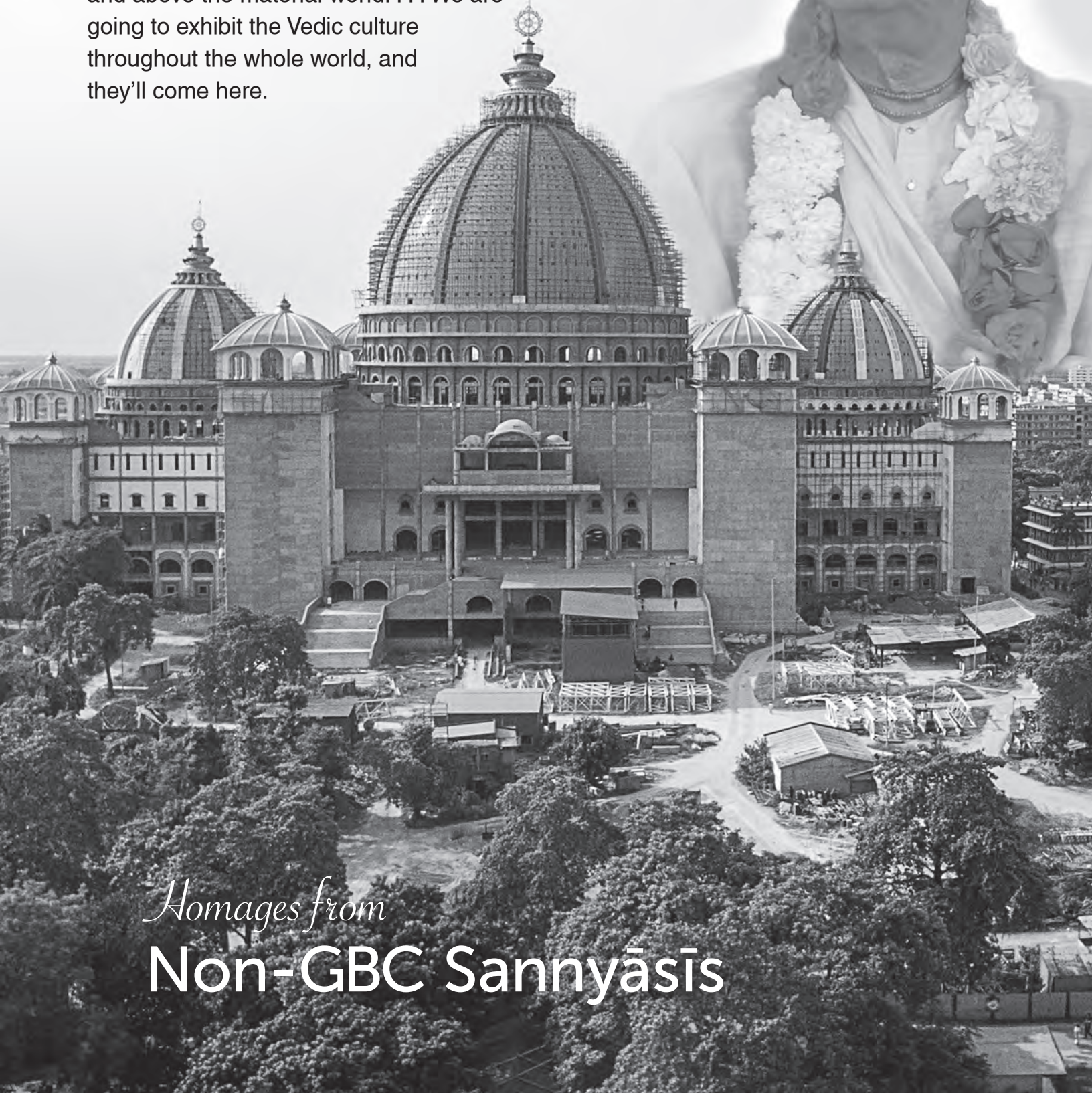
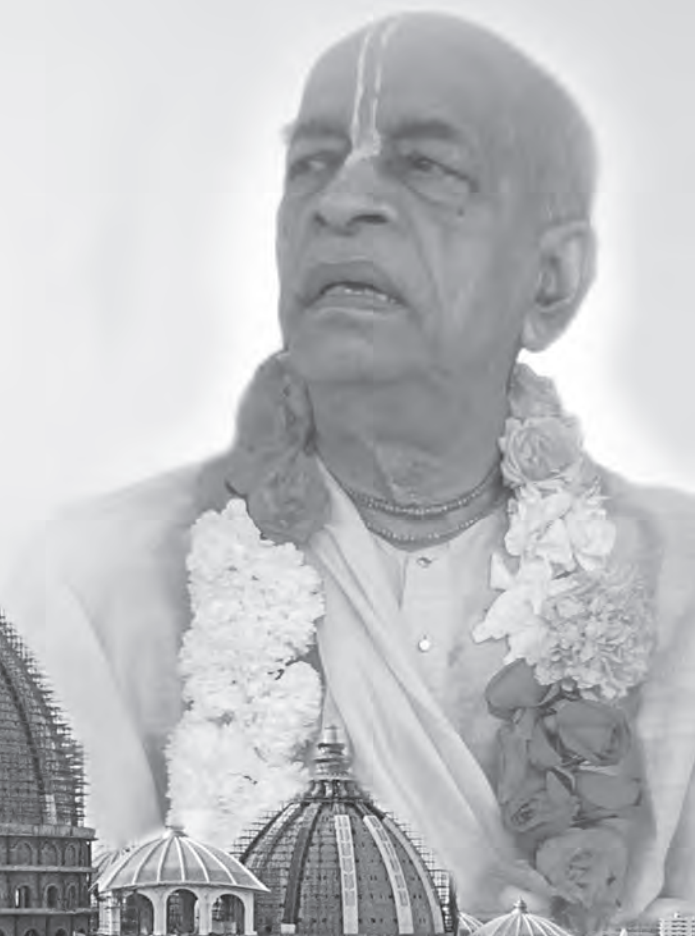


No “Understanding,” simply Vedic—
“Temple of Vedic Planetarium.” That’s all.
We shall show the Vedic conception of
planetary system within this material world
and above the material world. . . . We are
going to exhibit the Vedic culture
throughout the whole world, and
they’ll come here.



Homages from
Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

Amala-bhakta Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glorious to your lotus feet.

I can never thank you enough for saving my spiritual life from the peril of impersonalism and instead guiding it into the bliss of personalism, i.e., pure devotional service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, eternally.

Your servant,

Amala-bhakta Swami

Bhakti Cārudeṣṇa Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most respectful obeisances at your holy feet. All glories to you.

Your divine appearance day is always a good opportunity for me to try to express my gratitude toward you for what you have done for me and for mankind. O best of the *ācāryas*, may your fame always keep on spreading throughout all the universes. Consciously or unconsciously, everyone recognizes your importance and your potency.

People are eagerly looking for ways and means to attain Kṛṣṇa and take shelter at His lotus feet in Goloka Vṛndāvana, the supreme abode. Some ways to attain Him are very difficult, while others are practically impossible to follow. But what does Kṛṣṇa say in the *Padma Purāṇa*?

*nāhaṁ tiṣṭhāmi vaikunṭhe yogināṁ hṛdayeṣu vā
yatra gāyanti mad-bhaktāḥ tatra tiṣṭhāmi nārada*

“My dear Nārada, actually I do not reside in My abode, Vaikuṇṭha, nor do I reside within the hearts of the *yogīs*, but I reside in that place where My pure devotees chant My holy name and discuss My form and activities.”

O glorious master, “Vaikuṇṭha Man” is one of your names. And Vaikuṇṭha means the place where there is no anxiety. You created ISKCON, which is like a replica of Vaikuṇṭha on earth where Kṛṣṇa’s holy name is chanted and where your disciples and granddisciples enthusiastically discuss His form and activities every day.

Therefore, the easiest way to attain Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is to join your ISKCON, the safest boat to take us to the final destination, which is full of knowledge, bliss, and eternity.

I bow down at your divine lotus feet again and again. I pray that I may always remember you, whatever my situation may be.

Aspiring to be the servant of your servants,

Bhakti Cārudeṣṇa Swami

Bhakti Gauravāṇī Goswami

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

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

“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.

“My 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.”

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Your appearance day marks the beginning of our great fortune. You appeared in this world on the order of the Supreme Lord, with the specific mission of rescuing all those who are captives of the illusory energy. Having lost all good sense and suffering under the influence of *avidyā*, nescience, we were in an unfortunate position, loitering about in a derelict state, when we met you. You offered help. You made us fortunate by providing the treatment for our *avidyā* disorder, which is the root cause of all suffering we conditioned souls have undergone for countless lifetimes. You are the transcendental physician who offered to cure us, who were suffering from the madness of the materialistic way of life, and thus end our endless journey of misery in this world.

We celebrate your appearance because you are the genuine representative of the supreme physician, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, whose message of hope for suffering humanity is expressed by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in one of his songs: *enechi auśadhi māyā nāśibāro lāgi* / *hari-nāma mahā-mantra lao tumi māgi*. “I have brought the medicine to awaken every living being from perpetual sleep. Please receive the holy name of the Lord, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, and awaken.” A similar comparison is given by Jaḍa Bhārata, who likens the conditioned soul to a person who has been bitten by the snake of ignorance and fallen into a comalike sleep. He tells Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa: “The conditioned soul in the material forest is sometimes swallowed by a python or crushed. At such a time he is left lying in the forest like a dead person, devoid of consciousness and knowledge. Sometimes other poisonous snakes bite him. Being blind to his consciousness, he falls down into a dark well of hellish life with no hope of being rescued.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.13.9)

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, fifty years ago my condition was just like that, and there seemed to be no hope for rescue. Like so many other residents of this world, I was lying unconscious, albeit hallucinating that I was expanding my consciousness. What a tragicomedy! The human form of life is valued because of its developed consciousness, but because of the illusory nature of such consciousness, this so-called awareness is rightly classified as unconsciousness. In such a state, how can the unconscious living entity expect to overcome his precarious condition? There was no hope for rescue, but deep inside, hidden underneath all the darkness, a tiny spark of desire was glowing, a desire to come to the light, to find out the meaning of life. What are we existing for? Why are we existing at all? Is there anything beyond the dreary and desolate daily dog race in this dead-end street of mundane existence? These and similar questions were coming up again and again, with no convincing answers coming forth—until you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, stepped into my life. The transcendental doctor of the soul had come to my rescue with the potent medicine of Kṛṣṇa’s holy name. For this I am forever grateful.

Since I accepted your offer and have been taking this medicine, the disease of *avidyā* is receding and the dark clouds of ignorance are gradually dissipating, letting the warming light of the Kṛṣṇa-sun shine

Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

forth. There is no doubt that your treatment is effective. To this I can bear witness. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī describes in his *Upadeśāmṛta* (8) how the medicine takes effect:

The holy name, character, pastimes, and activities of Kṛṣṇa are all transcendently sweet like sugar candy. Although the tongue of one afflicted by the jaundice of *avidyā* cannot taste anything sweet, it is wonderful that simply by carefully chanting these sweet names every day, a natural relish awakens within his tongue, and his disease is gradually destroyed at the root.

It is indeed wonderful that by following diligently the treatment plan elaborated by you, the expert physician, we can regain our natural, healthy condition within a relatively short period of time. The darkness of ignorance had covered us for innumerable lifetimes, but you assured us that in one lifetime we can be cured from the *avidyā* disorder. If we take the medicine as prescribed, full recovery is guaranteed. It is only a matter of time. And it is also absolutely wonderful that the treatment is accessible to one and all. The medicine is free, and the application is not a highly complex procedure that only a few exceptionally qualified patients can follow.

In a lecture back in 1974 you said:

There are very nice verses in *Bhāgavatam*: *nivṛtta-tarṣair upagīyamānāt*. This chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, or God, is possible by a person who is disgusted with all these material activities. They can actually chant. That means *mukta-puruṣa*, liberated soul. The chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra is the business of liberated soul, not for the conditioned soul. But even in our conditioned life, we chant, we become gradually purified. Therefore it is recommended that everyone should chant. Never mind. *Oṃ apavitraḥ pavitro vā . . . yaḥ smaret puṇḍarikākṣam*. Anyone who remembers the Puṇḍarikākṣa. By chanting, you'll remember. So, *nivṛtta-tarṣair upagīyamānād bhavauśadhāt*. It is the medicine for our *bhava-roga*, repeated birth and death. Such a nice thing. *Nivṛtta-tarṣair upagīyamānād bhavauśadhāc chrotra-mano-'bhirāmāt*. Not only it is medicine . . . Medicine is always bitter, but it is not bitter. *Mano 'bhirāmāt*. It is very pleasing to the mind, to the senses. Otherwise, how we become ecstatic in chanting unless it is pleasing? It is medicine, but pleasing medicine. Other medicines, they are very bitter. If you practice *yoga*, oh, you have to take so much labor. And that, you do not know whether you'll be successful or not, *haṭha-yoga*. And if you take to *jñāna*, that also requires much education, much understanding of philosophy. So they actually, although they are medicine, but they are bitter medicine. Not very palatable. Neither everyone can take it. A child cannot become a *jñānī*. A child cannot become a *yogī*. But a child can become a *bhakta*. Therefore this is the easiest process. Pleasing. Everyone is pleased to execute this process.

Considering that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is such an easy and pleasing process, if we decline this once-in-a-lifetime offer and think that we can cure ourselves by our own method, how unfortunate we are! "When we are diseased," you said in 1971, "if I speculate at home that 'My disease will be cured in this way and that way,' no. That is useless. You go to an authorized physician, and he will give you a nice prescription, and you'll be cured. That is the process . . . But in the modern age people think that 'I am free, I am independent, and I can make my own solution.' That is rascaldom."

I don't want to be counted among the rascals, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Not only would that be an affront to you, who took so much trouble to deliver the medicine, but it would also be a disgrace and a very risky course of action, just like the foolish decision of a suffering patient to ignore the treatment offered to him by a qualified physician and act whimsically, thus worsening his condition in the long run. Mahārāja Parīkṣit describes such a person as a *paśughnāt*, one who kills his own self.

*nivṛtta-tarṣair upagīyamānād
bhavauśadhāc chrotra-mano-'bhirāmāt*

*ka uttamaśloka-guṇānuvādāt
pumān virajyeta vinā paśughnāt*

“Glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is performed in the *paramparā* system; that is, it is conveyed from spiritual master to disciple. Such glorification is relished by those no longer interested in the false, temporary glorification of this cosmic manifestation. Descriptions of the Lord are the right medicine for the conditioned soul undergoing repeated birth and death. Therefore, who will cease hearing such glorification of the Lord except a butcher or one who is killing his own self?” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.1.4)

In the purport to this verse you tell us:

A qualified reciter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* gives the right medicine (*bhavausadhi*) for the conditioned souls. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is therefore trying to train qualified preachers to recite *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Bhagavad-gītā* throughout the entire world, so that people in general in all parts of the world may take advantage of this movement and thus be relieved of the threefold miseries of material existence.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this auspicious day of your appearance I affirm my determination to continue the treatment as prescribed by you, and I ask for your blessings so that I will be able to distribute the medicine of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others who are just waiting to be rescued from the disease of *avidyā*.

With the hope of being allowed to continue as a member of your rescue team,

I beg to remain your eternal servant,

Bhakti Gauravāṇī Gosvāmī

Bhakti Narasimha 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*

In gratitude, honoring our founder-*ācārya*, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, on his Vyāsa-pūjā day.

To the one who opened our eyes, previously blinded by the darkness of ignorance, with the torchlight of divine knowledge, I express my gratitude.

To the one who revealed to us what is to be known—Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the process of devotional service, I express my gratitude.

To the one who unfolded the wisdom known as the crown jewel of Vedic knowledge, enabling it to blossom forth as the lotus petals open to the sun, I express my gratitude.

To the one who pointed the way to self-knowledge, which burns away the chains of innumerable births and deaths and their causes and effects, I express my gratitude. This realization freed me to pursue the

Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

human potential within us all in ways that no belief system devised by a human mind could possibly do. Just as one welcomes the light of the rising sun that removes the darkness of night, I too reached toward the deepest wisdom available to humanity, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Surely this is the greatest gift a person can be given. To the bestower of this infinitely precious gift, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, I express my gratitude.

A servant of his servants,

Bhakti Narasimha Swami

Bhakti Prabhāva Swami

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

You have received the full mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Evidence for this is that you have spread the Lord's names and teachings all over the world. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.11 states:

*tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavo
yasmīn prati-ślokaṁ abaddhavaṭy api
nāmāny anantasya yaśo 'nikitāni yat
śṛṇvanti gāyanti grṇanti sādhaṇaḥ*

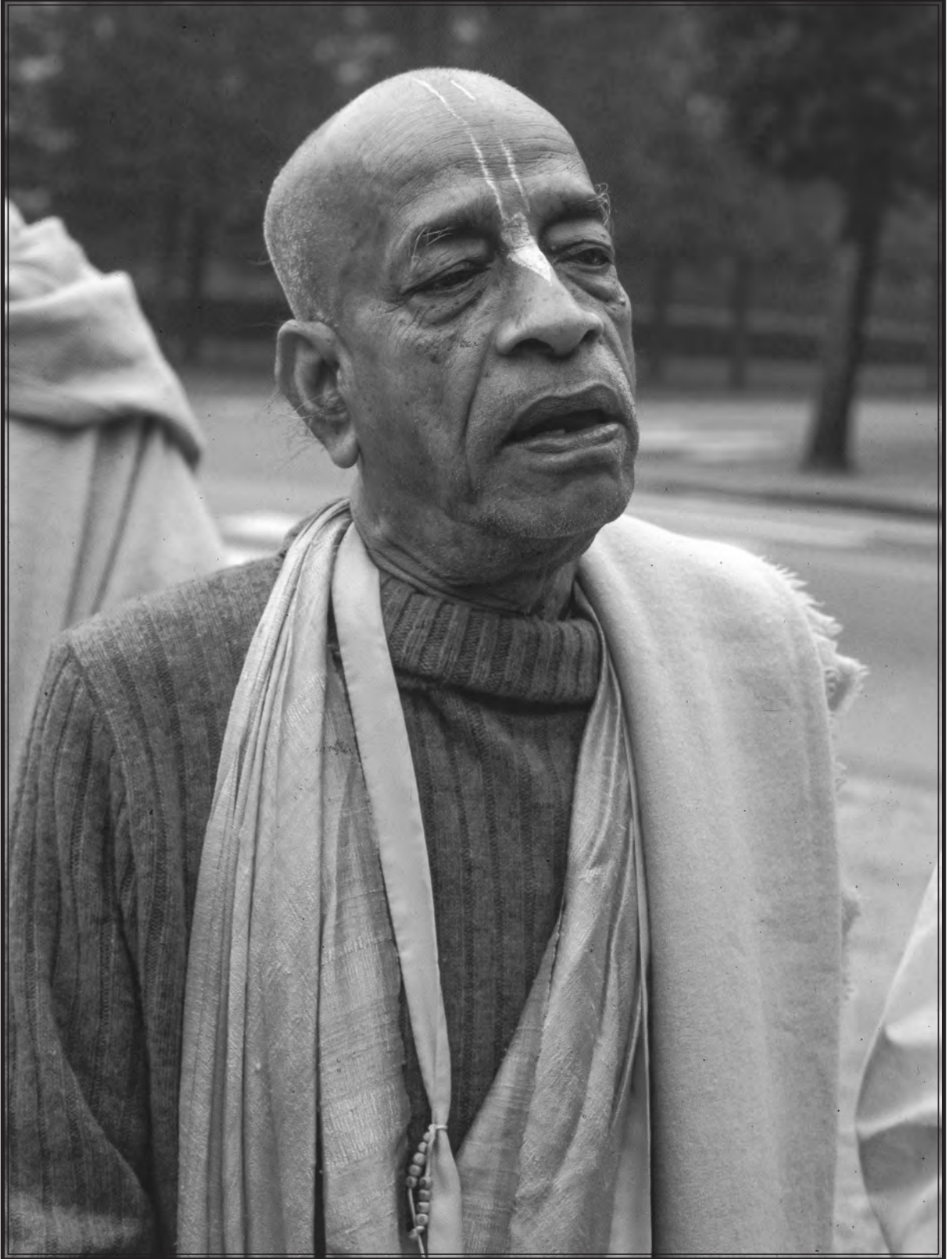
“On the other hand, that literature which is full of descriptions of the transcendental glories of the name, fame, forms, pastimes, etc., of the unlimited Supreme Lord is a different creation, full of transcendental words directed toward bringing about a revolution in the impious lives of this world's misdirected civilization. Such transcendental literatures, even though imperfectly composed, are heard, sung, and accepted by purified men who are thoroughly honest.”

By your mercy the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is now facilitating this revolution in the impious lives of this world's misdirected civilization. Your Divine Grace has compiled *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for this specific purpose. Lord Kṛṣṇa sent you to this world to lead this revolution.

Your books are the means for transferring our thoughts from the material energy to the spiritual energy. In material life, everyone is accustomed to thinking of the material energy. However, reading your books and preaching from them constitute the ultimate and sublime method for spiritualizing people's lives. Therefore, *harināma*, book distribution, and preaching are the heart of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. The missionary spirit required for executing your mission is specified in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.11:

When there is fire in a house, the inmates of the house go out to get help from the neighbors, who may be foreigners, and yet without knowing the language the victims of the fire express themselves, and the neighbors understand the need, even though not expressed in the same language. The same spirit of cooperation is needed to broadcast this transcendental message of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* throughout the polluted atmosphere of the world.

The mid-seventies were the time of the Hare Kṛṣṇa explosion. Thousands of your disciples surrendered



Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

to the mission of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, millions of books were distributed, and the movement expanded quickly. Today, some forty-five years later, many devotees look back to that glorious period and long for the revival of that intensity of missionary spirit.

Desiring to become your instrument in the full revival of this missionary spirit, I am focusing my preaching on prioritizing the promotion of your mood and mission. Therefore, I pray to Your Divine Grace and the entire *guru-paramparā* for empowerment and intelligence to become instrumental in reviving this intense missionary spirit, especially in my preaching zones, including the UK, the Ukraine, Bulgaria, Moldova, the Czech Republic, Germany, Belgium, France, French Canada, and New York City. Devotees who are following the process of *vaidhī-sādhana bhakti* will benefit unlimitedly from cultivating the mood of urgency to engage in your preaching mission. The combination of daily hearing of *Śrīmad Bhagavatam* and engaging in your preaching mission produces the spiritual taste (*Śrīmad Bhagavatam* 1.2.16–18) required for going back to Godhead.

Please bless me with good health and spiritual intelligence in my endeavor to become your humble instrument.

Your servant,

Bhakti Prabhāva Swami

Bhakti Prabhupāda-vrata Dāmodara Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, for your information, this writing finds me back in New York City, the city of my material birth and the city where you founded your international (ISKCON) mission. This is also where, back in 1965, due to some inconceivable good fortune, I was guided from Brooklyn to the Lower East Side of Manhattan, where I rented an apartment half a block from Tompkins Square Park. Of course, in the summer of '66, when you also relocated to that neighborhood and began your momentous Hare Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana* in that same park, I could not have failed to hear you and see you and soon speak with you. How easy it was to obtain your *darśana* in those days! And you were so very merciful that, despite my inability to accede to your heartfelt invitation that I “simply join . . .,” you did not withhold from me the shade of your lotus feet, which protected me even as I went about my worldly business, moving to Boston in 1969. Yes, you protected me simply by your desire to save me. Thus, I somehow remained in your association, even basing myself in locations that you had earlier graced with your personal presence. Some of your enthusiastic followers also kindly fanned my spark of devotion in many ways through those preparatory years. Despite my irregularity, I felt impelled to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa throughout these nine turbulent years. Then I finally moved in.

Back to the here and now, you may be happy to know that New York City is now about to witness a great revival of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and a growing sense of your divine presence in this world capital metropolis. Back here again, I am thrilled at the prospect of a new “Hare Kṛṣṇa Explosion.” So much

attention is now being focused on this temple and its community, and so many very senior, empowered devotees are either now residing here or visiting here. And more will come.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, it was you who personally sliced those apples, tossed a piece into your lotus mouth, and then distributed the slices to us at 26 Second Avenue. (So sweet was that simple mercy . . .) So just as those apple slices became *kṛṣṇa*- and *guru-prasāda*, let us offer this “Big Apple” (NYC) to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu for His pleasure! This can actually be done, but only so long as we carefully follow your mood and mission, making them our own.

Begging to always remain under your shelter,

Your foolish aspiring servant,

Bhakti Prabhupāda-vrata Dāmodara Swami

Bhakti Rāghava Swami

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ 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.”

om śrī surabhyai namaḥ! om śrī gurave namaḥ!

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace on this, your 123rd sacred Appearance Day Anniversary.

Like so many of your disciples and granddisciples, I remain ever indebted to you for the gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness you so graciously bestowed upon the world by coming to the Western world. Had it not been for your intense compassion upon the deluded and suffering conditioned souls of this Kali-yuga, none of us would have come to know about the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, our savior and eternal well-wisher.

You brought the torch of knowledge, giving hope to thousands upon thousands of fallen souls like me. You are that special ambassador sent by your beloved spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, to help deliver the fallen souls of this age. How can I repay this enormous debt that I have to Your Divine Grace?

The world continues to be afflicted with ever-increasing passion and ignorance. The misguided masses are madly pursuing activities of sense gratification, and in so doing are destroying themselves and the world. Your prediction that modern civilization is a doomed civilization should be in the forefront of our minds as we witness the onslaught of material nature, bringing humanity practically to the brink of destruction.

Your words of wisdom continue to be my constant source of inspiration. Your lectures, which I listen to practically daily, deliver the eternal wisdom of the *Bhāgavatam* itself. They are ever fresh, deeply insightful, and always soothing. They bring complete solace to the heart. If only more people could hear those ever-fresh instructions, which you give not only in your lectures but in your books as well, the world would benefit immensely.

Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

Please give me the intelligence to follow in your footsteps, the courage to face all difficulties, the patience to meet all challenges, and the tolerance to face all opposition.

I thank you again and again for giving me this opportunity of devotional service.

I pray to remain forever your humble servant.

Begging for your merciful glance,

RP Bhakti Rāghava Swami

Bhakti Rasāyana Sāgar Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Thank you very much for going through so much sacrifice to allow the Western world to benefit from Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In doing so you saved the whole planet from imminent disaster, including myself. I'm scared to even think of what would have happened to me without your mercy. You literally saved me from death.

It was 1971 when your lotus feet graced Moscow, the capital of the former USSR. These were really gloomy times in our country: it existed in the state of repression and depression. Believing in God from my childhood, I realized that the communists were godless demons, causing unlimited trouble for the whole country, and tried to oppose the regime peacefully by sharing the inconvenient truth of all their atrocities. I was finally arrested and faced severe consequences, which I barely survived.

I prayed to God to be saved from the calamity, and the miracle happened! Suddenly everything changed, and a new era of openness and transformation was declared by a couple of the top communist leaders—a phenomenon for which there were no objective reasons.

It happened in 1986, fifteen years after your transcendental visit, and for quite a few years I could never understand why and how this could have taken place. But after I finally joined your movement, I learned that after seeing the pathetic state of affairs in the USSR you predicted that when the people of this country would start chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, the demoniac system would naturally collapse. And you planted the seed of change by empowering just one youth, Ananta-śānti Dāsa, to spread your message far and wide. He accomplished the task while undergoing great personal hardship, and in the next fifteen years hundreds of people all over the country started chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, which allowed your brilliant prediction to be fulfilled.

And since you saved my life, it's natural that I should dedicate it to your cause.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, by your mercy I have everything I could ever dream of: a wonderful God-family of so many amazing devotees all over the world, an opportunity to travel and preach, chant, dance, and benefit myself and others by sharing Kṛṣṇa consciousness with everyone, trying to humbly follow in the footsteps of my *gurudeva*, His Holiness Indradyumna Swami, who got so much of your association and mercy and who helps me understand your mood and mission.

My greatest inspiration is to contribute as much as I can in this lifetime to accomplish the very first purpose of your ISKCON:

To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all people 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.

Unfortunately, even after more than half a century, the members of our movement are still struggling to establish peace and unity among ourselves, what to speak of giving it to the world. Therefore, I beg you to please bless me with the ability to help devotees and nondevotees alike in this regard by being a perfect example of working in harmony with others and facilitating them in achieving the noble goals expressed above.

Your aspiring servant,

Bhakti Rasāyana Sāgar Swami

Bhakti Sundar Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

The first time I dreamt of you was in 1979. I saw myself in an abandoned house, and the atmosphere was ghastly. I was trying unsuccessfully to find my way out. I passed in front of a mirror but couldn't see my reflection. I panicked: "Oh, maybe I became a ghost!" Then suddenly you appeared, grabbed my hand, took me out of the house to the temple, and told the devotees, "I rescued him from the impersonalists. Now please take nice care of him."

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for rescuing me then and now. Every day I feel your loving presence. Thank you for giving me a transcendental engagement in devotional service, for teaching me how to live and how to die—how to die to live.

Mādhavānanda: Then they would say that we also must die. Everyone must die.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, we die—to live forever. *Tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti*. We die for that. This is the last death.

This reminds me of the following story:

Kumar, a Hindu merchant, went to Africa for a job. When he finished his business, he took a walk in a park, stopping in front of a tree full of parrots. "I'll grab one and take him to my home in India," he told himself. Then he captured one. When he returned home, he put the parrot in a big cage and began to feed him fruits, nuts, and honey. Daily Kumar taught the parrot new words, and gradually the parrot learned to talk.

After a year Kumar said to his parrot, "I'm going back to Africa. Would you like me to give your friends a message?"

"Yes!" replied the parrot. "Tell them that I miss them so much, but that I'm happy in my cage, well fed and cared for." Then the parrot said goodbye to Kumar and wished him a good trip.

One afternoon, having finished his work, Kumar went to visit the parrots, and after giving them the message of their friend, suddenly one of them fell dead. "Poor parrot! How is it possible? Why did he die suddenly, just after listening to his friend's message? Maybe they were very good friends, and realizing that he would never see him again, he had a heart attack."

After burying the parrot, Kumar returned to India. When he got home, Kumar, armed with courage, told his parrot: "I'm sorry to tell you that after I gave your message to your friends, one of them fell dead instantly." When the parrot heard this bad news, he collapsed, dying in his cage. Kumar could not

Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

believe it: “I loved him so much! How could he die on me like that? He has died in such a strange way and so suddenly. I cannot find an explanation.” Crying disconsolately over the death of his beloved parrot, Kumar took the dead body out of the cage and went to his garden, and after depositing it with great care on the grass, he turned around to pick up a shovel and dig his grave. After Kumar had walked few steps, the parrot flew away and landed on a tree. Kumar, filled with astonishment and fury, shouted, “You were not dead! You cheated me! Why did you do that?”

While massaging his back with his wing the parrot replied: “Well, I did it because my friend from Africa sent me a very important message.”

“A message? What message?” asked Kumar, without understanding anything.

“The message was that I had to die to live,” said the parrot. “My friend indicated to me that I should fake my death to live in freedom.”

In the same way, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you taught me how to get out of the bondage of material existence. The cage represents the body, the parrot symbolizes the soul, and the parrot who sent the message is the spiritual master. No matter how beautiful the cage and how nice the food, no bird can be happy in a cage. In the same way, we can never be happy in a material body: we are spiritual souls, and we need to be free from the captivity of the cagelike body. Dying to live means dying to ignorance and living for eternal loving service to Kṛṣṇa.

Your eternally grateful servant,

Bhakti Sundar Goswami

Bhakti-vighna-vināśa Narasimha Mahārāja

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

It has been my great fortune to accept the shelter of Your Divine Grace as my spiritual preceptor. I certainly had no qualification to receive this boon; rather, it is due only to your causeless mercy.

I would like to report to Your Divine Grace concerning the development of the Navadvīpa *dhāma parikramā*. It was the desire of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and then Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, as well as Your Divine Grace, to see this *parikramā* develop. This year we had devotees staying in camps on our own ISKCON land instead of the usual rented land. Now ISKCON has acquired land on seven different islands of the *dhāma*, greatly easing the problems of setting up camps and accommodating one or two thousand devotees for overnight stays. With the new lands, more and more devotees will be encouraged to participate in the annual *parikramā* of Navadvīpa *dhāma*.

At the present time I am traveling with a group of Chinese devotees to holy places around India. We just visited Prayag, Chitrakut, Benares, and Ayodhya. In each of the holy places we heard the glories of the Lord and the pastimes He enacted in that place. We were able to stay at the ISKCON temple in Prayag, situated on the bank of the river Ganges, and at that temple we saw the beautiful Deities of Rādhā-Veṇī-Mādhava.

Now we have arrived at the ISKCON center in Kanpur. On the outskirts of the city the devotees of Kanpur have acquired a piece of land, where they have established an impressive marble temple with beautiful Deities of Nitāi-Gaurasundara, Rādhā-Mādhava, and Janakī-Janakī-vallabha. The temple was inaugurated in 2015. There is also a large guesthouse and a Govinda's restaurant. The *āśrama* has forty *brahmacārīs*, and the congregation numbers about 20,000. Seeing the success of the local centers here in India is very encouraging for the overseas devotees. In our travels around the holy places we see many *āśramas*, but nothing compares to ISKCON's facilities. Others may have temples with Deities, but their standard of worship is not comparable to the Deity worship in Your Divine Grace's ISKCON temples. Similarly, others are publishing books, but your BBT books are the most beautifully illustrated, with the best quality of printing and binding, and at the same time they present the highest philosophy, expressed in the most erudite and crystal-clear language. The festivals organized by ISKCON are another important feature: they attract the largest crowds and awaken the highest love for the Lord and His devotees.

We can see that when looking at the preaching and the centers around India, ISKCON is a success story. I had the opportunity to serve in India in the mid 1970s and know how you began with just a few Western disciples and no funds and no property. Now it is a different situation. Many educated Indian devotees look after large, well-maintained temples with no great financial problems. Materially ISKCON India is a success, and spiritually it is also a success because in every center we find pure, kind-hearted souls dedicated to the service of you, Lord Caitanya, and the *saṅkīrtana* movement.

I feel very fortunate to be a very small member of such a powerful and respected society as ISKCON. I think you can feel some satisfaction that your labor to set up the society did not go in vain and that your instructions are not being forgotten.

I pray that we can always remember the instructions that came from your lotus mouth.

Begging to remain a servant in the dust of your lotus feet,

Bhakti-vighna-vināśa Narasimha Mahārāja

Candramauli Swami

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

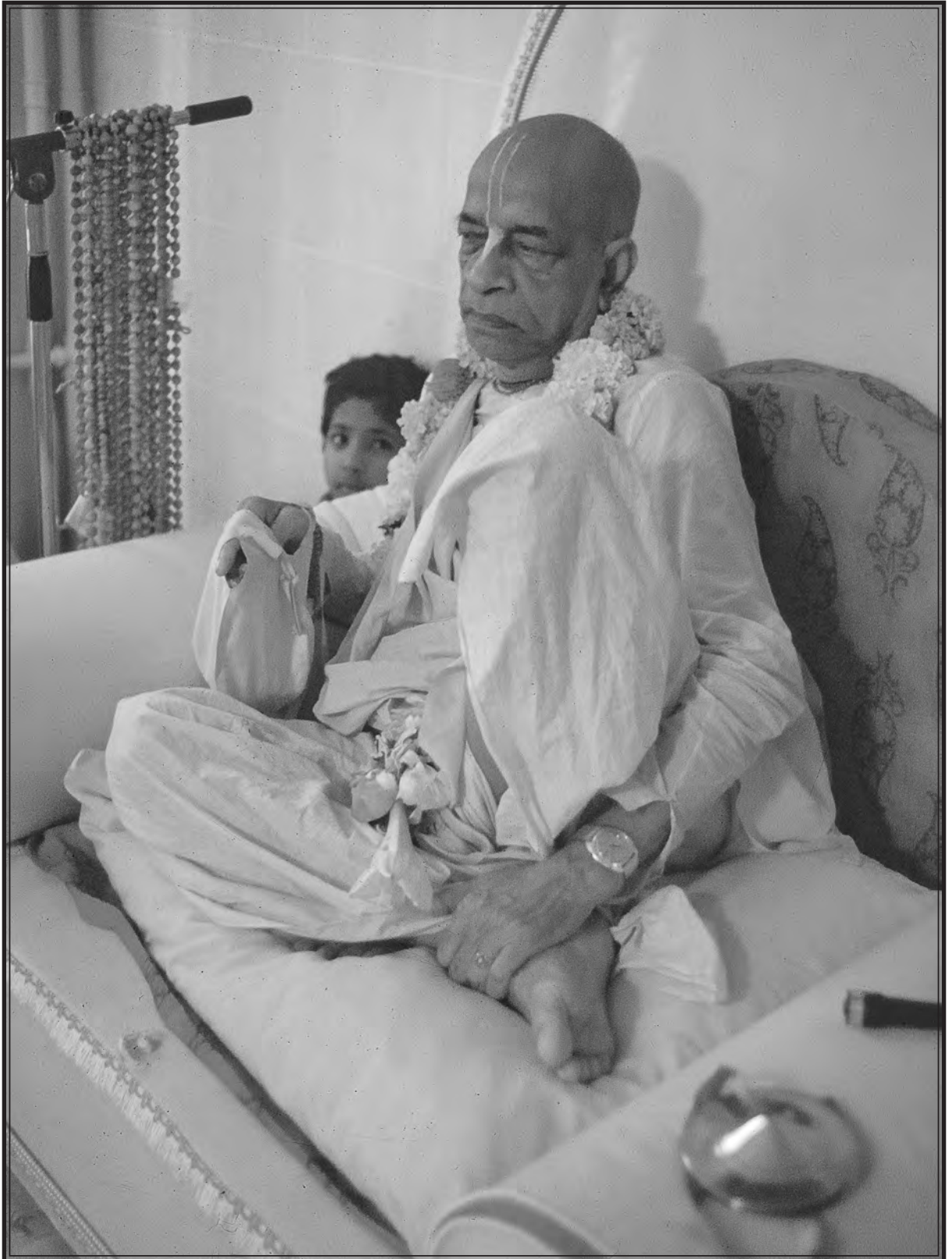
I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge.

*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*

Simply by remembering the spiritual master, the devotees of the Lord, and the Personality of Godhead, one invokes their benedictions, destroys all difficulties, and very easily fulfills one's own desires. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 1.20–21)

Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs



Just as Śrī Advaita Ācārya loudly called upon the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, to appear in the world in order to save the fallen souls trapped in the entanglement of the material quagmire, so you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, brought that same mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead into the lives of the fallen souls of modern-day Kali-yuga. Up until then only a relatively few fortunate persons knew that Lord Caitanya is the selfsame Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and knew of His mission of compassion of uplifting the residents of Kali-yuga to the practice of worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa of Śrī Vṛndāvana *dhāma*.

Although the Lord's mercy is always available, today it is only fully accessible by taking shelter of Your Divine Grace's lotus feet, for you are the representative of the compassionate nature of Lord Nityānanda. I am very fallen, struggling to stay near your lotus feet, that unlimited ocean of mercy.

One of your more important instructions to your disciples is to become an instrument of your mercy by giving to others what we have received from you in the form of Lord Caitanya's mercy—to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and inspire others to do the same. Please allow me to continue trying to act on your behalf, although I lack the necessary qualifications.

Hā hā prabhu koro doyā, deho more pada-chāyā . . .

Candramauli Swami

Candraśekhara 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,

Each year brings new realizations and greater awareness of my own personal defects. Because you have so mercifully bestowed Kṛṣṇa consciousness upon me, I am trying year after year to actually enter into it. Usually throughout the year, by your mercy, I receive different realizations. These realizations may be small, but I would like to share them in my offering to you. What follows will be an account of them as they occurred this year, along with the surrounding circumstances. My two main themes are pain and frustration. In 2018, the main theme of my life was upheaval, but in 2019, this year, the theme seems to be purification. In other words, how pain and frustration lead to purification. Although pain is hard to love, it is actually a good thing. Pain means that you are burning off some inauspicious reactions and you are being reminded that this earth is not your home.

Sometimes you just want the pain to stop, but it won't. "Doctor, is there something I can take? Doctor, to relieve a belly ache? Put the lime in the coconut and drink um bode up."

From about twenty-five years ago to about six years ago, I used to get recurring migraine headaches. They were so severe that I would just have to cancel all my plans for that day and try to sleep my way through the episode. These migraines appeared once or twice a month on average, and usually lasted for about eight to twenty-four hours, during which time I was unable to function at all. They were

Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

getting progressively worse and more frequent. By Kṛṣṇa's mercy, after much research and experiment, I discovered that if I just changed three things in my daily habits, these debilitating migraines would just go away, mostly. They still occur, but they are just annoying and a shadow of what they once were.

There was a time, about thirty years ago, when I was bolder than today and when the idea came to me that I should ask Kṛṣṇa directly for His mercy, be it pleasant or unpleasant. I still try to do this every so often. I call this Kṛṣṇa roulette (after Russian roulette). How this works is simple. You just go before Kṛṣṇa on the altar and say, "Kṛṣṇa, whatever it will take to make me a better devotee, please do this to me now!" Probably now you get the reason why I call this Kṛṣṇa roulette; the resemblance to putting a loaded revolver with one bullet in the rotating chamber to your head is not abstract. Is "terrifying" the proper word? This technique I have somehow managed to employ several times. At such special times, I always preach to myself in a special way, standing on the edge of that precipice before Kṛṣṇa on the altar. "My dear self, why be afraid? I know that Kṛṣṇa is going to 'roulette' me anyway. I might as well pick up a few points by asking for it." Whenever I am going through a difficult or painful episode, I reflect back on this request.

When pain is relentless and long term, it is hard to think about anything else, and thus I drop into the very, very experiential now. I notice the pattern of the quilt on my bed, the fact that the door is crooked, and the details of wrinkles on my hand. These experiences bring me to consider how I will manage my thinking at the time of death, when pain might be extreme. I think about this often.

The prompt for this keynote about pain comes up from an episode that occurred this year in Māyāpur. Two days before my flight back to New York City, I caught some type of flu. This led to an opening prelude of two days of migraine pain, just like the old days. During that time all I could do was mostly just writhe in my bed. Sometimes, during this episode of pain, I mustered up the determination to just breathe the word "Kṛṣṇa" on the incoming and outgoing breaths. It was about all I could do. Even doing this exhausted me, and then I would sleep for some hours.

So it can be easily seen that my level of spiritual advancement and material detachment are not—how shall we say this?—top drawer. However, I am determined to carry on, whatever. One advantage to pain is its side-effect of making you completely focus on the here-and-now. No special effort is required because long, discursive thought is almost impossible. This is an interesting contrast to my everyday mode of thinking. After a pain episode there is a feeling similar to that of having taken a bath or a shower. I always feel more grounded and focused. Every cloud has a silver lining; but, on the other hand, I would say that every bar of silver is cloudy.

When pain and sickness come, they do not ask me to look at my Microsoft-Outlook schedule. They force themselves into my life. They are messages from Kṛṣṇa and are His special mercy. One just needs to be able to decode such messages. Sometimes that is not easy and only much later does the cipher break. In breaking that cipher, we receive some of the most important messages we ever get in life.

Please note well that I am not saying any of these things in this Vyāsa-pūjā offering to draw pity or compassion. These occurrences are what they are. I am convinced that I deserve them; there is no need for either me or anyone else to "do anything" about them, and there is nothing that can be done, anyway. And, by the way, I am not some special type of martyr or hero; everybody goes through these things. I am just reporting what I have learned and trying to appreciate that Kṛṣṇa has sent these difficulties. As difficult as it is for me, pain serves a purpose. I was staring at Rādhā-Mādhava in Māyāpur as my head pounded during their morning announcements and feeling blessed.

In short, pain is also our servant, helping us on the journey back home. There is a reason we go through such times. Usually, only some years later can I see what the message was and appreciate the pain.

Frustration is also another interesting topic, and it's the other part of my theme for 2019. I am more and more coming to realize that frustration is a *sure sign* of my lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and nothing more. Frustration is always a sign there is something I want that I lack. What else can cause it?

The only thing I can say I actually own is my service, and even the type of service and the circumstances under which I perform it are really not up to me, though I can try to optimize and tweak such circumstances when possible. When is there ever a lack of service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness? Am I ever frustrated because

of a lack of service? No, I am frustrated because of a lack of a particular service or resources or respect accorded to that service. That is what I am frustrated about. *Hmmm*.

When we feel frustrated, this means that something in our environment, either external or internal, is not measuring up to our expectations. I mean . . . How dumb is that? “Kṛṣṇa, can’t You do it differently?” Now I have to get out my D60 and start bulldozing my way through the nearby landscape. That is my technique. I have gone down this road many times, and after many months of hard work I always come to the realization that precisely nothing had been accomplished even though much has been bulldozed.

I suppose that it is a natural-born human instinct to be at least somewhat dissatisfied with one’s lot in life, but Kṛṣṇa consciousness is about being satisfied—*ātmārāmā*, *tuṣṭa*, or *santuṣṭa*. This is specifically mentioned in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.55).

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
prajāhāti yadā kāmān
sarvān pārtha mano-gatān
ātmāny evātmanā tuṣṭaḥ
sthita-prajñas tadocyate*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: ‘O Pārtha, when a man gives up all varieties of desire for sense gratification, which arise from mental concoction, and when his mind, thus purified, finds satisfaction in the self alone, then he is said to be in pure transcendental consciousness.’” Thus frustration is the antithesis of *ātmārāmā*.

Throughout life we are presented with many frustrating situations, and mostly there is nothing at all we can do about them. We are helpless. Success or failure in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is about our attitude. That is why I am trying to constantly examine my attitudes toward the occurrences that engulf me. I am finding that frustration never seems to have a legitimate Kṛṣṇa conscious basis. I could be frustrated that I am not advancing quickly enough in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and that would be a legitimate pretext for frustration, but I am never frustrated for that reason.

I was just reading in the *Mahābhārata* how the dying Bhīṣmadeva tells Yudhiṣṭhira,

Destiny and exertion are the two great factors that influence the lives of men. Of the two, exertion is more important because destiny is nothing more than the results of one’s past endeavors. Therefore, even while achieving an unfavorable result, a king should continue to perform his duty conscientiously, without becoming overwhelmed by grief.

Destiny is just our past *karma*; thus, frustration is only the backwash of our past action. Who is responsible for that? This is a no-brainer: whatever external reason I try to point to as bringing about my frustration, that reason must be bogus. By investigating that reason, I can gain insight—deep insight—into how to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. What is it that I wish was different? Why exactly?

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for introducing me to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, because without it I would have surely already perished. In everyday things and experiences, as you have taught, Kṛṣṇa continues to send me new realizations. Let me be always thankful and attentive.

Your servant,

Candraśekhara Swami

Dānavīr Goswami

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

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

*Jaya Om̐ Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottara-śata (108) Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedānta
Swami Prabhupāda kī jaya!*

My dearest Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my most respectful obeisances at your lotus feet.

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

If you had not come to the West,
My life would never have progressed.
I was fallen in a deep, blind well—
Only you could save me from Hell.

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

In your presence, everything glows,
As everyone who meets you knows.
Through your causeless merciful love,
We're moving t'ward the Lord above.

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

You shine light into the darkness,
You give hope to all the hopeless,
You have brought life back to the dead,
You revealed what Lord Kṛṣṇa said.

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

For those who trust your promise bold,
Goodbye to death and getting old.
Chant *mahā-mantra*, soothing balm—
Next stop will be Goloka Dhām.

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

You appeal to man's highest taste,
You make eco farms to stop waste,
You rightly say, "Grow your own food;
"Slaughtering cows is the most crude."

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

You teach equality for souls,
Back to Godhead, best of all goals,
Bhakti, the supreme form of yoga,
From Saigon to Saratoga.

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

With wisdom you remove ignorance,
Morality lifts decadence,
Loving Kṛṣṇa includes all things,
From deserts to noble kings.

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

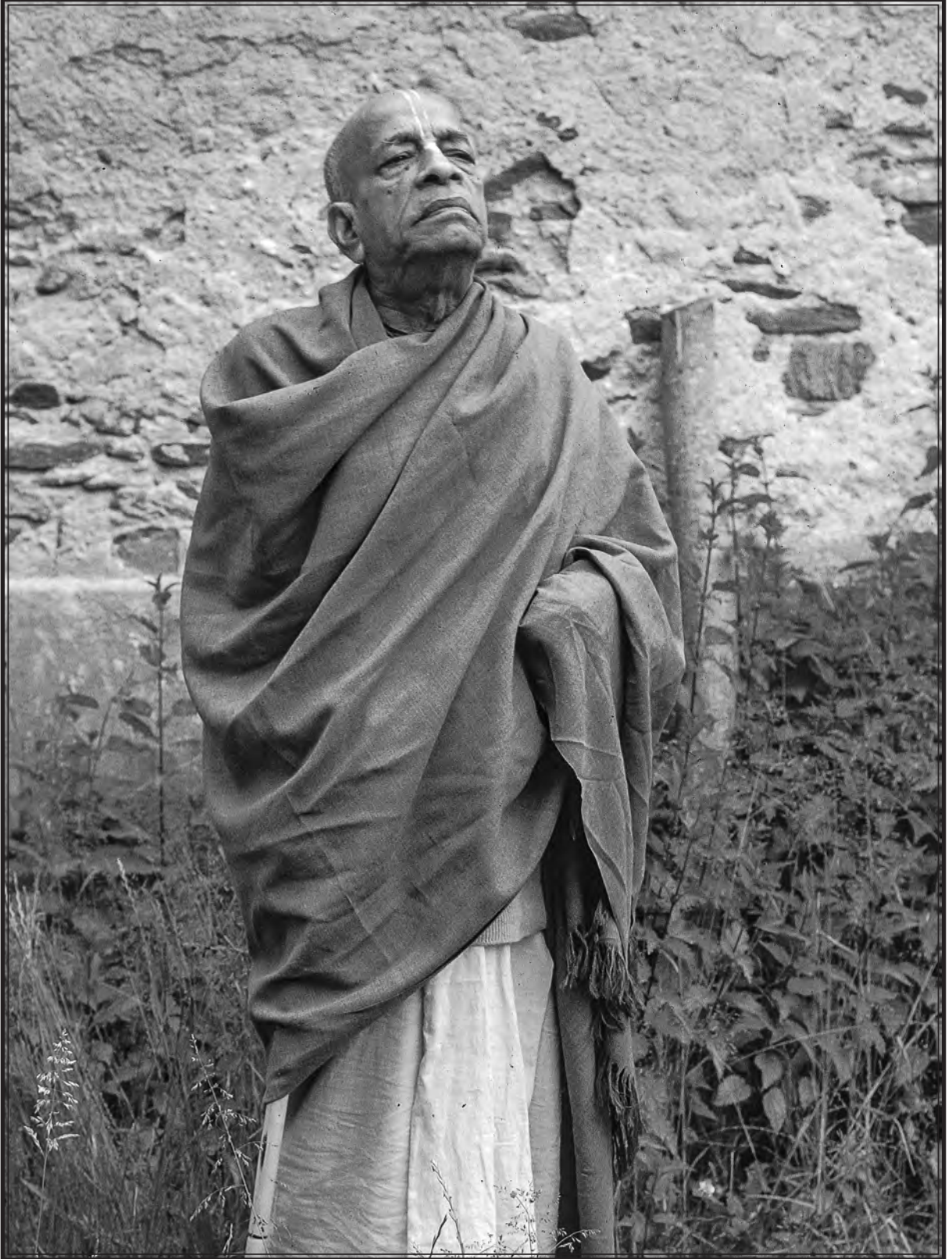
You display the reason to live:
Pure unalloyed service to give.
You are everyone's best friend,
From the start up until the end.

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

*kiṁ durāpādanam̐ teṣāṁ
pumsām uddāma-cetasām
yair āśritas tīrtha-padaś
caraṇo vyaśanātyayaḥ*

For you, nothing's impossible,
No ocean is uncrossable.
At Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet—
Guru and Gaṅgā, the shelter sweet.

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.



Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

Our debt to you—unpayable.
Our thanks—not conveyable.
Let us always serve your kind will,
Where every moment is a thrill.

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

Begging for your causeless mercy,

Your forever thankful, insignificant servant,

Dānavīr Goswami

Dayānanda Swami

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

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

The *śāstra* explains that we can associate with great souls in two ways: one is by personal association (*vapu*) and the other is through his words or writings (*vāñī*). Of the two, it is recommended that association through his words is more important because whether he is personally present or not, we can still receive valuable instruction.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I have recently been reading some of your biographies, written by your disciples. By such reading we can experience both *vāñī* and *vapu* association. Just by absorbing ourselves in your pastimes, we not only receive valuable instruction for our spiritual development but can also benefit from you personal association.

Every devotee who came in contact with you became attracted by your exemplary character and personal dealings. Devotees became inspired to surrender their lives to you and your mission; they performed great austerities and undertook what seemed almost impossible tasks. They were so thirsty for your association that they would create programs and preaching engagements just to attract you to give them your association.

When I read the biographies by your disciples, I almost feel that I'm indulging in sense gratification and that I should be reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā* instead. But on reflection I can understand that devotional service is a very personal process and to become inspired by your personal association is also important for a devotee to properly grow and mature in his devotional service.

These books will be the lens through which society for generations to come can have your personal association understand practically your character, personality, and qualities.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you showed the importance of personal association when you first met your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, in Calcutta. When you left that meeting you told your

friend, “I have just met a very nice saintly person, and I think Lord Caitanya’s message is in expert hands.” It was from that meeting and subsequent meetings that you became inspired to preach Lord Caitanya’s message worldwide.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for giving us your association, both now and in the future, by inspiring your disciples to write your biographies. Thus your *vapu* as well as your *vāṇī* association will be available to everyone forever, and continue to inspire countless existing devotees and make countless new ones. As Lord Caitanya states in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 22.55):

‘sādhū-saṅga’, ‘sādhū-saṅga’—sarva-śāstre kaya
lava-mātra sādhū-saṅge sarva-siddhi haya

“The verdict of all revealed scriptures is that by even a moment’s association with a pure devotee, one can attain all success.”

You humble servant,

Dayānanda Swami

Gaṇapati dāsa Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Śrīla Bhaktinoda Ṭhākura has written in the Saṅga-tyāga section of his *Śrī Bhaktyāloka*:

It has been seen that many fortunate souls have given up attachment for prejudices by the association of pure Vaiṣṇavas. From the scriptures it is well known that by the association of Śrī Nārada Muni the hunter (Mṛgāri) and Ratnākara (Vālmiki) attained auspiciousness. The foremost instruction of Śrī Rāmāṇujācārya is this: “If you cannot purify yourself by any endeavor whatsoever, then just go sit with the Vaiṣṇavas and you will achieve all auspiciousness.”

When a person observes the pure characteristics of a devotee, in a very short time the person’s mind is changed, his attachment for sense enjoyment decreases, and the seedling of *bhakti* sprouts in the heart. One even gradually develops a taste for the Vaiṣṇavas’ food and behavior. We have seen how by associating with Vaiṣṇavas people have given up many *anarthas*—taste for associating with women, thirst for wealth, desire for sense enjoyment and liberation, inclination for *karma* and *jñāna*, eating meat and fish, drinking wine, smoking tobacco, and the desire to chew pan. By observing a Vaiṣṇava’s quality of not uselessly wasting time, many people have easily given up *anarthas* such as laziness, oversleeping, useless talk, urge of speech, etc. We have also seen that when one associates with Vaiṣṇavas for some time, his cheating propensity and desire for fame have been destroyed. We have seen with our own eyes that associating with Vaiṣṇavas with a little affection has vanquished all other association, such as attachment for prejudices. Those who are attached to winning fights, those who are expert at attaining dominion, those who are eager to accumulate great wealth—all such types of people have attained devotional service by

Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

being purified in the association of Vaiṣṇavas. Even the hearts of persons who think “I will defeat the world by my arguments and attain supremacy” have been pacified. Without the association of Vaiṣṇavas, there is no alternative for rectifying the attachment for prejudices.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the simple truth is that your association awoke within us a desire to be like you, to experience what you were experiencing. Most young people in the Sixties were experiencers, as in “getting high.” In the same way that Śrī Nārada commanded the respect of all, even villains like Kaṁsa, Vālmiki, and Mṛgāri, you commanded the respect of the academic authorities, the anti-authority hippies, and even the low-lifers in the Bowery. Those who were most fortunate sat with you, witnessed your lifestyle, and bathed in the aura of your grace and saintliness. They developed a taste for the remnants of your foodstuffs and for your behavior, volunteered services, and became your devoted followers. In a nutshell, by their observing your pure characteristics, their minds were changed.

Leonardo da Vinci once quipped, “Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.” Your personal lifestyle and your mode of teaching showed you to be a master of simplification. You were so simple and childlike, yet exceptionally sophisticated—a *pukka* Bengali gentleman; and even more—a genuine “Vaikuṇṭha man.”

You made it all seem so very easy—just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, accept *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*, and be happy, like you. Of course, there was a catch—it would take purification (and some time). You answered all our questions and doubts with the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy neatly packaged so as to encourage practical engagement in devotional service. You had faith that if we experienced a taste for the *sādhana*, it would prepare us for accepting aspects of the *siddhānta* that we might not find palatable, or even conceivable. In a sense, you were a “transcendental trickster.” This should not surprise anyone, as you yourself wrote, “That great souls cheat others may be astonishing to know, but it is a fact that great souls cheat others for a great cause.”

Meditating on Nārada Muni’s expertise for engaging varieties of candidates in devotional service helps me appreciate yours more. Vālmiki lived the life of a plunderer, sometimes even murdering his victims, all for the benefit of his family members. Upon Śrī Nārada’s enlightening him as to the dire effects of his profession, Vālmiki surrendered to Nārada’s guidance. Nārada, understanding that Vālmiki would be unable to chant the name of Lord Rāma, instructed him to meditate on “Mara” instead, a fitting mantra for one whose life had been so intertwined with death. As a result, Vālmiki became purified by inadvertently and repeatedly chanting “Rāma,” and eventually he recorded the *Rāmāyaṇa* as it was revealed in his meditative trance by the grace of Nārada.

In your commentary to CC *Madhya* 24.252, you write:

This is the effect of associating with a pure devotee. Our preachers who are preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world should follow in the footsteps of Nārada Muni and become purified by following the four principles and chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. This will make them fit to become Vaiṣṇavas. Then, when they speak to sinful people about the teachings of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, people will be affected and take the instructions.

Although you wrote this to instruct your followers, you were, as usual, the perfect emblem of it.

Mṛgāri was a hunter who relished wounding animals and then watching them die slowly in pain. Nārada, struck with compassion for both the animals and their assassin, explained to Mṛgāri the horrible fate awaiting him and requested that he at least kill the animals completely. However, by just a few moments of Nārada’s association, “the hunter was a little convinced of his sinful activity. He therefore became somewhat afraid due to his offenses.” You confirmed this aspect of the benefit of *sādhū-saṅga* to devotees in Delhi in 1976:

Devotee: Therefore the association is most important.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Oh, yes, very important, so that if I commit some mistake, I’ll regret: “Oh, my other associate, he is not coming to act in that . . .”

When Mṛgāri asked Nārada how he could be delivered, Nārada instructed him to break his bow, distribute his stock of riches to pure *brāhmaṇas*, construct a cottage by the river, chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, and worship Tulasī-devī, and be assured that his maintenance would be arranged for.

Lastly, there is the history of Nārada Muni and Dhruva. Nārada did not abandon Dhruva after Dhruva admitted to not being capable of following his directive. Rather, Śrī Nārada compassionately adjusted his instruction in accordance with Dhruva's capability. Due to Dhruva's firm faith in his gurus and his own determination, he was successful in his *sādhana*, and being further purified by the Lord's *darśana*, ultimately achieved the peak of devotional perfection. In a similar way (although you were inflexible in regard to your disciples' following the four regulative principles) you amended your original mandate of 64 rounds daily to 16 rounds. You prescribed a unique, practical blend of *pāñcarātri*- and *bhāgavata-vidhi* by which many have made tangible progress toward the ultimate goal of *prema-prayojana*. Besides your initiates, you encouraged others to practice the Kṛṣṇa conscious process according to their personal limitations, and yet others to practice their preferred brand of Vaiṣṇavism or other bona fide religious path more ardently.

"An *ācārya* who comes for the service of the Lord cannot be expected to conform to a stereotype, for he must find the ways and means by which Kṛṣṇa consciousness may be spread." Fortunately for us, an empowered *ācārya* did come to the West for the service of the Lord, didn't conform to a stereotype, and expertly found the ways and means by which Kṛṣṇa consciousness could be spread. All glories to that *ācārya*, Your Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda!

Gaṇapati dāsa Swami

Janānanda dās Goswami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet.

Fifty years ago, in 1969, you sent your disciples to Paris to start the mission there—Sūri Dāsa, Jotillā Devī Dāsī, Janārdana Dāsa, and others. Their first address was 2 Place de La Chappelle, Paris 18. Almost inconceivably, this address is now the exact spot where the annual Ratha-yātrā parade in Paris begins. It is there where we have the inaugural speeches and *kīrtanas* and opening rituals. For an hour or more Lord Jagannātha sits majestically, bestowing His mercy on the Parisians. This is certainly not by chance. All glories to those devotees who planted the seeds of your movement in Paris fifty years ago.

It is also not by chance that we have had the inconceivable good fortune to come in contact with you, a pure devotee, and take shelter at your lotus feet. You once gave the following example of how rare this opportunity is.

A wooden board is floating in the ocean, and in the middle of the board is a hole. A turtle swimming in the ocean surfaces, and its head goes right through the hole in the board. Just as the chance of this

Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

happening is very slim, so the chance of a conditioned soul finding shelter at the lotus feet of a genuine spiritual master is equally slim.

In the *Śrī Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (13.2) it is stated:

*akṣṇoḥ phalaṁ tvādṛśa-darśanaṁ hi
tanoḥ phalaṁ tvādṛśa-gātra-saṅgaḥ
jihvā-phalaṁ tvādṛśa-kīrtanaṁ hi
su-durlabhā bhāgavatā hi loke*

“My dear Vaiṣṇava, seeing a person like you is the perfection of one’s eyesight, touching your lotus feet is the perfection of the sense of touch, and glorifying your good qualities is the tongue’s real activity, for in the material world it is very difficult to find a pure devotee of the Lord.”

Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa: I think we must be extraordinarily fortunate that Lord Kṛṣṇa . . . He appears once in a day of Brahmā, and He appeared just five thousand years ago. And then Lord Caitanya just appeared five hundred years ago, and we have an opportunity to associate with Them.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Always remember this grace of the Lord and utilize it. [Morning Walk, 13 June 1974, Paris]

Unfortunately, I do not appreciate this great fortune. How grateful I should be, but I am not. This is the sign of a rascal who likes to take credit. One who is forever grateful is a real disciple. He never takes credit. You are the perfect example of this: if anyone deserves credit in this universe, it is you, yet you took none.

So anyway, although I began very late, at the age of seventy years, so by the help of my disciples this movement is gaining ground and is spreading all over the world. So therefore I have to thank you. It is all due to you. It is not my credit, but it is your credit that you are helping me in executing the order of my Guru Mahārāja. [Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā address, 22 August 1973, London]

You gave the credit to us and to your spiritual master.

This is not my credit, but the process which is given by Caitanya Mahāprabhu. That is His credit. I have simply brought the process. It is not my manufacturing; it is authorized. It is given by Caitanya Mahāprabhu; therefore it is authorized. [Room Conversation, 15 June 1975, Honolulu]

The word “grateful” is not even remotely adequate to express the actual feeling of a sincere disciple. “Grateful” denotes mere thankfulness, as in ordinary dealings. The truth is that the causeless mercy you are bestowing is the greatest good fortune that exists and is really the only good fortune we have ever received. Our very existence, our only spiritual hope, our very life—all are possible only by your mercy. To say “thank you” is a mere pittance.

If I truly felt the depth of your mercy and the depth of the spiritual gratefulness I owe you, then I would stop my whining and self-pity, trying to justify my foolishness and looking to externals for my shelter or relief from unsavory experiences. When will that day come? You showed the perfect example in every respect, not only refusing to take credit but also taking shelter at every moment of the lotus feet of your guru and Gaurāṅga. This is true humility.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura shares the heart of the pure devotee:

The instructions of my spiritual master to worship the Personality of Godhead by chanting, remembering, serving His feet, and so on are my only *sādhana*, my only *sādhya*, my only livelihood. I am unable to give up these instructions, either in the stage of practice or in the stage of perfection.

They alone are my object of desire and my only responsibility. Besides them I can desire no other responsibility, not even in my dreams. It is all the same to me whether I feel happy or unhappy, or whether my material existence is eradicated or not.

This was your constant strength in establishing your mission: the empowerment by your spiritual master due to following his instructions absolutely, come what may.

Unfortunately, after forty-eight years I am still on the mental platform and have not entered into this realm of pure devotion. Although the realm is all around me, I remain a spectator to pure devotion. The mercy is there for everyone, as you told Viṣṇujana Mahārāja. It is up to us to take it. I thank you for the privilege of serving your mission in France. Even though I am incapable, you have mercifully given me the chance to take shelter at your lotus feet. There is no other shelter. Please guide me to become your instrument. We have so much to do. I am sure there are so many areas which do not bring pleasure to you—I hope we can in some way adjust this. Please awaken some good qualities in me so that I may be of some use to you.

Fifty years ago, on September 11, 1969, you set foot for the first time in the UK. While staying at John Lennon's estate in Tittenhurst, you wrote the following in a letter to Vāmanadeva: "Also, Suridas and his wife, Jotilla, with others have gone to Paris. As formerly the Europeans made colonization in different parts of the world, it is the same thing: colonization of Sankirtana in Krishna Consciousness."

I beg you to please engage me in my little service in France, for which I am most unqualified, to assist you in the colonization of *saṅkīrtana* in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I hope that one day I can appreciate and live by the following truth.

Therefore the disciple remains eternally indebted to the spiritual master and continually works in such a way that the spiritual master may become pleased upon him for such sincere services rendered. [Letter to Mantriṇī, 29 July 1976]

*janame janame sabe pitā-mātā pāya
kṛṣṇa guru nāhi mile bhaja hari ei*

Birth after birth one receives a mother and father, but if one gets the benediction of guru and Kṛṣṇa, he conquers the material energy and returns back to Godhead by worship of the Lord.

Your eternal servant,

Janānanda dās Goswami

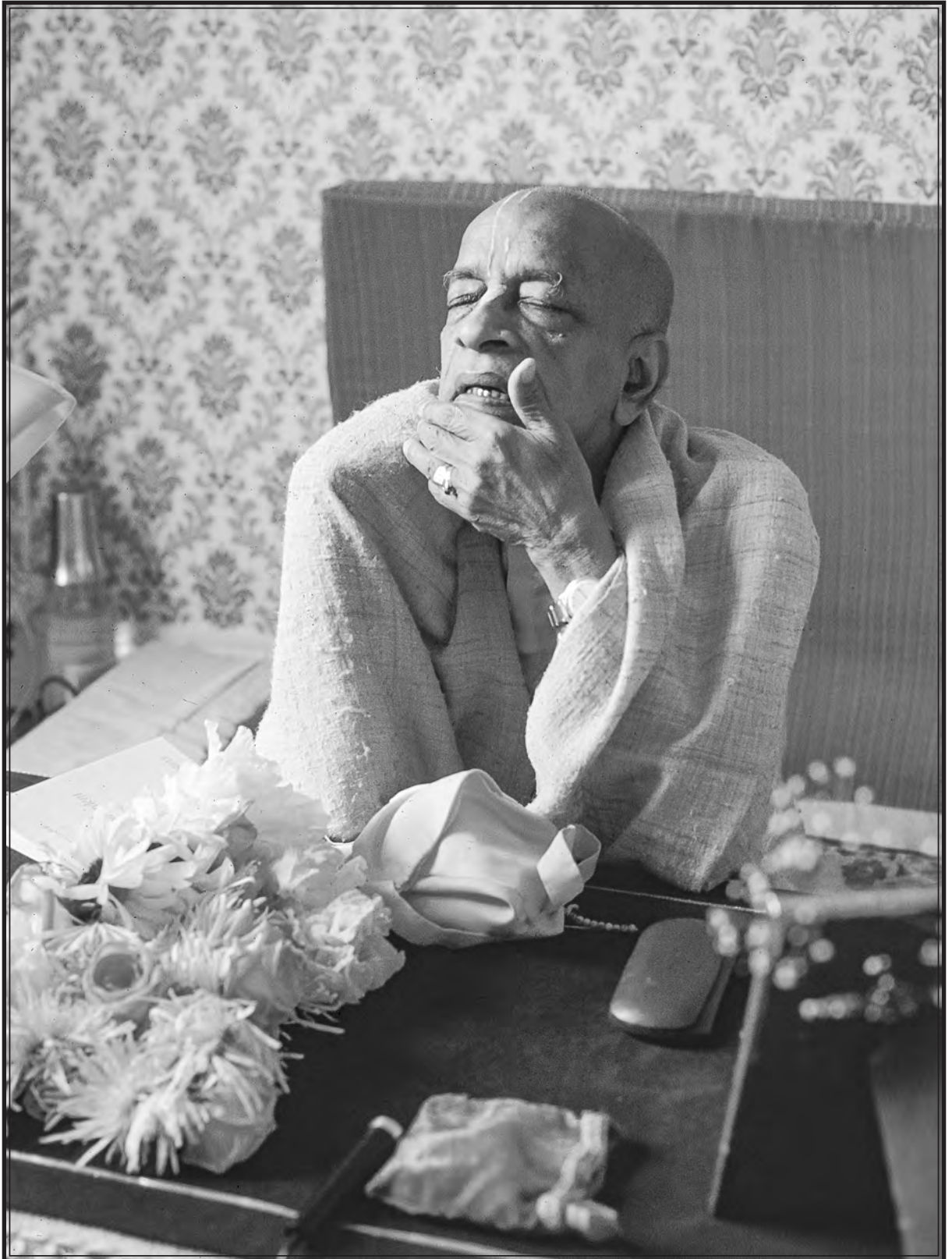
Kadamba Kānana Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

You are carrying the powerful mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in a pure and unadulterated form in huge quantities, enough to flood all directions. Anyone who gets touched by it becomes transformed. It happened to us.

Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs



Now we are carrying the same mercy of Mahāprabhu. Not in the same quantity as you do, but we are carrying some mercy as your servants. And it acts and transforms people, and we are amazed to see this potency. Even when ordinary men like us carry and distribute this mercy, it does miracles and people change. What to speak of when a great and pure devotee like you carries the mercy of the Lord! Then the whole world changes

So we simply wish to express our gratitude that we are allowed to be your servants and carry a few drops of that mercy, of which you carry an ocean. We bow at your feet in great happiness.

Your insignificant servant,

Kadamba Kānana Swami

Keśava Bhāratī Dāsa Goswami

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this most auspicious anniversary of Your Divine Grace's appearance in this world, I fall at your lotus feet and beg you to accept me as a fully surrendered disciple, one who aspires to be absorbed in your association by hearing and chanting your sublime literatures, assimilating the instructions contained therein into my thoughts, words, and deeds, and sharing your profound wisdom with as many persons as I can for the rest of my life—for your pleasure and theirs—the ecstasies you yourself relished as you compiled these transcendental masterpieces.

Your books are my life and soul, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for I feel your personal presence in sound as I read them out loud, to myself and to others, every day without fail. You confirmed this truth when you were asked the question in San Francisco, "What will happen when you die?" Your response: "I will never die. I will live forever in my books."

A flood of nectar flows from the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and from every syllable of *Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. And your Bhaktivedanta purports turn that flood into a tsunami of bliss. This nectar is the greatest gift one person can give to or receive from another. Only such a tsunami—caused by the mass distribution of these literatures and the application of their teachings by your sincere followers—can extinguish the blazing fire of hate, lying, dissension, violence, and political fear-mongering, a fire that is laying waste to the dignity of human society throughout the world, poisoning the hearts of today's once innocent but now jaded masses.

How did you envision such an unlikely inundation would come to pass?

Lord Caitanya's spiritual master instructed Him, therefore, that one must read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* regularly and with scrutiny to gradually become attached to the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 7.73, purport]

Preaching is the best service to the Lord. The Lord will immediately be extremely satisfied with one who engages in this service of preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is confirmed by the Lord Himself in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.69). *Na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu kaścin me priya-kṛttamaḥ*: "There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear." If one sincerely tries his best to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness by preaching the glories of the Lord and His supremacy, even if he is imperfectly educated, he becomes the dearmost servant of the

Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is *bhakti*. As one performs this service for humanity, without discrimination between friends and enemies, the Lord becomes satisfied, and the mission of one's life is fulfilled. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu therefore advised everyone to become a *guru*-devotee and preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness (*yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa*). That is the easiest way to realize the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By such preaching, the preacher becomes satisfied, and those to whom he preaches are also satisfied. This is the process of bringing peace and tranquillity to the entire world. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.6.24, purport]

By associating with persons for whom the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Mukunda, is the all in all, one can hear of His powerful activities and soon come to understand them. The activities of Mukunda are so potent that simply by hearing of them one immediately associates with the Lord. For a person who constantly and very eagerly hears narrations of the Lord's powerful activities, the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead in the form of sound vibrations, enters within his heart and cleanses it of all contamination. On the other hand, although bathing in the Ganges diminishes bodily contaminations and infections, this process and the process of visiting holy places can cleanse the heart only after a long time. Therefore who is the sane man who will not associate with devotees to quickly perfect his life? [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.18.11]

When we speak of hearing and chanting, it means that not only should one chant and hear the holy name of the Lord as Rāma Kṛṣṇa (or systematically as the sixteen names Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare), but one should also read and hear the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the association of devotees. This primary practice of *bhakti-yoga* will cause the seed already sowed in the heart to sprout, and by a regular watering process, as mentioned above, the *bhakti-yoga* creeper will begin to grow. By systematic nurturing, the creeper will grow to such an extent that it will penetrate the coverings of the universe, as we have heard in the previous verses, reach the effulgent sky, the *brahma-jyoti*, and go farther and farther and reach the spiritual sky, where there are innumerable spiritual planets called Vaikuṇṭhalokas. Above all of them is Kṛṣṇaloka, or Goloka Vṛndāvana, wherein the growing creeper enters and takes repose at the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the original Personality of Godhead. When one reaches the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa at Goloka Vṛndāvana, the watering process of hearing and reading, as also chanting of the holy name in the pure devotional stage, fructifies, and the fruits grown there in the form of love of God are tangibly tasted by the devotee, even though he is here in this material world. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.2.30, purport]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the pitiless intrigues of Māyā, as you call them, plunk down obstacles onto the path of those trying to push on the modern branch of the movement you began just a few decades ago to re-spiritualize human society. The main obstacle, it seems to me, is the weakening of faith in your books, faith that is the cornerstone of ISKCON, which as you write is “one of the branches of the Caitanya tree.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 9.18, purport)

In 1998 I was asked by His Grace Gopīparāṇadhana Prabhu to be his English editor. Of course, I was hardly fit for such a task, having had almost no editing experience. But he insisted, I submitted a sample that was somehow approved by the BBT editorial department, and a journey began in which I was trained “on the job” by your senior English editor, Jayādvaita Swami, who also agreed to do the polish edit. For five years I had the unique privilege of working intimately with those stalwart, loyal, and expert disciples of yours, getting to know them up close. The result of that five-year marathon was the publication of the English translation of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Śrī Bhṛad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, and the first English translation of his auto-commentary, called *Dig-darśinī*.

I remembered reading years before in your Bhaktivedanta purport to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 5.203: “Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu, the teacher of the science of devotional service, wrote several books, of which the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* is very famous; anyone who wants to know about the subject matter

of devotees, devotional service and Kṛṣṇa must read this book.” At the time the only English translation of that book was a Gauḍīya Maṭha edition, and the English was barely readable; plus, the commentary was not included.

It wasn’t surprising, then, that the BBT edition of *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* received extremely high praise from the top authority on Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in the academic world at that time. Indeed, Professor Joseph T. O’Connell wrote in his Foreword to the BBT’s publication:

The further I read, the less was I conscious that I was reading a translation, so naturally does one unit of the narrative flow into the next. When I did shift to the task of comparing portions of the translation with the Sanskrit, I was pleased to discover that the English prose is indeed very faithful to the Sanskrit original. . . . From the literal meaning of the original, little is left out, and very little is added, in the passage from Sanskrit to English. . . .

There is a special significance to this publication over and above its making accessible to readers of English a Sanskrit classic of spiritual literature. This is the first publication by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust of a major Vaiṣṇava theological text which disciples of the late Swami A.C. Bhaktivedanta Prabhupāda have accomplished without his immediate presence. It follows the widely disseminated versions of the *Bhagavad-gītā* in many languages and multi-volume translations of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, each of which is accompanied by an elaborate commentary. These prior publications were substantially the work of Prabhupāda himself, with certain of his Sanskrit-trained devotees, including Gopīparāṇadhana Dāsa, serving as apprentices. The appearance of the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* thus marks a new phase of textual theological scholarship by members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. They have, as it were, come into their maturity as responsible for faithful transmission of the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition of *prema-bhakti*, loving devotion to God Kṛṣṇa. What better way to assure fidelity to the words and spirit of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and his circle of immediate disciples than to enable devotees and attentive seekers to read, hear, and visualize the foundational texts of those very scholar-devotees who had experienced the charismatic presence of Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya himself!

Such high praise for your followers from a profoundly respected authority in his field certainly exalts you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, perhaps in the most profound way possible, for the quality of the spiritual master is measured by the quality of his disciples. What better way, then, to glorify you! How pleased you must be with Gopīparāṇadhana Prabhu and Jayādvaita Swami!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, faith in your transcendental books can be maintained simply by hearing them regularly and submissively with love, rapt attention, and without argument. I pray that my faith never wavers in your books and in those who have assisted you in the great service of editing and publishing them for your pleasure.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, all glories to your selfless service to your spiritual master, to all the previous *ācāryas*, to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and to suffering humanity. And glories to all your sincere followers and their humble service to you. May I always remain in humble service to them.

Your eternal servant,

Keśava Bhāratī Dāsa Goswami

Kṛṣṇakṣetra Swami

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, Friend of the Poor in Spirit,

I offer myself at your feet, which are like luminous lotus flowers bestowing the light of knowledge that brings sight to blinded eyes.

Years ago, at the end of a lecture you gave in the “City of Angels,” Los Angeles, I was surprised to hear you speaking of the French medieval saint Joan of Arc. When a woman asked you whether there was anyone similar to Joan of Arc in the *Bhāgavatam*, you first affirmed that you were familiar with her and then replied in a general and inclusive way: “Any activities of devotees, that is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.” You then explained the literal meaning of the word *bhāgavata* as pertaining to Bhagavān, and concluded:

So *Bhāgavata* can be expanded to any unlimited. So anything in relationship with God, that is *Bhāgavatam*. So if Joan of Arc, she was in relationship with God, she is also *Bhāgavatam*. You should expand *Bhāgavatam* in that way. Yes. [Lecture on *Śrī Śrī Ṣaḍ-gosvāmy-aṣṭaka*, Los Angeles, 18 November 1968]

Revisiting these words of yours these many years later in printed form, I am no less surprised than when I first heard them. Yet my surprise turns to wonder as I consider your advice at the end of your reply to the unnamed woman: “You should expand *Bhāgavatam* in this way. Yes.”

The first wonder is that you suggest that the *Bhāgavatam* might be “expanded.” To me, it points to the commentarial tradition, which you so expertly and richly extended with your Bhaktivedānta purports. Such expansion is inclusive: you include the insights of previous *ācāryas*, you include your own insights, and you invite readers to draw on their own life experiences as ways to affirm the truths expressed in the *Bhāgavatam*. You also encourage and expect devotees to expand the *Bhāgavatam* by following your example of reading and then expounding on it in morning classes, discussing its meaning “from all angles of vision.”

Your suggestion of *how* to expand the *Bhāgavatam* is also a wonder: “So if Joan of Arc, she was in relationship with God, she is also *Bhāgavatam*.” Here you suggest that reading the *Bhāgavatam* is a dynamic process, in which it is possible, and indeed necessary, to find and appreciate how persons not explicitly included in the ancient text of Śrīla Vyāsadeva can be seen as participating in what you once called “the beautiful story of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” Thus, for you, the *Bhāgavatam* is not limited to descriptions of the Lord’s devotees in ancient India, as it is not a geographically or ethnically circumscribed work. Rather, the *Bhāgavatam*, as you hint in this discussion, challenges us to think broadly, to see it as a dynamic, living text that is to be *inhabited* as we read, and to realize its transformative import.

I am reminded of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s joyful exclamation upon hearing King Pratāparudra recite a verse from the Tenth Canto’s *Gopī-gītā*: *bhūri-dā, bhūri-dā!* “You are the most munificent! You are the most munificent!” (*Caitanya-caritamṛta*, *Madhya* 14.14). Mahāprabhu saw the king—despite his apparent disqualification due to being engaged in worldly duties—as one to be acknowledged and even celebrated as a participant in the spirit of the *Bhāgavatam*, a spirit epitomized by the *gopīs* in their pure love for Kṛṣṇa.

I pray for your blessings so that I may imbibe some portion of this, your magnanimous vision of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*’s inclusiveness, and may be your instrument in helping others appreciate and enter deeply into this glorious literary work of Vyāsa’s genius, which you so lovingly translated and elaborated to benefit and bless us all.

Serving your lotus feet,

Kṛṣṇakṣetra Swami

Lokanāth Swami

My dearest and most beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most prostrated obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet on this most auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā celebration, the 123rd anniversary of your appearance in this world. All glories to Your Divine Grace! All glories to your causeless mercy!

Born in 1896 in Calcutta, you had already begun to be motivated by altruistic feelings when you became a follower of Gandhi, who always carried the *Bhagavad-gītā* and strove for political emancipation. It was in 1922 that Śrīmān Narendranath Mullik insisted that you join him to visit a *sādhu* in a house at Ultadanga. This was when you met your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, for the first time and became a follower of the Madhva-Gauḍīya-sampradāya of Lord Caitanya. At this very first meeting, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura advised you to preach the cult of Caitanya Mahāprabhu in English in the Western countries. Prabhupāda, you said to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura that in order for anyone to take Caitanya Mahāprabhu's message seriously, India first needed to be freed from foreign domination. You further stated that India, as a dependent nation, was not primed to preach the cult of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. However, after some debate, you were defeated and became convinced that the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was the only panacea for suffering humanity.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's instruction to you to preach in the West in English was a prompting from Lord Caitanya, through your Guru Mahārāja, to you. This became the springboard for a lifetime in preparation for this phenomenal task, the founding of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, which would propagate Kṛṣṇa consciousness worldwide. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu had appeared for the benefit of the whole world and predicted that His holy name would be heard in every town and village. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and his son Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had already laid the foundation and set the scene for the worldwide propagation of the "Caitanya Cult." This mission had to be carried forward seriously and accomplished, and, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that is what Your Divine Grace magnificently and meticulously did. Through the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, known as ISKCON, you fulfilled Lord Caitanya's mission.

A lot has happened in the fifty-three years since the formation of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

In September of 1965, when you arrived in Boston at the Commonwealth Pier, there was no joyous reception, and the next day, when you stepped off the *Jaladuta* in New York, you did not know which way to turn. These days, every year at the exact time of your arrival, the Commonwealth Pier reverberates with the sound of *kīrtana*, *mṛdangas*, and *karatālas*, with devotees from all corners of the globe celebrating your arrival in America.

In 1977 you shared with us the aphorism that the British Empire claimed itself to be "the empire on which the sun never sets." Anyone who has visited England will know that the sun actually never *rises* there. In comparison, it is on the ISKCON empire founded by you that the sun never sets. Every hour, in one time zone after another, the resounding blast of a conch shell announces the beginning of *maṅgala-ārati* at an ISKCON temple somewhere on this planet.

In the 1980s the KGB, the "Committee for State Security," declared that the three main threats to the Soviet Union were "pop music, Western culture, and Hare Kṛṣṇa." After the fall of communism there, *Newsweek* magazine (1994) noted that the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement was the fastest growing religion in Russia. There are close to seven hundred thousand Hare Kṛṣṇa followers in the former Soviet Union.

I have just attended the opening of a magnificent, white-marbled ISKCON temple in Rajkot, Gujarat. This triggered in my mind thoughts of a conversation at the 1977 Kumbha-melā between you and a gentleman who had questioned you about the reason for opening so many temples when there were already numerous temples in existence. You expertly asked the gentleman who the woman and boy sitting close to him were.

Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

He replied that they were his wife and son. I still vividly remember your response: “There are so many boys all over the world. Why did you give birth to one more?” The gentleman vehemently stated, “But this is my son.” Prabhupāda, you responded likewise. “There are many temples, but the ones ISKCON is opening will be our temples. These are Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s temples.” Śrīla Prabhupāda, you would be pleased to know that to date there are close to a thousand ISKCON temples or centers worldwide.

ISKCON *padayātrīs* are constant and consistent globetrotters. The *padayātrā* teams have walked more than two hundred and sixty thousand kilometers worldwide, visiting towns and villages in one hundred and ten countries. They visit not only towns and villages but also the people in between the towns and villages. This has exceeded Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s prediction, as the teams spread the holy name, promote simple living, high thinking, hold cultural programs, make friends, and distribute books.

I recall an incident that took place in Māyāpur a few years ago. The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust was making a presentation to the Governing Body Commission during a plenary session. During the presentation a light was consistently blinking at two-second intervals. We were all wondering what was the significance of this blinking light. Toward the end of the presentation, the BBT presenter revealed that every time the light blinked, somewhere on the planet a book was being distributed! One blink, one book. To date more than half a billion BBT books and magazines have been distributed.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, during your time the Ratha-yātrā festival was always a treasured event. You liked the festival so much that as a child you wanted your own cart so that you could have a Ratha-yātrā parade. Lord Jagannātha is known as “the Lord of the Universe.” Beginning in San Francisco in 1967, you introduced this joyous event in different parts of the world. Today Ratha-yātrās are spectacularly and regularly celebrated in close to seven hundred towns and cities all over the world, and Lord Jagannātha has successfully been established as the Lord of the Universe.

You started the Sunday festival, which became known as the Sunday Love Feast. Many more festivals followed—Māyāpur-Vṛndāvana festivals, *padayātrā* festivals, Janmāṣṭamī festivals. The list is vast. When you arrived in India in 1971 with your Western disciples, you started the Hare Krishna Festival at Cross Maidan in Bombay. I was fortunate enough to be a part of that festival, and my deep connection with ISKCON—and with you, Śrīla Prabhupāda—emerged through that flamboyant festival. Had that festival not been organized, I would not have linked with you.

In relation to the idea of festivals, Nārada Muni’s conversation with Bhakti Devī comes to mind:

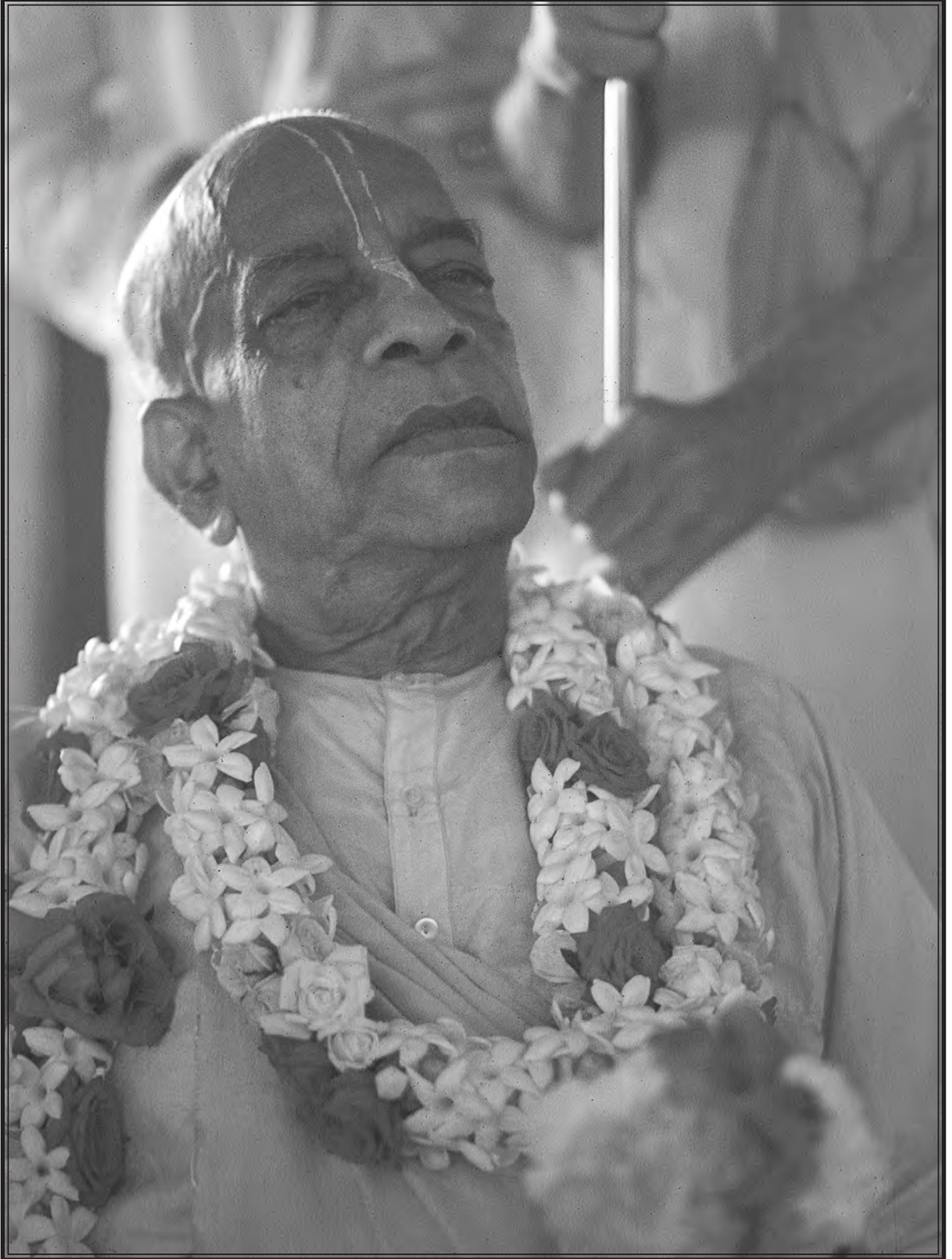
*anya-dharmās tiraskṛtya puraskṛtya mahotsavān
yadi pravartaye na tvām tadā dāso harer na hi*

*tvad-anvitāś ca ye jīvā bhaviṣyanti kalāv iha
pāpino ’pi gamiṣyanti nirbhayā hari-mandiram*

“O Bhakti-devī, if after setting aside other religious practices and promoting great religious festivals I don’t promote you, then I am not Lord Hari’s servant. In Kali-yuga those who are blessed by you, even if they are sinful, will attain the abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa without fear.” (*Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa* 194.14–15)

I deduced that you are the *ācārya* in the line of Nārada Muni and you have followed the same strategy by organizing festivals and inspiring your followers to do the same. Today festivals are an integral part of ISKCON. With a myriad of colorful decorations, multi-course feasts, elaborate rituals, *kīrtanas*, dance, and dramas, festivals make spiritual progress a fun-filled experience. More than six thousand festivals are held annually in ISKCON all over the world. All these festivals serve as outreach programs where an unlimited number of people are joyfully exposed to the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

During the 1972 Māyāpur Festival you saw Bengali children rummaging through the leftovers on the leaf plates left by devotees. Almost instantly you gave your senior disciples the following instruction: “A temple means *prasādam* distribution. No one within ten miles of an ISKCON temple should go hungry.” You termed ISKCON the kitchen religion. This served as an inspiration for ISKCON’s Food for Life program. Food for Life Global has 211 projects worldwide and distributes two million plates of free *prasādam* to



Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

the needy and hungry daily. The Annamrita Midday meal scheme in India, which feeds schoolchildren, is distributing over 1.2 million plates of *prasādam* daily.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, all these temple constructions, Ratha-yātrās, book distribution programs, festivals, global walking *padayātrās*, education and training programs, and all other ISKCON activities and programs are expanding strongly. Through these ISKCON activities, the message of Lord Gaurāṅga, which is the panacea for suffering humanity, is being spread worldwide—all due to your faithful following of the order you received from your Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, at your first meeting with him on that Ultadanga roof in 1922.

ISKCON founder-*ācārya* Śrīla Prabhupāda-*kī jaya!*

Your insignificant servant,

Lokanāth Swami

Mahādyuti Swami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances and please forgive all my offenses. All glories to you!

The second verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says: “The highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all.” That, to me, seems the essence of your mission—which you executed in extraordinary fashion to a remarkable degree. And your movement continues to spread to thousands and thousands of people, even in the most remote locations.

Your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is your *magnum opus*, of course, and your main vehicle for saving us and saving the world; in fact, it is the only hope for “this world’s misdirected civilization” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.11).

You repeatedly urged us to take advantage of this preeminent gift:

You are restless because you don’t read. I am laboring so hard for you, but you don’t take advantage. . . . Take advantage of these books! Then your life will be successful. My duty—I have given you so valuable things, day and night trying to convince you, each word to word. And if you don’t take advantage of this, then what can I do for you? [Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.6–14, Tokyo, 2 May 1972]

You further admonished us:

All the devotees connected with the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement must read all the books that have been translated (the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā* and others); otherwise, after some time, they will simply eat, sleep and fall down from their position. Thus they will miss the opportunity to attain an eternal, blissful life of transcendental pleasure. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 25.278, purport]

How much we are grateful to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! We will demonstrate our gratitude by thoroughly studying your books.

Such study, of course, will naturally give us the desire, the strength, and the enthusiasm to help you spread this most noble of missions, to benedict the world with this life-saving knowledge and nectar. And that's where we find the greatest nectar: helping you alleviate the suffering of humanity. Once I heard you say that the goal of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is to make people happy. Indeed, that goal is being reached at every moment in multifarious locations all over the planet.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the gift that keeps on giving.
All glories to you!

Your servant,

Mahādyuti Swami

Pārtha Sārathi Dās Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.37) states, “Indeed, there is no higher possible gain for embodied souls forced to wander throughout the material world than the Supreme Lord’s *saṅkīrtana* movement, by which one can attain the supreme peace and free oneself from the cycle of repeated birth and death.”

By your causeless *kṛpā*—and only yours—we find ourselves in the Supreme Lord’s *saṅkīrtana* movement. Your ISKCON, which is a branch of the tree of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mercy in the Western world, was established solely and wholly by Your Divine Grace.

So Lord Caitanya’s *sampradāya*. [*laughter*] That is my joy, that we have now a *sampradāya*, a party of Lord Caitanya in the Western country. That is my success. That’s all. I have no value—insignificant—but somehow or other you cooperated, and you are still cooperating, as Lord Caitanya’s *sampradāya*. That is my life. Thank you very much. [Lecture in San Francisco, 4 July 1970]

As your obedient and dedicated followers, we take it is our responsibility to at least maintain what you have established and, if possible, expand your divine mission, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Being a member of your institution, ISKCON, means we are participating in Lord Caitanya’s pastimes:

The present Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is nondifferent from the pastimes performed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu when He was personally present, for the same principles are being followed and the same actions performed without fail. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya-līlā* 5.88, purport),]

As your followers mature in their devotion, so will their appreciation for one another and the profound realization that ISKCON is an actual pastime of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. We are blessed and fortunate to be part of this *līlā* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and by your grace we can attain direct *darśana* of Śrī

Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His numerous associates, as listed in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi-līlā 10, 11, and 12).

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the world *ācārya* in this Kali-yuga. You have the power to enter into your devotees' hearts and enthuse them, inspire them, and propel them further in their respective spiritual journeys. In other words, you can invest your potency in the hearts of your followers and bring them to the status of *śakty-āveśa*. You are personally empowered by Lord Nityānanda, who is the *kṛpā avatāra*, and as already seen in the lives and activities of your sincere followers, you can empower them. As the supreme *ācārya*, you are not frozen in time like a Paleolithic prehistoric animal frozen in ice.

To think that you are not personally with us is a material conception. You will always be present in the lives of your followers. You give inspiration, you give meaning, you give life, you give spiritual emotion, you give vigor, you give enthusiasm, you give direction, and you are like a volcanic eruption.

In the future we will be able to see you face to face, in the groves of Vṛndāvana or on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, along with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Gaura Kīśora Dāsa Bābājī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and their numerous followers. That is my ultimate goal—to personally serve you in that special place along with my exalted godbrothers, godsisters, and other sincere followers of yours.

Your soft compassionate heart is overflowing with liquid *prema*, just as the Ganges flows uninterruptedly and forcefully from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal.

If by good fortune we can obtain one-millionth of a drop of your affection for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, we will drown in the special *prema* that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to give. Thank you for making this available to the conditioned souls in this dark and ominous age. By your grace and desire, I came to Africa forty-five years ago. In the divine association of your other disciples, I tried with them to establish your mission in a country run by the apartheid policy. Some success is here, and it is due to your ardent desire to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the southern tip of Africa.

I bow down to you from every direction, I bow down to the dust of your lotus feet, I bow down to your shadow *koṭi koṭi* times.

I remain

Your servant,

Pārtha Sārathi Dās Goswami

Rāma Govinda Swami

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

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

Parama-pūjyā Parama-gurudeva Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace on this auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā.

Parama-gurudeva! So many wonderful things are happening in your ISKCON, and still are going to happen. All these are the result of your causeless mercy. Your invisible hand is everywhere, and it is my

conviction that ISKCON is spreading like wildfire only because of your causeless mercy and the efforts of your beloved disciples.

Parama-gurudeva! In the purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.11.22 you write:

Because both [Indra and Vṛtrāsura] were devotees, the Lord awarded them the respective benedictions they wanted. Vṛtrāsura never wanted material possessions, for he knew very well the nature of such possessions. To accumulate material possessions, one must labor very hard, and when he gets them he creates many enemies because this material world is always full of rivalry.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was very kind to Vṛtrāsura because he never had any desire for material possessions; therefore Kṛṣṇa gave him liberation and he went back to Godhead. It is a great eye-opener for us devotees to realize our mood in serving the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. If there is any small desire for material enjoyment, that desire will be an obstacle on our path back to Godhead. Your Divine Grace often mentions in your purports that we, the devotees, must serve Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa just for Their pleasure. All our activities must be linked to the service of Their Lordships for Their pleasure. Then this wonderful process of *bhakti-yoga* Your Divine Grace has given us and explained becomes the means for going back to Godhead.

Parama-gurudeva! Sometimes, without my realizing it, some desire for material comforts comes into my heart, but then I understand that it is not proper for me as a devotee to desire in this way. Rather, I should always completely depend on the mercy of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, just as a child completely depends on the mercy of his mother and feels comfort in her lap. Please bless me so that I may also always feel fully dependent on the mercy of Their Lordships, and thus this life will become perfect. Without your blessings, it will not be possible for me. Please bless me so that I can continue to preach your teachings and help you spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

The servant of your servant,

Rāma Govinda Swami

Śacīnandana 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*

Your transcendental gifts are always offered to us disciples—in fact to all who come to you. You give these gifts freely and continuously. And the supply is never exhausted, just like the water of the Gaṅgā or the rays of the sun. Our only task is to receive your mercy.

Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

The River Analogy

I once heard an analogy that likens the flow of water in a pristine river to the instructions flowing from the mouth of the pure devotee. How can one best obtain and benefit of such river water? Simply bring a clay pot and hold it in the right position. Similarly, we will best profit from our guru's instructions when we bring the pot of our faithful dedication and firmly hold it to catch the flow of his instructions. Easy!

And the larger our pot—the greater our faithful dedication—the more benefit we will obtain. Without the pot of our dedication, the water of the guru's potent teachings will simply pass us by.

The Sun Analogy

To benefit from the light of the sun, one must stand in the right place, not in the shadow or a dark cave. In this regard you wrote:

The mercy of the spiritual master is always there, but we have to take it. The sun is there for everyone, but we must at least stand in a receptive place to get the benefit. [Letter to Kadamba Kānana, 8 December 1975]

To me, standing in a receptive place means to stand where *sādhana*, *sevā*, and good *saṅga* are going on.

Always There, More Merciful than the Gaṅgā and the Sun

The accessibility of your personality far surpasses that of the Gaṅgā or the sun because you are driven by a deep sense of compassion for the fallen souls—a compassion that often made you go so far out of your way. You left the fixed course of deep, riverbedlike traditions and extended yourself to us, even when confronting our Western shadows. And this amazing quality of your unbounded compassion transcends past, present, and future. You revealed this at various times, such as in the following two letters:

I shall remain your personal guide, whether I am physically present or not. [Letter to Tamāl Krishna Goswami, 14 July 1977]

You do not require to worry, as I shall never leave you. You are my disciple, and I am your spiritual master, so there is no question, as long as you follow my instructions, that I shall ever leave you. [Letter to Bhaktijana, 21 September 1972]

Your Gifts to Me

The supreme holy name;
The divine mantra;
A place in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's merciful mission;
The holy *dhāma*;
The desire in my heart for the service of the divine couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava in Vṛndāvana.

I have heard that *ācāryas* are very merciful on their divine and happy appearance days. Today I stand before you—a disciple who is not always good—and beg you: Please remain kind to me. Please know that I am sincerely looking for a bigger container to catch more of your mercy and for a way to leave, once and for all, my habitual place in the shadows. Please give me the strength to follow up on your open invitation to surrender with my entire being.

These words of yours touch my soul in an increasingly deep way:

What is surrendering? “Kṛṣṇa, I forgot you for so many births, from time immemorial. Now I surrender unto You. Please accept.” This simple method. This simple method will make you liberated if you do it sincerely, without any . . . reservation. [Lecture, Gorakhpur, 18 February 1971]

With the deepest of gratitude,

Śacīnandana Swami

Subhāg Swami

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

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

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

Please accept my most humble obeisances to your lotus feet on the most auspicious day of your divine appearance.

While reading the Fourth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* recently, I came across two wonderful verses along with your enlightening purports—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.31.28–29:

TRANSLATION (28): My dear King, in this way, after hearing the transcendental messages of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His devotees from the great sage Maitreya, Vidura was overwhelmed with ecstasy. With tears in his eyes, he immediately fell down at the lotus feet of his guru, his spiritual master. He then fixed the Supreme Personality of Godhead within the core of his heart.

PURPORT: This is a sign of associating with great devotees. A devotee takes instructions from a liberated soul and is thus overwhelmed by ecstasy from transcendental pleasure. As stated by Prahāda Mahārāja:

*naiṣāṁ matis tāvad urukramāṅghriṁ
sprṣaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthaḥ
mahīyasāṁ pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekaṁ
niṣkiñcanānāṁ na vṛṇīta yāvat
(Bhāgavatam 7.5.32)*

One cannot become a perfect devotee of the Lord without having touched the lotus feet of a great devotee. One who has nothing to do with this material world is called *niṣkiñcana*. The process of self-realization and the path home, back to Godhead, means surrendering to the bona fide spiritual master and taking the dust of his lotus feet on one’s head. Thus one advances on the path of

Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs



transcendental realization. Vidura had this relationship with Maitreya, and he attained the results.

TRANSLATION (29): Śrī Vidura said: O great mystic, O greatest of all devotees, by your causeless mercy I have been shown the path of liberation from this world of darkness. By following this path, a person liberated from the material world can return home, back to Godhead.

PURPORT: This material world is called *tamaḥ*, dark, and the spiritual world is called light. The *Vedas* enjoin that everyone should try to get out of the darkness and go to the kingdom of light. Information of that kingdom of light can be attained through the mercy of a self-realized soul. One also has to get rid of all material desires. As soon as one frees himself from material desires and associates with a liberated person, the path back home, back to Godhead, is clear.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, recently I listened to a lecture of yours in which you beautifully described the roles of the guru and the disciple. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura writes, *sarvasva tomār, caraṇe sarīpiyā, poḍechi tomāra ghare / tumi to' thākur, tomāra kukur, boliyā jānaḥo more*. The disciple has to become a dog of the spiritual master. The dog has the wonderful quality of being fully surrendered to its master. History shows that dogs have sometimes given their lives in the service of their masters. This should be the mood of an ideal disciple.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī comments that unless we accept the inconceivable potency of the Supreme Lord we cannot understand Him or His transcendental activities. In this regard the scriptures state, *yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau / tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ*. If one has unflinching faith in both the Supreme Lord and the external manifestation of the Supreme Lord, the spiritual master, then all the knowledge of the *Vedas* will be revealed to him. This was the case with Prahlāda Mahārāja. Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva placed His lotus hand on the head of Prahlāda Mahārāja, and by the Lord's mercy all Vedic knowledge was revealed to Prahlāda. In the same way, when one becomes a menial servant of the spiritual master, submits oneself fully to his will, and humbly carries out his instructions, knowledge of the Absolute is revealed in the heart.

Your appearance day is a day for us to reflect on how surrendered we are to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. As Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham*. Kṛṣṇa reciprocates with us according to our degree of surrender. Our surrender may sometimes be partial, conditional, or artificial, but our goal should be complete surrender. Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this most auspicious day, please bless us so that we may unconditionally surrender at your lotus feet.

By transcending the *jīva-bhūta* state, one enters into the *brahma-bhūta* state. At this level of consciousness one is unaffected by material dualities. By transcending the material modes, one can gain entrance into the state of *viśuddha-sattva*. When will that day come, Śrīla Prabhupāda? Only by your blessings will this be possible. Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, shower your causeless mercy upon us again and again.

Your insignificant servant,

Subhāg Swami

Śukadeva Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Writing a Vyāsa-pūjā offering is like completing one more year in the service of Guru and Gaurāṅga: it furthers purification, progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and reinstatement in the eternal service of the Lord. It means looking back with hope, satisfaction, and joy. How often have you said that material life means total failure, hopelessness, and utter misery? Spiritual life means victory, opulence, bliss, and transcendental love.

First we must understand that “I am not this material body but am an eternal, blissful soul.” The soul knows no rest, misery, or death. Freedom from misery and death is what everyone is looking for in this world. Śrīla Prabhupāda, it looks like there is no difference between the causeless mercy of the Lord and the mercy of His pure devotee like you. In fact, the Lord’s mercy comes through His pure devotee. When Lord Caitanya told Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Sanātana on their first meeting that Lord Kṛṣṇa had saved them from the pit of stool of this material existence, Rūpa and Sanātana submitted that “We do not know Kṛṣṇa, but it is You who have saved us.” Śrīla Prabhupāda, in the same way, it was you who have given us the understanding of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. How can we pay you back for bringing us to Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

When we give something, we actually have nothing to give because everything already belongs to Kṛṣṇa. When we render some service, it is we who are getting purified and benefited. Lord Kṛṣṇa always defeats everyone with His reciprocation.

If we want to see the mercy of the Lord, we can see it through your ISKCON. If we want to experience the joy of love and service, we can experience it in your ISKCON. I feel eternally indebted to you as I spend year after year in ISKCON. Where else could I find safety and shelter in the desert of this material existence?

Śrīla Prabhupāda, it is you who have given the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the modern world; it is you who have given us the vision of one world and one family with Kṛṣṇa as the supreme father; it is you who have made us indifferent to the vagaries of material life; it is you who have enabled us to see ourselves as spirit souls, aloof from this world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, what can I say? Your mercy is all I am made of. If I am not up to the mark, I have to blame myself for digressing from your instructions. Śrīla Prabhupāda, please enable my consciousness to stay fixed in the realization that Your Divine Grace is my only hope. I wish to be a transparent medium of your mercy. Please shower your mercy as you always do, and may I continue to accept it. Thank you for purifying my life with your Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Aspiring to be your good servant,

Śukadeva Swami

Trivikrama Swami

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

I have been thinking about you a lot recently, trying to understand what it is that you want me to do. You once said about one of my godbrothers: “He will go wherever I send him.” On the other hand, you were upset with me because I left my service in Tokyo in 1974. Also, you once told me this Bengali proverb: “It is better to stay at home and make \$13 than to go on the road and make \$12.”

Your personal example was to travel and preach, even up to the last days you were with us. In any case, please do indicate to me how this unqualified servant of yours should use the little time I have left in a way that would be most pleasing to you. I know that pleasing you is the *only* way I can hope to make my insignificant life account for anything.

I thank Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda from the bottom of my heart for sending you to us.

Your lowly servant,

Trivikrama Swami

Varṣāṇā Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to your lotus feet. All glories to your divine appearance.

In this world where hearts are breaking
Being given to mortals who perish
Whose tender arms once held so dearly
Cannot be reached once they are gone

Gentle lips who sang so sweetly
Fall silent in the night
Vigilant eyes who once watched over
Have lost their precious sight

Earthly joys and the sorrows that follow
Lead alike unto the grave
Where to turn for lasting relationships
In a world which only fades

You introduced us to a vibrant land
Shaped by the song of Kṛṣṇa’s flute
Where loving relationships endure

Growing sweeter deeper newer eternally

In that homeland of our souls
The glory of your tender-hearted Lord
Extends beyond Vaikuṇṭha
His grace runs deeper than the causal ocean

In 1896 He blessed this earth
and all the souls herein
Sending His most magnanimous servant
You our eternal servant

Our hearts were forever transformed in 1972
When you visited New Vrindaban
To lead us in the worship
For Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī and your Vyāsa-pūjā
To kindle love for sacred teachings

Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

In the temple room
As Janmāṣṭamī's midnight *ārati* neared
Devotees sat at your lotus feet
Like ancient sages gathered around their guru
For a *Bhāgavat* recital in some timeless holy place

As we read chapters of *Kṛṣṇa* book aloud
Culminating in the Lord's advent
You appeared to have entered the very *līlā* described
We were unable to follow

By your kindness
Our inability to share in your experience
Was overcome on the following day

Nandotsava began with eager anticipation
What a rare joy and true gift
To celebrate your appearance
While you were here with us

As you approached the pandal
It was like a scene from the spiritual realm unfolding
As if Śrī Dhām was already preparing
An offering of her own

Cows grazed peacefully
Across the verdant hillsides
Each one decorated
With patterns drawn in various hues
Of New Vrindaban clay

When you stepped out of Hayagrīva's
Volkswagen
To walk the final stretch
Daisies in the field bowed their gentle heads
Along the path you tread

The gracious way you smiled upon us
Like the index of your soul
Spoke volumes of precious *siddhānta*
More than any book or scroll

Conveying sweet assurance
Fulfilling our deepest aspiration
That you would feel at home
Here in New Vrindaban

Honoring Their loving envoy
Rādhā-Dāmodara came to be with you
To preside over the festivities
On this most blessed occasion

As you came before Their Lordships
To offer your *praṇāms*
You began to lead the indelible *kīrtan*
And the spiritual frontier
Emerged before our vision

Your ecstasy was contagious
Everyone was affected
Hundreds of eyes shed joyous tears
Hundreds of arms reached upward
Undulating with grace

Celestial voices joined with ours
Songs of nature formed the chorus
Echoes responded from surrounding hills

Noontime sun from high above
Shone down on us to see
Faces beaming with new-found hope
In brighter worlds beyond the sky

While our praise rose upward
Blessings descended in return
Your Vyāsa-pūjā lecture
Thereby affirmed

It seemed as if the heavens opened
For the mellows of Vṛndāvana to shower upon us
Cleansing the mirror of my soul from the dust of illusion
While subduing *saṁsāra*'s raging fire
Awakening a taste for devotional life

A euphoric feeling surpassing all comprehension
Distinct from all worldly experience
Immersed us in the ecstasy of unbounded joy
Amidst a delicate assemblage of fragrance and warmth
Color beauty luster and *rasa*

This impression grows ever more vivid
With the passage of time
I reflect on it often
For inspiration

In the half century that has passed
My steps have tried to move forward
While my heart still lags behind
Absorbed in precious memory

Let past and present now embrace
In memory of future homecoming

You represent Paramātmā
Our eternal guide and companion
Who emerged from the core of our hearts
To appear before our eyes
In the mortal form we knew

How we would love to know
Your eternal form in Vṛndāvan
And how we will serve you there

We are confident that all Truths
Will be revealed in course of time
To those who embrace the essence
In all you taught and exemplified

You personify the potency of Śrī Nityānanda Rām
Come to rescue the most fallen
While revealing the holy Dhām in the Western
world

From the realm of sacred sound
Beyond the touch of corporeal senses
The scope of empiric ability
You continue to reach out
The touch of your loving hand tangible still

You beckon us to go deeper
Seek *darśan* in your *vāṇī*
The immortal feature of yours
Where we commune with you still

Throughout all the ages
Your *vāṇī* rings true
Amplified as it drifts
Through the corridors of time

Enshrined in hearts
Who are given to you
Living in the praise
They sing anew

In this way we catch glimpses

Of the Golden Age's dawn
Painting the sky with good fortune
For ten thousand years as Kali-yuga recedes

By holding tightly to your instructions
We find your presence
As vivid as ever
Living on in *nāma-saṅkīrtan*
The divine dispensation

Sweetest sound on all the earth
Song bestowing second birth
Dancing upon your lotus lips
Resound in me today

This world fades and its light grows dim
Shadows move across the landscape
Worldly songs fall silent
Mortal memories are all erased

Lead us through this tangled maze
Burn the pages of karmic store
Carry us over the shifting patterns
Of burning desert sand
As we cross this barren wasteland homeward
bound

Clear the slate of my mind
Wipe away unholy images from the mirror of my
soul
Impress our hearts with message never ending
Enduring in the praise we sing

O beloved Gurudeva
Deliver us from duality
Where division and conflict rage

Take us to that higher realm
Where you wait for us today
Guide my steps on narrow path
As we serve you here and now
Eager to see your smile once again

Extend the offer of enduring love
To lonely souls of this world

Heal the broken hearts
That they too may sing
In fellowship with your devotees
Where you live with us still

Homages from Non-GBC Sannyāsīs

May all who give their lives to you
Reflect the joy of your eternal shelter
Living in the sacrament we celebrate today
Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā, the most blessed event

Your servant,

Varṣāṇā Swami

Vedavyāsapriya Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisance at your lotus feet with great reverence and gratitude for your divine mercy, which you have so kindly bestowed upon me, who was hurriedly initiated through a letter written by His Holiness Tamāl Krishna Goswami. Later on, he really became my mentor and connector with Your Divine Grace, till Your Divine Grace called upon him to be with you.

I have spent many years steadily serving your mission, yet now I am feeling some dissatisfaction with not being able to serve you more. I want to please you by serving you more in the fag-end days of my life, which have already arrived. You are the sole source of my inspiration, as is true for so many of your senior disciples still serving in their old age. Remembrance of your divine personality, which manifested through your mind, words, and actions, is the rarest gem we all possess in the matter of executing pure devotional service to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. All your devotees are extremely fortunate to carry the weight of service according to the plan of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, a plan that Your Divine Grace revealed.

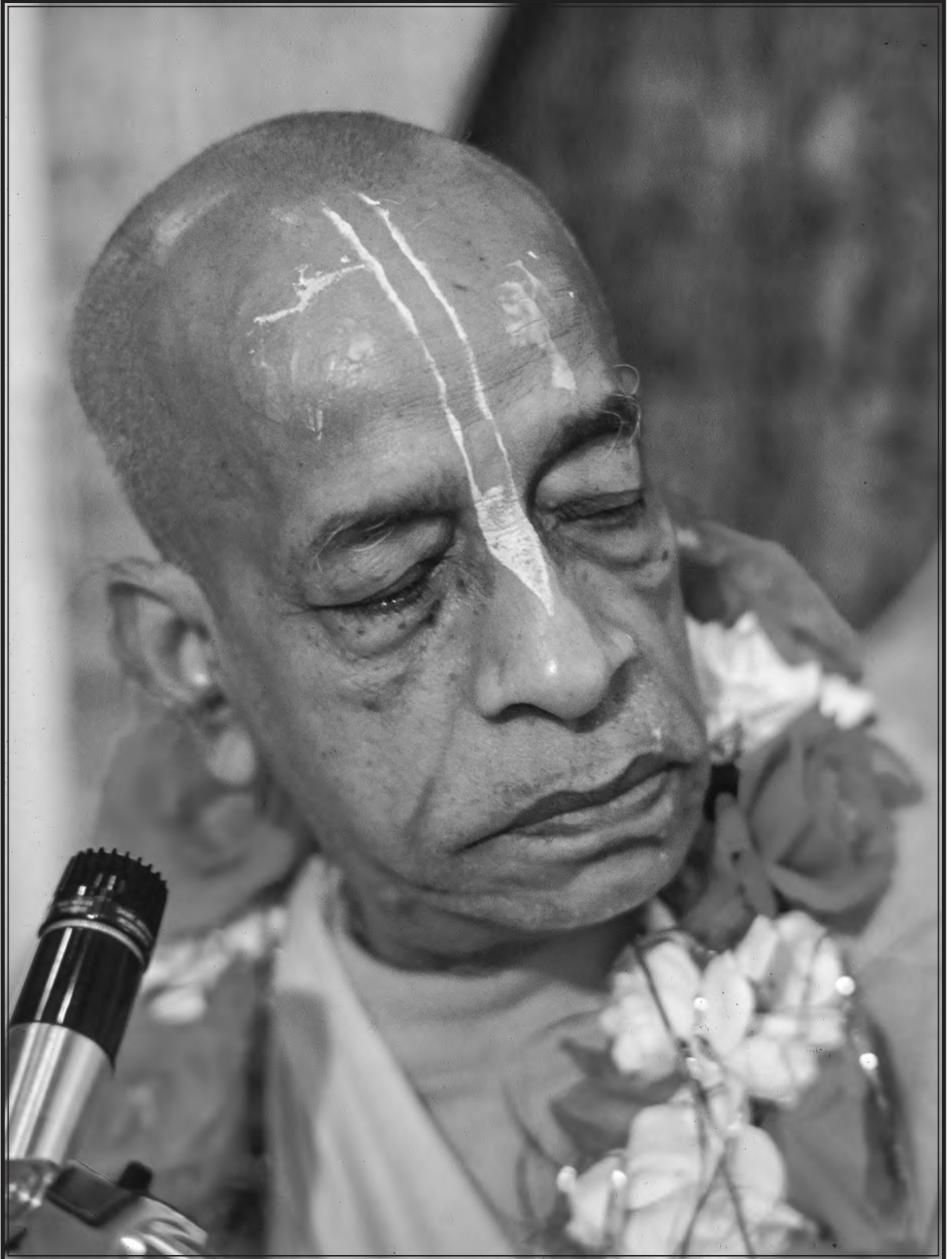
I think that you are happy with the progress and overall health of your ISKCON. That progress can only continue if we embrace the spirit of cooperation—something you stressed in the mantra you gave us by which we could successfully execute pure devotional service to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa: “Your love for me will be shown by how you cooperate among yourselves after I have gone.”

You have so kindly instructed us about the need for the unflinching, faithful execution of the instructions of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Your Divine Grace, which alone will fructify in collective success. This I do hold high among all other instructions. As you prayed to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to protect you even though you were an empowered and completely liberated personality, and you took full shelter of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, I pray today, on your auspicious appearance day, that you will please protect me and save me from Māyā’s allurements so that I can keep serving according to your instructions.

I offer at your lotus feet this Vyāsa-pūjā offering. Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this 123rd anniversary of your appearance day, along with all my accumulated realizations in this life. I am eager to celebrate your next Vyāsa-pūjā with greater enthusiasm and dedication. Meanwhile, I wish to beg you for your divine mercy.

Your insignificant servant,

Vedavyāsapriya Swami



Yadunandana Swami

*evam sva-karma-patitaṁ bhava-vaitaraṇyām
anyonya-janma-maraṇāśana-bhīta-bhītaṁ
paśyaṇ janāṁ sva-para-vigraha-vaira-maitraṁ
hanteti pāracara pīṇhi mūḍham adya*

“My dear Lord, You are always transcendently situated on the other side of the river of death, but because of the reactions of our own activities, we are suffering on this side. Indeed, we have fallen into this river and are repeatedly suffering the pains of birth and death and eating horrible things. Now kindly look upon us—not only upon me but also upon all others who are suffering—and by Your causeless mercy and compassion, deliver us and maintain us.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.41)

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

It is fully befitting that we worship you as Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s representative because you have made his essential message of pure devotional service, as revealed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, accessible worldwide. Your books are the greatest contribution humanity could ever get. There is no greater gift than the holy name of the Lord and the topics of the Lord.

As the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana sing:

*tava kathāmrtaṁ tapta-jīvanāṁ
kavibhir iḍitaṁ kalmaṣāpaham
śravaṇa-maṅgalaṁ śrīmad ātataṁ
bhuvī grṇanti ye bhūri-dā janāḥ*

“The nectar of Your words and the descriptions of Your activities are the life and soul of those suffering in this material world. These narrations, transmitted by learned sages, eradicate one’s sinful reactions and bestow good fortune upon whoever hears them. These narrations are broadcast all over the world and are filled with spiritual power. Certainly those who spread the message of Godhead are most munificent.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.31.9)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, relishing the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the best among the *gopīs*, felt unlimited happiness while hearing this verse, thus revealing how pleased He is with your service of spreading His message all over the world.

I am very fortunate to have the opportunity to serve you by contributing “my two cents” in the propagation of the *saṅkīrtana* movement in Spain, my *prabhu-datta deśa*, and wherever I go in my international travels.

Presently I’m giving considerable attention to establishing a sound basis for the sustainability and development of New Vrajamaṇḍala, ISKCON’s rural community in Spain. It is a fact that to successfully develop rural Kṛṣṇa conscious projects in the West remains a challenge for most of us. As you taught us, we need spiritual substance, good intelligence, and organization.

For spiritual substance we are relying on the basics, including reading your books as a daily practice. Based on the inspiration we got from the Saṅga of GBCs, Gurus, and Sannyāsīs (SGGS) in Śrīdhām Māyāpur, we have scheduled a time in the evening for the devotees to read your books together in a group. This practice, combined with the daily morning program, will give us true spiritual strength to offer pleasing service to the Lord and His devotees.

As for good intelligence and organization, we are doing our best to create a spirit of cooperation

among the devotees and divide the work in the best possible way. As you taught us, in the Age of Kali it is very difficult to establish and maintain a spiritual movement. Therefore I am falling at your lotus feet and praying that you may ask Kṛṣṇa, who is within our hearts, to give us the inspiration to do the right things at the right moments so that New Vrajaṁḍala and ISKCON Spain in general may flourish as oases of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, where people can come by the thousands to quench their thirst for true peace and happiness.

With gratitude, I remain

Your eternal servant,

Yadunandana Swami