

Homages from Ministries



ISKCON Congregational Development Ministry

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to the *saṅkīrtana* movement, and all glories to your Vyāsa-pūjā!

On 14 April 1972, in a letter to Bhavānanda, you wrote:

We want every house to be a temple, not that our place should be the only place for the people to come. No, this should be the process: that they learn at our place, then establish the same thing at home.

You envisioned a capillary diffusion of the practice of *bhakti*, in which the ISKCON centers operate as training centers, where people come to learn to replicate—in scale—“the same thing at home.”

As early as 1968, when almost all ISKCON members lived in temples and the focus was on opening more and more centers, you wrote in a letter:

I have already written you about this in my last letter, that we require many Deities for our temples as well as for our many devotees who want to worship Radha Krishna at home. So we want to introduce this Deity worship in this country and as such, we may require hundreds of pairs of Deities in different sizes. [letter to Acyutānanda and Jaya Govinda, 13 October 1968]

Later on you formally and publicly reiterated and elaborated on this approach in the pages of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 3.190, purport):

It is not that we have to open different centers all over the world. Whoever cares for the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement can install Deities at home and, under superior guidance, worship the Deity regularly, chanting the *mahā-mantra* and discussing the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

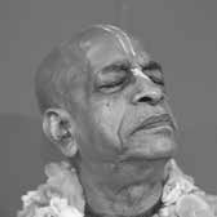
An important part of the mission of the ISKCON Congregational Development Ministry is to propagate this information—this vision—to help all souls in human bodies embrace the path of *bhakti*. The goal is to form caring communities that look after their members on every level: spiritual, emotional, intellectual, etc.

At the Ministry we recognize the need for us to become better transparent media of your encompassing insights and strategy, of your message of love and trust.

O well-wisher of all living entities, please enable us to serve you more selflessly and effectively, so that we may live and propagate the essence of your instructions, not just follow them superficially or mechanically. May your fame continue to spread to every nook and corner of the world, and may all people learn to worship you everywhere—in all temples and homes—as the founder-*ācārya* of the Golden Age.

Your servants at the ISKCON Congregational Development Ministry.

(written by Yamunājīvana Dāsa)



Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2013

ISKCON Daiva Varṇāśrama Ministry

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

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

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace, who have revealed the sublime vision for spreading the *saṅkīrtana* mission of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu in every town and village all over the world!

I wish to briefly report recent developments of our Varṇāśrama Ministry in India. The ISKCON Daiva Varṇāśrama Ministry (IDVM) was established in 2009, and over the last three years we've passed several important milestones.

In the fall of 2012, by your kind mercy, our national coordinator, Śrīmān Bhārata Candra Prabhu, introduced four *varṇāśrama* courses as part of the curriculum of the Māyāpur Institute. These courses were well received, and we consider this a breakthrough for introducing the *varṇāśrama* mission to a larger audience.

Similarly, and again by your kind mercy, our director for leadership development, Śrīmān Yogeśa Candra Prabhu, introduced courses at the ISKCON Chowpatty temple in conjunction with the Paraśurāma Academy of Protection Sciences (PAPS) and the Cāṇakya Academy of Leadership Strategy (CALS). With the success of these courses, he plans to introduce the Security and Leadership Retreat (SLR) to interested temples. He will soon be attending the first International Vaiṣṇava Kṣatriya Conference in Italy.

As part of our desire to create more awareness among devotees, we have just conducted a four-day seminar with ISKCON LEADS at ISKCON Tirupati. Devotees who are involved in preaching the *varṇāśrama* mission in different parts of India came together to present various topics to the forty participants. Such exposure to the many facets of the *varṇāśrama* mission will greatly help devotees become more aware of this important limb of your movement.

I have just returned to Canada and am now staying at La Nouvelle Vraja Bhūmi, a new community in the making. By your inspiration I am beginning to teach a fourteen-week course entitled Dharma Śāstrī. The course is geared especially toward the newer section of society and will explain the two dimensions of *dharma*, namely, *bhāgavata-dharma* and *varṇāśrama-dharma*. The courses will be given in French at La Nouvelle Vraja Bhūmi, and then starting in early August I will conduct the same courses in English at Śaraṇāgati Village in British Columbia. Please bless these humble efforts to bring more people in contact with your divine mission.

Just a few days ago I came across the Vyāsa-pūjā offering written by His Holiness Bhakti Bṛhat Bhāgavata Swami last year. In that offering he quotes many wonderful instructions you gave at a public conference while visiting Mauritius in October 2, 1975. Among those instructions I found this one of particular relevance:

When we are many in number, then we shall take politics also. Yes. First of all let there be perfect men. If there is no perfect men, the government will be imperfect. If there is perfect men, the government will be perfect. . . . Kṛṣṇa was in politics. So He instructed Arjuna to fight. This is politics—for a good cause. . . . *Kṣatriya* means one who gives protection from being hurt, *kṣat*. *Kṣat* means hurting. So suppose if I unnecessarily hurt you, then it is the duty of the government to give you protection. . . . Therefore in the society there must be *kṣatriya*. The *brāhmaṇas* should be learned; they should give instruction, advice. The *kṣatriyas* should give protection; the *vaiśyas* should produce, economic development; and rest, they should assist . . . that's all.



Just hearing those valuable instructions, especially in regards to the need to one day enter politics and bring about the much-needed social changes, reinforces our attempts to begin covering the important aspect of *kṣatriya* development. Although you emphasized the need to train up *brāhmaṇas*, you also clearly instructed that we must also train up a class of responsible Kṛṣṇa conscious leaders who will give proper direction and protection to society and also serve as ideal examples. Naturally there are challenges in doing this within your ISKCON society, and I pray that you kindly guide us so that we can understand how to best serve your mission.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, there are many other wonderful *varṇāśrama*-related developments taking place within ISKCON, many of which I may not be aware. I also know that there are many ongoing efforts among people who may not be part of your ISKCON society. The troubled world in which we live is clearly facing many impending major global changes. Will our devotees be ready for the turbulence ahead? Will we be able to provide the kind of support and direction you expected from your devotee communities? Please help us understand more clearly and more quickly how we can position ourselves to assist you in your grand vision to spread the Lord's holy names and usher in the Golden Age of Lord Caitanya.

Your servants at the ISKCON Daiva Varṇāśrama Ministry.

(written by R.P. Bhakti Rāghava Swami)

ISKCON Prison Ministry

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

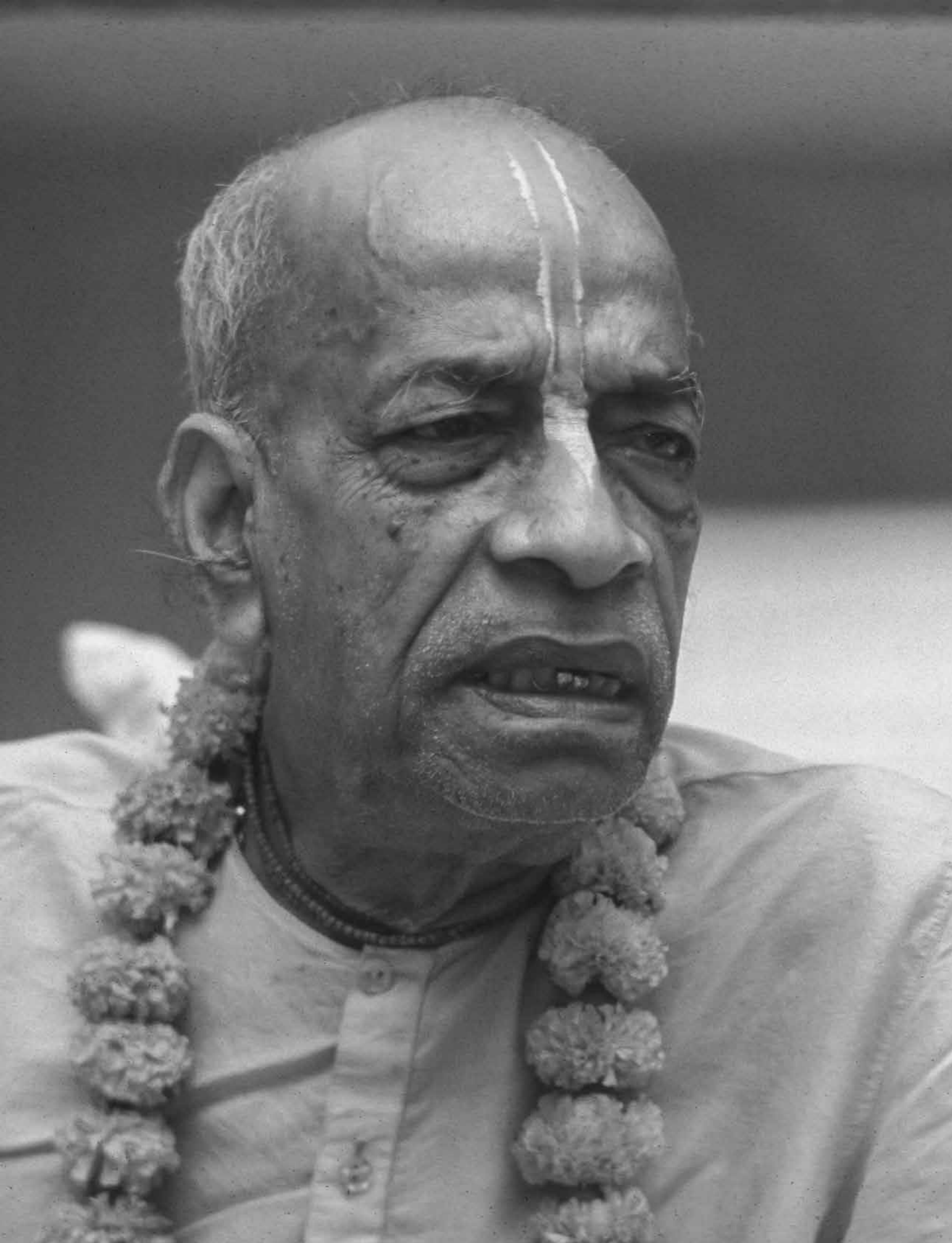
We humbly offer our obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet with sincere gratitude, having been blessed with the service of giving your merciful teachings to those who are seen as undesirable elements of society, locked away in the prisons of this world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, many sincere souls have come forward while incarcerated, and in our small, somewhat awkward way we are trying to fulfill your desire to reach them, both men and women. By your mercy many are reading your books and chanting *japa* regularly, developing the qualities of a strict practitioner of devotional service. By your mercy the preaching is increasing exponentially worldwide, with lecture programs, books being sent, and preaching through correspondence. Some of these fortunate souls are even coming to the platform of qualifying for formal initiation. All this has been possible only because of your strong desire to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to all classes of men, a desire that is the hallmark of all true followers of Śrī Nityānanda Rāma. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Please bless us so we may move forward with renewed enthusiasm to increase this prison preaching for your pleasure and the pleasure of the previous *ācāryas*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in our attempt to preach to these many fallen souls, we are often reminded of your struggles to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the young people of the West and then around the world. We especially recall how you never gave up on so many fallen souls and disciples:

We should never give up our duty. I am doing my duty and always keeping my spiritual master in front. Even there is some difficulty or hardship, still, I must perform my duty to my spiritual master and not become discouraged and go away. [Letter to Kṛṣṇa Dasa, 9 September 1972]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, many times we become perplexed as to how we can reach these fallen souls and penetrate their illusions simply by writing letters, giving them long distance association. Their condition-





ing is very strong and their environment hell. What can we do? How can we help them? You expressed similar feelings:

That is the greatest difficulty one encounters when trying to promote spiritual consciousness in human society. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is trying its best to bring people back to Kṛṣṇa consciousness in its pure form, but the *pāṣaṇḍīs* and atheists, who are cheaters, are so numerous that sometimes we become perplexed and wonder how to push this movement forward. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.14.29, purport]

However, you have mercifully left us with an abundance of books to send the prisoners, thereby giving them your association. Your books are the “main course” of what we offer. Once in a letter you wrote, “What your lecture will do for three minutes? But if he reads one page his life may be turned.” And in another letter: “What your one hour of preaching will do? They will hear and go away. But if they have one book at home, they will read, their friends will read, and something solid work is done.” In the Prison Ministry we understand that since the inmates can’t visit a temple, the devotees have to visit them in the form of letters. But without your books, our letters would be unable to elevate them to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

So we have to educate these classes of men, *śva-vid-varāha-uṣṭra-khara*, these class of men: dogs, hogs, camels, and the asses. The world is full of these classes of men, and you have to educate them. Your responsibility is very great. You have to make an ass a devotee, a camel a devotee, a dog a devotee, a hog a devotee. This is your mission. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lecture, Los Angeles, 15 June 1972]

Yes! The prisons are certainly filled with so many hogs, dogs, camels, and asses. So that is our mission: to turn them into devotees. And that is Lord Caitanya’s mission, as you have given it to us:

Ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam. This is the process of devotional service. Anyone can be purified by following the principles of devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, for Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so powerful that it can purify even the dirtiest class of men and transform them into the topmost Vaiṣṇavas. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s movement aims at this purpose. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.18.43, purport]

But it can be very difficult. Often we put our heart and soul into writing a prison *bhakta*, only to never hear from him again because he gets lost, either while still in prison or as soon as he is released. At other times we send a prisoner books and letters, only to hear back from him as if he never read one word. But we do not quit. We will not quit. We know you are pleased by our insignificant attempt to serve Lord Caitanya’s movement to reclaim the fallen, conditioned souls.

“So this life is for *tapasya*,” Prabhupāda said. “But we cannot execute severe penances in this age. So our penance is to try to reform poor crazy persons. One should take voluntary pains for Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa comes to save the fallen souls, so if you help a little, He will be pleased. Kṛṣṇa comes Himself and He sends His devotee and He leaves books, and still we are mad for sense enjoyment. Our penance, therefore, is to try to reform the fallen souls.”

Later, one of the devotees told Prabhupāda that dealing with the devotees was sometimes more difficult than dealing with the materialists. “That is your penance,” Prabhupāda said. “We should take anxiety. For a sane man to work with a crazy man is not pleasurable, but the service to Kṛṣṇa is pleasurable.” Prabhupāda described how he had left his peaceful life in Vṛndāvana to take on so much burden and anxiety for Kṛṣṇa. Just as he had taken a risk by going to America in old age, so his disciples should accept whatever difficulties were required in preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. “The work is not pleasurable,” Prabhupāda said, “but making so many devotees is pleasurable.” [*Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, “Let There Be a Temple”]



Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2013

So we will go on trying to reform these poor (sometimes crazy) prison *bhaktas*, trying to make them into Vaiṣṇavas by your mercy. And we know that if they read just one book—no, even one word—and if they chant Hare Kṛṣṇa even once, then their lives are benefited eternally.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, by your mercy, since the Prison Ministry started over twenty years ago thousands of inmates' lives have been touched, transformed, eternally benefited. *You* touched them, Śrīla Prabhupāda, through your books and your person. The inmates develop a real, very personal relationship with you. You have become their light, their hope in the midst of a very dark, painful situation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are so pleased to tell you that the *saṅkīrtana* movement is growing within the prison system. Many inmates adopt Lord Caitanya's mood and endeavor to give Kṛṣṇa to everyone they can. *Bhaktas* share their books, introduce others to chanting, and even start Kṛṣṇa conscious programs in their chapels, where anywhere from two to 120 inmates gather to read and chant. One *Back to Godhead* magazine can travel from hand to hand, from heart to heart, spreading Kṛṣṇa's message. Even discarded books often find their way to an inmate who will start chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and then write to the Prison Ministry, hungry for more.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, last year Bhakta Mark Myers, who has been in prison for the last fifteen years, since age nineteen, and will hopefully be released to join us in 2018, wrote a wonderful offering to your Divine Grace. Here is a small part of that offering:

In your books, you have given us the perfect understanding to leave this material prison. Your books are the Key. One just has to use them properly. If one has a key but never places it into the lock, the door will remain closed. So, like this key, if I do not follow the instructions in your books, the door to spiritual life will also remain closed. You were merciful to give us these books and instructions on how to become Kṛṣṇa conscious and leave this material prison, and I am indebted to you for this kindness. For this kindness, I owe you my life, yet I have been so unwilling to give it.

Please, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, force me into your service. I know that I am unworthy and unwilling, but I know that service to you and to your mission (ISKCON) is the only perfection for my life. Please bless me with the desire to serve your mission, and never allow me to leave the mercy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Aspiring to become the servant of your servant,
Bhakta Mark

In closing, here is a poem written by one of your disciples in prison:

by Jan Holmstrom (Śrīmān Ujjala Dāsa, initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in Mexico City in 1972)

To realize one is spirit,
Not merely flesh and blood,
Pure love for sweet Lord Kṛṣṇa—
That's Lord Caitanya's flood.

That service and devotion,
His Holiness and Grace,
Unbounded mercy flowing
To every land and race.

Identity means servant,
The master He's so kind,
His followers are many,
The lame and even blind.

This age of Kali-yuga,
One perfect sacrifice:

To congregate and sing
The *mahā-mantra* nice.

The Hare Kṛṣṇa music folks,
Their public demonstrations,
That *bhakti-yoga* happiness
Eliminates frustrations.

Ecstatic dancers many,
Huge feasts without a fee,
Great transcendental scriptures,
Like gifts upon a tree.

A priceless treasure mantra great,
No fee or charge or tax,
And anyone can come take part,
With bliss up to the max!

Homages from Ministries



Hearing “Hare Kṛṣṇa,”
Chanting “Hari bol!”
Sing the names forever;
Never let them go.

The all-attractive Master—
Lord Kṛṣṇa, friend and son—
His mother and his father,
They help Him have His fun.

Out to the fresh green pasture,
His Brother and the boys,
The cows and calves all happy,
No industry or noise.

Sometimes They play on bugle horns,
At other times a flute,
And all the milkmaid *gopīs*
Think no one is as cute.

Surrender and Devotion,
Sweet Rādhā’s shelter strong.
She captivates Govinda,
Her loving heart a song.

Eternal life, no sadness,
Each moment higher still,
To realize the greatest,
Unbounded love fulfill.

Jaya Prabhupāda!

Our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda, may we follow you and be your humble servants eternally. May we take birth and assist you wherever you are engaged in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s glorious mission.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your fallen servants at the ISKCON Prison Ministry.

