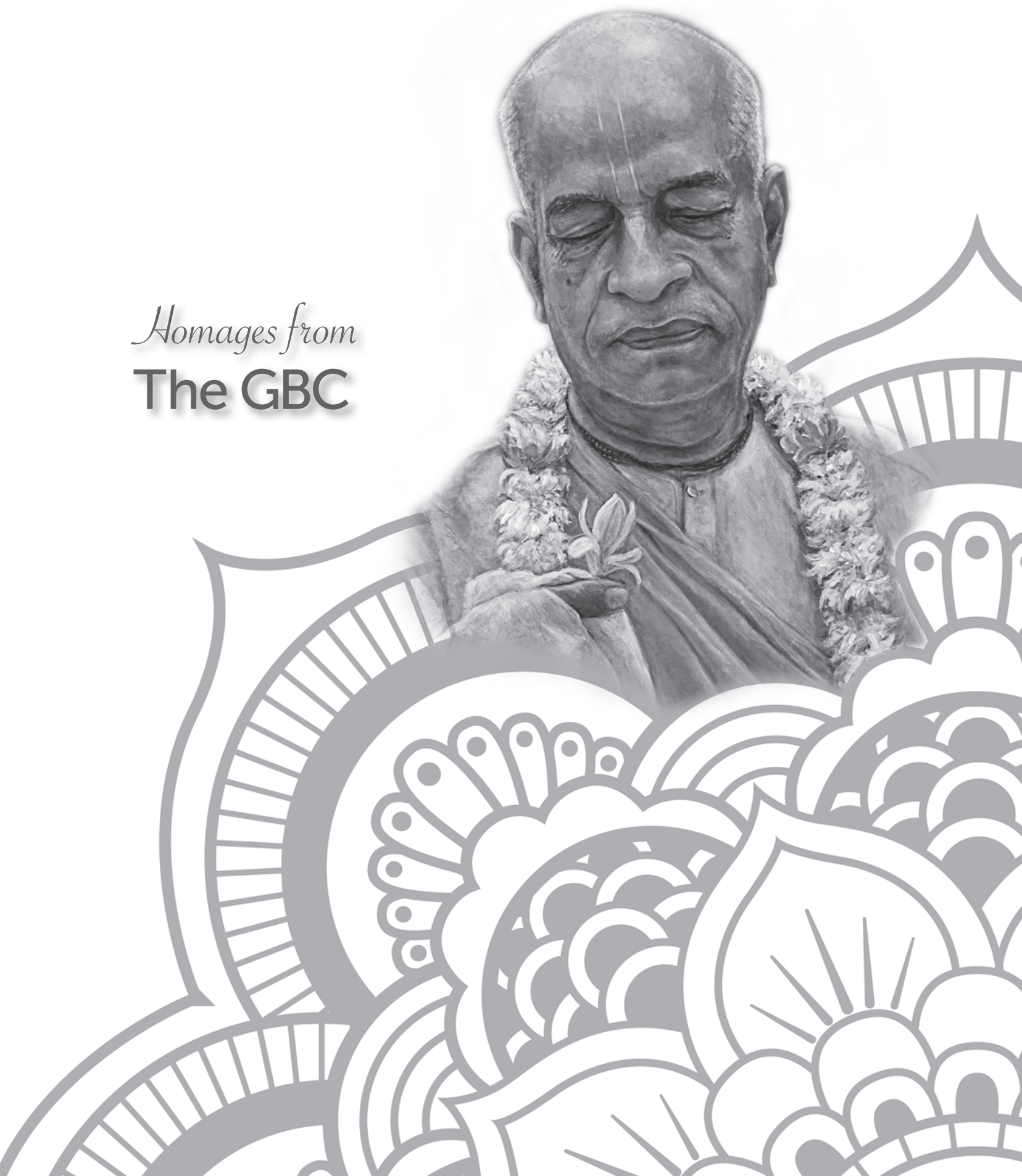


Homages from
The GBC



Anuttama Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

It is said the test of a man's greatness is to measure the long-term impact of his life and teachings—to see if his legacy continues to inspire and guide others after his passing from the world.

It has been more than forty years since you physically left this world, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and fifty-plus years since you established ISKCON. But as time passes, your memory is not fading. Instead, time itself is revealing your place in history. Your impact has been momentous, and it continues to grow year by year.

In addition to establishing the ISKCON movement, writing your books, opening temples and rural communities, and traveling around the globe to teach and preach, you inspired a core of dedicated followers. Today those followers, and your own *vāṇī*, are inspiring others, and the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is having an impact on the global stage.

As my offering to you this year, I highlight a few of the many astounding things that continue to evolve because of your desire and vision. Specifically, how your legacy is expanding through the work of your dedicated followers. We can measure your greatness, in part, by the achievements of those who follow you.

Below are a few examples of the millions of Vaiṣṇavas who are carrying the Seven Purposes of your ISKCON Mission forward, proving that the life, teachings, and legacy of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda continue to bring positive changes in the world.

ISKCON's First Purpose: To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.

Inspired and guided by you, Śaunaka Ṛṣi Dāsa established the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (OCHS) twenty years ago in Oxford, England, one of the modern bastions of learning. Śaunaka Ṛṣi and his supporters have created an acclaimed academic center. OCHS has produced dozens of highly educated men and women, doctorates and professors, who teach in universities, publish scholarly books, and conduct in-depth research into the Vaiṣṇava tradition and other Vedic traditions. Inspired by your vision, OCHS is robustly “propagating spiritual knowledge to society at large” at the highest intellectual levels.

Purpose #2: To propagate a consciousness of Kṛṣṇa, as it is revealed in the Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Through 6,000 annual festivals, 3,600 weekly home study groups, and Sunday Feasts and other programs at 650 ISKCON temples worldwide, your followers are systematically propagating “a consciousness of Kṛṣṇa” on a global scale. In India alone, 1.2 million schoolchildren are fed healthy, sanctified vegetarian *prasādam* lunches six days a week through ISKCON Food Relief programs, thus ensuring those children a healthier life, a better education, and a lifelong appreciation for the kindness of ISKCON and its founder-*ācārya*. These are just a few examples of how your desire to spread awareness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's glories continues to inspire Kṛṣṇa conscious activism throughout the world.

Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā 2018

Purpose #3: To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Kṛṣṇa, the prime entity, and thus to develop the idea within the members, and humanity at large, that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Kṛṣṇa).

Many devotees have been inspired by this aspect of your mission. One example is the Grihastha Vision Team, led by your disciple Kṛṣṇanandinī Dāśī and her husband Tariq. The dedicated couples of the GVT strengthen devotee families by teaching seminars, training mentors, counseling couples, and sharing wisdom via their book, *Heart and Soul Connection*. By promoting understanding, honesty, respect, and loving relationships among family members, these disciples and granddisciples of yours have brought thousands of devotees closer “together with each other and nearer to Kṛṣṇa, the prime entity.”

Purpose #4: To teach and encourage the saṅkīrtana movement, congregational chanting of the holy name of God, as revealed in the teachings of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, there is a *kīrtana* revolution exploding among the younger generations of your followers. Many thousands of these young men and women have developed a deep love for chanting Kṛṣṇa’s names. They organize 24-hour *kīrtanas*. They stay up late at temples and congregate at homes to chant together. They record music. They perform at yoga studios and at colleges and parks. They love the Lord’s names, and they love you for giving them the gift of the Holy Name. And, that love is reverberating around the world as millions more, influenced by your pure desire and the enthusiasm of these young Vaiṣṇavas, are awakening their attraction to *kīrtana*.

Purpose #5: To erect for the members and for society at large a holy place of transcendental pastimes, dedicated to the Personality of Kṛṣṇa.

Your beloved disciple Ambarīṣa Dāsa (Alfred Ford) and his staff of professional devotees are erecting a stunning Temple of the Vedic Planetarium in Māyāpur. Year by year, brick by brick, the entire ISKCON society is contributing to build this beautiful and holy place. This year, as the golden *cakras* were raised above our heads and onto the temple domes, it was clear from the smiles and laughter of thousands of Vaiṣṇavas present that, as you envisioned, a world-class holy place “of transcendental pastimes, dedicated to the Personality of Kṛṣṇa” is rising on the banks of the sacred Ganges.

Purpose #6: To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler, more natural way of life.

While the world cries out for an end to environmental degradation, but struggles to rein in the greed and lust that cause it, your granddisciple Gaurāṅga Dāsa and a troupe of dedicated supporters are showing the world how to live simply at the Govardhan Eco Village (GEV) in Maharashtra. The United Nations World Tourism Organization gave the community an award for Innovation in Non-Governmental Organizations for its sustainable practices. Inspired by your teachings, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the GEV empowers local farmers, draws appreciation from famed environmentalists, and is having a global impact in teaching a “simpler, more natural way of life.”

Purpose #7: With a view towards achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, magazines, books, and other writings.

Under the leadership of Vaiṣeṣika Dāsa, Vijaya Dāsa, and many others, your book distribution is gaining ever-new life. In our earliest days book distribution was successful but also costly; our enthusiasm was sometimes overzealous and damaged the reputation of ISKCON.

Today, however, devotees are taught the importance of book distribution balanced with the priority of

Homages from the GBC

making friends. The prime objective: “To leave everyone with a good impression.” The result? In North America alone over the last five years book distribution has tripled. And in 2016 and 2017, the North American BBT sold a total of more than \$4 million worth of books. Internationally, in addition to selling millions of your books, new languages are added almost every year. Under your continued guidance, Śrīla Prabhupāda, “periodicals, magazines, books and other writings” are being published and distributed as never before.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as scholar and historian Dr. Thomas J. Hopkins stated during the 50th Anniversary of ISKCON event at Harvard University’s Center for the Study of World Religions, you were a “one-man channel for an entire culture and religious tradition.” He added that there “is no clear parallel” to your achievements in the history of world religions. And he said, “ISKCON has done at least as well as Christianity and Islam in its first fifty years.”

Forty years after your departure, Śrīla Prabhupāda, your followers are increasingly inspired by your example, your mission, and your love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. Historians and scholars of religion, too, are noting more and more of your achievements.

While most people are forgotten within forty years of their passing, your name, your legacy, your mission, and your love are only beginning to bear fruit. You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are a great man, a noble man, a world-changing man, and a transcendental man. You are our life. Our soul. Our guide. Our guru. Our founder-*ācārya*. We pledge our lives to helping the world understand you; and through you, themselves and the eternally youthful, unlimitedly beautiful Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Your disciple and eternal servant,

Anuttama Dāsa

Badrinārāyaṇ Swami

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

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

The span of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s consciousness covered the full spectrum of reality. By this I mean that while his consciousness was fixed in Goloka Vṛndāvana, he also had both feet firmly on the ground. He functioned seamlessly and flawlessly in both the transcendental and the material worlds.

Tamāl Krishna Mahārāja told me that once Śrīla Prabhupāda offered him some lugloos. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja remarked, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, I have never tasted anything so wonderful.” Śrīla Prabhupāda casually replied, “Oh, that is Mother Yaśodā’s recipe.”

When one devotee was trying to explain to reporters that Śrīla Prabhupāda was hearing from Kṛṣṇa metaphorically, Śrīla Prabhupāda interrupted and said, “No, Kṛṣṇa personally speaks to me directly.”

At the same time, to close the deal on the donation of the land for ISKCON Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Prabhupāda used the rope from a mosquito net to survey the boundary line of the property. During the construction, he flushed a few balls of chapati dough down a toilet to make sure it was working.

While being realized in the Goloka arts of intimate service to Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda was expert at executing the mission of Kṛṣṇa in this world as well.

With the benefit of the passing of time, I am ever-increasingly amazed at the grace and power of Śrīla Prabhupāda. How did one man, in such a short time, at such an advanced age, accomplish so much? By way of explanation, I recently came across the following verses and purport in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu delivered almost all the fallen souls by directly meeting them. He delivered others by entering the bodies of great devotees, such as Nakula Brahmācārī. [*Antya-līlā* 2.5–6]

To deliver people in regions throughout the universe who could not meet Him, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally entered the bodies of pure devotees. [*Antya-līlā* 2.13]

Thus He empowered living beings [His pure devotees] by manifesting in them so much of His own devotion that people in all other countries became devotees by seeing them. [*Antya-līlā* 2.14]

In his purport to this verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

As stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya* 7.11):

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

Unless one is empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, one cannot spread the holy names of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* throughout the world. Persons who do so are empowered. Therefore, they are sometimes called *āveśa-avatāras*, or empowered incarnations, for they are endowed with the power of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

When we look at all that Śrīla Prabhupāda achieved, can we honestly doubt that he was empowered by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu?

This dynamic between the Lord and His devotees is explained by Kṛṣṇa Himself in the *Gītā*: “As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.11) Śrīla Prabhupāda once quoted this verse and then gave the example that different materials have different levels of electrical conductivity. Rubber has practically none, water is better, copper is even better still. Why this difference in the degree of electrical current that these varied materials can transmit? The answer is that the less the resistance of the material, the more of the current can flow. Similarly, the more one is surrendered to Kṛṣṇa, the less resistance in the form of personal desire and selfish motivation, the more of Kṛṣṇa’s potency can flow through such an exalted soul.

At the same time, these wonderful accomplishments by Śrīla Prabhupāda were not easy. They did not happen without great personal effort and sacrifice on his part.

It is said that great personalities almost always accept voluntary suffering because of the suffering of people in general. This is considered the highest method of worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is present in everyone’s heart. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.7.44]

Śrīla Prabhupāda voluntarily took on personal suffering to push the mission of Lord Caitanya forward. His determination was rooted in his profound empathy.

In the early days of ISKCON Māyāpur, one of the project’s managers noticed Śrīla Prabhupāda looking over the edge of the balcony of the Lotus Building. Interested in what Śrīla Prabhupāda was looking at, the devotee also looked over the railing. There he saw the pit where the devotees threw their used leaf plates and clay cups after taking *prasādam*. In the pit were an old lady and some children picking through these discarded items, hoping to find a few morsels of food. After a few moments of silence, the devotee remarked to Śrīla Prabhupāda, “Sometimes I feel so sorry for these poor people.” With a penetrating look

Homages from the GBC

of deep compassion, Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “Why just sometimes?”

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in *The Nectar of Devotion*:

A soft heart is compared to honey, to butter, and to nectar. And the condition of the mind is compared to sunshine. As honey and butter become melted even in slight sunshine, softhearted persons become easily melted. Nectar, however, is by its nature always liquid. And the hearts of those who are in pure ecstatic love with Kṛṣṇa are by nature always liquefied, just like nectar.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s nectarlike heart was always flowing with sympathy for the suffering of others, whether they were in poverty or materially well fed but spiritually starving.

This mood of great devotees is expressed by Prahāda Mahārāja:

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

In the purport for this verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda brings it home for us:

The members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are not at all interested in so-called meditation in the Himalayas or the forest. . . . Rather, every member of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is interested in going door to door to try to convince people about the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is, the teachings of Lord Caitanya. That is the purpose of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā*:

Persons who have acted piously in previous lives and in this life and whose sinful actions are completely eradicated are freed from the dualities of delusion, and they engage themselves in My service with determination. [*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.28]

A devotee asked Śrīla Prabhupāda about this verse: “How does this verse apply to me? What to speak of my lack of pious deeds, I was performing sinful deeds up until the moment I met you. How is it then that I have been allowed to engage in devotional service?”

Śrīla Prabhupāda responded, “It is because I have created your good fortune. Now all I ask in return is that you go and create good fortune for others.”

This is the spirit of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement—to feel grateful for our deliverance and thus be inspired to try to deliver others.

The beasts, the birds, they cannot offer any gratitude. But I am human being, I have got developed consciousness. I must feel grateful . . . and offer my gratitude. That is my duty. [Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.12–13, Montreal, 20 August 1968]

May I always feel deeply indebted to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your grateful servant,

Badrinārāyaṇ Swami

Bhakti Caitanya Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to your lotus feet, which are the shelter for the three worlds.

Time is moving on for me. Gradually my material body is becoming old. I remember when I used to visit my mother in her later years, and each time she would tell me which of her friends had died since the last time I was there. Then one time she told me, “They’ve all gone. Every one of them.”

We have also lost a number of your disciples as time has passed, and my turn will come in due course. There is not so much time left, and I have to try to do something of value for you before I go.

When you came to the Western world you were five years older than I am now, and look what you did! It is completely inconceivable. Could I do something like that? Definitely not. So should I give up? Definitely not. When I listen to your classes from the early days in New York, I feel the extreme sense of urgency in your voice, and it gives me a little insight into your heart. Sometimes your voice breaks momentarily into a higher pitch as your emotions of concern for the fallen souls overpower you. It becomes overwhelmingly clear that you are convinced that there is no question of there being any alternative to serious Kṛṣṇa consciousness, striving for unalloyed devotional service. Convinced is not the right word. Actually you have clearly realized it.

Not that this sense of urgency was there only in those days. All the way through you showed it, every day.

In your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.13.53 you say: “One should understand that no one is independent, for everything is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa and is acting and moving by the supreme desire of Kṛṣṇa. This understanding, this consciousness, is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” When we read that, it sounds like straightforward Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy—nothing so very unusual.

But I remember a little while ago watching the movie *Your Ever Well-Wisher*, and to my surprise it showed you, emaciated on your deathbed, reciting this very sentence, surrounded by a small group of disciples, with Jayādvaita Mahārāja holding the microphone to your mouth. Your physical condition was well beyond hopeless, but despite that you were continuing with unbreakable determination to give us the priceless gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Not only that, but you continued translating and commenting on the *Bhāgavatam* for another eleven verses before stopping.

In your association, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have witnessed something beyond the constraints of this material world. We have been given not just a glimpse but a clear view of what it means to be a resident of the spiritual world, and how such a soul thinks, feels, and acts. As time goes on and I age, I am slowly digesting this more and more.

So what to do now? Not much time is left, and I have to try to do something more than what I have been doing. I don’t know exactly what, and that is sometimes a dilemma for me. But I guess I have to keep preaching your message and trying to help your devotees in their Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If I carry on like this to the end, hopefully the devotees will say, “He was a Prabhupāda man.” It would be very nice to be remembered like this.

Your servant,

Bhakti Caitanya Swami

Bhakti Chāru Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet on this auspicious anniversary of your divine appearance. Please bless me that I can remain engaged in your service life after life.

Last year, as chairman of the GBC, I had to become involved in the activities of our movement all over the world. Previously, I could focus on my own zone and projects, but now I had to be concerned with all our problems and activities. Fortunately, I had support from the two other members of the GBC Executive Committee—Madhusevita Prabhu and Bhaktivaibhava Mahārāja—without whom I would not have been able to shoulder this awesome responsibility.

It was a wonderful experience, and an opportunity to see how you created ISKCON both to fulfill the prediction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and also to provide a shelter for those who surrender to His teachings—a house where the entire world can live in harmony and experience the most profound joy and satisfaction.

This past year I also decided to support our Ministry of Cow Protection and Agriculture. I know how concerned you were about developing these two crucial areas of Vedic culture. Human civilization rests on these two gifts of Kṛṣṇa in the form of Mother Nature and Mother Cow.

When Kālakaṇṭha Dāsa from Brazil became minister of this department and I saw his sincerity and enthusiasm, I decided to give him the support he needed. I met with devotees involved in cow protection in the West and became aware that it was especially difficult in colder regions, because when the cows grew old and stopped giving milk, taking care of them in winter became very expensive, and their numbers increased every year. Ordinary farmers sell cows to the slaughterhouse when they stop giving milk, but this is out of the question for us. So caring for the older cows had become an ever-increasing burden and a crisis.

I thought that if we could find a large piece of land where the weather was not so severe, we could let the retired cows graze in the pasture throughout the year, thus decreasing the financial burden significantly. I looked for land in the southern United States and came across a 116-acre property that had been a Christian youth-retreat center. With the help of several other devotees, we succeeded in acquiring it—a beautiful piece of land along a lake, with facilities from the retreat center already available. We decided to utilize the property not only for taking care of the cows but also for preaching.

The facility is situated about thirty-five miles from Orlando, a city that attracts tens of millions of tourists every year from all over the world. The area is also home to well-known universities and multinational companies employing hundreds of thousands of people.

We started our Sunday-feast program less than a month ago, and it is already gaining popularity. Those who attend are impressed with the beauty and serenity of the place, and people have started to volunteer to help.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please bless me that I can develop this project as my humble offering to your divine lotus feet and contribute in some insignificant way toward your mission of making this world Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Your humble servant eternally,

Bhakti Chāru Swami

Bhaktimārga Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*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*

Thank you for your mercy
And fulfilling a dream.
In some mystical way
It flows from the Supreme.

I have a troupe of actors;
They play their parts so well,
Pushing folks' emotions,
Lifting hearts from hell.

The performers learn a *lilā*,
They merge into a person,
Exploring a new character
Of purity or perversion.

From Kāṁsa to Lord Kṛṣṇa,
From Rāvaṇa to Rām,
Leaving aside the ego,
The actor has us in his palm.

In college you played Advaita.
The audience was in tears.
Those souls were transported
Through hearts, eyes, and ears.

You once said of theater:
"The play [is] better than the book."
The impact it can have:
The world—a different look.

Your servant,

Bhaktimārga Swami

With Kṛṣṇa in the middle—
That's surely where it starts—
Culture conquest on horizon,
Channeled through the arts.

You encouraged Loka, Sudāmā,
Nanda, Lohi, and Ras.
These actors, and so many more—
Just every drama: *dās*.

I'm thrilled about this service,
A connection I have with you
For enlightening the masses—
They stand in eager queue.

You gave us all the stories;
They are found on every page.
"Take one or two, perfect them,"
And take them to the stage.

"All the world's a stage," he said.
Shakespeare had this view.
We play out all these mundane roles
Instead of surrendering to you.

Prabhupāda, you asked us to serve.
Servant is the only post.
All else is but a myth:
Dās is what we boast.

Bhakti-puruṣottama Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

You came to this material world to bring about a historic change in this world's misdirected civilization. You fulfilled the desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by spreading His holy name all over the world. You inaugurated the preaching of the Lord's holy name all over the world, in every town and village. You started this movement and trained your followers so expertly that they are continuing the work Your Divine Grace started. You told your disciples, "My Guru Mahārāja has sent all of you to help me." Your disciples are empowered by you and also by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. Now your disciples are running this society with great success. You said, "Whatever I have done, at least maintain that." But by your causeless mercy your society has not only been maintained but is also expanding due to the able leadership of your followers.

Your humble servant,

Bhakti-puruṣottama Swami

Bhaktivaibhava Swami

I offer my humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.

Ten Reasons Why Śrīla Prabhupāda's Books Are Meant for Everyone

1. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books reveal the truth about the temporary material existence.

Different people have different individual interests. There is a vast variety of departments of knowledge the mind and intelligence gets absorbed in. However, the fact remains that every subject matter of mundane study and knowledge is of a temporary nature. And that temporary nature is contrary to the nature of the eternal soul, the eternal living entity.

Human evolution begins when inquiry into the eternal nature of existence awakens in the mind. Every activity of the human being is to be considered a failure unless he inquires about the eternal nature of the Absolute Truth.

If we truly believe that every human being, in fact every living entity, is an eternal soul, knowledge of the eternal nature, described in detail in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, is for the self-interest of every human being on this planet. In no other literature do we find such detailed and voluminous knowledge about the eternal nature of the soul as we find in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. Therefore, these books are most beneficial for everyone, without any discrimination.

2. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books contain the most detailed knowledge of the material creation and the cosmic manifestation.

Even ordinary people, at one point in their lives, begin to wonder about the universe, the millions of stars they see at night in the sky. Although ordinary people are primarily occupied most of the time with material activities, such thoughts occasionally occur. They create a sense of belonging. Having a sense of belonging is a common experience. A sense of belonging is a human need, just like the need for food and shelter. Feeling that you belong is most important in seeing value in life and in coping with intensely painful emotions.

Most people feel connected with their family members, friends, social media, religion, etc. Similarly, there is a natural sense of belonging related to this world, this universe. What is my connection to and my role in this creation? What is my purpose in life? Why do I exist in the first place? These or similar thoughts appear like flashes in the mind of every human being.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's books answer all these questions in an overwhelming way, leaving no questions open. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books do not "search" for knowledge; they rather transmit knowledge. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books satisfy profoundly the sense of belonging related to the cosmos we are living in and to the overall material creation.

3. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books precisely explain the three modes of material nature, by which everyone is bound and conditioned in a particular way.

The three modes of material nature—a fascinating subject matter. A subject matter entirely lacking in societies' educational system and yet of utmost importance. Every thought people in material life have, every activity they perform, every desire they have, every food they eat, even hope and faith—all are influenced by the three modes of material nature.

The three modes of material nature condition a person in a particular way. People want to be free, or they think that they are free, but if one does not become free from the influence of the three modes of nature, there is no question of freedom. One is forced to act and behave in a particular way, often against one's own will. Many times people regret something they have said or done to somebody. It is being imposed upon them by the modes of material nature.

Being educated in the nature and function of the three modes reveals the truth about one's own psychophysical nature, the particular condition of one's birth, and so much more. What could be more interesting? Such education gives the answer to a host of questions everyone has. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books educate people in the science of the three modes of material nature. This science is a must for everyone to study.

4. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books inform people about the detailed laws of karmic reactions—the cause of suffering and joy.

Many people wonder why there is so much suffering in this world. Why do bad things happen to good people? And why do good things happen to bad people? Not understanding the rigid laws of karma, people lean toward atheism. How can an all-good, all-knowledgeable God allow all this suffering to go on without interfering? He could instantly put an end to all the miseries and evil in this world.

The present life is only one frame out of an entire film spool (reel) of material existence. People don't see the whole picture. Reactions to activities one performed in past lives strike or bless us in our present life. This of course should not mean that we justify violence committed against any living being by thinking that whatever happens to a victim is his karma. Perhaps it is, but perhaps it is not. The Vedic injunction states, *mā hiṁsyāt sarva-bhūtāni*: "Never commit violence against anyone." Human beings have a certain amount of free choice. They can create good or bad karma. The *kṣatriyas* in Vedic society provide protection against violence. If everything would be karmic reactions, it would go against the laws

Homages from the GBC

of karma if *kṣatriyas* would interfere to protect humans and animals. The laws of karma are extremely complex, and we require accurate knowledge, historical accounts, and examples to be able to understand karmic reactions in a proper way.

Since everybody is subjected to karmic reactions, it is in everyone's interest and for everyone's benefit to understand the laws of karma. Such knowledge can potentially instantly change anyone's life for the better by providing an understanding of the causes of suffering. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books provide this knowledge, informing one not only how to avoid suffering reactions to one's present deeds, but also how to avoid suffering reactions to deeds one performed in previous lives.

5. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books remind everyone that there is a higher, spiritual purpose in life.

It is natural that people are engaged and absorbed in their respective studies, occupations, and life's passions. Societies and social life have existed since ancient times and will continue to exist. However, there is a higher purpose in life, a purpose that extends beyond our present life. The soul temporarily occupies a particular body and continues to exist when the body comes to an end. To educate ourselves in understanding the identity and nature of the immortal self, the soul, is a higher purpose in life. Anything related to that which continues to exist is of a higher nature than anything related to that which ceases to exist.

*nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ
ubhayor api dṛṣṭo 'ntas tv anayos tattva-darśibhiḥ*

"Those who are seers of the truth have concluded that of the nonexistent [the material body] there is no endurance and of the eternal [the soul] there is no change. This they have concluded by studying the nature of both." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.16)

This fact is eternally true, independent of whether we might consider this to be important or not or whether we believe it or not. Without contemplating topics concerning the soul, one has not yet begun human life. As Śrīla Prabhupāda so accurately phrased it, a materialistic society devoid of *ātma-tattva* is "a soul-killing civilization." Śrīla Prabhupāda's books are changing the destiny of such a society into a soul-revival society.

6. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books provide the knowledge of everyone's eternal constitutional identity.

In psychology, the term "identity crisis" refers to the failure to achieve ego identity during adolescence. Individuals struggle to "find themselves." Youngsters experience this struggle when everything rapidly changes, especially their own personal looks and their outlook on life. It often reappears as a midlife crisis, when people begin to realize that they are slowly heading toward old age. Is it worth hanging on to things that are transitory, passing? What will happen after death? These thoughts lead to another kind of identity crisis called "identity diffusion," which people naturally try to cope with in various ways. But the questions remain unanswered.

From the spiritual perspective, every living being in this creation has forgotten his eternal identity. What is someone's position who doesn't know who he is in a deeper sense? Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote an article called "Who Is Crazy?" as an answer to the charge against the devotees that they are crazy people.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, "My dear Arjuna, there are different classes of men. One class of men are sleeping, and the other class of men are awake." To read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books is the process of awakening from an eons-long slumber of forgetfulness. *Tamasi mā jyotir gama*: "Don't remain in this darkness. Go to the light." This call and other similar Vedic aphorisms are meant for everyone, without any discrimination.

7. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books reveal the spiritual unity of all living beings.

People are longing for the unity of all people, for one human race. “We are all brothers and sisters” is a slogan in songs and prayers. Especially in the 60’s this concept was embraced—no restrictions between genders. Human beings were perceived as one broad family. But in time this ideal gradually weakened. The basis of that concept was rather shallow.

The fundamental basis for the unity of not only human beings but all living beings is described in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books. The *Bhagavad-gītā* is the most essential scripture on *ātma-tattva*, knowledge of the soul. The soul is of the same spiritual nature in whatever body it temporarily resides.

*vidyā-vinaya-sampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śuni caiva śva-pāke ca paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*

“The humble sages, by virtue of true knowledge, see with equal vision a learned and gentle brāhmaṇa, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater [outcaste].” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 5.18)

Sama-darśinaḥ means “who see with equal vision.” This equal vision we find described throughout Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books in philosophy, stories, and culture, the Vedic culture. The more people read Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, the more they begin to understand the central point, the pivot, of everyone’s existence.

8. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books contain knowledge of the living entities’ eternal relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

“If there is a God, the cause of all causes, how am I related to Him?”

Probability and statistics merely tell us how things happen, but we learn nothing about the causes that lead to these events. In science, causality has always been a fundamental notion.

It is not unusual to hear people suggest that time plus chance accomplished the evolution of simple organisms into more complex entities. There is a logical error in such a statement. There is no such thing as chance. Chance is not an entity that causes things to happen.

There is the coin-toss example: The odds of the coin coming up either heads or tails are 50/50. What we forget is that one flip of the coin involves a whole chain of causal factors. The weight of the coin, the shape of the coin, the upward impulse of the toss, air resistance, spin—the initial conditions—all interact on each toss of the coin. It is a mathematical convenience to say that the probability of heads is 50% and the probability of tails is 50%. Every individual toss of a coin is controlled by the laws of physics. There is no mechanism called “chance” determining the outcome of any toss of the coin.

Chance as a cause does not exist. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books explain in remarkable detail that Lord Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by His countless expansions and energies, is the cause of everything.

9. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books contain the highest knowledge of the different relationships the eternal souls can have with Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The general concept of a relationship with God is that it is one of awe and fear. This is confirmed in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.8):

*bhīṣmād vātaḥ pavate bhīṣodeti sūryaḥ
bhīṣmād agniś candraś ca mṛtyur dhāvati pañcamah*

“It is out of fear of the Supreme Brahman that the wind is blowing, out of fear of Him that the sun regularly rises and sets, and out of fear of Him that fire acts. It is only due to fear of Him that death and Indra, the King of heaven, perform their respective duties.”

We find similar descriptions in other books. However, the living entities can have another relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa, a relationship of a more familiar nature, of friendship, all the way to a conjugal relationship.

Homages from the GBC

Śrīla Prabhupāda's books inform everyone about his eternal relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa. The description of the five main *rasas* (transcendental mellows) and their subdivisions is unique. There is no information about these *rasas* in any other scripture or religious teaching. The information stands on its own, waiting to be delivered to every human being on this planet.

10. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books teach the harmonious combination of worldly life and duties with spiritual activities, leading to eternal liberation, freedom from all suffering.

People often shy away from getting involved in anything religious or spiritual because they think it is incompatible with their mundane engagements and family affairs. Picturing the lifestyle of a Catholic monk or nun, a yogī or Buddhist monk, they consider a spiritual path an option for perhaps later in their lives, if at all.

However, spiritual life can be taken up at any time and to whatever degree is comfortable for the practitioner. The progress, however minute it might appear, will never be lost. As Lord Kṛṣṇa states in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.40):

*nehābhikrama-nāśo 'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate
sv-alpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*

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

It is not like a material project, which has to be completed if one is to be successful. And still the option always remains to be fully dedicated to the spiritual path at any time.

In the past, great kings and people from all walks of life practiced spiritual life despite their full involvement in mundane activities. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books give insight into how to harmoniously combine mundane activities with spiritual activities. One kind of activity does not exclude the other.

Therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda's book are meant for everyone, without any discrimination. There should be no doubt about it.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's eternal servant,

Bhaktivaibhava Swami

Bhūrijana Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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



Homages from the GBC

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this earth, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your actions and accomplishments stagger my mind, for they appear impossible for even the most powerful persons of this world. You translated and wrote commentaries on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, you traveled worldwide and while doing so lectured twice each day—once each morning on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and once each evening on the *Bhagavad-gītā*. You sought to challenge the underpinnings of contemporary atheism by establishing the Bhaktivedanta Institute, and even during your morning health-maintaining walks you were preaching to your disciples and followers. At every opportunity you criticized impersonalism, impersonalists, cheating spiritualists, and hypocrites, and you relished speaking to scholars, professors, and various dignitaries of limited knowledge. You wrote thousands of letters and personally counseled and guided numerous disciples, and you simultaneously managed ISKCON and trained your senior, more accomplished followers to lead, preach, and manage on your behalf. You struggled and forcefully fought to build great temples in Mumbai, Māyāpur, and Vṛndāvana, pushed the publishing and distribution of your books, and dealt with managerial problems and disciples' personal issues as they arose, which they regularly did. In the midst of all this, you daily met with life members, guests, and disciples in your rooms, in whatever country those rooms were in.

Although the issues that confronted you day after day may have caused you anxiety, your overall demeanor was astoundingly calm, a state that clearly stemmed from the secret depths of your heart. As we sat in your room in Fiji in 1976, observing you after you'd spoken to the devotees and guests present, you leaned back, relaxed, with your hand gracefully resting on your head. "In the beginning," you said, "I had nothing and there was no anxiety. Now Kṛṣṇa has given so much and still there is no anxiety." You then smiled in your unique way, illuminating the room as the sun illuminates the earth at sunrise.

Yet despite the peace born of your deep Kṛṣṇa consciousness, your service demanded that you struggle on countless fronts as you tirelessly worked to establish the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement throughout the world. Despite managing a worldwide movement as well as errant, unsteady disciples, you nevertheless described yourself as free from all anxiety! How was that possible?

The only reason I can discover for this is that for you, your mountain of work was not quite work—it was *sevā*, service, born of your intense *bhakti*, which flooded the world like a tidal wave of desire to serve and please your Guru Mahārāja, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. And that mood of *sevā* transformed difficulty into ecstasy.

In a song describing *ātma-nivedana*, the soul's offering of himself to Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wrote: "Troubles encountered in Your service shall be the cause of great happiness, for in Your devotional service joy and sorrow are equally great riches. Both destroy the misery of ignorance."

And as you yourself wrote in a purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.8.6, the ecstasy of loving surrender transforms hardship into pleasure and work into *sevā*: "[S]uch difficulties are very gladly suffered by the devotees in preaching because in such activities, although apparently very severe, the devotees of the Lord feel transcendental pleasure because the Lord is satisfied."

In a lecture in Māyāpur on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.27, with strong feelings you expressed the principle of service that underpinned your life:

You don't make Kṛṣṇa your order-supplier. That is mistake. Therefore *anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam*, pure devotion means first of all you learn not to order Kṛṣṇa: "Kṛṣṇa, give me this, give me that, give me that." Don't bother Kṛṣṇa. That is the beginning of spiritual life. *Anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam*. You prepare to carry out every order of Kṛṣṇa. Then it is spiritual life. Don't make Kṛṣṇa your order-supplier. You become order-supplier of Kṛṣṇa.

And then later in that same lecture:

You wanted some rotten things; you get it. You wanted some stone and wood, you take it. But if somebody wanted to serve—"I have given Him service"—all right, you serve. . . . This is the process. . . . *Sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*. Therefore the principle is *sevānurūpam*. Always remember this . . . Kṛṣṇa is always ready to give you *prasāda*, all favor. Why not? Without doing something, you are getting so much favor. Without Kṛṣṇa's favor you cannot live even for a moment. He's so kind. Even the cats and dogs, they are also getting Kṛṣṇa's favor. [But the] real facility is how to serve Kṛṣṇa. That is real facility. So we should always ask, beg. That is Caitanya Mahāprabhu's instruction:

*na dhanam na janam na sundarīm
kavitām vā jagadīśa kāmāye
mama janmani janmanīśvare
bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī*

This facility we should always ask: "Kṛṣṇa, I don't want any facility of this material world. I am not worthy to serve You; still, I am begging. Give me this facility so that I can get the chance to serve You." That is life's success.

And what is the result of one who possesses, as you possessed, a mood of "everything for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure"? This the demigods reveal in a prayer to Lord Śiva: "It is said that great personalities almost always accept voluntary suffering because of the suffering of people in general. This is considered the highest method of worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is present in everyone's heart." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.7.44)

In you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we see manifest that intense, ecstatic desire to do whatever is required to please Kṛṣṇa, no matter how difficult. Your ability to accept any austerity was born not so much out of your tolerance as out of your *bhakti*, your devoted, loving desire to serve and please Kṛṣṇa. May I realize even a fraction of your glory, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and may your glory become known throughout the world.

Sadly, I find myself unable to either imitate or follow your full-hearted, compassionate example. I find myself only able to pray to be allowed to serve you in at least some small corner of your movement. May your brilliant example of unselfish, devoted service remain always the light of ISKCON. May your effulgent *bhakti* enlighten my midnight-black heart.

Your servant,

Bhūrījāna Dāsa

Bīr Krishna dās Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

At *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66 we find Lord Kṛṣṇa's final instruction to Arjuna and to ourselves:

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

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

It is hard to figure out how to apply this instruction. How can one abandon all varieties of religion? What does it mean to surrender to Kṛṣṇa?

Many other instructions in the *Gītā* are equally challenging to carry out, such as the instruction at 18.65:

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī mām namaskuru
mām evaiṣyasi satyaṁ te pratijāne priyo 'si me*

“Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me, and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend.”

To carry out these and other instructions, one must have a practical example of someone in the modern day and age who exemplifies them. It is important to have a person *bhāgavata* as well as the book *bhāgavata*. One may also say that one must have the person who epitomizes the *Gītā*, as well as the book *Gītā*.

“Not only should we read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, but we should also serve the person *bhāgavata*, one whose life is nothing but *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.” (*Teachings of Lord Kapila*, verse 16) This is the key: one must serve “the person *bhāgavata*, one whose life is nothing but *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.”

You are the person *bhāgavata* who shows us how to practically carry out Kṛṣṇa's instructions. You are the perfect example of how to follow the *Gītā*'s instructions in the present day. You are the teachings of the *Gītā* in action.

You are our role model, our inspiration, and our hero.

It is imperative for all the members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness society to regularly read your biographies and hear the memories of your dear disciples. The term “founder-*ācārya*” is not simply a designation or title. It indicates that your actions should be taken as our ideal. Your actions as well as your words should be studied scrutinizingly.

As I travel, I encourage all the devotees to dive deeply into the nectar of your pastimes, and to apply your example and teachings in their own lives. We are so fortunate to have numerous first-hand accounts of your activities and words. This abundance of direct information concerning an *ācārya*, or religious preceptor, is unique in the annals of religious history.

I pray to be always conscious of your example and teachings, to follow in your footsteps, and to inspire others to do so.

Your servant,

Bīr Krishna dās Goswami

Devāmrita Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most respectful obeisances at your lotus feet.

Especially on your divine appearance day, I first strive to express my unbounded gratitude for your purely transmitting the *mahā-mantra*—a bestowal apparently so simple yet truly so miraculous. As the years and decades in *bhakti* pass, increasingly even this lowly disciple can catch a glimpse of the reality that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura declared: “In all fourteen worlds there is nothing to be had except the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.”

Next, I urgently thank you for opportunities to engage the senses in Kṛṣṇa’s service. For the past two weeks I have been meditating on the words in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.12.13:

A devotee has no other ambition than to serve Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement was started to engage people twenty-four hours daily in the service of the Lord and in His glorification.

So that was one of your foundational motivations? You began ISKCON as a device “to engage people twenty-four hours daily in the service of the Lord”? In the current ISKCON context, how can we fulfill this desire? It would seem that whether devotees live in their own home, in an *āśrama*, or in a devotional community, somehow every devotee, regardless of one’s accustomed level of *bhakti* intensity, should have ready access to the impetus (the inspiration) and the capability (the techniques) for engaging in devotional service morning, noon, and night.

To you I acknowledge, although so inadequately, my eternal indebtedness for your pure gifts of the *mahā-mantra* accompanied by absorption in devotional service. We call out to the whole world, tactfully yet persistently proclaiming that even in this most desperate and degraded era, your process, inherited from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, certainly works.

Aspiring to be your servant,

Devāmrita Swami

Giridhārī Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

“Just Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa”

Recently, as I was reading *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, you reminded me that of the nine processes of devotional service chanting the holy name is the most essential. I have read and heard you say this many times before, but this time seemed special. Profoundly affected, I felt the idea penetrate my stonelike

Homages from the GBC

heart more deeply than in the past. Naturally, realization is born from such an experience. Let me share how your words purified and shaped my consciousness.

When Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya asked Caitanya Mahāprabhu, “Which item is most important in the execution of devotional service?” the Lord replied that the most important item was the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 6.241)

In the next verse Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu quotes the *Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa* (38.126) to confirm His statement:

*harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

“In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy, the only means of deliverance is the chanting of the holy names of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way.” [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 6.242]

In His teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu singles out chanting as the most essential practice:

Of the nine processes of devotional service, the most important is to always chant the holy name of the Lord. If one does so, avoiding the ten kinds of offenses, one very easily obtains the most valuable love of Godhead. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā* 4.71]

In your purport to this verse you quote from Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī’s *Bhakti-sandarbhā* (270):

“Chanting the holy name is the chief means of attaining love of Godhead. This chanting, or devotional service, does not depend on any paraphernalia, nor on one’s having taken birth in a good family. By humility and meekness one attracts the attention of Kṛṣṇa. That is the verdict of all the *Vedas*. Therefore, if one becomes very humble and meek, he can easily attain the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa in this Age of Kali. That is the fulfillment of all great sacrifices, penances, and austerities because when one achieves ecstatic love of Godhead he attains the complete perfection of life. Therefore, whatever one does in executing devotional service must be accompanied by the chanting of the holy name of the Lord.” [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā* 4.71, purport]

We find a similar discussion between Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Rāmānanda Rāya. There, Mahāprabhu asks, “Among all worshipable objects, which is the chief?” Rāmānanda Rāya replies, “The chief worshipable object is the holy name of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 8.256)

These quotes and others like them establish that chanting the holy name is undoubtedly the most essential process of devotional service. Is it any wonder, then, that *ācāryas* such as Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī feel compelled to share their hearts:

“I do not know how much nectar the two syllables ‘Kṛṣṇa’ have produced. When the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is chanted, it appears to dance within the mouth. We then desire many, many mouths. When that name enters the holes of the ears, we desire many millions of ears. And when the holy name dances in the courtyard of the heart, it conquers the activities of the mind, and therefore all the senses become inert.” [*Vidagdha-mādhava* 1.15, cited in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā* 1.99]

“All glories, all glories to the all-blissful holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which causes the devotee to give up all conventional religious duties, meditation, and worship. When somehow or other uttered even once by a living entity, the holy name awards him liberation. The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is the

Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā 2018

highest nectar. It is my very life and my only treasure.” [*Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* 1.9, cited in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya-līlā* 4.71, purport]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, through your teachings and practical example, you stressed the importance of chanting the holy name.

Of all the regulative principles, the spiritual master’s order to chant at least sixteen rounds is most essential. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 22.113, purport]

All of you must chant at least 16 rounds of beads daily and without fail. That is first and foremost. [Letter to Rāmeśvara and other initiates, 28 April 1971]

The first management is that each and every member in the temple is chanting sixteen rounds regularly and following the regulations. . . . But sixteen rounds is not very large number. The lowest in India is twenty-five. . . . That is our spiritual strength—to observe the regulative principles and chant at least sixteen rounds. Then you do other things. [Room conversation with GBC, 25 May 1972]

At the same time, you stressed the importance of chanting without offense as the means to realize that Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa’s name are nondifferent:

One must come to the understanding that the holy name of the Lord and the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself are identical. One cannot reach this conclusion unless one is offenseless in chanting the holy name. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 8.16, purport]

If chanting is the most important *aṅga* of devotional service, then the most important principle in relishing the fruit of chanting (*prema-bhakti*) is to chant in the mood of complete helplessness, fully depending on Kṛṣṇa as our only shelter:

It is the aspiration of a devotee that while he chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* his eyes will fill with tears, his voice falter, and his heart throb. These are good signs in chanting the holy name of the Lord. In ecstasy, one should feel the entire world to be vacant without the presence of Govinda. This is a sign of separation from Govinda. In material life, we are all separated from Govinda and are absorbed in material sense gratification. Therefore, when one comes to his senses on the spiritual platform he becomes so eager to meet Govinda that without Govinda the entire world becomes a vacant place. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 7.81, purport]

Having mined these priceless gems from your *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, letters, and room conversations, I feel deeply inspired and committed to strive to chant the holy name purely, calling out sincerely from my heart rather than just mechanically from my lips.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for gifting me the holy name nearly fifty years ago. There is no way I can ever repay you for this gift, but if I can please you by sincerely trying to chant the holy name without offense and helping others to do the same, I will take that as your causeless mercy upon me.

In anticipation of receiving your mercy, although most undeserving, I will take solace in these words of yours:

Just chant Hare Krishna and everything will be all right. [Letter to Madhukara, 19 August 1974]

Your humble servant,

Giridhārī Swami

Girirāj Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this earth, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.”

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

“Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.”

After the conveyance of the Juhu land was finally signed in October 1973, you declared, “It was a good fight. Someone should write a book about it.”

And in Vṛndāvana in June 1977, you repeated the instruction when speaking with Tamāl Krishna Goswami:

Tamāl Krishna: Always you came out victorious. Always. I have never seen you ever defeated. In Bombay it was absolutely impossible. It seemed to be impossible.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Nobody encouraged. . . . Nobody, not a single man. Who could see such a big project would come out?

Tamāl Krishna: Only you could see that, you and Rādhā-Rāsabihārī.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Nobody. Still, I was determined: “No, this place is very nice.”

Tamāl Krishna: They should write a book about that.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, it is worth writing—history.

You had already instructed me, in February 1971, “You should write. This is your first business.” Over the years you repeated this instruction, and so I thought you would want me to write that book about Juhu. As it is, I am the only devotee who was intimately involved in the project from the time you got possession of the land in 1972 to the time the temple opened in 1978.

So, with the encouragement and assistance of many well-wishers, three years ago I took up writing about you and Juhu as my first priority. In doing so, I became absorbed in your divine qualities, activities, and words, and I came to understand you—and even events to which I was party—in new, deeper ways. I felt like I was mining a limitless reservoir of precious gems.

Now, by your and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī’s and the devotees’ mercy, I have finished writing the basic narrative of the book, entitled “*I’ll Build You a Temple*”—*A Good Fight and a Promise Fulfilled*. In the process, I have come to appreciate you—and your servants—even more, first and foremost those servants who assisted you in the Juhu project, and also those who have supported me in my efforts to write about it.

Your transcendental desire to establish a center of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the remote Bombay area of Juhu was awakened even before you left for America. When you would visit Sumati Morarji, you would

pass the land and think, “This would be a nice place for a temple.” Years later, Mr. Nair sold you the very same land, to be “profitably utilized for big purpose, as yours,” and you brought Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī from Their residence in a posh flat in Akash Ganga, overlooking the Arabian Sea, to a rented pandal on the property. From there They were moved onto a wood-plank platform under cloth supported by bare bamboo poles; then, for the rainy season, into a *chatai* hut with devotees; and on Janmāṣṭamī 1972 into a makeshift structure of bricks and asbestos sheets. But you had vowed to Them, “I will build You a temple.” And finally, after years of struggle, in 1978 we were able to offer Their Lordships the temple you had promised.

You expressed your spiritual desire to build Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī a temple with great, intelligent endeavor. In your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* 10.13.50 you explained, “The word *svakāṛthānām* refers to great desires. As mentioned in this verse, the glance of Lord Viṣṇu creates the desires of the devotees. A pure devotee, however, has no desires. Therefore Sanātana Gosvāmī comments that because the desires of devotees whose attention is fixed on Kṛṣṇa have already been fulfilled, the Lord’s sidelong glances create variegated desires in relation to Kṛṣṇa and devotional service.” Thus in “a place where there was no temple, . . . a devotee desired, ‘Let there be a temple and *sevā*, devotional service.’ Therefore, what was once an empty corner has now become a place of pilgrimage. Such are the desires of a devotee.”

By the strength of your desire, an overgrown plot of land in Juhu became a place of pilgrimage and devotional service. And in the long process, you engaged so many of us in devotional service. As you explained in your introduction to *The Nectar of Instruction*:

This devotional service is a sort of cultivation. It is not simply inaction for people who like to be inactive or devote their time to silent meditation. There are many different methods for people who want this, but cultivation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is different. The particular word used by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in this connection is *anuśīlana*, or cultivation by following the predecessor teachers (*ācāryas*). As soon as we say “cultivation,” we must refer to activity. Without activity, consciousness alone cannot help us. . . .

We can offer many services with our bodily activities. But all such activities must be in relationship with Kṛṣṇa. This relationship is established by connecting oneself with the bona fide spiritual master, who is the direct representative of Kṛṣṇa in disciplic succession. Therefore, the execution of Kṛṣṇa conscious activities with the body should be directed by the spiritual master and then performed with faith.

You engaged us, your disciples—and so many others—in devotional service authorized by the principles of scripture and the instructions of previous spiritual masters, developing Hare Krishna Land on a grand scale, and after your departure, by your mercy, we were left with tremendous challenges of work and responsibility—for our own spiritual benefit and for the benefit of all those who would associate with the temple.

In spite of all opposition and obstacles, you remained perfect in Kṛṣṇa consciousness—an ideal *sādhū*. During one of your talks on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, you spoke about our situation in relation to a verse describing the qualities and behavior of a *sādhū*:

*titikṣavaḥ kārūṇikāḥ suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām
ajāta-śatravaḥ śāntāḥ sādhabaḥ sādhu-bhūṣaṇāḥ*

“The symptoms of a *sādhū* are that he is tolerant, merciful, and friendly to all living entities. He has no enemies, he is peaceful, he abides by the scriptures, and all his characteristics are sublime.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.25.21)

You perfectly exemplified the verse, and while discussing it you explained to us your inner mood and motivation, but you did so in such a way as to include us:

Homages from the GBC

Here all the boys and girls—the devotees—they are concerned with Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. That’s all. Their whole business, day and night, is Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. From early morning, three o’clock, to night, ten o’clock, their only business is Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. That’s all. Therefore they are *sādhū*.

And so many people are criticizing. We are not getting the sanction to build because we have so many enemies. They say we are creating a “nuisance.” We are chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, and that is a “nuisance.” This complaint is going to the police. So that is very difficult.

[Filled with emotion, you exclaimed:] Therefore a *sādhū* is advised, “*Titikṣavaḥ*, tolerate! Tolerate all this nonsense!” What can be done? We have no other alternative but to tolerate. Nobody’s coming to help us. Our business is so thankless. Because we are trying to create one temple, so many enemies are giving hindrance: “You cannot do it.” Therefore *titikṣavaḥ*. You have to remain *sādhū*. You cannot become *asādhū*. You have to tolerate. What can be done?

At the same time, you have to become merciful. You know what has happened in this place, Hare Krishna Land? So much attack by the police, by the municipality: “Break this temple!” We could have gone, concluding, “What is the use of taking so much botheration? We have hundreds of temples outside India. If people here are not liking, let us go away.” No. *Kāruṇikāḥ*. We have come to distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We must tolerate and give this message to the people. *Kāruṇikāḥ*: very merciful, in spite of all trouble.

These American boys and girls have come to help me—not that they have come because they are hungry. No. My mission is, “You Americans, you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa so the people of India will see, ‘Oh, Americans are also chanting. Why not we?’” But unfortunately—such dull brains—that thought is not coming. But still, we have to do it. We have to tolerate, and we have to become *kāruṇikāḥ*, merciful.

Why should you want to be merciful? *Para-duḥkha-duḥkhī. Kṛpāmbudhir yas tam ahaṁ prapadye*. A Vaiṣṇava understands, “These people are engaged like cats and dogs in sense gratification. They are misguided, and in the next life they’ll be punished. Let us do something for them.” This is *kāruṇikāḥ*: out of mercy. There is no question of getting something, money. No. We have got sufficient money. But just to become merciful upon these fallen, conditioned souls, who are suffering on account of becoming animalistic, without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the preacher, the *sādhū*s . . . These are *sādhū*s—*titikṣavaḥ*, tolerant: “Never mind. Whatever hindrances and tribulations they are offering to us, never mind. Tolerate.”

And *suhṛdaḥ*. *Suhṛdaḥ* means the heart is so nice. . . . The Vaiṣṇava is always thinking how a man can be saved from the clutches of *māyā*. He has no other desire. The Vaiṣṇava is so kind that *suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām*: he is kind not only to the human beings but to all embodied souls—cats, dogs, trees, plants, insects. A Vaiṣṇava will hesitate to kill even a mosquito. *Sarva-dehinām*. Not that “I shall take care of my brother only. I am good, and my brother is good.” No. *Suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām*.

And *ajāta-śatravaḥ*. When one is living in that way, as a *sādhū*, why will others become his enemy? The *sādhū* does not create enemies, but people become enemies out of their own character. How can a *sādhū* create enemies? Kṛṣṇa says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*, and we are simply teaching, “My dear human being, my dear friend, you become a surrendered soul to Kṛṣṇa.” So what is our fault? So we don’t create any enemy, but they become enemy. Why shall I create enemy? *Suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām*. But they become, out of their own nature. . . .

So we are in this society, human society, and because we are spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the envious, who are more dangerous than snakes, are putting so many impediments. But we have to tolerate. We have no other alternative. You see? *Ajāta-śatravaḥ śāntāḥ*. Be peaceful. What can be done? Depend on Kṛṣṇa.

These are the ornaments of a *sādhū*: *titikṣavaḥ kāruṇikāḥ suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām*. You must know what is a *sādhū*. First, a *sādhū* is a devotee. And if he is a devotee, then all the symptoms are there. Now, you find a *sādhū* and associate with him. Then your path of liberation will be open.

Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā 2018

Śrīla Prabhupāda, it has been our greatest good fortune to be able to associate with you, a perfect *sādhū*. And by your words and example, you encouraged us to try to become *sādhū*s as well. And by the service of such a *sādhū* as you, one actually develops the qualities of the *sādhū*.

Along with your desires as a preacher, you also had your personal commitment and service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī. “My dear Sir,” you had told Them, “You just stand here, and I will build You a temple.” And you did. You fulfilled your promise. And what a temple you built! And what a struggle to do it! But you did it. It was a good fight, but you did it: you kept your promise and built Them a temple.

All glories to Your Divine Grace, to your wonderful service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī and to all of Mumbai, all humanity, and all living entities—including this fallen soul. And all glories to your servants, who, by your mercy, are continuing your sublime mission.

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

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, the deliverer of all fallen souls, whose mercy turns the dumb into eloquent speakers and enables the lame to cross mountains.”

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your eternal, dependent servant,

Girirāj Swami

Gopāl Krishna Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet on your 122nd Vyāsa-pūjā celebration.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu predicted that one day the holy name would be chanted in every corner of the globe:

*prthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma
sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*

In 1875 Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura predicted that a personality would soon appear in order to preach the teachings of Lord Caitanya. You were that empowered personality who took Lord Caitanya’s message to almost every corner of the globe. You arrived in America in September 1965 on a cargo ship, the *Jaladuta*. You had only twenty-eight dollars, a pair of *karatālas*, some books, and an introduction to the Agarwal family in Butler, Pennsylvania. Due to your advanced age, almost everyone in India discouraged you from traveling to the West. But you were determined. You had full faith in your guru’s and Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. Your only desire was to follow the instruction that your Guru Mahārāja had given you in 1922 and repeated in his last letter to you in December 1935.

You struggled for nearly forty years in India to establish Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You struggled again for almost a year in America, and finally, in July 1966, you opened the first temple in a storefront and incorporated the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in New York. In the early days you personally cooked and served *prasādam* to the devotees and guests. Many guests got attached to the

Homages from the GBC

prasādam and eventually became devotees. You translated over seventy books into the English language. Today, for the first time in history we have the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in almost every major language of the world. Scholars all over the world have appreciated your translations from the original Sanskrit texts. In a brief span of eleven years you traveled around the world twelve times, gave thousands of lectures, wrote thousands of letters, and met hundreds of scholars and dignitaries. In 1971 you visited Moscow for just five days and planted the seed of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which has developed into a luxuriant *bhakti* creeper in Russia that continues to grow. Under your inspiration the first Ratha-yātrā outside India was held in San Francisco in 1967. Today Ratha-yātrās are held in more than two hundred cities around the world.

This year we celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the inauguration of the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī temple in Mumbai and the twentieth anniversary of the inauguration of the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Pārthasārathi temple in New Delhi. The Juhu project was very dear to you, and we all know how you struggled to secure the land and get the construction started. You often said Bombay was your office. Over a hundred senior devotees who had served in Juhu in the 70's came and recalled your wonderful pastimes at Hare Krishna Land. These devotees were very fortunate to have served in Juhu during your stay on this planet. Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī have blessed millions of fortunate souls over the past forty years.

In the early 60's you regularly traveled to New Delhi from Vṛndāvana to publish and distribute your books. You had a strong desire that a major temple be established in this important city. Unfortunately, we could not get any land while you were on the planet. However, due to your causeless mercy we finally obtained a four-acre plot in a prominent location in New Delhi. The Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Pārthasārathi temple was inaugurated in March of 1998 by Prime Minister Atal Krishna Bihari Vajpayee. Today, by your mercy, we have twelve temples in New Delhi at prominent locations.

On this auspicious day I pray that I never deviate from your divine instructions and keep working to expand your glories. Your glories are unlimited, and your books keep inspiring the conditioned souls to take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda-*kī jaya!*

Your eternal servant,

Gopāl Krishna Goswami

Guru Prasād Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet. That dust is *mora pañca-grās*, the ultimate foodstuff for those wanting to advance in spiritual life.

Karuṇā, compassion, the next quality in my quest to demonstrate a drop of those qualities by meditating on your transcendental *līlā*, is among the most salient. Progressively, the previous qualities of *kṛpālu*, mercy, *sarva-upakāraka*, working for the welfare of others, and *vadānya*, magnanimity, all culminate in compassion, being related attributes. Compassion includes mercy while being demonstrated practically in spiritual welfare activity. It embodies magnanimity to the fullest extent.

Everything you did and said was bathed in compassion. However, since compassion manifests in many different forms, it cannot always be recognized as such. You explained to us that the real mercy of the spiritual master comes in the form of chastisement and correction, for the duty of a merciful *ācārya* is to

rectify his followers. We see throughout Kṛṣṇa's creation so much tribulation, which is just a manifestation of His compassion. To try to individually enumerate all of the manifestations and appearances of compassion throughout your dealings, writings, and spoken words would be too voluminous for the purposes of this offering. Lord Brahmā's statement *tat te 'nukampām su-samīkṣamāṇo bhuñjāna evātma-kṛtām vipākam*, accepting whatever happens in one's life as the Lord's mercy, can be compared to everything you did and said as yielding the same benefit, and must be taken in the same way.

Your loving and caring demeanor, especially during the beginning days of ISKCON, might be seen as classical compassion, exemplified by such acts as cooking for and waiting on the devotees. Still, perhaps the most wonderful display of your kindness, warmth, and sensitivity was when you would chastise someone and then buffer he chastisement, eliminating any apparent harshness, with your loving smile. However, there is no doubt that anything and everything that emanated from you was one of the multifarious aspects of compassion.

Although your compassionate nature is all-pervading, still someone as reluctant as I am to take advantage of it must beg you to give some special charity to this most foolish soul. I thank you a hundred million times for accepting me as your aspiring servant.

At the dust of your sheltering-giving lotus feet,

Guru Prasād Swami

Hṛdaya Caitanya dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

When I joined your ISKCON movement in 1980, I heard statements such as "Material existence is temporary, illusory, and full of miseries. There is no happiness at all. There is just the futile attempt to get rid of the miseries, and temporary cessation of misery is falsely called happiness." Hearing this naked truth, I was wondering whether devotees were being too negative, or whether we were trying to brainwash ourselves, as if we were making such statements just to convince ourselves to stay in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Over the years I have had to admit that slowly, slowly I came to realize that your words and the words of the previous *ācāryas* are the hard reality of life, and that the picture of the world I had previously painted was distorted, sentimental, foolish, and created by an underlying desire for sense gratification. Real life is spiritual life.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are our hero, you are Kṛṣṇa's empowered pure devotee, you are our spiritual father and spiritual grandfather, you have realized the truth, and you have traveled tirelessly around the world to spread the mission of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

You have completely changed the lives of thousands of your direct followers, and you continue to transform countless lives through your disciples and granddisciples, who are spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness to hundreds of thousands.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, you remain in the center of all the expansion of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Due to the printing and distribution of your books, your teachings are continuously being disseminated all over the planet and will continue to be broadcast for many centuries to come.

Homages from the GBC

Personally, I can't imagine what my life would be if I hadn't met your devotees, if I hadn't taken up Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

You requested your disciples and granddisciples to take responsibility, to take some risks in serving the preaching mission. Taking part in the leadership of ISKCON is a very responsible and important service. Many of your direct disciples and your granddisciples are doing wonderful service for your ISKCON movement, and I admire their achievements. So many people are being saved from being submerged deeper and deeper in materialistic activities, and by the mercy of your teachings they are being saved from materialistic thinking, feeling, and willing.

In my service, the main challenges I meet are the lack of understanding of how necessary cooperation is. You told your direct disciples that their love for you would be shown by how they cooperate with one another after your departure.

In several countries in Europe we are struggling with a lack of manpower; there are few of your direct disciples left, and the second-generation devotees are also getting older. So the challenge we are facing is to evoke in the third and fourth generations of devotees the necessary commitment and surrender to carry on and expand your movement.

A few days ago I saw the latest film made by Yadubara Dāsa and his wife Viśākhā Devī Dāsī—*Hare Kṛṣṇa! The Mantra, the Movement and the Swami Who Started It All*. This film allows us to see your greatness, your purity, and how only an empowered pure devotee could have had such vision and determination to spread the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa all over the globe. Above all, we see how everything was based on your inner strength and desire to please Kṛṣṇa and your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Otherwise, how could you alone have started such a worldwide movement, which has already changed the world and which will continue to completely change the course of the world in due course of time?

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, your Vyāsa-pūjā day allows me to reflect on my service to you and your disciples, and although it's a humbling experience, reality needs to be seen, and some small progress here and there encourages me to continue to serve you and them.

Please allow me to continue to serve you and your devotees.

Your dependent servant,

Hṛdaya Caitanya dāsa

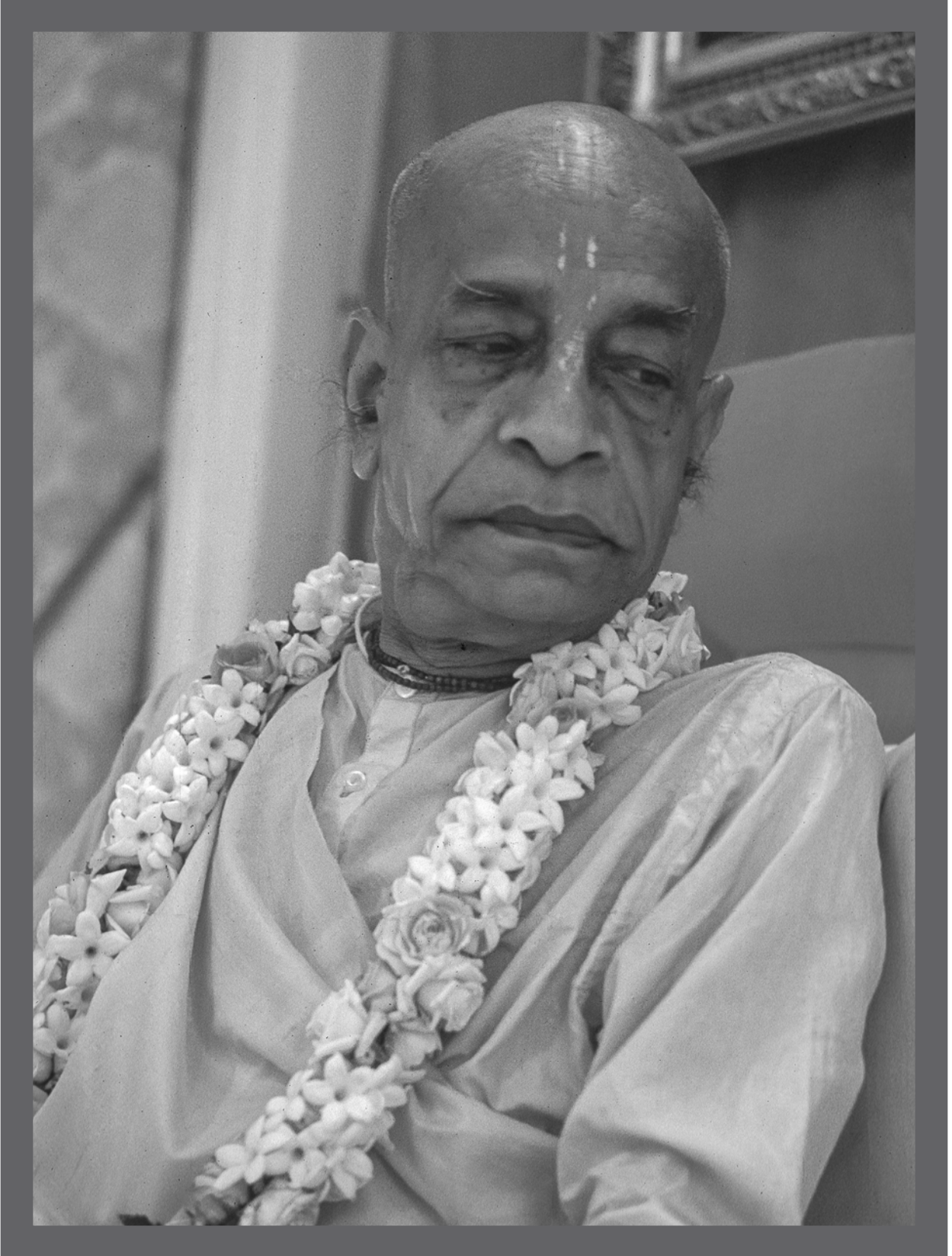
Hridayānanda dās Goswami

I bow to my eternal spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

This year I will reflect on a sublime period that I think of as a golden age of ISKCON's mission in the West. I speak of the time from 1966 to 1970, a time when Prabhupāda personally knew most of his devotees and they personally knew him.

We can structurally compare Prabhupāda's *līlā* in this world to that of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya. Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Mathurā and Dvārakā had the greatest impact on global affairs, in terms of slaying demons and reestablishing pious rulers. But Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vraja are the sweetest, the most intimate, and the most revealing of His highest nature.

Similarly, for six years Lord Caitanya traveled around India, preaching with extraordinary success. But His pastimes in Navadvīpa, like those of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, are very sweet. He lived in a smaller



Homages from the GBC

community, surrounded by family and lifelong friends.

Prabhupāda repeatedly circled the globe, creating and managing the Hare Kṛṣṇa explosion. Yet I see his earlier pastimes as analogous to those of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana and Mahāprabhu in Navadvīpa. As stated above, in the early days Prabhupāda knew all the devotees and, in a sense, they knew him. Mukunda Goswami's biography, that of Gurudas and of course Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami, and others, describe these very intimate pastimes the devotees relished in the early days of the movement. In those days Prabhupāda lived in America and declared an American city, Los Angeles, to be his world headquarters. We find in those earlier days that Prabhupāda trusted his disciples to discover effective preaching strategies. Prabhupāda maintained boundaries, but within those generous boundaries he encouraged the ingenuity, creativity, and local experience of his disciples. The result was wonderful.

My dream and goal in life is to help to reestablish what Prabhupāda created then—a truly Western Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in the West. In our hearts, we Western preachers must bring Prabhupāda back, to live in our Western countries. By our love and service, we can relish with him the same intimate, sweet dealings that Prabhupāda's early disciples did. The more we spiritually manifest Prabhupāda in the West, by our genuine devotion, the more Western people will be attracted. Let us work together to fulfill Prabhupāda's great dream of a Kṛṣṇa conscious world.

His servant,

Hridayānanda dās Goswami

Jayapatāka Swami

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

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

My dear spiritual father,

Please accept my respectful obeisances on the occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā.

I am reminded how you undertook the great sacrifice of taking Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the Western world and how we are so indebted to Your Divine Grace. You took Lord Caitanya's mercy all over the world.

You have shown us how we should be dedicated to serving Guru and Gaurāṅga, how we should be following your footsteps. I would like to finish the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium along with the devotees, see the Navadvīpa *parikramā* expand, see the unification of the Caitanya disciplic succession, and see the distribution of your transcendental literature increase exponentially. There are many other instructions you have given us, your disciples. Following them is possible only by your grace. We can remain together, carrying out your orders, if you give us your mercy. All glories to you!

Your servant,

Jayapatāka Swami

Kavicandra Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Kabe Habe

I know that I can never repay the causeless mercy you are showering on me. I pray that I will never stop trying.

When you gave me my beads and said, “Your name is Kavicandra Dāsa,” you commented that Kavicandra was a great devotee of Lord Nityānanda. You knew that I needed that supermost mercy. I thought at that time, “I must do *saṅkīrtana*, book distribution.” I have tried. Depending upon Lord Nityānanda always gives me hope. Thank you for that.

Now I feel like *kabe habe*, when oh when will I . . .

Give up the enjoying spirit.
Develop a service attitude.

Krishna Consciousness is always dormant in everyone’s heart & it can be awakened simply by service attitude. [Letter to Jadurāṇī, 13 October 1967]

Kabe habe, when oh when will I . . .

Be able to cry for Kṛṣṇa, knowing there is no other way.

I see so many devotees making so much advancement. They are very kind, by your mercy, to keep offering me various services and always encouraging me.

You wrote me only one letter. We were told not to write to you so you could concentrate on translating. You wrote that appreciating devotees was very important.

Please tell me, when will that day be mine—when my offenses will end and the power of divine grace will infuse my heart with a taste for the pure holy name?

When will Lord Nityānanda show me mercy and release me from the illusion of materialism?
When will He give me the shade of His lotus feet and let me enter the marketplace of the holy name?

When will compassion for all fallen souls awaken within this Bhaktivinoda, and when will he thus forget his own happiness and with a meek heart set out to propagate by humble entreaty the sacred order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu? [*Kabe Ha’be Bolo*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura]

Humility seems to be so out of reach for me.

Your potency is constantly manifesting so many new devotees and temples. I wish to be part of that. Thank you for your causeless mercy.

Homages from the GBC

Please engage me in your service.

Your servant

Kavicandra Swami

Madhusevita Dāsa

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

Today I was browsing through the “Prabhupāda Meditations” calendar, the calendar that has a daily quote from you, and found the following statement you uttered in Bhubaneswar: “Whatever Kṛṣṇa said, that is good and everything else bad. *Bās*. Our confusion is finished.”

There is no confusion in my heart. When I read your books, preach, or associate with devotees, everything is crystal clear.

How is this possible?

In Delhi you said, “Any devotee who has developed genuine love for Kṛṣṇa can also explain the truth about Kṛṣṇa because Kṛṣṇa helps such sincere devotee seated in the heart.”

But honestly (no question of humility here), in my heart love for Kṛṣṇa is conspicuous by its absence, and you know that well.

Then how is that I am convinced, determined, and feel spiritually nourished?

There are two answers to this question:

- a) Your causeless mercy, inspiration, and support.
- b) The wonderful association of your servants.

The first one comes mostly in the form of your books. I read them and find them perfect. Within your words I find the key to properly discriminate and place every statement in its right context and hierarchical relevance, from absolute *siddhānta* to Bengali proverbs, avoiding sweeping juxtapositions thereof.

I don’t criticize or oppose the request for hermeneutics, exegesis, or the like; some feel the need for it, either for their own understanding or for preaching purposes.

But as far as I am concerned, I feel that while I am reading or describing your purports you are enlightening and guiding me. Therefore, as long as I try to sincerely serve you there will be no room for confusion in my heart and the truth of Kṛṣṇa will always shine forth.

Truly practicing your impeccable instructions, particularly on hearing and chanting the holy name, then makes everything complete.

The second answer is the immense gift in the form of the protection and shelter that your loving servants provide.

With the passage of time I realize more and more how dependent I am on those who have devoted

their lives to you, and how attached I am to them as well. They are heroes, special souls whose hearts have become your residence. They remind me of you; some manifest certain traits of yours, some others, and they all are my loving family.

The GBC members especially are engrossed in service to you, and their anxiety in trying to maintain and expand your movement is sometimes heartrending.

Same goes for your servants at the BBT, whose only goal in life is to keep your *br̥hat-mṛdaṅga* heart beating strongly.

And glory to all my godbrothers and godsisters who genuinely maintain your legacy, as well as to all others who sincerely serve you.

In conclusion, on the sacred occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā, my humble request to you is that since this aging body will soon manifest its expiration date, please don't let confusion ever overcome me, so that while avoiding committing offenses I may one day be readmitted into your eternal shelter.

Your worthless servant,

Madhusevita Dāsa

Mālatī Devī Dāsī

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the dearest person within my life and within my heart:

Please accept my humbly offered obeisances at your lotus feet again and again and again.

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

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this earth, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

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

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

In all the three worlds, you are not to be equaled (and that is a fact).

So it is that each day I submit my head at your feet with the same plea: "Please allow me to be of service to you today." And each night, I again plead: "Please allow me to do better tomorrow." While this practice may appear routine, those moments with you are supremely real. At the same time, while that reality can be blurred by so many factors, the supplication remains the same and my intention remains the same: "Please allow me to serve you, day after day after day. Please tell me what I can do for you (in particular situations)?"

The blurred reality tries to find a manner in which to remain true to you and your mission even when it seems that every once in a while this could mean closing my eyes for a moment to certain "realities" on

Homages from the GBC

the ISKCON ground, or remaining silent like a dull doll when it's obvious there's something askew that is not being addressed or acknowledged by us, your timeworn soldiers.

So I continue to ask you, "Please let me serve you," but the real question is how to do so in such times. For that to be understood, I clearly must improve and increase my own level of devotional aptitude and surrender. In the meantime, I am forced to beg you to please give me an indication of what I should do in what seem like perilous times, both for your mission and in my fading life.

Your fame is spread all over the three worlds (and that is a fact). You are famous because you are a cent per cent pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa and have not deviated from your spiritual master's instructions (and that is a fact). You are glorious because you have used your life to rescue fallen souls without consideration of your own convenience (and that is a fact). You are incomparably compassionate because you gave up your position of frolicking in the forests of Vraja with Kṛṣṇa and his cowherd boys to come to this wretched world (and that is a fact). You are most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and therefore He personally came to speak to you when you sat down to write your books about Him (and that is a fact).

Therefore, I could never bear to leave your service (and that is also a fact).

Your forever dāsī,

Mālātī Devī Dāsī (as named by you in January 1967)

Mukunda Goswami

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

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

Eighteen ninety-six Calcutta,
A heart was born softer than butter,
And when Armageddon
Would in later years threaten,
He taught Kṛṣṇa's names one must utter.

From the start liberated
And always elated;
The *mṛdaṅga* he beat
Made a sound so sweet.
Then in sixty-seven, when a drum came from
heaven,
His playing excitement generated.

* * *

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda:

The parade you'd stage
At an early age;
The *rath* you towed
Was Kṛṣṇa's abode;
All these were signs of a budding sage.

In just a short time
Your peers you'd out-climb;
You trotted the globe,
Your home was the road.
Hare Kṛṣṇa! Your life was sublime.

You're here to stay:
Kali's at bay
For ten thousand years.
Music to ears.
Oh happy, happy day!

Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā 2018

Friendly to guests who came in streams,
You tore to bits their impersonalist dreams.
Against “progress” you railed,
You said science had failed—
It fell apart at the seams.

You wrote in the night,
While disciples slept tight.
You changed the world,
And with texts unfurled
You made many sinful wrongs right.

Your books were your mace
For a dying race.
With logic and reason
Always in season,
T’was a philosophy many’d embrace.

In public you’d speak—
You were never meek.
With words profound,
Your cherished sound
Was loved by the strong and the weak.

Before you was madness,
A dreary blackness.
You answered questions
And found the connections
That always turned sadness to gladness.

You taught God’s Supreme,
That He plays with a team
And conquers all,
Not as a puff-ball,
Not as an out-of-reach dream.

Your devotees, infallible soldiers
With actions stronger than boulders—
They made people think,
Brought them to the brink.
Some bowed, dipping their shoulders.

The trail you blazed
Left scholars amazed.
You questioned the knowledge
They learned in college.
They left your *darshan* with consciousness
raised.

You’re here to stay:

Kali’s at bay
For ten thousand years.
Music to ears.
Oh happy, happy day!

Your words, sugarcane,
Sweetened stout and lame.
Always the master,
Your wit was faster,
Yet humility named the game.

One saw oceans of cream,
As in a dream—
A miraculous thing.
We wanted to cling
To what seemed a bright sunbeam.

When you’d appear,
T’was like “Spring is here!”
All would kneel,
And things got real
For the far and the very near.

When Bangladesh preaching
Was unleashing,
Your followers were bolder
Than a British soldier
With a Bengali mom’s heart a’beating.

When you’d reminisce,
Moments not to miss,
Your past you’d remember
With full surrender,
And disciples would roll in bliss

What you had to say
To us every day:
“Serve the Lord
With lotus or sword.”
We’d choose the most practical way.

You’re here to stay:
Kali’s at bay
For ten thousand years.
Music to ears.
Oh happy, happy day!

Your servant,

Mukunda Goswami

Nirañjana Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Today I am observing your appearance day for the forth-fifth time. After standing before you like this annually for forty-five years, offering homage to your divine lotus feet, I'm thinking that I need to take a serious look within my heart and pray that my attempt to glorify you will some day become worthy of your attention.

When you were with us, you once told us:

So my Guru Mahārāja used to say that “Instead of seeing Kṛṣṇa, you serve so faithfully that Kṛṣṇa will see you.” That should be the process. Kṛṣṇa is omnipresent. He can see you; He can understand you, what you are doing. So we have to execute devotional service in such a faithful way that Kṛṣṇa will see us. Then you will be successful. “Don't try to see Kṛṣṇa. Try to become seen by Kṛṣṇa.” That was my Guru Mahārāja's instruction.

How can I ever expect Kṛṣṇa to look at me unless you ask Him to look favorably upon me? My only hope is for capturing your merciful glance along with your benevolent smile of approval. I live for that. Without hope for it someday, there is no value to my life.

Kṛṣṇa remains passive with me as *upadraṣṭā* and *anumantā*, the overseer and permitter. There is no reason for me to think that other than through your mercy He will respond to me in any way other than that. I have no love for Him. I cannot therefore invoke His divine intervention. But you love Kṛṣṇa and He surely listens to you.

It is my greatest fortune that you magnanimously accepted me as your servant almost forty-four years ago, when I promised you that I would faithfully execute devotional service to your divine lotus feet for all of eternity.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has instructed how a faithful *sādhaka* must think:

“Kṛṣṇa must be merciful to me either today or after one hundred years or in some other birth. I will take shelter of His lotus feet with determination and never leave.” This type of *dhairya*, patience, is most desirable for the practitioners of devotional service. [*Śrī Bhaktyāloka*]

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this most auspicious day of your divine appearance, I humbly submit that I have complete faith that *you* will be merciful to me, either today, after one hundred years, or in some other birth. I have firmly taken shelter of your lotus feet and will never leave them. Please keep me as your servant birth after birth, and continue to engage me, as you see fit, in service to the Lords of your life.

Your eternal servant,

Nirañjana Swami

Prahlādānanda Swami

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

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

Confused by material concepts of life, souls under the spell of the illusionary energy are to different degrees unaware of Lord Kṛṣṇa and try to satisfy their desire for security and love under the inspiration and guidance of leaders who are also spiritually blind.

Because we're eternal and eternally connected with Lord Kṛṣṇa, we're always eternally secure and should experience unlimited spiritual love and pleasure. In the material world, however, a soul has two problems: he's covered by Lord Kṛṣṇa's illusionary energy and thus unaware of his true nature, and, misdirected by illusion, he accepts leaders equally covered by illusion and misdirected.

But a fortunate soul comes in contact with Lord Kṛṣṇa through books such as the *Bhagavad-gītā* and learns of his spiritual nature and his eternal relationship with the Supreme. If he's still more fortunate, he comes in contact with devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who can engage him in Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotional service, by which he becomes eligible to receive the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotee and thus attain spiritual enlightenment.

Less fortunate conditioned souls, guided by spiritually blind leaders, will continue to believe that material gain and sense gratification will bring the highest levels of security and love and happiness. Bound by the illusionary energy, such souls remain in the cycle of birth and death to repeatedly suffer under the laws of karma.

Recounting a conversation with Professor Kotovsky, Śrīla Prabhupāda said:

Just like I told Professor Kotovsky that "Your communism, what is the difference between your communism and our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement? You have selected Lenin as your leader, or master, and we have selected Kṛṣṇa as our leader, master. So on the principle, where is difference?" The professor could not answer. [Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.1, Vṛndāvana, 14 November 1972]

As a perfect representative of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda is a perfect spiritual leader. Śrīla Prabhupāda not only perfectly repeated Lord Kṛṣṇa's message, but he also perfectly lived His message. Because Śrīla Prabhupāda had an intense desire to give Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy to the fallen souls of Kali-yuga, Lord Kṛṣṇa is fulfilling that desire through Śrīla Prabhupāda's representatives in the form of his books, lectures, ISKCON, and his devotees.

Truly fortunate are those who come in contact with what Śrīla Prabhupāda offers and then accept it. The more they follow Śrīla Prabhupāda, the more fortunate they become. The more fortunate they become, the more they become empowered to spread that fortune to others.

Prahlādānanda Swami

Rādhā-Krishna dās

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful obeisances. All glories to you.

It's 2018. This is the first year that I have the privilege of serving you by serving the devotees in Hungary, Turkey, and Romania as a GBC. Through your books, lectures, letters, and conversations you have made it very clear what you expect from the leaders of ISKCON. Being a GBC is a fantastic opportunity for me to grow in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and also as a human being, since there is one thing that is sure: I'm not qualified. But there is another thing that is also sure: I promise I'll try really hard to become qualified.

I would like to thank you for guiding me on my Kṛṣṇa conscious journey for the last twenty-four years. I am more than thankful for all the wisdom I have received from your books and your disciples. Please bless me so that I can fulfill my responsibilities as a leader of your movement.

I would like to see you smile when we give the reports from Hungary describing how we are striving to develop the Hungarian *yātrā* so it will become exemplary in preaching, Deity worship, education, and *varṇāśrama*, and how we are working to make ISKCON Hungary a well-organized community where devotees live happily in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and Hungarians in general look up to ISKCON devotees as people who should be followed.

I would like to see you smile when we open new centers in Turkey, when our Goranga Yoga Centers become the topmost centers for spiritual knowledge, when your books are distributed countrywide in bookstores and on tables on the streets and plazas, and when the devotees are working cooperatively and businesses are set up that can provide proper maintenance and occupation for the devotees and in which they can have proper devotee association.

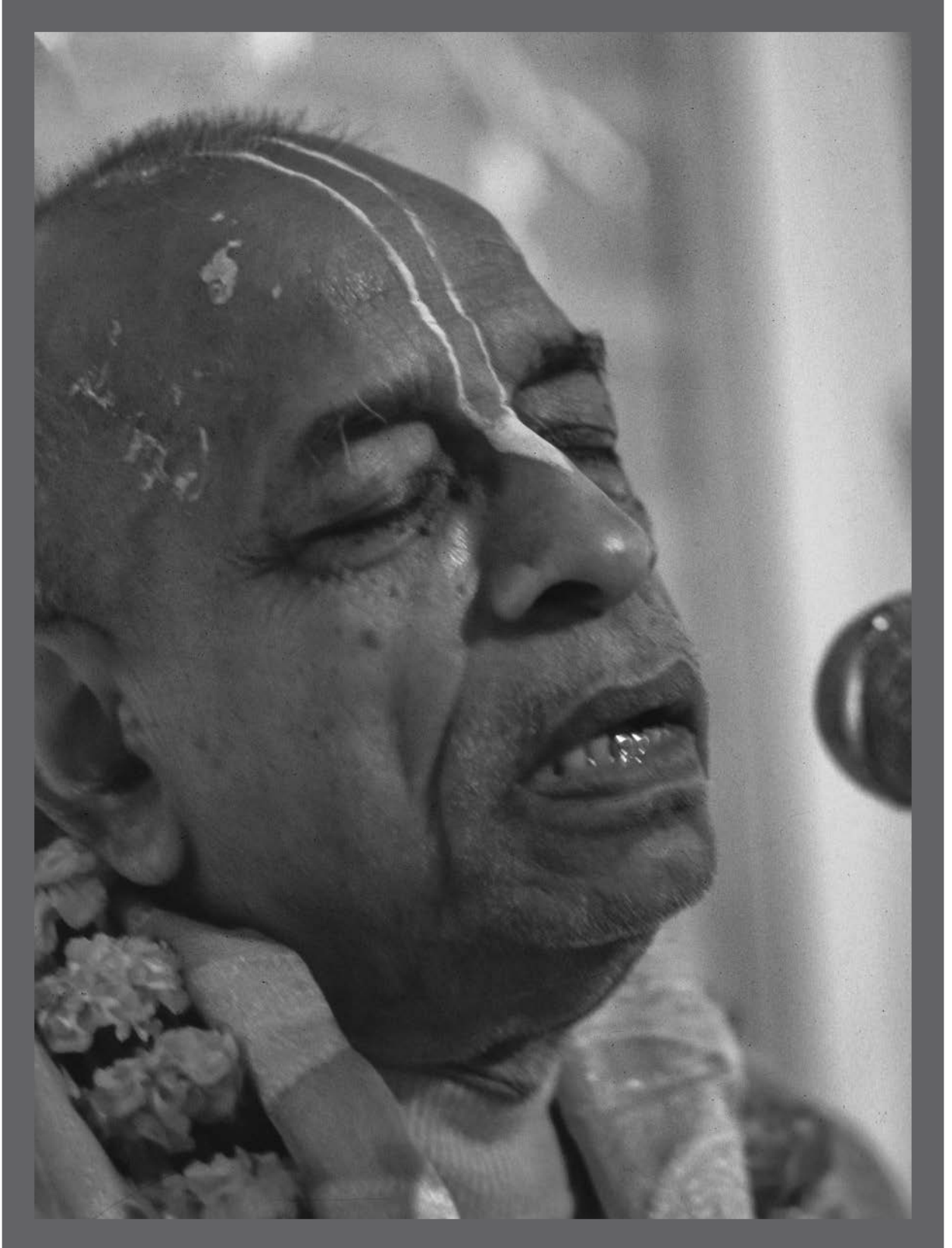
I would like to see you smile when we develop the most cooperative congregation of tens of thousands of devotees in Romania, when your books are distributed nationwide, when the devotees are accepted as authorities on spirituality, when ISKCON is accepted as a bona fide religious institution in the country, and when we reach the hearts of the people through the chanting of the holy name, *prasādam* distribution, and the impartation of genuine knowledge as we guide them with loving care and attention in their spiritual lives.

Please bless us so that we can serve you and become proper instruments in your hands for taking Kṛṣṇa's message to every town and village.

I'm praying to be worthy of your blessings.

Your servant,

Rādhā-Krishna dās



Rādhānāth Swami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I sincerely offer my life at your holy feet.

Today, remembering you, I am reflecting upon your room at Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Temple in Vṛndāvana. I heard that you once said this room is your eternal home.

When you first resided there in the early sixties, it was a simple, small room with crumbling stone, mud walls, and an austere Indian bed with crisscross ropes as a mattress. In the seclusion of early morning you would sit on the floor behind a low wooden table. In the light of an oil lantern, you clicked away on a manual typewriter, translating *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and composing purports destined to be distributed by the millions and become the basis of a worldwide movement.

Across a public courtyard was your kitchen, a small oblong room where you cooked your own meals by squatting on the earthen floor and placing clumps of coal into the side of a rustic clay cooker.

Years later, in Los Angeles, devotees offered you a spacious, beautifully furnished residence. There, assisted by thousands of followers, you translated with a state-of-the-art dictation machine and had expert cooks eager to prepare meals for you. One day, while sitting in the elegance of your new rooms, you shared your heart with a devotee:

I am feeling separation from my home in Vṛndāvana. You have seen my rooms at Rādhā-Dāmodara Temple? I am longing to return there. But for me that would be sense gratification, because my Guru Mahārāja wants me to spread Lord Caitanya's message all over the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your ecstatic love for Guru and Gaurāṅga and your limitless compassion for all beings form the true foundation of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Still, it is your humble nature to attribute your success to all the devotees who assist you.

This year, Śyāmasundara Prabhu, one such devotee who served several years as your personal secretary, released the first volume of his memoir, *Chasing Rhinos with the Swami*. A little background of how this book came to be is inspirational. A few years ago Śyāmasundara Prabhu was on the verge of death due to liver cancer. Only an immediate liver transplant could save his life. When the message was released, Gopinātha Prabhu, who lives in India and had never personally met Śyāmasundara Prabhu, asked his wife Parijātā Devī for her blessings to risk his life and go through the painful ordeal of donating a major section of his liver. Their child Rasanath was then one year old. With tears of gratitude, she said, "Please do it. You may never again have such a special opportunity to please Śrīla Prabhupāda." In this very real expression of love, we see how you are living in the hearts of the devotees and will continue to do so generation after generation.

Coming out of that difficult surgery with a new window in his life, Śyāmasundara Prabhu is offering his heart to sharing your pastimes with the world.

Armed with the holy names of Kṛṣṇa and the philosophy and culture of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, you are freely giving the essence of dharma—*prema-bhakti*. By your words and example you are teaching us how *bhakti* is to be practiced with a truly simple heart—simply to please Guru and Kṛṣṇa, without selfish desire, arrogance, or the will to control. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You are the light of our lives

as you beckon all souls back home, back to Vṛndāvana, the realm of eternal love.

Your fallen and unworthy servant praying for your mercy,

Rādhānāth Swami

Rāmāi Swami

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in the Sixth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ paṇḍurṁ laṅghayate girim
yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande śrī-guruṁ dīna-tāraṇam*

By the mercy of the guru, even a dumb man can become the greatest orator, and even a lame man can cross mountains. As advised by Lord Brahmā, one should remember this śāstric injunction if one desires success in his life. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.7.23, purport]

In the Seventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we find this passage:

Yamarāja once asked Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, “What is the most wonderful thing within this world?” Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira replied (*Mahābhārata*, *Vana-parva* 313.116):

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

Hundreds and thousands of living entities meet death at every moment, but a foolish living being nonetheless thinks himself deathless and does not prepare for death. This is the most wonderful thing in this world. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.2.57, purport]

Yamarāja, who appeared in the form of a crane by a lake, asked further questions, and Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira replied:

“I shall try to answer your questions to the best of my ability. Please ask me what you will.”

“What makes the soul rise out of his entanglement in matter? Who keeps him company, who is his guide on that spiritual journey, and on what is he established?”

“It is knowledge of the Supreme Lord which makes the soul rise. Godly qualities are his

Homages from the GBC

companions, dharma is his guide, and he is established on truth.”

Yamarāja asked Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira many more questions and was completely satisfied by his answers.

In the journey of life one needs profound knowledge, not only of the material world but of the method to go beyond it. Unfortunately, most people in Kali-yuga have no true understanding of these things. Only those on the path of devotional service under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master can begin to comprehend.

In the Australian *yātrā*, over the last few years a number of devotees have left their bodies and gone back home, back to Godhead, or at least to a higher position in this material world. One in particular, my dear godbrother Veṇugopāla Dāsa, I’m sure went back home, back to Godhead.

I had known him since we were young *brahmacārīs* traveling and serving in different temples together. From early on I knew he was a special devotee, and as the years went by I became more and more convinced of his Kṛṣṇa consciousness and spiritual advancement.

Veṇugopāla was the type of devotee who could have a loving, affectionate relationship with anyone, regardless of who they were. I visited him in his last days and was so inspired by his association that I thought, “Somehow I have to become like him.”

Veṇugopāla was very attached to you and dedicated to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and it was you who showed us how to live our lives and prepare ourselves for the future.

By your instructions you paved the way,
By your example turned night into day.
You showed us how to live and die,
To go beyond the material sky.

Your mercy and grace for us to gain,
Although for some it was a strain.
Within our hearts pollution stored;
Still your lips sweet nectar poured.

At your feet we bowed and said,
“Let the dust fall on our head.”
We wanted to hear more and more;
You were a great sage of holy lore.

In *śāstra* so divinely skilled,
Perfection of life to be fulfilled,
You lay so clear before the eye
The spiritual deeds of days gone by.

Caitanya’s messenger, lofty souled,
You preached to us, so uncontrolled.
Siddhānta’s disciple, the lion’s son,
Went to the West—you were the one.

People were in awe to have your sight;
From that moment their futures bright.
For most it was a gigantic leap
From conditioned life so very deep.

The human span should not go in vain:
Ignorance and bondage must be slain.
It's useless to suffer and lament
For something so quickly spent.

Give us the strength to keep up the fight.
Māyā is strong, with tremendous might.
By your compassion the mercy bestowed,
With your grace reach the spiritual abode.

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your lowly servant,

Rāmāi Swami

Ravindra Svarūpa dāsa

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

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

All devotees in ISKCON have been blessed by the directions of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura—fashioned by him into Bengali poetic verse—as to how we should receive the teachings of our society's founder-*ācārya*, Śrīla Prabhupāda. These specific instructions are so enshrined as to receive a special, hallowed attention. Each day in each temple, when all gather in the morning for Śrīla Prabhupāda's *guru-pūjā*, we together sing Śrīla Narottama's song.

In the song's second stanza we sing *guru-mukha-padma-vākya*. This phrase directs our attention to “the words that issue from the lotus mouth of Śrī Guru.” Then: *cittete koriyā aikya*. Here Narottama dāsa directs us to make these teachings one (*aikya*) with our *citta*, with our heart and mind. He then proceeds to sharpen this point: *Ār nā koriho mane āśā*, he says. “Do not allow any other aspiration to reside therein.”

In this way, we are enjoined to cultivate this purity of heart—this clearly defined, unambiguous, single-mindedness of thinking, feeling, and willing. Not only are we so enjoined, but we also commit ourselves to it each day.

So important is this purity for us that we are well advised to make an effort to grasp its forms and its functions. It is, indeed, a veritable state of being—for as this purity of heart develops, it opens the doors of our perception, and it pervades all our thinking, our feeling, and our willing.

Another name for it is *vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ*. We find this expression at *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.41. There it is used by Lord Kṛṣṇa to describe the essential characteristic of successful devotees. They possess intelligence

Homages from the GBC

(*buddhi*)—an innate sense of direction or guidance—that is not only accurate but also undeviating (*ekeha*) and resolute in nature (*vyavasāyātmikā*).

In his purport to this text, Śrīla Prabhupāda further elucidates *vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ* by quoting *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 22.62:

*‘śraddhā’-śabde—viśvāsa kahe sudṛḍha niścaya
kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya*

The text can be rendered thus: “The word *śraddhā* denotes a very firm and confident conviction that just by executing *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* one will achieve the purposes of all other obligatory or desirable actions.” For this reason we can certainly be confident in following Narottama dāsa’s injunction *ār nā koriho mane āśā*. If we are simple, single-minded, and undeviating in following the directions of Śrīla Prabhupāda, all other worthwhile results will be attained.

The proof of this is found in Śrīla Prabhupāda himself. He tells that he was given the order, in both his first and his final communication with his spiritual master, to “push on this movement in the English language”; it meant “propagate Lord Caitanya’s movement outside of India.” During Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s lifetime his institution had invested huge resources of men, money, and time to send off preachers—equipped with a sophisticated, scholarly English-language book called *Sree Krishna-Chaitanya*—to England and Germany in the 1930s, with orders to build a temple in London. However, in the event, the effort did not accomplish much. And soon after Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura left his body, his powerful institution fragmented.

But our Śrīla Prabhupāda had also received the order, the *guru-vākya*, and he carried it out—virtually alone—without consideration of success or failure, and even of life or death. He, therefore, is all the proof we need. He took Lord Caitanya’s movement and established it on all continents, but he himself left orders, wanting it to go much, much further.

And so he left us with a mission that is breathtaking in its challenges, as was the mission his own spiritual master had given him.

The world needs desperately what we who have received this mission have to offer it—spiritually, intellectually, economically, ecologically, socially, politically . . . In each and every one of these areas we need to demonstrate to the world that we have the answers it requires. The directions for all of these are in our care, given us by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

We have all seen what one person has done, and that person has openly shared all his secrets with us. He has held back nothing.

Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura therefore sings:

*guru-mukha-padma-vākya, cittete kariyā aikya,
āra nā kariha mane āśā*

Begging for the blessings of the Vaiṣṇavas to help me become a true servant of Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Ravindra Svarūpa dāsa

Revatī Raman Dās

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

First of all, let me offer my obeisances again and again to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who proved He is the *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti* by giving us the invaluable *śīromaṇi* of all devotees—you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who are delivering all the conditioned souls burning in the scorching heat of the blazing fire of material existence.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are directly witnessing how your glorious *saṅkīrtana* movement is simply pouring forth Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mercy, drenching everyone in an ocean of transcendental bliss, thereby devastating Kali's plans and nullifying all the evil tendencies of Kali-yuga.

All the revealed scriptures say that it's very difficult to understand a pure devotee. Just one of your qualities, your mercy, is indescribable, and any attempt to describe it with any number of words is simply insufficient. I feel myself extremely fortunate to have Your Divine Grace as my grand-spiritual-master, and I will remain grateful and indebted to you every second for making each and every moment of my life meaningful and wonderful.

Recently I heard a lecture by a devotee who recounted how a world-famous traditional Carnatic musician from South India named Balamurali Krishna became mesmerized by your divine *bhajana* of Śrī Ṣaḍ-gosvāmy-aṣṭaka. In the 1980s a party of traveling *saṅkīrtana* devotees set up a stall in Chennai to distribute books while your singing of Ṣaḍ-gosvāmy-aṣṭaka played in the background. A passerby dressed in a simple way stood nearby for quite some time, absorbed in hearing your *bhajana* with closed eyes. A Western devotee taking care of the stall thought he might be there to steal, and so the devotee was trying to push him away.

Meanwhile, a local devotee helping at the stall informed the Western devotee that the man was the world-famous Carnatic singer Balamurali Krishna and that the Western devotee shouldn't treat him that way. Then the devotee apologized and started conversing with him. During the conversation, Balamurali Krishna asked the devotee, "Who has sung this song?" The devotee replied, "It is our founder-*ācārya*, Śrīla Prabhupāda." Balamurali Krishna then said, "This voice and music are not from this world but from the spiritual world." Śrīla Prabhupāda, even an ordinary materialistic person can recognize that you are undoubtedly an ambassador from the spiritual world. Of this there is no doubt.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have the precious gem of Your Divine Grace in our lives, although we are not worthy of this in any way. Now we have a great responsibility to safeguard what we have received and to decorate our lives with all the wonderful loving instructions you have given us in the form of your books, lectures, letters, etc. You are the emblem and embodiment of a perfect guru, disciple, teacher, father, well-wisher, friend, etc. All these manifestations of your perfection are reflected in your loving disciples, who are all serving your mission, which they regard as their life and soul. Example is better than precept.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this most auspicious anniversary of your appearance, please bless us so that we can express our genuine gratitude and love for you through our exemplary behavior. In other words, let our promises to follow your instructions be heart deep and not just lip deep. Although you have bestowed everything upon us, still, due to our conditioning, there is every chance we might misuse this great movement to fulfill our material desires born of false ego. Please always protect us from all forms of *māyā* that can hamper our progress and the preaching activities of your movement.

On the other hand, Kṛṣṇa will be very happy if we work to make ISKCON the savior of the whole world. Each and every member of ISKCON has a duty to bring as many souls as possible under the cooling shade of your lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have a great responsibility to expand this movement far and wide all over the globe, giving Kṛṣṇa consciousness to as many persons as possible without discriminating according to

Homages from the GBC

caste, creed, color, or gender. To accomplish this, we need qualified leaders—leaders who are competent, flawless in character, and deeply Kṛṣṇa conscious—who will carefully deliver the message of Lord Caitanya without any desire for name, fame, followers, etc. For this to happen, your causeless mercy is essential.

The GBC body is trying its level best to take care of all the minute details so that ISKCON can succeed in all its activities. As a GBC, I have a great desire to establish a full-fledged devotee-care program to fulfill all the needs of the devotees who have sacrificed their lives in service to your movement. I pray to your divine lotus feet that you will bless me so that I will be able to make a humble contribution for the pleasure of all the Vaiṣṇavas and Your Divine Grace.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your humble servant,

Revatī Raman Dās

Romapāda Swami

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

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

*mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ paṇḍuraṁ laṅghayate girim
yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande śrī-gururṁ 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!

Without exception, other than Kṛṣṇa Himself, every manifestation is the effect of some prior cause.

Is there any exception?

What in this world occurs without a material cause?

The word *ahaitukī*, causeless, indicates that which awakens and matures without any material cause (*hetu*).

Since *bhakti* is as fully independent and as fully spiritual as Kṛṣṇa is, we must conclude that *bhakti* arises from mercy that is devoid of material impetus. Just as from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's declaration that "There is no love in this material world" we can conclude that real love is otherworldly, we can conclude that the same holds true for the *bhakti* you imparted to this unfortunate world filled with darkness.

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

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, who with the torchlight of knowledge has opened my eyes, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance.” (*Gautamīya Tantra*)

In the *Uddhava-gītā* Kṛṣṇa discusses with Uddhava the causeless nature of *bhakti*. Kṛṣṇa uses the word *yadṛcchayā*—“somehow or other.” For example, *yadṛcchayā mat-kathādau*, “if somehow or other a person becomes attached to hearing about Me” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.20.8) and *mad-bhaktiṁ vā yadṛcchayā*, “somehow he attains My devotional service” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.20.11). This mysterious word *yadṛcchayā* means “by its own independent sweet will.”

I want to offer you my most heartfelt gratitude for your causeless mercy, for finding me in some dark place and giving me the gift of *bhakti*, so magnanimously extended to all by you, who were fully empowered by the order of your Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, to do so. With full faith in his order, you gave your life and your heart, providing access to the Transcendence, to Goloka Vṛndāvana, to the transcendental realm of Kṛṣṇa, through the holy name and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and all the rest that ISKCON offers the world.

“The root cause of suffering is ignorance,” you declared boldly. All that removes ignorance is your abundant and perpetual gift. The willingness to open our hearts and receive that gift is entirely in our hands. By your mercy we feel confident that in this very lifetime we can access the fullness of your gift, graciously extended to us, however unqualified we may be by worldly yardsticks.

You openly declared to one and all the most effective key to returning to our eternal service mood to Kṛṣṇa: entering into the mood of service to His holy name. Here is an example:

One is understood to be an eternal servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead if he considers himself an eternal servant of the holy name and in this spirit distributes the holy name to the world. . . . The holy name becomes manifest when one engages in the service of the holy name. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 8.16, purport]

In your Bhaktivedanta purports you gave the world the *yuga-dharma*, along with comprehensive *sambandha-jñāna*; in this way the ignorance of Kali-yuga is being dissipated by the light of the *bhāgavata* and Kṛṣṇa’s holy name. Only with the shelter of the proper understanding of *kṛṣṇa-tattva* can the fullness of the name be experienced.

You have given us everything.

With abundant gratitude, may we fully accept your gifts and then, reposing our full faith in you, generously extend the same gifts to others and become fearless.

The desire to serve you literally forever, regardless of favorable or unfavorable circumstances, has been deeply and indelibly imbedded within the core of my heart by Your Divine Grace. This dedication to your service and to the service of Nāma Prabhu will never leave me.

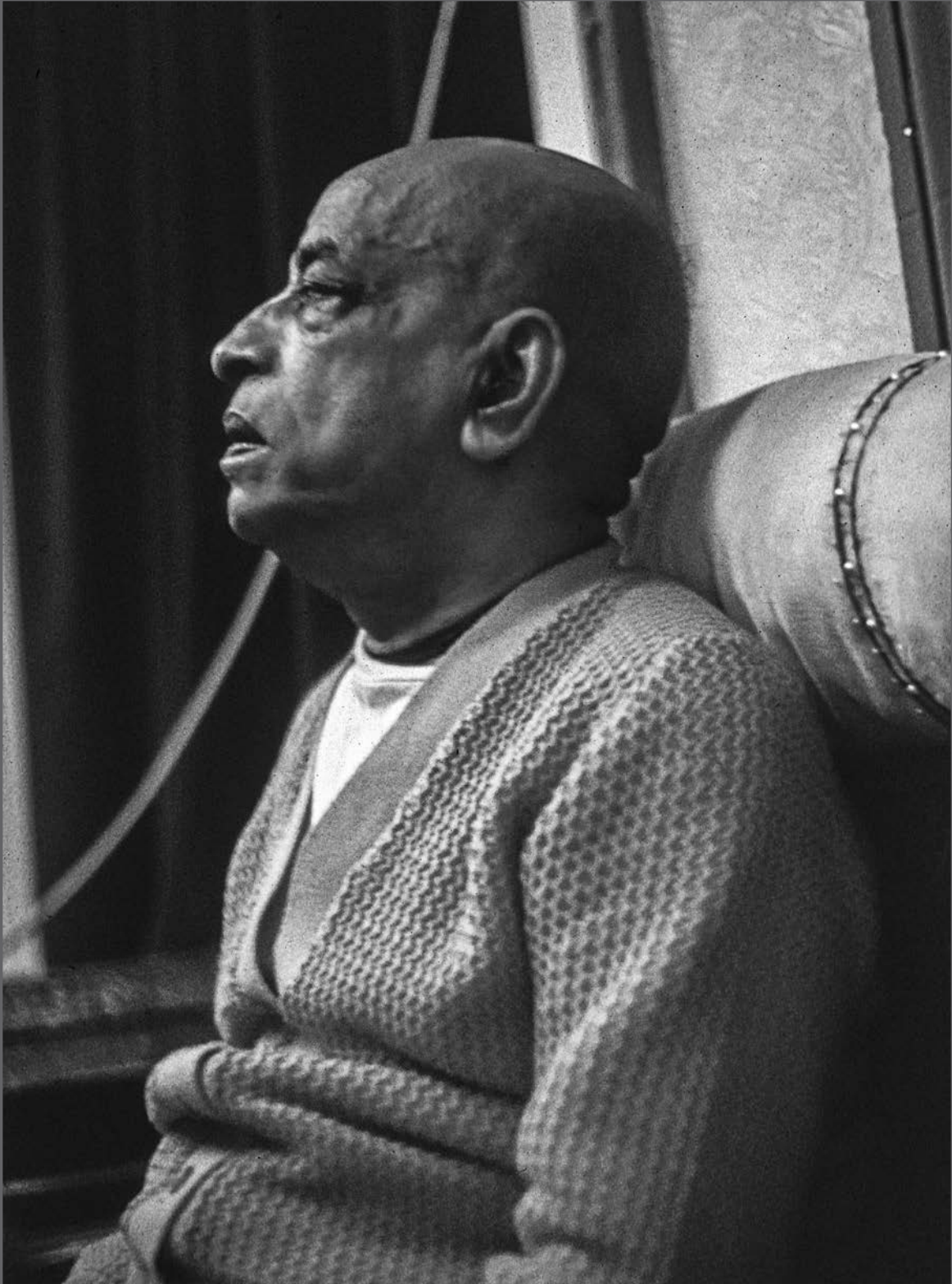
Kindly accept my prostrated obeisances again and again.

Aspiring for your eternal service,

Your humble disciple,

Romapāda Swami

Homages from the GBC



Śivarāma Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

A few days ago I was writing the outline for this offering based on a talk you had given in Jagannātha Purī in 1977. As I was preparing to write, I received a Viber message from Sanātani Devī Dāsī, one of your Budapest book distributors and a truly wonderful Vaiṣṇavī. I read the message and found it so amazing that I decided to make it the basis for this offering and put the Purī talk off for next year. Her message read:

Yesterday I met a man on book distribution—maybe he is from America but I’m not sure. He gave some laksmi and I gave him a *Chant and be Happy*, and when he saw the book with Prabhupāda’s picture he said, “I know this man.” I asked, “You mean personally?” He said, “Once, I gave the last money from my wallet to a Hare Krishna temple, and that night this man, Prabhupāda, appeared in my dream and he said, ‘I will guide you and I will help you through your life.’” He said that this dream was a strong experience in his life. He was spending just 3 days in Budapest, but I invited him to Krishna Valley. Maybe he will go. And of course he took the book. He was a very kind man. I was just thinking how merciful Prabhupāda is.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda! If a little devotional service performed just once means you are willing to guide a stranger for life—no doubt to Kṛṣṇa—then what benefit do you have in store for devotees who have given their lives, homes, and souls to you? This is just like Lord Brahmā’s prayers, where he makes the same observation about the fathomless reaches of Kṛṣṇa’s mercy:

You have already arranged to give Yourself to Pūtānā and her family members in exchange for her disguising herself as a devotee. So what is left for You to give these devotees of Vṛndāvana, whose homes, wealth, friends, dear relations, bodies, children, and very lives and hearts are all dedicated only to You? [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.35]

I share Brahmā’s bewilderment. If this is what you give to a one-off donor, what will you give to those who give their everything? Your transcendental opulences bewilder me.

Therefore, on this glorious Vyāsa-pūjā day I can only bow at your lotus feet and, paraphrasing Brahmā’s words, admit that while some devotees may say “I know all about Śrīla Prabhupāda,” I can only say that your kindness and opulences are beyond the reach of my mind, body, and words.

Your amazed servant,

Śivarāma Swami

Tamohara dāsa

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

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

From Darkness to Light

Drifting through time, millennia passed,
Each birth brought pain, each worse than the last.
None gave relief, but headlong we hurled,
Illusion of hope in this dark world.

Opportunity came in human life—
Again squandered with desire and strife.
Hopes for freedom explored through each sense—
Jīva was covered, our path now dense.

Somewhere within, an ember still burned.
Hope almost gone, to Kṛṣṇa we turned.
Through wonder, knowledge, desire, or pain,
Your mercy descends, like cleansing rain.

With a scrap of desire, we have been told,
The Lord responds a thousandfold.
Led toward the Guru from deep in the heart—
Our spiritual life was soon to start.

An Indian swami was sent our way,
The one known as Abhay Charan De.
Devotion so deep, strength like a rod,
Keeper of truth—our Prabhupāda.

Summoned by guru, sent by the Lord,
He answered the call—he cut our cord.
He lit the path and cleared the way,
Turned pain to joy, and night to day.

Faith of iron, his words touched our heart,
Illusion's storm clouds began to part.
Chanting, dancing, rising before dawn,
Past bad habits miraculously gone.

Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā 2018

How could one *sādhū* transform us all?
Hippie to happy, hearing the call.
Hearts were transformed, the change was sure,
Graced by the words of a soul so pure.

We awakened love for the boy of blue
In our heart of hearts, not really new.
Our faith took hold, practice became strong.
Prabhupāda lived truth, and we came along.

His path to freedom restored our hope.
Enlightenment ours—just hold the rope.
From one who has known, we also know God—
Our soul's redemption from Prabhupāda.

My heart was confused, my path was unclear,
No enlightenment likely to appear.
But love for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme God,
Was given freely by Prabhupāda.

Hardened hearts cannot repay love,
But try we must, through grace from above.
Kṛṣṇa empowers, clears the taint,
To follow the footsteps of His great saint.

Your most unworthy servant,

Tamohara dāsa