeling absolute awe toward him, while simultaneously experiencing being directly uplifted—silently and gently—to the transcendental platform by him, your most beloved and compassionate Guru Mahārāja.

One brilliant insight is presented in Text 5 of *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā*, wherein the position of Śvetadvīpa, situated within the realm of Goloka (or Gokula), is described. In Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta’s inimitable language, he describes that while Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* reside within the hexagonal whorl of the lotus of Goloka and within its petals, beyond this region, within the perimeter area known as Śvetadvīpa,



Lord Caitanya resides. While one might think that the perimeter of the whorl is lesser, the opposite is true! Not only is Śvetadvīpa nondifferent from the whorl, but it “makes complete, and is no less than” the central whorl or the flower’s corolla. How so? The answer is given that Lord Caitanya fulfills an aspect of Kṛṣṇa that Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa within the whorl cannot! Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa, but He fulfills the desire of Kṛṣṇa to experience the love and happiness of Rādhā by Himself tasting that love and happiness. In this way, Śvetadvīpa makes Goloka complete.

You taught us these same core understandings within your translation of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, yet the manner of expression within *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* adds a delightful flavor and appreciation of the abode of Śvetadvīpa: Lord Caitanya and His abode make Kṛṣṇa and his Goloka complete!

As an unflinchingly dedicated and ardently faithful disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, you delivered the sublime message of Lord Caitanya in an unadulterated form to the Western world, at enormous personal sacrifice and risk. You then mercifully brought it back to your place of birth, *puṇya-bhūmi*, India.

You demonstrated tireless commitment to your Guru Mahārāja’s mission: broad dissemination of the message of Godhead to the world. This is the way of the true follower of Lord Caitanya. Just as Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was uniquely empowered to fully comprehend and carry forward the message of Lord Caitanya, in his line you have accomplished the same—unprecedented empowerment. You are unquestionably a true *rūpānuga*.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī expressed his submission to the Lord of his life as follows:

*viracaya mayi daṇḍam dīna-bandho dayām vā
gatir iha na bhavattaḥ kācid anyā mamāsti
nipatatu śata-koṭīr nirmalam vā navāmbhas
tad api kila payodaḥ stūyate cātakena*

“O Lord of the poor, do what you like with me, give me either mercy or punishment, but in this world I have none to look to except Your Lordship. The *cātaka* bird always prays for the cloud, regardless of whether it showers rain or throws a thunderbolt.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the singular Lord of my life. By following you may I also become a *rūpānuga*, a follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and thus a follower Lord Caitanya, whose gift is the path of becoming a lover of Kṛṣṇa in the mood of the residents of Vṛndāvana.

Kindly keep me engaged in your service, eternally. This one desire is deeply and indelibly imbedded within my heart.

Kindly accept my prostrated obeisances again and again.

Aspiring for your eternal service,

Your humble disciple,

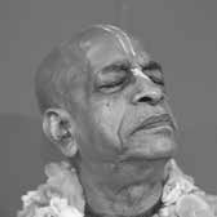
Romapāda Swami

Śivarāma Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

I am sitting in a hospital, and having been here for over two weeks and experienced a share of my just rewards, I am getting many realizations. In this condition, still dizzy and with double vision, I try to express my thanks for having been blessed by the divine wisdom that you have revealed to the world—wisdom that helps one appreciate the true value of this human form of life, wisdom that reveals every



Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2013

nook and corner of reality, wisdom that helps us navigate through the stormy sea of material existence, wisdom that guides us to our eternal home, to our eternal Lord.

The other day Dr. Sundarānanda introduced me to a patient staying a few doors down the hall. The patient came to my room, sat down, and said, “Swamiji, I am a doctor by profession, but my mind has been very troubled since my own recent health challenges began.” As it turned out, he had gone through a health crisis and treatment similar to mine. That set a common ground upon which I could repeat your teachings.

I explained that we are spiritual entities, that our bodies are just clothes covering the indestructible soul. I told him that these bodies have to suffer the results of past deeds, and so we must patiently tolerate the inconvenience of the body while remembering Kṛṣṇa. Then I cited this well-known verse:

One who seeks Your compassion and thus tolerates all kinds of adverse conditions due to the karma of his past deeds, who engages always in Your devotional service with his mind, words and body, and who always offers obeisances unto You is certainly a bona fide candidate for becoming Your unalloyed devotee. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.8]

The patient replied, “Swamiji, I know this. But how do I get the strength to practice it?”

Then I taught the man to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, saying that by the grace of the *mahā-mantra* he would have the required spiritual strength. I also gave him a copy of the book *Chant and Be Happy*, telling him, “The details of how to chant the *mahā-mantra*, and its many benefits, are explained in this book.”

He then took his leave, thanking me and saying, “I have gotten strength from your words. I feel fortified, much better. Thank you.”

I sat down in my chair, satisfied that I could transmit your teachings and help another. Then I closed my eyes and chanted the *mahā-mantra*, thinking of Kṛṣṇa, and while I did so I felt so infinitely grateful to you for giving me this essence of all religious practices, *smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇuḥ*—the ultimate treatment and unfailing panacea for what ails us. May my attempts to preach and practice what you have taught please you and be my *puṣpāñjali* offering at your lotus feet.

Your insignificant servant,

Śivarāma Swami

Tamohara Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

In reflecting on your unique spiritual qualities, we often remember your purity, your unwavering devotional service, your boundless wisdom, your compassion for all fallen souls, and your love for your disciples.

I have recently realized that you were also a transcendental organizational genius who were uniquely empowered to spread the *saṅkīrtana* movement. There may have been other pure devotees who had love for Kṛṣṇa, but you alone knew how to take this love of God to us and make Kṛṣṇa consciousness available to the whole world. There can be no doubt that you were delegated as Lord Caitanya’s representative to take His *saṅkīrtana* movement to every town and village.

Organizing a worldwide preaching movement is an enormous undertaking that required great leadership skills, extraordinary spiritual vision, and the blessings and empowerment of the Supreme





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Lord. You alone succeeded where others attempted and failed. While you were with us, we were amazed by your unceasing energy, which far exceeded what our young bodies could muster. We understood how you worked tirelessly with one aim—to make the world Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Now we also have a glimmer of understanding that your service was well planned, that each step was carefully crafted, and that your vision of the future of ISKCON was only separated from reality by time. You were the original strategic planner, decades before we caught up and are now belatedly attempting to organize the preaching in a more planned, thoughtful, and systematic manner.

While it was not fully apparent to me at the time, I now see that from the beginning you tried to teach us this thoughtful and systematic approach. In my initiation letter you stated:

So you are all intelligent boys and girls—therefore, my request to you is that study this science of Krishna Consciousness and solve all the problems of the world by systematic propaganda as far as you are able to do it.

I always understood that in this letter you were encouraging your disciples to take up great challenges and feel personal responsibility to “solve all the problems of the world.” Only in more recent years have I reflected on the phrase “systematic propaganda.” This implies that our efforts should not just be enthusiastic but must also be organized, efficient, and well planned to effectively spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. To the degree that we perform our preaching work in this mood of careful and conscientious planning, we may also have some small success.

Hundreds of years from now, history will record your greatness, and your many accomplishments will be widely known. It will be recognized that it was your organized, worldwide preaching work that brought Kṛṣṇa consciousness to millions of people all over the world and changed the tide of Kali-yuga for the benefit of all souls.

Your most fallen servant,

Tamohara Dāsa