



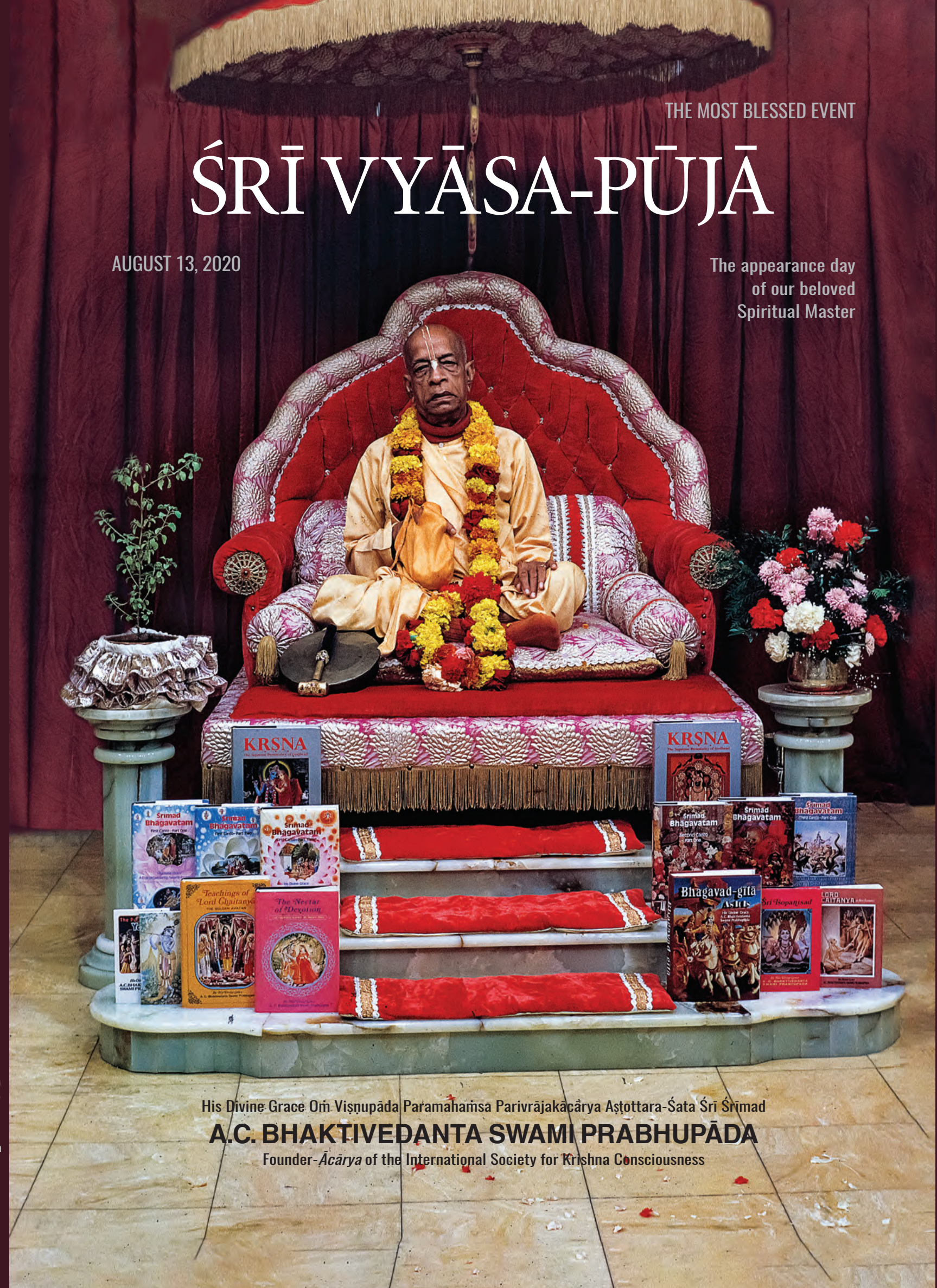
Figuratively the queen is supposed to be the disciple of the king; thus when the mortal body of the spiritual master expires, his disciples should cry exactly as the queen cries when the king leaves his body. However, the disciple and spiritual master are never separated, because the spiritual master always keeps company with the disciple as long as the disciple follows strictly the instructions of the spiritual master. This is called the association of *vāṇī* (words). Physical presence is called *vapuḥ*. As long as the spiritual master is physically present, the disciple should serve the physical body of the spiritual master, and when the spiritual master is no longer physically existing, the disciple should serve the instructions of the spiritual master.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.47 Purport

ŚRĪ VYĀSA-PŪJĀ

AUGUST 13, 2020

The Appearance Day of His Divine Grace
A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA



THE MOST BLESSED EVENT

ŚRĪ VYĀSA-PŪJĀ

AUGUST 13, 2020

The appearance day
of our beloved
Spiritual Master

His Divine Grace Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottara-Śata Śrī Śrīmad

A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

ŚRĪ VYĀSA-PŪJĀ

Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā
August 13, 2020

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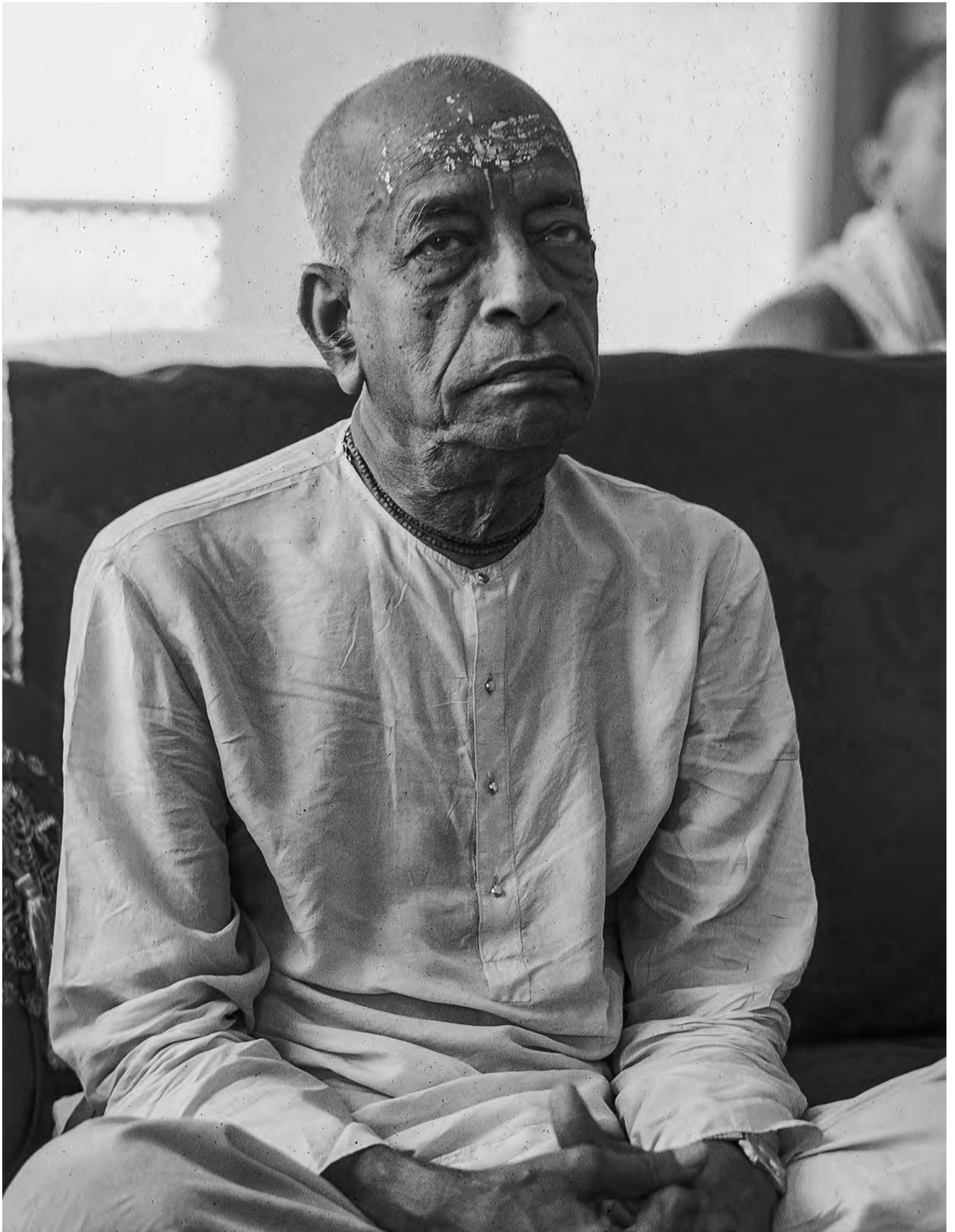
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Introduction

Like the fifty-one Vyasa-puja books that preceded it, this year's is a treasure chest of gems in the form of devotees' heartfelt glorification of Śrīla Prabhupāda, prayers to him, and reflections on how his mercy has transformed their lives and those of the countless souls throughout the world whom he has touched through his books, his followers, his temples, and other ways. But unlike all those that preceded it, this year's book contains many offerings written by devotees under "lockdown," immobilized by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. The following excerpt by Giridhāri Swami's homage expresses several of the sentiments and sobering realizations devotees are having as they confront the worldwide emergency and respond to it from a Kṛṣṇa conscious perspective:

Physical and mental anguish now abound as the world crumbles to pieces before our eyes. People are desperate for solutions. The world stage is thus being set for your faithful followers to unite and teach countless millions throughout the world as they become eager to hear transcendental knowledge.

Devotees from around the world report that they have formed reading groups that study your books through video conferencing. They are appreciating you and your books much more than before. They realize that they should not take this valuable opportunity for granted. I have had such experiences, and I know many who have vowed to continue the online reading when the pandemic is over.

Opportunities are also opening to utilize the internet to meet new people and introduce your books and teachings to them. There is huge potential for online classes, courses, and other types of outreach programs.

As I write, I am receiving tragic news that several of your devotees around the world have contracted COVID-19 and some have already left their bodies. We pray that you have given them shelter at your lotus feet. We also pray that you will protect the other devotees and that they can continue to serve you for many years to come.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am on my knees with tears in my eyes, praying that you will bless us with sufficient intelligence to take the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness more seriously and to take full advantage of the myriad new preaching opportunities as they arise.

Please empower all of us to spread your glories far and wide. In this way, may history give you the credit you deserve for having saved the world in its darkest hour.

Some offerings were written and submitted before the pandemic manifested its full horrible power in late March. One such was penned by Girirāj Swami, in which he explores how Śrīla Prabhupāda is a manifestation of Lord Nityānanda's mercy. Here is an excerpt:

It is quite a history—what you endured for the sake of delivering the mercy of Gaura-Nitāi is inconceivable. On the boat to America you suffered two heart attacks, and even in America you had a lot of physical problems. But you endured everything—all these attacks of *māyā*—for the sake of delivering Gaura-Nitāi's mercy to us. And what Nityānanda Prabhu wanted in India you have fulfilled outside India. What Nityānanda Prabhu wanted was fulfilled in Bengal, but through you it's been fulfilled throughout the world. So you really are the embodiment of the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu. There's no one else in the history of our *sampradāya*, no one after Nityānanda Prabhu, who has taken up that mood of approaching anyone and everyone without discrimination, without considering who is qualified and who is not.

We'll close with a few excerpts from first-time submitters. The devotees in Saldus, Latvia, submitted an offering for the first time:

We are deeply grateful to you for the worldwide Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Since we have been in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, we have felt the depth of the truth for which our souls, hearts, and minds have been yearning. We are recognizing more and more how important it is to understand the *śāstra*, to learn to love Kṛṣṇa, to see ourselves and every living being in the whole creation as one extended family. We are learning to see and experience Kṛṣṇa in our souls and to see and experience Kṛṣṇa in every person and situation. We have learned to be grateful for every day, every moment in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

And the devotees in the Saskatoon Preaching Center, in Canada, contributed these moving words:

You crossed continents and oceans, alone and elderly, to bring Kṛṣṇa consciousness to an unforgiving and demonic land, where *māyā* is endless and people's actions are unfathomable. You are the epitome of kindness, love, faith, tolerance, and courage, and your causeless mercy has inspired us and so many others to take up the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's name. . . .

You have given us all we need to go back to Kṛṣṇa. Your determination to lead by example, and your faith in complete surrender to Kṛṣṇa, inspire us daily, and we beg that you continue to bless us so that we may continue to faithfully follow your instructions and inspire others to do the same.

Finally, like several of the devotees who wrote offerings this year, I saw how in some ways the coronavirus can be a *karuṇā* virus. How? In the same way that Queen Kuntī saw all the dangers she and her sons overcame up to the conclusion of the Kurukṣetra War: as impetuses to take full shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and call out to Him from the bottom of her heart:

*vipādaḥ santu tāḥ śāśvat tatra tatra jagad-guro
bhavato darśanam yat syād apunar bhava-darśanam*

"I wish that all those calamities would happen again and again so that we could see You again and again, for seeing You means that we will no longer see repeated births and deaths." In the case of ISKCON devotees, the pandemic has been an impetus to take even more shelter of Śrīla Prabhupāda in his most accessible and important manifestation, his words, and to share them with others. Just as Śrīla Prabhupāda faced and overcame so many dangers to begin and develop the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, his sincere followers are seizing the moment to take inspiration from the dangerous COVID-19 pandemic, hold on even tighter to his lotus feet, and strive harder to serve him by becoming more Kṛṣṇa conscious and giving Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others.

Draviḍa Dāsa
Vyāsa-pūjā book editor

The Meaning of Vyāsa-pūjā

In the modern era, Vyāsa-pūjā, as a celebration, began in 1924, on the 50th Appearance Day of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. He inaugurated the event for the benefit of his disciples, wanting to give them access to the lineage through glorification of its current preceptor—him. In establishing this ceremony, of course, he was not canvassing people to worship him as opposed to others, nor was he doing so for his own pleasure. Rather, he taught that Vyāsa-pūjā is the worship of all Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* through the exaltation of one's own guru. In the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, all members recognize His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the institution, as their preeminent *śikṣā-guru*, and thus on his appearance day each year we worship the entire *paramparā* through its most prominent modern representative.

Vyāsa-pūjā is a meditation on how Śrīla Prabhupāda is a representative of Vyāsadeva, for just as Vyāsa gave us transcendental knowledge through Vedic texts—and through conveying the process of how to practically apply these teachings—so Śrīla Prabhupāda carried on in that tradition by giving his disciples the same transcendental message, both with traditional expression and in new language suitable for the modern era.

But to truly honor Śrīla Prabhupāda, to make the most of the Vyāsa-pūjā ceremony, one must acquaint oneself with *guru-tattva*, and how it applies to ultimate divinity. The veneration of Śrīla Prabhupāda deepens when we learn to appreciate Balarāma-Nityānanda *tattva*, the archetypal recipients of Vyāsa-pūjā worship.

Balarāma, as His name indicates, gives spiritual strength to the devotees. This is the power that allows practitioners to overcome obstacles on the devotional path. And that is the nature of the true guru—he helps his disciples overcome all impediments on the spiritual path. For this reason, among others, Balarāma is considered the original spiritual master.

What are the obstacles on the devotional path? As Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura teaches us, the demons killed by Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma represent various *anarthas*, or bad habits and qualities. But the demons killed by Balarāma are particularly significant in terms of *guru-tattva*: Dhenukāsura, for example, is the symbol of ignorance, or the disavowal of truth, and Pralambāsura embodies licentiousness, selfish desire, or the thirst for personal gain, worship, and honor. Lord Balarāma, no doubt, killed many other demons as well, such as Dvidida gorilla, Balvala, and the wrestlers in Kaṁsa's wrestling arena, but in the current context, Dhenuka and Pralamba may be singled out.

Dhenuka, who, again, is ignorance personified, is in many ways the archenemy of the devotee, for transcendental knowledge is required to make progress. But the spiritual master destroys this demon's capacity for success, lightening the burden for a sincere practitioner.

Pralamba, for his part, represents lusting after another living being for one's own sensual pleasure; greed; and the desire for worship and position. It all begins with the desire for sense gratification, as Śrīla Prabhupāda so clearly taught us. That's why among all vows, *brahmacarya* (not just as a formal *āśrama* but as a particular mindset of veering away from sense gratification) is called the *brhad-vrata*, or "the great vow."

Why is it the great vow? What does it ask us to refrain from? It is not just avoidance of sexual activity as such. It has more subtle implications, including the thought of sex, praising it, toying with the idea of it, watching it from afar, secretly speaking of it, intending it, pursuing it, and delighting in its various permutations. Any of these eight indicates the opposite of *brahmacarya*. But it goes even further—the perfection of *brahmacarya* is ultimately realized when one completely transcends the desire to enjoy separately from Kṛṣṇa. At that stage, far from being allured, one is completely repulsed by the degrading titillation previously derived from falsely thinking oneself the center of the universe.

Vyāsa-pūjā is a celebration of moving beyond such an exploitative mentality, of gradually evolving into true transcendence, assisting Śrīla Prabhupāda both here and in the beautiful land of dedication, Vaikuṇṭha.

In that transcendent realm, Balarāma is said to sing the endless glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa with thousands of mouths and expands His personal form to serve as Lord Kṛṣṇa’s paraphernalia, in the form of such items as His umbrella, slippers, bedding, pillow, garments, resting chair, residence, *gāyatrī* thread, and throne. Such all-pervasive service can come only from the ideal guru, the perfect servitor. Our life should similarly become the epitome of service, and we learn this from Balarāma, extended to us through Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Lord Balarāma’s service reaches its pinnacle in His form as Nityānanda Prabhu, wherein He taught Jagāi and Mādhāi the error of their ways. They became great devotees by His grace. Thus, He acts as guru, saving the most fallen of souls, just as our own beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda did in saving the countless Jagāis and Mādhāis of the current age. Vyāsa-pūjā is a time to remember this, and to thus recommit, to renew our vow to be real disciples.

Meditating on Balarāma-Nityānanda *tattva* is thus a sure way to appreciate the depths of Vyāsa-pūjā, for through Them—and Their foremost modern representative, Śrīla Prabhupāda—we learn how to really serve Kṛṣṇa with heart and soul. In our various Vyāsa-pūjā offerings, then, we glorify Śrīla Prabhupāda and his many accomplishments, reminding ourselves of his deep connection to Vyāsa, Balarāma, and Nityānanda Prabhu, loving spiritual servitors par excellence.

But who serves Kṛṣṇa best? Śrīla Prabhupāda has taught us what Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu revealed and exemplified, that Śrīmatī Rādhikā is unparalleled in Her devotion, in Her mood of loving Kṛṣṇa, even if Her level of consummate love is unreachable by any other living being. She is the embodiment of Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure potency (*hlādinī-śakti*), and those who serve Her—that is to say, those who serve Śrīla Prabhupāda, who serves Her—can assist in Her incomparable pleasure-giving project.

Her very name, “Rādhā,” is derived from the Sanskrit *ārādhana*, which means “worship,” and Śrīla Prabhupāda usually called Her “Rādhā-rāṇī,” for She is the queen (*rāṇī*) of such worship. Her name implies that Her love for Kṛṣṇa is unsurpassed. Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us the foremost of Gauḍīya texts, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, which teaches that although Kṛṣṇa is so beautiful that He can attract millions of Cupids, and is therefore called Madana-mohana, “the attractor of Cupid,” Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī can attract even Kṛṣṇa. She is therefore called Madana-mohana-mohinī—“the attractor of the attractor of Cupid.”

As Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “If we approach Kṛṣṇa through Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, through Her mercy, then it becomes very easy. If Rādhārāṇī recommends, ‘This devotee is very nice,’ then Kṛṣṇa immediately accepts, however a fool I may be. Because it is recommended by Rādhārāṇī, Kṛṣṇa accepts.”

This is the great secret of *guru-tattva*, and thus of Vyāsa-pūjā. If we see Śrīla Prabhupāda for who he really is—a manifestation of Rādhā Herself, the one who pleases Kṛṣṇa most—our celebration of Vyāsa-pūjā will deepen in meaning.

Along these lines, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, has written as follows:

Guru-tattva is indeed a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa, but one must understand the spiritual master to be a manifestation of the supreme worshiper [Śrī Rādhā] rather than the supreme worshipable object, Rādhikā-nātha [Kṛṣṇa]. . . . If we can see the beauty of Śrī Rādhārāṇī’s toenails in our spiritual master’s lotus feet, we will no longer think about where to find Her. If we are fortunate enough, we can attain service to and darshan of our spiritual master’s lotus feet, because he is non-different from Śrī Rādhā and very dear to Her.

But this does not exclude Balarāma-Nityānanda *tattva*, and this is important. To the contrary: Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura tells us in the same article that all major forms of *śaktimān* (the source) and *śakti* (the energy) are included. He elaborates by saying that Balarāma’s position as spiritual master, as servitor Godhead, is manifested to its highest degree in Nityānanda Prabhu, crystallized in His ultimate act of mercy to Jagāi and Mādhāi. The two brothers virtually defined sinfulness and atheism among the townspeople

of Navadvīpa. Still, they eventually became great devotees by Nityānanda's grace. Śrīla Prabhupāda, through his books, his example, and his movement, offers this same opportunity to the rest of humanity, thus representing the essence of Balarāma and Nityānanda Prabhu.

But Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura reveals an inner meaning as well: Śrī Nityānanda is considered nondifferent from His *śakti*, Jāhnavā Ṭhākuraṇī, and it is she who represents guru for practitioners in *mādhurya-rasa*, or the most confidential form of conjugal love in the Gauḍīya tradition—the special dispensation that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to give. By Nityānanda Prabhu's causeless mercy, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta tells us, one attains Jāhnavā's shelter and thereby the shelter of Anaṅga-mañjarī (the younger sister of Śrī Rādhikā), Jāhnavā's incarnation in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. She is thus representative of Śrī Rādhā, the ultimate in *guru-tattva*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda represents all of these personalities for his disciples and his disciples' disciples, and for everyone forevermore, for without His Divine Grace, who would have access to them or the mercy they so enthusiastically bestow? For us, then, Śrīla Prabhupāda is Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma-Mahāprabhu-Nityānanda-Jāhnavā-Anaṅga-mañjarī-Rādhā *tattva*, all rolled into one. Not in some ontological impersonal abstraction, but as a tangible representative who can deliver them to us through his teachings and example. Śrīla Prabhupāda-*kī ja!*

But to achieve this, we have to be good disciples, faithful to the *paramparā*, and this is where Vyāsa-pūjā comes in, since Vyāsa-pūjā means honoring the entire disciplic line, including the divinities at its helm, by honoring Śrīla Prabhupāda.

In Sanskrit there are two terms—*vidvad-rūḍhi* and *avidvad-rūḍhi*—referring to disciples who are, in fact, real disciples, as opposed to those who are such in name only, respectively. From our Gauḍīya teachings we learn that these two kinds of disciples correspond to two kinds of *dīkṣā* (initiation)—*anusthānikī* (*bhāravahī*) and *vidvad-rūḍhi* (*sāragrāhī*). *Anusthānikī* refers to the external formality of a fire *yajña* and the giving of *dīkṣā mantras*. Of course, the ceremony is essential, but it is not complete without *vidvad-rūḍhi*.

It is called *vidvad-rūḍhi-dīkṣā* when we embrace the guru's mood while serving his mission with deep love and affection. This is what Prabhupāda wanted of us, and to take part in this is the ultimate Vyāsa-pūjā offering. *Pāñcarātrikī-dīkṣā*, or the external ceremony, is no doubt necessary, and it can even inspire one to embrace a higher conception in due course. This is why Rūpa Gosvāmī includes it as being among the first of his sixty-four items of *bhajana* (*guru-pādāśrayas tasmāt kṛṣṇa-dīkṣādi-śikṣaṇam / viśrambheṇa guroḥ sevā*, as per *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.74).

But formal initiation is not what *dīkṣā* is all about. Śrīla Prabhupāda famously called it a “formality.” Real *dīkṣā* is characterized by heartfelt surrender and a service mood that is uncompromising—as in Balarāma-Nityānanda *tattva*.

This is alluded to in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 15.108): “One does not have to undergo initiation or execute the activities required before initiation. One simply has to vibrate the holy name with his lips. Thus even a man in the lowest class [*caṇḍāla*] can be delivered” (*dīkṣā-puraścaryā-vidhi apekṣā nā kare / jīhvā-sparśe ā-caṇḍāla sabāre uddhāre*).

In the purport, after giving much evidence for the importance of initiation, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “In other words, the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is so powerful that it does not depend on official initiation, but if one is initiated and engages in *pañcarātra-vidhi* (Deity worship), his Kṛṣṇa consciousness will awaken very soon, and his identification with the material world will be vanquished.” This all points in the direction of real initiation: *vidvad-rūḍhi*.

If we can simply learn to hear the holy name properly, to chant it sincerely, and to dedicate our lives to Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission, serving Kṛṣṇa as His Divine Grace revealed Him to us, we can then fully realize the purport of actual *vidvad-rūḍhi* initiation, becoming true disciples.

In other words, the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is so powerful that it does not depend on official initiation, as mentioned in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, nor does it depend on some esoteric initiation—it simply depends on giving our lives, fully and without reservation, to Śrīla Prabhupāda or his genuine representatives. *That* is real initiation. *That* is what it means to come in disciplic succession, and *that* is what Vyāsa-pūjā is meant to convey.

“So keep this *paramparā* system,” Prabhupāda says. “This Vyāsa-pūjā is *paramparā* system. Vyāsa-pūjā means to accept this *paramparā* system. Vyāsa. Guru is the representative of Vyāsadeva because he does not change anything. . . . What Vyāsadeva said, your guru also will say the same thing. Not that ‘So many hundreds of thousands of years have passed away; therefore I’ll give you a new formula.’ No. There is no new formula. The same Vyāsa-pūjā, the same philosophy. Simply we have to accept it, then our life will be successful.”

Satyarāja Dāsa

Author

Founding editor, *Journal of Vaishnava Studies*

Associate editor, *Back to Godhead* magazine



1944 BTG Article

In 1944, as World War II raged in Europe and the Far East, very much affecting British-ruled India, Śrīla Prabhupāda published his first issue of Back to Godhead magazine. Back to Godhead's motto, the translation of a verse in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 22.31) was (and remains) "Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience." In his article Śrīla Prabhupāda refers to the motto in its first paragraphs and stresses how a widespread adoption of the spiritual and moral values taught in India was the only hope for mitigating the worldwide crisis presented by the war. Faced with a similar worldwide crisis today in the COVID-19 pandemic, we are including Śrīla Prabhupāda's remarkably relevant article in this year's Vyāsa-pūjā book.

"BACK TO GODHEAD"

[the following verse was in Devanagari in the original]

*vande 'ham śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pada-kamalaṁ śrī-gurūn vaiṣṇavāṁś ca
śrī-rūpam sāgrajātaṁ saha-gaṇa-raghunāthānviṭaṁ taṁ sa-jīvam
sādvaitaṁ sāvadhūtaṁ parijana-sahitaṁ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-devaṁ
śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pādān saha-gaṇa-lalitā-śrī-viśākhānviṭāṁś ca*

The man having forgotten himself as the son of Godhead, has forsaken his real constitutional nature. He has misidentified himself with everything non-godly and therefore manipulates a material existence conducted by the mind and the six instrumental senses. He is concerned only with his material coverings of gross body and the subtle mind but cannot see either himself or his so-called numerous fellowmen. This is what we mean by Nescience, which is darkness. The man having designated himself with the relation of his vehicular body and the finer elements of mind and ego etc., like the motor-car driver who has identified himself wrongly with the motor-car itself, has manufactured a civilization which is self contradictory and self denial.

His so-called rationality having not gone far above the rationality of the lower animals, he laments at the death of his fellowmen or at the loss of his own things, which he has never witnessed by real experience. This is what we mean by Nescience, which is darkness. He slightly feels only, and that after the death of his fellowmen, that the body loses something that moves it just like the driver moves the motor-car, but still due to the darkness of Nescience he never concerns himself with the driver of the body but takes care superficially only for the body, or the mechanical car.

In the darkness of Nescience he is fully amazed with mechanism of the gross body, just like a boy who is amazed with mechanism of the motor-car, but he hardly tries to understand that without a driver any amount of astounding mechanical arrangement of the motor-car, or that of the human body, it cannot move either of them even by an inch. This is what we mean by Nescience, which is darkness.

The defect of the present day civilization is just like the above. This is actually the civilization of Nescience, or illusion, and has, therefore, civilization been turned into militarization. Everyone is fully concerned with the comforts of the body and everything related with the body, and nobody is concerned with the Spirit that moves the body, although even a boy can realise that the motor-car mechanism has little value if there is no driver of the car. This dangerous ignorance of humanity is a gross Nescience and has created a dangerous civilization in the form of militarization. This militarization, which, in softer language, is nationalization, is an external barrier to come to an understanding of human relations. There is no meaning in a fight where the parties do fight only for the matter of different-coloured dresses.

There must be, therefore, an understanding of human relations without any consideration of the bodily designation, or coloured dresses.

“BACK TO GODHEAD” is a feeble attempt by the undersigned under the direction of His Divine Grace Sri Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada, the celebrated founder and organiser of the Gaudiya Math activities, just to bring up a real relation of humanity with central relation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

That there is a great and urgent need of a literature like this is keenly felt by the leaders of all countries, and the following statements will help much in the procedure.

Some time back a bold statement by the Metropolitan of India, in the form of Moral and Spiritual Re-armament movement, was published in the Hindusthan Standard, in which the reverend Bishop declared that “INDIA GUIDED BY GOD CAN LEAD THE WORLD BACK TO SANITY.”

The President of the United States of America, in a message to the Senate, stated that “the underlying strength of the world consists in the moral fibre of citizens. A programme therefore of moral re-armament for the world cannot fail to lessen the dangers of armed conflict. Such moral re-armament, to be most highly effective, must receive support on a worldwide basis.”

The Ex-president of the United States of America, Mr. Herbert Hoover, sent a message in a citizen’s meeting in New York which included the following words. “What the world needs today is to return to sanity and moral spiritual ideals. At the present moment, nothing so concerns mankind.”

Some 236 members of the British House of Commons jointly affirmed that spiritual principles, which are common heritage of all people, are more fundamental than any political or economic issue. They also strongly affirmed that there is urgent need to acknowledge the sovereign authority of God in home and nation to establish that liberty which rests on the Christian responsibility to all one’s fellowmen and to build a national life based on usefulness, unity, and faith.

Sir Stafford Cripps, the Lord Privy Seal of Britain, in a meeting of Christians some time in the month of September 1942, said that the kingdom of God would be accomplished through the Divine Power of love, and he declared that “the tasks before us are, first, so to conduct ourselves as individual Christians that in spite of the difficulties of our surroundings we may work towards the establishment of the kingdom of God throughout our country and the world, and second, so to influence and change our social, economic, and political environments as to encourage both ourselves and others to take to the Christian way of life.”

The horrors of the war are pinching every one and all in the world, and a statement of Mr. Windel Wilkie, after his return from Russia, will tell the story of all other countries in the world. He stated that “Five million Russians have been killed, wounded, or missing. At least sixty million Russians are slaves in the Russian territories controlled by Hitler. Food in Russia this winter will be scarce, perhaps worse than scarce. Fuel will be little known this winter in millions of Russian homes. Clothing, except for the army and for essential war workers, has nearly gone. Many vital medical supplies just do not exist.”

What is true for the Russian people is also true for other people, as we Indians are feeling the same scarcity, the same want, and the same disgust.

The disgust of the war is well summarized by the Foreign Secretary of Britain, Mr. Anthony Eden, who said that “This time we have to finish the job properly. We will not tolerate this business every twenty years. When the job is finished we must see that they cannot start it again. That is the will of the nation and the united nations.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in his recent broadcast in London, said, “In every quarter of earth men long to be delivered from the curse of War and to find, in a world which has regained its peace, respite from the harshness and bitterness of the world they have known till now. But so often they want the kingdom of Heaven without its King, the kingdom of God without God. And they cannot have it.”

“OUR RESOLVE MUST BE BACK TO GOD. We make plans for the future for peace amongst the nations and for civil security at home. That is quite right enough, and it would be wrong to neglect it. But all our plans will come to ship-wreck on the rock of human selfishness unless we turn to God. BACK TO GOD—that is the chief need of England and of every nation.”

And lately Sir Francis Younghusband, while speaking at the World Congress of Faiths, said that “Now

that religion is everywhere attacked brutally, we look to India, the very home of religion, for a sign.” Sir Francis pleaded “that India, by her example, might show the world how religion can be the most potent of all uniting forces in the conduct of human affairs.”

Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, the great Hindu philosopher, addressing a crowded public meeting in Calcutta recently, observed:

“At a time like this, when there is poverty, malnutrition of body and mind, when many people do not know what it is to have a cooked meal or to lie on soft bed, when millions of homes turn into homes of hunger and prisons of poverty, religious men will have to address themselves to the task of removing them.

“Today the world is noisier, more controversial and violent. There is more hope and more uncertainty, more aspirations and more frustration. And the years that intervened (from the last war) showed the bankruptcy of any spiritual value. The Versailles Treaty, the League of Nations, and the Disarmament Conference failed because they had not the background of public opinion to sustain them. This war, when it would be won, will prove to be the breeding ground of other wars if the peace is not saved. It can happen only if powerful nations cease to take pride and glory in their possessions, which are based on labour and tribute of other weaker nations. This perhaps was what Sir Harcourt Butler meant when he said that the principles of Hinduism contained the essential elements for the saving of world civilizations.”

In another meeting the same philosopher pointed out, “We have to defeat tyranny in the realm of thought and create a will for world peace. Instruments for training the mind and educating human nature should be used to develop a proper social outlook, without which institutional machinery is of little use.”

These psychological movements of the leaders of all countries—combined with the orders of my Divine Master, Sri Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada, have led me to venture to start a paper under the above name and style “BACK TO GODHEAD” which implies all the words that we may intend to say in this connection.

India has been politically subjugated, so to say, for the last one thousand years, but very few have been able to exploit her spiritual resources up till now, which are measured unlimited by the spiritual masters. Politically India may ask all so-called foreigners to quit the shores of India, but spiritually she did never ask anybody to do so, nor will she do so even now. She will rather invite all the so-called foreigners to come and exploit the spiritual resources of India’s advancement, and this transcendental exploitation will not only enhance the glory of India but will also enrich the glory of the whole world for unity, faith, and humanity.

It may not be out of place to mention herein that His Divine Grace Sri Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada, just before his departure from this mortal world, wrote me a letter from Puri dated the 3rd December, 1936, directing me towards my duty in fulfilling His mission in the world for propagating the religion of Divine Love as propounded by Lord Chaitanya. In course of writing that letter, He wrote the following lines amongst other things.

“I am fully confident that you can explain in English our thoughts and arguments to the people who are not conversant with the languages of other members.”

“This will do much good to yourself as well as your audience.”

“I have every hope that you can turn yourself into a very good English preacher if you serve the mission to inculcate the novel impression to the people in general and philosophers of the modern age and religiosity.”

And when I was consulting my well-wishers and friends who are able to help me in this great adventure, all of them encouraged me in this connection. His Grace Sripad Bhakti Saranga Goswami Moharaj, the Preacher-in-charge for the Western countries appointed by His Divine Grace, who has recently returned from London preaching work to his headquarters, very kindly sent his blessing from Sri Nityananda Gaudiya Math in his letter dated the 15-3-43 in the following words amongst other things:

“I know that His Divine Grace used to admire your intelligence, and it was His earnest desire that the world outside be benefitted through your writings in English.”

Under the circumstances, since 1936 up to now I was simply speculating whether I shall venture this difficult task, and that without any means and capacity; but several have encouraged me, including the

late Prof. Nishikanto Sanyal and Spd. Vasudev Prabhu (now Puri Moharaj), I have now taken courage to take up the work. Late Prof. Sanyal used to encourage me always by publishing my articles in his “Harmonist,” and some time back he wanted to give me the charge of the paper, which I could not accept due to personal considerations.

But at the present moment my conscience is dictating me to take up the work, although the difficulties are not over for the present situation arising out of War conditions.

I wish that everyone who is enlightened and educated, of all nationalities, may take active interest in this periodical publication for wide circulation, as this paper will contain only the transcendental messages of the great savants of India, and especially of Lord Chaitanya, the Godhead Incarnate Who descended for the deliverance of all fallen souls in the present age. My duty will be simply to repeat in the “BACK TO GODHEAD”, just like an interpreter, what I have heard from and what I have been ordered to deliver by my great spiritual master, H.D.G. Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada. Nothing will be manufactured by me by my mental concoction. Such words will descend as Sound Transcendental, and when they are given proper serving reception by the aural channel, surely they will act like medicine to carry all back to home and “BACK TO GODHEAD.”

It is proposed that at least part by part issues of this literature shall be published every year and the subscription is fixed up at Rs. 6/- per annum in India or fifteen shillings per annum abroad. The writers of this paper will be mostly those who have dedicated their lives, resources, intelligence, and speeches for the service of the Absolute Personality of Godhead and for the welfare of all entities. The readers will therefore derive the highest amount of benefit by their association if they will simply sacrifice a little time for the service of Godhead as will be directed in this paper from time to time. Surely they will go back to Godhead and the present rotten world will be transformed into the kingdom of God as people learn to acknowledge the sovereign authority of God in home and outside.

The subject matters delineated in the pages of “Back to Godhead” may seem to be very dry in the beginning, as the messages are from a different sphere altogether, but still we have to give attention to the messages if we really mean to cure the disease of Nescience and go “BACK TO GODHEAD.” Sugar-candy is never sweet to those who are suffering from the disease of the bile. But still sugar-candy is the medicine for bilious patients. The taste of sugar-candy will gradually be revived if the bilious patient goes on taking sugar-candy regularly for the cure of the disease. We recommend the same process to the readers of “Back to Godhead.”

Godhead is One without a second, and all living entities are His eternal subordinate transcendental servitors. Realisation of this transcendental relation will be the attempt of this paper, and therefore there is no bar for anyone in the world, irrespective of colour, creed, and nationality, to go back to Godhead.

Abhay Charan De,
Editor and Founder.

Homages from



The GBC

Anuttama dāsa

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*

This is to inform you that I, the undersigned, am the Founder-Acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, and the world leader for all of its branches. I have appointed 18 direct representatives to manage different sectors of the world, and they are known as Governing Body Commissioners. [Letter to Attorney General's Department (Canberra, Australia) 16 January 1977]

On your Vyāsa-pūjā Day we remember and meditate deeply on our relationship with you, your instructions, your vision, your desires, and your many gifts to us. This year, 2020, is the fiftieth anniversary of your founding the Governing Body Commission. This milestone inspires me to consider the importance of this gift and its role in your transcendental plans.

It was on July 28, 1970, that Your Divine Grace created the Governing Body Commission, or GBC. Foreseeing the global expansion of your fledgling society, you created the GBC to help manage and protect the worldwide organization, to free you from management so you would have more time for writing, and to look after the well-being of your devotees and temples. You expected your GBC members to travel, to preach, to supervise, and to uphold ISKCON's standards. You also planned for the GBC to continue to manage the "affairs of the society" after your departure. Managing in a collective manner, you instructed, would give you "great pleasure."

I have formed this GBC for that purpose, to keep the devotional standards at the highest level and at the same time to manage a world-wide organization. [Letter to Rūpānuga, 4 November 1970]

I have already formed a Governing Body Commission, so in my absence they will manage the affairs of the Society. I shall begin my 75th year from the Vyasa Puja Day, and if you all combined together manage the affairs of the Society nicely, that will give me a great pleasure. [Letter to Umāpati, 23 August 1970]

Consultation and cooperation were to be the means of governance. In the future there would be no single leader of ISKCON who would set spiritual or secular policy. Instead, you would always be ISKCON's founder-ācārya, teacher, and standard-bearer. The duty of the GBC was to work cooperatively, under you, to protect and guide what you had created.

[T]he 12 GBC members are being trained up strictly under my guidance so that they will protect the interest of the society very, very carefully. All our property should be well protected, and I think in every document my name as Founder-Acarya should be mentioned. [Letter to Bali-mardana, 5 September 1974]

You write to say that it is my satisfaction that is important; my wish is that you all GBC members cooperate and advance the mission of this society. That will satisfy me. [Letter to Hayagrīva, 11 August 1971]

As you affirmed in your will, the GBC was to be “the ultimate managing authority of the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness.” You knew it was essential for your youthful ISKCON leaders to also remember who is the real manager.

[A]s the boys are getting experienced I shall very soon transfer the administration to them. . . . But actually what we need is to render sincere service to the Lord because ultimately Krishna is the supreme manager. [Letter to Nevatiaji, 16 July 1970]

You also knew, and you experienced firsthand, that the GBC would make mistakes. You warned the GBC to be careful to uphold Vaiṣṇava standards while respecting other senior devotees and ISKCON leaders. In training the GBC you were firm, yet also forgiving.

GBC does not mean to control a center. GBC means to see that the activities of a center go on nicely . . . but not to exert absolute authority. That is not in the power of GBC. . . . The GBC men cannot impose anything on the men of a center without consulting all of the GBC members first. [Letter to Girirāja, 12 August, 1971]

I am glad that you have admitted about the GBC members not appropriately discharging their duty. I do not mind this discrepancy but you should be alert; you and all the GBC members. . . . People have respect for our movement. Now it is time for GBC members to be very very careful so that people may not point out any black spot in the behavior of our society. . . . [Letter to Tamāl Krishna, 1 Sept 1971]

The GBC did sometimes err. I was present in 1976 in Māyāpur when the GBC overstepped its boundaries. By the influence of a few powerful *sannyāsīs* who had a zealous enthusiasm to have temples filled exclusively with *brahmacārīs* and *sannyāsīs*, the GBC passed a resolution that all women and married men must move out of the temples. When this came to your attention—and after temple presidents around the world complained that without women and married men in their temples, preaching and other services would come to a standstill—you overturned the decision.

When errors were made and human frailties were detected within the GBC body, you made corrections, gave additional instructions, and continued to empower the GBC to lead and advance the mission of Lord Caitanya.

I am more and more depending upon you GBC. Of course you GBC are in training, but you are all the hope for the future of our movement. [Letter to Karandhara, 15 March 1973]

Stick to our principle, and see our GBC is very alert. Then everything will go on, even I am not present. Do that. That is my request. Whatever little I have taught you, follow that, and nobody will be aggrieved. No *māyā* will touch you. [Room Conversation, 22 April 1977, Bombay]

Since your departure, Śrīla Prabhupāda, under your continued leadership and the guidance of the GBC, ISKCON has flourished. We now have over 600 temples, 100 vegetarian restaurants, and 70 farms and eco-villages. More than 550 million of your books have been distributed, and more than 100,000 devotees have taken Vaiṣṇava initiation. The Temple of the Vedic Planetarium is rising in Māyāpur, ISKCON’s contributions have been honored by governments and the United Nations, Vaiṣṇava colleges have opened, devotee scholars teach in universities, and devotee lawyers practice in the courts. Your movement is now more than ever an international society.

Not surprisingly, there have been challenges as well. As you predicted in your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* commentary, when the *ācārya* leaves there will be disturbances:

When [the *ācārya*] disappears, things once again become disordered. The perfect disciples of the *ācārya* try to relieve the situation by sincerely following the instructions of the spiritual master. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.48, purport]

As happened when you were physically present with us, in the years since your departure misguided governments, parents, and others have accused ISKCON of being a cult or sect. In some countries there have been drawn-out court battles, media attacks, and official inquiries as to whether ISKCON was a positive or negative force in society.

In the mid-1980s, ISKCON faced the corruption of some of the leaders who had taken up the role of initiating spiritual masters. Some committed crimes. Others egregiously violated their vows. Some set themselves up as leaders independent of ISKCON. Tremendous forces were unleashed that threatened to splinter your movement.

In the 1990s, ISKCON became aware of widespread abuse of children in our schools and communities during the 1970s and 1980s. With heartbreak, we learned that our children, families, and communities had been injured and scarred. As part of the karmic justice due us, the whole of ISKCON was accused of abusive systems and a lack of love, care, and accountability, and several hundred million dollars worth of lawsuits were brought against us.

Yet, despite these calamities, and a multitude of lesser challenges, your society has continued. We have suffered for our mistakes and because of the disturbances caused by others. Yet in each instance—while sometimes painfully slowly—ISKCON has become more introspective, corrected itself, purged itself (where necessary), and continued. We have endured because of your grace, your inspiration, your guidance, your purity, your faith in us, and the faith you gave us in Kṛṣṇa.

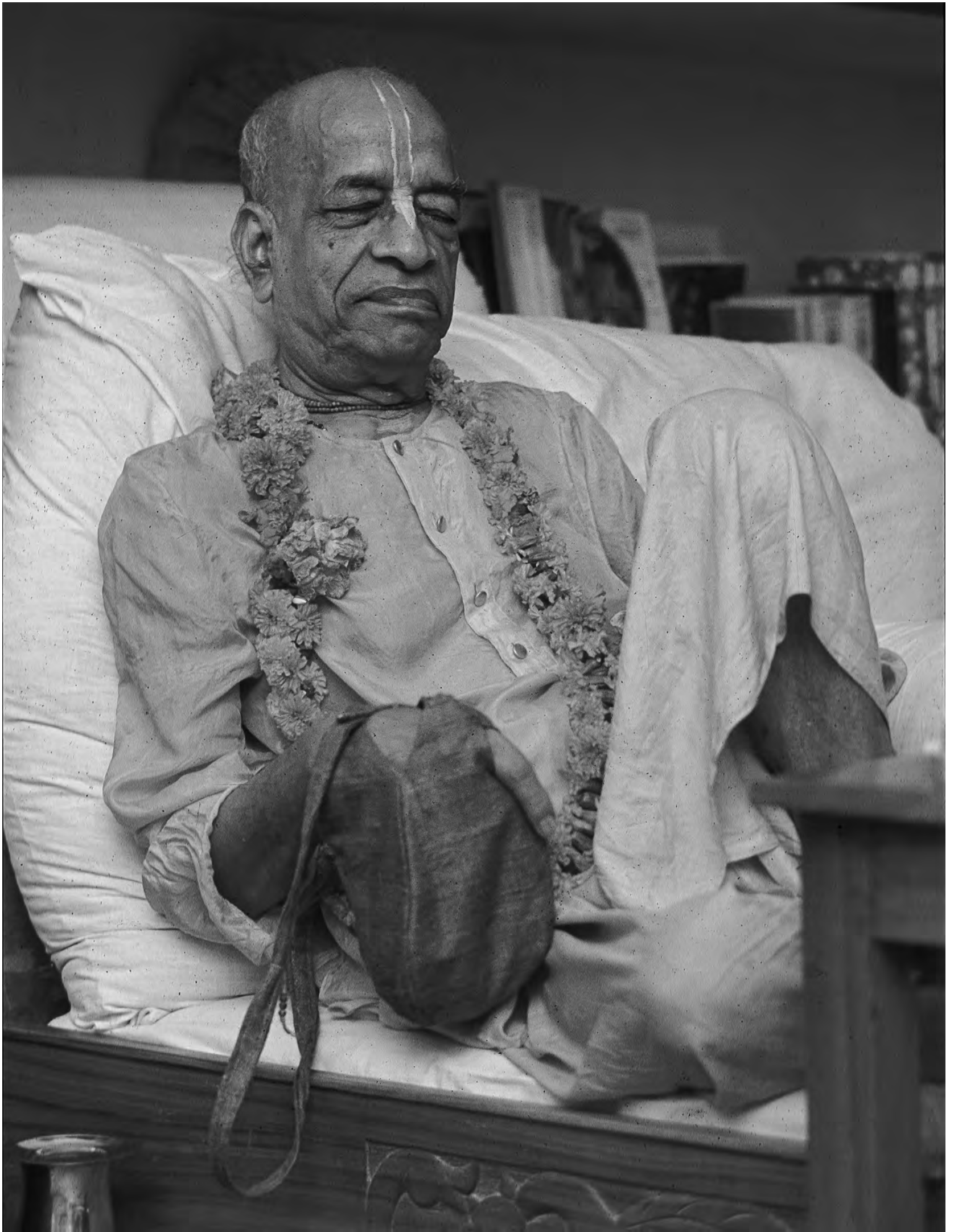
And we have endured, to a large extent, because of the wisdom you showed in creating a Governing Body Commission. Creating the GBC, despite its frailties and human limitations, was one of the greatest gifts you gave us.

When unified action was needed, because of your foresight a system of cooperative decision-making was in place. In each of the above-mentioned crippling crises, ISKCON benefited from a GBC that could lead us out of the morass. Despite the historical fact that most religious communities crumble after the passing of their founder, ISKCON has held together while the GBC led us through court battles, media attacks, deviant philosophies, wayward gurus, splinter groups, and myriad other challenges both internal and external.

By your blessings, the GBC has also made a multitude of positive contributions to strengthen and grow ISKCON. There are now standards for awarding *sannyāsa*; courses for initiating gurus and prospective disciples; a Śāstric Advisory Council that guides the GBC on philosophical questions; a GBC College to train future leaders; a Child Protection Office to aid in protecting children; GBC Ministries that train devotees worldwide and guide a variety of programs, such as the Deity Ministry's policies to protect and oversee the worship of the Lord's *mūrti*; and, a Sabhā to broaden insights and provide checks and balances on GBC authority. Individual GBC members, serving cooperatively with local leaders and other devotees, have opened hundreds of new temples and eco-communities, inaugurated new festivals, seen book distribution set new records, and contributed significantly to the growth of your movement across the globe.

Today ISKCON is white, black, brown, and every color under the rainbow. We are growing in India, the Americas, Europe, Russia, Africa, Asia, Australasia, and every place in between. We are no longer just ashrams full of young people. We are young and we are grandparents. We are men, women, and children. We are renunciants and we are corporate leaders. Our growth is far-ranging. So too, sometimes, are our opinions, allegiances, and affections.

Living through the pain of watching Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's mission splinter, you made it a priority in 1970, even before you created your beloved BBT, to form the GBC. You knew that ISKCON would need an ultimate managing authority to bind us together.



Wherever there are individuals there is bound to be difference of opinion. Therefore for this purpose I have formulated the GBC. [Letter to Rūpānuga, 14 February 1973]

I have built the skeleton of the building, but there is so much more work remaining before us. The GBC men are there, the world is divided into 12 zones for gradual development by these, my chosen right hand men. So however you manage it, that you know best . . . [but do not] become, discouraged. . . . [Letter to Hamsadūta, 2 January 1973]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as the years go by it becomes more and more evident that you are the transcendental binding force and strategist, the central figure, the loving grandfather, and our ever-present founder-*ācārya*. Marking the fiftieth anniversary of the GBC, we are reminded that the GBC was, and remains, an integral part of your vision. In the midst of an ever-changing material world, the GBC system you created holds us together, provides global vision, seeks harmony when we disagree, corrects us when we swerve, and reminds us of our central allegiance to you and your ISKCON.

In the future, ISKCON will face more opportunities and challenges. Yet if we remain faithful to your vision, your teachings, and your central and preeminent position in ISKCON, and if we strive to serve cooperatively under the guidance of your GBC, Lord Caitanya's movement will remain strong. And your transcendental desire that His blessings be distributed throughout the world will continue to be fulfilled.

So you GBC men are my selected few for insuring that what I am doing will be carried on very nicely for the pleasure of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. So now you must all my senior disciples and leaders become very, very much aware of your grave responsibility to the human society for delivering them from the clutches of catastrophe, and be always cool-headed and utilize every moment in the best manner possible. [Letter to Madhudviṣa, 16 June 1972]

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the gift of the GBC, and for all the many, many other gifts you have bestowed upon us.

Aspiring to be your eternal servant,

Anuttama dāsa

Badrinārāyaṇ Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

You told the story of a man who was blind, poverty-stricken, and childless. He was given one wish. What to wish for? He had three problems and only one remedy (and he was restricted from wishing for unlimited wishes).

You said, “He wished to see his children from the roof of his palace.” Thus, he was granted sight, wealth, and children—all in one stroke.

As a conditioned soul, I was roaming this world with unlimited desires. I had so many plans and dreams. But none of them delivered the promised results. None of them delivered lasting happiness, peace, or satisfaction. None of them did any real good for the world.

As you said in a lecture, “Not only do we [the conditioned souls] not know the right answers, we don’t even know the right questions.”

In answer to my searching, you have given me the goal, Kṛṣṇa, along with the ways and means to reach Him—pure devotional service.

Gajendra prays, “I know that persons who are pure devotees and have, by serving the lotus feet of great souls, become freed from all material desires, are always merged in the ocean of transcendental bliss and, as such, are always satisfied simply by glorifying Your auspicious characteristics. For them there is nothing else to aspire to or pray for.” (SB 8.3.20)

The wives of Kālīya pray, “Dear Lord, the dust of Your lotus feet is very wonderful. Any person who is fortunate enough to achieve this dust does not care for heavenly planets, lordship over all the planetary systems, the mystic perfections of yoga, or even liberation from material existence. In other words, anyone who adores the dust of Your lotus feet does not care a fig for all other perfectional stages.” (SB 10.16.37)

When you were incorporating your fledgling ISKCON, some suggested that instead of naming it “The International Society for Krishna Consciousness,” you should use a more universally understood term, “The International Society for God Consciousness.” But you rejected this suggestion, saying that this was precisely your mission—to teach people that Kṛṣṇa was in fact the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Cause of all Causes, and the Absolute Truth.

“The Absolute Truth is realized in three phases of understanding by the knower of the Absolute Truth, and all of them are identical. Such phases of the Absolute Truth are expressed as Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān.” (SB 1.2.11)

I can never repay you for giving me the vision and understanding that Kṛṣṇa is present in every atom, in everyone’s heart, and simultaneously has His own form, place, and pastimes.

“Those who understand the inconceivable, impersonal Absolute will find that pure transcendence in their hearts. That is not, however, what is in our hearts. In our hearts resides the charming, lotus-faced, lotus-eyed person who wears golden garments and whose complexion is the color of a dark raincloud.” (Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Padyāvalī*, Text 77)

Let me stay forever under the shelter of your lotus feet and always engaged in Kṛṣṇa’s sublime service,

Badrinārāyaṇ Swami

Bhakti Caitanya Swami

My dear lord and master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

Now the world is in the grip of a fever regarding the so-called coronavirus. I have been wondering how you would have reacted to all this. I feel you would point out how the material world is always full of danger, and that this is just a further example of that.

Currently I am in our Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha temple in Durban, South Africa, and we are under what is called “lockdown,” meaning that no one in the country can go out of their houses unless they have an extremely good reason. We have not had a regular preaching program for almost two weeks, and we don’t know when we will be able to have one, although it will not be soon.

I remember that when you were with us there were accusations in America that we were “brainwashing” people to get them to become devotees. Some devotees did not know how to respond to these accusations, but you, as always, were very clear about addressing the situation. You said:

Yes. We are brainwashing from bad to good. That is our business. We are washing the brain from all rascaldom. That is our business. . . . Your brain is filled up with all rubbish things: meat-eating and illicit sex, gambling. So we are washing them. *Ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam. Śṛṇvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ / hṛdy antaḥ-stho hy abhadrāṇi. Abhadrāṇi washing. Abhadrāṇi means bad things. The bad things should be washed off. Don’t you cleanse your home? Don’t you cleanse your room? Is not that brainwashing? So if you wash your room very cleansed, who blames you? But you are so rascal that “Why you are washing this garbage?” you are protesting. [Conversation on train to Allahabad, 11 January 1977]*

You also said:

If you have got brain . . . You are trying to brainwash. Actually you have no brain . . . see how important it is, this movement. You are trying to brainwash. We are not brainwashing. We are giving you good brain. That is our mission—that you are so dull-headed we have come to give you good brain. *Su-medhasaḥ. Yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ.* We have come to make you intelligent. Receive us well, for your benefit. Tell them like that. Bring one court case, and I shall sit . . . [I shall] go and sleep there and expose them, item by item. I know my case is strong. [Room conversation, 2 November 1976, Vṛndāvana]

So I am sure you would have many things to say to clarify how this virus situation has arisen due to the degraded habits of the majority of people, and you would have many ideas how we can make the most of this situation and spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness under these circumstances, even though so many people and countries have become practically paralyzed and have no idea what to do.

In your purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 7.31–32, you write:

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted to invent a way to capture the Māyāvādīs and others who did not take interest in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. This is the symptom of an *ācārya*. 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.

By your mercy devotees are finding ways to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness through the internet and similar means, and some extraordinary results are coming.

In many ways your example and instructions were revolutionary, and therefore your movement has had such an effect on this world. We are praying on this most sacred day to get a little empowerment from you so we can represent you and carry things on in ways that you will be pleased. Only in this way can we be successful.

Your eternal servant,

Bhakti Caitanya Swami

Bhakti Chāru Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

As I am trying to compose my Vyāsa-pūjā offering, I cannot help but reflect on the world situation today. The whole world is in the grip of intense fear caused by a pandemic, and practically everything has come to a standstill. The whole of India is on lockdown, and no one is allowed to go out of his house. For the first time in history, all the places of worship—temples, mosques, churches, and synagogues—have been shut down. No one could have ever imagined that such a situation would arise. Nevertheless, I can see the foresight of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Knowing that such a situation would arise, when no one would be able to go to the temple to see the Deities of the Lord and worship Him, He gave us the process of chanting His holy name.

At a time like this, I also wonder whether this is His divine arrangement to force this world to surrender unto Him and accept the process of congregational chanting. After all, He sent you to fulfill His prediction, and very systematically you have made all the arrangements by creating the institution of ISKCON and training an army of dedicated devotees worldwide, an army that is marching forward equipped with the most powerful weapons of your books to defeat the misdirected, atheistic civilization of this world.

On this auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, please bless us so that we can become valiant warriors in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's army and fight against the enemy that has vitiated the whole world with sinful activities. Please lead us, as our glorious general, to lay siege to meat-eating, intoxication, illicit sex, and gambling. Under your divine leadership, we are confident that victory will be ours, that we will defeat the eternal enemy of this world, which corrupts everyone's mind with the poison of atheism. Once again, under your expert guidance, let us establish the kingdom of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in this world.

When we have a pure devotee like you to lead us and the Supreme Personality of Godhead with us, then who can ever doubt our victory? Who can ever doubt that the ominous influence of Kali will be defeated and that absolute peace and ultimate prosperity will prevail again, bringing the spiritual world down to this beautiful planet of ours.

Your humble servant eternally,

Bhakti Chāru Swami

Bhaktimārga Swami

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

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

Your Picture on the Wall

A picture of you came my way,
All framed and looking good,
With pilot-type cap, shawl on shoulder,
Head tilted up as far as you could.

A *pūjārī* gave it with intent
To be hung on the wall
For all to see and inspire
Any eyes who pass the hall.

It reminds us as to who is boss.
No question as to who sets the tone.
Your caring, commanding face says,
“I’m with you; you’re not alone.”

You were present in the summer of ’75,
Inspecting the building’s levels and floors.
You gave a nod to make the purchase,
From basement to roof and all corridors.

You expressed approval with the words
“This will suit our purposes.”
You warned there’d be anxiety—
Help did come from divine sources.

The Christian owners said frank and bold,
“We would rather burn it down
Than sell to the Hare Krishnas.”
I guess they wanted us out of town.

You proposed we’d install Jesus
For daily worship/meditation.
The owners refused, wouldn’t budge.
We secured the place with mild perpetration.

It has all worked out for so many years—
Service at 243 Avenue Road.
Your visage that hangs on the modest wall
Tells, “For Kṛṣṇa, accept a load.”

Once a church, now a temple.
The aim of both was the same:
To love and serve each and all
With concentration on His name.

Bhaktimārga Swami

Bhaktivaibhava Swami

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

If we study the activities of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, we can see that he directly served the desires of his Guru Mahārāja beyond anyone's expectation. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was factually preparing himself to go to the West to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He gave the instruction to Śrīla Prabhupāda to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the English-speaking countries. Śrīla Prabhupāda spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, expressing his last wish, gave the instruction to form a Governing Body of ten to twelve leading disciples to manage his mission, the Gauḍīya Maṭha. In 1970 Śrīla Prabhupāda established the Governing Body Commission (GBC) as the ultimate managerial authority of ISKCON.

Śrīla Prabhupāda continued the *Harmonist* magazine in English by publishing his *Back to Godhead* magazine, which continues to be published up to the present with interesting articles and beautiful illustrations.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wanted the book *Sree Krishna-Chaitanya*, in three volumes, to be taken to London with Bon Mahārāja and Tīrtha Mahārāja in 1933. Śrīla Prabhupāda took three volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* with him when he went to America for the first time.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura established the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha in Śrīdhām Māyāpur as the central or "parent" temple of all other branches, which were supposed to spread all over the world. Śrīla Prabhupāda acquired land in Māyāpur and gave detailed instructions for building the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium, presenting the same teaching portrayed by the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha in a more detailed and comprehensive manner that would attract visitors from different parts of the world.

The Vedic Planetarium directly challenges the accepted modern version of the universe and establishes the legitimacy of the Vedic version, using science to counteract the dominance of modern atheism. Śrīla Prabhupāda proposed to exhibit the universe in an exposition, which would take the viewer on a journey through the material cosmos to the spiritual world, all according to the descriptions found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The temple will also house the Institute of Vedic Cosmology, which will continue research work and hold discussions about the Vedic account of the universe.

If we can explain the passing seasons, eclipses, phases of the moon, passing of day and night, etc., then it will be very powerful propaganda. . . . [Letter to Svarūpa Dāmodara, 27 April 1976]

We shall show the Vedic conception of the planetary system within this material world and above the material world. [Morning walk, 27 February 1976, Māyāpur]

It will be a glorious exhibition of India's Vedic culture that will attract visitors from all over the world. [Letter to Deputy Secretary S.L. Dhani, 14 November 1976]

Śrīla Prabhupāda served the desires of his Guru Mahārāja in such an unprecedented way that it leaves us all in awe and veneration. He brought the mission of his Guru Mahārāja back to life by spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness to every major city around the world. The entire world will always be eternally grateful to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's eternal servant,

Bhaktivaibhava Swami

Bhūrijana dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, first in Canto Nine and then in Canto Twelve of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, ruling dynasties of the world are described, and that list continues to name kings near and in the present days of Kali-yuga. A still more contemporary list would reveal modern rulers, no longer true *kṣatriyas*, often as perpetrators of violent attacks on the innocent, as pillagers, beheaders, murderers, and plunderers. Indeed, recent Kali-yuga history leaves a blood-red trail.

Some of us seem to have been born tired of this chaos and violence and filled with a longing for peace and truth. Nor could we place our faith in the heavenly rest of scientism's promise of endless material progress. Sadly, but inevitably, with no true guidance, we too became submerged in materialism, cynicism, and sadness.

But then you appeared, apparently from faraway, exotic India, with a true and positive alternative. Your empowered presence offered me and many others hope, as you guided us and blessed us with your presence as an exemplar of the ideal Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

So many years after being introduced to you, although I find myself still unable to pierce to the core of your oceanic gift and blessing, I still would like to offer to you several grateful acknowledgements of your countless gifts to me and so many others.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have englightened my soul by teaching me, and so many others, that the Absolute Truth is not impersonal, void, or all-expansive matter, but personal—the all-attractive, all-beautiful, all-adventurous Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave me, and so many others, hope through the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's names.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you introduced me, and so many others, to absolute beauty in the forms of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you caused me, and so many others, to embark on the adventure of reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you blessed me, and so many others, with a glimpse of the sweetness that is Kṛṣṇa's land, Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you entranced my ears, and the ears of so many others, in Māyāpur with the sound of Śrī Śācinandana's holy name.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you allowed me, and so many others, to enter, even if slightly, into the vastness of the most intimate of secrets, the internal reason for Caitanya Mahāprabhu's advent.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you extracted me, and so many others, from poisonous, meaningless philosophical pursuits.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you blessed me, and so many others, with service in your mission, the compassionate mission of your Guru Mahārāja and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you caused me, and so many others, to meet true friends, who have proved dear and whose friendship has proved unbreakably lasting.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you awoke in me, and so many others, a true conception of religion.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you placed within my hand, and the hands of so many others, a *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, which clearly and boldly allowed Kṛṣṇa to present Himself as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you placed me, and so many others, in great and small families that support our most cherished ideals.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you showed me, and so many others, a clean life that is both practical and ethically ideal.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you awarded me, and so many others, a life worth living, a purity worth striving for, and a goal worth achieving.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you enshrined within me, and so many others, true heroes.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you awarded me, and so many others, the most noble, exalted association.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you awarded me, and so many others, a vision of a culture that supports the most uplifting ideals of mankind.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave me, and so many others, your association, which placed before our eyes a man who had himself combined matchless meekness with astounding boldness.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave me, and so many others, your association, which allowed us a taste of the sweetness that is eternally our home.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you caused me, and so many others, to taste the threefold spiritual flavors that exist as three holy *dhāmas*.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have privileged me, and so many others, to contrast the gifts of temporary and eternal time.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have guided me, and so many others, toward the valuable skill of disagreeing but still being respectful.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have brilliantly yet concisely summed up the foundation of your mission as “Books are the basis; preaching is the essence; utility is the principle; and purity is the force.”

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have offered me, and so many others, a wealth of practical maxims to guide our journey in the form of long-forgotten village wisdom, such as “If something is auspicious, do it immediately. If something is inauspicious, put it off.” And “Something is better than nothing.”

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have given life to the tendencies and abilities of me, and so many others, by allowing us to serve Kṛṣṇa through those tendencies and abilities.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have given me, and so many others, a deep perspective of life, despite its unavoidable trials and sufferings.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have implanted within me, and so many others, a respect for all life, regardless of the body in which that life lives.

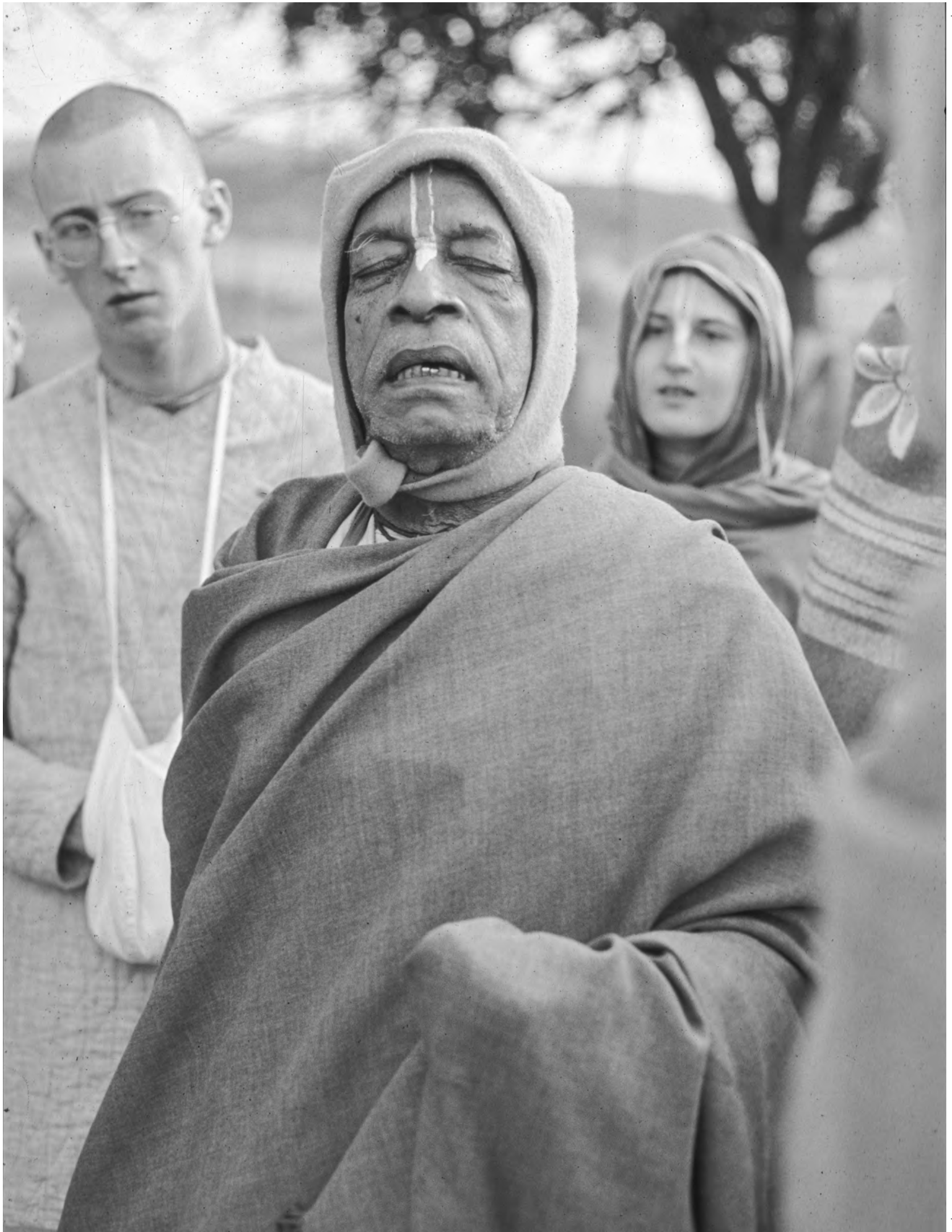
Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have offered me, and so many others, the most valuable jewel in the essence of all advice: to constantly chant Kṛṣṇa’s names and to always be absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa.

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have awarded me, and so many others, mantras to chant three times each day that are powerful, deep meditations.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you keep reminding me, as well as so many others, to be in sympathetic harmony with your great, compassionate mission meant to award the world knowledge accompanied by responses of practical, responsible actions.

May I remain gratefully yours in eternal service,

Bhūrījana dāsa



Bīr Krishna dās Goswami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

*Prabhupāda!
kṛpā-bindu diyā, koro' ei dāse,
ṭṇāpekhā ati hīna
sakala sahane, bala diyā koro',
nija-māne sprhā-hīna
("Gurudev," by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura)*

"Śrīla Prabhupāda, O spiritual master! Give to this servant just one drop of mercy. I am lower than a blade of grass. Give me all help. Give me strength. Let me be as you are, without material desires or aspirations."

This morning in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class we were reading about the *gopīs*' intense feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa when He disappeared from their sight during the *rāsa* dance.

Because the beloved *gopīs* were absorbed in thoughts of their beloved Kṛṣṇa, their bodies imitated His way of moving and smiling, His way of beholding them, His speech, and His other distinctive features. Deeply immersed in thinking of Him and maddened by remembering His pastimes, they declared to one another, "I am Kṛṣṇa!" [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.30.3]

Similarly, the dedicated disciple, feeling separation, meditates deeply on the characteristics of the spiritual master. We understand that one should not think oneself to be one's guru or equivalent to one's guru. However, one should aspire to be like the spiritual master in the sense that one imbibes the mood of the guru. One's guru is one's role model. This is what is expressed by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in his song "Gurudev."

Once you were asked about your feelings of separation from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. You replied, "That question you don't need to ask."

In your reply you clearly let us know that your feelings of separation and devotion are your very life and soul.

By your actions you illustrate this. You are one hundred percent focused on the mission of your spiritual master. You are ready to do whatever is necessary to attract souls to the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. You clearly reflect the mood of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in being ready to take all risks in spreading the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

When the governor of Bengal, Sir John Anderson, visited Māyāpur in January 1935, arrangements for receiving him and his gubernatorial party were made by a Calcutta hotel, which on Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's order supplied meat and other items according to British taste. When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī suggested a similar approach for foreign preaching, Śrīmad Śrīdhara Mahārāja protested that it would invite criticism. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied,

“I decided all these things thousands of births ago. We have to do anything and everything for serving Mahāprabhu.” On another occasion he had cigarettes provided for a visiting German scholar. [*Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava*]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, after you met your Guru Mahārāja in 1922, you were focused on the mission of your guru and ready to do the needful to carry out his mission of “creating a revolution in the misdirected lives of an impious civilization.”

*tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavo
yasmin prati-ślokaṁ abaddhavyaty api
nāmāny anantasya yaśo 'ñkitāni yat
śṛṇvanti gāyanti grṇanti sādhaḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.5.11*

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pray that we, your followers, both *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā* disciples, may be as you are, without material desires or aspirations, simply desiring to please you by carrying out your mission and being ready to innovate without deviating from the principles you have taught us.

Therefore let me with all my earnestness pray at the lotus feet of my divine master to allow me to suffer the lot for which I am destined due to my past misdoings, but to let me have this power of recollection: that I am nothing but a tiny servant of the almighty Absolute Godhead, realized through the unflinching mercy of my divine master. Let me therefore bow down at his lotus feet with all the humility at my command. [Śrīla Prabhupāda’s homage to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura on the occasion of his Vyāsa-pūjā celebration in February, 1936]

Your eternal servant,

Bir Krishna dās Goswami

Devāmrita Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most grateful and respectful obeisances at your lotus feet.

Far down at the bottom of the Earth, gazing over the Pacific Ocean, I meditate not on the immense waters, thundering as countless waves, but on the boundless expanse of your mercy, dynamically reconnecting us to the Supreme Beloved.

Although the planet Earth contains twice as much water as land, who today can fully fathom the mysteries of the sea? Oceanographers are fond of saying that science knows less about the high seas than it does about . . . the moon.

One day humankind may comprehend the deepest secrets of the ocean and the moon, but who can ever grasp the depths and scope of your compassion and mercy?

Dedication to your lotus feet bestows the chance to develop love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

How is it that I am allowed to approach your divine lotus feet, the magnanimous treasure trove of pure *bhakti*?

Why did you dare engage such a wretch in life's most exalted activity: devotional service?

Through the thick and thin of my meager attempts to serve you, why do you bother to sustain such an inconsequential speck, a most diminutive insectlike semblance of a devotee?

Akrūra, on his way to Vṛndāvana, beautifully illustrated the miraculousness of your divine rescue mission, the incomparable intervention:

Just as a blade of grass floating on the waves of a river may by chance come near the shore and gain shelter, a conditioned soul carried away by the waves of material existence may sometimes be saved by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.38.5]

Śrī Caitanya Mahaprabhu declared to Sanātana Gosvāmī: "My dear Sanātana, Kṛṣṇa has saved you from Mahāraurava, life's deepest hell. He is an ocean of mercy, and His activities are very grave." Swiftly, most appropriately, Sanātana replied: "I do not know who Kṛṣṇa is. As far as I am concerned, I have been released from prison only by Your mercy." [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 20.63–64]

With the strength you grant, I can then strive to never forget both the darkest depths of ignorance, from where I came, and the most exalted destination, to where I can go.

Without at least a lifetime of humble service to your lotus feet, I'll never resolve the most confidential perplexity of existence:

Desiring to understand the glory of Rādhārāṇī's love, the wonderful qualities in Him that She alone relishes through Her love, and the happiness She feels when She realizes the sweetness of His love, the Supreme Lord Hari, richly endowed with Her emotions, appeared from the womb of Śrīmatī Śacī-devī, as the moon appeared from the ocean. [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi 1.6]

How is it the Two appear as the One, and the One appears as the Two?

You have the right to reveal this most oceanic divine mystery.

High above my shameful head, I hold this most precious goal.

Waiting in service, I beg for your glance upon me and for your eternal guidance.

Your hopeful servant,

Devāmrita Swami

Dīna-śāraṇa Devī Dāsī

*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*

Who can comprehend the immense fortune
of what it takes for someone who has become so fortunate
as to be able to bow down at your lotus feet,
not only on this auspicious day of your appearance,
but again and again daily to your *mūrti* at *guru-pūjā*?

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are waiting for us
to guide us through the rest of our spiritual life
and take us back to Godhead . . .

You are asking us to please accept the blessings you are offering us . . .

Who can comprehend the immense fortune
of what it takes for the *pūjārī* on the altar
just about to decorate
the Supreme Personality of Godhead with a necklace and a garland?

Who can comprehend the immense fortune
of what it takes the book distributor on the streets
just about to deliver your books to unknown persons,
who later become the next disciples in line?

Who can comprehend the immense fortune
of what it takes to transfer
but just a drop of your mercy to others,
to touch their hearts,
to help them see . . .
“Yes, here it is, what your soul has been looking for!”
“Stop getting distracted!”
“Have the courage!”
“Take it!”
“Do it!”

Who can comprehend the immense fortune
of what it takes to comprehend the kind of surrender it takes to understand . . .
“This is Jagat Guru!”
“Take advantage!”
“Surrender unto him forever!”
“Have faith and trust him!”
“He will show you the truth because he has seen it!”

Who can comprehend the immense fortune
of what it takes to assess its deepness?
Who can witness its reality?

Who can comprehend the immense fortune
 of what it takes a fallen soul—as I am still today
 after fifty years of Kṛṣṇa consciousness,
 in such a deep state of ignorance—
 to develop the intelligence it takes to understand your instructions?

Who can comprehend the immense fortune
 of how much chanting, how much worship,
 how much financial support,
 how much management,
 how so much of everything
 is needed
 to make one devotee
 and have him trust and develop enough faith to stay, never to leave again?

Who can comprehend the immense fortune
 of what it takes for this moment of clarity,
 when the curtain opens
 for less than a split second,
 less than the blink of an eye,
 when our thoughts and our heart are lined up
 just for that particular span of a moment?

“Lets wake up to this one split second!”
 “Lets wake up to our reality out of our material dream!”
 “Lets wake up to our enlighten!”
 “Lets act upon it!”

Through the incredible struggle for survival
 in the tsunami-waves of the ocean of material life,
 only on the strength of your mercy can we comprehend that.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
 Your love for the fallen souls
 Is all-pervading
 Unconditional
 Everlasting
 Because you are
 The transparent medium for the
 Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is
 Himself all-pervading, unconditional, and everlasting.

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are waiting for us
To guide us through the rest of our spiritual life
And take us back to Godhead.

You are asking us to please accept the blessings you are offering us.

Your trying-to-be servant,

M. Dīna-śāraṇa Devī Dāśī

Giridhārī Swami

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I write to you from your ISKCON Vraja Eco Village, a rural community in the Philippines, which is locked down by the coronavirus pandemic. This deadly virus is spreading like the wind. Thousands in this country are expected to be infected, and a good number will certainly die.

Around the globe, more than one million people have already been infected, and tens of thousands have succumbed to death. In fear people act irrationally, their base qualities becoming even more apparent than usual. They panic buy, fighting even over toilet paper! And history teaches that things will get much worse before they get better.

Pandemics are hardly new to this planet. In fact, you told us about a plague that hit Calcutta in the late 1800s:

I remember, in Calcutta there was a very virulent type of plague epidemic in 1900 . . . 1898. So Calcutta became devastated. All people practically left Calcutta. Daily hundreds and hundreds of people were dying. I was one year old or one-and-a-half year old. I have seen what was happening. But there was plague epidemic. That I did not know. I . . . later on . . . I heard from my parents. [Lecture, Māyāpur, 20 June 1973]

Your prophetic words warn us:

Material advancement of civilization means advancement of the reactions of the threefold miseries due to celestial influence, earthly reactions, and bodily or mental pains. By the celestial influence of the stars there are many calamities like excessive heat, cold, rain, or lack of rain, and the aftereffects are famine, disease, and epidemic. The aggregate result is agony of the body and the mind. Man-made material science cannot do anything to counteract these threefold miseries. They are all punishments from the superior energy of *māyā* under the direction of the Supreme Lord. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.14.10, purport]

Owing to ignorance of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the masses have no idea why the world is faced with repeated calamities. But you succinctly explain why:

This is the law of nature. If you become disobedient to God, then *prakṛti*, or nature, will give you trouble in so many ways. And as soon as you become submissive, surrender to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, there will be no more natural disturbances. [Lecture, Māyāpur, 20 June 1973]

Physical and mental anguish now abound as the world crumbles to pieces before our eyes. People are desperate for solutions. The world stage is thus being set for your faithful followers to unite and teach countless millions throughout the world as they become eager to hear transcendental knowledge.

Devotees from around the world report that they have formed reading groups that study your books through video conferencing. They are appreciating you and your books much more than before. They realize that they should not take this valuable opportunity for granted. I have had such experiences, and I know many who have vowed to continue the online reading when the pandemic is over.

Opportunities are also opening to utilize the internet to meet new people and introduce your books and teachings to them. There is huge potential for online classes, courses, and other types of outreach programs.

As I write, I am receiving tragic news that several of your devotees around the world have contracted COVID-19 and some have already left their bodies. We pray that you have given them shelter at your lotus feet. We also pray that you will protect the other devotees and that they can continue to serve you for many years to come.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am on my knees with tears in my eyes, praying that you will bless us with sufficient intelligence to take the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness more seriously and to take full advantage of the myriad new preaching opportunities as they arise.

Please empower all of us to spread your glories far and wide. In this way, may history give you the credit you deserve for having saved the world in its darkest hour.

Your aspiring servant,

Giridhārī Swami

Girirāj Swami

Śrīla Prabhupāda and Lord Nityānanda's Mercy

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Knowledgeable devotees agree that you were a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*, an empowered incarnation, and you have indicated as much yourself. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Antya 2.13–14) states, “To deliver people in regions throughout the universe who could not meet Him, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally entered the bodies of pure devotees. Thus He empowered living beings [His pure devotees] by manifesting in them so much of His own devotion that people in all other countries became devotees by seeing them.”

And in your purport you explain,

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

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

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

Your learned godbrother Śrīpāda B. R. Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī Mahārāja also accepted that you were a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*, and he opined specifically by whose *śakti* you were empowered—Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu's.

Lord Nityānanda is renowned for delivering Jagāi and Mādhāi. As described briefly in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi 17.17), *tabe nistārila prabhu jagāi-mādhāi*: “Then the Lord delivered the two brothers Jagāi and Mādhāi.” In your purport, you write,

Jagāi and Mādhāi were two brothers born in Navadvīpa in a respectable *brāhmaṇa* family who later became addicted to all kinds of sinful activities. By the order of Lord Caitanya, both Nityānanda Prabhu and Haridāsa Ṭhākura used to preach the cult of Kṛṣṇa consciousness door to door. In the course of such preaching they found Jagāi and Mādhāi, two maddened drunken brothers, who, upon seeing them, began to chase them. The next day, Mādhāi struck Nityānanda Prabhu on the head with a piece of earthen pot, thus drawing blood. When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu heard of this, He immediately came to the spot, ready to punish both brothers, but when the all-merciful Lord Gaurāṅga saw Jagāi's repentant behavior, He immediately embraced him. By seeing the Supreme Personality of Godhead face to face and embracing Him, both the sinful brothers were at once cleansed. Thus they received initiation into the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* from the Lord and were delivered.

But as you wrote about yourself in your purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 16.65:

If one is true to Gaura-Nitāi's service in the disciplic succession, he can even exceed Nityānanda Prabhu's service. This is the process of disciplic succession. Nityānanda Prabhu delivered Jagāi



and Mādhāi, but a servant of Nityānanda Prabhu, by His grace, can deliver many thousands of Jagāis and Mādhāis. That is the special benediction of the disciplic succession. One who is situated in the disciplic succession can be understood by the result of his activities.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you took up the same mood of approaching anyone and everyone—pious or sinful, qualified or unqualified—without discrimination. As Nityānanda Prabhu said, in Kali-yuga practically everyone will be like Jagāi and Mādhāi. That may be more apparent in America and Europe than in India—though I did hear a talk in which you were discussing how demonic Western civilization is and how the leaders, and pretty much everyone, are demons, but then added, “Actually, in my country also, 80 percent are demons.” But still, what you encountered in 1965 when you came to America was something that people now, especially people in India, can’t even imagine.

Kṛṣṇa-candra Prabhu (Hrishikesh Mafatlal), from Mumbai, used to say that people cannot imagine who you approached when you came to America. He recommended that everyone see the early DVDs of you, first at 26 Second Avenue in New York, then at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. Most of us can’t believe, can’t imagine, the type of people you were approaching. And they didn’t always receive you or treat you well.

I hope all your followers have read *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*; everyone should read it, as well as see the DVD series *Following Śrīla Prabhupāda*. There was one incident when you were living in New York, in a loft in the Bowery, which was the most degraded part of the city, its skid row, inhabited mostly by drunks. But even they had a little respect. They would be sprawled out on the sidewalk and on the stairs leading up to your apartment, but somehow they sensed that you were a saintly person and would try to move over and make room for you to pass.

You were staying with a young man who seemed interested. In fact, you thought, “I’ll train him as a Vaiṣṇava.” But one day the young man went crazy, probably from taking LSD—the 1960s’ equivalent of the strong wine Jagāi and Mādhāi were drinking five hundred years ago. He went crazy and wanted to attack you. And he was ready to kill you, just as Mādhāi was ready to kill Nityānanda Prabhu. You bolted out of the room and ran down the stairs like Lord Nityānanda being chased by Jagāi and Mādhāi.

It is quite a history—what you endured for the sake of delivering the mercy of Gaura-Nitāi is inconceivable. On the boat to America you suffered two heart attacks, and even in America you had a lot of physical problems. But you endured everything—all these attacks of *māyā*—for the sake of delivering Gaura-Nitāi’s mercy to us. And what Nityānanda Prabhu wanted in India you have fulfilled outside India. What Nityānanda Prabhu wanted was fulfilled in Bengal, but through you it’s been fulfilled throughout the world. So you really are the embodiment of the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu. There’s no one else in the history of our *sampradāya*, no one after Nityānanda Prabhu, who has taken up that mood of approaching anyone and everyone without discrimination, without considering who is qualified and who is not.

And you delivered the same message: chant Kṛṣṇa’s name, worship Kṛṣṇa, follow Kṛṣṇa’s instructions—but not in so many words, because the people you were approaching didn’t even know who Kṛṣṇa was. When Nityānanda approached people in Navadvīpa and told them, “Chant Kṛṣṇa’s name, worship Kṛṣṇa, follow Kṛṣṇa’s instructions,” they knew who Kṛṣṇa was and they knew what He was saying. But in America and Europe nobody knew who Kṛṣṇa was. So “Just chant Kṛṣṇa’s name, worship Kṛṣṇa” had to be explained in detail in books, and thus you wrote so many books to explain who is Kṛṣṇa, what is Kṛṣṇa’s name, what are Kṛṣṇa’s instructions, how to chant Kṛṣṇa’s name, how to worship Kṛṣṇa, why we should surrender to Kṛṣṇa and follow Kṛṣṇa’s instructions—the same message that Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked Nityānanda Prabhu to deliver to everyone, but in an expanded form, because the people you were approaching had no idea of Kṛṣṇa’s identity or instructions.

When we go out with your books, it is like when Mahāprabhu sent Nityānanda and Haridāsa to approach people with that message. Sometimes devotees are not well received, but even Nityānanda and Haridāsa were not always well received. Caitanya Mahāprabhu would have nocturnal *kīrtanas* in Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura’s house, and if anyone was proud they were not allowed to enter. Only humble, pure devotees were allowed. So all these proud people in Navadvīpa were upset and angry that they weren’t

allowed to join the *kīrtana*, and when Nityānanda and Haridāsa came to their homes, they were angry with them—“Oh, you’ve come from that Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura”—and the people spread so many rumors about them: “They are thieves. They come to your door and say to chant Kṛṣṇa’s name and worship Kṛṣṇa, but really what they’re doing is looking in your house to see what you have so that they can come back at night and steal it.” The people spread a lot of false propaganda. So we have to accept that, expect it and accept it, without being deterred. It didn’t stop Nityānanda Prabhu, and it didn’t stop you, and it shouldn’t stop any of us.

So, your movement is the continuation of Nityānanda Prabhu’s mission, and you really had that mood. When one of your early disciples came to India and the Calcutta temple president phoned you in Bombay to tell you that the devotee was smoking *gañjā*, marijuana, and asked what to do, you told your secretary, Tamāl Krishna Goswami, to relay your response: “Tell him that if he doesn’t stop smoking *gañjā* I will reject him.” Afterwards, Tamāl Krishna Goswami asked you, “Is it true that if he doesn’t stop smoking *gañjā* you will reject him?” And you said, “No—I cannot reject anyone.” Tamāl Krishna Goswami asked, “But don’t you have to draw the line somewhere?” And you replied, “The mercy of Lord Nityānanda has no limit.” So, that was your mood; you were in the mood of Nityānanda Prabhu.

We are the recipients of Gaura-Nitāi’s mercy through you. By your mercy, we are chanting Kṛṣṇa’s name and worshiping Kṛṣṇa, accepting Kṛṣṇa as the goal of our lives. And it is also by your mercy and order that we preach the same message to others. We can speak to our capacity, and we can give people your books, which convey the same message of Mahāprabhu. We just elaborate on it and present it in a way that people without any background in Vedic knowledge can understand.

So, on this most sacred and blessed occasion, we can pray to you and Nityānanda Prabhu to inspire and empower us with this mood of humble persuasion. When Nitāi approached people, after giving them instruction He would say, “If you accept this instruction, I will consider you more dear to Me than My own life.” And if someone did not accept the sacred instruction, He would prostrate Himself at their feet and beg them to take it. He is Lord Balarāma, the first of all of Kṛṣṇa’s expansions; He is the origin of Mahā-saṅkarṣaṇa, who is in turn the origin of Mahā-Viṣṇu, Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, by whose breathing countless universes are generated from the pores of His body. And then a portion of that Mahā-Viṣṇu is Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and He enters into every universe and gives birth to Brahmā and engineers the creation of every universe. And Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu is the Supersoul in everyone’s heart. Nityānanda is that original Supreme Person, and He is rolling in the dust at people’s feet and begging them, “Just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.”

I saw that mood in you. You often tutored us in it, but I saw it personally. When we first went to Bombay, there was a program on the terrace of the house where we were staying—Seksaria Bhavan, on Marine Drive. It was very nice, very glamorous, near the sea, and our host, Kailash Seksaria, had invited all the elite, affluent, aristocratic people he knew in Bombay. And you, with the same humility as Nityānanda Prabhu, implored them, “I am taking the straw in my mouth and begging you, please chant Hare Kṛṣṇa”—just like Nityānanda Prabhu.

You often quoted a verse by Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī about how we should approach people the way Nityānanda Prabhu approached people. The verse is, *dante nidhāya tṛṇakam padayor nipatya*: “I take a straw in my mouth . . .” (it is a sign of utter humility) “and I bow at your feet.” *Kṛtvā ca kāku-śatam etad ahaṁ bravīmi*: “And I flatter you a hundred times.” *He sādhaḥ*: “O great learned sādhu.” *Sakalam eva vihāya dūrād*: “Whatever you have learned, you keep it far away from you.” And *gaurāṅga-candra-carāṇe kurutānūrāgam*: “Just accept the mercy of Lord Gaurāṅga, just surrender to Lord Gaurāṅga, become attached to Lord Gaurāṅga’s lotus feet.” And you did it yourself.

In that humble mood, Nityānanda was begging for people to take the holy name—falling at their feet, rolling in the dust, and begging them. And that, in essence, is what you did with us. None of us would be here today if you hadn’t done what you did.

In Bombay, an Indian gentleman came to you, pleading, “Please save me; please save me. Only you can save me. Please save me.” And you replied, “I cannot save you; you have to save yourself. But I can give you the process by which you can save yourself.”

So, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have given us the process by which we can, with your mercy, save ourselves, and on this auspicious occasion we resolve to follow the process in greater earnestness.

In one brief statement you encapsulated our entire procedure: “To approach Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, you need the mercy of Lord Caitanya. To get the mercy of Lord Caitanya, you need the mercy of Lord Nityānanda. And to get the mercy of Lord Nityānanda, you have to approach people like Jagāi and Mādhāi.” So, if we ever feel, “Oh, I’m too high, I’m too holy, I can’t approach these people,” we should think of that instruction and your own example and Nityānanda Prabhu’s example and really pray, beg, to be humble instruments of your love and mercy and compassion. And as your Guru Mahārāja told you, that will be good for us and good for the people who hear us.

In a talk in Bombay you said, “Our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is trying to make fools and rascals and sinful men wise. And actually it is happening. *Pāpī tāpī yata chila, hari-nāme uddhārila, tāra sākṣī jagāi-mādhāi*. You want evidence? Look at Jagāi and Mādhāi. Caitanya Mahāprabhu delivered two sinful brothers named Jagāi and Mādhāi. Now you can see how strong is Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s movement. Many thousands of Jagāis and Mādhāis are being delivered. Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s movement is greater than Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally delivered Jagāi and Mādhāi, but now, by His movement, thousands of Jagāis and Mādhāis are being delivered. This is the practical evidence. If you take advantage of it, you will be glorified, and we shall be glorified. This is our process.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, despite your merciful association and instructions, I am still possessed of some qualities of Jagāi and Mādhāi. So, on this auspicious occasion, please purify me and reform me.

*śrī-guru karuṇā-sindhu, adhama janāra bandhu,
lokanāth lokera jīvana
hā hā prabhu koro doyā, deho more pada-chāyā,
ebe jaśa ghuṣuk tribhuvana*

“O spiritual master, O ocean of mercy and friend of the fallen! O universal teacher and life of all people! Alas, alas, O master, please be merciful unto us and give us the shade of your lotus feet. May your glories now be proclaimed throughout the three worlds.”

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your aspiring, eternal, hopeful servant,

Girirāj Swami

Guru Gaurāṅga Dāsa

*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.

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you, the foremost servant of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanya and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

While traveling to Śrīdhām Māyāpur to attend the 534th anniversary celebration of Lord Caitanya's appearance and my first Annual GBC Meeting since 1988, I reflected on the instruction you once gave one of your disciples, who asked you, "Now you are present, Śrīla Prabhupāda, so everything is all right. But what if, in the course of time, when you are not here, ISKCON falls from the standard? What should I do?"

You replied without hesitating, "You are one of ISKCON's important members, so work for the correction, but don't leave."

Beloved Prabhupāda, this powerful instruction would periodically roil the hearts of your disciples during your lifetime, but never so much as since your departure.

During your presence among us, you were the steady captain of the ISKCON ship who always knew how to correct any misguided course. You made it easy for us to never leave ISKCON, which we equated with you.

ISKCON is still yours and always will be, so to keep faith with you, each of us must internalize the meaning of your instruction to "work for the correction" and never leave. By seeking our own correction, we make ISKCON better. By seeking to correct ISKCON, whenever needed, we better your Society for the benefit of the devotees and all humanity, now and for future generations. In so doing, we please you, Lord Caitanya's pure devotee.

In the faithful implementation of your instruction,

- we read your books and follow them in our daily lives;
- we make time to chant our rounds properly;
- we preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness, especially by book and *prasādam* distribution, in whatever condition of life we find ourselves;
- we maintain association with devotees;
- we sustain ourselves with *prasādam* only; and
- we willingly work for the correction of any problems in your Society and never leave.

Please fortify my will to be forever true to your instructions so that future generations will find ISKCON a hospitable home in which all may live harmoniously and confidently in difficult times.

Your loving servant always,

Guru Gaurāṅga Dāsa

Guru Prasād Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

In this offering I am contemplating the Vaiṣṇava quality of *kavi*, and how it is especially manifest in your person. Usually *kavi* means “poet” or “very knowledgeable person,” both of which apply to you perfectly.

The primeval *kavi* is Kṛṣṇa, as stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* 8.9—*kaviṁ purāṇam*. The *Bhāgavatam* begins by saying *tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye*. Lord Kṛṣṇa imparted the Vedic knowledge into the heart of the original *kavi* within the universe, Brahmā, and his representative in the *paramparā* is also *kavi*: one who gives real knowledge to the world. Some have transmitted pure knowledge to a small group, and some have given paltry knowledge and information to all, but you gave full knowledge to the entire world; therefore you are the most munificent *kavi*. When the *gopīs* spoke of Kṛṣṇa’s glories in their prayer beginning *tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam*, they extolled the virtues of beneficent persons who spread *kṛṣṇa-kathā* worldwide with the words *bhūri-dā janāḥ*, “those who are very liberal in distributing the greatest fortune to all.” At *Bhāgavatam* 11.11.32, a *kavi* is described as one who can resolve all apparent contradictions between ordinary *dharma* and pure *bhakti*. You have perfectly delineated the truth about Kṛṣṇa, free from the slightest tinge of external influences.

Kavi also means poet. The whole *Bhāgavatam* is perfect poetry, expertly presented by Vyāsadeva. However, one who can translate poetry into another language in the most beautiful fashion while preserving all the original nuances, meanings and message—such a *kavi* is a poet extraordinaire. In every expression you demonstrated how Kṛṣṇa’s glories and qualities are the source of beautiful descriptions that please the mind and consciousness.

I place this petition at your lotus feet: by your divine grace may I be able to describe one drop of those attributes in a way that will be pleasing to the devotees and others, thus allowing me to contribute a morsel of your divine legacy to others.

Your most fallen servant,

Guru Prasād Swami

Hridayānanda dāsa Goswami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

As I reached the age at which you came to America on the *Jaladuta* and founded your great mission,

ISKCON, I found I could understand and appreciate more than ever your bold, straightforward, and skillful presentation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Sociologists confirm that a movement must grow its core of committed followers in order to achieve sustainable, meaningful growth. You expressed this very idea in your unforgettable metaphor—you were looking not for many stars but for a moon that could actually illumine the darkness of Kali-yuga. You were of course paraphrasing a metaphor that Lord Caitanya gave in the first verse of His *Śikṣāṣṭakam*: *śreyah-kairava-candrikā-vitarāṇam*—the *saṅkīrtana* movement spreads (*vitarāṇam*) the moon rays (*candrikā*) that cause the night-blooming white lotus (*kairava*) of good fortune (*śreyah*) to blossom.

You personify and instantiate the Caitanya-candra, the moon of Caitanya, and you came to the West looking for descendent moons to continue and fortify Mahāprabhu's line. You preached boldly and openly, and with great skill, knowing that only the truth would convince the most sincere souls. You disclaimed any intention of loading up your movement with what sociologists sometimes call “free riders,” i.e., those who hover around the movement but never seriously serve it or commit to it.

If ISKCON is to grow significantly, we must attract moons, committed members who publicly declare and practically demonstrate their deep devotion to your mission. Your followers who ardently wish to assist you in this task must utilize *upāya-kauśalya*, often translated in Buddhism as “skill in means.” We must preserve entirely the purity and integrity of your message and mission, and yet present them in a skillful way that attracts the world in which we live. I pray you will bless us to accomplish this urgent task.

Your servant,

Hridayānanda dāsa Goswami

Jayapāṭaka Swami

My dear spiritual father, His Divine Grace Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda!

Please accept my respectful obeisances!

At this time, we are remembering Your Divine Grace—how you utilized every opportunity to preach the message of Lord Caitanya. Now we are under the pandemic of the coronavirus. This offers us an opportunity to request all the people of the world to chant the name of God, as you have instructed. We remember how you gave out the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He said that no matter how fallen or how sinful a person was, He would deliver them. But He said that if a person offends a Vaiṣṇava, then He will not deliver him! You once told us how in the presence of your guru everyone was very respectful, but that after he departed your godbrothers began to fight with each other. You also said that even in your presence your disciples were fighting. However, since you left we have been working together under the GBC. So without your mercy, how is it possible that we will be delivered? I am hoping that I can be freed of any offense I may have committed, knowingly or unknowingly, to the Vaiṣṇavas or to Your Divine Grace.

We see that Kṛṣṇa is Yogeśvara, the greatest of all magicians, and so He can do anything He wants. We hope that by your mercy, somehow Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya will inspire all the people to take up *bhakti-yoga* at this time of worldwide pandemic. I surrender at your lotus feet and, by your mercy, I hope to continue serving till my last breath. And I hope that the future generations will serve Your Divine Grace with full dedication!

The *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* predicted that there will be a Golden Age during this Kali-yuga, when

people will become Vaiṣṇavas and chant the holy names, that this age would last for ten thousand years, and that it would start five thousand years after the beginning of Kali-yuga. You came five thousand years after the beginning of Kali-yuga, and Lord Caitanya came about four hundred years before you did. We see that Lord Caitanya empowered you to usher in the Golden Age. And this coronavirus pandemic has brought the world to a standstill—travel between countries is not happening or is highly restricted. Therefore at this time we pray for your mercy so that the present worldwide crisis will inspire all the people to read your books, chant the holy name, pray to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and practice *bhakti-yoga*.

At this all-auspicious time of your Vyāsa-pūjā, we bow down to your lotus feet, offer our *puṣpāñjali* three times, and pray for your mercy. Please forgive us for any offenses we have made, and allow us to serve you eternally.

Your servant,

Jayapatāka Swami

Kavicandra Swami

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

*śrī-caitanya-mano-'bhīṣṭaṁ sthāpitaṁ yena bhū-tale
svayaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ dadāti sva-padāntikam*

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. When will Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, who has established within this material world the mission to fulfill the desire of Lord Caitanya, give me shelter under his lotus feet?

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

When I first joined your ISKCON, we were told not to write to you since you needed to translate. I guess that has stuck with me, since when the time comes to write a Vyāsa-pūjā offering, I have trouble writing.

You have so many erudite followers all over the world who glorify you so nicely. My attempts are like a donkey's braying in comparison.

You have given so many invaluable gifts that we have no way to know all of them. The most prominent one is the *mahā-mantra*:

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

By your determination and love for Kṛṣṇa, the *mahā-mantra* is now being chanted all over the world, following Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's prediction.

*nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālāḥ
etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durdaivam idṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ*

“My Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, in Your holy name there is all good fortune for the living entity, and therefore You have many names, such as ‘Kṛṣṇa’ and ‘Govinda,’ by which You expand Yourself. You have invested all Your potencies in those names, and there are no hard and fast rules for remembering them. My dear Lord, although You bestow such mercy upon the fallen, conditioned souls by liberally teaching Your holy names, I am so unfortunate that I commit offenses while chanting the holy name, and therefore I do not achieve attachment for chanting.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya* 20.17)

By your causeless mercy I am still chanting regularly, although my realizations are limited. I am realizing this one line more and more. “I am so unfortunate that I commit offenses while chanting the holy name, and therefore I do not achieve attachment for chanting.”

This is confirmed by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura:

*kabe ha'be bolo se-dina āmār
(āmār) aparādha ghuci', śuddha nāme ruci,
kṛpā-bale ha'be hṛdoye sañcār*

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

One proof of your divine qualities is that you are tolerating me.

Another great gift of yours is *sādhū-saṅga*. You created an international society of Vaiṣṇavas and sent them out to give association to anyone and everyone. Again, you bring the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* to life:

*'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.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 22.54)

Unfortunate as I am, I have not taken advantage of this mercy. I feel like Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura wrote the following verses from his song *Gorā Pahunī* just for me:

- (3) Avoiding the association of saintly persons, I sported merrily in the company of materialistic rascals. For that reason I have become strung up in the noose of my own fruitive activities.
- (4) I perpetually drank the horrible poison of mundane sense gratification, having never absorbed myself in the divine mellows of the *kīrtana* glorifying Lord Gaura.
- (5) Oh, why has my heart not experienced any satisfaction? And why has Narottama dāsa not simply perished?



Next on the list of your most important gifts is your books, which are spreading and revealing the holy names throughout the world.

*kṛṣṇe sva-dhāmopagate dharma-jñānādibhiḥ saha
kalau naṣṭa-dṛśām eṣa purāṇārko 'dhunoditaḥ*

“This *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the Age of Kali shall get light from this *Purāṇa*.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.43)

And your most important gift: your example. You exemplified the twenty-six qualities of a devotee and freely associated with us, leaving an unlimited legacy.

*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janaḥ
sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas tad anuvartate*

“Whatever action a great man performs, common men follow. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 3.21)

*yad yad ācarati śreyān itaras tat tad iḥate
sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas tad anuvartate*

“The mass of people follow the example of a leader in society and imitate his behavior. They accept as evidence whatever the leader accepts.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.2.4)

Just after arriving in the USA you wrote a poem called *Mārkine Bhāgavata-dharma*, which includes the following verse, in which you address Lord Kṛṣṇa:

*taba icchā hoy jadi tādera uddhār
bujhibe niścai tabe kathā se tomār*

“I wish that You may deliver them. Therefore if You so desire their deliverance, then only will they be able to understand Your message.”

Once one of my godbrothers, after watching me distribute books, said, “You are proof of Lord Caitanya’s mercy. You have no material qualification, yet you can distribute books.” So I think that is why you have picked me up and kept me around, just to show me your causeless mercy and tolerance. So please let me stay in the association of your devotees and somehow learn to serve them.

At my initiation you gave me a hint that I needed causeless mercy. You said, “Kavicaandra was a great devotee of Lord Nityānanda.” If I ever hope to get causeless mercy, I have to distribute the mercy of Lord Nityānanda in the form of your books. Others are doing so much more. I am not even like the squirrel trying to help the monkeys.

Your servant,

Kavicaandra Swami

Madhusevita dāsa

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

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

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, here are twenty-six reasons why we can't fail you.

We can't fail you because you are most dear to Kṛṣṇa.
We can't fail you because you are Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's envoy.
We can't fail you because you are Nītāi-Gaurāṅga's mercy incarnate.
We can't fail you because you are the pride and joy of the previous *ācāryas*.
We can't fail you because you underwent so many tribulations just to save us.
We can't fail you because nobody ever loved us as you did.
We can't fail you because you created the family of ISKCON.
We can't fail you because your instructions are impeccable.
We can't fail you because your adorable disarming smile conquered us.
We can't fail you because you tolerated so much nonsense.
We can't fail you because you turned us from failures to *sādhakas*.
We can't fail you because you are Prabhupāda.
We can't fail you because you devastated our foolish pride.
We can't fail you because you annihilated impersonalism and voidism.
We can't fail you because you are the person *bhāgavata*.
We can't fail you because it would be so stupid to do so.
We can't fail you because your deep affection left us no way out.
We can't fail you because you cried to Kṛṣṇa for us.
We can't fail you because you told us you depended on us.
We can't fail you because if we do, remorse will kill us.
We can't fail you because we want to see you again.
We can't fail you because without you there is only void.
We can't fail you because you are carefully watching us.
We can't fail you because if we do, Lord Nityānanda will get mad at us.
We can't fail you because it would displease so many wonderful devotees.
And finally, we can't fail you because by some inconceivable fortune we have developed love for you.

Your humble servant,

Madhusevita dāsa

Mukunda Goswami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You wrote Kali'd relent
For 10,000 years
A time God-sent for sure
mitigating fears.

You gave us hope
The world would change
We read in your books
Ten thousand years, a sizeable range.

Where *varṇāśrama* would rule
And demons would slump

Life'd be rural
With sin at the dump.

Like summer in winter
Reversals occur
Un-normal things happen
The *Purāṇas* concur.

You gave us hope
The world would change
We read in your books
How the Lord would arrange.

* * *

Location: 1st Avenue, Manhattan, New York City. Time: 6:30 A.M. Date: 31 August 1966.

At the UN we sat
Silently chanting
On the sidewalk with you
No street walkers standing

To watch the oddity
Ten sat cross-legged
Against a wall
It looked like we'd beg'd.

A scruffy lot
A day with the prof
Passers-by'd scoff
Thought we fed at the trough.

The "peace formula"
Some handed out
We must've looked weird
Of this none would doubt.

Our first day out
Summer in the city
No clouds in sight
Our necks not yet dirty & gritty.

But it was lovely
We sat with the swami
On a mission important
The morning was balmy.

T'was a clear day,
Not yet hot
What could you say
A threat we were not
What a beautiful day.

Your servant,

Mukunda Goswami

Nirañjana Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

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

Today is the anniversary of your divine appearance in this world. I therefore do not want to miss this opportunity to describe a small drop of the ocean of mercy you have bestowed upon this most wretched and fallen soul.

You made your way into my life when I was just under twenty years old. Well, actually, you made your first attempt to pluck me out of this illusory mess when I was seventeen. But I was just too dull to take notice.

It was September, 1970. I was walking into a building at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst to purchase books for my freshman courses. Just by the entrance, one of your followers was sitting at a table with a small display of your literature. I stopped, looked at the display, picked up a booklet, glanced at the cover, took another look at your follower, thought he looked much too strange to take seriously, quickly dropped the booklet back where it came from, and then just continued on as usual, as I had been programmed to live since time immemorial. I had “more important” books to fill my backpack with—textbooks on psychology 101, computer science, calculus, and chemistry, and a few other books not essential for spiritual life.

Later that same day, while walking into the back entrance of my dormitory, I saw this same follower of yours sitting cross-legged on the grass a short distance away. This time he looked even stranger—his eyes were closed, his head was rhythmically bouncing back and forth, and all it looked like to me was that he was talking to himself. I distinctly remember feeling relieved that I hadn’t taken him seriously. Little did I know the insidiousness behind that illusory relief I was feeling at the time.

Looking back, my life during those college years, from 1970 to 1972, can be best described in one word: insane. I tried so hard to extract pleasure from the mind, body, and senses. It seemed as if there was nothing I wasn’t willing to try. That illusory relief I felt from not answering your first call was very short-lived. Māyā held me tightly in her clutches and relentlessly pierced me with her trident of the threefold miseries. But I didn’t want to give up her embrace.

It was in the autumn of 1972 that I wandered into a bookstore looking for a book on yoga. I’m sure you must know this story quite well. I will therefore not go into all the details. This time, however, you cracked the code of that same program on which I had been operating ever since Māyā had captured me so long ago.

What happened is that this time not only did I pick up one of your books once again, but I glanced

through it. It was your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, and becoming attracted by the illustration of a yogī, I decided to purchase the book and take it with me. That same day I started reading it, and I continued to do so every evening after returning from work.

I had doubts about what I was reading, but there was something in it all that started to convince me you were telling me the truth. Nobody had ever told me the truth the way you spoke it to me. It resonated in my heart, it shook my deep-rooted misconceptions of life to the core, and it gave me a strong sense of a purpose for living—something about which I had seriously been asking myself again and again. “What is my purpose for living?” Finally, you appeared in my life to answer this and so many of my other unanswered questions.

Not long thereafter I left my external attachments behind and began offering myself to you more and more in your service. Those times were bittersweet. Bitter because I realized that in my heart I was still clinging to the attachments I had left behind. But sweet because you were there to reconfirm again and again in my heart that you would also be there to help me if I would remember and depend on your instructions.

I continued to serve in the association of your disciples, and shortly thereafter, in a letter dated May 27, 1974, you accepted me as your disciple, gave me the name Nirañjana dāsa, and instructed my temple president, Trai Prabhu:

Keep him carefully now. Kṛṣṇa Consciousness means to create ideal men, so you must set the example in following the rules and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and see that others are doing it also.

Those words—“Keep him carefully now”—never cease to amaze me. Such an inconceivable blessing to know that you even wanted me to be kept carefully. What unimaginable good fortune!

These words continue to give me great hope. They mean that not only then but now and on into the never-ending future you must have some use for this fallen and incognizant *jīva*. Otherwise, why would you want me to be kept carefully?

These thoughts have become and remain a fundamental purpose for my living and serving . . . while patiently waiting for the time when you will call me to your lotus feet once again, wherever you are and for whatever reason you wanted me to be kept carefully for some future service.

On this most auspicious day of your divine appearance, I thank you again and again for your unlimited care for me.

Thank you for the holy name emanating from your lotus lips, for your books, for your lectures, for your *bhajans*, for your instructions, for calling Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīvallabha to manifest Themselves before us, for your movement, for establishing temples and Deities in the holy *dhāmas*, for my godbrothers and godsisters, who always remind me about my eternal debt to you, and for your granddisciples and future followers, about whom you also very much care. I also thank you for transparently connecting me to all of our previous *ācāryas*, whose sublime teachings nourish me in my efforts to please you.

Your eternal debtor, always at your lotus feet,

Nirañjana Swami

Praghoṣa dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

For sure the world needs the glorious message you delivered to us when you arrived in America in 1965, arguably more than ever.

May I be so cheeky as to ask you for something on this most glorious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā? My request is to inspire us all to be so much more effective in spreading far and wide the message you gave us. We have made some progress since you left, but there is so, so much more we need to do.

Thank you! I fall at your lotus feet in awe of all that you did on behalf of your beloved Guru Mahārāja and Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Your inspiration is an ever-increasing reality for me, and I offer you my sincere thanks for that sublime benediction.

Hoping to be your eternal servant,

Praghoṣa dāsa

Prahlādānanda Swami

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

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

As I am writing this offering, there is a global concern about the spread of a virus. People's lives are personally, financially, and socially impacted on an unprecedented level.

During a morning walk in Māyāpur on 4 April 1975, Śrīla Prabhupāda mentioned a world crisis that might affect everyone's lives. The following exchange ensued:

Haṁsadūta: So Prabhupāda, is there something we should do to prepare ourselves for this disaster?

Prabhupāda: What?

Haṁsadūta: This coming war.

Prabhupāda: You should simply prepare for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Everyone is already facing the greatest material disaster in the form of death. The only actual remedy and preparation for this disaster is to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. However, to practically do that, we should not only chant Hare Kṛṣṇa but also serve Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission.

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mission is to distribute the *saṅkīrtana* movement of hearing and chanting the glories of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But to make this mission effective and successful, ISKCON needs to be organized intelligently, in a way that maximizes its members’ cooperation and their focus on this mission. ISKCON leaders should, according to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s teachings and example, focus on how to apply his principles of spiritual knowledge in action and teach their followers to do the same. That can inspire and empower ISKCON members to serve in Lord Caitanya’s cultural revolution and spiritualize the currently misdirected human civilization.

Your servant,

Prahlādānanda Swami

Rādhā-Krishna dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful obeisances! All glories to Your Divine Grace!

“You built a house in which the whole world can live.” We’ve heard that quote so many times. The question is, Do we believe it? Or if we go a bit further, Do we really live it?

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were a master of community-building and a master of developing unity in diversity within your society. It’s a great mystery how to properly achieve unity in diversity—how not to be so strict that one unnecessarily excludes many good ideas, and how not to be so liberal that one compromises foundational principles. As Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, we have to live a balanced life. It is also true for social development. Extremism will not lead to Kṛṣṇa conscious results and will just divide the society. We have to learn from past examples, and as leaders we have to understand and show the path forward by being the best example we can.

So many things have happened over the last year. All around the world so many devotees have worked together to achieve common goals, and as I look back I have to say that I am proud to be part of ISKCON’s family.

We’ve seen great success in the TOVP efforts, strategic planning, the GBC College, Māyāpur development, and so much more internationally. And of course, a lot of things are progressing in the area where I try to serve the devotees directly: Hungary, Romania, Turkey, and Greece. Community building and social development are the keys to expanding our devotee community. That’s what we should do. Leaders need to read your books, Śrīla Prabhupāda, through the lens of how to use your teachings in expanding the movement by developing a great Kṛṣṇa conscious society.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please give us your blessings so we can be successful in serving your wonderful ISKCON.

Your servant,

Rādhā-Krishna dāsa

Rādhānāth Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my life, as your humble servant.

In your compassion to all the world, you have opened the doors to the unborn and undying nature of the soul. You revealed that the living force within us is forever a loving servant of the supreme, all-beautiful, all-merciful, and all-loving Personality of Godhead.

Just prior to Kali-yuga, Kṛṣṇa descended to attract our hearts into the pastimes of Vṛndāvana. Out of infinite kindness He came again as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to taste and distribute ecstatic spiritual love through the *saṅkīrtana* movement. In doing so, He showed us the simplest way to reach the most intimate level of liberation.

But the darkness of Kali hid this blessing from the world.

Then, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you came to let the light of Mahāprabhu's mercy shine throughout the world and dispel the darkness of material suffering.

While people were obsessed with finding solutions to their endless problems, you spoke the simple truth, that the real problems are birth, old age, disease, and death. Repeatedly you warned us of the nature of the material world, where suffering and death are inevitable.

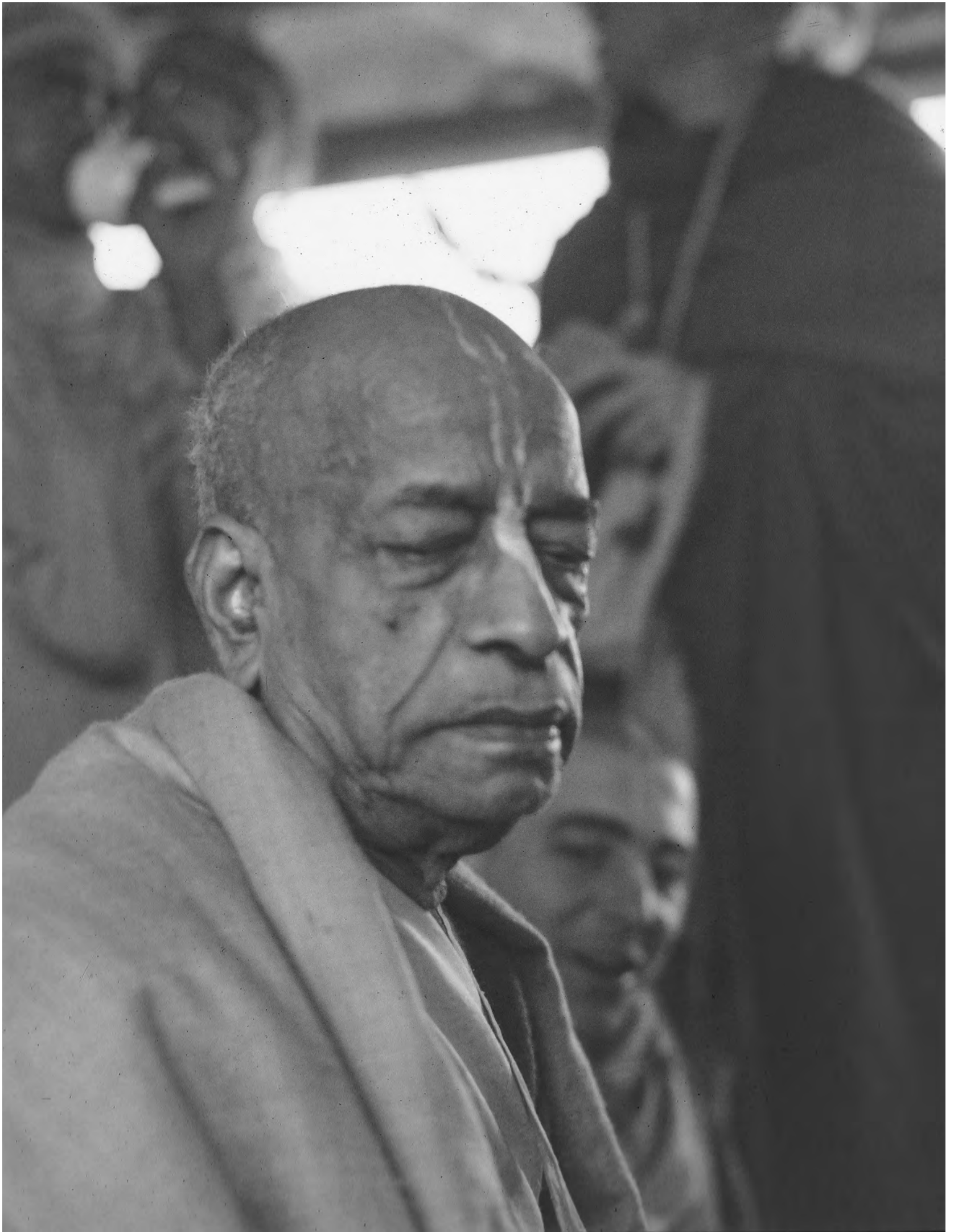
With the coming of the coronavirus, the world is now on its knees in fear, confusion, and despair. This is but a glimpse of what will come in Kali-yuga. But, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you enlightened us with an eternal truth, where Kṛṣṇa's love and endless joy are forever awaiting. Every situation is an opportunity to seek shelter in God's grace and share this mercy among devotees. In this spirit, as a devotional community, we have the chance to share the treasure of *bhakti* with the world.

As the embodiment of Kṛṣṇa's divine grace, you pleaded with us to rise above petty differences and distractions and unite to receive and distribute Lord Caitanya's mercy. In your compassion for all beings, you taught us the purest meaning of love. You entrusted us with the holy names, a medicine that can immunize all of us from the pandemic of ignorance and all its subsequent sufferings. You opened the gates to the spiritual world, which is seated in our own hearts, where Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha will smile upon us and welcome us home.

I pray, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that you will please help me overcome my seemingly endless pathetic weaknesses, so that my every heartbeat may be an offering of love and gratitude to you.

An aspiring servant of your servants,

Rādhānāth Swami



Rāmāi Swami

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

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

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as I was writing this homage, the world was placed into great difficulty by a new virus that has affected everyone's lives. Many people have died, and world leaders have become perplexed as to what to do. They cannot understand the subtle laws of karma dictating that when there is an abundance of sinful life, painful consequences must follow. Everyone is very afraid.

However, as devotees, we are not afraid. A devotee sees the hand of the Lord in everything, even distress and suffering. He remains calm and fixed in the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Once, you gave a simple definition of being a Vaiṣṇava. You said that a Vaiṣṇava is happy to sit and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and if there is some service to be done for the Lord, he will gladly do it.

In your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.22.24 you write:

Sometimes we receive letters from neophyte devotees questioning why they have fallen sick although pursuing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They should learn from this verse that they have to become tolerant (*dvandva-titikṣayā*). This is the world of duality. One should not think that because he has fallen sick he has fallen from Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness can continue without impediment from any material opposition. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa therefore advises in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.14), *tāms titikṣasva bhārata*: “My dear Arjuna, please try to tolerate all these disturbances. Be fixed in your Kṛṣṇa conscious activities.”

When you were present, you gave us such a beautiful Kṛṣṇa conscious life to follow, with *kīrtana*, Deity worship, preaching, *prasādam*, etc. If we continuously remember your example and follow your instructions, we will remain blissful in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness, no matter what our position is in the material world.

With heads in lowly reverence bent,
And filled with thoughts of joy we went,
Wonderful our Deities, true and bold,
Whose ears were ringed with polished gold.

The devotees worked in full accord
To seek the pleasure of the Lord.
We gazed with devoted eyes and heart—
Certainly, this was a beautiful start.

The Lord's *līlās* were sweet to hear;
 Countless pastimes soothed our ear.
 Like the moon that grows so well,
 Out *bhakti* creeper began to swell.

In addition, there was something more,
 The dear representative of the Lord
 Who came and lifted us up so kindly
 From material life—we followed blindly.

We respected him because he spoke the truth
 To us who had come from reckless youth.
 Divine knowledge our eternal father gave;
 Many disciples' lives did he lovingly save.

Others didn't know they had this friend.
 Why was it so difficult to comprehend?
 For those who had spent their lives in *māyā*,
 It was hard to get out and go much higher.

To waste their lives was a sad negligence;
 It decreased their spiritual intelligence.
 So much misery and suffering all around—
 Birth, death, old age, disease in every town.

But for those who were blessed by Śrīla Prabhupāda,
 Their spiritual lives became easy, not very hard.
 They attained the service of the Lord so sweet—
 Most fortunate to take shelter at His lotus feet.

Your insignificant disciple,

Rāmāi Swami

Ravindra Svarūpa dāsa

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

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

*vāñchā-kalpa-tarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

As I write this, I am “locked down” and practicing “social distancing” along with most of the human race, all in thrall to the depredations of an itty bitty teeny tiny virus, avidly transferring and replicating itself whenever and wherever society socializes.

News outlets relay much of the anguish and agony of sustained isolation.

It’s a great time for loners like me, but not so much so for our own “International Society,” whose premier practice, *saṅkīrtana*, bears the prefix “*san-*,” meaning “together.”

And yet, even so, we are with each other, knitted closely together by that great and holy living network of indivisible bonds woven by Śrīla Prabhupāda, and even now sustained by Śrīla Prabhupāda, a marvelous network whose vast extent reaches from Bhūr, to Bhuvar, to Svar, and to Goloka.

Moreover, I believe Śrīla Prabhupāda has prepared for this eventuality. As part of his legacy, he has given us the basis for a true global unity that will flourish more and more, even as the false globalism based on lust for wealth and power falls, bit by bit, apart.

This false globalism has ravaged Mother Earth, and the current pandemic is only one of the signs that she can take no more. The true and valid global unity fostered by Śrīla Prabhupāda will make food and energy production as local as possible and transform the family from a tenuous, frangible unit of consumption into a durable and sustainable unit of production. (See Śrīla Prabhupāda’s 1956 essay “The Conception of Gita Nagari.”)

Śrīla Prabhupāda also taught us that in Vedic culture all living beings are *prajā*, or citizens, and are to be protected by the king. This means, in contemporary terms, that all living beings—not merely humans but also animals, and even trees and forests—have “civil rights.” This is a part of our ecology of the spirit.

All the same, modern technology is to be used when it is compatible with this spiritual ecology and favorable for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thus Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura accepted the printing press and the publishing of journals, magazine, and books. And now, in the same spirit, we engage computers and the global internet.

In this way, we have the formula for the future. At the same time, we remain connected with our ISKCON founder-*ācārya* and, through him, with the four historic Vaiṣṇava founder-*ācāryas*, whose teachings and institutions achieved fulfillment in Lord Caitanya and his ever-expanding *saṅkīrtana* movement.

Let us continue to increase Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mercy in space and time for the benefit of all living beings.

Begging for Śrīla Prabhupāda’s blessings,

His fallen servant,

Ravindra Svarūpa dāsa

Romapāda Swami

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

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

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

*mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ paṇḍurāṁ laṅghayate girim
yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande śrī guruṁ dina-tāraṇam*

My dear and most respected spiritual master and eternal father,

Please accept my most humble and respectful obeisances in the dust of your most merciful lotus feet! All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

In this age of abundant darkness, can anyone estimate how expansive and how vital is the role that Your Divine Grace continues to play and manifest in the lives of sincere seekers of Truth? Is there a limit?

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja provided all his followers with the Śrī Śrī Viśva-vaiṣṇava Rāja-sabhā, conventionally known as the Gauḍīya Mission. You, as a recipient of immeasurable *kṛṣṇa-śakti*, during your lifetime manifested around the globe that very blueprint received from your Guru Mahārāja, namely an actual worldwide spiritual organizational structure, giving shape and life to the *Bhāgavata* vision expressed by Nārada Muni to Vyāsa: the vision of a revolution in the impious lives of those captured by the distractions of this Age of Kali.

After Vyāsadeva received Nārada's order to refine the *Bhāgavata* vision which he had previously composed in a synopsis form, Vyāsa compiled the current form of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* according to that order.

Kṛṣṇa Himself, in the mood of His own devotee, appearing as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu along with His followers, continued carrying forward that precise vision. Yet it was *you* who factually manifested this vision within this entire world—in an unprecedented fashion and within such a short period of time never before seen in the history of religion.

I would like to cite three profound examples of this profound mercy, which continues to impact the world today: your Bhaktivedānta purports, the Vṛndāvana Temple, and currently in your having given such prominence to the development of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium.

You wrote to a disciple on 18 November 1972: "These books and magazines are our most important propaganda weapons to defeat the ignorance of maya's army, and the more we produce such literature and sell them profusely all over the world, the more we shall deliver the world from the suicide course."

In Vṛndāvana, streams of pilgrims come to the holy *dhāma* from all over the world. Daily these international spiritual seekers pour through the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple, receiving the holy name and the mercy of the Deities you personally installed at great sacrifice.

Recent developments in Māyāpur regarding the near-completion of some portions of the TOVP are yet another display of your current influence in spiritualizing the entire world. Ambarīṣa Prabhu shared with me that he had no expectation that this project would have moved so swiftly to its present stage of development. This is all due to your empowerment, your imparting *śakti* to many of your sincere followers to carry out your mission.

Recalling all these achievements, I find myself asking another question, in addition to the one raised

at the beginning of this offering: How many souls are actually searching for the Truth? Out of those who may be capable of attaining *siddhi*, or perfection, the *Bhagavad-gītā* teaches us that few truly are even interested or capable of approaching the Personality of Godhead. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains that this Age of Kali is so bad that the rare sincere seeker is commonly misled. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wrote an entire book explicitly dedicated to guiding those who are searching for Truth. Faithfully following in his footsteps, you most liberally gave the entire world the same wisdom and more: the opportunity to receive the fullness of Kṛṣṇa's mercy through His most-rare devotional service, leading to *vraja-prema*, and all that is included.

With profound awe, I express my deepest gratitude for having been one such soul whose fortune of life was to come in contact with you and receive the seed of *vraja-bhakti*.

That you successfully gave this most valuable gift to the entire world proves that you were empowered with *kṛṣṇa-śakti*, which you combined with your indomitable determination. Was there opposition? Were there obstacles? Setbacks? Challenges? Forces of Kali of so many varieties presented themselves before you, which you had to contend with, despite your being Kṛṣṇa's empowered and protected instrument, dedicated exclusively to manifesting in unadulterated form the *Bhāgavata* vision within this world. Did that deter your determination? Not in the slightest!

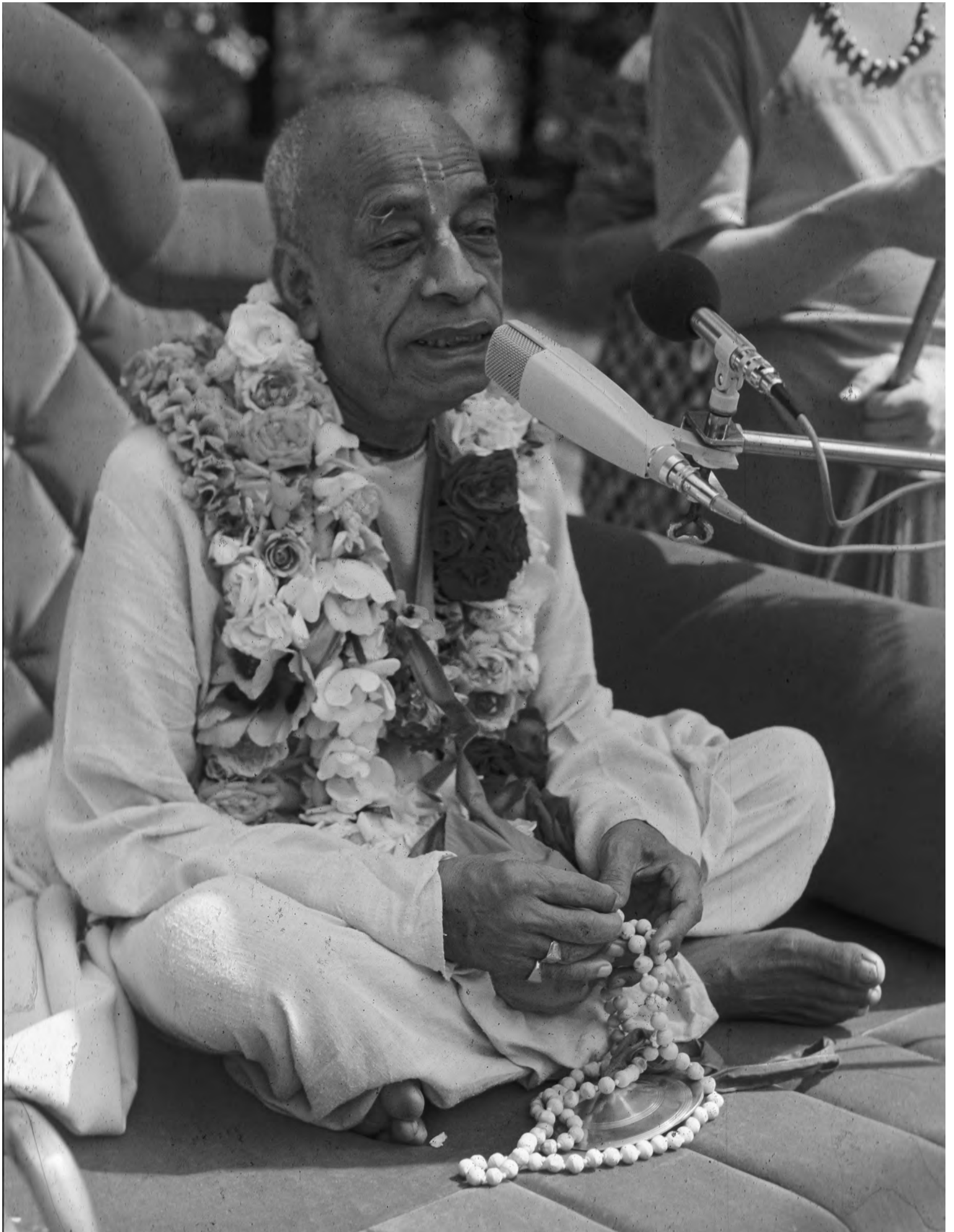
Most of us who are striving to assist you in furthering Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission are far less than perfect. We make mistakes. Our determination does not come close to matching yours. Yet, despite all our shortcomings, unflinchingly our faith rests in you and the most munificent Lord Caitanya, whom you are serving.

Kindly accept me, despite my error-filled attempts to assist and serve you favorably. Pleasing you is my life and soul, the real meaning and value of my life.

I am at your feet, begging for your continued mercy. Please keep me forever and ever engaged in your service.

Your humble servant,

Romapāda Swami



Homages from



Non-GBC
Sannyāsīs

Amala-bhakta Swami

I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, His Divine grace, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, having taken shelter at His lotus feet. O servant of His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī, you are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

O spiritual master, please accept my appreciation for your having mercifully saved my life from committing endless sins and for your having blessed me with the means of attaining pure love for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Begging to remain your servant . . .

Amala-bhakta Swami

Bhakti Anugraha Janārdana Swami

My dear beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances unto the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to you on this most auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā!

Your whole movement is remembering, glorifying, and worshiping you today as the dearmost bona fide representative of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the disciplic succession. Today is that most special moment when your followers re-dedicate themselves unto you and deepen their surrender unto the Supreme Lord under your benevolent guidance.

In your letters you often stressed that reading your books must be an integral part of your disciples' daily *sādhana*. In a letter to a disciple you wrote:

[Y]our first duty is to read my books. Otherwise, how will you preach? In order to remain steadily fixed in Krishna consciousness there must be a sound philosophical understanding, otherwise it will become only sentiment. Whenever you find time, please read my books. [Letter to Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami, 5 January 1976]

The knowledge that one derives from reading your books makes us convinced to surrender to the Supreme Lord and chant His holy names, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are present in your books, and as you said, "I will never die. I will live forever in my books." Whenever we want to have your association, all we have to do is open your books and read them. Out of humility you also said that you did not write your books but that actually Lord Kṛṣṇa wrote them and that you were the medium by which they were recorded. You also said that your purports are your emotional ecstasies.

You are the personification of humility, as expressed in so many of your letters to your disciples:

It is my duty to help you always in the matter of understanding Krishna consciousness, and whatever I am trying to bestow upon you all is the gift of Lord Krishna directly—I am just doing the work of a bearer. There is nothing of my personal contribution, and I ask all your mercy so that I may be able to distribute Krishna’s message as it is without any deviation. That will make Krishna, myself, and all others eternally happy. It is so nice, sublime and easy to perform. [Letter to Himavati, 14 June 1968]

I thank you very much for your nice surrendering attitude by placing yourself at my disposal. Of course, I am using you already in the service of the Lord, and personally I cannot utilize your service. So whatever I demand from you, it is for Krishna’s sake. Personally I am humble servant of Krishna as you are also, but I am deputed to accept your service just to transfer it to Krishna as via media. I shall try to do this service to you and Krishna throughout my life, and I am so proud to have such assistants as you are to help me in my mission to push on the Krishna Consciousness Movement. [Letter to Dayānanda, 1 May 1969]

I have received your description of the books sold during three-day Christmas period, and I am very much pleased upon all of the nice boys and girls who have helped me in this way. I could never have thought it was possible to distribute so many of our literatures. Therefore I can understand it is simply Kṛṣṇa’s blessing us for your sincerely working on His behalf. Actually, that is the secret of my success, not that personally I have done anything wonderful, but that because those who are helping me are sincere, they have done the work, that is the reason for our success all over the world where others have failed. A little sincerity is very difficult thing in this age of hypocrisy and bluff, but I am so fortunate that Kṛṣṇa has sent me all of you nice boys and girls who are sincerely working. Please convey to all of them my deepest appreciation. [Letter to Karandhara, 9 January 1973]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please shower your mercy upon us and bless us to continuously follow in your footsteps so that we may not go astray and get lost in the quagmire of this material existence. Please empower us to become stronger and stronger every day in our practice of devotional service and thus help others as well in the process of devotional service. You are our only shelter, life after life, and by your able guidance many more conditioned souls will be able to cross the ocean of material suffering and ultimately rest upon the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara.

I beg to remain your eternal servant,

Bhakti Anugraha Janārdana Swami

Bhakti Bṛhat Bhāgavata Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

In the early 70s Hamsadūta Prabhu wrote an article for your *Back to Godhead* magazine describing a lecture you gave in December, 1970, to the members of the Lions Club in Indore. You told the audience, “In three years I accomplished one hundred times more than all the swamis and yogis who have come to the West in the past century.”

Now, almost fifty years later, Your Divine Grace and your followers have accomplished thousands of times more in giving Kṛṣṇa consciousness to almost everyone in most towns, villages, and cities in this world.

All glories to your causeless mercy!

On a morning walk on January 4, 1976, in Nellore, the following exchange took place:

Śravanānanda: Prabhupāda, they said that if Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the Western countries, why didn’t He go there Himself? That’s what they told us.

Prabhupāda: So, He left the credit for me. [laughter]

Devotees: *Jaya! Haribol!*

Prabhupāda: He loves His devotee more than Himself.

Please bless me with love for Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and attachment for your mission to spread the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa worldwide.

All glories to your boundless compassion upon us all!

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

With my deepest gratitude, eternally,

Your servants’ servant,

Bhakti Bṛhat Bhāgavata Swami

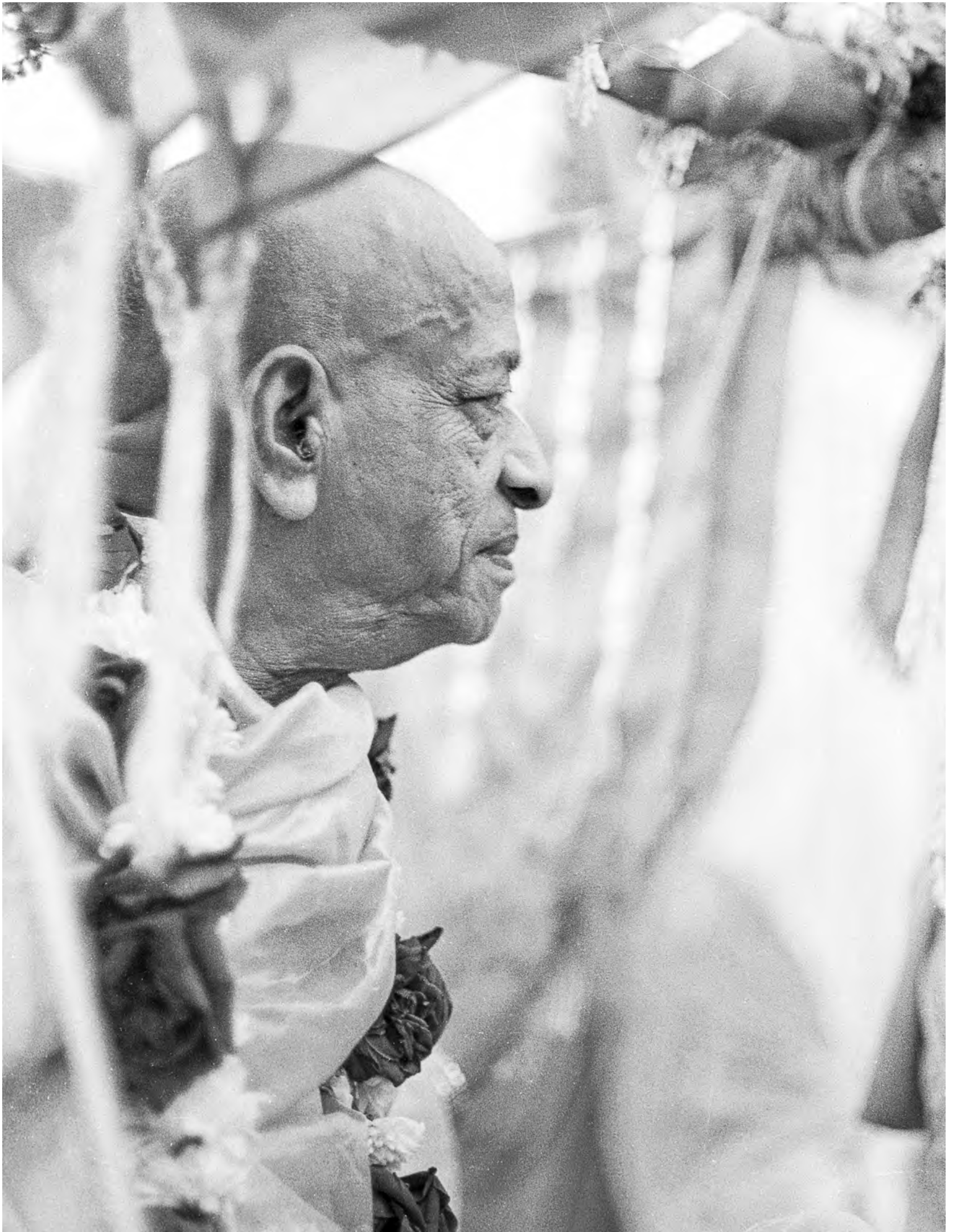
Bhakti Cārudeṣṇa Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful obeisances at your holy feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace. All glories to the *guru-paramparā*.

Being unqualified as I am to approach you directly, I am sending you my offering on behalf of a devotee who loves you dearly and knows how to serve you. That devotee is your dear servant Bhaktitīrtha Swami, my beloved spiritual master, who taught me who you are.

Years have passed, and you still remain present in my thoughts, unlike many so-called big men who



left this world just recently but are already forgotten. You really do live in your books.

In fact, you are supremely deserving of the titles “Prabhupāda” and “Bhaktivedanta.”

You left us *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, the most powerful book for self-realization, a book that provides practical spiritual solutions for the various material problems in this godless society. The whole world is crying about global crises everywhere, not knowing that you have already given the solutions in your books.

Now all the members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement and devotees who are friends of the movement are remembering you during this time of the deadly coronavirus crisis. Your disciples and granddisciples are proposing a “*karuṇa* virus” to counteract the coronavirus crisis, which is just a man-made crisis caused by society’s disconnection from Vedic principles. But unfortunately, nondevotees seem to have no eyes to see, no ears to hear, no brain to think, and no heart to feel the reality.

Sometimes I feel that this world is going to be destroyed in the next few months, but by remembering you I become hopeful. But honestly speaking, although I am supposed to be an exemplary devotee, am I so different from the nondevotees?

I think Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has accurately described my life in the song *Āmār Jīvan*:

1. I’m an impious sinner and have caused others great anxiety and trouble.
2. I have never hesitated to perform a sinful act for my own enjoyment. Devoid of all compassion, I’m concerned only with my self-interest, and I’m remorseful to see others happy. I’m a perpetual liar, and the misery of others is a source of great pleasure for me.
3. The material desires within the core of my heart are unlimited. I’m wrathful, devoted to false pride and arrogance, intoxicated by vanity, and bewildered by worldly affairs. Malice and egotism are ornaments I wear.
4. Ruined by laziness and sleep, I resist all pious deeds, yet I’m very enthusiastic to perform wicked acts. For worldly fame and reputation I engage in the practice of deceitfulness. Thus I am destroyed by my own greed and am always lustful.
5. A vile, wicked man such as this, rejected by the godly, is a constant offender. I’m such a person, devoid of all good works, forever inclined toward evil, worn out and wasted by various miseries.
6. Now in old age, deprived of all means of success, humbled and poor, Bhaktivinoda submits his tale of grief at the feet of the Supreme Lord.

Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, when showering your compassion upon your beloved and sincere devotees, don’t consider my wrong actions, for I badly need it more than anyone else.

Your struggling grandson,

Bhakti Cāruḍeṣṇa Swami

Bhakti Dhīra Dāmodara Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I beg to offer my respectful obeisances unto your divine lotus feet. With grateful heart I thank you for everything you have kindly done for the whole world. By your divine grace the whole world is dancing in your *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*, which you have kindly and compassionately given to us. You have made the whole world fortunate by giving pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness in a way that is easy and practicable for the modern man.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.19) Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

*bahūnāṁ janmanāṁ ante jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvaṁ iti sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ*

After many, many births of cultivating transcendental knowledge, one who has attained true knowledge will surrender to Kṛṣṇa and attain pure love for Him. But you have expanded the benediction moon by making it possible to attain that love in one lifetime. As you have said so many times in your lectures and books, one can go back home, back to Godhead, in this lifetime by sticking to the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness as you have given it.

You have expanded the benediction moon by turning crows into swans through the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is the greatest miracle ever done in the history of the whole world. You told my spiritual master, Bhakti-tīrtha Swami, that although his ancestors had been sent out of Africa as slaves, you were sending them back to Africa as kings. And Bhakti-tīrtha Swami was actually crowned as a king in Nigeria and was also empowered by Your Divine Grace to make so many African devotees.

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are a transcendental touchstone that has transformed many ordinary stonelike hearts all over the universe into invaluable jewels glowing with pure love of Godhead, thereby expanding your glories, which will be sung for eternity. Your lectures, books, schools, restaurants, farms, Deity worship, temples, *prasādam*, devotees, BBTs, etc., comprise the divine systems you use in expanding and manifesting your pure compassion upon all living entities.

I am praying and begging at your divine lotus feet that you kindly protect me from doing anything not approved by you, and that you kindly empower me to always do things that please Your Divine Grace. May your causeless mercy remain my eternal shelter, and kindly forgive all my offenses.

An eternal servant of your servant,

Bhakti Dhīra Dāmodara Swami

Bhakti Gauravāṇī Goswami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

One of the many well-known sayings you quote in your preaching is “Time and tide wait for no man.” As the years are passing, the simple truth behind these words becomes clearer to me by the day, especially this year, when I finally arrived at the same age you were when you embarked on your journey to the West. For most people, turning sixty-nine is not the time for new adventures. Rather, it is the time for retirement, for sitting on park benches lost in memories, or for relaxing in **cafes**, playing cards or dominos, or watching TV. As life’s sun is setting and bodily strength is dwindling, who would even dream of starting a worldwide preaching movement?

You did. For over forty years you had been meditating on how to carry out the order of your spiritual master, and you were determined to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the English-speaking world, no matter what obstacles would come your way. Speaking from your own experience, you would encourage us on different occasions: “Try your best and Kṛṣṇa will help you.” With that confidence, you were determined to try. Success or failure was in Kṛṣṇa’s hands.

At the same time, you were keenly aware of the powerful influence of time. Only five years after your arrival, in 1970, you made arrangements to ensure that the propagation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness would continue even in your absence:

I am getting old, 75 years old, therefore at any time I may be out of the scene, therefore I think it is necessary to give instruction to my disciples how they shall manage the whole institution.
[Direction of Management, 28 July 1970]

Yes, you had actually created an institution. Within the short period of only five years you had established an international society. An amazing feat. But you humbly dismissed this idea:

People say that I have done very wonderful. People say that. Even our countrymen, those who are not very favorably disposed, they also admit that I have done something wonderful. But what is the secret of this success? That resolution, that “My Guru Mahārāja wanted this. I shall try my best to do this.” That’s all. I have no other secrets. Rather, I was doubtful, that “What I have got position, how people will understand? Still, let me try my best.” That’s all. [Room conversation, 30 January 1974, Tokyo]

“Time and tide wait for no man.” Whenever you quote this proverb in your books and lectures, you point out two main aspects of time: its incalculable value and its powerful influence. As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, He Himself is time, the great destroyer. Regarding the value of time, you said in 1975, in Vṛndāvana:

So Cāṇakya Paṇḍita said, *svaṇṇa-koṭibhiḥ*. *Svaṇṇa* means gold coins, and *koṭi* means ten millions. So suppose today is 6th December. Now seven o’clock, morning. Seven o’clock, 6th December,

passed. Can you bring it again by paying one crore of gold coins? Hm? “Let me get back again seven o’clock, 6th December, 1975, again!” No. It is gone forever. So just see the value! You cannot get back even a moment of your life by paying millions and millions of dollars. How time is valuable, just calculate. Therefore Cāṇakya Paṇḍita says, *na cen nirarthakaṁ nītiḥ kā ca hānis tato ’dhikā*. If you waste your time, such valuable time, for nothing, just imagine how much loser you are! But we do not know. Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, *kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*: “Your life is meant for chanting. Therefore you should simply chant *sadā*, always, constantly.” This is the advice. This is properly using the moments of time.

And as far as the power of time goes, in one of your very first lectures, in 1966, in New York, you described to your young audience the reality of time’s influence with a graphic example:

A son is born. Oh, you are very glad—“I have got a son.” But if you study philosophically, no, it is not birth. He is not born: death is born. Because the growing of the child means he is dying. It is dying. The dying process. The very day, the very moment the child is born, the dying process begins. So we do not know that it is not birth, it is death. This is called *māyā*. This is called illusion, that death is born and we are jolly that there is birth of a child. This is called *māyā*.

In a similar vein, you unmasked the phantasmagoria of youth while commenting on the story of Puraṇjana in the Fourth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.27.5, 13):

The words *navam vayah* are significant in this verse. They indicate the period of youth from age sixteen to thirty. These thirteen or fifteen years of life are years in which one can very strongly enjoy the senses. When one comes to this age he thinks that life will go on and that he will simply continue enjoying his senses, but, “Time and tide wait for no man.” The span of youth expires very quickly. One who wastes his life simply by committing sinful activities in youth immediately becomes disappointed and disillusioned when the brief period of youth is over. . . . Since time and tide wait for no man, time is herein called Caṇḍavega, which means “very swiftly passing away.” As time passes, it is calculated in terms of years. One year contains 360 days, and the soldiers of Caṇḍavega herein mentioned represent these days. Time passes swiftly; Caṇḍavega’s powerful soldiers of Gandharvaloka very swiftly carry away all the days of our life.

One of the fallacies of youth is that the profound truth of these statements remains somewhat elusive. Although one may observe the effects of time all around in one’s environment, the covering potency of illusion makes one believe that time influences everything and everybody except oneself. That was certainly my personal experience. But as time passes and the body is attacked by the powerful soldiers of Caṇḍavega, the true nature of time becomes more and more conspicuous. Gradually one begins to understand what Kṛṣṇa means when He tells Arjuna that He is Time, the great destroyer of the worlds. And of course Kṛṣṇa does not have to do anything personally. He has His agents to do the work for Him. One of them is the daughter of Time, Kālakanyā, better known as Jarā, old age. She is the great destroyer of bodies, from celestial to microbial, and as Kṛṣṇa also tells us in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, old age is one of the four intrinsic miseries of material existence. However, devotional service is so powerful that it can even transform fearful and ugly old age into a joyful and attractive personality.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the best example of a devotee beyond the influence of time and old age. Simply by following in your footsteps, anyone can experience that old age not only loses its fearful nature but actually becomes a companion on the progressive march toward eternal life beyond time.

Let us carefully contemplate the words you wrote while commenting on the story of Puraṇjana in the Fourth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. You were seventy-eight years old at that time:

If a person is Kṛṣṇa conscious, he can work like a young man even if he is seventy-five or eighty years

old. Thus the daughter of Kāla (Time) cannot overcome a Vaiṣṇava. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī engaged in writing *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* when he was very old, yet he presented the most wonderful literature about the activities of Lord Caitanya. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī began their spiritual lives at a very old age, that is, after they retired from their occupations and family lives. Yet they presented many valuable literatures for the advancement of spiritual life. . . .

Thus *jarā*, the effect of old age, does not harass a devotee. This is because a devotee follows the instructions and the determination of Nārada Muni. . . . Because a devotee rigidly follows the instructions of Nārada Muni, he has no fear of old age, disease or death. Apparently a devotee may grow old, but he is not subjected to the symptoms of defeat experienced by a common man in old age. Consequently, old age does not make a devotee fearful of death, as a common man is fearful of death. When *jarā*, or old age, takes shelter of a devotee, Kālakanyā diminishes the devotee's fear. A devotee knows that after death he is going back home, back to Godhead; therefore he has no fear of death. Thus instead of depressing a devotee, advanced age helps him become fearless and thus happy.

Almost fifty years ago, when I read these words for the first time, I was not in a position to grasp their full scope, being trapped in a youthful body. Now, by your grace, the profound meaning of these words is unfolding more and more with every passing year. *Jarā* has been knocking on my door for quite some time. I tried to ignore her, but she is very persistent. She wants to marry me, although I have accepted the renounced order of life. What shall I do? She is not someone to be refused. Therefore, I will receive her with open arms and give her shelter, having full confidence in your words that she will help me become fearless and happy. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Ever grateful for your life-saving instructions,

Bhakti Gauravāṇī Goswami

Bhakti Narasimha Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

The word *guru* connotes a teacher, but in the ancient Vedic tradition it has contextual meanings, with significance beyond what *teacher* means. The guru is more than someone who teaches a specific type of knowledge. A guru is also a counselor, someone who helps to mold the character of his disciples. He is an exemplar, an inspirational source who reveals the meaning of spiritual life.

Darkness and Light

Text 16 of the *Advaya-tāraṇakopaniṣad* gives an etymology of the word *guru*: “The syllable *gu* means ‘darkness,’ and the syllable *ru* means ‘one who dispels.’ Because of his power to dispel the darkness of ignorance, the guru is thus named.” At *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.11.13 it is said, “The Lord is very satisfied with His devotee when the devotee greets other people with tolerance, mercy, friendship, and equality.” On your first day in Moscow, while watching from your hotel window as a tumultuous military parade passed by,

you compassionately commented, “This cannot last. In twenty years all this will be gone.” This show of military might was Moscow’s regular Sunday event. During this incident you displayed your quality of mercy mentioned in the above *Bhāgavatam* verse.

Tolerance

On 20 October 1971, after a long night flight from Nairobi, you disembarked in Bombay. Unfortunately, your secretary had neglected to provide Your Divine Grace with a certificate proving you had been inoculated against yellow fever. So the immigration officer denied you entry. Exasperated, your secretary said to the officer: “But this is Bhaktivedanta Swami! You can hear outside—all those people chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa are waiting for him!”

The immigration officer simply said, “Even if Indira Gandhi would come here without the certificate, she would not be allowed to enter.”

“What do we do?” asked your secretary.

“You can either get back on the flight and return to your point of origin, or you can go into our quarantine facility here and wait for six days.”

Totally flustered and contrite, your secretary glanced at you, expecting your well-deserved anger. To his surprise, you said to the official, “We shall stay at your facility.” Furthermore, you commented, “We need this time to rest, anyway. Kṛṣṇa has arranged.” Such is your quality of tolerance.

Friendship

While in Madras in February 1971, you spoke on the *Bhagavad-gītā* for three consecutive nights in a large hall. Madras was a capital of the Māyāvādīs. One of the strongest Māyāvādīs of that time was Dr. Radhakrishnan, then eighty-three years old and a resident of Madras. He had written a popular interpretation of the *Bhagavad-gītā* wherein he famously commented on text 9.34: “It is not the personal Kṛṣṇa to whom we have to give ourselves up utterly but the Unborn, Beginningless, Eternal who speaks through Kṛṣṇa.” In an article called “Scholars Deluded,” published in the November 1958 issue of *Back to Godhead* magazine, you wrote:

We have all respects for Dr. Radhakrishnan because he is not only the second citizen of India, the great world-renowned philosopher, and a scholar in the Hindu philosophy but also he is truthful Brahmin with considerable knowledge in the Impersonal Brahman. There is a popular saying that there is no harm in creating some antagonism with a great scholar but there is harm even by creating a friendly relation with a fool. . . . So we are not afraid of Dr. Radhakrishnan when we put forward the critical view of his great scholarly exposition of the Bhagwat Gita. . . .

In the Bhagwat Geeta the Personality of Godhead Sri Krishna says surrender unto Me only. But Dr. Radhakrishnan says surrender not to the person Krishna. Is it not the opposite view to suit the particular type of philosophy followed by Dr. Radhakrishnan? These indirect interpretations of the Mayavadi school for all kinds of revealed scriptures are . . . condemned.”

Somehow one of your leading disciples had arranged a meeting with Dr. Radhakrishnan at his home. You greeted the old man with all courtesy, and then quickly launched into your argument that Kṛṣṇa is a person, the Supreme Personality, and that to interpret His use of the word *mām* (“unto Me”) in some impersonal way was a flagrant error. When Dr. Radhakrishnan couldn’t respond, you recognized his advanced invalidity and soon thanked his daughter and prepared to depart. When you took his hand to say goodbye, he weakly spoke his first words of the entire meeting: “Swamiji, you please pray to God for me.” Such is your transcendental friendship.

Seeing your relentless defense of Lord Kṛṣṇa against Māyāvāda philosophy, we understand the deeper meaning of your *praṇāma-mantra*:

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

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

The servant of your servants,

Bhakti Narasinha Swami

Bhakti Prabhava Swami

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

At *Bhagavad-gītā* 5.16, Lord Kṛṣṇa compares transcendental knowledge to the sun, which lights up everything during the daytime. Also, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.43 states that the *Bhāgavatam* is just like the sun and that “those who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the Age of Kali can get light from this *Purāṇa*.” But how did the *Bhāgavatam* become available to the entire population of this world? It was Your Divine Grace who brought *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to America in 1965 and, in subsequent years, made it available to the entire world. Thus you granted access to this great treasure of devotion through the medium of your profound purports containing your precious instructions.

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī’s *Kṛṣṇa-līlā-stava* (verses 412 and 413) glorifies *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as having the potency to grant spiritual vision to all the people of the world. Within a span of eleven years Your Divine Grace spread this spiritual vision by preaching and distributing the teachings of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Bhagavad-gītā* all over the world, thus offering everyone the sun arisen to dispel the darkness of Kali-yuga (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.43).

Verse 415 of *Kṛṣṇa-līlā-stava* refers to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the friend, companion, teacher, and deliverer of good fortune. Every devotee within our ISKCON movement accepts Your Divine Grace as his or her best friend, teacher, and source of all good fortune. As the personification and propagator of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*’s teachings, you carry Lord Kṛṣṇa’s mercy and give it to everyone willing to accept the treasure of *bhakti*.

In addition, verse 416 of *Kṛṣṇa-līlā-stava* says that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is “the giver of saintliness to the unsaintly.” But what’s true of the book *Bhāgavata* is also true of the devotee *bhāgavata*, and thus Your Divine Grace gave saintliness to hippies and so many others addicted to sinful acts. In your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.8.2 you write: “If one comes in contact with both the book *Bhāgavatam* and the devotee *bhāgavata*, who knows what the *Bhāgavatam* is, then such a fortunate man gets out of the material entanglement.” So, by Lord Kṛṣṇa’s mercy and out of compassion for the suffering people of the world, Your Divine Grace appeared in order to teach us, by example, the real import of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. You are the fully realized devotee *bhāgavata*.

My personal service of spreading the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa by presenting the teachings of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in many countries is a poor attempt to assist you in your mission. The people of the world

are suffering tremendously. The coronavirus pandemic, economic uncertainty, wars, and increased sinful activities pervade the entire planet. May Your Divine Grace empower and protect us in our endeavors to execute Lord Caitanya's mission and offer the people the teachings of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which alone can mitigate the material miseries of the living entities by the linking process of devotional service (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.6).

Praying for your blessings,

Your unworthy servant,

Bhakti Prabhava Swami

Bhakti Prabhupāda-vrata Dāmodara Swami

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

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

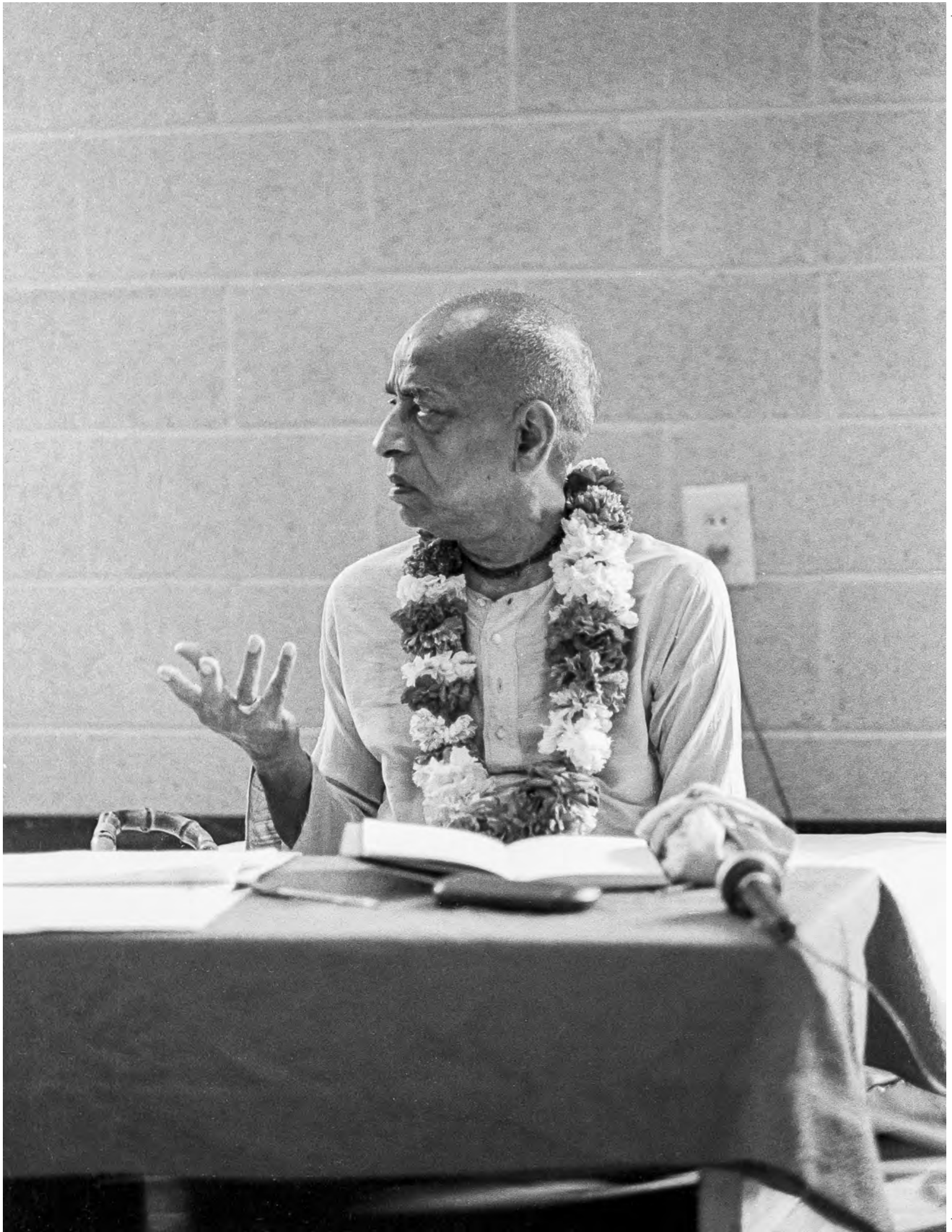
On this most auspicious day of his Vyāsa-pūjā observance, I humbly submit the following stunted effort at poetry in glorification of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, our most amazing founder-*ācārya*.

Then and Now

His potency survives his physical frame
As he continues spreading the Holy Name
While impelling TOVP's construction completion
And inspiring ISKCON's worldwide preaching.

How wonderful his glories shine so that they never wane,
Despite his seeming absence from this risky mundane plane.
Was he really ever *of* the world despite appearing *in* it?
Is he not as well among us still, despite his seeming exit?

The sense that Śrīla Prabhupāda's so mercifully right here, tho,
Depends upon to what extent his instructions we adhere to.
We can't expect consistent and continuous uplifting



If, estranged from the founder’s mood and mission, we blithely go a-drifting.

As one prabhu’s “principle” another’s “detail” figures,
 Dispute, debate, and fretful schism such confusion triggers.
 Yet solution, much to our relief, is not that far away:
 To simply hear with open heart and willingness to stay
 The course of *bhakti* toward the shade of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet
 While sheltered in the dust of those of Prabhupāda, how sweet!

(And now a personal question, disciple to guru . . .)

O most dear master, do you perhaps still remember me?
 That deranged and unhinged “Lon” who was such a sight to see?
 (This was, of course, in ISKCON’s bare beginning ice-break phase,
 When we hippies loitered here and there, the latest sudden craze.)

You might recall my anxious dad who somehow came to ask you
 For advice on what to do about his wild offspring, all askew.
 On that occasion Your Divine Grace euphemistically replied,
 “There is something wrong with that boy,” (which Poppa Herb could not deny).
 “But we can fix him up!” you added, full of confidence and light,
 Now (although I still have miles to go) this is somehow proving right . . .

(And just wondering, imagining . . .)

If now were 1966 and I were to visit you as now I am indeed,
 You’d find me so much easier to teach and sow the *bhakti* seed.
 I would even be your three-year senior—Oh just imagine that!
 And sober ’nough for shelter at your lotus feet, there in your flat.

(Transcending temporal, spatial considerations . . .)

Coming from the matchless gift of your pure śāstric teaching,
 We learn of four “eternals” coalescing, inter-reaching.
 When the fortunate living entity finally comes to his real senses
 By reviving his eternal dharma, surpassing all three tenses,
 He meets the Supreme Eternal for loving reciprocation,
 In none other than the Supreme Abode, beyond mundane location.
 Thus, as you explain, four eternals, “*sanātanas*”—eternal *jīva*, eternal
 dharma, eternal Supreme Lord, eternal abode—all converge to meet,
 As well as you, my glorious master, having saved me, will then greet.

(So, I fervently pray . . .)

All glories to Your Divine Grace, whose mercy is all that I am made of.

Your yet aspiring servant,

Bhakti Prabhupāda-vrata Dāmodara Swami

Bhakti Prema Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you very much for inaugurating an eternal festival for us, in which we are able to see your transcendental glories through the eyes of your pure devotees. Conditioned souls like me are blinded by material desires, and thus on our own we fail to see the true glories of a *mahā-bhāgavata* like Your Divine Grace.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, Jesus Christ was a pure devotee of the Lord. His contribution was vast. However, although he nullifies the reactions of sins committed by his followers, they cannot give up their bad habits and sin again. But when someone accepts your teachings, you uproot the sinful desires from his heart. Jesus gave his teachings according to time, place and circumstances. But you have given the topmost teachings for all time to come, for going back to home, back to Godhead, without considering any qualification.

Nārada Muni always travels with his *vīṇā*, singing the glories of the Lord. However, it is not possible for a layman to play the *vīṇā*, what to speak of teaching others. But you have given us the *br̥hat-vīṇā* in the form of your books. Anyone can read your books and facilitate others to read. This is your special mercy on us. Therefore you are the dearest servant of the most munificent Lord Gaurāṅga.

Lord Caitanya became ecstatic and embraced King Pratāparudra when he sang the verse of the *Gopī-gīta* beginning *tava kathāṁṛtam* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.31.9). Citing a word from the verse, Lord Caitanya addressed the king: “*Bhūridā! Bhūridā!*” (“You are the most munificent! You are the most munificent!”) But how dear to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu must that devotee be who is *bhūridā* personified—the one who has propagated the glories of Kṛṣṇa in every town and village! That is why it is beyond our imagination that we could ever comprehend how fortunate we are to be your followers.

Since you had the power to create and maintain such a wonderful organization as ISKCON, you naturally have the ability to continue it without any difficulty. To continue serving your ISKCON, we beg your causeless mercy to understand your mood. I am foolish. I think I understand better than others. Please give me humility and love so that I can appreciate others’ ideas. Without that ability, I will not be able to cooperate with others, and you always wanted your followers to cooperate.

I have now been staying in the USA for more than a year, but I have not been able to do anything to please you. Please engage me in the service of my spiritual master, who is very dear to Your Divine Grace.

I pray to your divine lotus feet to keep all your loyal followers in sound health for many more years so they can guide us on the path of *bhakti*.

The humble servant of your servant,

Bhakti Prema Swami

Bhakti Rāghava Swami

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

“I was born in the darkness of ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torchlight 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 lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace on this, your 124th sacred Appearance Day Anniversary.

I write this offering from the Sahyadri Śrī Krishna-Balarāma Kṣetra (SSKBK) farm project in South India, amidst the unfolding pandemic caused by the unabated spread of the life-threatening coronavirus, or COVID-19, which has already claimed the lives of some 20,000 people on different continents. Naturally, all of us are reminded of your invaluable instructions and numerous warnings regarding the dangers of a civilization that is hellbent on acquiring material things to feed a life of ever-increasing consumerism in the vain pursuit of peace and happiness.

For devotees in general, and for the world at large, the pandemic should serve as a wakeup call for us to return to the basics of life, which are ultimately to be found in the fundamental teachings of the Vedic culture: “Human society needs only sufficient grain and sufficient cows to solve its economic problems. All other things but these two are artificial necessities created by man to kill his valuable life at the human level and waste his time in things which are not needed.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.29, purport)

I remain forever indebted to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for having sacrificed so much to transmit the pure knowledge of the Vedic tradition. You were ideal and perfect in everything you said and everything you did. The world will gradually come to understand this more and more, but the longer it delays, the longer the calamities will continue to increase.

In 2016 we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of your establishing ISKCON in New York City. Over the last four years and until the Golden Jubilee of your disappearance on 2 November 2027, we will witness more and more fiftieth anniversaries, commemorating temple openings, devotees joining your movement, first and second initiations, *sannyāsa* initiations (the first one is scheduled for this year, honoring one of your early *sannyāsa* disciples, His Holiness Jayapatāka Swami), books translated and published—all attesting to your true greatness and potency.

Many of your disciples have already left this world, and within the next ten years the vast majority of us will be breathing our last. The journey has been glorious, although at times tainted with faults and mistakes. As the Lord’s chosen emissary, you have created so many moonlike disciples and granddisciples who continue to spread the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu despite various obstacles and challenges.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for coming to the West and saving me from this world of illusion. As you have done for so many others, you have bestowed your kind mercy upon this unworthy soul. Please forgive my many faults and shortcomings. May I remain ever indebted and grateful to you for your love and compassion, which continue to flow in your nectarean classes and written instructions. The world has yet to appreciate your unlimited glories.

May you always give me an opportunity to render some little service for your mission. Please help me to become your worthy son. I am so proud of having such a glorious father as you.

Aspiring to remain at your lotus feet life after life,

Your humble servant,

Bhakti Rāghava Swami

Bhakti-ratnākara Ambarīṣa Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

You created this Hare Kṛṣṇa movement to spread the mercy of Lord Caitanya all over the globe by fulfilling His prediction:

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

“In every town and village, the chanting of My name will be heard.”

This year has a special feature: half the people in the world are locked in their homes because of the coronavirus pandemic. We have more time for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and reading your books. The virus of ignorance is much more dangerous than the coronavirus; we have to prepare ourselves to continue this great fight against ignorance. We have to inspire people to read your books. Only your books can give the solution to all the problems of this world, and because the problems are increasing day by day, people are becoming more receptive to this knowledge! In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.16), Lord Kṛṣṇa says,

*catur-vidhā bhajante mām janāḥ su-kṛtino 'rjuna
ārto jijñāsur arthārthī jñānī ca bharataṣabha*

“O best among the Bhāratas, four kinds of pious men begin to render devotional service unto Me—the distressed, the desirer of wealth, the inquisitive, and he who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute.”

At the time of great difficulties, people look for some solution, and now it is our time to show by our own example the right path.

On this auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā we are praying for your mercy—please give us the intelligence to be useful in your mission.

The servant of your servants,

Bhakti-ratnākara Ambarīṣa Swami

Bhakti Sundar Goswami

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

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

How I Came to the Shelter of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Lotus Feet

In 1965, the same year that Śrīla Prabhupāda traveled by the cargo ship *Jaladuta* to America, I also traveled by ship, from Lebanon to Venezuela, South America, at the age of fourteen. There was a plan to send me to a monastery to become a Christian priest, but at the last minute I decided not to go but rather traveled with my family to Venezuela. In 1969 I got hold of a record with the songs from the Broadway musical *Hair*, one of which featured the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. So I started chanting the mantra regularly, since I felt an immediate connection with it without understanding the actual meaning. Then the song “My Sweet Lord” came out. “If George Harrison is chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, it must be incredibly good and spiritual,” I thought. I also started practicing yoga and became a vegetarian.

In 1973 I saw the devotees for the first time on a TV show called “The Show of Richard.” They blissfully chanted the holy name, and then they started preaching. I listened along with my family. When I turned up the volume to hear better, my mother got upset. I was already the black sheep of the family because of my yoga practice and vegetarian diet. So when I turned up the volume my mother said, “The only thing left for you to do is to join these Hare Kṛṣṇa people.” I never thought about it until she said it, but then I thought, “Why not? It’s a good idea.”

The temple was in the Venezuelan capital, Caracas, and my town, Maracay, was two hours away. But one day I saw the devotees chanting on the streets of my town. They looked really blissful. “Why can’t I be like them?” I thought. So anyway, to make a long story short, I then came to know about Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, and the book that actually made me a devotee was *Śrī Īśopaniṣad*. When I read that book, Śrīla Prabhupāda smashed all my impersonal ideas about God and the soul, and everything become crystal clear. I accepted him in my heart as my spiritual master.

A short while later I decided to move into the temple and become a full-time monk. I told my parents about my decision. Of course, they didn’t like it much. My father said, “You always ask me to lend you my car. I will buy you a new car. Just stay at home and stop your madness.” My mother was crying, asking me to stay and reminding me that I was her favorite son. I said to them: “Remember how you told me long ago that after you lost three sons shortly after birth due to sickness you went to a Christian Church to pray to God, and you promised Him that if the next son would survive you would dress him as a monk for three years and offer him for the Lord’s service?”

The first time I had traveled by ship from Lebanon to Venezuela was in 1953, when I was two years old. We stopped in Barcelona, Spain, for a day and took some pictures under a statue of Christopher Columbus. I was dressed as a little monk. When I later joined the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in Venezuela and traveled to Spain, one day during a *japa* walk with the devotees in Barcelona we passed the same statue of Columbus. I told the devotees, “I came here for the first time at age two dressed as a Christian monk, and now, by Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mercy, I’ve returned after thirty years as a Hare Kṛṣṇa monk.”

So, anyway, I told my parents, “You should be happy that I’m going to become a monk so you can fulfill your promise to God.”

“Well,” they replied, “we were addressing the *Christian* God, not the *Hindu* God!”

“Then you should have been more specific! Besides, God is not Christian, Hindu, or Muslim. He is the same God—just with different names.” Then just to pacify them I said, “If I don’t like the temple I’ll come back.”

“Please come back soon,” they pleaded.

“Let’s see,” I replied.

I went to join the temple at the beginning of 1974, and my good friend Havi Dāsa welcomed me, saying, “You look ecstatic, smiling with eyes like a Chinese!”

I had a wonderful experience while chanting *japa* of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra for eight hours nonstop. After that experience, I made up my mind to join the temple as soon as possible. I thought, “This is what I’ve actually been looking for! This is much better than LSD!”

After two weeks my parents came to visit me. I gave them a tour of the temple, and they liked it very much, especially the *prasādam*. Śrīla Prabhupāda had sent a letter to all temples instructing them that they should have twenty-five plates of *prasādam* always ready throughout the day for visiting guests. No guest should leave without taking *prasādam*. Thanks to this instruction, I was able to serve my family the Lord’s mercy.

I asked them, “How did you get the temple address, since I forgot to give it to you?”

My sister replied, “We went to a psychic to help find you. He asked for your picture, and then he sent a ghost to find the temple. That’s how we found it.”

“Really!” I replied. “That’s far out: the ghost did a service by bringing you to the temple!”

Finally, Śrīla Prabhupāda came to Venezuela on February 18, 1975. On February 22, there was an initiation ceremony, and many devotees from Venezuela and other Latin American countries were initiated. When I was called up to receive initiation, Prabhupāda told me, “Your name is Jagat Cakṣur Dāsa. Jagat Cakṣur means ‘the eye of the world.’ In whatever situation or place we may be, we should always feel God’s sight on us. He is the witness of everything we do. We should always remember that.” Then Prabhupāda pointed at me and said, “You cannot hide from the eyes of God!”

People were looking at me, thinking “Maybe he did something wrong.” I felt that Śrīla Prabhupāda was reading my mind, because sometimes I used to go to the kitchen, steal a *mahā* sweet, and hide somewhere to eat it, thinking nobody was watching me. Now I felt that Prabhupāda had caught me in front of everyone!

This incident made me more Kṛṣṇa conscious, and I appreciated Prabhupāda’s words very much. In Prabhupāda’s company everything was surcharged with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and I felt secure and protected from the illusion of *māyā*. Prabhupāda spoke from the transcendental platform, and his nectarean words penetrated the dense darkness of my heart, enlightening my being with the clear understanding that I am the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa.

The next day I came back from *saṅkīrtana* a little early and, forgetting that I was not supposed to pass through Prabhupāda’s garden, entered it. Prabhupāda was sitting on his rocking chair, chanting *japa*. I immediately paid my obeisances, and when I got up I stood frozen, not knowing what to do. Prabhupāda didn’t pay much attention to me, since I didn’t have an appointment. But when he saw I wasn’t leaving, he made a little gesture with his hand, as if to ask, “What do you want?”

I said, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, I just came from the city. I was distributing your books.” We were very enthusiastic to distribute his books because we knew that Prabhupāda was blessing all the people of Venezuela through his books.

Prabhupāda softly asked me, “Do the people in Venezuela like my books?”

I happily replied, “Yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda, they love your books. They always ask me for new titles. The people here are simple but pious. As soon as they read your books they become very favorable.”

Prabhupāda moved his head from side to side, indicating he was satisfied, and said, “Come, I have something to give you.”

I followed him to his room, and on his table was a tray full of sweets. He gave me one and said, “Thank you very much for helping me.” That melted my heart, and I was so moved that I began to cry. I was a new devotee, yet Prabhupāda gave me so much mercy. Then I thought, “He is telling me I don’t have to steal the sweets—he will give them to me.” So, I paid my obeisances and left, incredibly happy and grateful. Śrīla Prabhupāda-*kī jaya!*

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s eternally grateful servant, life after life,

Bhakti Sundar Goswami

Bhakti Vighna Vināśa Narasimha Mahārāja

I offer my most respectful obeisances to the lotus feet of my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Please allow me to express my gratitude for kindly accepting this fallen person as a disciple and giving me the opportunity to take up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is said that while everyone has a mother and father, only a fortunate soul has a spiritual master, and by the grace of the spiritual master he can come to Kṛṣṇa. I do not know how I became fortunate; it can only be due to your causeless mercy.

This past year we have seen unprecedented changes in the world. First we had rioting take place on an almost daily basis for a few months in the usually conservative and peaceful city of Hong Kong. You visited Hong Kong in the 1970s, so you are very well acquainted with the atmosphere there. You initiated your first and only Chinese disciple there, and you saw him as a gentleman. However, the return of Hong Kong to Chinese rule in 1997 has given rise to serious tension and conflict. The usually hard-working and respectful Chinese of Hong Kong, particularly the student and youth population, have turned aggressive and voiced strong disapproval of being part of China. Several thousand have been arrested and imprisoned or fined, but there is no sign of any solution to the problem. I am reminded of the words of Mother Bhūmī in the Twelfth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In her *Bhūmī-gītā* she laughs at the foolish kings who were killing each other in their attempts to conquer and rule the planet, but who were unable to see their own inevitable death.

It was expected that with the coming of winter and the festive season we could all relax, but it was not to be. A deadly virus infected many and took the lives of several. It seemed to originate in a city in China, but within a month it had spread around the globe. It is a pandemic, something we had not seen in our lifetime. Airlines have been forced to stop their service, cities around the world have closed down, and everywhere people are advised to stay indoors and keep away from any public gathering. As I write this homage, India's prime minister, Narendra Modi, has ordered a nationwide twenty-one-day shutdown. Everyone has been told to stay at home and not come out unless absolutely necessary. I am truly fortunate to be in Māyāpur at this time. Here I have the best spiritual atmosphere and the best association, from such stalwart disciples of Your Divine Grace as Jayapatāka Swami, the twin brothers Jananivāsa and Pañkajāñghri Prabhus, and many others, all highly dedicated to your mission.

At this time more than ever I feel very fortunate to be in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I am happy to have time to focus on hearing and chanting. I have many books to study and services to be performed for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. However, I do feel some concern for all those persons who have no knowledge of devotional service. As Prahāda Mahārāja states in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.9.43),

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

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

Your Divine Grace would often tell us that this modern civilization could never last. Now we are seeing how it is all falling apart suddenly, without warning. We heard you tell us not to put faith in the

materialistic lifestyle, and now we can see clearly why you implored us to seriously take up the mission of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Unless, therefore, one is saved from the wrong conception of the body and the soul, there is no knowledge of Godhead, and unless there is knowledge of God, all advancement of material civilization, however dazzling, should be considered a failure. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.7.42, purport]

We can only hope that some of the vast numbers of your transcendental literatures we have been distributing over the last fifty years will find their way into the hands of worthy persons who may now be ready to hear and accept the conclusions of the Vedic scriptures. We also pray that we can guide them and assist them in their pursuit of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Please engage me in your service, please give me the strength to serve you, please accept me.

Your unworthy disciple,

Bhakti Vighna Vināśa Narasimha Mahārāja

Bhakti-vikāśa Swami

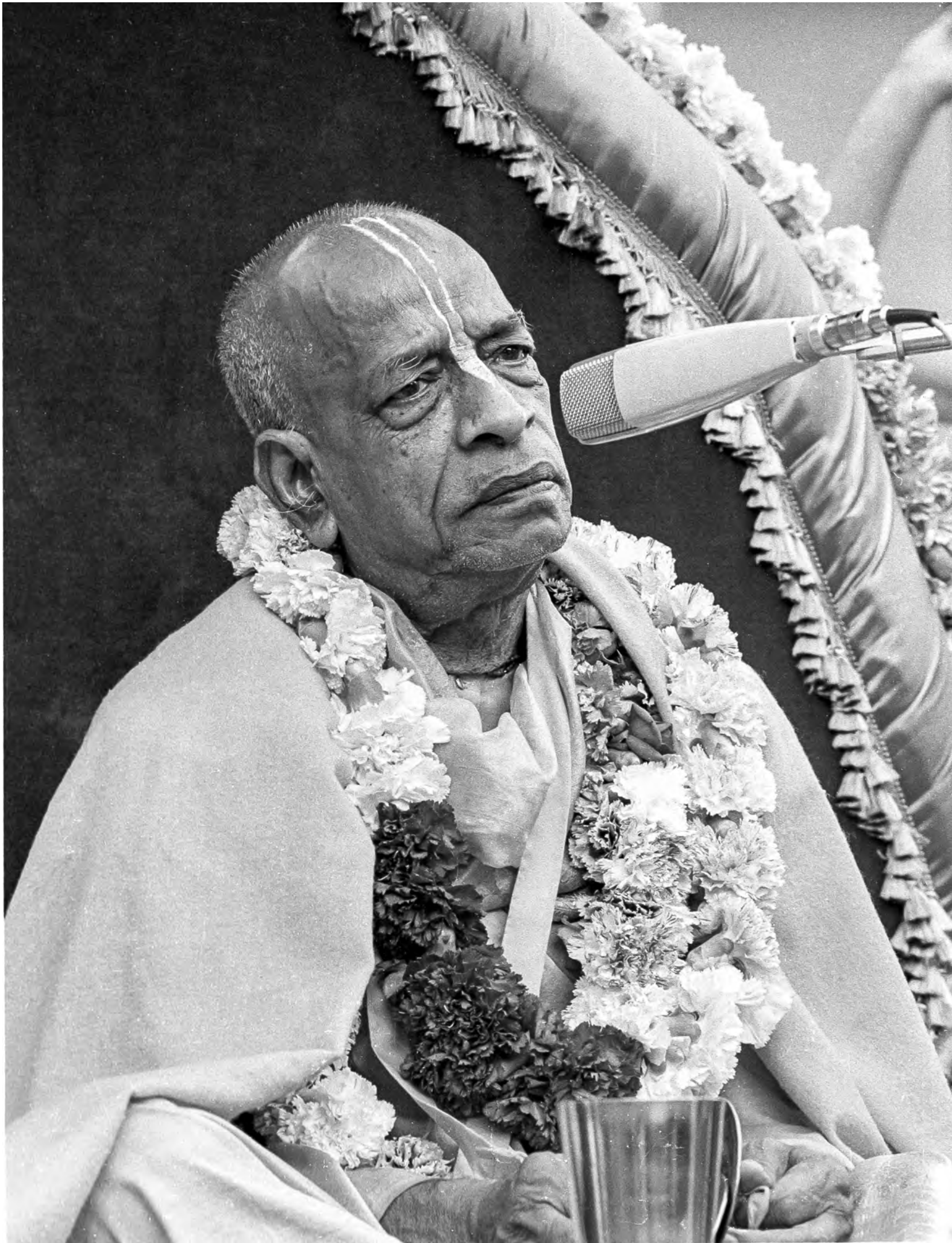
*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn iti nāmine*

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

Most dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you undertook your worldwide mission exactly according to the principles enshrined in Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, which you rendered into English as *The Nectar of Instruction*. Exemplifying the qualities described in the first verse, you were abundantly qualified to make disciples all over the world.

You spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness with enthusiasm, determination, and patience, always emphasizing the need to follow the regulative principles, keeping your presentation pure and uninfluenced by any ideas of nondevotees, and strictly following the previous *ācāryas*. These six principles alone undoubtedly assured the complete success of your endeavors.

You never collected more funds than required, because you knew how to engage all the money in the world in Kṛṣṇa's service. While making gargantuan efforts to do amazing things for Kṛṣṇa, you never endeavored for mundane achievements such as fame and prestige. By speaking continually about Kṛṣṇa, you implanted Kṛṣṇa consciousness and *kṛṣṇa-kathā* in the world; indeed, you set the perfect example of never talking unnecessarily about mundane subjects. Your expert application of the principle of avoiding *niyamāgrahaḥ* was pivotal in the success of your mission; you knew what to implement and what not, and at what stage in the progress of individual disciples and of the whole movement. You did not associate with worldly-minded persons uninterested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but gave such people your association and transformed many of them into high-minded persons whose only interest was in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.



You brought love to a world hankering for it, and particularly with us, your disciples, shared the six symptoms of love listed by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. And you lovingly arranged for profuse distribution of *prasādam*—out-of-this-world food saturated with Kṛṣṇa's love.

Personally realizing the holy name, form, character, and pastimes of Kṛṣṇa to be transcendently sweet like sugar candy, you instructed us to carefully chant His sweet names every day, assuring us that by doing so a natural relish would awaken within our tongues, whereby the disease of ignorance would gradually be destroyed at the root.

Explaining the intricacies of devotional service, such as levels of offering honor, and not seeing pure devotees from a materialistic point of view, you gradually taught us the essence of all advice: to utilize one's full time—twenty-four hours a day—in nicely chanting and remembering the Lord's divine name, transcendental form, qualities, and eternal pastimes, thereby gradually engaging the tongue and mind, and in this way to reside in Vraja (Goloka Vṛndāvana *dhāma*), serving Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of devotees (we want to be under your guidance always!). Raising our vision above the platforms of the *karmīs* and *jñānīs*, you implanted in us an aspiration for residence at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, where, in a spiritual body surcharged with ecstatic devotional feelings, we may render loving service to the divine couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda.

* * *

Śrīla Prabhupāda, presently my main service is compiling a book about your divine personality and mission. It is like trying to accommodate an elephant on a dish, for your qualities are unlimited, and thus the manuscript keeps growing. Please bless me with enthusiasm, determination, patience, and all else required to complete this task timely so that I may move on to other endeavors in your service. There is much to do, and life is short.

Dīna, hīna, patita, pāmara

Bhakti Vikāśa Swami

Candramauli Swami

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

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

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

*vāñchā-kalpa-tarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānāṁ pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

In these difficult times of the worldwide spread of pestilence, more than ever your words, containing both philosophical instructions and practical guidance, are the life-giving elixir of our execution of devotional service.

You once said that just as an expert businessman makes a profit whether the price of rice goes up or down, similarly an intelligent devotee can take advantage of any material situation to generate Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Things that would ordinarily be deemed good or bad have practically no effect on a devotee who carefully applies your instructions in each and every situation. The spread of the coronavirus has inspired devotees to find novel ways to reach out to the conditioned souls with the message of chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa.

Your words always offer the devotees clarity of vision and perfect guidance amidst material calamities:

Rāmeśvara: [I]f there is a war between Russia and America, there would be a nuclear war and they would pollute the whole atmosphere with radioactive particles, which would kill everyone.

Prabhupāda: It is already polluted.

Rāmeśvara: They say that this radioactive fall-out . . .

Prabhupāda: The whole material world is polluted. Who will live here? A little, say, twenty years before, dying. After all, you have to die, twenty years after or twenty years before. So it is already polluted. That is humbugism. They will die at the end, but still they are trying to live.

Tamāl Krishna: Like they're creating their own . . .

Prabhupāda: This is the difference between man of knowledge and without knowledge. A man of knowledge will think, "After all, I have to die. So what is the difficulty, dying a few days more or before?" That is knowledge. And those who are not in knowledge, they are afraid of death. Best business is before the death comes let us finish our Kṛṣṇa consciousness perfectly. That is wanted. Death will come. You cannot avoid it. [Morning Walk, Māyāpur, 4 April 1975]

Our real business, as you have repeatedly said, is to become Kṛṣṇa conscious and give the message of devotion to Kṛṣṇa to others. You instructed us not to be overly concerned about the particular material situation we're in, to accept everything as an opportunity to preach and advance spiritually.

[Translation:] Devotees solely engaged in the devotional service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa, never fear any condition of life. For them the heavenly planets, liberation, and the hellish planets are all the same, for such devotees are interested only in the service of the Lord.

[Purport:] Pārvatī might naturally have inquired how devotees become so exalted. Therefore this verse explains that they are *nārāyaṇa-pāra*, simply dependent on Nārāyaṇa. They do not mind reverses in life because in the service of Nārāyaṇa they have learned to tolerate whatever hardships there may be. They do not care whether they are in heaven or in hell: they simply engage in the service of the Lord. This is their excellence. *Ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*: they are liberally engaged in the service of the Lord, and therefore they are excellent. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.17.28]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the coronavirus can in some ways be termed "the *karuṇa* virus," since we are finding more opportunity to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness and strengthen one another in our practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Your words are literally life-giving and life-saving.

Candramauli Swami

Candraśekhara Swami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the search for the perfect attitude. I have always thought that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is synonymous with “The Perfect Attitude.” Scriptures inform us of what attitudes are salutary and what attitudes are deleterious. The key here is “attitude.” And attitudes are far more important than accomplishments, mundane emotions, or external situations.

We live in a sea of action and reaction, in a sea of human interactions, in a sea of strategic possibilities and downstream social and physical ramifications. The trends in how we navigate those seas and streams are called our character by others. To us, those trends could be called our attitudes. If those trends are investigated and mentally processed, they are called our philosophy of life. We perceive our emotions directly, and usually our actions are mostly reactive and unconsidered. On the other side of the fence, others perceive our trends in our actions from the outside as our character and back-figure our attitudes, sometimes assessing our emotions and attitudes differently from the way we might. Generally, we don’t perceive our attitudes at all. We find it strange when someone says we have an “attitude.” We are guided by our attitudes; we are enveloped by our attitudes, but we are blind to our own attitudes. That is to say, though blind to our own attitudes, we are certainly not blind to *others’* attitudes (in, of course, the individual specific way we back-figure them). Interesting how that works.

During the course of carrying out everyday duties and trying to engage myself to enlarge my scope of preaching, there are those bits of thought and emotion at the edge of my city of awareness, just outside the city limits. Catching these fleeting ghosts and examining them is not just a psychological curiosity or pastime but an important reconnaissance.

I am not all the things that I think. Thankfully. But I had better be careful what I allow myself to drift with. We are not our bodies, and similarly we are not our minds either. The tendency is, however, to identify with what the mind is ruminating about. The more we return to a particular rumination, the more we *identify* with that rumination and engender ever stronger emotions. If those ruminations are negative, we generate negative emotions. The positive version of this same process we called “affirmations”; sadly, they are not as easy, natural, or automatic as the negative kind.

As an interesting side-note, the word “rumination” has come to have a technical meaning in psychology, in particularly in a field of study called Response Styles Theory (RST), advanced by Nolen and Hoekesema. They speak of rumination as being the repeated focus on the symptoms, causes, and consequences of one’s distress rather than its solution. This use of the word “rumination” is even more appropriate than its common colloquial use, to which I mostly refer in this writing.

So we have to be careful. There are positive thoughts about expanding our service and the methods and strategies to do so. There are positive thoughts about issues under devotee evaluation. There are positive thoughts about past experiences with devotees and others. There are positive thoughts about personal improvement. And there are positive thoughts even about what may be amiss, but those thoughts are about fixing it. But there are also negative thoughts about failures, self-worth, accomplishments, and the ever-popular irritation caused by human interaction. These negative thoughts never reach a conclusion but simply recycle over and over.

We are *not* what we think, but we become *identified* with what we think if we think it long enough.

Thus, finding an optimistic and charitable way to view everything is paramount. Thinking about negativity only makes you negative, but we are not negative, we are positive. Therefore we should think about everything from a positive perspective. This is not Pollyanna or rose-colored-glasses mentality; it is a realization that everything with Kṛṣṇa is ultimately a story of grand success. That success may not yet be with us, but it will soon come. When one pleases Kṛṣṇa, nothing is left unachieved!

If we feel lost, we should know that we can find Kṛṣṇa and ourselves in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. If we feel unworthy, we should know that we are thinking only about our material position and should rather think of the fact that, to Kṛṣṇa, each of us is a special soul—though we will never become Rādhārāṇī; sorry, that position is taken. If we feel frustrated, we should know that the material world is full of frustrations by its nature and that it is not accomplishments that matter to Kṛṣṇa but rather our mental state of striving-to-please-Him that does. If we feel angry, we should know that whatever or whoever has made us angry is only a vehicle of Kṛṣṇa's "special" mercy upon us and that we should understand there is a purpose for which Kṛṣṇa has made us feel this way; what is that purpose? If we feel failure, we should know that Prabhupāda also appeared to fail until very late in his life and that nothing worthy of achieving is ever achieved on the first try. If we feel afraid, we should know that fear is a sure sign of having a material mentality about having something material to lose; rather, we should think about the fact that we will, one day, lose everything; do we really want to rot here eternally in this material world with all its terrifying upheaval just because of a few shriveled raisins of material happiness? Also, we can know that just by simply reading the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or *Bhagavad-gītā* we will begin to feel fearless. Every negative thought or attitude has a positive counterpart—we need to find that positive counterpart.

By removing the negative attitudes from our thinking, we will more and more come into the possession of the perfect attitude—the attitude of the devotee. Unfortunately, this attitude will not come to us once-and-for-all but will result from a constant battle that we will have to fight until we die.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for this message from Kṛṣṇa that you delivered to our Western world. Now please help me reach and hold this perfect attitude.

Your servant,

Candraśekhara Swami

Dānavīr Gosvāmī

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

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

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

One hundred eight glories to the topmost wandering mendicant and swanlike devotee of the Lord, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.

On this most auspicious day, we celebrate the one hundred and twenty-fourth birth anniversary of

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the great spiritual master of the universe. At this time when the world is engulfed in the coronavirus pandemic, Śrīla Prabhupāda's advice is pertinent and welcome:

Material advancement of civilization means advancement of the reactions of the threefold miseries due to celestial influence, earthly reactions, and bodily or mental pains. By the celestial influence of the stars there are many calamities like excessive heat, cold, rains or no rains, and the aftereffects are famine, disease, and epidemic. The aggregate result is agony of the body and the mind. Man-made material science cannot do anything to counteract these threefold miseries. They are all punishments from the superior energy of *māyā* [the illusory energy] under the direction of the Supreme Lord. Therefore our constant touch with the Lord by devotional service can give us relief without our being disturbed in the discharge of our human duties. The *asuras* [nondevotees] however, who do not believe in the existence of God, make their own plans to counteract all these threefold miseries, and so they meet with failures every time. The *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.14] clearly states that the reaction of material energy is never to be conquered, because of the binding effects of the three modes. They can simply be overcome by one who surrenders fully in devotion under the lotus feet of the Lord. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.14.10, purport]

By practicing Śrīla Prabhupāda's happy process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one lives in harmony with nature and simultaneously becomes reinstated in one's original spiritual identity. Śrīla Prabhupāda foresaw the effects of godlessness and prescribed the remedy.

The conclusion is that even though saintly persons have no business in political affairs, they are always compassionate upon the people in general. Thus even though they are always aloof from society, out of mercy and compassion they consider how the citizens can peacefully execute their rituals and follow the rules and regulations of *varṇāśrama-dharma*.

In this Age of Kali, everything is disturbed. Therefore saintly persons should take to the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, as recommended in the *śāstras*:

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

Both for spiritual and material prosperity, everyone should devotedly chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.14.37, purport]

As in previous ages the Supreme Lord was invoked by meditation, sacrifices, and temple worship, so in Kali-yuga Kṛṣṇa manifests Himself personally through the chanting of His holy names. Assisted by His devotees, Śrī Kṛṣṇa will rectify the global anomalies just as the sun dissipates fog.

Therefore let us joyously praise Śrīla Prabhupāda on this day and beg to be engaged in his service.

An unqualified servant,

Dānavīr Goswami

Gaṇapati dāsa Swami

*vande 'haṁ śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pāda-kamalaṁ śrī-gurūn vaiṣṇavāṁś ca
śrī-rūpaṁ sāgrajātaṁ saha-gaṇa-raghunāthānviṭaṁ taṁ sa-jīvaṁ
sādvaitaṁ sāvadhūtaṁ parijana-sahitaṁ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-devaṁ
śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pādān saha-gaṇa-lalitā-śrī-viśākhānviṭāṁś ca*

Shortly after the *tirobhāva* of our Divine Master, Oṁ Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, a delegation of GBC members approached his godbrother, His Holiness B.R. Śrīdharadeva Gosvāmī, to seek clarity on *guru-tattva*. The following is an excerpt from this now-famous series of discussions:

By the special will of Kṛṣṇa, *gurudeva* is a delegated power. If we look closely within the spiritual master, we will see the delegation of Kṛṣṇa, and accordingly we should accept him in that way. The spiritual master is a devotee of Kṛṣṇa and, at the same time, the inspiration of Kṛṣṇa is within him. These are the two aspects of *gurudeva*. He has his aspect as a Vaiṣṇava, and the inspired side of the Vaiṣṇava is *guru*. . . . The disciple is concerned with the delegation of the Lord, the *guru*'s inner self, his inspired side. The inspired side of a Vaiṣṇava is *ācārya*, or *guru*. The disciple marks only the special, inspired portion within the *guru*. He is more concerned with that part of his character. But *gurudeva* himself generally poses as a Vaiṣṇava. So, his dealings towards his disciples and his dealings with other Vaiṣṇavas will be different. This is *acintya-bhedābheda*, inconceivable unity in diversity.

In general, Śrīla Prabhupāda also emphasized that a disciple should maintain a reverential attitude and formal etiquette towards his/her spiritual master, lest informality and familiarity lead to contempt.

The spiritual master is always considered either one of the confidential associates of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī or a manifested representation of Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 1.46, purport]

The spiritual master is the external manifestation of the *caitya-guru*, or the spiritual master sitting in everyone's heart. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.8.44, purport]

The spiritual master is as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and therefore one who is very serious about spiritual advancement must regard the spiritual master in this way. Even a slight deviation from this understanding can create disaster in the disciple's Vedic studies and austerities. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.15.27, purport)

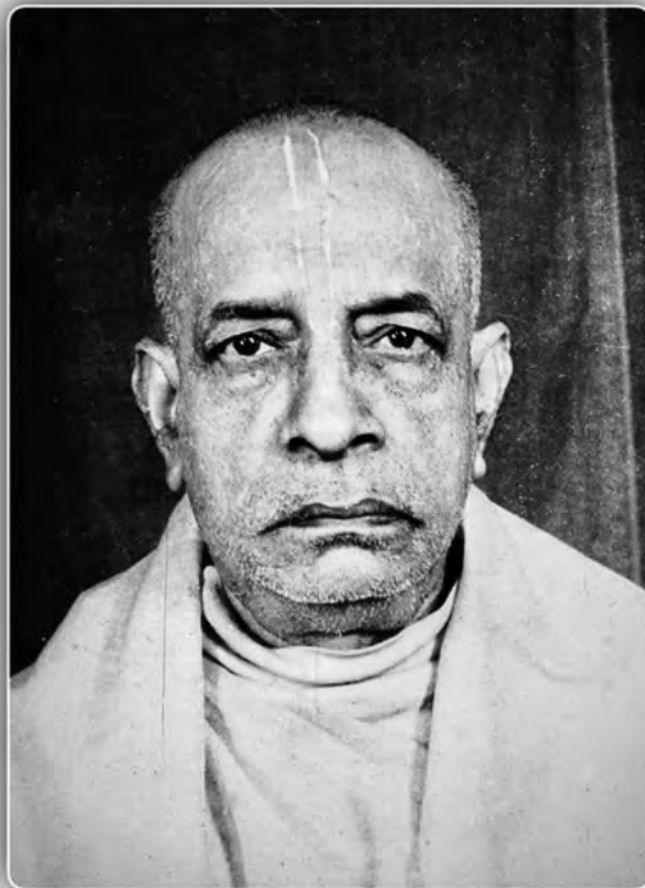
Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura wrote in the seventh *śloka* of his *Gurv-aṣṭakam*:

*sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstrair
uktas tathā bhāvayata eva sadbhiḥ
kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

In Śrīla Prabhupāda's writings we find this commonly translated as "The spiritual master is to be honored as much as the Supreme Lord because he is the most confidential servitor of the Lord. . . ."

However, this verse can be rendered more literally as “The spiritual master is to be honored as much as the Supreme Lord because he is directly [one in quality with and the external manifestation of] the Lord. But [due to his being a *śuddha* Vaiṣṇava] he is also very dear to the Lord.” This rendering affords the disciple the latitude to meditate on Śrī Gurudeva’s Vaiṣṇava—or “inspiring”—aspect.

At this point, I would like to introduce one of my most inspiring images of Śrīla Prabhupāda:



I asked several trusted devotees to share a one- or two-word impression of this photo. A few responses:

- grave
- intensely contemplative
- deeply begging
- concerned
- surrendered
- compassionate anxiety

For the scrutiny of my godsiblings, I wish to now disclose the realization, meditation, and inspiration this photograph has elicited in me:

(1) “not my will, but thine, be done”

Although this phrase is, of course, reported as having emanated from the mouth of Lord Jesus Christ, Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed the same mood in his own words: “O Lord, I am just like a puppet in Your hands. So if You have brought me here to dance, then make me dance, make me dance, O Lord, make me dance as You like.”

(2) “sold-out”

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura employed this very phrase to describe the temperament of the exemplary disciple:

Each of us is the eternal slave of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa. We are sold-out animals at the feet of our spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa. Because we have forgotten this simple truth, we have fallen into our present miserable condition. If by the devotees’ mercy we can come to remember this truth, we will be saved and will make advancement on the devotional path.

Śrīla Prabhupāda further identified such a “sold-out animal” in a prayer of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s that he was fond of quoting:

So we should always pray, *vaiṣṇava ṭhākura, tomāra kukkura baliyā jānaha more*. This is . . . There is a song of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura: “My dear Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura, kindly accept me as your dog.” Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura. As the dog, by the indication of the master, does everything very obedient, we have to learn this lesson from the dog, how to become faithful to the master. That is the instruction. In everything you can learn something. Everyone. Therefore *mahā-bhāgavata*, they accept everyone as *guru*, to learn something. Actually, from the dog we can learn this art, how to become faithful at the risk of life even. There are many instances, dog have given the life for the master. So . . . And we should be dog to the Vaiṣṇava. *Chāḍiyā vaiṣṇava-sevā, nistāra pāyechē kebā*. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class, 27 February 1977, Māyāpur]

Likewise, in numerous instances Śrīla Prabhupāda referenced this beautiful *stotra* of Śrī Yāmunācārya:

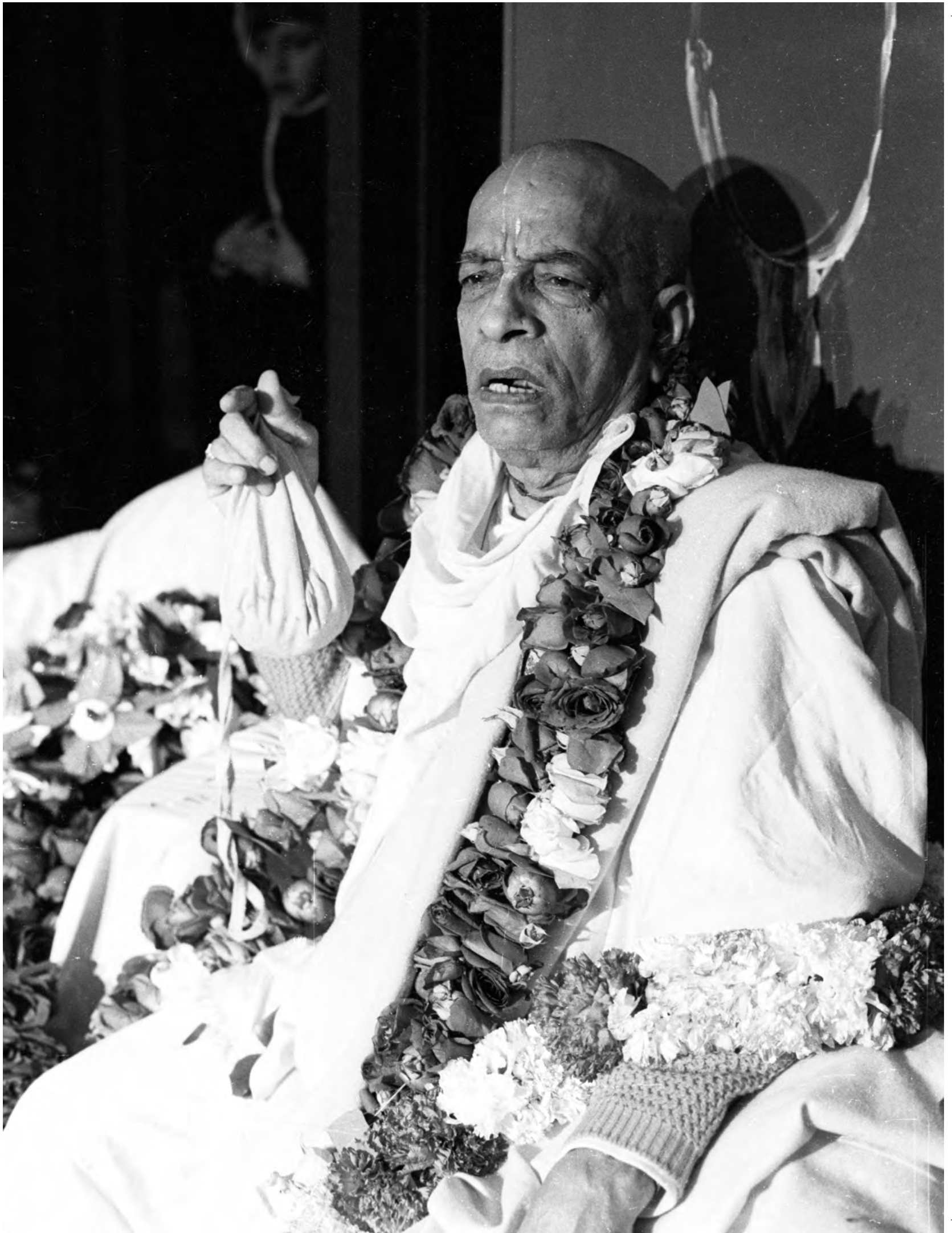
*bhavantam evānucaran nīrantaraḥ
praśānta-niḥśeṣa-mano-rathāntaraḥ
kadāham aikāntika-nitya-kiṅkaraḥ
praharṣayīṣyāmi sanātha-jīvitam*

“By serving You constantly, one is freed from all material desires and is completely pacified. When shall I engage as Your permanent eternal servant and always feel joyful to have such a fitting master?” (*Stotra-ratna* 43)

And in the following commentary, he compares the position of a faithful disciple to that of a dog or child:

This is the constitutional position of all living entities. Just as a dog or servant is very much satisfied to get a competent, perfect master, or as a child is completely satisfied to possess a competent father, so the living entity is satisfied by completely engaging in the service of the Supreme Lord. He thereby knows that he has a competent master to save him from all kinds of danger. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 1.206]

In summary, while it may be offensive to think of one’s spiritual master as a “sold-out animal,” there can be no harm in considering him to be sold out to his guru. Indeed, nothing inspires me to surrender as



a “sold-out animal” to His Divine Grace more than knowing that he is totally sold out to his *guru* and the entire *paramparā*. After all, we have not been asked to join a personality cult. Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke of “the fundamental principle of *gurudeva*” and that “there is only one *guru*.” It’s a package deal, so to speak. Surrendering to Śrīla Prabhupāda means surrendering to the disciplic succession he represents. A large part of what makes Śrīla Prabhupāda so personally wonderful is that he has introduced us to—and is the immediate face of—a succession of most wonderful realized masters.

Śrīla Prabhupāda-*kī jaya!* Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *guru-paramparā-kī jaya!*

Gaṇapati dāsa Swami

Hanumatpresaka Swami

We offer our humble obeisances to His Divine Grace Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, author of the book *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*, and founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we suspect that our attempts to illuminate your glories on your Vyāsa-pūjā day are like a candle trying to illuminate the sun. The flame just becomes invisible. On the other hand, if we are allowed to consider the task to be like a fire-fly trying to illuminate some of the features of your lotus feet, then we might be able to make a small contribution to today’s activities.

When Your Divine Grace was in Berkeley, California, in 1975, we heard from your lips that anyone who chants the Pañca-tattva *mahā-mantra* and follows it with the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* has achieved the perfection of life, but that if one wanted to preach one should read your books.

Then, when asked by a reporter what would happen to your movement when Your Divine Grace died, you answered firmly that you would never die—you would live forever in your books.

These two statements are our life and soul.

Thank you.

We try to always be chanting the *mahā-mantra* internally and externally under the shelter of Your Divine Grace’s lotus feet, and over and above that we read and preach from your books.

Now we are reading the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* daily before *maṅgala-ārati*, and it is 90% a novel experience for us. We understand it with so much more depth than before. We see that Your Divine Grace’s book is deep beyond our abilities to plumb.

Then after *maṅgala-ārati* we read and discuss a little with the devotees in Spanish. Before we were doing *The Nectar of Devotion*, but now we are reading a verse a day from *Light of the Bhāgavatā*. We find the purports provide direct truth, illumination, on such topics as veganism, administration in ISKCON, etc.

We conduct a daily *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class. Sometimes it is with an online group, sometimes at local temples. We are integrating our study with the development of questions for the Bhakti-vaibhava diploma with your ISKCON Board of Examinations.

We cite your books from Vedabase.io and the concepts we have learned therein in our humble attempts to preach in the university, Jungian, world classical literature, and interfaith communities.

They are the guide for devotees advancing from *ādaḥ śraddhā*, *sādhya-saṅga* to *prema*.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. We feel we have always been a heavy load that you have had to drag forward in our purification, but we are experiencing practical advancement.

We hope that we can be a little, pleasing grain of sand under your lotus feet in the sandy path that is your ISKCON, helping your *saṅkīrtana* expand and expand and expand.

Thank you.

Your very fallen servant,

Hanumatpresaka Swami

Janānanda Goswami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am in your room in New Māyāpur, France, one of your favorite places to stay.

Is the New Mayapur palace maintained nicely? I like to live there. Especially my wonderful room. I like to live there. I like that New Mayapur facility. Nice vegetables, flowers, grains. This is very encouraging to have such a farm, where all problems are solved. . . . Repair all the old buildings and give all the new people who come ample accommodations. . . . [Conversation in Vṛndāvana, as quoted in a letter from Tamāl Krishna Goswami to Bhagavān Dāsa, 4 August 1977]

This is a strange, unanticipated time—all-around coronavirus consciousness. Somehow I am here in this oasis you have given us. It seems that every year, as I am about to write your Vyāsa-pūjā offering, I find myself in New Māyāpur, sitting in your room. This is indeed your mercy and your message. But this year is a little different, since I was not scheduled to be here, but due to the coronavirus pandemic I could not travel and am “marooned” here under your lotus feet.

The stark reality of the material world is vividly rearing its ghastly face, and nobody can hide (except in their cell). Only you are giving the medicine to cure the disease of material life. More than two billion people all over the world are in “lockdown.” Unfortunately, although they do not realize it, all the conditioned souls are always in lockdown, “the confining of prisoners to their cells.” Such a true definition! You alone have come to release us prisoners from our material cells. Now the civil authorities are calling upon everyone to practice “social distancing.” But all along you emphasized this—to avoid unwanted association and the enemies of spiritual life. Otherwise we will be infected by the material disease—*māyā*!

Māyā is always ready to attack. Always. So we have to take this injunction, this anti-vaccine, Hare Kṛṣṇa. *Enechi auṣadhi māyā nāśibāro lāgi*. That song, *Jīu Jāgo, Jīu Jāgo*. “I have brought

this medicine for killing this Hong Kong flu of *māyā*.” [laughter] *Enechi auśadhi māyā nāśibāro lāgi*, *hari-nāma mahā-mantra lao* . . . Now you take. This is greatest contribution of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, to fight against this attack of material influence. Everyone is subjected. [Initiation lecture and marriage ceremony, 4 June 1969, New Vrindaban]

Just like if there is some epidemic, disease, and if you take vaccine, it is supposed that you are freed from the contamination. So this vaccine of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* will keep you fit without any contamination of this Age of Kali. And that is happening. All over the world people are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. And practically we see, those who are chanting, they’re becoming free from the contamination. If you follow the rules and regulation, very simple thing, and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*—that is our only request—then, in spite of this contaminated Age of Kali, you’ll be saved. [Class on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.16.19, 15 January 1974, Honolulu]

During your three visits to New Māyāpur you repeatedly instructed the devotees which direction to take, not only foreseeing the future need but also seeing the reality of our present needs—that which would be favorable for our spiritual advancement—and to protect us from the material virus.

Our farm projects are an extremely important part of our movement. We must become self-sufficient by growing our own grains and producing our own milk, then there will be no question of poverty. So develop these farm communities as far as possible. They should be developed as an ideal society depending on natural products not industry. Industry has simply created godlessness, because they think they can manufacture everything that they need. [Letter to Rūpānuga, 18 December 1974]

Somehow, over the years I have drifted from the ideals you gave and have often become caught up in the same spirit of lassitude and lethargy that afflicts the whole world, forgetting the goal of life and how to achieve it.

Hopefully, one positive aspect of the present pandemic is that it is acting as a wake-up call to remind us, as you reminded us again and again, “Are you so advanced that you do not need to fear *māyā*?!” It is a call to embrace your instructions to heart. Maybe the coronavirus will transform into *karuṇā*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So we have to be very careful. The age is very bad, the Kali-yuga. You are experiencing. We have to simply take shelter of Kṛṣṇa and always cry,

kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, he!
kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, he!
kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, rakṣa mām!
kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, pāhi mām!
kṛṣṇa, keśava, kṛṣṇa, keśava, kṛṣṇa, keśava, rakṣa mām!
rāma rāghava, rāma rāghava, rāma rāghava, pāhi mām!

Like that, as Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught us. The time is very dangerous. And still, in this dangerous time . . . Just like in epidemic condition where every people is being contaminated and dying, still, the doctors appointed by the government, they have to go into the epidemic area and try to treat the person and save them. Our duty is like that. The whole atmosphere is epidemic, whole atmosphere, this Kali-yuga. And still, by the superior orders we have to preach this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Therefore our only shelter is Kṛṣṇa. *Kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa, rakṣa mām*. Very dangerous position. The foolish people, they are thinking that “We are very happy and we are very safe.” But nobody is safe. Nobody is safe. [Lecture, 6 January 1971, Calcutta]

In these trying times it is easy to forget Kṛṣṇa's message and become absorbed in speculations, but where is the time to waste? You taught genuine compassion. The *jīvas* are in fear and ignorance, and no material adjustment will remove them. Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, infuse genuine compassion into my dirty heart. In every verse of your prayer to your spiritual master called *Viraha Aṣṭakam*, you wrote "O Śrīla Prabhupāda! You personally suffer to see the suffering of the fallen conditioned souls." The same applies to you—we saw again and again how tears would role down your face as you felt the people's suffering due to their forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa. What could be more relevant to our present situation than the deep spirit of your prayer—a heart-breaking compassion for the ignorant suffering *jīvas*, struggling aimlessly in the world of *māyā*? And I am thinking of my own problems.

As Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes in his song *Kabe Ha'be Bolo*: "When will compassion for all fallen souls awaken within this Bhaktivinoda, and when will he thus forget his own happiness and with a meek heart set out to propagate by humble entreaty the sacred order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu?" When will that day come? When will I surrender to your lotus feet and drown in that ocean of compassion which you are showering on us?

Back in the oasis of New Māyāpur, I ponder whether perhaps the solution is right here, in the safe haven of your instructions.

Are you liquidating your debts for the farm? You borrowed money on the farm. Are you repaying the loan? It is very good that the farm will be providing foodstuffs for both the farm and the temple in Paris. That is wanted. The farm program should be: grow your own food, produce your own milk, cloth and everything and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. It is good that you are repairing the buildings. They are dilapidated, but they can be repaired very nicely. [Letter to Bhagavān, 14 November 1975]

I can never liquidate the debt to you. I will forever be repaying you for the mercy you have shown me. Will I ever take your instructions of farming seriously? Simple living, high thinking? Your desire for self-sufficiency? How to repair my crooked, dilapidated heart in this old age? When will I take your *karuṇā* seriously?

I, like most of the world, am now in lockdown and cannot travel. But what a place to be in lockdown—your New Māyāpur! How fortunate! You have kindly given everyone this opportunity to be in lockdown, in "a house the whole world can live in." May we stay locked in your house forever. Your lotus feet are our only shelter.

Your servant.

Janānanda Goswami

Keśava Bhāratī Dāsa Goswami

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, service to your lotus feet, to your instructions—especially through your translations of and Bhaktivedanta purports to the most essential works of the vast Vedic scripture, the source of all knowledge—are my life and soul. Indeed, hearing and distributing this transcendental sound is my very life.

Your Divine Grace, for your pleasure, kindly let me attempt to glorify you on this holiest of days marking the 124th anniversary of your appearance in this world.

Your service to your Guru Mahārāja and to the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is unique in history. No one else could spread pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the entire world in so many languages and transplant it into so many cultures. The ways to examine that uniqueness are myriad, but I would like to focus on one aspect of your unique greatness. You mentioned it in a room conversation in Melbourne, Australia, in April of 1976:

Brian Singer: When you become Kṛṣṇa conscious, does it mean you come into the chapel, or can you lead the sort of life that we lead and still . . . ?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, going to the chapel, that is one of the means. But there are nine different processes, of which hearing about Kṛṣṇa is the most important thing, *śravaṇam*. If you continuously hear about . . . Therefore these books are there, hearing and chanting. If you cannot read, I'll read; you hear. I'll speak. Or you will speak; I'll hear. These two processes are very important. Therefore we are presenting in English language the subject matter of Kṛṣṇa so elaborately. We have published eighty-two books like this. If you read one book . . . This is the preliminary study. Then, if you read it with great attention, you become Kṛṣṇa conscious immediately. Then you understand about Kṛṣṇa from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in sixty books, and then you enjoy the transcendental pleasure in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in seventeen books. So you cannot finish even within your life, so many books are there. And you'll forget reading other books.

Brian Singer: We'll just . . . ?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The first book of reading is this, *Bhagavad-gītā*. The *Bhagavad-gītā* is well known all over the world. Every scholar, religionist, everyone reads, all over the world. But sometimes they are misinterpreted foolishly. We are therefore presenting *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is, without any foolish interpretation. What Kṛṣṇa says, we repeat the same thing.

Brian Singer: Do you find that in the translation from the thoughts and the Sanskrit to the English words, then from the English words to the mass of the people's heads, do you find that there is much loss?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, if you have grasped the thought, that you can express in any language. But if you cannot grasp the thought, then you cannot express. . . . Our translation is that we have to receive the thoughts as it is by the *paramparā* system. Therefore it is presented so nicely, and people like it. . . . It is the value of the subject matter. That we have to receive from authorities. Just like any scientific book, say medical science. You cannot understand medical science [just] by reading the books. It must be received through a medical man. Then it will be clear.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness is expanding all over the world on the basis of the transcendental literature you have published and continue to publish to this day through your Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. And as you said yourself in the introduction to your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*:

Recently an American lady asked me to recommend an English translation of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Of course in America there are so many editions of *Bhagavad-gītā* available in English, but as far as I have seen, not only in America but also in India, none of them can be strictly said to be authoritative because in almost every one of them the commentator has expressed his own opinions without touching the spirit of *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, throughout your Bhaktivedanta purports you repeatedly touch on this concept of how to properly grasp the thoughts contained in the Vedic literature and to explain those intricate spiritual concepts with realization so that any honest and reasonable person who hears them will be able to properly understand them. The result? You did the seemingly impossible. You were able to explain the essence of the Absolute Truth, which is the goal of the *Vedas* (Bg. 15.15), in a way that any sincere person can understand that God, the Absolute Truth, the source of all knowledge, must be a person.

We are propagating the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement simply by following in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. We may not be very well versed in the *Vedānta-sūtra* aphorisms and may not understand their meaning, but we follow in the footsteps of the *ācāryas*, and because of our strictly and obediently following in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, it is to be understood that we know everything regarding the *Vedānta-sūtra*. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 7.148, purport]

One can overcome all misconceptions and entanglement in the material world by practicing *bhakti-yoga*, and therefore Vyāsadeva, acting on the instruction of Śrī Nārada, has very kindly introduced *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to relieve the conditioned souls from the clutches of *māyā*. 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 7.73, purport]

Personal realization does not mean that one should, out of vanity, attempt to show one's own learning by trying to surpass the previous *ācārya*. One must have full confidence in the previous *ācārya*, and at the same time one must realize the subject matter so nicely that he can present the matter for the particular circumstances in a suitable manner. *The original purpose of the text must be maintained*. No obscure meaning should be screwed out of it, yet it should be presented in an interesting manner for the understanding of the audience. This is called realization. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.4.1, purport; emphasis in original]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in my offerings to you over the past five years, I have tried to document your desire that we constantly read your books, especially out loud to one another, as you explained above to Brian Singer, in order to understand how to chant the holy names properly, without offense, and achieve love of God through *nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

This is not my word; this is Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You have to associate with *kīrtana*. The reading is also *kīrtana*, and chanting on the beads, that is also *kīrtana*. There is no difference. So make your life in such a way. Either chant Hare Kṛṣṇa or read books. [Lecture, 27 February 1975, Miami]

Persons conducted by such a conception of life can never get liberation from material bondage. But even a person perpetually condemned to the miseries of material existence can get relief from bondage if he simply agrees to hear only *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. In this Age of Kali, the process of hearing *kṛṣṇa-kathā* is the most effective means of gaining release from unwanted family affection and thus finding permanent freedom in life. The Age of Kali is full of sinful reactions, and people are more and more addicted to the qualities of this age, but simply by hearing and chanting of

kṛṣṇa-kathā one is sure to go back to Godhead. Therefore, people should be trained to hear only *kṛṣṇa-kathā*—by all means—in order to get relief from all miseries. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.5.44, purport]

The holy name and the Lord are identical. One who is completely free from the clutches of *māyā* can understand this fact. This knowledge, which is achieved by the mercy of the spiritual master, places one on the supreme transcendental platform. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu presented Himself as a fool because prior to accepting the shelter of a spiritual master He could not understand that simply by chanting one can be relieved from all material conditions. But as soon as He became a faithful servant of His spiritual master and followed his instructions, He very easily saw the path of liberation. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* must be understood to be devoid of all offenses. The ten offenses against the holy name are as follows: (1) to blaspheme a devotee of the Lord, (2) to consider the Lord and the demigods to be on the same level or to think that there are many gods, (3) to neglect the orders of the spiritual master, (4) to minimize the authority of scriptures (*Vedas*), (5) to interpret the holy name of God, (6) to commit sins on the strength of chanting, (7) to instruct the glories of the Lord's name to the unfaithful, (8) to compare the chanting of the holy name with material piety, (9) to be inattentive while chanting the holy name, and (10) to be attached to material things in spite of chanting the holy name. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 7.73, purport]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, every day for the past two years I have been reading out loud, over the internet, your translations, cover to cover, of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, including your Bhaktivedanta purports. Now the fruits are beginning to show and to ripen. Please allow me to share an atomic drop of what is possible by associating with you through hearing your transcendental books, even as a worldwide health crisis plunges the world into chaos, forcing the total lockdown of entire countries, even shutting down the normal activities of ISKCON's temples.

The following is a sample from the many letters I am receiving, this one from a devotee who has been listening every day to the Facebook page "Daily Readings of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Books" (which is now available on a YouTube channel of the same name):

Mahārāja, I'd like to share a little update with you on my reading groups in Sydney because I know that you are enthused by sharing and reading Srila Prabhupāda's books and you are encouraging devotees to also do this—and that's what's given me the enthusiasm to try and do this service. Here in Sydney we're quickly moving towards lockdown like other countries. I'm mostly at home; however my reading groups are getting bigger even though they are all online now and this is really very blissful. This pandemic has meant people have more anxiety and uncertainty in their lives but also more time to search for spiritual solace.

Here's something that might be nice to share with you. Yesterday after we read from the 6th chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* on my zoom group, I asked each participant to write a few words about what the reading meant to them. Carole, a 76-year old lady from a country town who just joined yesterday, and was reading Srila Prabhupada's books for the very first time, said "As we were reading I felt like things I knew deep down, things I'd lost, were being renewed." Isn't that nice! It just shows how Srila Prabhupada's words are able to reach sincere seekers of all backgrounds.

Your servant

Vilasa Manjari devi dasi

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, there is no way to repay you for the causeless mercy you have given the world. So again and again, and yet again, I pray to you that I may be able to continue to live in the abode of your transcendental books and to serve you by sharing with as many people as I can the bliss of hearing out loud your transcendental books and spreading this process of *bhakti-yoga* by associating with

you, who are uniquely empowered to deliver the Absolute Truth to anyone who agrees to hear sincerely, submissively, without argument, from Your Divine Grace.

Hare Krishna.

Your eternal servant,

Keśava Bhāratī Dāsa Goswami

Krishna Kshetra Swami

Offering prostrate obeisance to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, my eternal guide, preceptor and master, I offer also these heartfelt words on the occasion of your appearance celebration as Śrī Vyāsadeva's very dear spiritual descendent and representative.

On July 1, 1966, you moved into your small Lower East Side Manhattan flat behind 26 Second Avenue. You recorded this in your 1966 journal:

Today I entered the new house at 26 Second Avenue rear portion Room #B1. For my purpose it [is] all good. I do not [know] why Krishna is trying to establish me in New York. I am his servant's servant and therefore let His desire be fulfilled through my agency.

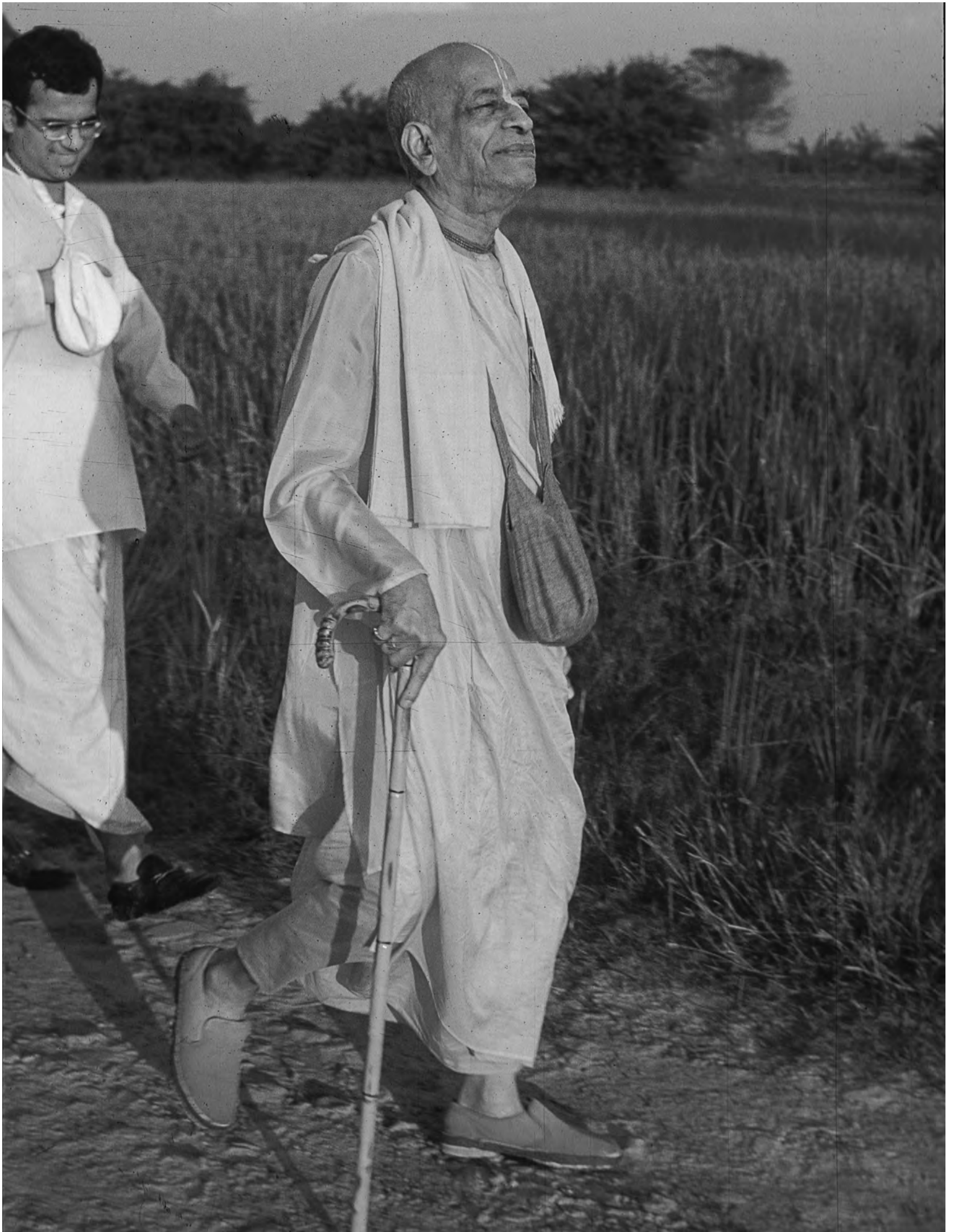
Lately, while reflecting on your profusion of instructions on how to advance in the practice of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti sādhana*, I came across my godbrother Mahātmā Prabhu's suggestion to improve *japa* of the *mahā-mantra* with the application of "*japa* affirmations," the title of a small book he has recently written. In considering "affirmations"—positive, present-tense statements that *affirm* the attitude and practices one wants to realize, it strikes me that you are repeatedly applying affirmations to your own engagement in your mission. For instance, in the case of this journal entry, you very simply and straightforwardly affirm your identity as Kṛṣṇa's servant's servant. Then, based on this truth, you *allow* Kṛṣṇa's desire to be fulfilled in the way that is fitting to your identity: As a servant of the servant, you recognize that you are eligible to act as the supreme master's—Kṛṣṇa's—agent.

In the same July 1 journal entry, you then go on to write,

The Landlord Mr. Gardiner is pukka landlord. He knows how to increase the rent. But I am not sorry. For two months namely July and August I will have to pay at 62 and odds whereas from September 1st I will have to pay \$71 and odds. Let me see how Kṛṣṇa arranges the things.

Despite the anticipated increase in rent of nine dollars per month (around \$72 in present-day value), you affirm that you are "not sorry." You are confident that Kṛṣṇa will act in a way that will resolve the financial uncertainty.*

Within these simple expressions of affirmation for the progress of your mission amidst quotidian details of accounting and the times of sunrise and sunset, I find indices of the sort of mature, humble confidence that made your efforts successful. They also point to a long Vaiṣṇava tradition of humble confidence, tied to a sense of eager anticipation to meet Kṛṣṇa, as we see when Akrura excitedly journeys to Vṛndāvana to meet the Lord. Other, somewhat related sources of inspiration for me are accounts of situations where



uncertainty regarding future events is mitigated with confidence in the Lord's all-good intervention. At present I'm thinking particularly of Lord Brahmā's uncertainty prior to the appearance of Varāhadeva. As your mission expanded during the early years of your efforts beyond as well as within India, you expressed continuing confidence. During a morning walk in Māyāpur (April 3, 1975) you made such an "affirmation" that was also an invitation to anyone and everyone:

This is the movement, that you come here, live with us, and produce your food, produce your milk, be happy, healthy, and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. This is our movement. Therefore we are creating New Vrindaban and farm, and we are trying to purchase . . . This is our movement, that we give you sufficient food, shelter, health, philosophy, religion, character, everything purity.

By saying "you come here," your confidence is magnified by such a direct appeal. What's more, your confidence is in your—and "our movement's"—capacity to *give* all that could be required for a person's well-being.

My prayer is that you may bless me to attain and maintain humble confidence in my own ability to be a positive contributor—a positive giver—to your mission of giving. To this end I allow myself to affirm my own fitness to be so. I further allow myself to affirm my potential, through your and Lord Kṛṣṇa's grace, to hold fast to your vision of flourishing communities sustained internally by "philosophy, religion, [and] character" and outwardly by "sufficient food, shelter, [and] health." And I pray that you allow me to continue to participate in your ongoing powerful agency in fulfilling Kṛṣṇa's wondrous desire to establish consciousness of Him, the Lord in our hearts, deep in the hearts of all.

Your aspiring servant,

Krishna Kshetra Swami

*However, even as you waited to "see how Kṛṣṇa arranges" the situation, on September 1st, two months later, you expressed yourself further: "Mr Gardiner wants to increase the rent to 71.odds. He came and got it signed by me before the trustees. I think it is not just."

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 124th Vyāsa-pūjā celebration. All glories to you and your mission of delivering the universe!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as I sit to write this year's Vyāsa-pūjā offering, I am unable to remain oblivious to the fact that the world outside is gridlocked by an invisible enemy, the coronavirus global pandemic. More than two million people have been infected by the virus across the world. As the world is grappling with this pandemic, the full display of the five kinds of *ajñāna-vṛttaya*, ignorant engagements created by Lord Brahmā, have become evident in this virus outbreak: "self-deception, the sense of death, anger after frustration, the sense of false ownership, and the illusory bodily conception, or forgetfulness of one's real identity." (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.12.2).

All of these five engagements are universally applicable, and when we are conditioned no one can escape them. With all of these in full action, the excruciating suffering encompassing the world right now is plain but painful to see. In your morning walks, lectures, and books, you saw the future as utterly predictable in the ways that these ignorant engagements will play out. Now we are observing the fulfillment of your prophetic words about the exploitation of nature, including the slaughtering of animals and the consumption of even creatures like bats and rats. The resultant backlash of such animalistic tendencies and atrocities is presenting itself with intense fury. “Since I suffer when pinched or killed by others, I should not attempt to pinch or kill any other living entity. People do not know that because of killing innocent animals they themselves will have to suffer severe reactions from material nature.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.15.24, purport).

Clearly, we have hopelessly submitted to these ignorant engagements created by the Lord. The onslaught of the virus being experienced is proof that the conditioned souls have completely misused their independence. Śrīla Prabhupāda, by giving us *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* you have given us insight into the situation we are presently experiencing.

We now see and understand how “the living entity prefers to misuse his independence and glides down towards nescience.” Although “the all-merciful Lord first of all tries to protect him from the trap, but when the living entity persists in gliding down to hell, the Lord helps him to forget his real position.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.12.3, purport). At this moment the world is at its lowest point. It’s easy to see the material world as a place of suffering and distress. Instead of realizing that the situation at hand is reminding us to mend our ways and become more Kṛṣṇa conscious, we continue our forgetful ways. As you would often say, Śrīla Prabhupāda, “We have forgotten our real identity and that we are part and parcel of the Lord.” Our fear goes beyond the coronavirus. Out of sheer fear, governments in countries across the globe have shut down all nonessential facilities, including temples. The one place where we can seek solace from the entanglement of our material lives, from the five ignorant engagements, is unfortunately now off limits. People feel as if they are being hunted down by an invisible killer, which has already taken the lives of more than 120,000 people worldwide. In each birth, we have tried to save ourselves but were left frustrated. I recall you saying, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that our fear is due to not wanting to leave this world of “society, friendship, and love.”

We think we are invincible. The suffering that the body endures is addressed, and we believe that everything will be fine. But we deceive ourselves thinking we are better than we actually are, and play at being God, the real enjoyer. This is the greatest deception, because what we really need is Kṛṣṇa’s help.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, there is quarantine, self-isolation, and now national lockdowns. Practically everybody is living in suffocated anger and frustration. This anger has taken on many faces. Anger at being forced to “stay at home” against one’s will. Anger at being forced to adhere to rules that will hopefully curb the spread of this disease. Anger by those following the restrictions that is directed at those who do not. The disease has halted people’s socializing and crushed their material aspirations. People are now frustrated and avoid each other, as this disease drives them into the tiny dark holes they call “home.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.12.3 you state, “Although he created the different influences of nescience, Lord Brahmā was not satisfied in performing such a thankless task, but he had to do it because most of the conditioned souls wanted it to be so.”

In response to the dark side of the Lord’s creation, which consists of the five kinds of nescient engagements, Brahmā next created the four Kumāras—Sanaka, Sananda, Sanātana, and Sanat. They were enlightened and guided by their father, Brahmā, and entrusted with the four principles of spiritual advancement, which would offset the ignorance of the conditioned souls, enlighten the world, and ultimately set them free. You describe these four principles in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.12.4:

[*Sāṅkhya*, or empirical philosophy for the analytical study of material conditions; *yoga*, or mysticism for liberation of the pure soul from material bondage; *vairāgya*, the acceptance of complete detachment from material enjoyment in life to elevate oneself to the highest spiritual understanding; and *tapas*, or the various kinds of voluntary austerities performed for spiritual perfection.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, following in the footsteps of the four Kumāras, you are representing Kṛṣṇa in the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya disciplic succession. You were endowed with wonderful qualities, like that of the four Kumāras. The movement that you founded, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, is a benediction for this world. Now it is your teachings that will help us come out of this pandemic. It is your teachings that will counteract the present situation and secure the future for us and for humanity as a whole.

You once told us, “There was a big plague in Calcutta. So one *bābā* went from door to door, house to house, and he had all the people—Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi—chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. After that the plague was driven out.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave us the holy names of the Lord, which we vowed to chant daily. They may shut down the temples, but they’ll never shut down the chanting of the holy name. Through the use of modern communication technology, I am engaging in a daily *japa* session with devotees in more than a thousand locations across the world. All over the globe, other disciples and granddisciples of yours are preaching and reaching out to the world in even bigger and better ways. As a result, thousands of people are now listening to *kathās*, *kīrtanas*, and discourses in their homes. We are encouraging devotees to convert their homes into temples, and we are appealing for the people of the world to spiritualize, now that socializing is not allowed. You showed by example that prayers are powerful, so, with your blessings, we Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees are praying for the complete well-being of the whole world. These transcendental sound vibrations will permeate the ether and purify the collective consciousness of people globally.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you correctly predicted the present suffering:

So you are suffering. You are maintaining so many slaughterhouse, and when it will be mature, there will be war, the wholesale murder. Finished. One atom bomb—finished. You’ll have to suffer. Don’t think that “Innocent animals, they cannot protest. Let us kill and eat.” No. You’ll be also punished. [Class on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.32, 31 May 1976, Honolulu]

You taught us how to prepare food, how to offer it to the Deity, and how to then honor that sanctified food. You gave us the right food to eat. The world needs this sanctified food more than ever. People are trapped—jobless and starving. The massive *prasādam* distribution project in Māyāpur that you initiated in the 1970s has proliferated globally, and ISKCON temples in India and other branches worldwide are distributing *prasādam* to those impacted by the lockdown.

The education that is imparted today teaches one to remain bound in ignorance. When we ignore something, it means we become ignorant of that. Worldwide, the Lord is ignored; hence we are in this horrific situation.

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you educated us on behalf of the Lord that real knowledge is not about storing masses of unnecessary data but rather having the wisdom to see every human being with equal vision and to become attached to Kṛṣṇa. The world has trained us to be ignorant, but you, Śrīla Prabhupāda have given us the knowledge to alleviate that ignorance. You have so mercifully given us your books, lectures, room and morning-walk conversations, and more than seven thousand personal letters. We also have many biographies of you. Through your life and teachings, the world is getting your direct personal association and instructions and getting armed with prescribed knowledge to counteract the onslaught of the calamities of the material world, like the current pandemic.

We are eternally grateful that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, have given us the proper karma-free diet of sumptuous *prasādam*, along with devotional service, transcendental books, the potent holy name,

enlightening knowledge, and accurate understanding.

As the world worsens and your mission becomes even more relevant, I am renewing my vows to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to carry forward your mission with energy and enthusiasm in whatever time I have left. I most humbly beg at your lotus feet for your mercy and blessings, so that I may fulfill all that I have pledged to do.

Your humble servant,

Lokanāth Swami

Mahādyuti Swami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my obeisances. All glories to you!

I don't feel qualified to say I love anyone; I don't consider myself spiritually advanced enough to feel real love. If, however, I do love anyone, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I love you—for the simple reason that you saved my life and you continue to save it. You have also saved and continue to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of other people.

That saving of which I speak, however, is not just the holy name you've given us to chant and the philosophy you've given us to study. Rather, the greatest gift you've given us is the opportunity to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness on behalf of you and Lord Caitanya.

As a child and teenager, I didn't think much about helping other people. I mainly thought about my own sense gratification. But after twenty years in this body, I started to develop a desire to do good for others. Yet I had no idea how. Though I tried various ways, none of them seemed to suffice.

When I met your disciples, they told me that spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the highest welfare work. They told me that the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa goes directly to the soul, without having to pass through layers of mind or intelligence. I didn't understand exactly, but it sounded good.

I visited their temple to learn more. On that first visit, they took me out to chant with them in a crowded, sensual part of the city. I was amazed to see that the joyful *kīrtana* seemed insulated from the surrounding degradation by an invisible bubble. People stopped, apparently involuntarily—stunned, it seemed to me, by the transcendental sound vibration going directly to their hearts. They had gotten in touch with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They were being unwittingly purified. And those interested got a *Back to Godhead* magazine that explained what they were experiencing. *This* I knew was what I had been seeking; this was indeed the highest welfare work. I was sure that this was the work to which I wanted to dedicate my life.

That night, one of the *brahmacārīs* shaved my head, and I became a temple resident. The next morning, less than twenty-four hours into my first visit to a Hare Kṛṣṇa temple, I was on full-time

saṅkīrtana. I was happier than I'd ever been in my life; now, by Your Divine Grace, I finally had a mission that would make people happy forever. (Many years later, I heard you say that the purpose of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is to make people happy. And when a professor in Mexico City asked you the purpose of life, you replied that the purpose of life is *ānanda*.)

We often hear that the chanting of the holy names is the *yuga-dharma* for this age. A verse in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi 3.40), however, goes a step further with the word *pracāra*—that the *yuga-dharma* is not only to chant the holy names but to “broadcast the glories of the holy name.”

This was your emphasis, Śrīla Prabhupāda: you yourself were always preaching as well as engaging others in preaching the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, especially in the form of His holy names.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for sacrificing your life to empower us to help you in your most blissful service of spreading the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in a mostly unreceptive and ungrateful world steeped in materialism and impersonalism.

All glories to you!

Your servant,

Mahādyuti Swami

Mahāvishnu Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this earth, having taken shelter at His lotus feet. Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, if we take your *praṇāma-mantra* at face value, you are presently “kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva.” By Kṛṣṇa’s arrangement, therefore, your transcendental activities seem to span past, present, and future.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura confirms this *advāya-jñāna-tattva* understanding of your pastimes in his poem glorifying Haridāsa Ṭhākura:

He reasons ill who says that Vaiṣṇavas die
When thou art living still in sound!
The Vaiṣṇavas die to live, and living try
To spread the holy name around!

In support of a straightforward literal acceptance of the truth of this verse, you also told us in your lecture on Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's Appearance Day, March 2, 1975, in Atlanta:

It is not that he is dead and gone. That is not spiritual understanding. Even ordinary living being, he does not die (*na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*). And what to speak of such exalted authorized personality like Bhaktisiddhānta. He is seeing. I never feel that I am alone. Of course, when I came to your country without any friend, without any means . . . Practically, just like a vagabond I came. But I had full faith that “My Guru Mahārāja is with me.” I never lost this faith. And that is fact. There are two words, *vāñī* and *vapu*. *Vāñī* means words, and *vapu* means this physical body. So *vāñī* is more important than the *vapu*. *Vapu* will be finished. This is material body. It will be finished. That is the nature. But if we keep to the *vāñī*, to the words of spiritual master, then we remain very fixed up. It doesn't matter.

Is it possible we can also have such full faith in your “exalted authorized personality” and “never feel that I am alone”? Is it possible we can accept your divine words to be you yourself in person? Is it possible we can faithfully follow in your footsteps as our ISKCON founder-*ācārya* and ISKCON head? By your mercy, it must be possible.

Otherwise why did you repeatedly warn us to strictly follow Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura's words in the second stanza of his *Śrī-guru-vandanā*: *ār nā koriho mane āśā*?

Do not try to research anything. That is final—*ār nā koriho mane āśā*.

Take this very seriously. *Ār nā koriho mane āśā*: “No more. Stop any other desires.” Then your life is successful.

No more desires, *ār nā koriho mane āśā*. This is devotee. Except service of Kṛṣṇa, there is no other thing. That is devotee.

Ār nā koriho mane āśā. So guru, your guru, has said that “You chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, observe these rules.” Do that, don't speculate, and you will understand everything.

Ār nā koriho mane āśā. You rascal, you do not desire anything else. Are you not singing daily? But do you understand the meaning?

Ār nā koriho mane āśā. Don't go anywhere else. Take this faithfully, the orders of guru. You are singing daily. *Ār nā koriho mane āśā*. This is faith, strong faith.

Ār nā koriho mane āśā. And if you plan something, [chuckles] “I am very expert in planning; I shall do this, I shall do that, not serve Kṛṣṇa,” then you remain impure.

Ār nā koriho mane āśā. Simply whatever you hear from the guru, try to execute it. *Ār nā koriho mane āśā*. Do not expect anything more.

Guru-mukha-padma-vākya, cittete koriyā aikya / ār nā koriho mane āśā. Do not try to foolishly search anything and waste your time. Hear from a bona fide spiritual master, and that is final knowledge. That is final knowledge.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this auspicious day of your 124th Vyāsa-pūjā, please bless me that I will now set out to strictly follow you (*ār nā koriho mane āśā*) and teach others so that your ISKCON mission will conquer all directions, and “a flood of transcendental ecstasy will certainly cover the land. When all

the sinful, miserable living entities become happy, the Vaiṣṇava's desire is then fulfilled.” (*Prayer Unto the Lotus Feet of Kṛṣṇa*, written on the *Jaladuta*)

Your humble servant,

Mahāvishnu Swami

Pārtha Sārathi Dās Goswami

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace. All glories to our *guru-paramparā*.

I recently memorized a statement from the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 22, Chapter Summary: “The fact is that devotional service is bestowed by the blessings of a pure devotee (*sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ*). . . . [O]ne has to receive his mercy for one's dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness to be awakened.”

From this statement I can understand that whatever advancement I've made, whatever position I'm in, is simply due to your causeless mercy.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has also said that mercy (*kṛpā*) is more important than endeavor. Of course, endeavor is required, and therefore Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes in Text 3 of his *Nectar of Instruction*:

*utsāhān niścayād dhairyāt tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt
saṅga-tyāgāt sato vṛtteḥ śadbhir bhaktiḥ prasidhyati*

“There are six principles favorable to the execution of pure devotional service: (1) being enthusiastic, (2) endeavoring with confidence, (3) being patient, (4) acting according to regulative principles [such as *śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam*—hearing, chanting, and remembering Kṛṣṇa], (5) abandoning the association of nondevotees, and (6) following in the footsteps of the previous *ācāryas*. These six principles undoubtedly assure the complete success of pure devotional service.”

But ultimately, it is mercy that carries us through the different levels of *sāmānya-bhakti* to *bhāva-bhakti* to *prema-bhakti*.

Some context: Presently it is lockdown. I am fortunate to be staying at Govardhana Hill. The house I am staying in is behind the ISKCON Bhaktivedanta Ashram. Every evening I sit on the rooftop and watch the sun (*Vivasvān*) set over Girirāja Govardhana, and it is like a crimson silken veil that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī might wear. The wind (*Vāyu*) blows pleasantly, and the moon (*Candra*) is shining. In two days it will be *pūrṇimā*, the full moon, and it is going to be a special pink moon.

During this lockdown I see children playing on the roofs. I offer my respects to the pigeons, to the starlings, to the *kalpa-vṛkṣa* trees, to the cows, to the dogs, to the pigs, to the Brajabāsīs, and even to the mosquitoes that are trying to taste my blood. I am fortunate to be at the best place in this material world, in the shade of Girirāja Govardhana.

When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked Rāmānanda Rāya where is the best place for a devotee to

practice devotional service, Rāmānanda Rāya replied, *vraja-bhūmi vṛndāvana yāhāṇ līlā-rāsa*: “He should live in the holy place known as Vṛndāvana or Vrajabhūmi, where the Lord performed His *rāsa* dance.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 8.254)

Somehow I am here at Govardhana Hill, at least until the lockdown is lifted. What better place to be than in the association of Giriraja Govardhana!

All this is your mercy upon me. Your mercy has also extended to tens of thousands of followers, admirers, disciples, granddisciples, and great-granddisciples.

I repeatedly commit myself to practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness within your personal mission, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. I pray that I can continue to get the association of your beloved disciples and granddisciples. Just today I got an email from one of my senior *śikṣā-gurus*, enquiring about my welfare. Due to your potency, you have made so many wonderful disciples, granddisciples, and great-granddisciples—to whom I repeatedly offer my respects. Simply remembering their holy names can purify me. As it is said in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi* 12.92), “Simply by remembering the names of all these Vaiṣṇavas, one can attain the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Indeed, simply by remembering their holy names, one achieves the fulfillment of all desires.”

Of course, this particular verse by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja refers to the Vaiṣṇavas listed in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, Chapters 10–12, but your beloved disciples and granddisciples are also exalted Vaiṣṇavas. So I can remember their names and chant their names—it is like offering oblations of ghee into the fire.

Thank you for allowing me to associate with you through your sound vibration—listening to your lectures and reading your commentaries on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Thank you for allowing me to worship your *mūrti* form.

I was extremely fortunate that when you visited South Africa in October 1975 for nineteen days, I was able to serve you. At that time I was the *pūjārī* and engaged in service of offering you *guru-pūjā* and applying *candana* paste to your forehead.

I hope in the very near future I can get your personal association. Wherever you want me to go upon leaving this body is your desire and the desire of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. I would very much like to associate with you in Goloka Vṛndāvana. But if you want me to take birth again within ISKCON, then that will also be my pleasure. I would imagine it would be South Africa again, since I have been there attempting to preach and establish your mission for forty-six years.

In *Jaiva-dharma*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura states that a *madhyama-bhakta* does not desire to live and does not desire to die but simply wants to perform *bhajana* and accept whatever is the desire of Lord Caitanya.

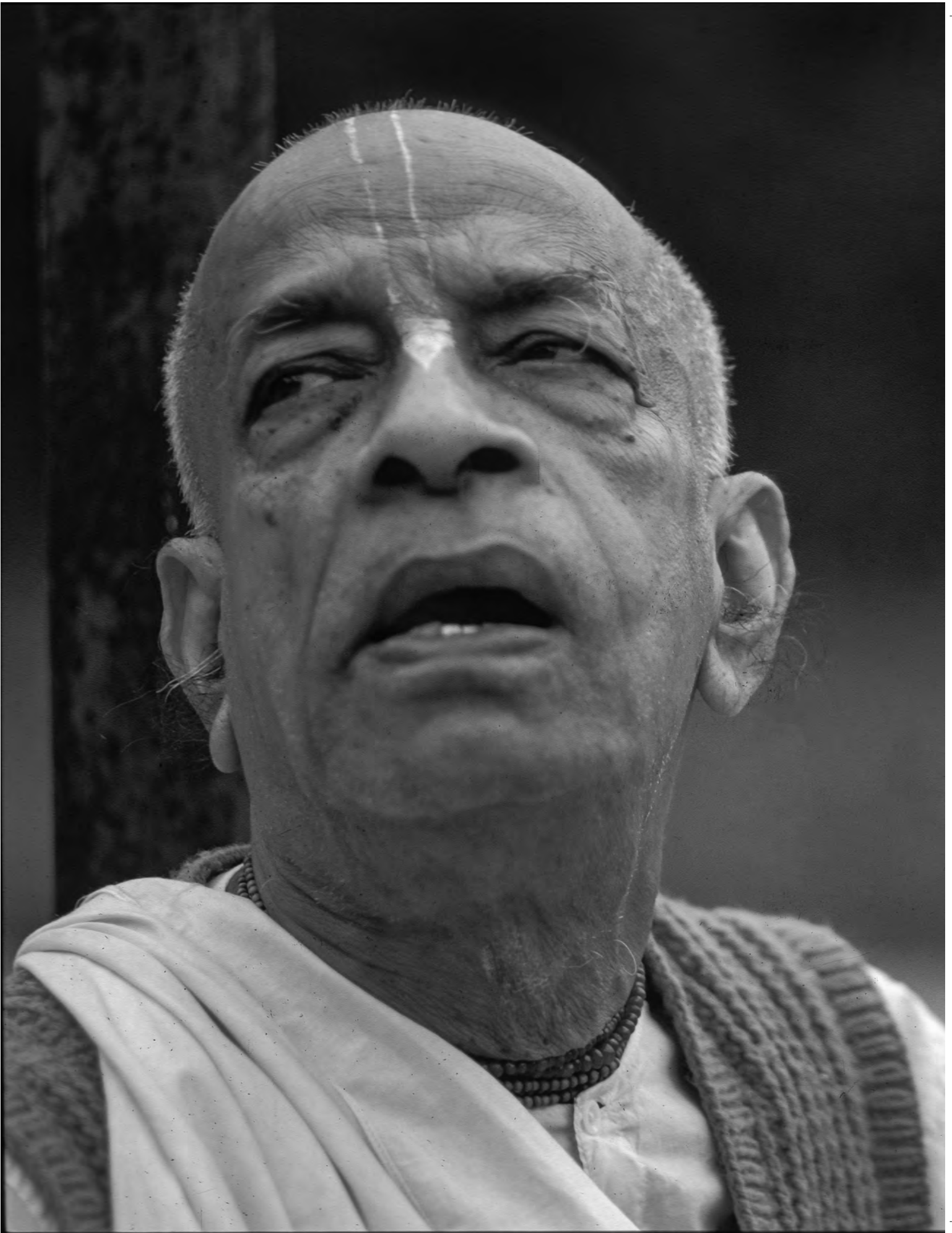
Of course, I am not a *madhyama-bhakta*, nor am I an advanced *kaniṣṭha-bhakta*, but I am a beginning *kaniṣṭha-bhakta*. The prerequisite for becoming an *uttama-bhakta* is to become a *madhyama-bhakta*. And a prerequisite for becoming a *madhyama-bhakta* is to become a mature *kaniṣṭha-bhakta*. And a prerequisite for becoming a mature *kaniṣṭha-bhakta* is to become a beginning *kaniṣṭha-bhakta*, who at least bows down to the Deity and follows the principles.

I pray that your personal preaching mission will continue and become more established. And, in the mood of Vāsudeva Datta, I pray that all living entities can be relieved of their material desires and the reactions of their sinful activities and become liberated. It would seem that Vāsudeva Datta has influenced you in this particular mood, since you have preached extensively not only in India but also in the Western countries.

Thank you once again for engaging me in your service and in the service of our *guru-paramparā*. I unlimitedly take the dust of my godbrothers, godsisters, and your granddisciples, *koṭi koṭi* times.

Your servant,

Pārtha Sārathi Dās Goswami



Rāma Govinda Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, *parama-pūjyā param-gurudevajī*,

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

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

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

Param-gurudeva! Simply out of causeless mercy on the fallen souls in this world, you undertook all tribulations in your old age and went to the United States of America to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You went to New York City, a place where people did not know who Kṛṣṇa is, and had never even heard His name. You perfectly fulfilled the import of the following verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.13.10), spoken by Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira to his exalted uncle Vidura:

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

“My lord, devotees like your good self are verily holy places personified. Because you carry the Personality of Godhead within your heart, you turn all places into places of pilgrimage.”

By reading your pastimes in *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, I have become totally convinced that the above verse perfectly describes you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. A pure devotee like Your Divine Grace is just like a moving place of pilgrimage. By establishing the worship of Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in each and every country, Your Divine Grace made all those countries places of pilgrimage. My little mind is unable begin to comprehend your glories and achievements. To me it seems like a dream that in the short period of just eleven years Your Divine Grace traveled around the entire world many times and established temples of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. All the great *ācāryas* of the various *sampradāyas* preached transcendental knowledge only on the Indian subcontinent, but Your Divine Grace preached the transcendental knowledge of *Śrī Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* throughout the world. Not only that, but you established the worship of the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, which was earlier exclusively meant for the so-called *brāhmaṇa* community. Many times we hear the reciters of *Bhāgavata-kathā* say that because of the preaching efforts of ISKCON, we have temples of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadra, along with Ratha-yātrās and pure vegetarian *prasādam* restaurants, in every part of the world. The whole world recognizes Your Divine Grace’s contribution to mankind.

In your translation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.6.27, Your Divine Grace writes, “[Transcendental] knowledge is extremely difficult to understand without the mercy of a saintly person like Nārada, but everyone who has taken shelter of Nārada’s disciplic succession can understand this confidential knowledge.” In your purport to this verse you write that “this confidential knowledge is extremely difficult to understand, yet it is very easy to understand if one takes shelter of a pure devotee.” By your mercy, I am practically experiencing this.

Param-gurudeva! Please bless me so that I can always stay in the association of the pure devotees and be at least a little helpful to your preaching mission of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in various countries of this world.

A servant of your servant,

Rāma Govinda Swami

Śacīnandana Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāñī-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. Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

On this most important day of the year—your Appearance Day—let me reflect on the answer you once gave to an intriguing question a young devotee asked you, serendipitously, in the very town where I grew up: “Is it possible for someone to make it within one life?”

Your answer was both sobering and encouraging:

It is possible in one second, provided you are serious. It is not difficult . . . There is no such formula that “One can be Kṛṣṇa conscious after so many years.” No. There is no such formula. One cannot become Kṛṣṇa conscious even after millions of births, and one can become within [a] second Kṛṣṇa conscious. But on the average, within this life we can become perfect in Kṛṣṇa consciousness if we take it seriously. [Room conversation, 8 September 1969, Hamburg]

When I first read your answer (as I had not yet joined the movement to be present at the conversation in which you answered this question), I asked myself what it could mean to take up the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Today, more than fifty years later, I continue to reflect on what is that exact process to become Kṛṣṇa conscious “in one second.”

The Process You Came to Deliver

In studying how you delivered Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the world, I have always been heartened to see how much of what you gave was both clear and achievable. First and foremost, you taught: Hear about Kṛṣṇa (*śravaṇam*) and glorify Kṛṣṇa (*kīrtanam*).

Śravaṇam

You began your worldwide preaching with the main purpose of informing the misdirected modern world about Kṛṣṇa and *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and realizations of the *paramparā* were your prime sources of information and inspiration. You endeavored so hard to translate the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and set up a network of temples and projects where this extraordinary work could be heard and learned thoroughly, as well as distributed widely. Your faith in the “claims” of the *Bhāgavatam* was unshakeable:

*śrīmad-bhāgavate mahā-muni-kṛte kiṁ vā parair īśvaraḥ
sadyo hṛdy avarudhyate 'tra kṛtibhiḥ śuśrūṣubhis tat-kṣaṇāt*

“This beautiful *Bhāgavatam*, compiled by the great sage Vyāsadeva [in his maturity], is sufficient in itself for God realization. What is the need of any other scripture? As soon as one attentively and submissively hears the message of *Bhāgavatam*, by this culture of knowledge the Supreme Lord is established within his heart.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.2)

Whenever I read the *Bhāgavatam* deeply, I experience that “the fire of lamentation, illusion and fearfulness” is at once extinguished in my life (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.7). And this experience is there naturally for all those who follow your advice to seriously study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Kīrtanam

mahā-bhāgavatā nityaṁ kalau kurvanti kīrtanam

“During Kali-yuga, the great devotees of the Lord always engage in *kīrtana*, chanting the Lord’s holy names.” (*Skanda Purāṇa*, as quoted in the purport of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.37)

Right from the very beginning of your life you demonstrated your great faith in the chanting of the holy names.

The *Bhāgavatam* says, “[E]nlightened persons [unexpectedly] worship Kali-yuga because, in this fallen age, all perfection of life can easily be achieved by the performance of *saṅkīrtana*.” (*Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* 11.5.36)

One might ask, Why is *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana* especially recommended for Kali-yuga? Why are other devotional services not as strongly recommended?

The answer is eye-opening: In Kali-yuga people can easily muster the qualification to chant—more than in other ages! Because of the intense suffering that is a distinguishing factor of Kali-yuga—an age in which everyone is severely handicapped as far as the normal qualifications for spiritual life are concerned, and in which they are incessantly attacked by wars, famines, plagues (including the coronavirus), widespread degradation, insanity, and so much more—people can easily summon up the main qualification for chanting. In their *japa* and *kīrtana*, they can find in themselves the helplessness that brings about dependence on Kṛṣṇa. Humbled by the external circumstances and their own weaknesses, the conditioned souls who have awakened to their plight can actually cry out to the holy name and surrender to this most merciful form of Kṛṣṇa. If they do so, they will immediately feel *paramaṁ śāntim*, supreme peace, and ultimately attain the *parāṁ gatim*, the highest goal.

Conclusion

The processes of *śravaṇam* (hearing) and *kīrtanam* (chanting) are thus so very effective that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura remarked:

When a devotee understands that the process of *bhakti-yoga* is complete in itself, and he becomes

absorbed in hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord, the supremely merciful Personality of Godhead affectionately lifts such a first-class devotee onto His own lap. [Quoted in the purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.51]

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, just as a little child can speak only those words his father and mother have put into his mouth, I lack original words. I can only quote and speak things that you have taught me. But no problem! Let me say just three words of my own composition about the process you have given to me and to the world:

It 100% works!

I know I can never repay you or show my indebtedness in an appropriate way:

*yair īdṛśī bhagavato gatir ātma-vāda
ekāntato nigamibhiḥ pratipāditā naḥ
tuṣyantv adabhra-karuṇāḥ sva-kṛtena nityam
ko nāma tat pratikaroti vinoda-pātram*

[Pṛthu Mahārāja said, in glorification of the four Kumāras:] “How can such persons, who have rendered unlimited service by explaining the path of self-realization in relation to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and whose explanations are given for our enlightenment with complete conviction and Vedic evidence, be repaid except by folded palms containing water for their satisfaction? Such great personalities can be satisfied only by their own activities, which are distributed amongst human society out of their unlimited mercy.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.22.47)

Kindly tolerate my spiritual slowness and keep me engaged in your life-saving mission of disseminating the process of *śravaṇam-kīrtanam*.

With deepest gratitude,

Your humble servant,

Śacīnandana Swami

Satsvarūpa dās Goswami

I offer my obeisances to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this earth. Obeisances unto you, Spiritual Master, who are so kindly teaching the message of Lord Caitanya and delivering these Western countries, which are full of voidism and impersonalism.

It has been over forty years since Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disappearance. He is still close to me and all his followers in his *vāñī*. I exchanged many letters with His Divine Grace, and they continue to guide me today. I once spoke to a professor who said that Kṛṣṇa consciousness appears to be a combination of logic and *śāstra*. I asked Prabhupāda about this and he replied to me as follows:

Concerning our use of analogy. We do not bring in imperfect analogy, but we follow the instructions of the Sastras strictly. Our authority is on the basis of Sastra, not analogy. . . We give analogy for the general mass of people who have no faith in sastra. Analogy is not proof; sastra is proof.

Foolish people cannot understand or accept, so we use analogy. The conclusion is not drawn from the analogy but from the sastra. We don't use a combination of logic and authority, we use authority. . . . The logic of using analogy is called in the sastra "sakha candra nyaya." It is easier to focus on the moon through the branches of a tree. [Letter, 21 October 1975]

I was very impressed with Śrīla Prabhupāda's strong conviction that *śāstra* is the proof in understanding Vedic knowledge (*śāstra-pramāṇa*). I share this letter with devotees who approach me with their doubts in accepting Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote me an even more personal letter about the importance of reading *śāstra* in his letter of Jan. 5, 1976, in answer to my inquiry of Dec. 4, 1975. I was very fond of reading his books for many hours, but I wasn't sure if this was bona fide. His reply was very encouraging:

Yes, as a sannyasi and GBC your first duty is to read my books. Otherwise, how will you preach? In order to remain steadily fixed in Krishna consciousness there must be a sound philosophical understanding. Otherwise it will become only sentiment. Whenever you find time please read my books.

This was a green light for me to cram Prabhupāda's purports. In the previous letter I quoted Prabhupāda said *śāstra* was the proof for Vedic understanding. I took it that Prabhupāda's books, with the verse translations and his purports, were themselves *śāstra*.

But in the same letter Prabhupāda also wrote:

Our first business is this book distribution. There is no need of any other business. If this book distribution is managed properly, pushed on with great enthusiasm and determination, and at the same time if our men keep spiritually strong, then the whole world will become Krishna conscious.

So, he didn't want me to *only* read his books, but I had to also distribute the books and tend to other preaching duties. But whenever I could find time—and I made it a top priority to do so—I read his books.

Reading Prabhupāda's books or listening to his recorded lectures is necessary and nectarean for keeping alive in spiritual life. I deeply thank Śrīla Prabhupāda and all the devotees who assisted him in publishing his books and recording his lectures. They have done a great service for the world, and for this fallen, aspiring devotee of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am now eighty years old. As long as I am physically able, please let me read your books with enthusiasm and without doubt. And let me cooperate with your devotees as a sign of my love for you.

Your eternal servant,

Satsvarūpa dās Goswami

Smita Krishna Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet.

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

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

Is this offering too late? It might not get published, but even if it isn't there would be no loss, as on this path there is no loss or diminution. And you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, know me, and I write this for you to read. And as I am writing, you already know. At the same time, I like to see it heard or read in your presence—maybe that is the essence.

I am writing at your Almviks Gard project in Sweden. It is a beautiful place—a farm in the countryside with forests and lakes surrounding it. And fields for the cows to graze in. There are houses and families. We call it a village.

The other day I took a long walk in the forests to reconnect with some old trails. Most of those trails are marked, but I looked for one specific trail that was not much used and kind of difficult to find the beginning of, and that was kind of overgrown. Long, long ago there cows walked there, freely traversing the forest and then coming back to their respective small farms in the evening. So what I looked for was one of those old cow trails of the previous centuries. I found the start of the old trail I was looking for where I expected, but to my surprise the trail was now clearly marked with yellow dots on the trees. Someone had marked the trail since the last time I was there. A pleasant surprise. With the help of the marked trees I could now quickly and safely return home to Almviks Gard and our temple there.

It made me think how you opened up the path back home, back to Godhead. You came and marked out the proper way back to the spiritual world—a path forgotten, neglected, unknown to modern mankind. You knew it and you marked it for us to easily find and traverse back to home, back to Godhead.

And now another day. I am sitting in my room and looking out the window, and I can see how a new set of oxen are being trained to walk together and work together. It's as much a learning experience for the trainer as for the trained. With time, progress has been made, but more is to come.

The challenge is to depend on the oxen, our fathers, who peacefully and patiently wait for us to get our act together—an act that includes the oxen who walk on their four legs, representing honesty, austerity, mercy, and cleanliness. May their four legs and what they stand for be our shelter.

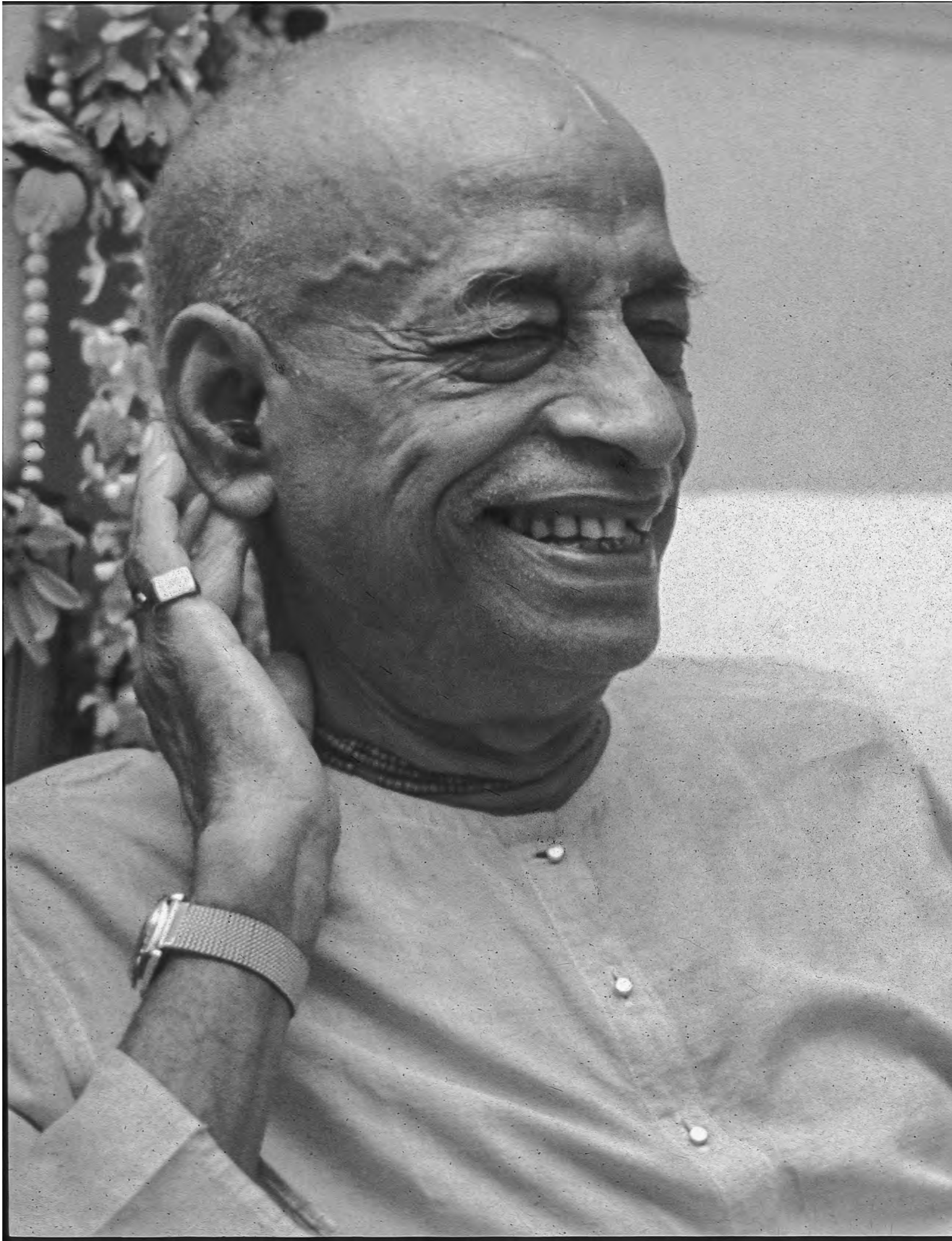
In the temple something happened during the winter: we came to end of the Twelfth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as we have been reading it from beginning to end. And now we have started the *Bhāgavatam* anew, from the beginning. Sooner or later we will come to the passage where Parikṣit confronts the personality of Kali, and there we will again meet the bull of dharma.

And then one day . . . Kṛṣṇa will blow His bugle . . . and call us home . . . to meet you and Kṛṣṇa there.

Please keep us in a corner of your heart.

Your disciple and attempting servant,

Smita Krishna Swami



Subhāg Swami

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

*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*

In your poem called *Mārkine Bhāgavata-dharma* (“Kṛṣṇa Consciousness in the West”), which you wrote while on the *Jaladuta* after it docked in Boston on September 17, 1965, you beautifully expressed the mood of surrender to the will of Lord Kṛṣṇa. As stated by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, “Mind, body, family, and whatever else is mine I have surrendered at Your lotus feet, O youthful son of Nanda!” In your poem you expressed how a devotee should feel just like an instrument depending on the Lord’s mercy. I cannot elaborate more, so I would like to include the translation of the poem.

My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, You are so kind upon this useless soul, but I do not know why You have brought me here. Now you can do whatever You like with me.

But I guess You have some business here, otherwise why would You bring me to this terrible place? Most of the population here is covered by the material modes of ignorance and passion. Absorbed in material life, they think themselves very happy and satisfied, and therefore they have no taste for the transcendental message of Vāsudeva. I do not know how they will be able to understand it. But I know Your causeless mercy can make everything possible because You are the most expert mystic.

How will they undersand the mellows of devotional service? O Lord, I am simply praying for Your mercy so that I will be able to convince them about Your message.

All living entities have come under the control of the illusory energy by Your will, and therefore, if You like, by Your will they can also be released from the clutches of illusion.

I wish that You may deliver them. Therefore if You so desire their deliverance, then only will they be able to understand Your message.

The words of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are Your incarnation, and if a sober person repeatedly receives it with submissive aural reception, then he will be able to understand Your message.

It is said in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.17-21):

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramātmā [Supersoul] in everyone’s heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted. By regular attendance in classes on the *Bhāgavatam* and by rendering of service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact. As soon as irrevocable loving service is established in the heart, the effects of nature’s modes of passion and ignorance, such as lust, desire, and hankering, disappear from the heart. Then the devotee is established in goodness, and he becomes completely happy. Thus established in the mode of unalloyed goodness, the man whose

mind has been enlivened by contact with devotional service to the Lord gains positive scientific knowledge of the Personality of Godhead in the stage of liberation from all material association. Thus the knot in the heart is pierced, and all misgivings are cut to pieces. The chain of fruitive actions is terminated when one sees one's self and one's master."

He will become liberated from the influence of the modes of ignorance and passion and thus all inauspicious things accumulated in the core of the heart will disappear.

How will I make them understand this message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness? I am very unfortunate, unqualified, and the most fallen. Therefore I am seeking Your benediction so that I can convince them, for I am powerless to do so on my own.

Somehow or other, O Lord, You have brought me here to speak about You. Now, my Lord, it is up to You to make me a success or failure as You like.

O spiritual master of all the worlds! I can simply repeat Your message, so if You like You can make my power of speaking suitable for their understanding.

Only by Your causeless mercy will my words become pure. I am sure that when this transcendental message penetrates their hearts they will certainly feel engaddened and thus become liberated from all unhappy conditions of life.

O Lord, I am just like a puppet in Your hands. So if You have brought me here to dance, then make me dance, make me dance, O Lord, make me dance as You like.

I have no devotion, nor do I have any knowledge, but I have strong faith in the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. I have been designated as Bhaktivedānta, and now, if You like, You can fulfill the real purport of Bhaktivedānta.'

Signed—the most unfortunate, insignificant beggar
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami,
on board the ship *Jaladuta*, Commonwealth Pier,
Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A.
dated 18th of September, 1965

In recent years, by your mercy, we have been pushing forward college preaching, which you were so fond of, with some of our *brahmacārīs*. They are regularly preaching in universities across India, and the results are promising and encouraging. There is also regular college preaching across Indonesia, and although it is a predominately Muslim country, the results are hopeful. In a letter to Rudra Dāsa dated 9 March 1970, you stated how important preaching to the younger generation is:

I have heard that there is very good potential for spreading Krishna Consciousness movement in Toronto, especially among the large younger population. So I think this will be a good field for you to work enthusiastically.

In a letter written to Bahudak dāsa in January 1976, you expressed similar delight: "I was very glad to learn how our devotees are coming out victorious in the preaching to the university professors and students."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were asked many a time what would please you. You often mentioned that you would be pleased if someone could become Kṛṣṇa conscious. At other times you replied that if someone preached the message of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, it would definitely please you. I am trying to do this as far as my capacity allows, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Since you specifically instructed me to preach in Bangladesh, I go there regularly to spread this movement across the country. For the last fifteen years I have been regularly visiting Indonesia, another Muslim country. To our astonishment, devotees hold twenty-five Ratha-yātrās across the islands of Indonesia every year! At certain places, like Batam, we have been amazed to see that even the government supports the Ratha-yātrā. To attract tourism in

Batam, they advertised the Ratha-yātrā with a big picture of Lord Jagannātha and also lent financial help. In Cligeon they included the beautiful face of Jagannātha in the annual carnival parade logo. Even the remotest places, such as Gorontalo, with a 98% Islamic population, are getting the mercy of the Lord. Recently there were a few preaching programs conducted there, and the response was wonderful. Many Muslim students took your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and honored *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*. A similar response was shown in Bandung, another city in Indonesia, where many young boys and girls of the Islamic faith took your books and showed keen interest in Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy. It is very encouraging to see people of other faiths taking your books and inquiring about the path of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. We heard that you were very much pleased with devotees preaching in difficult areas, and we are trying to do our best to please you.

Please give us strength, courage, and conviction. Let your words inspire us and keep us always on the path of preaching.

Your fallen, insignificant

Subhāg Swami

Śukadeva Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Another year has passed by, and we gather again to rededicate ourselves to the process given by you, which is the perfection of religion—devotional service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, chiefly by chanting the holy names of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

Spiritual life means practicing and preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The whole world is thinking and planning to stay on here, improve this world, enjoy sense gratification, and be happy. Everyone's motto is to squeeze as much pleasure as possible out of the body before it becomes invalid and drops dead.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you educated and convinced us and demonstrated as well how to transcend the body and experience the joy of self-realization. To attain this, there are no material prerequisites, like money or a college education. But there is one requirement to experience the joy of self-realization, and that is to meet a genuine representative of the Lord, such as Your Divine Grace. Kṛṣṇa has sent you at this point in history. Without pleasing a pure devotee of the Lord, one can't take to this path. Your followers are also expected to remain fixed up in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and distribute the gifts of Your Divine Grace to the generations of devotees to come.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your compassion, like the Lord's, is boundless. You have established ISKCON like a world university to systematically educate and train people in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, irrespective of their material designations. If only world leaders would pay a little attention to your timeless, pure messages. Then everyone would want to practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and there would soon begin a new era of peace, prosperity, and perfection in human society. Your message is the need of the hour, because people have utterly failed with all their academics and technology to find the clue to universal peace, love, and harmony. You have given us a simple, unfailing, and most potent method: "Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and be happy." I am most fortunate to have accepted Your Divine Grace. Please bless me so that

I stay on with ISKCON's devotee *saṅga* and distribute this mercy as much as I can. In that way I am sure to obtain your shower of mercy. I am eternally grateful that you picked me up from the gutter and have allowed me to remain with your glorious mission, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

An aspiring servant of your servants,

Śukadeva Swami

Trivikrama Swami

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

One thing that is becoming more and more apparent to me as I get older is that when Lord Kṛṣṇa says that this material world is a place of misery He is not exaggerating. So much suffering, subtle and gross, from every direction, but still the mind tries to convince us that we can be happy here. The problem, of course, is that we listen carefully to the mind and often tend to agree with it in this regard.

Fortunately, as we continue with this process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, this truth about the material world is revealed to us more and more. And from the other side, by your mercy, we are experiencing a small glimpse of the spiritual world, especially in the *kīrtana* of the names of Lord Hari. As Narottama dāsa Thākura writes, *golokera prema-dhana, hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*: “The chanting of the Holy Names of the Lord is coming from the spiritual world, Goloka Vṛndāvana.”

I remember being with you in Vṛndāvana in September 1974. I had arrived from preaching in Hong Kong, and at the time you were somewhat ill. Every night we had a program in the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple (under construction), and all the devotees were expected to attend, mainly because you were always there. The program started at 6:30 with the evening *ārati*, after which there was a class. Because of your ill health you were not giving class, and instead your *sannyāsīs* took up this service.

Śrutakīrti Prabhu, your personal servant at the time, instructed us that you wanted the class to be short. Sometimes, if you thought the *sannyāsī* was speaking too long, Śrutakīrti would come and say that you wanted him to stop. Then everyone would stay for the second stand-up *kīrtana*, which went on for at least another hour or so.

This evening program went on like this for some time, and gradually your health improved. One evening after the final *kīrtana* I came back into the courtyard, where you were getting ready to take rest. You were sitting on one of those wooden beds and were speaking for a few minutes before the mosquitoes forced you to cover with the net. Śrutakīrti and I were sitting on the ground when you began to speak. Your voice was firm and full of real authority. You said, “This *kīrtana* gives us life. This is the special mercy of Lord Caitanya.” Then after a very short pause to bring emphasis to what you were about to say, you declared, “And if we don’t get life from the *kīrtana* . . . simply sex life.”

I am personally very grateful to you for this emphasis on *kīrtana*. I thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, from the bottom of my heart.

Your insignificant servant,

Trivikrama Swami

Varṣāṇā Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you.

There is more to a story than the narrator knows, more rhythm in a poem than the poet is aware of, more music to a song than the composer can hear. Ultimately, the souls of this world express their heartfelt emotions and creative potential with a yearning hope to resonate with the universal story of enduring love that conquers any separation caused by impending death. This longing for a reality beyond the confines of *samsāra* stirs in the depths of the archetypal world.

Inspiration has always been drawn from our planet, who adorns herself in attire perfectly appropriate for each season and occasion, from springtime flowers to autumn's crimson foliage. She forever infuses her various cultures with endless exuberance to celebrate the gift of life containing the treasure of a potential relationship with God. Such hope forever resides in our individual and collective remembrance.

By acknowledging and giving voice to the unspoken wonders of God's creation, we are ushered toward a greater Reality beyond the relative. There, shining forever in the spiritual sky, we are introduced to the Beauty Who is Truth, the Truth Who is Beauty.

The nature of this highest realm is revealed in the *Vedas*, yet even they are unable to understand the mysteries hidden within their own pages. Śrīla Vyāsadeva therefore continues to write, either directly or through the *ācāryas*, to reveal the inner treasure of *Vedānta*—the pastimes and precepts of the Golden Avatāra, who joyfully declares that Kṛṣṇa's Holy Name personifies the essence and goal of all the scriptures.

There is so much more to Śrīla Vyāsadeva and his representatives than that which they speak about themselves. Therefore, the predecessor is often known more fully through his successors. This was perfectly demonstrated in the offering you wrote to your beloved Guru Mahārāja for his Vyāsa-pūjā in 1935. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was so pleased with your words that he shared them with the assembled devotees. One verse in particular clearly reveals the heart of your guru:

Absolute is sentient,
Thou hast proved,
Impersonal calamity
Thou hast moved.

Overcoming impersonalism necessitates addressing its root: our conception of God, which is the basis of our worldview and relationship with everyone and everything within it. The personal feature of Bhagavān, which your Guru Mahārāja was dedicated to exalting, while minimized in empiric epistemology, is essential on the spiritual quest. Your Divine Grace perfectly embodies this legacy of your guru. Our invocation prayers, meant to acknowledge and beseech your guidance, grace, and blessings, further serve to highlight your mission of dispelling the darkness of impersonalism with the brilliance of Lord Caitanya's *vāṇī*.

* * *

tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a bona fide spiritual master.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.34)

Prior to my second birth with you as my father, I had turned to the only scripture I knew, yearning for a personal understanding of a gracious God. But bereft of the dynamic effects of the *guru-paramparā*, despite my sincere efforts and prayers I found the Bible very perplexing, both as a dutiful child who loved

the stories of the Good Book in my Sunday School, and later as a student of theology in a Christian college.

Biblical culture places great significance on names, which are carefully selected to indicate the nature of a person. Understanding someone's name assists in developing a relationship with them. Yet, according to the Bible, God's foremost name is too sacred, too powerful, too dangerous, too fearsome to be spoken aloud except under the most exclusive conditions. Instead, He is primarily addressed with formal titles and reverential adjectives. How can a close relationship develop with a God when His intimate name can never be known? How was I to honor the Biblical mandate to praise the Holy Name of the Lord without knowing His confidential name or even being able to freely speak His generic name? Biblical teachings go so far as to warn that to see His face would cause one's death. How can the most pure, sweet, and innocent sentiments of the soul find fulfillment in relationship with a vastly distant, faceless, and often fearsome deity?

* * *

The notion of divine fecundity within the living, immortal, sacred Word—the seed of creation and first manifestation of Godhead, germinating as the physical forms of material elements—finds expression in the Bible's opening words, where God speaks: "Let there be light . . ." The Old Testament introduces the Word of God and His form of wisdom as spoken with creation to reveal His hidden design for this world.

Studying the etymological origin of *logos*—the Word—drew me into a community of theologians, seekers, and philosophers who had also pursued a clear understanding of the concept for millennia. Personally, I felt called to the Gospel of John, knowing intuitively that I needed to pursue the deep truth within his writings. The Apostle John was creative and unconventional in articulating, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word *was* God." In John's Gospel the Word is equated with God, who first spoke creation into existence and later incarnates as His representative here on Earth.

John's perspective was gleaned from the commentaries of those who had come before him. It left rich sustenance to nourish the church fathers who would come after. And yet, for me, the Word of God in the New Testament remained as ambiguous as its parallel, the Name of God in the Old Testament, though they clearly had a significant connection. I became increasingly confused and frustrated as the actual meaning and realization continued to evade my grasp. My attempts to establish a personal relationship with the God of the Bible left me with one clear conclusion: the empiric approach to spiritual truth is helpful mainly insofar as it leads to realizing the crucial need for a spiritual master's guidance and shelter.

At this critical juncture, the quest for truth becomes synonymous with the search for a bona fide spiritual master. The empiricist accepts, to varying degrees, that seeing is believing. Śrī Guru, from his higher perspective, declares that believing is seeing. In other words, submissively hearing from a proper spiritual authority kindles faith, granting us the assurance of all we hope for and the firm vision in what is yet to come.

From the stage of finding, serving, and surrendering to the proper source, the instructions of Śrī Guru form the crux of the spiritual quest. The Biblical tradition alludes to the living dynamics of the *guru-paramparā* in one of the final statements of Jesus: "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear to hear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of Truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth." (John 16.12)

These words ringing in my ears marked the conclusion of my empiric theological studies. I became vigilant, attentively seeking any intimation of the Spirit of Truth, open to whatever tradition He chose to reveal himself in.

It was only in hearing first *about* you from your disciples, and later hearing directly *from* you, that I recognized the voice of the Spirit of Truth *within* you, who had been guiding me all along to find your shelter and guidance. In your presence, the Word of God, Spirit of Truth, and Holy Name all became perfectly integrated in a most confidential, relational, and personal dynamic. They verily came to life before my eyes and within my heart. Finally, all that I had heard and seen before began to fall into proper place and make perfect sense. It was as if you had me step back far enough to reflect on the larger picture in which God

continues to write the script. And you, as *ācārya*, bring the story to life, integrating the spiritual fruits of wonder, truth, and love with the security of knowing that eternal service is our birthright—an inheritance bequeathed, by Your Divine Grace, even to those of us who are deficient in comprehensive knowledge.

Your commentary on Biblical verses, given from the Vedic view, illuminated all areas of my former uncertainty, granting congruity within the nutshell verse, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word *was* God.” In a conversation in Paris on June 9th, 1974, while discussing these very words, you crystallized vast theological commentaries into one conclusive truth by citing a verse from the *Padma Purāṇa*: “Just parallel to this Bible passage I’ll quote one Sanskrit verse from the *Vedas*. Therefore, it is said, *nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ / pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto ’bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ*.” Your translation of this verse at *Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya* 17.133 reads, in part, “The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is transcendently blissful . . . because the name of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself are identical.”

The supreme theology revealed by Lord Caitanya, elaborated by the Six Gosvāmīs, and synthesized by yourself explains every word, letter, and verbal root in relation to the Supreme Truth—the Holy Name, who is unique in personifying both the means and the goal of spiritual perfection. Your elaborations on the absolute nature of everything connected with Kṛṣṇa make it clear as day that, objectively speaking, the Word *is* the Holy Name.

Subjectively, the Word expands as all the instructions needed for the guidance of disciples under the direction of Śrī Guru, the agent and representative of Vyāsa. By the grace and blessings of Śrī Guru, the truth of the *Vedas* is presented comprehensibly in a most personal manner. All of our relationships are thereby uplifted to a more personal nature.

The grace and blessing of Śrī Guru are likened to *cintāmaṇi* dust upon his feet. The influence of that dust purifies the heart, enlightens the consciousness, and fulfills the most cherished desires of the soul. In your presence we experienced firsthand that the Word of God does indeed take human form; that the book *Bhāgavata* speaks to us in and through the person *Bhāgavata*, who, for us, is you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

You objected to us literally taking the dust of your lotus feet upon our heads, assuring us that we could achieve the same result by sitting and submissively hearing as you spoke from the *vyāsāsana*. We were like *cakora* birds, subsisting only on moonlight, nourished by the benediction moon shining in the spiritual sky as you reflected, extended, and revealed it to us. As we heard your narrations with rapt attention, the spiritual world took shape in our consciousness. Your words and deeds revealed the luster and wonder of Vṛndāvana to those living in a mere shadow of reality. Indeed, sacred sound *is* the reality it conveys, above and beyond merely representing the greater reality.

Through your grace, we see this truth manifest in countless ways. In the beginning of your mission there were no buildings, no students, no books. You came to the United States without men or money, equipped only with conviction in Śrī Guru’s instructions, an implicit faith in the Holy Name, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the literary incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. By your purely delivering the message of Godhead and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, all of ISKCON manifested. Thus, you offered us a living example of the creative power of the Word.

The Spirit of Truth lives in the immortal nectar of your words and in the echo of your *kīrtana*. They form the crest jewel of theology, the very fulfillment of the teachings of Lord Caitanya. The Holy Name continues to resound and expand to every town and village by your divine grace. You being the *senāpati-bhakta* in Lord’s Caitanya’s entourage, the essence of your gift to the world, especially here in the godforsaken Western lands, is the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, the most confidential hymn of Goloka Vṛndāvana, comprised of the most endearing names of the Divine Couple. Their ever-expanding *līlā* is the original story to which no narration can reach its completion, no poem can convey in full, no melody sung can be concluded. For as soon as Kṛṣṇa approaches the extent of His glory, it further expands.

Your *cintāmaṇi* words bless the earth. They made manifest a magnanimous place of pilgrimage in the Western world, a replica of Vṛndāvana in the hills of Appalachia. Here, in New Vrindavan, the effects of Śrī Dhāma enhance all the nine processes of devotional service for residents and pilgrims alike. Even tourists sense something special when visiting, thereby reaping the benefits of *ajñāta-sukṛti*.

Our only access to *vraja-līlā* is found through your pastimes and precepts, which are an open book inviting us into its unending story. Your words form the choicest poetry, suitable for sublime truths, articulating and echoing the rhyme of endless spiritual rhythms. Your *kīrtana* is the hymn of life eternal. You have transformed our lives into a dance as we follow in your footsteps on the path back to home.

The Spirit of Truth is likened to the wind breathing new life into hearts who are open to receiving and serving. Your unfailing influence has touched and transformed countless lives. In your global community, many stories are told in remembrance and glorification of you. These accounts may be very different from one another, some may even seem to conflict. And yet, if we continue our pursuit to serve the Spirit of Truth, our understanding will mature by the many ways your love and compassion have touched and continue to touch countless souls.

By hearing such stories shared, whether through tears or smiles, words or silence, inquiry or explanation, tenderness or boldness, we will gradually overcome impersonalism by the supremely personal touch conveyed in all your words and deeds. We will discern the truth that we can all remain united and empowered, by the influence of a Spirit greater than our own, to overcome the quarrel and hypocrisy so characteristic of this age. We will be reminded that pleasing you is the most important consideration in life. May we all demonstrate our love for you in the cooperation needed to extend your legacy.

Unto you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the representative of Vyāsa, who expand and distill the language of *śāstra* for the understanding and welfare of the world, worship is offered on your appearance day as Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā, the Most Blessed Event. As the outward manifestation of Paramātmā, you are the eternal companion, counselor, and comforter of all souls who find shelter in you. May every Vyāsa-pūjā offering express our gratitude more deeply, reveal your heart more clearly, amplify your glories more fully, and bless the world with ongoing remembrance of you.

Your servant,

Varṣāṇā Swami

Vedavyāsapriya Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace, whose mercy is now being seriously felt even more by this insignificant disciple of yours.

During forty-two years of my Kṛṣṇa conscious life, by your mercy I have gotten opportunities to travel all over the world many, many times to teach, preach, and give seminars and personal guidance to devotees and disciples, besides attending so many functions and enjoying countless festivals.

But all of a sudden this coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic has put a brake on me, and now I'm confined at one place with lockdown and distancing regulations. Though my accommodations are comfortable, I started feeling restless after a few days, as it has become my second nature to travel and preach. But you soon reminded me that the conclusive aspect of all your teachings is to execute pure devotional service and feel real and very intense separation from Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

So I concluded that you wanted me to utilize this opportunity of confinement and see it as Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's corona *karuṇā*. Thus I became very serious about executing intensified devotional service through

teaching Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka*. I started giving a nine-day seminar on it through the internet, covering a verse a day and giving a summary and conclusion on the last day.

But on the ninth day, again by your inspiration, I was led to think, "How can we practically realize this intensity of separation from the Lord without going through a systematic and thorough study of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*?" Previously, due to my great misfortune, I had never had the opportunity to teach this subject, even in the Bhakti-śāstrī course. I had taught the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Upadeśāmṛta*, and *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, but not *The Nectar of Devotion*! And I was really empty in my teachings without this nectar. So, by your unfathomable mercy, I was inspired repeatedly to start daily classes, in both English and Hindi, in *The Nectar of Devotion*, which you translated so simply but perfectly for unworthy neophytes like myself.

When I expressed my desire to teach a course in *The Nectar of Devotion*, I received an overwhelming positive response from my well-wishers. So, only through your mercy upon this unworthy soul, the classes on *The Nectar of Devotion* have become a daily function for from 250 to 300 devotees worldwide.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are so merciful upon this poor soul who is destitute in all spiritual aspects that I feel you are by my side, guiding me in these trying circumstances, taking care of me as a father would. Please do not abandon me. I intensely feel I need you more than ever in my advanced age. Thank you very much for guiding me.

Your insignificant servant, hoping to achieve a drop of the nectar of pure devotional service,

Vedavyāsapriya Swami

Homages from



ISKCON
Centers

Abidjan

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

We offer our most humble obeisances at your holy feet.

On this occasion of your glorious Vyāsa-pūjā celebration, we are again most excited to send you our offering. We feel eternally indebted to you for bringing this wonderful Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to our native country.

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 9.41, Lord Caitanya instructs:

*bhārata-bhūmite haila manuṣya janma yāra
janma sārthaka kari' kara para-upakāra*

“One who has taken his birth as a human being in the land of India [Bhārata-varṣa] should make his life successful and work for the benefit of all other people.” Although this instruction has been given to those who have taken birth in India, we feel that the same instruction has also been given to us. Now we should make it our prime duty to perfect our Kṛṣṇa consciousnesses and in this way become fit to enable those who have taken birth in this country of Côte d’Ivoire to benefit from the precious gift you gave to suffering humanity. We would certainly be misers (*kṛpanas*) and perform violence (*himsā*) if we failed to do so.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your mercy is there for everyone, but are we ready to take it? Mercy and effort go together. Your mercy comes when we make some sincere effort, and yet we need your mercy to make some tangible effort.

How can we solve this puzzle?

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Madhya 19.151) Lord Caitanya states:

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*

“According to their karma, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. Some of them are being elevated to the upper planetary systems, and some are going down into the lower planetary systems. Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. By the mercy of both Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service.”

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have given us gurus (Bhakti-tīrtha Swami and Kavicandra Swami) and Kṛṣṇa. What more do we need to receive the seed of devotional service and become empowered to give it to others? Oh! We pray we can do that and thus live meaningful lives and please you. Certainly, simply surrendering to guru and Kṛṣṇa is the key. We always pray to you that we can surrender to them as they want and not as we want. By doing so, we hope that one day we will please you by our humble attempts to render some devotional service in the proper way.

All glories to you again and again, Śrīla Prabhupāda, our dear spiritual grandfather.

Your insignificant servants in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire.

Almviks Gard

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet.

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

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

Is this offering too late? It might not get published, but even if it isn't there would be no loss, as on this path there is no loss or diminution. And you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, know me, and I write this for you to read. And as I am writing, you already know. At the same time, I like to see it heard or read in your presence—maybe that is the essence.

I am writing at your Almviks Gard project in Sweden. It is a beautiful place—a farm in the countryside with forests and lakes surrounding it. And fields for the cows to graze in. There are houses and families. We call it a village.

The other day I took a long walk in the forests to reconnect with some old trails. Most of those trails are marked, but I looked for one specific trail that was not much used and kind of difficult to find the beginning of, and that was kind of overgrown. Long, long ago there cows walked there, freely traversing the forest and then coming back to their respective small farms in the evening. So what I looked for was one of those old cow trails of the previous centuries. I found the start of the old trail I was looking for where I expected, but to my surprise the trail was now clearly marked with yellow dots on the trees. Someone had marked the trail since the last time I was there. A pleasant surprise. With the help of the marked trees I could now quickly and safely return home to Almviks Gard and our temple there.

It made me think how you opened up the path back home, back to Godhead. You came and marked out the proper way back to the spiritual world—a path forgotten, neglected, unknown to modern mankind. You knew it and you marked it for us to easily find and traverse back to home, back to Godhead.

And now another day. I am sitting in my room and looking out the window, and I can see how a new set of oxen are being trained to walk together and work together. It's as much a learning experience for the trainer as for the trained. With time, progress has been made, but more is to come.

The challenge is to depend on the oxen, our fathers, who peacefully and patiently wait for us to get our act together—an act that includes the oxen who walk on their four legs, representing honesty, austerity, mercy, and cleanliness. May their four legs and what they stand for be our shelter.

In the temple something happened during the winter: we came to end of the Twelfth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as we have been reading it from beginning to end. And now we have started the *Bhāgavatam* anew, from the beginning. Sooner or later we will come to the passage where Parikṣit confronts the personality of Kali, and there we will again meet the bull of dharma.

And then one day . . . Kṛṣṇa will blow His bugle . . . and call us home . . . to meet you and Kṛṣṇa there. Please keep us in a corner of your heart.

Your servants at ISKCON's farm community in Almviks Gard, Sweden.

Amravati

Most respected and worshipable Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please kindly accept my most respectful and humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet on your most auspicious appearance day.

While I deeply contemplate your unfathomable glories in order to write this humble offering, the world is experiencing a pandemic—the rapidly spreading and deadly coronavirus—which is engulfing all countries like a forest fire. The modern technologies of the so-called advanced countries are completely helpless before the wrath of the laws of material nature. Your divine words predicting widespread suffering due to the flaws of modern, godless civilization, found in your lectures, letters, and the pages of your books, especially *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, are proving so true today. In a lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.32, given in Honolulu on May 31, 1976, you said:

Nature's law is so strict; a little deviation will put you into suffering. This is going on. That is Yamarāja. And if you violate more and more and more, then you suffer more and more and more. This is the law. You cannot escape. So that is fixed up. But as there are some exceptional cases . . . Just like one has committed murder, so by law he must be hanged. By law. That is the general law everywhere, all over the world: life for life. So similarly, in the God's law there is no such thing that if you kill a human being you'll be killed, and if you kill an animal you'll not be killed. That is imperfect law, man-made law. Therefore Jesus Christ said, "Thou shall not kill." No question of ... They have modified, "This killing means murdering." But Christ does not say. Was he a fool, that he committed mistake, a mistake, instead of writing "Thou shall not commit murder" he has written "Thou shall not kill"—general? Otherwise Christ has no intelligence. He cannot use the proper word. But you are misusing the order of Lord Christ.

So you are suffering. You are maintaining so many slaughterhouses, and when it will be mature, there will be war, the wholesale murder. Finished. One atom bomb—finished. You'll have to suffer. Don't think that "Innocent animals, they cannot protest. Let us kill and eat." No. You'll be also punished. Wait for accumulation of your sinful activities, and there will be war, and America will drop [indistinct] atom bomb, and Russia will be finished. Both will be finished. Go on now enjoying. It takes time. Just like even if you infect some disease, it takes time. Not that immediately you infect, and immediately the disease is there. No. It takes a week's time or so. What is called? Quarantine, quarantine.

And in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.15.24 you write:

By practice, one should avoid eating in such a way that other living entities will be disturbed and suffer. Since I suffer when pinched or killed by others, I should not attempt to pinch or kill any other living entity. People do not know that because of killing innocent animals they themselves will have to suffer severe reactions from material nature. Any country where people indulge in unnecessary killing of animals will have to suffer from wars and pestilence imposed by material nature. Comparing one's own suffering to the suffering of others, therefore, one should be kind to all living entities. One cannot avoid the sufferings inflicted by providence. . . .

These words impress on the world the unavoidable need to accept a supreme controller and His laws.

But then in that same purport you immediately speak of what devotees should do in such a crisis: "And therefore when suffering comes one should fully absorb oneself in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra." Trying to humbly follow your teachings, devotees here have tried to increase their chanting and intensify

their taking shelter of *harināma* and *hari-kathā*. The ultimate solution for all these miseries is to expand your mission as quickly as we can—before Kali-yuga shows some other horrific face.

As a part of serving you here at ISKCON Amravati, devotees are developing newer and newer ways to expand your divine mission. Every event this year has been a unique offering at your feet.

After your Vyāsa-pūjā last year, we held our first-ever life member convention. The program was a success—very well attended and appreciated by everyone. During Kārttika we celebrated a Dāmodara outreach festival for the first time, and more than eight thousand lamps were offered in a number of public places, such as schools, various temples, a jail, and at a variety of public gatherings. Our entire community was enthused by these divine activities.

Later, in December 2019, to develop a good rapport with a number of influential communities in Amravati, we held thirty-six days of teaching the *Bhagavad-gītā* in eleven locations for three days each. This was well covered by the media.

Somehow, ISKCON here has been isolated and therefore not well attended since we opened this center. With that in mind, we have been trying to acquire a piece of land where we can construct a temple. This will allow us to create a preaching project that will have an impact and mark us with a strong presence in the city. We have been approaching the city's elite for aid. Finally, we have begun to get promises of help from practically everyone we approach, and we can now move forward.

Then, 2020 opened with sublime promise and unique hope in the transcendental pages of ISKCON Amravati, because this year is the twentieth anniversary of the installation of our beloved Śrī Śrī Rukmiṇī-Dvārakādhīśa. We firmly resolved to purchase the land and build the temple by November 19, the anniversary of the installation of Śrī Śrī Rukmiṇī-Dvārakādhīśa, and make this our offering to you this year. The forty-third anniversary of your disappearance day falls on the next day.

We made a *saṅkalpa* (a firm resolution) that started us on an eleven-month marathon. Three or four months have already passed, but due largely to the lockdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic, we have made almost no tangible progress. Our hearts are losing conviction and determination, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Our marathon, which in the beginning seemed a challenge, is now looking impossible to complete successfully. So we are desperately praying at your lotus feet to make it a success. The sole purpose of our resolution was to please you. Only by your divine grace does what seem impossible become possible in Kṛṣṇa's service. Personally, we have no qualification. *Mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ paṅguṁ laṅghayate girim / yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande śrī-guruṁ dīna-tāraṇam*.

*jogyatā-vicāre, kichu nāhi pāi, tomāra karuṇā sāra
karuṇā nā hoile, kāṇḍiyā kāṇḍiyā, prāṇa nā rākhibo āra*

“When I examine myself, I find nothing of value. Therefore your mercy is essential to me. If you are not merciful, I shall simply weep and weep, and I shall not maintain my life.”

So this year on your divine appearance day, we each earnestly pray to you to help us quickly accomplish this project as an offering to you.

Your servants at ISKCON Amravati, Maharashtra, India.

(written by Anantaśeṣa Dāsa)

Baroda

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, by your unreserved mercy we would like to take this opportunity to glorify you on your most divine appearance day. I am not qualified to glorify you, but since I know you are an ocean of mercy, I trust you will forgive me if I unintentionally make a mistake. Further, it is impossible to glorify you in a short offering because your glorifies are unlimited.

A few days ago I completed reading *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, the history of your life. There I read how you have given your mercy to the most fallen souls of this world, including me. The more I know you, the more my love and respect for you increase. How many sacrifices you made to deliver the fallen souls! In this age, you are the true savior of the fallen souls.

By your mercy, at Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara Temple, ISKCON Baroda, we are trying to serve you to the best of our ability. It is all to please you, Śrīla Prabhupāda:

1. We have a good number of *brahmacārīs* in the *āśrama*, who are involved in temple management, temple preaching programs and youth preaching programs in various locations.

2. We have a good number of cows in our temple *gośālā*, and we offer their milk to the Deities. We are not dependent on outside milk.

3. Every day, by the mercy of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara, we distribute Their *prasādam* at the temple so that all the *jīvas* can benefit.

4. We organized a third annual successful *padayātrā* from Baroda to Dakor. Hundreds of devotees participated, and all along the *yātrā* we distributed *prasādam* and performed *harināma-saṅkīrtana* and book distribution.

5. We also stress farm communities and their programs.

6. By your mercy, last year we expanded the *brahmacārī-āśrama* so that we could accommodate more *brahmacārīs* living in the temple and increase the services they perform.

We are endeavoring to protect the *siddhānta* you taught us from changes that might corrupt your teachings. We do this by working with the website *akincana.net*, which is dedicated to ISKCON's culture, philosophy, and *siddhānta*. The purpose of this website is to present, encapsulated in your words, Śrīla Prabhupāda, what you taught in your lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.10 on September 9, 1976, in Vṛndāvana, India:

So as far as possible, try to understand. As advised by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, *siddhānta baliyā citte nā kara alasa*. Don't be lazy. Always try to understand Kṛṣṇa, *siddhānta*, by *siddhānta*, by Vedic conclusion—not by manufacturing ideas. *Siddhānta*. Don't be lazy. That is the instruction of Kavirāja Gosvami:

*siddhānta baliyā citte nā kara alasa
ihā haite kṛṣṇe lāge sudṛḍha mānasa*

[“A sincere student should not neglect the discussion of such conclusions, considering them controversial, for such discussions strengthen the mind. Thus one's mind becomes attached to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 2.117)]

If you study according to the Vedic conclusion, don't manufacture ideas and whims and sentiments. If you go through *siddhānta*, then you'll be more and more firmly fixed up. *Ihā haite kṛṣṇe lāge sudṛḍha mānasa*. Then your life is successful.

O ocean of mercy and savior of the fallen souls, please show us the light that will lead us from darkness so we can be saved and also save the next generations.

Your servants at the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara temple, ISKCON Baroda, India.

(written by Padmanāyana Kṛṣṇa Dāsa)

Botswana

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Please accept our humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to you on this most auspicious anniversary of your appearance.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, this year we celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of ISKCON Botswana. We cannot believe that it's been twenty-five years since your movement came to here. You brought us here from the U.K., from where we traveled with your *mūrti* and the Deities of Jagannātha, Baladeva, Subhadrā and Gaura-Nitāi.

At the time ISKCON Botswana started, we could never have imagined that we would be around to celebrate the silver jubilee. We didn't even know where Botswana was prior to 1991. We had no idea that by your desire a beautiful temple would become manifest here in Botswana. All this is like a sweet dream for all your devotees.

Now, twenty-five years later, we have realized that your sending us here was part of your plan to fulfill Caitanya Mahāprabhu's famous prediction:

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

“In every town and village, the chanting of My name will be heard.” (*Caitanya-bhāgavata, Antya 4.126*)

Your mercy is certainly not limited to the places on the globe where you placed your lotus feet, but it reaches to all corners of the entire world. Even remote countries like Botswana have benefited from your causeless mercy.

It took us twenty-five years to realize that your *mūrti* is nondifferent from you. Śrīla Prabhupāda, it was you who brought Kṛṣṇa consciousness to Botswana, it was you who planned the humble and sweet beginning, and it was you who registered the society. And then it was only time that separated us from the beautiful temple that has become manifest by your desire.

We humbly pray that you continue to manifest your causeless mercy so that your granddisciples and great-granddisciples continue to grow in Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Botswana.

Always praying for your causeless mercy,

Your servants in Botswana.

Brahmapur

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

In this so-called advanced modern era, when everyone is bewildered by the growing impact of illusion, we first express our heartfelt gratitude from the core of our hearts at your lotus feet for dispelling our illusion and enlightening us with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is only because of you that we are in the safest position in this world.

This International Society for Krishna Consciousness is like a presentation of the spiritual abode in this material world. We pray that in every birth we may remain in ISKCON and be fortunate enough to serve you.

This year we conducted a *Gītā* Championship in several schools and held youth festivals and children's summer camps in and from our temple. Book distribution by both the congregation and the ISKCON Youth Forum devotees is going on very nicely.

We are trying to bring more and more devotees into our congregation, as the new temple will soon be ready. The main entrance gate and the altar will both be constructed by the end of this year. For the successful completion of these transcendental activities, we need your merciful blessings, which are our only source of spiritual health. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your servants at ISKCON Brahmapur, Odisha, India.

Brampton

*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*

Our dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet. All glories to you!

With gratitude and sincere devotion we begin our simple offering to you. Please forgive us if we have made any offenses in this process. In this *duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam*, you gave us purpose: to transform our selfishness into selflessness, and our illusioned understanding that we are the doers into an understanding of our constitutional position as servitors of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. What you did for us was nothing less than a spiritual revolution: you empowered and continue to empower each and every one of us with Kṛṣṇa conscious principles and opportunities to serve Śrī Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī and Their devotees in the mood of *dāsānudāsa*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you had a vision, seeing ISKCON centers all over the world, thousands of devotees, and millions of Vedic literatures distributed. Following the instruction of your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, you sowed the seed of *harināma* in the West and had unflinching faith in its potential to fulfill your vision. Today that seed has grown into a tree with almost 590 centers globally, and thousands of devotees now show their appreciation of our tradition's genuineness and purity of devotion by themselves living a life of pure *bhāgavata-dharma*. You always said, "Chant and be happy," and this has been the solace of devotees in any life situation, even during the unpredicted pandemic we are now experiencing.

ISKCON Brampton Vedic Education Centre has been doing well by your blessings and Śrī Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī's mercy. Under the able leadership of His Holiness Bhaktimārga Swami, the congregation is developing into a close-knit Kṛṣṇa conscious society and growing larger each week. The devotees are always eager to execute their devotional service, and this enthusiasm has allowed the congregation to achieve all the goals it has set so far. We were able to distribute more than 5,100 books last year, which includes twenty-one *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sets. Our target for 2020 is 5,500. We served around 20,000 plates of *prasādam* in 2019, and this includes plates at our Ratha-yātrā, attended by about 4,000 devotees, our Janmāṣṭamī, attended by about 2,000, and our Sunday Feast program, attended by an average of 250 guests each week. Our new communications team has been reaching out to the public with Kṛṣṇa conscious messages and information, using social media apps like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. This outreach is a new initiative taken up by the youth working alongside older devotees. In addition, it is endearing to see our youth coming up with a variety of initiatives, such as a winter clothing drive, in order to give back to society. Also, our Sunday school had its first Spiritual Fair as a way to reach out to the community, and it was well received.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, our congregation would not be where it is without the immense support of the festival team, who work tirelessly to make every single event successful. Through outreach programs such as *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, book distribution, and the many *bhakti-vṛkṣas*, devotees are doing their best to preach the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the outside world. The finance and sponsorship teams are always persevering to make sure everything runs smoothly and without interruption. Last but definitely not least, our *dhāma-sevā* team is ever meticulous to keep Kṛṣṇa's premises spotless.

Mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ—one should follow the path set by the great devotees—has always been the essence of your teachings. You have shown us how to place spiritual priorities before mundane material goals, and how to find the opportunity to serve, chant, read your books, and distribute books no matter our position. In a submissive, humble mood, we beg you to always bless and guide us so that our hearts are sincere in executing our devotional service and we are able to transform others' hearts, turning them to this blissful path. Also, we always want to consider ourselves instruments for spreading your mission and carrying out your instructions to our best capacity.

Your insignificant, menial servants at ISKCON Brampton, Canada.

Budapest

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to the dust of your lotus feet.

This spring of 2020, we, the devotees at the Budapest temple, are in an extraordinary situation, as are most of the devotees in your ISKCON: the temple, city, and whole country is on lockdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The most important service at our temple, which you have always emphasized, is book distribution, and it is at a standstill—associating with people in the street, however briefly, is strictly forbidden.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have always taught us that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the remedy for the various ills of the world. It can solve each and every problem the world faces. We are experiencing the truth of this statement now, when it is clear that the epidemic is caused by violations of brahminical principles—violations such as the killing of innocent animals, wasting Mother Nature’s resources, and being disrespectful to the forces of nature. The pandemic is imposing renunciation on humanity. The latest news is that the mindless mass air travel that has been the norm is now reduced by at least 90 percent.

During this emergency, doctors are emphasizing the importance of frequently washing one’s hands. You often said that cleanliness is next to godliness. You gave us not only a religion but a whole culture, a key to how to live a human life. Now that people understand the importance of cleanliness, we sincerely hope that many will also understand the rest of your message and, by gradually elevating themselves to a spiritual standard, achieve the goal of human life, pure love of God.

You, as *jagad-guru*, also taught us the principle of *yukta-vairāgya*—using everything possible in Kṛṣṇa’s service. Therefore, since we cannot go out on the streets to preach and distribute your books, we are using the internet to do our *bhajana* and to preach, and we are delivering books through the post.

Most people agree that once this pandemic is over the world will never be the same. This pandemic is a real game-changer. As you said, people are generally pious, so we hope there will be more scope for preaching and for Lord Caitanya’s golden age to further unfold.

You wrote the following verse while aboard the *Jaladuta* while it was docked in Boston Harbor in September of 1965:

*āṇiyācho jadi prabhu āmāre nācāte
nācāo nācāo prabhu nācāo se-mate
kāṣṭhera puttali jathā nācāo se-mate*

“O Lord, I am just like a puppet in Your hands. So if You have brought me here to dance, then make me dance, make me dance, O Lord, make me dance as You like.”

We pray to you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, to give us a little intelligence so that, at this time and in this place and during these extraordinary circumstances, we can make the best decisions and continue our service as best we can to your mission, the devotees, and humanity at large.

Your loving servants at ISKCON’S temple in Budapest, Hungary.

(written by Gauramaṇi Dāsa)

Calgary

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

We beg to offer our humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Thank you so much for giving us complete facility to live a purposeful human life. Being born in the darkest ignorance, we were preparing to commit spiritual suicide, full of false convictions. But your mercy personified, your representatives, pulled us from the deep well of ignorance. Seeing the hardships they undergo to help souls like us, we can only imagine a drop of the hardship you must have faced in establishing the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in the West from scratch. Following in your footsteps, your pure representatives continuously invest gallons of blood, time, and consciousness to bring us back to our constitutional position. I am deeply grateful to you for blessing us with the personal association of such devotees, because if you had not started the movement, such association would have been impossible to attain.

Each day becomes a righteous day when we read your books and hear your lectures. We feel so secure in heart when we associate with you or your pure representatives. Each festival is a great opportunity for us to purify our existence because it allows us to glorify guru, Kṛṣṇa, and the Vaiṣṇavas even more. Thank you so much for establishing ISKCON Calgary, as it provides us an opportunity to experience bliss and a Vaikuṇṭha environment, as well as providing tons of opportunities to render service to Their Lordships. Without your mercy, attaining *darśana* of our *arcā-vigraha* would have remained a dream.

You may be pleased to know, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that your center in Calgary is progressing steadily. Devotees are enthusiastic about book distribution. During the 2019 marathon we distributed a total of 28,000 BBT books. Our congregation has grown by 30 percent through our Sunday Feast programs. Our devotees are actively participating in *saṅga-kīrtana* programs, especially during the summer in the downtown area. At the temple on weekends we organized twelve twenty-four-hour and six-hour *saṅga-kīrtanas*, along with twelve Food-for-Life programs. In 2019 we also organized a Ratha-yātrā and had the highest number of participants attend—five thousand compared to the four thousand who attended in 2018. This festival benefited thousands of people, each of whom had *darśana* of Lord Jagannātha, heard beautiful *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, and tasted delicious Jagannātha *prasādam*. We organized another chariot festival too, in which over fifteen thousand participants received Lord Jagannātha's *darśana* and heard beautiful *harināma-saṅkīrtana*.

Thank you so much for providing living examples who have proved that consistent attendance at the morning program is the essence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We are working on improving our temple's attendance, but we need your mercy to achieve our goal. Please bless us with one-pointed desire to make following our spiritual master's instructions the mission of our lives so that we can become the kind of devotees you want us to be. Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are able to do all this with your blessings and the guidance of senior Vaiṣṇavas. Kindly always continue to shower us with your mercy.

Your beggars for mercy at ISKCON Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Chamorshi

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

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

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

Dear Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

What can I offer at your lotus feet on this auspicious day? I'm just your poor, foolish, and insignificant son. Among all your disciples, I'm most unqualified. What can I offer to you, the topmost Vaiṣṇava? The instruction you gave me at the time of initiation is what I'm living by, holding it close to my heart. And the instruction was "Never leave the temple."

To live up to your instruction, I chose a tribal area of India and opened an ashram there. Today that ashram is known as Krishna Nagar, ISKCON Chamorshi, Gadchiroli. It was a dense forest with lots of wild beasts. Since 1982 I have been serving Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara here in this tribal area. Where once lots of carnivores roamed the area near their local caves, today Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara and Śrī Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā are enthroned. It's all because of your causeless mercy.

The uneducated, poor tribal community had never heard the holy name of Kṛṣṇa; they had no idea who He is. But due to your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the seed of the creeper of *kṛṣṇa-prema* has sprouted in their hearts. They are chanting the *mahā-mantra*, honoring *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*, and living peacefully. They are becoming dedicated servants of the Lord.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu predicted, *pythivīte āche yata nagarādi-grāma / sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*. Although the Lord Himself didn't fulfill this prediction, you turned it into reality by taking the holy name across countries and to cities, towns, and villages—to every nook and corner of the world.

O my dear *gurudeva*! The entire world is indebted to you. You endowed humanity with an incredible wealth of knowledge in the form of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *Bhagavad-gītā* (as it is), and lots of other enlightening works of literature. Your matchless books are mines of devotional service. It seems that you are Śrīla Vyāsadeva for the current age.

*nārada muni, bājāy vīṇā
'rādhikā-ramaṇa'-nāme
nāma amani, udita haya,
bhakata-gītā-sāme*

When the great soul Nārada Muni plays his *vīṇā*, the holy name Rādhikā-ramaṇa immediately appears. Similarly, the sound of your cymbals made the holy name descend in every corner of the world. Many souls from different countries, holding beads in their hands and wearing *kañṭhī-mālās* around their necks and *tilaka* on their foreheads, are dancing together. The meat-eaters become satisfied just by taking *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*. That's the glory of your preaching!

O Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Caitanya Mahāprabhu delivered the most sinful Jagāi and Mādhāi. Likewise, you shattered the sins

of the sinners by reverberating the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. You facilitated their return home, back to Godhead. It's impossible to glorify you thoroughly.

What can I offer you on this auspicious day? Please accept the humble words of this insignificant soul.

Your servants at ISKCON Chamorshi, Maharashtra, India.

(written by Parameśvara Dāsa)

Chandigarh

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

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

Our dearmost Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble and respectful obeisances unto your divine lotus feet. All glories unto you and your faithful followers in the *paramparā*.

*athāpi te deva padāmbuja-dvaya-
prasāda-leśānugrhitā eva hi
jānāti tattvaṁ bhagavan-mahimno
na cānya eko 'pi ciram vicinvan*

“[Lord Brahmā said:] My Lord, if one is favored by even a slight trace of the mercy of Your lotus feet, he can understand the greatness of Your personality. But those who speculate to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead are unable to know You, even though they continue to study the *Vedas* for many years.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.29) Since you are a pure representative of Kṛṣṇa, the same applies to you. Just by a drop of your mercy one can understand your personality, and not by any speculation or so-called Vedic scholarship. Therefore, on this blessed occasion we beg for a slight trace of your mercy so we may understand and glorify you and thus please the Vaiṣṇavas and Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Everyone on the planet is presently facing a pandemic outbreak of a fatal viral disease, which has also afflicted some of our temples and devotees across the globe and applied the brakes to our outreach preaching services. So at this time of crisis we seek guidance and shelter in your pastimes and teachings. In December of 1942, during World War II, blackouts and bombings became daily affairs in Calcutta, and many of the terrified residents vacated the city. For some reason you had to stay at home with your family. You described the situation in one of your lectures:

I was just eating and there was siren of bombing in Calcutta. . . . So the arrangement was as soon as there will be siren of bombing the government selected a place, shelter room, that “This room in your house will be shelter room.” So we had to go into that shelter room and the bombing began—*CHIIII-GOWW*. So we were seeing that *viśvarūpa*, you see, at that time. So I was thinking

of course, that this is also Kṛṣṇa's another form. [*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.35–45, 20 February 1969, Los Angeles]

We learn from this account that you were completely fearless even in the midst of such a life-threatening calamity, behaving in a way just befitting your name, Abhay Charanaravinda (“fearless at the lotus feet of the Lord”). Such fearlessness is possible only if one has taken complete shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord (*Bhagavad-gītā* 1.19 purport), which means that you were fully surrendered to the will of Kṛṣṇa. You could see Kṛṣṇa everywhere, even in the deadly bombing scenes, as the *viśvarūpa* form of Lord, just as Prahlaḍa Mahārāja saw Lord Vāsudeva everywhere, even amidst the tortures by his father.

During the Second World War, at the time of world crisis, you felt even greater need to propagate Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which shows how your heart was filled with deep compassion for suffering souls like us. Therefore, in 1944, on the appearance day of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, you started *Back to Godhead* magazine to fulfill the desire of your Guru Mahārāja to print books. Your determination to serve your guru can be seen by your persistent efforts to obtain funds and to procure government permission to buy paper for the magazine, even after repeated denials due to the war. Your solution for world peace and security, although alien to the masses, was logical and realistic since you addressed the root cause of the problem. You urged everyone to have one resolve, i.e., “BACK TO GOD.” You wrote, “[O]ur plans will come to ship-wreck on the rock of human selfishness unless we turn to God. BACK TO GOD, that is the chief need of England and of every nation.”

For your pleasure, we would like to share an unusual event that recently occurred in your temple at Chandigarh. This incident made us all feel that you are always present here with us, observing our situation and guiding us back home, back to Kṛṣṇa. On March 26, as our routine *Bhāgavatam* class, we intended to play in the temple hall a recording of one of your lectures. It was the class you gave on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.32 in Surat on 17 December 1970. The devotee who coordinates the class distributed photocopies of the transcription of the lecture to everyone, but to our surprise the lecture that began playing was different—your lecture on SB 6.1.32 given in Honolulu in 1976. The coordinator tried to change the lecture, but there was no audio file available for the Surat lecture. Seeing the divine arrangement, we listened to the Honolulu lecture without a transcript. After a few minutes you started addressing the ongoing catastrophic conditions throughout the world, and our ears perked up. We really felt your presence. You said:

You are maintaining so many slaughterhouses, and when it will be mature, there will be war, the wholesale murder. . . . Just like even if you infect some disease, it takes time. Not that immediately you infect, and immediately the disease is there. No. It takes a week's time or so. . . . Incubation. So from Africa, if anyone goes anywhere, they require yellow fever injection. So if you haven't got [proof of] yellow fever injection, then even in the airport, there is arrangement, you have to wait in the quarantine area for six days. You'll not be allowed. So this is . . . As you have got the laws and the punishment in this government, so why do you think there is no punishment and there is no God?

You then cautioned us to use this rare human form of life very responsibly to make the right choices and thus go back home, back to Godhead. At present, the governments of all affected countries have alerted their citizens and told them of the severity of the deadly virus, and out of fear the people are taking it very seriously. Similarly, all our *ācāryas*, from Brahmājī to Your Divine Grace, have alerted us about the dangers of Kali-yuga, but still we are not taking it very seriously, and we often forget to properly take preventative measures (*asat-saṅga-tyāga*) and the safe and effective medicine (chanting of the holy name). Therefore, we earnestly beg at your lotus feet to kindly make us realize the urgency of practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness seriously during this most degraded Age of Kali, when the whole atmosphere is filled with the virus of envy and sinfulness. The infection of Kali-yuga is spreading day by day, so we plead at your lotus feet: Please inject us with the vaccine of firm determination to practice

intense Kṛṣṇa consciousness so we can resist this infection and help bring other infected people to your shelter so they can also be cured.

The servants of your of servant at ISKCON Chandigarh, India.

(written by Vaiṣṇava Priya Gaurāṅga Dāsa)

China

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

I feel inspired to write something for your Vyāsa-pūjā day, since we have entered into an extremely dangerous time in world history. The whole world is changing rapidly, moving toward global calamity and destruction. At the beginning of this year, China faced the spread of a dangerous virus around the country; thousands of people died and 1.4 billion people were restricted to their homes for many weeks. People in other parts of the world are now also suffering from this virus, as well as unexpected hurricanes, bush fires, earthquakes, mudslides, famine, pestilence, and the effects of global warming. No doubt Kali-yuga has entered a new phase, and darkness is pervading the world. People have to pay for their sins, and karma has accumulated because people have fallen under the spell of Kali and rebelled against the laws of God. Great disasters loom. But people still ignore Kṛṣṇa's warnings and take pride in their bodies and material achievements. It seems they will never wake up. It is clear that this material civilization has covered everybody and is dragging the world toward destruction. This is an era of conflicts within our civilization, and our civilization is self-destructing.

Today I read an article you wrote in the first issue of *Back to Godhead* magazine, published in 1944, during World War II. In that article you criticize material consciousness on the level of global human civilization, and then, giving a Kṛṣṇa conscious viewpoint, you connect spiritual realization with a revolution in world civilization. You wrote in that historic article:

[Modern] man, having forgotten himself as the son of Godhead, has forsaken his real constitutional nature. He has misidentified himself with everything non-godly and therefore manipulates a material existence conducted by the mind and the six instrumental senses. He is concerned only with his material coverings of gross body and the subtle mind but cannot see either himself or his so-called numerous fellow men. This is what we mean by Nescience, which is darkness. [Modern] man, having designated himself with the relation of his vehicular body and the finer elements of mind and ego, etc., like the motorcar driver who has identified himself wrongly with the motorcar itself, has manufactured a civilization which is self-contradictory and [in] self-denial. . . .

The defect of the present-day civilization is just like the above. This is actually the civilization of Nescience, or illusion, and . . . therefore civilization has been turned into militarization.

You once said that *Back to Godhead* magazine was the starting point of your mission. This article, written in the first issue of that magazine, served not only as a preface to it but also takes the topic into a deeper discussion; it is a declaration of war on modern civilization by a self-realized soul. It is much greater than *The Communist Manifesto*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. We should understand that it is

your unique vision, your unique mission, which makes you so special in the Vaiṣṇava disciplic succession or in the circle of any spiritualists throughout human history.

Most saints and enlightened masters emphasize personal self-realization and liberation. Very few emphasize the need for a spiritual revolution in civilization as a whole. Even in the Vaiṣṇava tradition, devotees usually talk about going back to Godhead or developing their individual love for Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. But you have connected self-realization to global civilization and expressed your love for Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa by endeavoring to save humanity from a misguided civilization. This is your special realization and special contribution to Vaiṣṇavism and the world. This is the modern application of Vedānta philosophy.

You taught us that without self-realization, human civilization rooted in the bodily conception of life has become the source of its own destruction. The chaotic condition of modern civilization is not only on the level of politics, economics, and morality but is deeply rooted in the understanding of life itself. Life comes from life, you declared countless times, not from matter. Since the modern civilization takes the material body as its foundation, the whole of human society has been suffering more and more despite so many scientific and technological advancements.

This basic understanding is actually your main motto, your *mahā-vākya*, for preaching, and it is no doubt the most basic foundation of Vedic knowledge and Vedic civilization.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you felt the pulse of modern civilization in a most accurate way. By your wonderful example you taught us how to attain Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy and save the world by spreading His message. By focusing on your target, modern civilization will finally be redirected by your most simple but powerful message. The work we have to do is to fully realize this foundational knowledge within the heart and practice it in our daily lives. People were lost, speculating about the teachings of Mahāprabhu and Lord Kṛṣṇa, but you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, clearly pointed out during the Second World War that we should save human civilization by ourselves becoming realized and then helping other people to realize that we are eternal and not the material body. As you told us, without Kṛṣṇa consciousness the modern civilization has no future but destruction. Now it is happening before our eyes.

Other so-called big *sādhus* and scholars spoke fancy, smart words or sophisticated high philosophy simply to catch the attention of naive people, but you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, spoke directly and honestly. You never hid or twisted the Absolute Truth, even when it seemed too simple.

It is time to grasp this essence of your teachings. It is time to go back to the basics of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The whole human civilization is awaiting your message so it can be saved from ultimate destruction. There is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way.

Your servants in China.

(written by Siddhadeha Dāsa)

Delhi

Most respected Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace. All glories to your unending glories!

Another year has passed, and we have gotten this unlimitedly rare opportunity to glorify Your Divine Grace.

Riots, terrorism, and now the Covid-19 pandemic! You have always taught us that this material world is not a place for a gentleman and that the nature of this place is *duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam* and *padarīṇ padarīṇ yad vipadām*. Yet in December 2019 ISKCON Delhi managed to distribute nearly 300,000 *mahā* big books during your marathon month, and nearly half a million books in the last quarter of 2019. This despite losing a week due to the riots, when no one could safely venture outside!

And now, when quarantine, lockdown, and social distancing are the watchwords, your fearless volunteers are going out to distribute a similarly huge numbers of plates of *prasādam* as part of the relief efforts due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The central and state governments, as well as several videos on national mainstream TV, have significantly appreciated ISKCON for its selfless efforts in wiping the tears from the eyes of thousands of the hungry and hopeless. As you desired, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we seek your mercy so that we can ensure that no one goes hungry in the close proximity of any ISKCON temple.

You once said that as long as profuse book distribution and *prasādam* distribution go on, there is no need to worry about management—it will take care of itself.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you built this ISKCON house for the whole world to live in and flourish. As you once remarked, “What will you do with your material progress at the time of death? Suppose you have a big bank balance, a nice house, good friends. At any moment death can come and kick you out. What can you do? *Mṛtyuḥ sarva-haraś cāham*: as death, Kṛṣṇa will come one day and take everything you have. Finished.” Having read your simple yet sublime transcendental books, we know that by taking shelter of Śrīla A(bhaya) C(haranaravinda) Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, we will receive protection and fearlessness—*abhaya*.

Yet, when we see the extreme anxiety now prevalent in society at large, we see how fortunate we are to be on this ISKCON ship. And we are confident that you, the captain of our ship, will navigate us through these troubled waters.

We have presented more families to you this year, along with nearly 175 Ashraya Groups, each with around 15 members; almost 75 Bhakti Vriksha Groups; and several Namahatta Groups. Śrīla Prabhupāda, over the last year more *brahmacārīs* have been trained up, more of your books have been distributed, more Bhaktivedanta Academies for Culture and Education and preaching and extension centers have been opened, and more dignitaries have visited ISKCON Delhi. At the center of all these programs, and very much in focus, is Your Divine Grace.

We beg at your divine lotus feet that we go beyond mere self-preservation and genuinely serve the *guru-paramparā* and society at large in a Kṛṣṇa conscious manner, especially in this hypersensitive environment. You have given us such immense facilities that it doesn’t seem like a lockdown! On this auspicious day we implore Your Divine Grace to help us understand your instructions in essence and not get sidetracked so that we don’t think that *facility* is the principle but remember that *utility* is!

In your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* commentary you write:

This is exactly the position of present civilization. Everyone is engaged in maintaining the body, home, and family. Consequently, everyone becomes confused at the end of life, not knowing what spiritual life and the goal of human life are. In a civilization of sense gratification there cannot be spiritual life, because a person thinks only of this life. Although the next life is a fact, no information is given about it. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.9, purport]

And in 1973 you wrote the following in a letter to a disciple:

I can understand your concern about the deterioration of the civilization. Yes, the city will be more dangerous place as Kali-yuga advances. It will be very deteriorating. The modern civilization is so corrupt and as sinful activities are more and more committed, the people will be forced to face more troubles, by nature’s order. Our business, however, is simply to take shelter of the Hare Kṛṣṇa Maha Mantra and pray to the Holy Name to give us protection. We shall be unaffected by all that will happen. Kṛṣṇa will provide us with working facilities. Be assured of this, that the

devotees will be protected by the Holy Name. Others will have to suffer in the days that are coming. [Letter to Kuruśreṣṭha, 23 July 1973]

While distancing ourselves socially, we are fortunately nearer to you now! Quarantine with Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee and his followers! Prabhupāda and *gaura-karuṇā* in the time of corona!

We seek protection, Śrīla Prabhupāda, from the vagaries and travails of the modern society around us. However, no matter what happens, we have an unshakeable faith that simply by following in your footsteps we will attain the love of God without a doubt.

All the resident devotees and the entire yātrā in Delhi, India.

(written by Mohanrūpa Dāsa)

Denver

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to your glorious appearance-day celebration, to what you left with us to carry forward on your behalf, and to your continued presence in your instructions, lectures, and books.

It's early morning, and five of us are on the altar. The transcendental bodies of our small Gaura-Nitāi Deities are being massaged with fragrant natural oils, and the aroma fills the altar space. One of us is gently dressing little Rādhā-Govinda in bright orange-and-silver garments, another is ringing the bell while offering sixteen *upacāras* to Lord Jagannātha, Lord Baladeva, and Śrīmatī Subhadrā. Another is wiping down the bodies of big Gaura-Nitāi in preparation for dressing Them. We're listening to one of your lectures given in 1976 in Māyāpur. As I place a sparkling silver necklace on Govinda's chest, you use the term "unity in variety." I reach for the flower garland.

"Very interesting," you say. "This is realization of God. There is difference, varieties; at the same time they're one. Unity in variety" As I rest the garland on Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's chest I notice the garland's well-crafted, artistic construction—white, red, and orange carnations and roses, green leaves strung with care. Every week we purchase the garland flowers, and when I show up to dress the Deities I see how each garland-maker has used those flowers to make a unique, fresh creation. A single flower is an artistic creation, with each of its petals and parts forming a perfect, radiant piece of art, and many flowers strung together by God-gifted intelligence and individual devotion is another dimension of creation.

The sound of the grain grinder in the Deity kitchen begins as the cook grinds whole, ancient wheat berries to make fresh *sooji*. Then you say, "Millions of universes . . . millions of stars, millions of planets . . . what to speak of living entities! Everything unlimited." The dichotomy strikes me. Each of us is one little, limited speck in an endless creation of unlimitedness. Each of us individually is limited. You explain how Kṛṣṇa is one source, the underlying adhesive; although He expands unlimitedly, He does not become limited or lose himself in that expansion.

"Just like a big man. . . ." The big man at home with his family, relaxed in a comfy chair, directs his entire business—all its offices and factories—from his phone. He doesn't need to visit the offices or factories; he does it all from his abode. "And there are management, so many managements. But all these managements are going on on the supreme management, Kṛṣṇa. . . . That one Supreme Person, He is managing everything."

Soaking in that perspective, I'm now working on Govinda's turban. As I pin one swirly teal peacock-feather *mukut* into place, I appreciate how wonderful it is to be limited. Being limited means we individually don't need to be Kṛṣṇa—we just need to rely on Him. The Invocation to *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* says that every part of the perfect and complete whole is individually perfect and complete in itself. We might not always feel perfect and complete, but when we are connected to Kṛṣṇa in a mood of harmonious dependency, we are complete. None of us ever lose our limitedness, though. And that's why cooperation is necessary.

The *pūjārī* to my left begins to ring the bell, twirling the incense in graceful circles. I hear the Deity-kitchen door open, the aroma of *halavā* fills the *pūjārī* room, and the cook sets the breakfast plates on the counter near the altar-room door. Another *pūjārī* appears with the *ācamana* tray and small red velvet seats for the *bhoga* offering.

We are all diverse, variegated entities. Each of us has our own unique strengths and talents. Yet each of us is limited in those. When our various strengths complement one another, we multiply the value of our collective offering to Kṛṣṇa, who is that “unity in variety.” When I take into account the perspective and experiences of others in relation to myself, my viewpoint broadens and I see where I can refine and where my limits are. In my limitedness I find myself settling into a humility that invites an empowering mercy and grace from Kṛṣṇa, the *paramparā*, and the Vaiṣṇavas. When we all have this mood of humility and interdependence, we benefit exponentially, both individually and collectively.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, as we continue to serve your mission together here at ISKCON Denver, New Badarikāśrama, we pray for your blessings to maintain this empowering humility and team cooperation—the kind that is grateful for the standards you gave us, the kind that recognizes the need for diverse moods and perspectives, the kind that compassionately recognizes one another's strengths and limitations, the kind that supports one another in creating a collective offering that will uplift each of us individually and the world at large.

Your servants at New Badarikāśrama, Denver, Colorado, USA.

(written by Vṛndāsundarī Devī Dāsī)

Detroit

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

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

Our dearmost savior of the whole world, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most respectful obeisances at your lotus feet.

In this most critical of times in this world, your instructions—in your books, letters, and recordings—are the only real shelter for all living entities. Your constant reminders to chant the holy names—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—are the real solution to save us in this most bewildering time.

We have learned a great deal from your poem *Mārkine Bhāgavata-dharma*, written onboard the *Jaladuta* after it docked in Boston:

*tabe jadi taba kṛpā hoy ahaitukī
sakal-i sambhava hoy tumi se kautukī*

“But I know Your causeless mercy can make everything possible because You are the most expert mystic.” Just reciting your poem gives us so much solace and strength to continue this most divine process of loving devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, given by you without interruption.

Here at one of your dearest projects, Devasadhan Mandir, things are going well by the special blessings of Their most merciful Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kuṇjabihārījī. On the strength of your vast compassion, more and more souls are becoming attracted to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, attaining a taste for chanting the holy names, and even becoming serious devotees. And your beautiful gift, this Fisher Mansion, is being maintained and upgraded with the latest technological advancements.

We beg you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to please hold our hands tight because we have the tendency to run away. We pray at your lotus feet that we may never leave you and your ISKCON.

We beg forgiveness for our unlimited offenses to the Vaiṣṇavas.

Your humble servants at Devasadhan Mandir, ISKCON's temple in Detroit, Michigan, USA.

(written by Jagad-guru Dāsa)

Durban

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories unto you on this auspicious day of your appearance.

[Prahāda Mahārāja prayed to Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva:] May there be good fortune throughout the universe, and may all envious persons be pacified. May all living entities become calm by practicing *bhakti-yoga*, for by accepting devotional service they will think of each other's welfare. Therefore let us all engage in the service of the supreme transcendence, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and always remain absorbed in thought of Him. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.18.9]

The heart of the saintly person is such that he cares for the well-being of all. In his heart, in his mind, and in his activities, his life embodies this selfless generosity. In the same mood of the great Prahāda Mahārāja, you thought of others. Indeed, you thought of all the generations to come in South Africa.

On 21 October 1972, in a *Nectar of Devotion* class, you spoke of how you'd received a newspaper article about Durban, South Africa. Your disciples had arrived in South Africa with the primary purpose of sharing *bhakti-yoga* despite the political circumstances. *Bhakti-yoga* was relevant especially at that time because true unification is born from the heart of devotion, which is accompanied by the eyes of purity. *Bhakti-yoga* is still relevant now and will be in the future. You gave us the basis of true unity, and you have united so many across the world.

You were enlivened by the devotees' arrival in South Africa because it meant that the flourishing of the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness had begun here, that now South Africans had the opportunity to live a life beyond monotony and fruitless struggles. Later, in October of 1975, you visited South Africa, and the many generations of devotees to come in South Africa who did not get to meet you personally will meet you by continuing to live in the benefit of your generosity.

You thought about us not for any self-enhancement but purely because you cared. Those things which don't matter to someone don't make an impression in the mind, yet you invested in us, as small as we are.

You invested in us: you sent your disciples, you gave transcendental literature, you gave the process of *bhakti-yoga*, you gave the essence of life, you gave and continue to give us Kṛṣṇa, and you gave us the greatest gift—yourself. These invaluable gifts are incomparable to anything of this world. To give time, to give oneself, and to give a place in the heart to others—all for their genuine spiritual upliftment—these traits are found only in the character of a saintly person. These expressions of selfless generosity, on a spiritual platform, are not restricted by the limitations of time and space. In fact, you made everything extraordinary.

We pray that you will be pleased with our attempts to become devotees and our attempts at sharing the *bhakti-yoga* process. When our weaknesses surface and our determination falters, remembering your qualities and sacrifice revives our momentum. Perhaps we may not yet have love of Kṛṣṇa, but we have undoubtedly been bound by your love. Even though we may never fully understand how far-reaching it is, still we are graced by it.

The central focus of our lives is to somehow please you and your sincere servants. Without this purpose our lives would be empty, bleak, and pointless.

You have perpetuated and secured your generosity through those disciples of yours who are sincere and transparent. In this way we are always guided.

The incredibly beautiful Temple of Understanding here in Durban, with its fresh modern architecture and beautiful rolling gardens full of exotic fragrant plants, as described in the *Bhāgavatam*, is attractive to so many people. This lovely place is the home of the youthful, elegant, and graceful Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha. They are the very embodiment of beauty, within this temple and beyond. How is it that we, with all our material tendencies and many shortcomings, have the opportunity to live in the spiritual world?

[Prahāda Mahārāja prayed to Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva:] The Supreme Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is always fully satisfied in Himself. Therefore when something is offered to Him, the offering, by the Lord's mercy, is for the benefit of the devotee, for the Lord does not need service from anyone. To give an example, if one's face is decorated, the reflection of one's face in a mirror is also seen to be decorated. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.11]

The spiritual master is the mercy manifestation of Kṛṣṇa, and so it is solely by your kindness that we have the opportunity to serve Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa directly in Their Deity forms. Though we lack so much, They are here by your prayer. Kṛṣṇa is in every ISKCON temple because your devotion brought Him and you connected us to Him. We are not qualified to serve Kṛṣṇa, but by the prayer and merit of the *ācārya* these things are happening.

Every temple is a gift because it was your desire to create facilities for everyone to have the opportunity of the gift of devotional service. The heart is not won by external opulences but by the opulence of the character of a saintly person. Everything you gave is so cherishable, even if some of us have been won over through *prasādam*, some through philosophy, some through music, some through art. Whatever it may be, the real thing that wins anyone over is when they feel sheltered and spiritually nurtured—and you gave that. So now we are bound to you by your love. Again and again, as we are won over by you more and more, we more and more appreciate the depths of your character.

Simply by thinking of us you have made arrangements for our welfare. Even though we have no claim to your kindness, still you give. It is certainly your causeless mercy.

If everyone forgets us but you remember us, we have gained everything.

We are living the experience of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Your thoughts and activities have shaped our lives. The care of the *ācārya* has an incredible depth. You made a place in your heart for us. We pray that you enter our hearts and remain there, and that we remember you at every moment. Let our lives be dedicated to you always so that we may never forget you.

We offer you our obeisances again and again.

Your servants at the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha Temple in Durban, South Africa.

(written by Bhakti Devī Dāsī)

Edmonton

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

I do not consider myself fit to pay homage to you, a great personality, great scholar, and the purest devotee, who came to this material world as a special messenger sent directly by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. Lord Kṛṣṇa especially chose you to deliver us from our mundane lives.

We are all passing through difficult times because of the most dreadful COVID-19 pandemic, which is currently causing untold misery and death throughout the world. We need your guidance and instructions more than ever to get us through these desperate times. We derive strength and solace from your recorded teachings and your books. You have given us answers to every one of our questions. As you have explained many times, all human beings suffer the threefold miseries—*adhyātmika*, *adhidaivika*, and *adhibhautika*. And that is what is happening now. We are suffering from these miseries due to the many sins accumulated in our lives, especially cruelty toward other living beings. Only the Lord can deliver us from these miseries through His most favorite devotees, such as yourself.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.19.21), Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Uddhava:

*mad-bhakta-pūjābhyadhikā sarva-bhūteṣu man-matiḥ
mad-artheṣv aṅga-ceṣṭā ca vacasā mad-guṇeraṇam*

From the purport, by your disciples: “The words *mad-bhakta-pūjābhyadhikā* are significant in this verse. *Abhyadhikā* indicates ‘superior quality.’ The Lord is extremely satisfied with those who offer worship to His pure devotees, and He rewards them accordingly. Because of the Lord’s generous appraisal of His

pure devotees, worship of the pure devotees is described as superior to worship of the Lord Himself.” So to please Kṛṣṇa it is most important for us to serve you sincerely. Kindly shower your mercy on us and help us pass through our miseries.

It is our solemn duty to strictly follow your teachings in order to become better devotees and better human beings and to make our lives meaningful. We should all work to strengthen the movement you started and keep ISKCON forever alive.

Jaya, jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your servants at ISKCON Edmonton, Canada.

(written by Bāla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa)

Fredericton

*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*

Respected Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

Please forgive us for our lack of realization and eloquence shown in this Vyāsa-pūjā offering. For conditioned souls like us, it is impossible to understand, let alone describe, the pastimes of a *mahā-bhāgavata* such as you. Your unalloyed love for Lord Kṛṣṇa was exhibited from your earliest days, when you organized Ratha-yātrā festivals and worshiped Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindajī as a child.

Later, while providing for and nurturing your family, you showed how to be a responsible *grhastha* by supporting your spiritual master’s temples, writing articles, and being involved in the chanting and spreading of the holy name. After taking *saṅnyāsa* you wrote your First Canto translation and commentary and then departed Vṛndāvana, armed with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda’s instructions in your heart and fortified by an unbreakable determination to fulfill his mission. Who can fathom your devotion and dedication as you ascended the *Jaladuta* gangplank? This is undeniably one of the greatest acts of love, faith, and devotion to guru and Kṛṣṇa within the history of Vaiṣṇavism.

Upon your arrival in America, difficulties surrounded you in the forms of a foreign culture, a lack of funds, and health challenges. However, you pushed on determinedly. How easy it would have been to give up! Yet you continued, no matter what the challenge—stepping over Bowery bums, fleeing a drug-addled loft-mate, having your requests for help rebuffed by your Godbrothers—and constantly fought to fulfill your spiritual master’s wish that Kṛṣṇa consciousness be spread in the West. As your movement took hold and you pushed the publishing, printing, and distribution of your books in as many languages as possible, the 1970s saw a massive dissemination of Vaiṣṇava literature throughout the world. Your Guru Mahārāja must be so pleased with your effort!

Your teachings and example influenced millions, ranging from heads of state to religious leaders to intellectuals to ordinary people, and you transformed hippies into happies. You cast your merciful gaze upon all, without prejudice. You revealed to us how the Absolute Truth, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, could be realized through a practical rural lifestyle dedicated to simple living and high thinking. But of course your ultimate mercy was accepting us as your servants and inspiring us to engage in devotional service. There are no words at our command with which we can thank you properly for such a boon

Śrīla Prabhupāda, with your mercy and under the instruction of your very dear disciple and my spiritual master His Holiness Gopāl Krishna Goswami, we have opened a small center in the Canadian city of Fredericton. We have successfully done major programs like Govardhana-pūjā and Rāma-navamī, and we are regularly doing programs every Sunday at our home. We trust that you and Śrī Nārada Muni are joining our programs, and we try our best to please both of you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am the most fallen in the whole ISKCON community. Still, I have been given so much love and support by your children (disciples) and grandchildren (granddisciples), love and support of which I am not at all worthy. We have full faith in your teachings and try to implement your instructions in our daily life.

Our prayer on this day is that you do not kick us away from your lotus feet, that you allow us to assist you in your service to Lord Kṛṣṇa eternally. This is the perfection of our lives, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your selflessness, teachings, and inspiration. Our humble request is to please always shower your mercy on us. Please give us the strength to fight *māyā* and the courage to preach the chanting of the holy names of the Supreme Lord.

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your eternal servants at the Fredericton Krishna Centre, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada.

Gainesville

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

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

The Brāhmaṇs' Wives

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

As Kṛṣṇa once dispatched his friends to beg from *smārta* priests, when you sailed West and needed help, you naturally turned East and asked some *paṇḍit* friends for men and funds to be released. Yet all of them ignored you and did not help in the least.

As Kṛṣṇa told his friends that beggars sometimes are rebuffed,
you knew the Lord would send you help, and help came soon enough.
It came from low-class people who were fallen, blind, and rough,
and not from high-class *smārta*-types whose egos were too puffed.

As *brāhmaṇ* wives and not their husbands brought Lord Kṛṣṇa food,
it was these fallen souls who caught your missionary mood.
While *paṇḍits* criticized your flock as *muchis*, foul and crude,
you knew the Pañca-tattva did not favor or exclude.

As all the *brāhmaṇs*' wives received much more than what they gave,
so grateful were the youthful boys and girls that you had saved,
they took your flood of love of God to Delhi and Bombay.
And when your countrymen took note, they too drowned in its waves.

As all the *brāhmaṇs*' wives then chose to stay right where they were,
for Kṛṣṇa, not their husbands, was the man that they preferred,
we wanted you to stay with us, your youthful amateurs,
for how could we survive without your form and just your words?

As Kṛṣṇa told the *brāhmaṇs*' wives to go back on their own
to handle household duties in their haughty husbands' homes,
you told us all to carry on the way you'd always shown.
With Supersoul and guru in the heart, we're not alone.

As all the *brāhmaṇs*' wives agreed to do what Kṛṣṇa asked,
returning to their homes, fulfilling ordinary tasks,
like you, we move ahead despite the *smārtas*, who, in fact,
do nothing to assist, though they may claim to have our backs.

As all the *smārta brāhmaṇs* finally started to lament
for disrespecting Him for whom their sacrifice was meant,
dear Prabhupāda, you showed how spiritual intelligence
surpasses smug and superficial *smārta* sentiments.

Your servants at ISKCON's Krishna House in Gainesville, Florida, USA.

(written by Kālakaṇṭha Dāsa)

Genova

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer at your divine lotus feet my most heartfelt obeisances.

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

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

It's such a privilege for me to come before you! You are that special and unique devotee chosen by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu as the *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the planet! And you were successful because of your extraordinarily high level of Kṛṣṇa consciousness! *Kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana*. No other devotee has received the power you received! This means you are unique!

I was a young, bewildered boy looking for knowledge and understanding of the real goal of life. I was wandering the streets of Rome, confused and frustrated. But by your divine grace I met your devotees Mrdā Mātājī, Somaka Prabhu, and Dhanañjaya Prabhu, who gave me shelter and hope. Nowadays the entire planet is bewildered, confused about its present and future because of an invisible *asura*, the coronavirus. People are lost, in deep confusion and frustration. Such a heavy situation. But under your shelter I feel secure and intrepid. Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you.

I am growing old, but I still feel strong and secure with you in my heart and your words in my ears. Your words give me the security and strength to carry on, and not only to *just* carry on but also develop, as you instructed us, a strong desire to help others take up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda, thanks to you, my old age is becoming my best age. I feel younger and younger because you give me strength day after day. Because of you, I feel I'm entering eternal life. Where is old age? Where is the coronavirus? I see only your beautiful lotus face. Your words resound in my ears and enter my heart. You are my only lord and master. For you I give up everything and am happy each day, more and more. Thank you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda. Please give me the strength and understanding to know who you really are—the greatest devotee and *ācārya* who ever came to this earth planet. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I bow again and again with deep gratitude in the dust of your divine lotus feet, which are my real life and soul. I'm happy—really happy—to remain forever with your servants. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I understand with great happiness that being in the company of your disciples and granddisciples is my greatest privilege. When I'm away from them I miss them so much—all of them!

Here in Genova we are starting to apply the self-sufficiency program you asked of us many times, a life dependent on mother earth and mother cow. We have our own mountain water and good, pure air. Simple living and high thinking, as you commanded. Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have only one desire: to remain in your service in your ISKCON family forever and to preach your glories life after life!

Your servants at Śrī Prabhupāda Dhāma, Genova, Italy.

(written by Dayānidhi Dāsa)

Gītā Nāgarī

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our prostrated and loving obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace on this auspicious anniversary of your appearance.

This offering started off under very different circumstances. Therefore the original version and this latest version are quite different. We went from being grounded in our 2020 plans and goals, moving ahead at full throttle, to shock and bewilderment, then finally “perspective” – perspective gained by looking through the lens of your teachings as they came alive in amplified ways, pushing us out of our somewhat complacent mood and into total vigilance.

The world looked very different within weeks due to the pandemic caused by a new coronavirus (COVID-19). A microorganism has destabilized the magnificent creations of even the most intelligent humans.

People are scurrying now not for the things they usually toil for—large homes, dazzling cars, the latest technological devices—but for food, cleaning agents, and safety. Their determination and focus have turned 180 degrees from leading “the good life” to the quest to stay alive.

Your Gītā Nāgarī has become very relevant at a time like this. Why? The principle of human beings coexisting harmoniously with fauna and flora on the basis of God consciousness—once the only and most natural way to live—has over time become a novelty. And now, within weeks, what was novel has become critical.

In these turbulent times, your astounding foresight revealed in your 1956 essay “The Conception of Gītā Nāgarī” stands us in good stead. You wrote:

Bhagavad-gītā can most scientifically raise this standard of life of sweet relation between one thing and another, and as such the Gītā Nāgarī shall be the centre for such supreme culture of knowledge. The Gītā Nāgarī shall set the example that neither God nor the living being nor Nature is in any way antagonistic toward one another, but that all of them exist in harmony as a complete whole unit. When Gītā Nāgarī will attempt to harmonise such sweet relation between man and God, Man and the world and the world and God, at such an auspicious time only, the United Nations effort to establish peace in the world will be successful or the dream of a casteless society all over the world will be realised in practice. There is no other practical solution of the scientific basis of universal brotherhood or of universal religion without understanding this simple truth of the fatherhood of Godhead, motherhood of Nature, and childhood of all living entities.

How fitting!

In the last forty-odd years, various teams of devotees have lovingly sacrificed in service to you here at Gītā-nāgarī. Each team pioneered and laid the groundwork for development by subsequent teams. Now again, an eager team, “servants of your servants,” continues your legacy.

We live with your words etched on our hearts. Every single member of this community is inspired by your example and instructions. We offer all our focus and energy to your vision.

We are reminded, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that you thought about Gītā Nāgarī in 1977, before you left this planet. That instills in us a great sense of responsibility. We beg you for the spiritual astuteness to bring unlimited pleasure to our beloved Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara, and to be instruments in manifesting your grand vision for Gītā Nāgarī, a vision much needed at this critical time in world history.

We thank you for your guidance delivered through your faithful disciples, servants, and followers.

While we are not a perfect community, the entire Gītā Nāgarī community remains fully dedicated and immeasurably grateful for the opportunity to express our gratitude for permitting us to participate

in the unfolding of your vision. Without your vision, Gītā Nāgarī would not be . . . and neither would we.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please be merciful to us. Give us the shade of your lotus feet. And let your fame be spread all over the three worlds even more!

Thank you.

Your eternally indebted children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren at the Gītā Nāgarī farm community in Port Royal, Pennsylvania, USA.

Glastonbury

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

*he guro jñāna-da dīna-bandho
svānanda-dātaḥ karuṇaika-sindho
vṛndāvanāsīna hitāvatāra
prasīda rādhā-praṇaya-pracāra*

“O spiritual master, O giver of divine wisdom, O friend of the fallen, you are the giver of your own bliss, and you are the only ocean of mercy. Although dwelling in Vṛndāvana, you have descended for the welfare of fallen souls like myself, and you are preaching the divine love of Rādhā for Kṛṣṇa. Please be kind upon me.” (As quoted in the *Pañcarātra Pradīpa*)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, from the bottom of our hearts we would like to first thank you for coming to this material world to help us fallen conditioned souls go back home, back to Godhead. And we’d also like to thank Lord Kṛṣṇa for sending you. Although your stay in this world was just a moment for Lord Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world, it was a lifetime for you on this planet. Being with Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world, or being with Him during your lifetime here in this material world, may not have been any different for you because your consciousness is always with Him in Goloka Vṛndāvana, but it made a world of difference for millions of souls on this earthly planet.

While you were in this land of death, Martyaloka, you changed the lives of the many souls who surrendered to you and you gave them eternal life. You trained them to teach others your message and left many volumes of books to help them avoid going astray. You were not only completely pure but also most intelligent and farsighted; therefore you trained both men and women to preach in order to perpetuate the process of souls going back home to the spiritual world, free from this Martyaloka.

We don’t know if Lord Kṛṣṇa asked you to come here, or if you asked Kṛṣṇa if you could come to perform this service for His pleasure. Either way, we thank you for coming and we thank Lord Kṛṣṇa for allowing you to come. Without your mercy there would be no hope for mankind.

We would also like to thank your Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja Prabhupāda, for the instructions he gave you that you should preach to the English-speaking people and that if you ever got money you should print books. Just by following those two instructions, you have

changed the world. We believe Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was able to foresee that you would be the one to spread the holy name to every town and village. He prepared you for that mission in the short time you associated with him. He instructed and befriended you, encouraging you to take on this seemingly impossible task of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the English-speaking people. You went above and beyond his instruction by spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world in many languages with the help of those you inspired. Now your books are printed and distributed in over eighty-five languages.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is still spreading more and more due to your imbuing your disciples and granddisciples with the strong desire to read, study, and distribute your books. We pray that we may follow your instructions as you followed those of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for seemingly leaving your blissful pastimes with Lord Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world and coming to this abominable place of birth, death, disease, and old age in order to please the Lord by sharing His blissful name, form, qualities, and pastimes. Thank you for not being afraid to come to such a horrible place. You were accurately named Abhaya Charanaravinda, “fearless for having taken shelter at the lotus feet of the Lord.”

Please help us serve you sincerely, with enthusiasm and patience, for by serving you we are serving the entire *paramparā* and Lord Kṛṣṇa and engaging in the highest welfare activity for the whole world. Thank you for giving us a life worth living.

Your humble servants at ISKCON Glastonbury, Connecticut, USA.

(written by Pyāri Mohan Dāsa)

Guyana

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace. All glories to this special Vyāsa-pūjā day, which brings all of us together to meditate on, appreciate, glorify, and share the rich spiritual heritage you have given us.

There is an undeniable potency in what you have created for us. You appeared as Lord Gaurāṅga’s *senāpati-bhakta*, His “commander-in-chief devotee,” to act as His representative and messenger during this juncture in the Age of Kali. You came to awaken us and the world to the forgotten treasure house He had opened five centuries earlier, the contents of which He freely offered to anyone who desired them. Because of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are now privy to that which we would never have deserved.

The Hare Kṛṣṇa community in Guyana is an oasis of relief and shelter from the harsh hand of Kali-yuga. Our preaching programs are very simple, but as you repeatedly stated, our success depends on our following the standard rules and regulations very seriously. We are aware that personal and collective success in ISKCON is achieved only when we stick sincerely to what you gave us.

As I write this homage, the coronavirus pandemic is spreading rapidly around the world, and everyone is overwhelmed with fear, panic, and uncertainty. We feel so blessed and comforted to be under your protective shelter and thus possessed of a deeper perspective on the world situation. Anyone can be solaced by your teachings and understand the immediate and remote causes behind every reversal, and that understanding enables us to tolerate the things we cannot change. The entire package Your Divine

Grace gave us—hearing and chanting the holy name; philosophy; association; Deity service; proper behavior; your concept of “simple living and high thinking,” etc.—all serve to shield us from the onslaught of Kali-yuga and give us both goal and direction in a world with no security. You taught us how to live and how to die, how to give and how to take Kṛṣṇa conscious association, how to care for one another and how to be a friend to everyone.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please strengthen our desire and determination to serve you. Help us overcome the complacency and lethargy that stunt us, and give us the strength to avoid the distractions that prevent us from focusing exclusively on your service. Kindly forgive our sins and cleanse away the *anarthas* that only weaken us. As we meditate on you today, we realize our eternal indebtedness to you. Your transcendental qualities are beyond our ability to fully understand.

You listed one of ISKCON’s principles as “preaching is the essence.” May we remain focused on preaching by devising innovative means to reach out to others. We pray that we can serve you in whatever way is needed to help you spread the holy names. We thank you for being so kind and providing us with a map by which to find our way out of this material world. Please help us always think of you with deep appreciation for your causeless love and grace. May we work in a cooperative spirit to develop our ISKCON Guyana.

We feel a great debt of gratitude for the opportunities you have created for us. As your servants here in Guyana, we pray to be able to continue to serve you with enthusiasm, thus assisting you in your mission in whatever way we can. On this holiest of days, we pray for the intelligence and purity to make your instructions one with our heart.

Although completely unqualified, on this auspicious day we fall at your lotus feet and beg you to infuse our hearts with a drop of your divine grace so that we may become qualified to assist you in your glorious mission. On this, your Vyāsa-pūjā day, we beg you to continue to make us objects and instruments of your mercy.

Your aspiring servants in Guyana.

(written by Paramātmā Dāsa)

Hong Kong

*tvaṁ naḥ sandarśito dhātrā dustaraṁ nistīrṣatām
kaliṁ sattva-haraṁ puṁsāṁ kaṇa-dhāra ivārṇavam*

“We think that we have met Your Goodness by the will of providence, just so that we may accept you as captain of the ship for those who desire to cross the difficult ocean of Kali, which deteriorates all the good qualities of a human being.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.22)

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your lotus feet from the fragrant harbor of Hong Kong! We are eternally grateful to you for delivering the mercy of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by handing us the sublime method for achieving the topmost realization of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This spiritual science of *bhakti-yoga* is perfect knowledge, and by your example we have seen that it can be applied anywhere and everywhere according to time, place, and circumstance. We have firsthand experience that the principles work wherever they are tried, having personally served you in the Far East on and off since 1975.

The Hong Kong devotees are very dedicated and steady, and we have known some of them for decades. They continue their engagements in Kṛṣṇa conscious activities. The Deity worship is first class, and the community is engaged in sewing some of the finest garlands I've ever seen, cooking feasts, celebrating auspicious festival days, and performing street *saṅkīrtana*. These devotees are extraordinarily innovative in finding ways to spread Lord Caitanya's movement. They have created a yoga studio adjacent to the temple, which is also used to facilitate lectures and *kīrtanas*, as well as discussion groups that are all based on Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava teachings.

Here is a brief list of some of the *sevā* initiatives at ISKCON Hong Kong in 2020:

Caturbhuja Dāsa is engaged in developing an eco-farm in Sheung Shui.

Lilā Mayī Rādhā Devī Dāsī conducts Indian Cultural Studies, which include

- Ekādaśī *kīrtanas*
- Weekly yoga meditation programs at Wisdom Tree Yoga Studio
- Kārttika "Month of Dāmodara programs with street book distribution
- Book fairs
- Saturday *Bhagavad-gītā* group studies
- Regular yoga sound meditation programs at the Chinese University of Hong Kong

Śiromaṇi Devī Dāsī's Food for Life comprises

- Weekly and monthly cooking classes
- Food for Life *prasādam* distribution
- Year-end cookie and radish-cake orders
- Children's classes

International Yoga Institute (Wisdom Tree Yoga) comprises

- Regular yoga classes
- Monthly yoga / health / spiritual talks
- Yoga trips to India
- Health expo at Kowloon Bay International Trade & Exhibition Centre
- Yoga book publishing
- Outreach yoga classes to businesses, secondary schools, and universities

BBT

- Re-editing small Chinese books
- Producing a second edition of *The Higher Taste*, with fifty new recipes

Mādhurī Rādhā Devī Dāsī gives monthly health talks.

Kuntī Mahārāṇī Devī Dāsī conducts monthly *śāstra* readings.

Śītārāṇī Devī Dāsī keeps everything running smoothly as the unofficial temple commander.

His Holiness Giridhārī Swami and Candraśekhara Dāsa manage the regional GBC responsibilities.

Lord Brahmā said, "My dear Lord, those pious and saintly persons who in the Age of Kali hear about Your transcendental activities and also glorify them will easily cross over the darkness of the age." (SB. 11.6.24)

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, your instructions save those who are compliant from all kinds of dangers. By following them we come to understand everything that is happening in the unified field of matter. Although here in Hong Kong we have faced extraordinary circumstances, including disruptive and prolonged social unrest—some of which took place very near the temple—and fear of widespread disease, we are not deterred. We know that change is coming and that we will adjust to it and continue serving your lotus feet and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's desire. You wrote: "A steadfast devotee knows very well that he is not alone. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is with him, and He can protect His sincere devotee in any awkward circumstance." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.13.27, purport) And so, by chanting our rounds and sticking to your

regulative principles of freedom, we follow in the footsteps of your lotus feet and become fearless. Birth after birth may we be engaged in your service. Śrīla Prabhupāda-*kī jaya!*

Your servants at the ISKCON temple in Hong Kong.

(written by Śravaṇīyā Devī Dāsī)

ISKCON of Silicon Valley

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

We are walking the noble path of devotional service because you believe in us. It's your faith in our potential that heartens us to daily chant the *mahā-mantra* and to attentively listen to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. We continue, despite our shortcomings and many obstacles, because you say that the most fallen among us will be quickly elevated to the highest position in *bhakti*. We go on because we believe in you and in what you say.

After crossing the ocean for the first time, from Bharata to America, you memorialized your faith in Kṛṣṇa's power to uplift us when you wrote in your poem *Mārkinē Bhāgavata-dharma*:

The words of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are Your incarnation, and if a sober person repeatedly receives them with submissive aural reception, then he will be able to understand Your message. . . . He will become liberated from the influence of the modes of ignorance and passion, and thus all inauspicious things accumulated in the core of the heart will disappear.

Remarkably, even though you met many people who were not even sober, you repeatedly gave them the message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and in time they not only became sober but were also greatly relieved from the burden of the modes of ignorance and passion, just as you had predicted they would be.

In the *Gītā*, at 15.16, Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "There are two classes of beings, the fallible and the infallible. In the material world every living entity is fallible, and in the spiritual world every living entity is called infallible." Your specialty, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is elevating the fallible to the category of the infallible.

Plato and Socrates stressed "care for the soul." Modern self-help gurus tout positive thinking, productivity, and mood therapy, all with a goal of making the fallible infallible. But, as you write in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.2.32,

Aside from devotees, there are many others, nondevotees, known as *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, or *yogīs*, philanthropists, altruists, politicians, impersonalists, and voidists. There are many varieties of nondevotees who have their respective ways of liberation, but simply because they do not know the shelter of the Lord's lotus feet, although they falsely think that they have been liberated and elevated to the highest position, they fall down.

It seems easy enough, or even natural, for conditioned souls to fall down, even in their worldly pursuits!

Sooner or later, those who have taken up self-improvement programs find themselves flagging, as the formidable modes of nature easily pull even the best of stalwarts away from their vows.

What to speak of keeping one's resolve for worldly self-improvement programs, how much more determination must one have to keep steady on the path of ultimate self-improvement, devotional service? After all, while mundane self-help programs aim at helping one get success and comfort in this life, those engaged in devotional service aim for that which is beyond even the heavenly planets, the *brahmajyoti*, or even *Vaikuṇṭha*—namely, the ultimate destination, *Goloka Vṛndāvana*, Kṛṣṇa's personal planet at the top of the spiritual sky.

Therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda, it's a great wonder how you have managed to encourage hundreds of thousands of people from various cultures and age groups to stick to this ultimate path, a path that tests even the greatest of yogīs. If even the ascetics, *munis*, and the highborn find reaching the spiritual world a severe test of their willpower, how then will regular earthlings busy with jobs, families, and finances reach that goal, which is reserved for the *paramahamsas*?

Those who read your books and listen to your recorded lectures know the answer. It's your hopeful teachings that allow us the audacity to consider that we too might be able to reach the highest levels of devotional service, to live among Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates, and, each of us, to revive our unique, individual relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

Here are a few excerpts from your teachings that demonstrate the ways in which you encourage us:

You repeatedly teach us that Kṛṣṇa helps those who have even a trace of sincerity in performing devotional service, even if such people are severely inept. For example, at *Bhagavad-gītā* 10.10, in your purport, you write:

A person may have a bona fide spiritual master and may be attached to a spiritual organization, but if he is still not intelligent enough to make progress, then Kṛṣṇa from within gives him instructions so that he may ultimately come to Him without difficulty. The qualification is that a person always engage himself in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and with love and devotion render all kinds of services. He should perform some sort of work for Kṛṣṇa, and that work should be with love. If a devotee is not intelligent enough to make progress on the path of self-realization but is sincere and devoted to the activities of devotional service, the Lord gives him a chance to make progress and ultimately attain to Him.

You repeatedly teach us that Kṛṣṇa responds to even an apparently unexceptional person who earnestly prays to Him. At *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.12, in your purport, you write:

It is clearly understood that a devotee does not need to be born in a very high family, to be rich, to be aristocratic, or to be very beautiful. None of these qualifications will engage one in devotional service. With devotion one should feel, "God is great, and I am very small. Therefore my duty is to offer my prayers to the Lord." Only on this basis can one understand and render service to the Lord.

You repeatedly teach us that anyone who knows the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, regardless of birth, can become a bona fide spiritual master. At *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya* 8.128, in your purport you write:

It is stated in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* that one should not accept initiation from a person who is not in the brahminical order if there is a fit person in the brahminical order present. This instruction is meant for those who are overly dependent on the mundane social order and is suitable for those who want to remain in mundane life. If one understands the truth of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and seriously desires to attain transcendental knowledge for the perfection of life, he can accept

a spiritual master from any social status, provided the spiritual master is fully conversant with the science of Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also states that it doesn't matter whether one is situated as a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *śūdra*, *brahmacārī*, *vānaprastha*, *grhastha*, or *sannyāsī*: if he is conversant in the science of Kṛṣṇa he can become a spiritual master as *vartma-pradarśaka-guru*, *dīkṣā-guru*, or *śikṣā-guru*.

You repeatedly teach us that a sincere follower of Lord Caitanya doesn't need academic credentials to be successful in his or her devotional service. For example, in a letter dated January 15, 1968, you intervened in a dispute between two of your disciples, one of whom had questioned the qualifications of a godbrother who was working on editing your *Bhagavad-gītā*. The devotee complaining had a college degree, and the godbrother he was complaining about didn't. You set aside the complainer's concerns like this:

Rayarama may not be as qualified as you are, but his one qualification [is] that he is fully surrendered to Krishna and his Spiritual Master. [This] is the first class recommendation for his editing any one of our literatures, because editing of Vedic literatures does not depend on academic education. It is clearly stated in the Upanisads that one who has implicit faith in God as well as in the Spiritual Master, to him only the import of Vedic literature is revealed.

You repeatedly teach us that Kṛṣṇa gives His ultimate mercy to those who simply try to spread His message to others. In a letter to Nandarāṇī and Dayānanda in April of 1968, you write:

Please accept my blessings. I am very pleased to receive your letters of April 23, 1968, and I am very thankful to you for your nice sentiments. You are very intelligent and nice boy and girl, and trying to understand Krishna Consciousness, and I can simply pray that you shall try to understand more and more about this transcendental science, and whenever possible, try to talk about Krishna Consciousness to your friends or whomever you may meet. Simply by this attempt you will get superior strength and knowledge about Krishna Consciousness. It doesn't matter whether a man is convinced or not, but your sincere attempts to convince others will help you progress. Nandarani is very intelligent girl, both of you execute nicely and try to bring up your daughter in the same spirit, and live nicely in Krishna Consciousness.

What to speak of gaining superior strength and knowledge in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, you also count those who constantly engage in spreading the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, according to their capacity, as being not only Lord Caitanya's associates but also *nitya-siddha* devotees, eternally liberated souls. At *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā* 11.89, you write in your purport:

A devotee is always thinking of how better to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and how to broadcast His name, fame, and qualities throughout the world. One who is *nitya-siddha* has no business other than broadcasting the glories of the Lord all over the world according to his ability. Such people are already associates of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Therefore Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura says, *nitya-siddha kari' māne*. One should not think that because Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was personally present five hundred years ago, only His associates were liberated. Rather, Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura says that anyone is a *nitya-siddha* if he acts on behalf of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by spreading the glories of the holy name of the Lord. We should respect those devotees preaching the glories of the Lord as *nitya-siddha* and should not consider them conditioned.

Finally, for those who worry that they may somehow or other forget Kṛṣṇa at the time of death (and who doesn't worry about this?), in your purport at *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* 17 you write:

The devotees, however, develop a sense of love for Godhead by practicing devotional service to the Lord. Even if at the time of death a devotee does not remember his service to the Lord, the Lord does not forget him. This prayer is given to remind the Lord of the devotee's sacrifices, but even if there is no such reminder, the Lord does not forget the service rendered by His pure devotee.

In your books you support all your encouragements by presenting the conclusions of other great Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*. For example, Śukadeva Gosvāmī explains how Śiśupāla, who, from birth, was inimical to Kṛṣṇa, was delivered by Kṛṣṇa; Prahlaḍa, in his prayers to Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, tells how Kṛṣṇa delivered even an animal, the elephant Gajendra. And Uddhava, in ecstasy, exalts the Lord's mercy, remembering how Kṛṣṇa liberated Pūtanā even as she tried to kill Him.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you told us that even if someone were to win the Nobel Prize a thousand times, such a winner would hardly be equal to one who has joined the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. You also told us that the devotees of Kṛṣṇa are the most exalted people on this planet: "Better than kings, all of them," you said.

Although we are not winners of multiple Nobel Prizes, nor are we kings, you make us feel that we are even far more than these, just because of our tiny efforts in devotional service. Most importantly, however, because of you, we, the members of ISKCON of Silicon Valley, have developed a firm determination to work together, to hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and to continue spreading the *saṅkīrtana* movement all over the world.

We are eternally grateful for your encouragement.

Your servants at ISKCON of Silicon Valley, California, USA.

(written by Vaiṣeṣika Dāsa)

Israel

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to you! Hare Kṛṣṇa!

We just visited your rooms at the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple, so nicely maintained by lovely devotees. Sitting there, we thought about how, from the most perfect place on earth, you came to the West and, with your bare lotus hands, reached into the dirtiest of places and lifted up the otherwise hopeless souls trapped in the dark well of material existence.

Every time someone fortunate gets one of your books, takes *prasādam* from one of your followers, hears *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, or comes to one of your temples, it is your mercy reaching out to that *jīva*.

Truly, your greatness cannot yet be fully appreciated because the vision you brought, carefully received from the disciplic succession you cherish so much, is only starting to manifest.

Your Divine Grace, thank you! Every day we feel your mercy and kindness toward us through your books, the practices you gave us, the wonderful Deities you introduced us to, the instructions you left us, your disciples, the *līlās* you performed and which were recorded by your trusted servants, and the society of devotees you so carefully created.

Please forgive us for not doing enough. You have prepared an amazing feast for us, but we are only taking it grain by grain. Instead, forgetting all rules and etiquette, we should be feasting with both hands on the *prasādam* of your books and instructions, fully taking the process you gave and becoming full of compassion while distributing it to others.

We have learned a well-known secret from one of your direct disciples: Once, instead of writing the traditional “Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!” he wrote in a friendly letter to one of his godbrothers: “Please . . . Prabhupada!” He said this was enough; it is actually the essence of it all.

So please, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, bless us so that we can become worthy instruments in your mission so we can please you and please our gurus and the leaders who follow you with their very *prāṇa*. Please allow us to distribute the gifts you brought us, and eventually to continue to serve you wherever you are now.

With great respect, and all the humility we can gather, please accept our humble obeisances.

All your grandchildren at ISKCON Israel and the devotees of the Israeli yātrā residing in Māyāpur, India.

Jalgaon

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most respectful obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga!

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

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

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

This is the first Vyāsa-pūjā homage I am writing to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I am very grateful and eternally indebted to you for giving me the rare opportunity to make my human birth significant and meaningful by coming in contact with the Kṛṣṇa conscious atmosphere created by you.

Also, thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving us ISKCON and your followers. I am getting opportunities to serve you by reading your books, hearing your lectures, and watching your videos.

I have practically no qualification to glorify you, but I can write down my heart’s feelings for the pleasure of Hari, Guru, and the Vaiṣṇavas.

One devotee has written, paraphrasing a song by Vāsudeva Ghoṣa, *yadi prabhupāda nā hoito, tabe ki hoito*: “If Śrīla Prabhupāda had not appeared, then what would have become of us?” Śrīla Prabhupāda, if you had not appeared on this planet, there would have been no ISKCON and none of your followers, obviously including us. We are here because of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, by your herculean efforts to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world and give us a chance to go back home, back to Godhead.

These efforts were characterized by your boldness in writing the truth as it is and speaking the truth as it is, and also by your conviction in following the order of your spiritual master and by your faith in the whole *paramparā* and their writings, as well as by your dedication to the mission and its missionaries. You taught us and set a perfect example of the “ABCDs” of preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness: aspiration, boldness, conviction and dedication.

Thank you very much, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving us the great, grand, gracious, global gift of ISKCON and your disciples, granddisciples, and other followers.

On this auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, I pray and beg for mercy at your lotus feet: please give me the strength, sincerity, and seriousness to serve you and your mission, ISKCON, till the last drop of my blood and the last breath of my life.

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!

His Divine Grace Abhaya Charanaravinda Bhaktivedānta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda-*kī jaya!*

Your servants at ISKCON's Jalgaon Center, in Maharashtra, India.

(written by Pārthasārathi Dāsa)

Kaundinyapur

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

We were born in the darkest ignorance, but as our spiritual master you opened our eyes with the torchlight of knowledge. In my humble opinion, generally a new devotee first comes in contact with you through your books, lectures, and *kīrtanas*, or perhaps a poster the devotees have put up, and then only by your causeless mercy does one become attracted to an ISKCON center. You are the universal *śikṣā-guru*, Śrīla Prabhupāda! We cannot repay you.

Your beloved disciple His Holiness Lokanāth Swami, my spiritual master, often shares with us a memory of when a disciple once asked you, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, how can we repay you?” Although such repayment is impossible, you replied, “You do as I did.” Again, in a letter written in 1975 to Mr. Ashish Roy about opening a temple near Nagpur, you wrote, “Actually, the teaching of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu that in every town and village there will be a center of Krishna Consciousness is essential.”

Taking your divine instructions to heart, His Holiness Lokanāth Swami not only established an ISKCON temple in Nagpur but also extended ISKCON's reach into villages like Kaundinyapur. In conversations with your disciples about why it took so long for a pure devotee to come to the West, you stated that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura could have singlehandedly completed the work, but out of his kindness he left some preaching nectar for you. You have also left some for us.

Kaundinyapur, the birthplace of Rukmiṇī-devī and the place where Lord Kṛṣṇa kidnapped her, was almost lost. But by your mercy, once again it is manifested as a *dhāma*, with the Girirāja temple attracting hundreds of souls every day. All Vaiṣṇava festivals are now being celebrated on a grand scale, along with daily free *prasādam* distribution, *go-sevā*, book distribution, *saṅkīrtana*, and much more.

When working with villages, challenges are inevitable. But we remember your *veda-vāṇī*: “Just depend on Kṛṣṇa.” You said, “We are the sons and daughters of the richest person in existence. We don’t have to worry.” How else could a penniless swami succeed at such an impossible task? How else is it possible that even after your physical departure your movement is still growing?

We are protected by your watchful eye and the guidance you left us in the form of your books, lectures, letters, example, and the ISKCON movement. We at ISKCON Kaundinyapur are launching a new project, Rukmiṇī-maṅgalam, on this auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā. We pray on this most sacred day that you continue to forgive us for our shortcomings in our service to you, that you give us extra mercy so we can understand how to live by the principles of devotional service you taught us, and that we continue to taste and expand the nectar of *saṅkīrtana*. You once said, “There is no question of becoming perfect. Try to become perfect. That is perfect. . . . Remain always student and try to become perfect. That is wanted.” You showed us that all credit for whatever we do on the devotional path belongs to our spiritual master. It is only because we have received his mercy that we can render service to Śrī Śrī Rukmiṇī-Dvārakānātha.

You left us beautiful, simple instructions for successful preaching: “Books are the basis, purity is the force, preaching is the essence, and utility is the principle.” May the books fly like hotcakes into the hands of souls starving for spiritual nourishment! Please let us each take shelter of the force of purity, which speaks for itself! Please let us preach the essence so that preaching becomes the essence!

Śrīla Prabhupāda-*kī jaya!*

Your servants at ISKCON Kaundinyapur, Maharashtra, India.

(written by Akrūra Dāsa)

Koh Samui

Dear Grandfather, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*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*

On the auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā, I would like to offer you this homage on behalf of the devotees in Koh Samui, Thailand.

You are the only reason why we all got to know about Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes. If you wouldn’t have decided to travel abroad and preach the glories of the Supreme Lord, we can’t even imagine the situation we would all be in now.

By your causeless mercy, we were recently able to establish Deities of Lord Jagannātha, Lord Baladeva, and Śrīmatī Subhadrā Devī in Koh Samui. We also have been running the Govinda’s restaurant and the center, where the devotees follow the programs you have left for us to follow. None of these would have been possible if it weren’t for you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

We pray unto your lotus feet, begging for a tiny drop of your causeless mercy so that we can get a taste of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Thank you so much for everything, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your servants in Koh Samui, Thailand.

(written by Śyāma-kuṇḍa Dāsa)

Latur

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

We devotees at our small *yātrā* in Latur, Maharashtra, are doing our best to fulfill your desire to spread the holy name and the teachings of Lord Caitanya.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, your deeply compassionate heart and your unshakeable faith in the holy name give us the power to perform our duties in this preaching mission. We are trying to invite more and more souls into the home you created, in which the whole word can live, having all their material and spiritual needs fulfilled as they very easily traverse the path back to Godhead.

We pray at your lotus feet to bless us so that our hearts can become like your heart.

Our dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please always stay with us, tolerating our occasional foolishness and madness.

In your service,

Your devotees at ISKCON Latur, Maharashtra, India.

London

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances, all glories to you!

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

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

We, the humble servants of your servants, are writing to you from the *brahmacārī-āśrama*, having taken shelter of you at your very special temple in central London.

But you have taught us that in reality it is the *saṅkīrtana* movement that is our real shelter. We go out on *harināma-saṅkīrtana* and book distribution every day, chanting the holy names and delivering your

books to anyone who will agree to take them. It can be tough work, but we do it with love and enthusiasm.

Saṅkīrtana is the spotless activity of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas—our family business. By your divine grace we are your humble assistants in helping to drive away the darkness of this age.

By performing this sacrifice as a team, we develop deep appreciation for one another, which forms the basis of our loving dealings. By having good relationships, we support one another on those days when it is difficult and enjoy together on the days when things go well.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are such an example of loving dealings. Everyone you dealt with was always fully satisfied. Our scriptures are full of examples of loving Vaiṣṇava dealings. Why do we find it so difficult to practically apply these ideals in our society? Being encouraging and inspiring, personally thanking and showing others appreciation, offering respect and not expecting respect in return—in this way we soften others' hearts and our own and become humble.

There are many ideas about how to attract the general public. Our realization is that the real attractive feature is our loving dealings with one another—that's what will impress others. It will also attract the all-attractive, Kṛṣṇa, and thus Bhakti-devī will enter deeply within our hearts.

Saṅkīrtana is how we lovingly try to rescue our brothers and sisters from the ocean of nescience. Love is active. Let us show people we care. *Harināma*, book distribution, *prasādam* distribution, public festivals—this is the formula you gave us to do that.

Our humble attempt to make the *āśrama* a family has shown early symptoms of success. We just celebrated our post-Gaura-Pūrṇimā book distribution marathon festival. The marathon went very well, and the devotees are inspired to push on the *saṅkīrtana*. But what was most heart-warming was the display of solidarity and mutual appreciation between our young, talented *brahmacārīs* who have taken up Lord Caitanya's mission heart and soul.

Please bless them and all the devotees here at the London temple with pure devotional service. We beg you to always remain within our hearts and to guide us back to Godhead. Please accept our eternal gratitude for everything you have given. Although we owe you an unpayable debt, we are going to try to repay it by striving to deliver your message far and wide by all means possible.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! All glories to you!

Your servants at ISKCON London, UK.

Luzce

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our respectful obeisances at your lotus feet.

Imagine what the world would look like without ISKCON. No bright-faced, happy devotees singing and dancing on the streets with melodious *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, no transcendental *Kṛṣṇa* books, no mouth-watering *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*, no Kṛṣṇa farm communities, no Ratha-yātrās . . . it's just an utterly unbearable thought. Kali's influence would have already grown immensely. But enough of this horrible thought experiment . . . fortunately Lord Kṛṣṇa sent you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, to save the situation.

You sailed on one boat from India to the USA to build another, a transcendental boat for saving the souls drowning in the ocean of birth and death and delivering them to the highest destination, the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. We are eternally thankful to you for lifting us out of that ocean and welcoming us aboard your ISKCON boat, and then teaching us loving devotional service to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. You defined the mission of your movement like this:

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is started for this purpose, so that hundreds of ISKCON centers may give people a chance to hear and chant, to accept the spiritual master, and to disassociate themselves from persons who are materially interested, for in this way one can make solid advancement in going back home, back to Godhead. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.22.23, purport]

There is no greater miracle in history. How is it possible for one elderly man to spread an exotic culture and philosophy, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, all over the world in just twelve years? To write, print, and distribute so many books? To write seven thousand letters? Initiate five thousand disciples? You are certainly a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*, a confidential friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Goloka, who sent you here for this mission. But that doesn't mean it was all an easy journey for you, that things happened mystically just by your wish. No, not at all. You enthusiastically worked very, very hard. Indeed, as your personal servant Hari-śauri Prabhu witnessed: in constant service you practically wore out your body.

You spoke about enthusiasm in the legendary series of lectures you gave in 1972 at the place from which you started—the courtyard of the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple:

Our whole Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is depending on this enthusiasm. Just like I went to your country. At the age of seventy years, nobody goes out of home. But there was enthusiasm, “Yes, I must go.” And because I went, there is something. You have got the information. Similarly, enthusiasm is the basic principle, *ādau. Utsāhān dhairyāt*. By patience. Not that “I am working so hard for Kṛṣṇa, but I'm not getting any impetus.” No. Don't be impatient. Kṛṣṇa will give you chance.

One analysis of the word *utsāhā* sees it conjoining two words, *ut* (“transcendental”) and *saha*, (“together with”) indicating the transcendental association of the Lord. Similarly, the word *enthusiasm*, which comes from Greek, conjoins the prefix *en* (“in”) and *theos* (“God”), indicating divine inspiration from within the heart. By hearing the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Arjuna became enthusiastic to fight due to his constant association, by remembrance within, of Lord Kṛṣṇa (*tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu mām anusmara yudhya ca* [*Bg.* 8.7]) In his enthusiasm, Arjuna performed great endeavors guided by unerring intelligence—by Kṛṣṇa's grace.

Similarly, you became enthusiastic by understanding the heart's desire of your Guru Mahārāja, and you worked day and night, step by step, to fulfill that desire with Kṛṣṇa's help. And in time everything manifested.

*tāra icchā balavān pāścātyete thān thān
hoy jāte gaurāṅger nām
pṛthivīte nagarādi āsamudra nada nadi
sakalei loy kṛṣṇa nām*

“By his strong desire, the holy name of Lord Gaurāṅga will spread throughout all the countries of the Western world. In all the cities, towns, and villages on the earth, from all the oceans, seas, rivers, and streams, everyone will chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.” (“Prayer Unto the Lotus Feet of Kṛṣṇa”)

In ISKCON we can purchase enthusiasm, the healing balm of all spiritual ills, for the same price Arjuna paid: taking a risk for Kṛṣṇa. As you said, “So we, our business is to become a little recognized by Kṛṣṇa. So we shall go on preaching like this at all risk. Thank you very much.” (Lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.67–69, 9 December 1972, Ahmedabad)

We should never forget, amidst our reflection on the mistakes of the past and our planning safeguards for the future, that the only purpose of this movement is to fight the war with *māyā*. In war, there will always be casualties. But no matter what happens, “idle meditation” is not an option. For one who risks everything in the fight, without duplicity, fully depending upon Kṛṣṇa, the Lord's full protection is guaranteed. There's a whole planet earth to be won for you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and Kṛṣṇa, if we can just be enthusiastic in the real sense of the word. “The rising tide raises all ships.” The good ship *harināma*, the good ship of book production and distribution, the good ship of *prasādam* distribution, the good ship

of improving management and administration, the good ship of temple and farm construction, the good ship of educating our next generation of devotees—all these important projects of the good ship ISKCON will be raised higher and higher by the floodtide of enthusiasm to serve you and Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Navadvīpacandra's Temple Activity Report for 2019

In addition to about a hundred regular *harināmas* in the center of Prague, we organized 18 sitting *harināmas* and gave away a few thousand *prasādam* sweet balls. Govinda's restaurant gave out around 48,000 plates of delicious *prasādam*. We distributed 2,635 *mahā* big books, 11,563 big books, 4,114 small books, and 30,000 invitation-and-mantra cards. The Deity worship is continuing regularly. With the help of Aśvahari Prabhu, we are trying to improve the Sunday programs in the temple, the Wednesday public programs in Govinda's restaurant, and the educational programs for the new *bhaktas*. In addition, we started new public preaching programs in Pilsen. Several new devotees joined. Cooking courses at Govinda's were renewed by Rādhākānta Prabhu. Your disciple Jaya Gurudeva Prabhu is presenting lectures at universities with a new PowerPoint presentation, "Karma."

Please give us all blessings to further our successful increase.

Your servants at the Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Navadvīpacandra temple in Luzce, Czech Republic.

(written by Ālālanātha Dāsa)

Maple

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Every year on the occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā, we offer our written sentiments,
But actually it is our duty to remember you and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa at every moment.

Some may question why we praise you repeatedly;
However, Kṛṣṇa prefers the glorification of his pure devotee with sincerity.

When most of the people on this planet were living in illusion,
You mercifully brought countless souls to the *bhakti-yoga* tradition.

We were weak and lacking spirituality;
You brought us from the brink of *māyā* to reality.
Following Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's desire and command,
You boldly ventured forth, trusting Lord Kṛṣṇa's plan.

You dealt with so many obstacles in your mission,
But still you pressed ahead with fierceness and conviction.

Everywhere people are foolishly hankering for material sense gratification,
But you have provided the escape from this cycle of sinful reaction.

You smashed false ideas and concocted perspectives;
Your use of *sāstras* to prove points was completely effective.

That we know anything worth knowing is only because of your mercy;
In your instructions, example, and *vāṇī* you provided everything necessary.

You would preach by day and dictate by night,
Just so you could put our sleeping souls on the path that is right.

Everyone is running around thinking they are achieving material happiness;
Indeed, you have shown that in actuality this is a life of suffering and distress.

You always gave advice based on time and circumstance,
The center being that in Kṛṣṇa consciousness we must advance.

You taught us everything from chanting and Deity worship to preaching;
You ensured high standards and exemplary service by your guidance and teaching.

Meeting and taking shelter of you is our great fortune;
You are the most merciful, pure, and exalted person.

You plucked us out of this ocean of material bondage;
For that alone, you must be glorified with infinite homage.

Despite being sent from Kṛṣṇa, you would always display humility,
But we could see your divine presence, as you were always absorbed in Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa ecstasy.

In all three worlds, may your glories be sung;
You, O master, have selflessly brought us *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your movement is spreading like wildfire;
You have provided the effective solution to save the suffering souls from Māyā's quagmire.

All around the world, fortunate people are becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious;
What you have done is unfathomable and miraculous.

You were equipoised and spread Lord Caitanya's message without discrimination,
And the result is that this movement is known in practically every town, city, and nation.

It is so easy for us to let our minds wander,
 But by meditating on Kṛṣṇa and following your instructions we can become stronger.
 May we follow in your footsteps with our sincerest devotion and endeavor;
 Only that can give you and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa pleasure.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, no matter what the circumstance or situation,
 We persevere because, after all, it is your ISKCON.

You have done so much for us—this we can certainly appreciate;
 Any attempt we make will never be enough to fully reciprocate.

Our only hope is that you continue to shower us with your merciful glance;
 May we remain at your lotus feet in every circumstance.

Please allow us to serve you and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa for eternity.
 May we never abandon you, even through severe challenge or difficulty.

Words are not enough to thank you for your kindness to us,
 For without you we would be misdirected and oblivious.

We make our lives complete only by holding on to your lotus feet;
 You are our life, our soul, our heartbeat.

Thank you, thank you, thank you, Your Divine Grace;
 Thank you for your shelter, thank you for the boat back to Kṛṣṇa's place.

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your humble servants at the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara temple in Maple, Canada.

(written by Mīnākṣī Devī Dāsī)

Mauritius

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

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

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

First, I offer my most respectful and humble obeisances to you, and then I offer my obeisances to all the Vaiṣṇavas who are continuing your mission of propagating the teachings of Lord Caitanya all over the world, and then I offer my obeisances to all the devotees who have been guiding me in my spiritual

life. Although I have no qualification to speak about you, it is indeed a great privilege to be associated with this endeavor.

Your Divine Grace, you have descended from the spiritual world to propagate the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world and to save fallen souls from this sinful world. You are an ocean of mercy, you are filled with happiness, and you are a shelter of *bhakti*. You have dedicated your life to serving the holy name, and you carried out your spiritual master's instructions free of any material desire. You are no ordinary man, and I bow to your lotus feet with great awe and reverence. I pray to be able to serve you one day with just a drop of the faith you had in your spiritual master.

Despite the difficulties and hardships you went through, you had unflinching faith in the power of the holy name, and this shows how great you are. You are surely very dear to the Divine Couple, and you are now in the spiritual sky watching over us. You possess ecstatic love for the Lord and risked your life just to spread that merciful Lord's glories throughout the world. By your grace one can cross the ocean of material suffering and obtain the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. The lotus feet of our spiritual master are the only way by which we can attain pure devotional service, and I humbly bow down to yours, knowing that you are my only savior in this material world.

Your disciples have such strong faith in you. Free from any doubt, you persevered to make the transcendental name of Lord Hari known everywhere, and today your disciples are working hard to propagate your *saṅkīrtana* movement by distributing your books and *prasādam*, establishing temples, and preaching to congregations around the world. All glories to you and your disciples, who have dedicated their lives to your service. You are the spiritual master of the universe, the one who built a house in which the whole world can live.

Although more than half of the residents of Mauritius come from a Hindu background, most hardly know anything about *dharma*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the regulative principles, or the process of *bhakti*. After more than forty years, ISKCON is now being recognized as an important spiritual organization, and more people are interested in and showing respect for this movement. It appears that your prediction that Mauritius would become the first Kṛṣṇa conscious country can one day come true.

In an interview during your visit to Mauritius in 1975, you emphatically pointed out that instead of growing sugarcane for export we should produce our own food and become self-sufficient. Today, after almost half a century, many of our political leaders are of the same opinion, because as the coronavirus spreads, the government fears a food shortage here.

My dear spiritual father, we had forgotten the goal of life. We had forgotten our loving devotional service to the Lord—our relationship with Him. With your guidance, however, we have been reestablishing that connection with the Supreme Lord. The materially conditioned souls of this world, no matter how advanced they become, cannot show us the purpose of life. But the teachings you have given us in your lectures and divine books can. O exalted one, deliverer of the fallen, you have such extraordinary qualities. Please allow us to serve you and the holy name without offense.

Your humble servants at Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandira, ISKCON Vedic Farm, Bon Acceuil, Mauritius.

(written by Śyāma Candra Dāsa and his daughter Nidhi)

Miami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

As the topmost empowered pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, you performed many wonderful transcendental activities beyond the ability of any conditioned soul. On this auspicious day, we are especially meditating on how you have guided millions of people to take up the path of devotional service and thus protect themselves from the degrading influence of this dangerous Age of Kali while progressing on the path back to Godhead.

You explain in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that the personality of Kali is the accelerating agent for irreligious principles. You further explain how the great emperor Mahārāja Parīkṣit allowed Kali to reside in only four places, namely, wherever there is the slaughtering of animals; the use of intoxicants; prostitution; and gambling. No such places existed five thousand years ago due to the strong management of the king, but Kali is everywhere now. Still, by steadfastly demanding from your disciples and all future disciples initiated into ISKCON that we strictly abstain from these four vices, you have effectively protected us from the degradation of Kali-yuga.

Furthermore, elsewhere in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* you explain that at the very moment Lord Kṛṣṇa completed His earthly pastimes, Kali entered this world. The sages at Naimiṣāraṇya Forest, anxiously anticipating a dire situation for the people of this age, asked guidance from Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī:

*brūhi yogeśvare kṛṣṇe brahmaṇye dharma-varmaṇi
svām kāṣṭhām adhunopete dharmāḥ kaṁ śaraṇaṁ gataḥ*

“Since Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth, the master of all mystic powers, has departed for His own abode, please tell us to whom the religious principles have now gone for shelter.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.23)

Later in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.43) Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī answers this question perfectly:

*kṛṣṇe sva-dhāmopagate dharma-jñānādibhiḥ saha
kalau naṣṭa-dṛśāṁ eṣa purāṇārko 'dhunoditaḥ*

“This *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the Age of Kali shall get light from this *Purāṇa*.”

It is significant that one of the essential activities you established in your temples was to daily hear and discuss *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Just three verses prior to the one quoted above, in a chapter dealing with the subject of the Lord’s incarnations, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, or *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is itself described as an incarnation of the Lord. This means that although Lord Kṛṣṇa physically left this world five thousand years ago, He is still here in the form of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. And although Kali-yuga continues to advance everywhere, those who take shelter of the knowledge in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will be protected from the degradation caused by Kali-yuga, even though Kali’s influence is all around us.

Once, at the height of big book distribution in the 70s, some of your enthusiastic disciples proposed that to get more books out they wanted to leave for *saṅkīrtana* at 7:00 a.m., right after the *japa* period, skipping the Deity greeting, *guru-pūjā*, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class. You strongly disapproved, because seeing the all-merciful form of the Lord beautifully dressed and decorated, worshiping the spiritual master, and bathing our intelligence in the philosophy of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are all essential to keeping us spiritually strong.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness largely to

facilitate the association of devotees in order to help us become strong in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Sometimes, when your disciples became frustrated in their association with other devotees, they suggested that they live independent of devotee association. Hearing such requests, you strongly advised against it by stating that a devotee who thinks he can make spiritual advancement outside of the association of devotees is living in a hallucination, and also insisting that even if the association of devotees becomes intolerable, we must tolerate it and remain in their association.

To further protect us from the evils of this age, you have given us the Lord's holy names. Lord Kṛṣṇa has endowed His holy names with all His potencies. If we simply chant Kṛṣṇa's holy names without offense, not only will we be protected from the influence of Kali-yuga, but we will gradually become established in our eternal *rasa* with the Lord. This is confirmed in the following verse from the *Padma Purāṇa*, quoted in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 17.133):

*nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ
pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto 'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ*

“The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is transcendently blissful. It bestows all spiritual benedictions, for it is Kṛṣṇa Himself, the reservoir of all pleasure. Kṛṣṇa's name is complete, and it is the form of all transcendental mellows. It is not a material name under any condition, and it is no less powerful than Kṛṣṇa Himself. Since Kṛṣṇa's name is not contaminated by the material qualities, there is no question of its being involved with *māyā*. Kṛṣṇa's name is always liberated and spiritual; it is never conditioned by the laws of material nature. This is because the name of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself are identical.”

In so many ways, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have given the world all opportunity to become free from the influence of this age and to simultaneously advance quickly on the spiritual path. With your good instructions, the holy names, your holy books, *prasādam*, association with devotees, and everything else that you established in ISKCON, you have given us every opportunity to advance. Still, so many of us are not strict in keeping our vows of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra or following the four regulative principles or remaining in the good association of devotees or studying your books regularly. Therefore we always pray for your continued guidance so that we may actually fully accept the blessings you have given us and please you by making all endeavor to make this lifetime our last as conditioned souls in this world. Even if we have not personally developed a strong desire to go back to Godhead, let us strive for that sublime goal so that Lord Kṛṣṇa and you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, will feel happy to see us go.

Your humble servants at ISKCON Miami, Florida, USA.

Milton

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept the humblest and most respectful obeisances of all the devotees serving at ISKCON Milton, Canada, in the dust of your lotus feet!

On this auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, we gather together to try to express our feelings of gratitude for all that you have taught us and done for us. We cannot truly understand the most merciful blessings you have given us through your care and, most of all, your compassion for all the fallen souls of this world. There is no one in the three worlds who can give anything more valuable than what you gave us.

In this darkest Age of Kali, what would have been our fate without your blessings? It is only by your mercy that ISKCON devotees are able to distribute thousands of your transcendental books throughout the whole world. Simply by reading your books, millions of people have become devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa. We can never thank you enough for that!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the savior of the fallen souls in this material world. Without your divine grace we would never have known the real goal of life! It is only by your causeless mercy that people in every corner of the world are relishing the sweet pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Gaurāṅga. Your immediate disciples were so fortunate to share a direct loving relationship with a great *mahātmā* like your good self. However, your grand- and great-grandsons and -daughters still feel your presence even now at every gathering of devotees whenever your name is uttered. This is due to your causeless mercy on us fallen souls!

Please bless us at ISKCON Milton to continue to follow in your footsteps and serve the Lord and His devotees with selfless enthusiasm. Please bestow your mercy on us so that we can continue to work together as one family. Please give us enough strength to overcome all the impediments that come our way. Please be there to guide us and show us the right way when we stumble and make errors. Please be there to teach us how to care for and love and show compassion to everyone. And please allow us to help you in your mission of saving the world, for you are the only genuine savior of the world!

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Thank you for tolerating our offenses. Thank you for allowing us to serve the devotees in your Society in some small way.

Your servants at ISKCON Milton, Ontario, Canada.

Monterrey

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

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

To our beloved spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada: please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to you!

Your causeless mercy endlessly transcends time; your purity has enlightened all the sincere souls who have surrendered to devotional service of beautiful Śrī Kṛṣṇa. What an evident empowerment! Your purity always illuminates our preaching centers, and new people keep coming, and I consider that those of us who are already here should take care of them and should keep together in association and service. Prostrated over and over, a thousand times, I humbly offer you millions of obeisances and my deepest gratitude.

We wish to be the servants of your servants.
Sincerely,

Your servants at ISKCON Monterrey, Mexico.

(written by Anaṅga-mañjarī Devī Dāsī)

Montreal

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

This is a humble attempt to express, at your lotus feet, the heartfelt gratitude of all our devotees and congregation members here in Montreal. By your visit here in August 1975, you made our temple a place of pilgrimage.

The compassion you and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu have for the fallen conditioned souls is similar. Caitanya Mahāprabhu converted Jagāi and Mādhāi, the most sinful persons alive five hundred years ago. But at least they knew who Kṛṣṇa was. You converted thousands of people just as fallen as Jagāi and Mādhāi, but they had never heard of Kṛṣṇa. How was it possible that you saved them? *Kali-kālera dharma—kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana / kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana*: “The fundamental religious system in the Age of Kali is the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. Unless empowered by Kṛṣṇa, one cannot propagate the *saṅkīrtana* movement.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Antya 7.11)

Before your arrival in the West, Vaiṣṇavism and the message of the *Bhagavad-gītā* were practically unknown. Being a pure devotee of the Lord, you were empowered by Kṛṣṇa to deliver the fallen conditioned souls. You bestowed your mercy on so many lost souls totally immersed in sinful activities, such as drugs, illicit sex, and other forms of sensual enjoyment. By coming in contact with you they gave up their old habits and replaced them with service and surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa and their spiritual master, thus becoming sincere Vaiṣṇavas.

Some time after your arrival in the West, the devotees found your prayer titled *Mārkine Bhāgavata-dharma*, which you wrote on September 17, 1965, onboard the *Jaladuta*, docked in Boston harbor. Stanza 18 reads *taba kṛpā ha’le mor kathā śuddha habe / śuniyā sabāra śoka duḥkha je ghucibe*: “Only by Your causeless mercy will my words become pure. I am sure that when this transcendental message penetrates their hearts they will certainly feel englanded and thus become liberated from all unhappy conditions of life.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the empowered manifestation of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. This is why you asked us to distribute your books widely and called them “time bombs,” with the power to shatter Māyā’s tight grip on the fallen souls.

Once, Dāmodara Prabhu was distributing books at a sports stadium. He gave one of your books to a person who threw it angrily away. The book landed on someone else's lap, and that person, not knowing where the book had come from, took it home and read it. Later, he became a devotee. Your books are like torpedoes: nobody knows where they will land and who's life they will transform.

Seeing Kṛṣṇa consciousness spreading rapidly throughout the world, many commented, "Swamiji, you have performed a miracle." In humility you often answered, "I don't know any magic. The only thing I can say is that I have not changed anything in the philosophy; I have presented *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is—that much credit I can take."

Your compassion for the fallen conditioned souls knows no bounds. You are the touchstone for deliverance. You never wasted time—you were always busy preaching to the devotees, personally guiding them through letters, teaching them to cook, engaging your artist disciples in painting Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, meeting professors, scientists, etc., attending press conferences, and more. You rested for only a few hours at night so that you could rise extremely early and devote yourself intensely to translating transcendental literature. Despite your advanced age and other difficulties, you showed us your example of selflessness in how to execute the spiritual master's order with full faith in Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Caitanya, speaking to Rūpa Gosvāmī, said:

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*

"According to their karma, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. Some of them are being elevated to the upper planetary systems, and some are going down into the lower planetary systems. Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. By the mercy of both Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 19.151).

Arjuna was a soldier and pleased Kṛṣṇa by following His order that he fight. Arjuna accepted Lord Kṛṣṇa as his guru. You, as Lord Caitanya's *senāpati-bhakta*, the commander in chief of His army of preachers, followed the instructions of your guru, His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and spread Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name and instructions all over the world, defeating nonbelievers, Māyāvādīs, and agnostics.

We feel fortunate to have somehow come in contact with you, Your Divine Grace, and been allowed to serve the *saṅkīrtana* movement. Our relationship with you is eternal. You are so kind that even if we temporarily fall down from the path and suffer the consequences, you are always there to pick us up from the dark well of ignorance.

We pray that we can carry out your instructions with firm faith and never deviate from your certain shelter.

Praying fervently for your mercy,

Your servants in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

(written by Samir Roy Choudhury)

Mumbai (Juhu)

Our dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

The government's plan to remove the Coastal Regulation Zone will benefit your Hare Krishna Land at Juhu by allowing us to build substantial new floor space. This will be our third phase in developing your dear project. Please give us the intelligence and guidance to plan and build new facilities that will make ISKCON Juhu the most first-class of all your preaching centers worldwide, for the transcendental pleasure of Your Divine Grace.

During the book distribution marathon in December 2019, we scored 427,287.25 book points, which included the distribution of 190,085 *mahā*-big books, and during Bhādra-Pūrṇimā we distributed 933 sets of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Our total book score for 2019 was 612,645.75. Kindly give us your blessings and inspiration to distribute more books this year.

We were not able to conduct Lord Jagannātha's Ratha-yātrā and our Hare Kṛṣṇa festival during the first week of February 2020 due to serious concerns raised about the date. Instead, we will be doing these programs during the Ashāda *śukla-pakṣa*—this will be the first time we have held the festival at this time. Kindly guide us to make this event a grand success.

In your teachings you emphasize that when material laws are violated humanity has to face the consequences. We are seeing this practically in the form of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, which is scaring people around the world. During this crisis we have been distributing *prasādam* to the hungry and helpless in the Juhu and Talasari areas. Despite difficulties at this time, we had a successful Śrī Rāma Navamī celebration, with only the devotees from your "office" in attendance. Also, we have maintained our Deity-worship standards, with garlands made from the flowers from your Talasari farm adorning your dear Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī. Kindly protect us so we can continue our service without interruption.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for engaging us in the service of your dear Lordships, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī.

Your insignificant servants at ISKCON Juhu, Mumbai, India.

Mumbai (Mira Road)

Our dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to you on this most auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā.

Queen Kuntī glorifies Lord Kṛṣṇa in her prayer at *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.35:

*bhave 'smin kliṣyamānānām avidyā-kāma-karmabhiḥ
śravaṇa-smaraṇārthāṇi kariṣyann iti kecana*

"And yet others say that You appeared for the sake of rejuvenating the devotional service of hearing, remembering, worshiping, and so on in order that the conditioned souls suffering from material pangs might take advantage and gain liberation."

Here we see the compassion of Lord Kṛṣṇa—how He descends to enact pastimes so that by remembering them we will get liberated.

Similarly, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you appeared in this world in order to relieve conditioned souls like us from material pangs by teaching us the philosophy and practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, thus opening the path back home, back to Godhead.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we find nine personalities, each of whom exemplifies perfection in the practice of one of the nine processes of devotional service. But you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, perfected all nine processes, like Ambarīṣa Mahārāja, and included them all in the morning program you established for all ISKCON temples.

(1) Parīkṣit Mahārāja exemplified the process of *śravaṇam*, hearing about Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said about you, “Yes, he likes to hear. He does not go away. I have marked him.” You saw him in person only about a dozen times and rarely asked any questions, but whatever Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī spoke you heard with great attention, with a receptive heart, and with the willingness to surrender to what he said.

(2) Śukadeva Gosvāmī exemplified the process of *kīrtanam*, chanting about Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, you spoke daily on the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, delivering thousands of formal lectures. Over 2,200 were recorded and archived. You also conducted many hundreds of informal conversations on the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness with disciples, scholars, professors, guests, reporters, and friends. Over 1,300 were recorded and archived. You recorded more than twenty albums of devotional music. And of course, every night you would spend hours dictating your priceless translations and purports, thus producing over seventy volumes of transcendental literature.

(3) Prahlāda Mahārāja exemplified the process of *smaraṇam*, remembering Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, your constant chanting about Kṛṣṇa and writing about Him proved you were always, twenty-four hours a day, remembering him.

(4) Lakṣmī Devī exemplifies the process of *pāda-sevanam*, serving the lotus feet of the Lord. Similarly, one meaning of “Prabhupāda” is “one who is always found at the lotus feet of Prabhu, the Supreme Master, Kṛṣṇa.” You always served the lotus feet of the Lord. Moreover, you went to holy *dhāmas* and performed *parikramā*. In this way also you served the lotus feet of the Lord.

(5) Pṛthu Mahārāja exemplified the process of *arcanam*, worshiping the Deity form of the Lord. Similarly you established 108 Kṛṣṇa temples on six continents, installed the Deity of Kṛṣṇa in each center, and trained your disciples in the process of Deity worship. In this way you established standard Deity worship around the world.

(6) Akrūra exemplified the process of *vandanam*, offering obeisances to the Lord. Similarly, you offered obeisances to Deities and Vaiṣṇavas all the time, whenever you saw them. You said that *na* means “negation” and *ma* means “false ego” thus *namaḥ*, offering obeisances, chases away pride. You said the word for “surrender,” *prapadyate*, literally means “to throw oneself down at someone’s feet.” You were always seen before the Deities with the *añjali mudra*.

(7) Hanumān exemplified the process of *dāsyam*, serving the Lord. Similarly, you never rested but served Kṛṣṇa 24/7. You circled the globe fourteen times, visiting twenty-four countries, preaching, inspiring your followers, and making countless public appearances before multitudes of people.

(8) Arjuna exemplified the process of *sakhyam*, serving the Lord as a friend. For the pleasure of Lord Kṛṣṇa you followed in Arjuna’s footprints by fighting with the impersonalists and voidists. In many places you said that it was part of our mission to defeat the attacks of the Māyāvādīs.

(9) Bali Mahārāja perfected the process of *ātmā-nivedanam*, surrendering everything to the Lord. By accepting *sannyāsa*, you confirmed that you had dedicated your body, mind, and words totally to the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, renouncing all other engagements.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, it’s impossible to count all your achievements and transcendental characteristics. Thank you very much for giving us the chance to take part in Lord Caitanya’s mission!

We humbly seek your kind permission to present a brief report of a few of the significant events that happened in the temple last year by your causeless mercy.

Umang, a youth festival, was attended by 4,000 students from different colleges.

On Gaura Pūrṇimā in 2020, devotees distributed 100-plus *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* sets.

Three hundred devotees distributed 28,000 *mahā* big books during the December marathon. In 2019 we did a *Kṛṣṇa* book marathon before Janmāṣṭamī, distributing 500 *Kṛṣṇa* books.

Devotee-care leaders are conducting regular devotee-care programs at their residences. They celebrated Janmāṣṭamī 2019 at different venues and conducted Kārttika *dīpa-dāna* at 444 places.

The Food for Life program is feeding hundreds of children in schools every week.

Govinda's restaurant is attracting huge crowds every weekend.

The Deity department is very well taken care of by temple and congregation devotees. *Ārati* and *bhoga* are offered five times a day with love and care.

The Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī Home School successfully celebrated sports day for 2 days.

Youth festivals for teenage boys and girls are conducted every month, followed up by weekly classes.

Twelve-hour *harināma-saṅkīrtana* is done every Ekādaśī. A *kīrtana-melā* with many *kīrtanīyas* was conducted on December 31st.

Summer camps conducted in schools and residences were attended by 700 children.

A children's Jagannātha Ratha-yātrā was conducted.

Two hundred children participated in a spiritual science exhibition on the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

A Bhaktivedanta Contest was held, including drawing, *śloka* recitation, story-telling, and quiz competition. Five hundred children from 25 schools participated, from Mira Road, Borivali, Bhayender, Dahisar, and Thane.

We have two love-feast programs, one for Hindi speakers, with an attendance of 400, and one for English speakers, with an attendance of 100.

Life members are treated with special care. They're given an opportunity to offer *ārati* to their Lordships on their birthdays and given a lecture exclusively for them.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, our only desire is to satisfy you by becoming more and more enthusiastic to spread the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, so that the holy name will be spread everywhere. If we actually sincerely work under your direction—that is, for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa—then we are confident that Lord Kṛṣṇa will help us in every way.

Your insignificant servants at ISKCON Mira Road, Mumbai, India.

Nagpur

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

We, the members of ISKCON Nagpur, offer our most humble obeisances unto your divine lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnāthajī, the beautiful presiding Deities here. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, this auspicious Vyāsa-pūjā day is the most joyous and transcendental moment in the life of all ISKCON devotees of the Supreme Lord. The divinity and mood on this day are very different from those of other festivals because on this day we feel your divine presence more than any other time. This is the day when we all come together to express our heartfelt gratitude to Your Divine Grace for saving us fallen souls. We were suffering in the darkest ignorance, but because of your causeless mercy we now have the opportunity to walk on the path to Kṛṣṇa.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, because of you, we devotees at ISKCON Nagpur are trying daily to cleanse the dust from the mirror of the mind by regularly chanting our rounds, but still the mind takes us anywhere and everywhere. My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are constantly serving the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana *dhāma*, and so on this day we beg for your mercy: please request Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to kindly bestow some mercy on us fallen souls so that we can develop a profound mood in chanting our rounds, stop our mundane passionate hankering, and situate ourselves in our real identity. Lord Kṛṣṇa describes our aspired-for state in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.27):

*praśānta-manasaṁ hy enaṁ yogināṁ sukham uttamam
upaiti śānta-rajasaṁ brahma-bhūtam akalmaṣam*

“The yogī whose mind is fixed on Me verily attains the highest perfection of transcendental happiness. He is beyond the mode of passion, he realizes his qualitative identity with the Supreme, and thus he is freed from all reactions to past deeds.”

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, on December 9th, under the chairmanship of Dr. Shyam Sundar Prabhu and with the inspiration provided by His Holiness Lokanāth Swami, the regional secretary of ISKCON Nagpur, the midday-meal project named Annamrita started *prasādam* distribution to 6,500 schoolchildren in 34 local schools.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, with your blessings and under Lokanāth Swami, we started the first phase of the construction of ISKCON Nagpur’s International Vedic Cultural Centre. This is the top priority for ISKCON Nagpur at the moment. The first phase of construction is picking up speed. We have completed the excavation and the foundation work of the *brahmacārī āśrama*, which will be named Sant Nivas. We hope to complete the construction of Sant Nivas before the end of this year. You may be pleased to know that another disciple of yours, His Grace Gaurasundara Prabhu, has taken the position of temple president of ISKCON Nagpur to help Lokanāth Swami shoulder the leadership responsibilities.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please pray to Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara, and Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi in Goloka Vṛndāvana to empower the devotees to stay united and strong in the service of Their Lordships so that we can overcome all hurdles and develop the exclusive desire to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa in your mission, unconditionally.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Your granddisciples and congregation members at ISKCON Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

(written by Abhay Gaurāṅga Dāsa)

New Biharvan

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Please accept our humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet. All glories to you and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Baṅkebihārī, the presiding Deities of Boise.

It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words. Some say it's worth *more* than a thousand words. Brain research suggests that our brain can process images sixty thousand times faster than it can process words. In an instant an image can convey an idea or emotion that will stick with us much longer than the words on a page. With that type of potential impact, it is no wonder that the advertising community pushes billboards and banners with flashy pictures to entice innocent people to engage in incessant sense gratification.

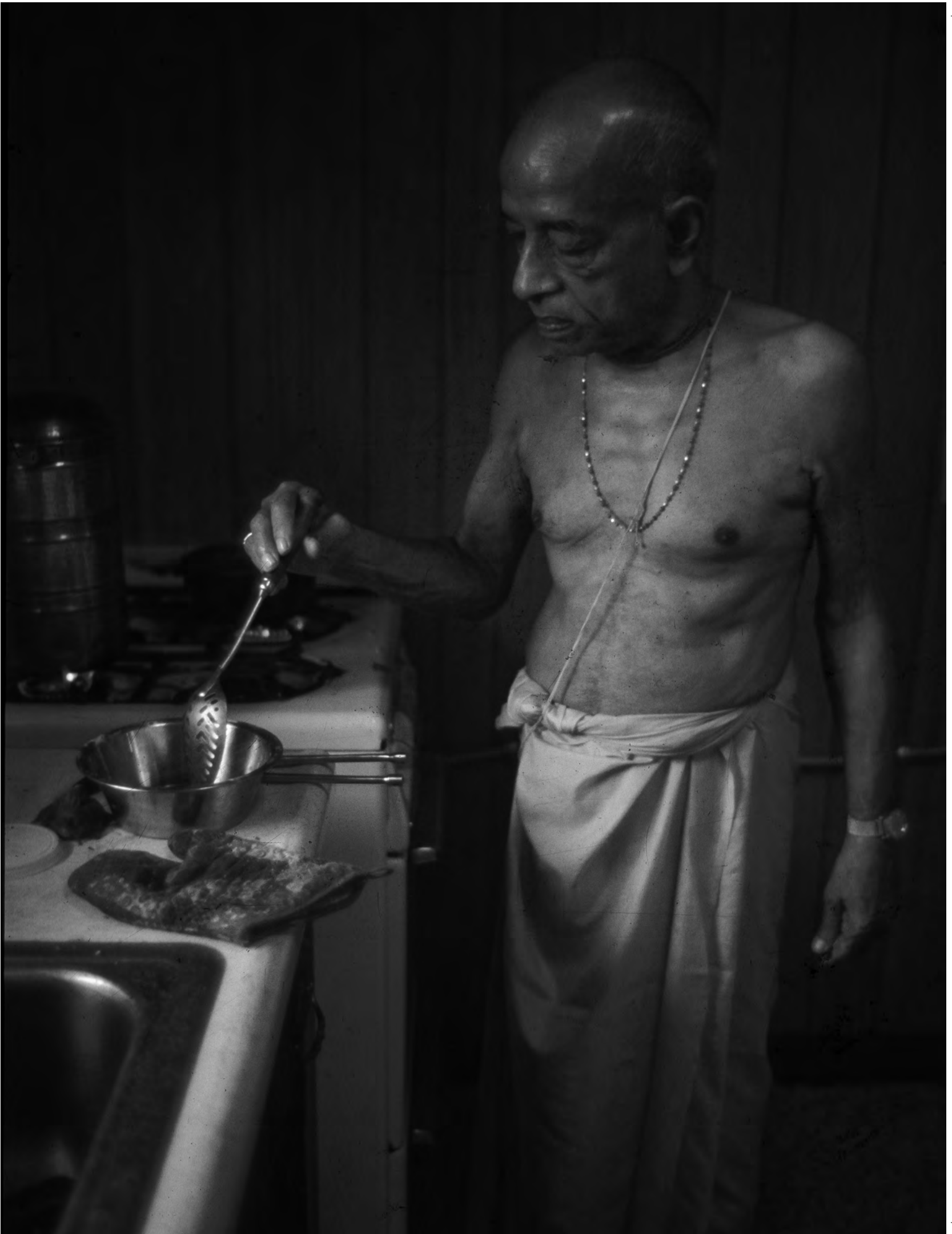
Your disciples took thousands of pictures of you, and each of them is invaluable. Their impact—their potency—is incalculable because you are present in them, providing us solace and peace and transferring us to the transcendental, spiritual realm—preparing us to go back to Godhead. Each of the photos exhibits one or several of your unlimited qualities: simplicity, oceanic laughter, gravity, the confidence of the *senāpati* general ready to conquer the world for Kṛṣṇa . . . One of my favorites is the picture in which you are cooking in only a *gamchā* over a small range. It adorns most ISKCON kitchens. One can see your intense focus as you cook the *bhoga* for Kṛṣṇa.

At ISKCON's dandavats.com website, I read a story written by Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa Prabhu:

Once, I was collecting in a very small sheep-farming town in Western Australia. I knocked on the door of a small, rundown, country-style house, and a very fragile-bodied old lady answered the door. It was quite clear that she was living on her own and looking after herself in the last years of her life. Normally, in that situation, people aren't used to strangers coming to the door, . . . so it struck me that she immediately looked at what I had in my hand, which was a roll of paintings, and said "Oh! Come in." She opened the door wide and took me into her living room, and before I could say anything she said, "I have to talk to you. It's about the book. Now, if you've come to get the book, then I have to talk to you." I told her I wasn't sure what she was talking about; I was there to sell paintings. She said, "Aren't you the little fellow who came last year?" I told her that I had never been to that town before. She replied, "Oh! I feel so relieved, because I thought you had come to get your book. There was no way that I was going to let you take the book away."

She took me into the room where she takes rest at night and explained that someone had come last year to sell something and, although she couldn't afford to buy anything, she confided in him that she was having trouble sleeping at night because her husband had died and she was feeling very lonely.

The devotee suggested that he give her a book to read before she went to sleep. She told him she couldn't read anymore. The devotee told her, "Well, I'm going to give you the book anyway, and even if you can't read it, just keep it, and it will give you some solace." She showed me on the nightstand next to her bed one of the small green paperback *Kṛṣṇa* books that used to come in a two-volume gift pack. She said, "I keep this book by my bed. I can't read it because, well, I



can't read anything these days, but let me show you something." I had a closer look and could see that the book was turned around so that the back was facing up, and on the back cover was a portrait of Śrīla Prabhupāda. It was a very casual photo, where Śrīla Prabhupāda was laughing and his teeth were showing. Then she told me, "I'm just so grateful for this book. Even though I can't read it, I just keep it by my bedside because this man's photo gives me so much comfort, and that's how I get by."

This story proves that there is no difference between the Deity or pure devotee in a picture and Kṛṣṇa or the pure devotee present face to face. It is only that we do not have the faith or understanding. As Rādhikā-ramaṇa Prabhu of the Boise temple said in a lecture last year on your Vyāsa-pūjā day: "You are not just another picture in the pictures of the *paramparā*" that all ISKCON temples have on their altars.

Another incident that I vividly remember regarding your picture deity happened in the early days of the Boise temple, before we had a life-sized *mūrti* of you. Our small temple had only been open for a few years, and on a decorated chair next to the altar we had an A3-sized photo of you smiling and sitting on the lawn at Bhaktivedanta Manor. One evening, before the Sunday feast, we held an *iṣṭa-goṣṭhī* with our handful of regular congregation members. There was an English professor who attended. He hinted that we shouldn't stick only to your *Bhagavad-gītā* and its purports but also talk about other viewpoints. Taking his cue from that, another young Indian, who was sitting in front of your photo but with his back to it, blurted out, "All you guys say is 'Prabhupāda, Prabhupāda, Prabhupāda!'" My family and I were shocked by his anger and his disrespect toward you. I was thinking in my immature mind that now he would have to face the consequences of his outburst. But through the corner of my eye I saw that you were still smiling. Being a pure devotee of the Lord and full of compassion, you took his shouting your name as a genuine cry for help. I do not think he or any of us realized that you had given him your causeless mercy.

And at that moment the student began to change. Over the next few years he gradually started to perform devotional service at the temple. That person, Umesh, took initiation ten years later, becoming Upendra Dāsa, a dedicated devotee. For almost twenty years now he has without fail made all the Deity garlands. All because of your picture.

In conclusion, your pictures are worth more than a thousand words. They are gateways to going back home, back to Godhead. As your grandchildren, many of us did not have the fortune of seeing you face to face, but we have your pictures, and in them you are alive and smiling, instructing, teaching, and guiding us as if you were here with us in person during our brief stay in the material world and on our way back to the spiritual world.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. All glories, all glories to Your Divine Grace.

Your servants in New Biharvan, Boise, Idaho, USA.

(written by Anantarūpa Dāsa)

New Dvārakā

*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*

A Message to the Future

The world is battling the coronavirus, but the United States has been hardest hit, having suffered more than 70,000 fatalities as of this writing. Many more are expected, from among the more than one and a quarter million confirmed cases. Practically everyone is afraid of catching this deadly disease. It's not hard to do. People are also worried about how they're going to live. Many people are not able to go to work due to government restrictions. More than \$2.3 trillion has been put into the economy to keep it from collapsing, but if the virus doesn't relent, the United States economy will still be in dire straits. People are anxious. Stress levels are up. Taken at face value, we're in a crisis situation.

Those who've been fortunate enough to come in contact with the teachings of the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya* are able to understand this crisis from a different perspective and consequently respond to it in a different way. That understanding is explained by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, the foremost exponent of those teachings in recent times, in his purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.14.10:

Material advancement of civilization means advancement of the reactions of the threefold miseries due to celestial influence, earthly reactions, and bodily or mental pains. By the celestial influence of the stars there are many calamities like excessive heat, cold, rain or lack of rain, and the aftereffects are famine, disease, and epidemic. The aggregate result is agony of the body and the mind. Man-made material science cannot do anything to counteract these threefold miseries. They are all punishments from the superior energy of *māyā* under the direction of the Supreme Lord. Therefore our constant touch with the Lord by devotional service can give us relief without our being disturbed in the discharge of our human duties. The *asuras*, however, who do not believe in the existence of God, make their own plans to counteract all these threefold miseries, and so they meet with failure every time. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.14) clearly states that the reaction of material energy is never to be conquered, because of the binding effects of the three modes. They can simply be overcome by one who surrenders fully in devotion under the lotus feet of the Lord.

In a lecture given in 1974 in Māyāpur, India, on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.23, Śrīla Prabhupāda tells us how we should respond to the dangers of this material world:

So fact is that even Kuntī or Devakī, so intimately connected with Kṛṣṇa, but they had to face so many dangers, so what to speak of others? What to speak of ourselves? So when we are danger, and we are in danger, we should not be discouraged. We should take courage that even Kuntī and Vasudeva and Devakī, they were also in danger, although they were very, very intimately connected with Kṛṣṇa. So we should not be disturbed by the dangers of this material world. If we are actually Kṛṣṇa conscious, we should face the danger and depend on Kṛṣṇa. *Avaśya rakhibe kṛṣṇa viśvāsa pālana*. This is called surrender, that "I may be in danger, but I have surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. He must save me." Keep this faith. Don't be disturbed when you are in danger, because

this world is such . . . *Padarṇ padarṇ vipadām*. Every step there is danger. Just like we are walking on the street—immediately there is some pinprick, thorn. And by pinprick of that thorn, it may become a boil; it may become dangerous. So even by walking on the street, by talking on the street, by eating our food . . . In English it is said, “There are many dangers between the cup and the lip.” So you should always remember that this material world is simply full of dangers. If you think that “We are very safe; we are very expert; we have made this world very happy,” then you are fool number one. *Padarṇ padarṇ yad vipadām*. But if you take shelter of Kṛṣṇa, these dangers are nothing. That Kuntī will say, that *vimocita*. *Vimocita* means “released from the danger.” So this is the study of Kṛṣṇa, that if you become Kṛṣṇa conscious, a sincere servant of Kṛṣṇa, don’t be agitated by the dangerous condition of this material world. You simply depend on Kṛṣṇa, and He’ll save you.

The best and easiest way to take shelter of and depend on Kṛṣṇa is to chant His holy names:

*kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṇ vrajet*

“My dear King, although Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, there is still one good quality about this age: Simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.3.51)

From the purport:

After mentioning the innumerable faults of this Age of Kali, Śukadeva Gosvāmī now mentions its one brilliant aspect. Just as one powerful king can kill innumerable thieves, one brilliant spiritual quality can destroy all the contamination of this age. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, especially in this fallen age.

Building on this knowledge, we learn from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s translations to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.6.8–10, and his purport to text 10, how to transform an adverse situation into a spiritual opportunity:

[Nārada Muni said:] When I was a mere child of five years, I lived in a *brāhmaṇa* school. I was dependent on my mother’s affection and had no experience of different lands. Once upon a time, my poor mother, when going out one night to milk a cow, was bitten on the leg by a serpent, influenced by supreme time. I took this as the special mercy of the Lord, who always desires benediction for His devotees, and so thinking, I started for the north.

[From the purport to text 10:] Confidential devotees of the Lord see in every step a benedictory direction of the Lord. What is considered to be an odd or difficult moment in the mundane sense is accepted as special mercy of the Lord. Mundane prosperity is a kind of material fever, and by the grace of the Lord the temperature of this material fever is gradually diminished, and spiritual health is obtained step by step. Mundane people misunderstand it.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda was almost seventy years old, he left India to execute the order of his spiritual master, which was to preach to the people in the Western countries in the English language. Obedience to that order was certainly a major motivating factor in his going. If we go beneath the surface, though, we can understand that the deeper reason Śrīla Prabhupāda executed that mission, and the reason he was given it by his spiritual master, was to shower compassion on those who were ignorant of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I realized recently that this is the best and most important reason for doing anything. It’s said that people don’t care how much you know; they want to know how much you care. Yesterday I was reflecting

on something Śrīla Prabhupāda said while walking with some disciples:

Therefore, this one practice—chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and hearing—that is very nice. And praying to Kṛṣṇa, “Please give me strength.” Hare, “O energy of Kṛṣṇa, O Kṛṣṇa, I am fallen, I have no strength. Please accept me.” That’s all. “I have no qualification. I am frail. I am trying, but I am failing.” All these appeals should be made. And Kṛṣṇa is all-powerful; He can do anything. Even [if] we do not perform, trying our best, if we fail, Kṛṣṇa will help us. Just like a child tries his best, but he falls down. The mother takes up and, “All right. Come on. Walk.” Like that. [Morning Walk, 23 March 1968, San Francisco]

I was trying to understand why I felt so drawn to and inspired by those words. I concluded that it was because they were telling me exactly what I wanted to hear—that is, that there is someone who is capable of helping me and, more importantly, that this person is inclined to help me. And receiving that person’s help is more dependent on His merciful nature than on my efforts. “Even if we do not perform, trying our best, if we fail, Kṛṣṇa will help us.” Taking that to be a fact, what I understood from those few words has helped me more than anything else to feel inspired to continue in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Somebody loved me: Kṛṣṇa. And that love was unconditional. Even though I am unable to perform to the proper standard, still, that love is there—like a mother’s love for her child, and so she helps him learn how to walk. I felt encouraged to know that it is Kṛṣṇa’s nature to love us like this, and I simultaneously felt confident that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s nature is no different. Like father, like son. Being Kṛṣṇa’s perfect representative, Śrīla Prabhupāda had the same nature as Kṛṣṇa’s. That’s the reason why so many people came forward to follow him—because they could feel he loved them, and they loved *him* for that. Aside from Kṛṣṇa and Śrīla Prabhupāda, the two most important people in my life were my parents. My attraction for them was not because they were charismatic celebrities but because I knew they genuinely loved me.

I put Śrīla Prabhupāda in the same category in that I believe he genuinely loved people and wanted to help them. In the most important way—arguably the only truly important way: spiritually. Whatever Śrīla Prabhupāda did, he did out of a spirit of transcendental love and compassion for us, not expecting anything in return. The benefits of the love offered by Śrīla Prabhupāda, unlike mundane love, are eternal. Parents may be able to help their children in one lifetime, but the love and compassion offered by Śrīla Prabhupāda to everyone in the form of the holy name, his books, his temples, and his genuine followers is an eternal blessing. There’s no greater gift than the opportunity to engage in devotional service, and that’s exactly what Śrīla Prabhupāda gave to countless millions of people.

We, the members of the New Dvārakā community, would like to extend our heartfelt sympathies to everyone who has been affected by the tragic disaster of the coronavirus. These understandings have been presented with no intention to disregard the gravity of this catastrophe. After everything is done to put an end to this horror story, which will hopefully end soon, many theists might search for reasons why something like this could happen. How could God allow so much suffering and death to be inflicted on human society? Does it have something to do with the way we’ve been living, and if so, how are we supposed to live? What exactly are we supposed to learn from this, and how are we supposed to proceed? This message is a humble attempt to provide some light by the brief answers that we’ve given to those questions above. Much more needs to be said in order for one to have a clear understanding. That additional information can be best found in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, his most significant contribution, which are highly respected by the academic community for their authoritativeness, depth, and clarity. They are used as standard textbooks in numerous colleges, and have been translated into over fifty languages.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s servants in New Dvārakā, ISKCON Los Angeles, California, USA.

(written by Bhṛgupati Dāsa)

New Gokula (Australia)

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most prostrated obeisances on this glorious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā.

In your “Seven Purposes of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness,” purpose 6 is “to bring the members [of the Society] closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler and more natural way of life.” We are one of your worldwide initiatives to implement this strategy. You once said that although devotee-run farms might be a little difficult in the beginning, they would ultimately prove more convenient. You often referred to the value of staying aloof from social obligations by producing our own necessities, particularly food and shelter. In this way you indicated that devotees would not be so encumbered and would ultimately save valuable time for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in your lectures and conversations you frequently refer to the symptoms of Kali-yuga given in the Twelfth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, where Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes the tribulations of drought, famine, and government harassment through overtaxation. Day by day, these crises increase the anxiety of the inhabitants of this earth planet. Most notably, people are pressured so much that there is little or no time left to devote to the higher purpose of fulfilling the aim of human life.

Similarly, in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.24.5, you write:

From the Lord’s personal activities, human society should learn how to give protection specifically to the cows and *brāhmaṇas*. Then the protection of religious principles, fulfillment of the aim of life, and protection of Vedic knowledge can be achieved. Without the protection of cows, brahminical culture cannot be maintained, and without brahminical culture the aim of human life cannot be fulfilled. . . . Unfortunately, because in Kali-yuga there is no protection of cows and brahminical culture, everything is in a precarious position.

We daily see the relevance of your wisdom. Recent years have seen very acute drought conditions across a large area of the Australian continent, culminating in catastrophic bush fires in late 2019 and early 2020. The drought indeed made it seriously challenging to feed our seventy-six resident cows and bulls, since our pastures were already fully depleted. Despite the exertion to manually do the rounds of hand-feeding, our devotee team kept up the prescribed regimen of *maṅgala-ārati*, chanting rounds, and attending *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class, and almost miraculously, every week the fodder requirements were met, along with necessary monetary donations to pay for it all. Nevertheless, the alarm bells rocked the boat, so to speak. We are taking steps to more actively cultivate in order to minimize the challenges of future droughts.

Finally, after some concentrated *harināma-yajña* on the northern farm, New Govardhana, along with many prayers from our well-wishers throughout ISKCON, the merciful rain showered down on the parched land. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

In your *Mārkine Bhāgavata-dharma* prayers, written onboard the *Jaladuta*, you offered fervent supplication to your beloved master, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, to help relieve the terrible reactions caused by nature’s lower modes by delivering the panacea of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. You requested the Lord to kindly make our hearing capacity suitable for receiving His divine mercy.

Surely ISKCON farm communities play an important role in providing the setting in which to chant and hear the powerful Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and to contemplate the succinct truths contained in the purports to your opus, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

On this auspicious day, we humbly beseech Your Divine Grace to kindly throw your merciful glance on the devotees of New Gokula-dhāma so that we may be inspired to work conscientiously and cooperatively to fulfill the order you gave to “make Vṛndāvana villages.”

Your servants at the New Gokula Farm in Millfield, NSW, Australia.

(written by Kāliya Kṛṣṇa Dāsa)

New Gokula (Canada)

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

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

Our dearest eternal *paraṁ-guru*, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Please accept our most humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace! All glories to Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga! All glories to Śrī Śrī Rādhā–Madana-mohana!

Our fortune is unfathomable. After passing through eight million species of life, one comes to the human form, and therefore human life is considered very rare (*durlabhaṁ mānuṣaṁ janma*). And after going through many lifetimes in this rare human form, one comes to the platform of inquiring into knowledge (*jñāna*) of the Absolute. After many lifetimes of living as a *jñānavān* (mental speculator), one comes to understand that Śrī Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, is everything. Such a transformation of the heart—from mental speculator to devotee—takes place by the great fortune of coming in contact with a pure devotee. Thus the thought of having had the opportunity to come in contact with Your Divine Grace is mind-blowing. As a result of such association, although this human life is temporary it becomes meaningful (*adhruvam arthadam*).

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, we did not come in contact with you directly. However, we have the rare opportunity of associating with your direct disciples and, through them, we have access to Your Divine Grace in the form of your Bhaktivedanta purports, audio lectures, biographies, and memories. You have created this global home where everyone can come together and associate with one another in order to practice the path of devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You have laid everything out that we need to know in order to attain perfection in our life and go back home, back to Godhead. Your books are transcendental beacons to guide us to spiritual perfection. When it comes to love of Godhead, everyone is poor and in ignorance—both fools and intellectuals alike. That is why in ISKCON we have souls who are illiterate and those who are educated (materially speaking), and yet they are united in devotion to the Supreme through your Bhaktivedanta purports.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you came to the West by boat, and then you *became* the boat by which one can cross over the ocean of material existence. As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.26.32)

*nimajjyonmajjatāṁ ghore bhavābdhau paramāyaṇam
santo brahma-vidaḥ śāntā naur dṛḍhevāpsu majjatām*

“The devotees of the Lord, peacefully fixed in absolute knowledge, are the ultimate shelter for those who are repeatedly rising and falling within the fearful ocean of material life. Such devotees are just like

a strong boat that comes to rescue persons who are at the point of drowning.”

By your divine grace you have left us many such strong boats (your disciples) so that our generation has the same hope of crossing this material ocean. Now it is our responsibility to be instruments of guru and Kṛṣṇa and continue to give that hope to future generations. On this glorious Vyāsa-pūjā day, we seek your blessings to become qualified instruments to bring others closer to you and your teachings, through which they can be rescued from this miserable material existence and go back home, back to Godhead.

Now the coronavirus is creating havoc around the world, and people are worried about dying. In this *mṛtyuloka* they are worrying about *mṛtyu*. Please empower us to preach to them about how to become friends with *mṛtyu* and welcome him happily so they can go back to Godhead. You taught us how not to worry about anything in this world. *Rākhe kṛṣṇa māre ke, māre kṛṣṇa rākhe ke*. For a devotee, death comes as Kṛṣṇa, so the devotee welcomes death in order to go back to Godhead. But for nondevotees Kṛṣṇa comes as death, snatching away everything they own. By total surrender to Kṛṣṇa we become unafraid of calamities on this earth. Please give us your blessings to convey this message to the world in its hour of need.

Here in New Gokula-dhāma, we are gearing up to build an amazing home for Śrī Śrī Rādhā–Madana-mohana and you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. The estimated cost is fifteen million dollars. This temple must be first class so that we can preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to international visitors coming to Vancouver, Canada. If this generation does not provide facilities for future generations, it will become difficult in the future to build new temples or centers, as people in general will become less charitable as Kali-yuga advances. Please empower us to make our dream come true. We remember you saying, “If you are sincere, then God, Kṛṣṇa, will help. Everything belongs to Him. He will provide.” So please make us sincere to serve you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

With your blessings, our new management is completing five years in service to you. Thanks for guiding us and setting us on the right track to spread *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* to more and more souls. Our leaders are determined to serve this *dhāma* until their last breath. Please bless all of us, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your servants at New Gokula-dhāma, Vancouver, Canada.

(written by Manu Dāsa)

New Govardhana (USA)

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble, prostrated obeisances in the dust of your transcendental lotus feet.

When Yamunā Dāsī told you that she was living outside an ISKCON temple with her friend Dīnatārīṇī Dāsī and felt bad about that, you told her that if two devotees are living together, it is just as good as two hundred if they are inspiring each other in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Previously there were many more devotees living around and attending the San Diego temple programs, but due to circumstances there is now a much smaller community serving the beautiful temple and the Deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī.

The temple residents are mostly mature *brahmacārīs*, who are very Kṛṣṇa conscious and treat all visitors with great respect. The *brahmacārīs* and the congregation of devotees living around San Diego are very sincere. Therefore, whenever there are *kīrtanas*, big or small, they are joyous and filled with *bhakti*. And whenever there are holy days/festivals, they are well attended by the congregation, and everyone chants and dances in ecstasy.

Book distribution is happening due to the enthusiasm of not only the temple devotees but also some of the congregation, and all this is helping to maintain the strength and enthusiasm of the San Diego temple.

So many miracles have transpired due to Kṛṣṇa's almighty supreme will and you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, a cent percent pure devotee of the Lord. Thus, miraculously, even with a skeleton crew and a lack of funds, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī always look stunningly beautiful! We're reminded of the miracle, many years ago in San Francisco, when the devotees were struggling to make the rent payment, and one day while walking to the temple they saw hundred dollar bills falling from the sky, which both solved their rent problem and deepened their faith in the Lord and in you.

All this has coalesced as a result of your all-pervading spiritual potency profoundly touching and enlivening everyone's devotional lives. How would anything even go on, much less flourish, without your unlimited mercy?! Therefore we are forever in your debt and beg to always stay in the shelter of your lotus feet, which are our only solace.

Your servants at New Govardhana, San Diego, California, USA.

(written by Madhusūdana das and Kāñcanabālā Devī Dāsī)

New Māyāpur

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

New Māyāpur has become famous among devotees as the last remaining ISKCON property in the European Union still in ISKCON's possession that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, personally visited. As with all other such temples throughout the world, New Māyāpur still keeps your rooms as you left them, in this case during your last visit in 1976. In the gardens one can still find the greenhouse that you are seen walking through in photographs. The Deities of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma whom you personally installed in 1976 are still worshiped on our altar.

New Māyāpur, the property that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, called "the Paris farm," has weathered a number of difficult storms over the years. Some of those challenges still affect devotees here to this day. While we don't consider ourselves perfect or free from fault, devotees here endeavor to work hard at improving the situation at New Māyāpur in order to make it a temple and community of which you could be even more proud than you were in 1976.

Today, on the occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā, we would like to offer you our small homage in declaration of how we are trying to bring New Māyāpur closer to the vision you had for it. We hope these plans and developments please you and all the ācāryas in our line.

Considering that New Māyāpur is eighty hectares, we have begun working more on the gardens, as you asked devotees to do wherever we had land. Though we do not claim to be expert at this service, or even much developed in it, we do have devotees who are maintaining the gardens as their main service, and vegetables from the gardens are regularly being offered to the Deities for the daily *rāja-bhoga* offerings, as well as for feasts. We are also developing plans to improve the gardens so that we can grow both vegetables and flowers, as we know such endeavors please you.

Devotees have also recently begun work on building new houses for resident devotees. One devotee in particular, your disciple Gopaswami Prabhu, has experience building houses out of wood, clay, and cow dung. He has started an initiative to build more houses with his design, and has enlisted the help of willing volunteers interested in learning to build their own homes. We hope this will attract more devotees to live and serve long-term at New Māyāpur.

We need more houses because the number of devotees who wish to stay at New Māyāpur has increased. Devotees are inspired by New Māyāpur's serene atmosphere and beautiful Deity worship, and have expressed a desire to stay and raise their families here. We can only pray that by your mercy all this can be successful so that your devotional family—and the New Māyāpur family—can increase.

One senior devotee who has expressed an interest in moving to New Māyāpur is your disciple His Holiness Janānanda Goswami. By your mercy he has been such an inspiration for all the devotees here. Due to the coronavirus lockdown, Janānanda Mahārāja has been obliged to stay here, and he has been inspiring devotees with his enthusiastic service attitude, love for *kīrtana*, and overall association. We pray that in the future many more senior devotees will become attracted to visit us and perhaps even live at New Māyāpur.

It is also with great pleasure, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that we inform you that with the help of many devotees, a member of New Māyāpur's congregation has opened a restaurant and preaching center in Tours called Le Gopal. The building was purchased and renovated by devotees, and is now being managed by devotees to provide fantastic *prasādam* to its customers and guests. The devotees there are also holding a weekly *kīrtana* and discussion on the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Please bless these devotees in their wonderful service so that they can inspire new people to come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and stay in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and that they can take up the most important service of sharing Kṛṣṇa consciousness with others.

Our *prasādam* distribution is not limited to the restaurant. Due to the efforts of sincere devotees at New Māyāpur, there has been an increase in *prasādam* distribution coming directly out of New Māyāpur itself. Every week devotees are attending markets in order to sell *prasādam*, and this is improving our relationships with local farmers and residents. Devotees also regularly distribute *prasādam* at fairs and music festivals. This helps provide revenue for the temple, but primarily it inspires us when we see how happy people are when they receive a plate of wholesome *prasādam*. We would like to make *prasādam* distribution an important part of New Māyāpur's services, and pray to you that this only increases for us in the future.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are only a small group of devotees at New Māyāpur who have taken on a very large service opportunity. Devotees here are working very hard to maintain a nice standard of Deity worship. Three large sets of Deities receive worship and dressing daily: Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda-Mādhava. And the same worship and dressing are offered to the small Deities. Somehow or other we are trying to not only maintain but also improve and expand. We pray you will take notice of our small efforts to serve you and your mission, and ask for your blessings so that we may be successful in our spiritual desires to do some service that is pleasing to our respective spiritual masters, Your Divine Grace, the *paramparā*, and ultimately Lord Kṛṣṇa.

On this day of your Vyāsa-pūjā we ask for this benediction: May all past wounds be healed, all lessons learned, and all our efforts to please you noticed. May Kṛṣṇa free us from any desire to try to control or enjoy in this world so that everything we do here at New Māyāpur is solely for His pleasure. We aspire only to serve you.

The devotees at New Māyāpur, France.

New Raman Reti

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

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāñī-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. Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī, you are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you fulfilled Lord Caitanya’s prediction, recorded in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* (Antya 4.126):

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

“In every town and village on this earth, the glories of My name will be chanted.”

For centuries no one knew how this prediction would be fulfilled. Even during Lord Caitanya’s presence, His *bhakti-yoga* movement of chanting the holy name and dancing was challenged as sentimentalism by Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī. Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu arranged to meet this Māyāvādī *sannyāsī*, and He talked on Vedānta and defeated him.

Following the Lord, it is the duty of every *ācārya* to maintain the philosophical integrity of the disciplic succession. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī wrote the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī wrote the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhāṣa*, and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī wrote *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Shortly thereafter, the Gauḍīya-sampradāya was challenged, and to answer the challenge Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa wrote the Govinda-bhāṣya, a commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, to soundly establish the Gauḍīya-sampradāya as bona fide.

Some time later, the Gauḍīya-sampradāya was revitalized by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who printed books and even sent some to England and America. His son, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, established the Gauḍīya Mission and wrote commentaries on various scriptures in such erudite language that no one could consider he was preaching a sentimental religion. He instilled in you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, a deep appreciation for the value of the printing press.

As a *grhastha*, you had the opportunity to become a leading businessman in the pharmaceutical chemical distribution field. You thought, “First of all, I shall become a rich man, and I shall use that money for preaching work.” Yet Kṛṣṇa and your Guru Mahārāja had other plans for you: *yasyāham anugṛhṇāmi hariṣye tad-dhanaṁ śanaiḥ* (“My first mercy shown to My devotee is to take away all his material opulence.”)

You considered, through your transcendental vision, that the British conquered India just so the English language would be introduced there. This gave you the opportunity to translate the treasure house of Vaiṣṇava literature into the English language and, in turn, to orchestrate its distribution throughout the world.

Following the plan of the Lord and your spiritual master, you came to America with a few of your books and almost no money. After almost a year virtually alone, you established ISKCON and went on to publish an enormous body of literature, including *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, *The Nectar of Devotion* (a summary study of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*), *Kṛṣṇa* book (a summary study of the *Bhāgavatam*’s Tenth

Canto), *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

Throughout the world you re-enacted your childhood pastime of organizing Ratha-yātrā, culminating in a grand procession down New York City's 5th Avenue in July of 1976. Then, when the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement was called "a bona fide religion" by a New York high-court judge, you declared, "So my mission is now successful."

No one in history before you has so widely revealed to the world the name, form, qualities, and pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You have given us *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* along with Lord Caitanya's topmost *acintya-bhedābheda* philosophy: "By Me, in My unmanifested form, this entire universe is pervaded. All beings are in Me, but I am not in them." You taught us this complex subject in simple terms: what God looks like and how to see Him in everything and everything in Him. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Person. He is very dear to you, and you are very dear to Him.

Our only desire is to offer some service at your lotus feet.

Your servants at the New Raman Reti community in Alachua, Florida.

New Tālavana

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

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

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

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

The essence of the guru-disciple relationship is based upon the disciple's sincere service mentality, the pinnacle of which is experienced in separation. You exemplified that from the very beginning! When you first incorporated ISKCON, it was thirty years after your spiritual master had departed this mortal world, yet you acted in pursuance of the instructions he had personally given you, and therefore you always felt his presence in your heart and his empowering approval.

*yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo
yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi
dhyāyan stuvaṁs tasya yaśas tri-sandhyam
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

"By the mercy of the spiritual master one receives the benediction of Kṛṣṇa. Without the grace of the

spiritual master, one cannot make any advancement. Therefore, I should always remember and praise the spiritual master. At least three times a day I should offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master.”

Unlike urban temples, which are primarily outreach-preaching centers, we here at New Tālavana have the added opportunity to serve the other half of your mission by developing a self-sufficient community. When you were preparing to leave us, you commented that your only regret was that you hadn’t established the *varṇāśrama* system. When asked how you would do that, you said, “I will go to Gītā Nāgarī. I will sit down, and I will teach you how to live off the land.” Capturing this mood in our hearts, in 2018 we developed our community “Vision and Mission Statement,” following in your footsteps.

In this light, we want to submit to you our annual report of our humble efforts to serve your mission:

ISKCON New Tālavana’s Accomplishments for 2019 and early 2020

1. Their Lordships Śrī-Śrī Gaura-Nitāi and Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Rādhā-kānta’s altar was resurfaced with Brazilian Peacock granite, and Your Divine Grace’s *vyāsāsana* base was replaced with Brazilian Crema Bordeaux granite. The Deities’ home, the temple building itself, had an a/c unit added to the altar, and a new a/c unit replaced the one that was in the temple room. Their sound system was upgraded by adding a digital decibel meter to monitor hearing-safety levels, plus a speaker was added to the *pūjārī* room, and another to the kitchen. We are recording *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* classes, which are then distributed on our YouTube channel. A new widescreen monitor was also added for the purpose of projecting cultural presentations. Some of these projects were completed in 2020.

2. Their Lordships’ standard of worship has been maintained at the level that Your Divine Grace established for ISKCON, and the fact that Śrīmatī Tulasi Devī thrived through last winter so prolifically proves your observation that she does well where devotion resides! In fact, she allows us to care for her 74 expanded healthy plants of various ages.

Their Lordships were recently freshly re-painted, and we present Them with 6 offerings daily. We also observe all the major annual festivals and frequently offer Them new outfits. Our Sunday Feast programs have been steadily improving, with frequent participation of congregational members. The children’s Sunday school program has been very effective in occupying the young Vaiṣṇavas with constructive educational and creative projects and cultural presentations. This is increasing their devotional sentiments while simultaneously allowing their parents to dive deeply into the temple program! We have also installed a new state-of-the-art children’s playground for guests and visitors.

3. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s kitchen improvements include a new 3-door commercial refrigerator, ventilation system repairs, and a cleaning marathon that culminated in a repainting of the entire kitchen in 2020. We also have a restaurant in the coastal town of Gulfport that has been distributing *prasādam* for the past 12 years, in addition to our bi-monthly Food for Life program.

4. Their Lordships have a herd of 48 cows, of which 9 are offering 20 gallons of milk daily; one cow has never even calved. Their sense of protection is enhanced by the fact that they are allowed to live a full life here. There are 3 recent new additions, 1 cow and 2 bulls. And currently there are 4 bulls associating with 4 cows, of which one is believed to be already pregnant; this will increase the herd’s population.

All calves born here are the first priority and are given all of their mother’s milk that they can drink. Thankfully, the mother cows give more than their calves can drink. We take what is left and make wonderful food with it, such as yogurt, butter, ghee, curd, and so many wonderful milk-based delicacies.

5. To help support the cow-protection program, every year in the fall we feature a Cow Festival. The Cow Festival is a three-day, two-night fundraiser that occurs the first weekend of October. It features all-day, rotating *kīrtana* by various groups, free yoga classes, and live music in the pavilion serenading our

6-foot-high Lord Jagannātha. The numerous vendor stalls display varieties of hot preparations, including dishes prepared in an Indian-style earthen oven; sandwiches; freshly-squeezed cane juice; cakes; ice cream; devotee clothing; books; original art; several types of massages; medicinal herbs; a petting zoo; and cow-milking demonstrations. Meanwhile, the children play in the new playground or the bounce-house. There is also a very popular hay-ride, which tours the property, and a firework display on the last evening.

The Cow Festival brings in some of the funds needed to care for our cows over the winter and covers any medical bills. However, after so many years our facility is in need of major upgrading. Our goal is to build a new barn, which would be modern and fully equipped. It would also have an educational area where we could invite children and adults to come learn more about the glories of our Mother Cow. Additionally, we have 50 acres that are for hay production and 300 for pasture. The equipment is purchased, maintained, and utilized constantly to keep pace with the cows' needs.

6. We have a Ratha-yātrā parade every year in the closest large city, New Orleans, in conjunction with their Mardi Gras parade. The cart is repainted for this celebration every year, and features our 6-foot by 5-foot Lord Jagannātha, who graces the public revelers with His glorious *darśana* and gazes lovingly upon them with His 18-inch lotus eyes. The devotees participate by chanting and distributing *prasādam* from the cart. Despite being a rural farm community, we usually have very good devotee attendance for our weekly *harināma* party on Saturdays. The reciprocation with the public is very good because New Orleans is always in a “carnival” mood.

7. Book distribution does not suffer for our transition to rural life, Śrīla Prabhupāda. \$28,000 worth of your books have been purchased from the BBT, most of which we distributed in New Orleans. We also have a team of very sincere congregational outreach representatives, who provide community and personal *agnihotra yajñas*, distribute your books, and do other important fund-raising activities to maintain this project.

8. We installed a handicapped-accessible parking pad and sidewalk system, which connects the temple building, the kitchen, the office complex, and the pavilion's restrooms to facilitate everyone, in any condition. This also qualifies our farm as a state-licensed “Agri-Tourism” destination. The signs for this were also approved and will be installed throughout the local region this year, from which we can advertise broadly.

9. We are currently breaking ground on a new 5,000-square-foot, 5-room guesthouse complex. It will feature a common kitchen and a central courtyard area for small gatherings.

10. In the same area we are also building a householder cottage, as you advised on your 1975 visit. It will become an example for future householders who want to move here. Permission has been granted by the county for the construction to begin, with a water well to be drilled for the cottage and any future cottages.

11. A little distance on the other side of this householder cottage, we have plans for a new school complex with a playground. This is needed to accommodate the increasing number of young Vaiṣṇavas who continually appear amongst us. In their service, we have expanded and strengthened our Child Protection Team and procedures.

12. Throughout the community complex we have renovated an additional 5 householder cottages and are in the process of completing a 6th renovation. We have recently rewired all the electrical wiring in the temple president's house, as well as installed a new HVAC system. Additionally, we have a new family that recently purchased neighboring property.

13. The temple office building improvements include a renovation of the garden office with a new floor and fresh paint for the walls, while the guest *sannyāsī* apartment at the other end of the building was recently converted to a householder apartment and was partially renovated to facilitate that purpose. Additionally, all of the windows around the entire building were replaced with double-pane insulated windows. The office itself has a new website and social media sites, which are being maintained and updated at regular intervals. Temple insurance helped pay for the cost of a new pump at our main well, and a new pump was installed in the well at the mobile home park. We also maintain our transportation vehicles with timely repairs and/or purchases, as required.

14. The M.B. Kumar / Ashis Bhattacharya Vedic Library was opened after the building was renovated.

15. The garage door was replaced on the storage shed behind one of the cabins, and a new washer and dryer were purchased for the in-house devotees.

16. We recently started renovation on the temple park by the pond close to the temple. This will provide the devotees with a *japa* nature-trail close by. We also have about 2 dozen fruit trees and nut trees that provide their bounty seasonally. Our flower production provides Their Lordships with year-round garlands with abundant fragrances. The only shortfall we experience is during major annual celebrations, at which time the congregational members generously fill the gap. Aside from this, there is a rose garden with over 50 varieties of very fragrant and beautiful flowers that far exceed the normal expectation in every respect. This all provides the devotees with almost endless *japa* trails to choose from.

The property in general is very well maintained—keeping the pastures healthy and productive and the grass throughout the temple’s community complex well manicured.

17. Over the decades since you personally visited, devotees who were inspired by your impact on their lives have dedicated themselves to studying the natural flora in this region and have developed an herbal pharmacy that they have called Blue Boy Herbs. This reference to Kṛṣṇa’s energy is the basis of their outreach preaching to their clients about His healing nature. They hold semiannual seminars and tours to train others in this science and its relationship to healing the body and spirit. They produce varieties of tinctures, holistic skin-care products, salves, perfumes, essential oils, and other Ayurvedic products.

18. A new garden team has been formed. They have currently planted 4,500 seeds in seed-starter trays to prepare for our spring planting session. This includes tomatoes, kale, collard greens, peas, turnips, 2 types of potatoes, 2 types of okra, 3 types of broccoli, cabbage, Swiss chard, wax melon, lauki squash, 2 types of cucumbers, strawberries and 5 types of lettuce. There is also a field that is currently under a cover crop in preparation for planting potatoes. We also have a medium-sized field of potatoes that are ready to be harvested. Additionally, we are also planting a field of marigolds to enhance the flower production for Their Lordships.

19. We have planted a two-acre fruit-tree orchard as the start of a permaculture demonstration site. We will intermingle berry bushes, medicinal and cooking herbs, and root crops as companion plants to “demonstrate” a series of rows of fruit tree guilds on level-contour. We will then separate these rows with productive vegetable gardens. This “demonstration” can then be duplicated throughout the property.

20. We have a master plan being developed from several excellent proposals, and sites for proposed expansion projects being identified and updated using drone and LiDAR technology. A new multi-media presentation plan is in the works, as a result.

21. To crown all of these developments, we have a plan for a Prabhupāda Memorial site to identify the tour that you took when you visited us in 1975. This tour will precisely follow the path you took

and immortalize your comments at every location, where you blessed us with your observations and instructions!

22. Our security team is standing nightly watches and running daily awareness campaigns throughout the community. All this to insure the protection of Their Lordships, the cows, the devotees, and *all* of Their Lordships' property!

But most important, whatever ministry we demonstrated was performed to help others be Kṛṣṇa conscious, thus relieving them from their separation from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda, jaya yugāvatāra Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu!

In your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.22, you write that “The spiritual master is the mercy representative of the Lord.” We hope and pray that our meager attempt to maintain and expand your project has been acceptable. We continually pray for your guidance and inspiration in strengthening our resolve to purify ourselves through individual *sādhana* and spiritual practices, as well as to cooperate congregationally to further develop this project for future generations.

This project is reminiscent of Sleeping Beauty awakening from her slumber to a whole new future!

We have plenty to be thankful for, from simply having someone say a prayer on behalf of us to sacrificing his or her time to do something selflessly for us. These things happen most often than not—it's how the world works! An exchange of love, help, and support. It's a network of interactions, but how often do we step back and acknowledge the support system we have around us? From the smallest to the largest, it's all wonderful.

What better way to celebrate your auspicious birth anniversary than to acknowledge the creator first above anything else, and all that He has provided for us; and to give thanks to Him for all His glory and might. The Lord is splendor and magnanimity personified, and we are eternally grateful for the opportunity He is giving us to love and serve Him by the mercy of Your Divine Grace!

You have told us that the masses, becoming overwhelmed by the onslaught of the material energy, will soon be coming to our rural-farming “Vṛndāvana-like villages” and will need our support and guidance. We are doing our best to capture and imbibe this vision and mission, and prepare for this rising tide of urgent need!

*sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ
tāsāṁ brahma mahad yonir ahaṁ bīja-pradaḥ pitā*

“It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kuntī, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 14.4)

We pray that people may see the light beyond segregation and sectarianism and acknowledge the higher purpose of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is to serve and love Him unconditionally. So, we at New Tālavana celebrate the Lord for His wonder and mercy to create diversity within His unity according to individuality, love, and needs. And we celebrate your appearance day by gathering, hearing, chanting, and feasting together as spiritual souls, children of Kṛṣṇa, and disciples and granddisciples of Your Divine Grace!

Your servants at New Tālavana Dhāma, Carriere, Mississippi.

(written by Yogīndra-vandana Dāsa, Gokula-rañjana Dāsa, and Lāṅga-gaṇeśa Dāsa)

New Vraja Dhāma

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

On the occasion of your appearance day, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to you. By bringing Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the West, you gave us the opportunity to rise to the platform of conscious human beings, to practice spiritual activities, and to learn about Vedic culture.

You gave us so much, but you also expressed that you had fulfilled only half your mission and that the other half—the establishment of *varṇāśrama*—you would leave for us to accomplish. Executing this desire of yours is the goal of New Vraja Dhāma. Our aspiration is to establish a happy, balanced, environmentally conscious community—a community that lives according to spiritual principles; a community that sets an example for the rest of the world to follow; a community that glorifies your efforts by its activities.

Year by year our community expands, growing more vibrant through the variety of missionaries and congregational devotees who now comprise it. We make a conscious effort to ensure that all devotees can find a place, service, friends, and recreational facilities in this colorful society. When your dear disciple Śīvarāma Swami built this farm community here in the Somogy Hills of Hungary, he focused on one goal: to satisfy you, his beloved spiritual master. He sets the perfect example of how a disciple should follow his spiritual master by making his guru's instructions one with his heart. Mahārāja continually demonstrates his endless love for you, and this gives us immense strength.

The presence of the Divine Couple, the Queen and King of New Vraja Dhāma, Tribhuvana Sundara Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara, makes Krishna Valley so attractive that even the holy places manifest here.

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

By your mercy, we can live in New Vraja Dhāma in the association of saintly persons, chant the holy names together, hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, live in a holy place, and worship the Divine Couple.

Although Kali-yuga is characterized by deteriorating relationships, misunderstandings, and quarrels, still, New Vraja Dhāma is a distinguished and vibrant place of tranquillity that provides both a spiritual solution and solace for all fallen souls. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were the one who showed us this path and who opened our eyes with the torchlight of knowledge. All of us who live and serve here are walking this path, following in your footsteps and endeavoring to fulfill your dream.

New Vraja Dhāma is gradually developing and expanding, and we have more and more visitors, thanks to the devotees' preaching efforts and book distribution. These visitors can learn about the spiritual culture you gave us. Cow protection, education, self-sufficiency, community development, and the rest of our projects are meant to please you and the Divine Couple, Tribhuvana Sundara Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please bless our community with the ability to cooperate, the mood of acceptance, the practice of compassion, the strength of preaching, and the nectar of pure love of Kṛṣṇa! Please bless us so that we can steadily continue to follow in your footsteps with determination and go back home, back to Godhead!

Your servants in New Vraja Dhāma, Somogyvámos, Hungary.

New Vrindaban

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your soft lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace. All glories to New Vrindaban, the land of Kṛṣṇa, which you gave to the Western world.

We are writing this offering at a critical time, when thousands of people worldwide have succumbed to the coronavirus, a pandemic that has left people helpless, destitute, and looking for answers, materially and spiritually.

But as you often mentioned, there is no material solution to man's problems, to the cycle of suffering and repeated birth and death. Finding a temporary fix does not end suffering or uproot man's greed, lust, pride, envy, or other vices, which are the causes of suffering as well as the distressing state of the earth. You gave permanent spiritual solutions. Just as a boil cannot be treated only externally, with hot compresses and pain medication, but is cured by addressing the underlying disease in the blood, so you gave the actual cure for our diseased hearts and the diseased earth.

At this precarious time, the cures you gave us in the form of your instructions are vital. We take shelter of your instructions for New Vrindaban, which are also instructive for the entire world.

You gave us five important ways to focus our efforts.

Simple Living and High Thinking

During this world crisis, the New Vrindaban community is regularly discussing your instructions on self-sufficiency and a simple-living, high-thinking lifestyle. Now even basic products are not available in stores, and we carefully clean boxes of fruit and vegetables to prevent transmission of the virus. Even our devotees are afraid of the risks—a fact that propels us to focus on fulfilling your dream of a self-sufficient village where dependence on outside sources is reduced as much as possible.

We also realize that your prediction of millions coming to ISKCON farms for shelter and food may soon become a reality, so we are concentrating our efforts on expanding our fruit and vegetable production. The ECO-Vrindaban project operates three large, high tunnels, fully equipped greenhouses, in which we produce vegetables for the temple. A New Vrindaban resident erected another greenhouse to increase the supply. Now we look forward to larger quantities of wonderful organic, home-grown vegetables for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vrindaban Chandra and Their devotees.

The modern world is globally interdependent for basic resources. This international supply chain has been crippled during the pandemic. But because you have encouraged and started self-sufficient farming communities in various parts of the world, these communities are reaping the fruits of self-sufficiency during this time of need. While many may go hungry, the devotees can be assured of the sustainability you spoke about. When the world has fallen to its knees, who would be so foolish as to not follow in your footsteps?

You also showed us how to live simply, in the mode of goodness—to follow basic Vedic codes of cleanliness and etiquette—washing hands and following other strict hygiene practices in our personal lives and in temple and Deity worship, taking off our shoes before entering the temple or other buildings, and greeting each other with folded palms instead of shaking hands—something the world is appreciating and now trying to follow.

You wanted us to set an example for the world. You showed us that by protecting the earth and living in harmony with nature, with Kṛṣṇa in the center, we can be sustained by the earth's many treasures. And since the nature of the world is *duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam*, where there is uncertainty and danger at every step, another disaster may strike at any moment. You wanted to prepare us for the worst and, through us, encourage everyone to seek a simpler, more fulfilling life depending on Kṛṣṇa and His natural bounty.

Cow Protection

You often emphasized that protecting Kṛṣṇa's cows forms the basis of *dharma*. Now the world faces dire consequences because of *adharma*—stripping the earth of its resources and slaughtering innocent creatures to satisfy the tongue. As a result, climate change, increasing natural disasters, and pestilence are a few examples of Mother Earth's rebellion. From the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we learn that Mother Bhūmi begs the Lord to intervene whenever *adharma* is rampant on earth. She takes the form of a cow, showing that protecting cows is a crucial component of protecting the earth. And when cows are mistreated, the earth withdraws its bounty.

Therefore at New Vrindaban we strive to follow your example of nurturing cows, together with the land. This year marks fifty-one years since you named New Vrindaban's first cow, Kāliya, and started a cow sanctuary, the first of its kind in the Western world. Now, New Vrindaban's *gośālā* is home to more than sixty-seven cows, calves, bulls, and oxen, with a team of dedicated cowherds and supporters to care for them. In return, our eight milking cows give rich, nourishing milk, which is made into *paneer*, milk sweets, yogurt, and ghee for the Deities and devotees.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving us the gift of raising and protecting Kṛṣṇa's cows. By caring for them and giving others the opportunity to serve them through cow adoption and care, we are assured of abundant material and spiritual wealth. After all, Vṛndāvana, the spiritual abode of Kṛṣṇa, is named Goloka, "planet of the cows." Thank you for giving us a glimpse of the spiritual world at New Vrindaban.

Spiritual Education

Your purpose was to educate people, not with material knowledge (although that too you exemplified through your expert management of the Society) but with the light of spiritual knowledge. You taught us the essence of life: to serve Kṛṣṇa, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and be happy. And for this you endured many hardships in order to translate and deliver the ancient Vaiṣṇava scriptures, which give a clear understanding of our identities as spirit souls and our eternal connection with Kṛṣṇa. Through your many volumes of books, conversations, and lectures, as well as your personal association, you planted the seed of devotion in the hearts of thousands.

In the same way, you gave special attention to New Vrindaban through your four personal visits, valuable instructions in letters and talks, and your vision for New Vrindaban. For this we are eternally grateful.

We can show our gratitude only by trying to fulfill your vision and share with others what you gave us. Through a variety of devotional retreats, seminars, and workshops, we strive to give people a spiritual perspective on life, a sense of the profound purpose that is service to God, and the rich spiritual heritage you mercifully gave us.

You had a special interest in educating the younger generation in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, so we are happy to inform you that our children are still being nurtured in our Gopal's Garden Homeschool Coop.

You have shown us how the sun of spiritual knowledge eradicates illusion and misery. In this age of increasing calamity and instability, please continue using us as emissaries of spiritual knowledge in order to remove the darkness of this world.

Place of Pilgrimage

You wanted New Vrindaban to be a sacred place of spiritual inspiration and rejuvenation, giving its visitors a unique experience of the spiritual world. You foresaw that the idyllic atmosphere of New Vrindaban would capture the hearts of spiritual seekers and make Kṛṣṇa's presence felt. Your vision became a reality—New Vrindaban has been a sacred place of pilgrimage for hundreds of thousands of guests and pilgrims over the past five decades, and the number of visitors increases by about five percent yearly. Last year, around 35,000 visitors and pilgrims came to New Vrindaban. We try our best to give them a positive impression of the Society you created, and we hope that by your mercy New Vrindaban can touch the hearts of many more pilgrims in the future.

We are also pleased to inform you that as a fitting tribute to the fortieth anniversary of your *smṛti samādhī*, your Palace of Gold was listed in the National Register of Historic Places last year, officially recognizing it as a national historical monument. This will encourage many more people to visit your Palace of Gold and receive your grace. Certainly, your ISKCON centers throughout the world have become *tīrthas*, spiritual havens, during the turbulences of Kali-yuga. Even during this global catastrophe, when we are forced to close our doors to the public, people are trying to connect with New Vrindaban and your other temples through the internet. We have extended our preaching activities to online programs, which have attracted even more attendance than those we hold in the temple building. This has inspired us to continue using innovative ways to reach out to people. Daily during this pandemic we send out a newsletter in an attempt to be a small ray of light in people's stressful lives. Perhaps a new era of preaching has begun, a time when people are more receptive to imbibing Kṛṣṇa's teachings, a time when the earth can be reprieved and we can press the earth's reset button, and a time to fulfill the ultimate goal of life. We pray for the strength and ability to deliver the real solution to the world's challenges—the process of reviving God consciousness. Only an individual shift in consciousness can cause a universal shift. Please bless us to take the pilgrimage place of New Vrindaban out to every home and heart.

To further replicate Vṛndāvana at New Vrindaban, you wanted the seven prominent Vṛndāvana temples to adorn the hills of New Vrindaban. You saw that this would draw more people to Kṛṣṇa's shelter. You often remarked that your goal was not to build opulent temples but to create wonderful facilities and opportunities for people to hear and chant about Kṛṣṇa, which would end their sojourn in this material world and give real happiness. With your love and compassion to inspire us, we are trying hard to complete the first temple, for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha. Although the temple construction is currently on hold, we request your blessings and guidance to overcome the internal struggles we face in completing this grand project for your pleasure.

Loving Kṛṣṇa

You epitomized the truth that loving Kṛṣṇa, our eternal friend and well-wisher, gives divine joy and eternal life with Him. Whatever we do at New Vrindaban is to bring us and others to this platform of loving Kṛṣṇa. Our colorful festivals, holy-name retreats, yoga camps, children's fun activities, twenty-four-hour *kīrtana* programs, and other events are meant to attract people to Kṛṣṇa, the abode of bliss and refuge of love. As you often emphasized, love for Kṛṣṇa will purify our hearts and bring universal brotherhood and peace on earth. It will end the cycle of birth and death and take us to the spiritual sky, where we truly belong. What can be a greater gift than this?

In giving the New Vrindaban community five priceless gifts or instructions to live by, you have already given us the spiritual world. How can we ever repay you? We can only try to make these instructions one with our lives, to please you by persevering against all odds to spread your mission, to share the ideals and gifts you painstakingly endeavored to give us, and to become pure instruments of your love and compassion.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your indebted servants at New Vrindaban, West Virginia, USA.

Noida

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

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

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most prostrated obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Today is the auspicious anniversary of your divine appearance, giving us an opportunity to remember and glorify your transcendental pastimes.

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira told Vidura:

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

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

In the purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you explain that the pure devotees hear from the authorities and chant, sing, and write the glories of the Lord. By their actions, the pure devotees can render any place into a place of pilgrimage. Such pure devotees are able to rectify the polluted atmosphere of any place.

So, there you were, Śrīla Prabhupāda, arriving upon the shores of the east coast of the United States in 1965, bearing within your heart a sacred message that would change the course of this planet forever. Age-old Vedic teachings, meticulously woven within a framework of contemporary understanding, successfully reverberated with the disillusioned generation of that time. And so you led them on the path to the highest salvation, a feat only you could have achieved, due to your unswerving surrender to the instructions of your spiritual master.

Thus concrete jungles turned into holy places, temples sprang up pulsating with ecstatic *kīrtanas* and the tinkling of bells for Deity worship, Ratha-yātrā carts rolled out with thousands of devotees thronging to get a glimpse of the Lord of the Universe, and streets echoed with the *golokera prema-dhana*, Goloka Vṛndāvana’s treasure of love of God in the form of the congregational chanting of the Lord’s holy name. All because you, out of your causeless mercy, sacrificed the comforts of your life to fulfill Lord Gaurāṅga’s prophecy: *sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*. “My name will be broadcast everywhere.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, today is also the day when we submit our annual report at your lotus feet. In our tiny efforts to help you spread the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, we have recently acquired another piece of land within the confines of Noida. Quite a distance from the current Noida temple, it was registered in ISKCON’s name on 26 February 2020. The land is 500 sq. yards, very nicely located, facing the main road and surrounded by many residential and commercial buildings. With your blessings, we are planning to commence construction soon. Since Noida is an expanding city, the new temple will be well positioned

to cater to a whole new group of people who live quite far from the present temple.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the size of our congregation has increased, and they are taking up various responsible services at the temple. Youth preaching has also increased, reaching more colleges than last year. Also, at our temple we regularly receive groups of schoolchildren on field trips. We offer them a compressed spiritual program consisting of *kīrtana*, the Krishna Expo, a quiz, and *prasādam*. Many schools invite us for spiritual discourses.

On the educational front, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have recently started a Bhakti Śāstrī course in English for congregational devotees, and one in Hindi for temple devotees. So the Bhaktivedanta Academy is quite busy. Social media is the predominant means of communication in the modern age, and so we are striving to follow your instruction of *yukta-vairāgya* by employing this medium in the service of the Lord, from posting daily *darśanas* to conducting regular preaching seminars. Overall, the number of our educational programs has markedly increased this year.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, with your mercy we managed to book the biggest stadium in town, NOIDA Stadium, for the culmination of our annual Ratha-yātrā festival. There was a big pandal set up, where a stage program, cultural performances, and an ecstatic *kīrtana* took place. Around ten thousand plates of *prasādam* were distributed in the stadium. It was one of our most successful outreach programs. Of course, the inspiration was drawn from your own efforts at outreach.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the whole world has been reeling under the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. Everything is under lockdown. ISKCON Noida, in compliance with the government's directive, has been observing total lockdown, with no guests entering the temple and the in-house devotees not going outside. However, as you have taught us, all devotional services are being carried out diligently. With your training and blessings, Śrīla Prabhupāda, devotees have used this period creatively, arranging many online live classes and courses. So this lockdown period has given our congregation members a chance to increase their hearing, chanting, and reading, thanks to the online classes providing regular Vaiṣṇava *saṅga*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, all this is because you have shown the way. Without your mercy, nothing is possible. As the scriptures tell us,

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

“I offer my respectful obeisances to my spiritual master, by whose mercy a dumb man can become a great speaker and a lame man can cross mountains.”

It is our greatest fortune, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that we received shelter and mercy at your lotus feet, although we don't have any qualification. Your mercy is all that we possess. You have given us the priceless gem of Kṛṣṇa's service. It is incumbent upon us to care for the devotees as well as train them to cooperate with one another. Please bless us so that we may take full advantage of this precious opportunity and strive with *utsāha*, *niścayā*, and *dhairya* on this journey toward Kṛṣṇa. May we always assist you in fulfilling the instruction of your spiritual master.

Happy Vyāsa-pūjā, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your insignificant servants at ISKCON Noida, India.

Ottawa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this most auspicious occasion of the anniversary of your divine appearance, we, the servants your servants, feel greatly privileged to submit our humble homage at your lotus feet.

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you bestowed upon us the knowledge of the following (only a partial list):

The real nature of the material existence is miserable and temporary.
We are all spiritual beings (in material bodies), parts of the Supreme Being.
The Supreme Being is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda Mahārāja.
His abode is Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma.
Our constitutional position is to love and serve Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
In such a loving relationship with Him, we exist eternally and blissfully.
The primary purpose of human life is to develop this pure love for Him.
Love for Kṛṣṇa is now manifesting as lust, or the desire to enjoy things independently.
This lust is actually love for Kṛṣṇa misdirected due to the influence of the three modes of material nature.
This lust can turn back into love for Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa when we practice *bhakti-yoga*.
Bhakti-yoga can be practiced through nine simple processes.
The chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* must be done always.
Chanting the *mahā-mantra* purifies the mind and senses, and with them our thoughts and actions.
And practicing this *bhakti* process becomes easy in devotees' association.

You also strongly and rightly insisted that we, the fallen souls, make use of this rare opportunity of human life, one among 8,400,000 species, to go back home, back to Godhead (Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa), in this life and not take another birth in this miserable world.

At present, March 2020, during the global coronavirus pandemic, it has become very evident to us how precarious it is to live in the material realm. People are isolated in their residences, movement of people is very much discouraged or even restricted, normal life is interrupted, and the anxiety level has increased. The news in the media is mostly depressing.

Devotees, however, find this crisis an opportunity to associate remotely, using modern communication technology to gather online and conduct classes and witness *ārati* ceremonies and festivities at local and far-off locations.

We, like devotees at most other temples, come together online to get Vaiṣṇava association and do *kīrtanas* and conduct classes and discussions. We seek your blessings to continue to do so more often in the future

Now more than ever we appreciate your gifts, not just to a few but to the human society as a whole. Most significant is your personal presence, and your presence in your books and recorded instructions, and also in the temples and ashrams and the association of devotees. Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are eternally indebted to you for these precious gifts.

It is well known that it is impossible to repay you for the mercy we have received from you. Therefore we simply convey our heartfelt “Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda,” and want you to know that we will endeavor constantly to extend that mercy to others whom we encounter in our sojourn in this world. With your blessings we hope to make some difference in the lives of such people by sharing your gifts with them.

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your humble servants at ISKCON Ottawa, Canada.

Pandharpur

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances on this most auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā celebration.

Last year we celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the installation of our beloved Deities, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Pandharinātha, on the auspicious occasion of Rādhāṣṭamī. By the heartfelt desire of your dear disciple His Holiness Lokanāth Swami, we have completed the construction of the Prabhupāda Ghāṭa on the bank of the river Chandrabhaga. This year on the auspicious occasion of Aṣāḍhi Śayanī Ekādaśī, we are planning to invite the chief minister of Maharashtra as the guest of honor at the inauguration ceremony. This *ghāṭa* is becoming very famous among the pilgrims coming for Lord Viṭṭhala’s *darśana*. There are four major Ekādaśīs celebrated in Pandharpur *dhāma*, and many lakhs of the people who bathe in the Chandrabhaga during these Ekādaśīs bathe at this *ghāṭa*. When they come for bathing, they visit our ISKCON *goṣālā*, take *darśana* of Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s footprints, visit our Matchless Gifts gift shop, and finally take *darśana* of beautiful Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Pandharināth.

We give all the visitors a cup of sweet *prasādam* and request them to chant a round of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. Inside the temple hall we have dioramas depicting Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s pastimes.

Also, this year we have built a new multipurpose hall, called Bhakti Kala Kendra. It has 36 special rooms and 6 medium-size dormitories that can house almost two thousand people. The hall can be utilized for various preaching programs.

This year we started a Vedic *gurukula* in our campus, and for that we constructed a Vedic hut structure like the *gurukula* in Māyāpur. About twenty students joined last year. This year we are expecting more students within a short period of time. This *gurukula* has become very famous in Maharashtra.

We plan to expand our youth preaching in the coming year. As a part of this program, we started college youth preaching in Indapur and Solapur. Currently we have three branches of BACE (The Bhaktivedanta Academy for Culture and Education) at Pandharpur. We also run seven Namahatta centers nearby.

Nowadays the whole world is suffering from Covid-19, a pandemic disease that arose due to meat-

eating. This worldwide crisis gives us the opportunity to preach the message of the *karuṇā-avatāra*, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and convince people to give up meat-eating and intoxication.

This year we plan to start organic farming so we can have our own vegetables, flowers, grains, etc.

Please have mercy on us, Śrīla Prabhupāda, so that we may continue to work together to expand your ISKCON and take full shelter of the oasis you established. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving us the opportunity to serve this mission of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Your servants at ISKCON Pandharpur, India.

Paris

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, Your Divine Grace,

*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*

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

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

We bow down at your lotus feet. All glories to your transcendental loving service at the lotus feet of your spiritual master. All glories to your divine ISKCON.

In 1973 you installed Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Parīśvara in the heart of Paris. Unfortunately, They were moved from that temple shortly after you physically left this world. Now, forty-three years later, by your grace, the ISKCON *bhaktas* continue to fight against the waves of Kali in Paris and the Paris region in order to continue your mission and spread *harināma-saṅkīrtana*.

For a few years now, for your pleasure a new generation of devotees has been chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa several times a week in the streets of Paris. Vaiṣṇavas regularly gather in their “Yoga Lyrics” center in the city. Your transcendental book distribution marathon also takes place each year.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on the day we celebrated Lord Nityānanda’s appearance day this year, Agnideva Prabhu, your disciple and senior *bhājana* leader, said that you had come to us in the same spirit as Śrī Nityānanda Rāma. Although ill-treated by the two drunkard brothers Jagāi and Mādhāi, Lord Nityānanda delivered them from their hellish lives. Likewise, despite having encountered so many difficulties in bringing Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the West, you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, delivered your followers from *saṁsāra*.

Now, in these troubled times, we can see how your words are truer than ever, and how a general atmosphere of sin has caused widespread havoc in society. Reclusive in temples and ashrams around the world, avoiding infection by the coronavirus, your followers meditate on your divine example as an *ācārya* and on the depth of your divine message.

At the time of this writing, only a small group of dedicated devotees maintain the worship of Their Lordships in our Paris temple. The police have forbidden them to leave that place, so the temple has become their transcendental prison. However, just like Vasudeva and Devakī in Kāṁsa's prison, by your grace these devotees see the Lord face to face and in their hearts. By the strength of our faith in you, material calamities are transformed into spiritual bliss at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Really, the pure devotee can turn lead into gold.

Our only prayer to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is that in all circumstances we can always remain your loyal and faithful servants. In this way, without a doubt we will attain the mercy of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī so that we can eternally serve Her sweet Lord, Śrī Śyāmasundara, in Goloka Vṛndāvana.

All glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga! Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your servants at ISKCON's Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Parīśvara temple in Paris, France.

(written by Bhāvasindhu Dāsa)

Perth

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble and respectful obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace on this auspicious anniversary of your appearance.

Recently we read an article during one of our morning *Bhāgavatam* classes titled “An Unbearable Glance.” It was a compilation of relishable testimonies by various devotees about what they felt when you looked directly at them. Of these testimonials, by your disciple Balavanta Prabhu, described a pure devotee like you very vividly. It goes as follows:

I was in the back of the room, and my eyes and his eyes locked. It was only for a fraction of a second, but I felt that there was a personal connection between us. At such a time one may think, “Oh, I'm special,” but I didn't think that, because I realized that Śrīla Prabhupāda had the capacity to relate to and connect with every person in that room. Śrīla Prabhupāda was the *external manifestation of the Supersoul*, God in the heart of every living entity. Śrīla Prabhupāda is not the Supersoul—he's a perfected *jīva* soul—and *because he's perfected he has a transparent, direct connection to the Supersoul*. Your connection and my connection to the Supersoul may be covered due to our false ego and conditioning. But in Śrīla Prabhupāda's case there was no false ego and no conditioning, *so the spirit soul and the Supersoul were in perfect harmony*. He could know my heart perfectly, because the Supersoul knew. [Emphasis added]

Here at ISKCON Perth, one of the spiritual hospitals in your ISKCON society, you have given us everything to perfect our lives and achieve the ultimate goal—pure love for God, Kṛṣṇa.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have never failed any of us. Your mercy knows no bounds because we see that your compassion has attracted all kinds of people to our temple. Wherever there is *kīrtana*, the youth are to be seen. Because you did *kīrtana*, today they are able to enjoy *kīrtana* and will do so forever in the association of swanlike spirit souls. Those with an inquisitive and critical mind see truth in your recorded instructions and your books. Those who are not ready for a program of full *sādhana-bhakti* simply love you for providing them with Sunday feasts and a happy lifestyle of dancing and music. Those who

are serious about spiritual life chug along and engage in your service despite all difficulties. Those whose lives dictate that they spend most of their time away from a temple are certainly there when it's time to glorify you on Vyāsa-pūjā day, the most auspicious anniversary of your appearance. The children of devotees build lifelong bonds that will someday be their saving grace. Some don't understand why they're attracted to you. You just happen to offer them a type of shelter and solace they never knew existed.

Among the major categories of service now being faithfully and sincerely carried out by your granddisciples here in Perth are Deity worship, book distribution, *prasādam* distribution (including restaurant, gift shop, and catering), *harināma*, festivals (including the Sunday Feast), Sunday and *kīrtana* school for children, and *bhakti-vṛkṣa* programs. At your Gopīnātha Dhāma, devotees have been performing weekend *kīrtana* nights, guest lectures, and spreading the glory of the holy *dhāmas* through the Sacred India Gallery, with a targeted focus on reaching out to Western devotees and well-wishers.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, during 2019 we added more devotional activities, such as a local Ratha-yātrā, creative and intensive outreach through Dāmodara and Kārttika programs, distribution of ahimsa milk, and facilitating the study of online Bhakti-śāstrī courses.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, let us express our deepest gratitude to you for giving us the holy name. We pray we can continue to accept this matchless gift with all humility and that our appreciation for this gift will steadily grow.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, because of your causeless mercy we recently acquired land for our new temple project. We were able to buy the land with our own funds and without resorting to any loans, mainly because of following your vision of “simple living and high thinking” and because of prudent and honest management of the *yātrā*'s revenues and expenses. We pray that with the support of the congregation and other well-wishers, and your blessings, we will be able to build a beautiful temple for Their Lordships within a reasonable time.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please instill within our hearts a minute fraction of your compassion, nobility, dedication, and spirit of sacrifice so that we aspiring devotees in the Perth *yātrā* can work together to please you, the other members of the *paramparā*, and Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi.

We pray that we may always be objects of your compassion, that you empower us to deliver that compassion to others, and that we develop deeper compassion for others.

Your servants at ISKCON Perth, Australia.

Philadelphia

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet. All glories to you, who benevolently bestowed on us your blessings by unlocking the treasure house of love of God.

As we continue life's task of following your instructions to find our way through this material world and eventually, by your mercy, return home, back to Godhead, you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, by your example of surrender, purity, fearlessness, and devotion to Kṛṣṇa, shine your light on our path back home. You were selfless in your desire to please your spiritual master, His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and Lord Kṛṣṇa. Your determination to spread Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement, despite all obstacles, is nothing short of extraordinary.

Now, as we grow older, we feel you have blessed us with increasing spiritual insight, so our relationship with you continues to mature. It is forever evolving and deepening, allowing us to see with greater clarity the transcendental relationship between guru and disciple. Please allow us to feel your soothing presence, which helps guide us to faithfully serve you so that we may continue to grow in our practice of *sādhana-bhakti*. Kindly keep us in your view so that we may forever remain in the protective shade of your divine lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as an empowered servant of the Lord, you woke up the sleeping souls in this world. Just as Lord Balarāma in the form of Ananta Śeṣa has been singing the praises of Lord Kṛṣṇa since time immemorial and will continue to do so for all time, we hope we can continue to speak of your glories eternally. In twelve short years you authored more than seventy books, a superhuman feat, while continually preaching the glories of the Lord. In addition, you oversaw the management of your worldwide ISKCON movement. Your translation work occurred mostly in the wee hours of the morning, often allowing you to sleep only two hours per night. In spite of your being elderly and with fragile health, you accomplished the unthinkable! You came to a strange country at age seventy with virtually no money, not knowing anyone, and not having anywhere to live. Yet you sat under a tree in a park in one of the poorer sections of New York City and, beating a little bongo drum, you attracted young and old to listen to your *kīrtana*. Eventually, some began to chant and dance with you. In this way the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement started, and eventually it spread throughout the world. You taught us everything we needed to know about how to change our bad habits into the habits of Vaiṣṇavas. In this way, you turned “hippies into happies,” as you told one reporter. Our lives changed forever!

As we enthusiastically chanted and danced in *kīrtana*, you watched us from your *vyāsāsana* and smiled brightly, nodding to encourage us. You often played the gong and motioned for us to jump up and down. As we did, with our arms in the air, you smiled even more, so we jumped higher! We never wanted the *kīrtana* to end! You then tossed us flowers, and we jumped even higher in order to catch the mercy of our beloved guru. Those precious moments have sustained us for four decades as we have had to endure a life in separation from you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Even though most of us were very young when you left this world, we have grown old with the understanding, by your grace, that you are still with us. You are in our hearts when we pray to you. You are in your books when we read and discuss them. You are in your instructions when we follow them in order to please you. You are in your *mūrti* when we worship you with love and respect. You are present when we watch your pastimes on the DVDs lovingly created and given to us by your expert disciples, and you are present when we associate with your sincere devotees, who strive to fulfill your wishes. We are grateful for this association in separation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, kindly continue to guide us at ISKCON Philadelphia so we may please you by remembering what is most important in our lives: pleasing Your Divine Grace by sincerely assisting you in your mission to fulfill the orders of your spiritual master. Please help us to serve together as one unified congregation in the mood of caring for and cooperating with one another. In this way, your beloved spiritual master will also be pleased, and ultimately we, as a community, can please the all-merciful Lord Caitanya Mahārabhu.

Your servants at ISKCON Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

(written by Vāmanadeva Dāsa and Saṅgītā Devī Dāsī)

Phoenix (Arizona)

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you! All glories to the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu!

With gratitude, love, and respect we present you with this humble offering:

Pleased is the most merciful Lord as He
Relishes the wonders of your service.
Awakening the sleeping souls was your
Bona fide plan, and with love and care the
Herculean task you began; like a spiritual warrior you
Upheld the precious instructions of your Guru Mahārāja.
Preaching loud and clear, preaching bold and mild,
Always with Śrī Caitanya at your side, with Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in your heart,
Day and night you gave yourself to rescuing from near and far
All the fallen souls who came across your path.

Please forgive our shortcomings and bless us so that we will develop sincere, unmotivated, unconditional devotional service and thus always remember Kṛṣṇa and never forget Him. Bless us so that with all humility, respect, and tolerance we may be able to work with each other and realize the true meaning of cooperation. You have given us the blueprints and a strong foundation to build upon. Please guide us so that we can work together and at the end of our journey join you at the pier, where we will be welcomed aboard the boat captained by you and, by your mercy, go back home to Godhead.

Your aspiring servants at ISKCON Phoenix, Arizona, USA.

Phuket

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

We offer our most respectful obeisances unto you, our beloved founder-*ācārya* and spiritual guide, who are very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, having taken shelter at His lotus feet. Fulfilling the desire of your Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, you are so kindly preaching the message of Lord

Caitanya Mahāprabhu and delivering the world from impersonalism and voidism.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, this year we have some very special news for you. On the auspicious day of Gaura Pūrṇimā we held the inauguration ceremony celebrating the start of construction for the new temple. We hope to develop the congregation of devotees and see more and more youth take up the Kṛṣṇa conscious lifestyle. With the new temple we hope we can attract the local people to take a serious interest in your movement. Kindly bestow your blessings on us so that we may be successful.

May we remain forever fixed in service at your lotus feet.

Your servants at ISKCON Phuket, Thailand.

Radhadesh

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept the humble obeisances of the residents of Radhadesh at your lotus feet.

In 1969, in *Back to Godhead* (no. 23), Hayagrīva Dāsa wrote about the development and philosophical background of New Vrindaban and described some features of life in a “spiritual community united in the pursuit of Krishna consciousness”: “Now the hills of West Virginia are vibrating daily with the Maha (Hare Krishna) Mantra, and it is certain that the forests, fields, and mountains are no longer in West Virginia—they have entered the spiritual sky of Vaikuntha.”

Because of spiritual sound and, perhaps even more importantly, because the community was “taking shape under the guidance of our Guru Maharaj, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami,” it was possible that a patch of West Virginian land could become part of Vaikuntha.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your guidance was geared to simple living—chanting, worshiping, cooking, constructing, caring for cows, etc.—and to distancing the mind from thoughts of sense gratification and “modern amenities.” Thus the devotees were free for high thinking—thinking of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Your guidance later spread to Belgium, a rather quaint patch of the world, where, in the late 1970s, the devotees bought a small castle that they named Radhadesh. Our spiritual community essentially has the same philosophical background as New Vrindaban: everything should be organized in such a way as to “enable the student to progress along the path of devotional service.” And thus, according to your principle of “practical *samādhī*” (*Gītā* 6.7, purport), service goes on here all the time and the “program is sufficiently diversified to accommodate a variety of talents, dovetailing them in Krishna’s service.” (Hayagrīva Dāsa, *Back to Godhead*, no. 23, 1969)

Over the last two years, Chateau Radhadesh has seen a good number of improvements and renovations. Although life comes from life and not from buildings, the quality of life between these venerable walls has certainly been raised by the sincere hard work of our devotees. Rebuilding the top of the lower tower was crucial and most involving. It’s now open again to the public during our tours, as are the fully refurbished washrooms in the basement.

The door and hallway on the side of the castle have been expertly repaired, repainted, and uncluttered. A wall in the entry room, graced with a life-size portrait of Your Divine Grace, offers a far more dignified and spiritually uplifting side entrance. Two offices and two *āśrama* rooms have been wholly refurbished

to ease our administrators' tireless devotional efforts and to enhance some residents' accommodation.

Our somewhat narrowly enclosed basement corridor, which leads to the kitchens and *pūjārī* rooms, received an artistic, Govardhana-themed upgrade. Apart from wall repairs and fresh paint, it was decorated with a number of large reproductions of paintings and photographs of Govardhana Hill. The narrow, windowed devotee kitchen in the basement underwent a complete transformation, both in spatial arrangement and in terms of elevation above the lower modes of nature.

The same is true for the ground-floor refectory, or *prasādam* room: after repairs to the ceiling and walls, it was decorated with devotional art. Devotees are currently planning and collecting two lakhs for a completely new, enlarged, and splendid *prasādam* hall to be built between the castle and guesthouse.

However, best of all the new improvements is the whole new set of insulated windows behind and beside the altar and in the temple room, which feature embossed *mahā-mantras* in gold paint above them—a superb devotional touch that our many, many visitors cannot miss. And we have two new carved wooden *tulasī* tables, on wheels and with pull-out shelves.

All the improvements to Radhadesh go on under your guidance and by your grace so that devotees may improve their devotional service more and more and so that the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—may ever reverberate within and outside these walls. In this way, this wonderful spiritual community can be united in the pursuit and preaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, especially in a new format of retreats, and this quaint patch of the world may increasingly reflect the spiritual sky of Vaikuṇṭha.

Ever seeking your blessings,

Your servants at ISKCON Radhadesh, Belgium.

Regina

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Koṭī koṭī daṇḍavat prāṇamas! Please accept my humble obeisances unto your lotus feet! Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I always feel it is a great honor to be your granddisciple. You pulled me out of the dirt of material life. Before meeting ISKCON devotees, my life was miserable—I was suffering at every step, with no goal in life. Your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, which I received from a devotee, saved me, and your purports still guide me, giving me great relief whenever I read them. Through them I feel your merciful, loving touch at every moment.

One day, while I was honoring *prasādam* in Śrīdhām Māyāpur, my eyes filled with tears as with every morsel I remembered you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! I expressed my gratitude to the devotee next to me, saying that if you had not been there, what would I be eating at that time? Thanks very much for everything! Only because of you, my dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, have I received everything best in life, especially Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

I love you so much, my dear Śrīla Prabhupāda! You've said that a grandfather is kinder to his grandchild than to his own child, and I feel your love at every moment in my life, so now I beg you to please give me your blessings and strength so that I will serve your mission honestly and remain the humble servant of your servants' servants. Thank you very much.

All glories to you, my beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your eternal servants at ISKCON Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

(written by Ānanda Dāsa)

Rome

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble obeisances unto your lotus feet. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this sublime anniversary of your divine appearance, and forever.

These weeks, which could become months, have seen the rise of the coronavirus, an intense and uncontrollable pandemic that seemingly rages on unobstructed across nearly every nation. As ever, perhaps more than in any other period of man's history, your words, if appropriately considered, trigger in the heart an opportune process of regret—regret because one is able to not only sense some guilt for everything that has happened but also for everything that has *not* happened in the world so far. You certainly taught us that “a fully Kṛṣṇa conscious person is not at all disturbed by the onslaughts of the threefold miseries, for he accepts all miseries as the mercy of the Lord, thinking himself only worthy of more trouble due to his past misdeeds; and he sees that his miseries, by the grace of the Lord, are minimized to the lowest.” (*Gītā* 2.56, purport) I do not have the courage to even imagine what would have happened if the world had not been sufficiently purified by the missionary work carried out by so many of your brave and tireless servants.

Consequently, from this regret a strong spirit of service comes forth from within the heart, a vigorous desire to face real responsibility with fresh enthusiasm. In a letter dated February 13, 1969, you wrote: “We are not meant for presenting any literary masterpieces, but we have to inform people that there is a fire of maya which is burning the very vitality of all living entities, and they should guard against the indefatigable onslaught of material existence. That should be our motto.”

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for having inspired all of us to do our best rigorously and totally to achieve Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Almost no one is fully aware of the advantages the human form offers. Therefore the prime antiviral consists precisely in helping the conditioned souls to be conscious of these advantages, whereby they would, with satisfaction, recognize the value of the human body and acquire the necessary serenity to revive their respectful and loving relationship with the Supreme Person, Kṛṣṇa, and as a consequence with all living entities and the material nature. The help we devotees can offer is to distribute your books and provide indisputable testimony. As soon as it is feasible to go outdoors again to contact the conditioned souls, we promise we will start doing so with unrelenting strength, more than ever before, and follow your perfect example—you, who patiently and affectionately explained the meaning of life to us who are condemned to death.

Your insignificant, aspiring servants at ISKCON Rome, Italy.

(written by Harikīrtana Dāsa)

Saldus

Our dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

We bow down to your lotus feet. All glories to you! And glories to Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa!

In this offering, I am joining with all our community members in expressing our deep gratitude to you, our dear *gurudeva* and beloved grandfather.

We are deeply grateful to you, who are following in the lotus footprints of your dear Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, and our whole *paramparā*.

We are deeply grateful to you for giving us your taste for the holy name, *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*, *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, and service to Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and the Vaiṣṇavas.

We are deeply grateful to you for inspiration, for spreading beautiful and simultaneously practical ideas. Your personality has given us and thousands of others around the world so much spiritual energy and joy!

We are deeply grateful to you for the worldwide Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Since we have been in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, we have felt the depth of the truth for which our souls, hearts, and minds have been yearning. We are recognizing more and more how important it is to understand the *śāstra*, to learn to love Kṛṣṇa, to see ourselves and every living being in the whole creation as one extended family. We are learning to see and experience Kṛṣṇa in our souls and to see and experience Kṛṣṇa in every person and situation. We have learned to be grateful for every day, every moment in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

We are deeply grateful to you for imparting to us clarity of vision so we can understand what is truly important in our life these days, when society seems to be falling apart.

Today I am chanting *japa* and caring for the devotees in our community and remembering a story you once told about cooking *purīs* for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa during a bombing raid on Calcutta during World War II. Thank you so much for your peace of heart and clarity of vision, exemplifying how to live our day-to-day life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness according to the motto “Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and be happy!”

Let us learn to see ourselves and everyone else as devotees of Kṛṣṇa, one extended human family of Vaiṣṇavas! Let us find increasing inspiration, satisfaction, and joy in serving Your Divine Grace, Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa!

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! All glories to you! All glories to you, our dear *gurudeva*, our beloved grandfather, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

With gratitude,

Your servants at ISKCON Saldus, Latvia.

(written by Janaka Dāsa)

Scarborough

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

On this most auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā celebration, we would like to express our eternal gratitude for removing the blindfold from our eyes, an act which not only saved us from crashing into material miseries but showed us who Lord Kṛṣṇa is through the wonderful ISKCON temples and your transcendental literatures.

Like moths, we constantly fly toward the flames of material misery, thinking they will give us pleasure, but since the effulgence of knowledge emanating from your transcendental books is brighter, it is helping us change course.

Along with the regular spiritual programs at our center, we share the scriptural knowledge you have given us through various outreach programs, like our weekly radio shows and presentations at Bengali Hindu temples, and by performing much-needed fire sacrifices for our community members.

As Lord Kṛṣṇa teaches the *brāhmaṇa* Sudāmā, the guru bestows transcendental knowledge on members of all the spiritual orders of society:

*sa vai sat-karmaṇām sākṣād dvijāter iha sambhavaḥ
ādyo 'ṅga yatrāśramaṇām yathāham jñāna-do guruḥ*

“My dear friend, he who gives a person his physical birth is his first spiritual master, and he who initiates him as a twice-born *brāhmaṇa* and engages him in religious duties is indeed more directly his spiritual master. But the person who bestows transcendental knowledge upon the members of all the spiritual orders of society is one’s ultimate spiritual master. Indeed, he is as good as My own self.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.80.32)

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, spiritual master of the universe, on this glorious Vyāsa-pūjā day please sprinkle a drop of your unlimited enthusiasm, tolerance, and determination on us so that we can serve your lotus feet with unflinching devotion and faith.

The aspiring servants of the servants of your servants at ISKCON Scarborough, Ontario, Canada.

Seattle

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances in the eternal dust of your lotus feet. All glories to your divine appearance anniversary!

* * *

Upendra: Prabhupāda, sometimes there may be differences between what is love of Godhead between Christian and Muslim, Muslim and Buddhist, Buddhist and Hindu. They may quarrel at what is love of Godhead.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Those who are not in love of Godhead, they must quarrel, because they are cats and dogs. You cannot expect any peaceful condition between cats and dogs. They will fight. So whatever they may be, so long they are fighting, that means they are not on the perfectional stage. . . . If you love God, then you love everyone. That is the sign. [Lecture, 18 October 1968, Seattle]

* * *

Exiles swirling within a sea of isms, divisions, and schisms
intone the COVID-19 dirge amidst global pandemonium.
The actual cure for such a virus is spiritual asylum;
by chanting God's holy names we can find our original phylum.

O Prabhupāda, you revealed the key to unlock *saṁsāra*'s conundrum:
serving guru with mind, words, deeds, and garlands of sweet alyssum.
Ringing bells for your Deities opens golden gateways to freedom;
singing the Lord's glories invokes blissful chords from the heart's adytum.

You gave the tree's reflection upon the water as an axiom,
explaining how pure love is mirrored within these ponds of illusion,
how we'd been sunk for lifetimes within dreams of selfish collusion
until the rope of your causeless mercy rescued us from this delusion.

Your *bhakti* gems are shrouded within mystic veils of an arcanum;
your letters, penned with invisible ink of unalloyed devotion,
reveal their deeper meanings through *tīvra-bhakti* and elation.
We humbly seek your matchless gifts of *ānandāmbudhi-vardhanam*.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your aspiring servants at ISKCON Seattle, Washington, USA.

(written by Lāvanya-maṅgala Devī Dāsī)

Solapur

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

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet on this most auspicious occasion, and all glories to Your Divine Grace.

In this world we are constantly tossed by the waves of duality. As practicing devotees, when we are hit by these waves we are affected and go through emotional and physical tribulations, but we have a fixed point to hold on to amidst these turbulent waves, a safe boat in which to cross beyond duality—remembering your instructions and endeavoring to follow them. These bring fixedness or steadiness in life.

Śāstra glorifies the instructions of the spiritual master. Indeed, you explain that one can meet the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the instructions of the spiritual master:

When one becomes serious to follow the mission of the spiritual master, his resolution is tantamount to seeing the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As explained before, this means meeting the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the instruction of the spiritual master. This is technically called *vāñī-sevā*. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura states in his *Bhagavad-gītā* commentary on the verse beginning *vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha kuru-nandana* (Bg. 2.41) that one should serve the words of the spiritual master. The disciple must stick to whatever the spiritual master orders. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. 4.28.51, purport]

We cannot take life for granted. At any time things can swing from one situation to any other situation. This is scary for people. But for the devotees, we have a sense of fixed shelter only because of your grace and mercy. Your instructions in your books, letters, and lectures are the source of our steady inspiration and protection. When I went through a difficult phase in my health after our temple inauguration, I wasn't sure I would ever be the same again. Internal dualities bombarded my consciousness in ways I haven't felt even in the midst of dangerous external situations. It was a different battle, but your instructions remained my source of inspiration and protection.

How and where do we strenuously endeavor? You explained that if we strenuously endeavor in just one area of devotional service—the chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa, or the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, hearing the sound vibration very attentively—then very easily the goal of Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be attained. So while Kṛṣṇa gave us this most important gift of a human body, you gave us another very important gift: the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

Just as Caitanya Mahāprabhu distributed the holy name freely to everyone without considering whether or not the recipient was qualified, you distributed the holy name of Kṛṣṇa freely throughout the world. To help us understand the importance of this gift of chanting, you spoke tirelessly about it everywhere and to everyone, in your talks, lectures, and on morning walks.

You said chanting the holy name is Caitanya Mahāprabhu's gift. You called it His munificent gift,

His most magnanimous gift. You also said that chanting the holy name is the prime gift, a special gift, a transcendental gift, the highest gift, the greatest gift, and a priceless gift. You said that it is the only gift for humanity at large. You said that simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* one can attain all perfection in life.

You taught us how your *vāṇī* provides us with your constant association: “As long as the spiritual master is physically present, the disciple should serve the physical body of the spiritual master, and when the spiritual master is no longer physically existing, the disciple should serve the instructions of the spiritual master.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.47 purport) Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave us the greatest gift of all: service in separation (*vipralambha-sevā*). As your disciples, we know of service in separation in principle, but to most of us it is a theoretical realization. Before one can feel intense loving separation from Kṛṣṇa, one must first feel intense attraction to Him. But for us conditioned souls who have forgotten and abandoned Kṛṣṇa and come to the material world under the spell of *māyā*, our “separation” from Kṛṣṇa is based on complete ignorance and forgetfulness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are still present with us through your instructions. That we are serving you in separation is undoubtedly a fact. Otherwise, now, when we are without your personal presence, how are we sustaining ourselves in spiritual life? Your presence remains, expands, and sustains your devotees’ lives. You are still in charge.

Today I offer this prayer of allegiance and faithfulness to always ride your ship, which you have been mercifully sailing to take us back to Godhead. My mind wants to drag me everywhere else, however, so I beg for your mercy that I never leave you and that I can count my blessings and, with gratitude, chant the holy name: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Your humble servants at ISKCON Solapur, Maharashtra, India.

(written by Kṛṣṇabhakta Dāsa)

Suriname

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

As the days pass by in this world full of miseries, we are always drawn to remember our great fortune of having taken shelter under your lotus feet. On this auspicious day we pledge to always be grateful to you and your ISKCON. What once looked like happiness to us has now been unveiled as pure suffering by dint of the transcendental knowledge in your books. We learned that sense gratification, though it may feel good at first, will ultimately entangle us more and more in material existence.

It was our own choice to be here in this mortal world, bound by the clutches of *māyā* and left to rot in this foreign environment, away from our real, eternal home. But by your causeless mercy and compassion we are being guided to live a life full of purpose, a life which is bringing us closer to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Mother Earth was surely blessed by your appearance and the time you spent here, when your soft lotus feet touched her from time to time. You came on behalf of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, as His *senāpati-bhakta*, to further His mission of expanding the *saṅkīrtana* movement worldwide, a movement the Lord Himself inaugurated and spread within India five hundred years earlier.

Although you are not physically here before our eyes, it is very difficult to not feel your presence

wherever we serve within your ISKCON. We feel closely connected to you whenever we study your divine teachings in your books or listen to your lectures. In this way our diseased eyes get cured from the blindness caused by ignorance, and our ears feel satisfied drinking the nectar of *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. And by our honoring *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*, which you introduced to us, our tongues and other senses get controlled, and thus we cannot easily be influenced by *māyā*.

Your appearance in this world has brought great hope to an otherwise dark and cruel world bereft of any real pleasure. You showed us how it is possible to become Kṛṣṇa conscious in a world where Lord Kṛṣṇa is envied and forgotten. You taught us the importance of proper association, the necessity of observing proper Vaiṣṇava etiquette, the true value of prayer, the sublime nature of *kīrtana* and *bhajan*, and the need to follow the Vaiṣṇava disciplines—all just to purify us so we would become qualified as genuine servants of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

By your mercy, our Suriname *yātrā* is now growing from strength to strength. By our preaching efforts on your behalf, people are now transforming their lives, and all over Suriname people are taking up Kṛṣṇa consciousness very seriously. This year ISKCON Suriname will be conducting its fifth annual Ratha-yātrā, distributing the mercy of Śrī Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā Devī to all the fortunate citizens.

We are most thankful for all you have done for us, Śrīla Prabhupāda. We feel safe and secure in your ISKCON ship, with you as the captain. We are confident that if we hold on to what you have given us, our future will be very bright. Today we, your granddisciples in Suriname, join with the rest of the ISKCON world in broadcasting your holy glories, which will continue to be sung forever.

Ohe! vaiṣṇava ṭhākura, doyāra sāgara, e dāse koruṇā kori' . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda-kī jaya!

Your aspiring servants at ISKCON Suriname.

Taichung

Dear grandfather, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most respectful obeisances. All glories to you. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

I still have fond memories of celebrating your Vyāsa-pūjā in the Taipei temple with the devotees last year. Now we are again gathered to celebrate your Vyāsa-pūjā. This means a lot to each of us, because you changed each of us. You gave us new life by mercifully giving us transcendental knowledge and opportunities to perform devotional service. Vyasa-puja gives us a golden opportunity to remember and discuss your transcendental activities and teachings among ourselves, and to relish the love you invested in everything.

It's my honor to both glorify you and report to you on behalf of the devotees in Taichung. To begin with, please allow me to offer you this beautiful song by Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura:

*parama koruṇa, pahū dui jana,
nitāi gauracandra
saba avatāra- sāra śiromaṇi,
kevala ānanda-kanda*

*bhajo bhajo bhāi, caitanya nitāi,
sudṛḍha biśwāsa kori'
viṣaya chāriyā, se rase majiyā
mukhe bolo hari hari*

*dekho ore bhāi, tri-bhuvane nāi
emona doyāla dātā
paśu pākhī jhure, pāṣāṇa vidare
śunī' jāra guṇa-gāthā*

*saṁsāre majiyā, rohili poriyā
se pade nahilo āśa
āpana karama, bhuñjāye śamana,
kahoye locana-dāsa*

“Lord Nitāi and Lord Gauracandra are very merciful. They are the essence of all incarnations. The specific significance of these incarnations is that They introduced a process of chanting and dancing that is simply joyful. My dear brothers, I request that you just worship Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda with firm conviction and faith. If one wants to be Kṛṣṇa conscious by this process, one has to give up his engagement in sense gratification. Become absorbed in worshipping Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda and simply chant ‘Hare Kṛṣṇa! Hari Hari!’ without any material motive. My dear brothers, just try to examine this. Within the three worlds there is no one like Lord Caitanya or Lord Nityānanda. Their merciful qualities are so great that upon hearing them even birds and beasts cry and stones melt. But I, Locana Dāsa, regret that I am entrapped by sense gratification. I have no attraction for the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, and therefore Yamarāja, the superintendent of death, is punishing me by not allowing me to be attracted by this movement.” (Translation based on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s explanation of the song.)

The reason I wanted to include this song here is that it is one of your favorite *bhajan*s. When I heard your disciple Agnideva Prabhu sing it in Māyāpur during the *kīrtana-melā* this year, I became even more attracted to it. After studying the word-for-word meanings, I was touched by the mercy of Lord Gaurāṅga and Lord Nityānanda, and also by your mercy for kindly giving us access to Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi’s causeless mercy. I now sing this song every day.

As for our studying, this year is especially important for me and all the devotees in Taichung, because we have invested more time in systematically studying your books under the guidance of many wonderful Vaiṣṇavas. We have all firmly concluded that by systematically studying the *bhakti-śāstras* we can learn how to apply the philosophy in daily life and realize the knowledge in the books by doing so. It also boosts our enthusiasm and increases our faith in devotional service.

Currently, many people are absorbed in coronavirus *kathā*, since the whole world is now plagued by this pandemic. People are in extreme anxiety. I believe if our attention can shift to *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, things would be quite different. We are therefore planning to do more online teaching and thus share the transcendental knowledge in the *Bhagavad-gītā* with as many people as possible, helping them reestablish their relationship with Kṛṣṇa and thus become free of fear.

I always believe that opportunities and challenges come hand in hand. Hopefully, by Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, more devotees can systematically study your books and thus become mature and more qualified to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness cooperatively.

Your servants at ISKCON Taichung, Taiwan.

(written by Lalitā-sakhī Devī Dāsī)

Taipei

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most respectful obeisances at your divine lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace! All glories to your divine appearance day!

O most beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda, every devotee should always remember your glories. On this auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, we thank you for saving us from the prison of material life. You gave us your oceanic causeless mercy. It's only by your mercy that here in Taiwan we can experience the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu freely and without discrimination distributed the holy names of the Lord. You followed in His footsteps and took the same mercy beyond India and spread it around the world.

Your books provide us with profound insights. You built a society in which everyone can be engaged in the service of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Even people who have no desire for anything spiritual or religious are attracted to you, your teachings, and your movement. This is why your movement is so beneficial to all the souls in this material world, and especially those in a place like Taiwan.

We are insignificant devotees trying to follow in your footsteps. Great souls like you are very merciful toward fallen souls like us. So, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we beg at your lotus feet that you kindly continue to make us recipients of your boundless mercy. Without such mercy from a pure devotee, we would be left tossing in the waves of the ocean of *māyā*.

What can we offer in return for the sacrifices you made for us? We can only pray to remain your eternal servants, birth after birth, and to remain engaged in service to your ISKCON society.

Your servants at ISKCON Taipei, Taiwan.

(written by Amṛta Vilāsinī Devī Dāsī)

Tallinn

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Please accept our humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet!

On this all-auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, let us thank you for your gigantic contribution to the enlightenment and education of mankind.

- You brought the mercy of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu to all of us.
- You revealed to us the greatest happiness—rendering devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

- You very generously gave everyone the invaluable realizations of Vaiṣṇava culture.
- You taught us the *yuga-dharma*—congregational chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.
- You taught us how to cook and offer with devotion the most delicious preparations for Lord Kṛṣṇa, and how to honor *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*.
- You revealed to us the sacred opportunity to personally serve the Lord in the form of His *arcā-mūrti*.
- You bestowed upon us life in a wonderful extended Vaiṣṇava family.
- You taught us how to attain the Lord's special mercy by preaching the message of His *Bhagavad-gītā*.

For all these gifts and many more, we owe you a debt of gratitude we can never repay, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda! Although we cannot repay the debt, we still struggle in our childish attempts to serve your lotus feet in order to decrease this debt.

Unfortunately, however, our desire to serve you is too weak. Two witches—the desire for *bhukti* and *mukti* (sense enjoyment and liberation) have caught us and are firmly holding us in the clutches of *māyā*.

Now, by your mercy, we have realized our shortcomings. So we are attempting to serve you more seriously. We want to fill our life with service to you. We understand that *māyā* will try to trick us. But we believe in Your Divine Grace's power to protect us. Please help us become your real servants. Please cast your gracious glance upon us so that we can increase our devotional service to you and ISKCON.

In need of your special mercy,

Your insignificant servants in Tallinn, Estonia.

Teluk Intan

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. Hare Kṛṣṇa

You are the light guiding us in our spiritual journey along the true path: Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

You taught us who God is, what His name is, and how to revive our eternal relationship with Him.

You taught us how to engage our bodies and minds in the devotional service of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Your books always inspire everyone who reads them to follow the right path.

You are truly the real messenger of God for modern mankind.

Your disciples are doing a wonderful job guiding and inspiring us.

We pray to always remain a part of your family of Vaiṣṇavas.

Please give us your mercy and blessings so we may overcome the influence of *māyā*.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, on your all-auspicious Vyāsa-pūjā day!

Your humble servants at ISKCON of Teluk Intan, Malaysia.

Toronto

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

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

It is our immense joy and fortune to glorify you on behalf of ISKCON Toronto, the New Remuṇā Dhāma community. On the auspicious Nandotsava in 1896—the same year Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura sent his book called *Shree Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, His Life and Precepts* to the West—you appeared in this material world.

Five hundred years ago Lord Caitanya proclaimed, “My commander-in-chief devotee will spread the chanting of the holy names around the world.” Your appearance heralded that this prediction would soon come true and that you were the one chosen to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the people worldwide, unconditionally and indiscriminately delivering all conditioned souls.

In 1966, in the Lower East Side of New York City, you founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), and over the next eleven years you built temples, farm communities, schools, and institutes throughout the world. Your position as the preeminent Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ācārya has been established beyond doubt.

With your personal example and qualities of humility, modesty, truthfulness, honesty, frankness, and transparency, you inspired thousands across the world to take up the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The ethos of simple living and high thinking is the principle by which your serious disciples try to live. You strongly criticized the rampant materialism and impersonalism seen everywhere in the world, and you established self-sustainable communities based on the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the spiritual qualities of compassion and eco-sustainability.

At ISKCON Toronto we have been trying hard to maintain your mood and mission. At the core of every activity we plan are your “Seven Purposes of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness,” as per your wishes. Our community continues to thrive and grow through multiple endeavors, which are planned and executed by our dynamic young community leaders. Some examples of these can be seen in the efforts of our innovative *saṅkīrtana* team, which extends your compassion to thousands of clueless souls in the material world. The KC Society has become a solid platform from which to care and nurture young people who will become future leaders. We have a highly successful Krishna Fun School, where many of our young children are learning different aspects of Vaiṣṇava art, culture, language, and music, along with how to apply the foundational philosophical concepts of Kṛṣṇa consciousness under the guidance of their dedicated teachers. They’re also learning outreach activities through our *kīrtana* leaders and musicians.

You singlehandedly revolutionized vegetarian cooking, introducing karma-free food based on *bhakti* and compassion. Our efforts at distributing *prasādam* continue through our Govinda’s restaurant and successful involvement in mainstream events around Toronto like yoga shows. We are developing new initiatives to better extend hospitality to temple guests and also pursuing a number of other, similar programs.

We had resounding success with all our festivals last year due to the great dedication of the festival

teams, *pūjārī* department, and our tireless kitchen crew serving under the leadership of young and inspired devotees.

Under the guidance of senior devotees, the temple board, and the GBC, we have also embarked on a major change in management, which brought in new leadership and decentralized the management structure. This will allow strong leaders to emerge from within the community, creating more personal investment in our programs and preaching and a healthy growth for this wonderful temple.

We continue to forge relationships with other ISKCON centers in the greater Toronto area, trying for a unified approach to programs and growth. We beg for your blessings so that we as a community can understand the urgency of your mission and be successful in distributing Kṛṣṇa consciousness to society at large, always keeping in mind your mood and mission. On this great occasion, we pray to you to please grant us service to your lotus feet so that by serving you we can achieve perfection in our spiritual lives.

Your humble servants at New Remuṇā Dhāma, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Tucson

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

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

Each day passes, another is lost,
So many goals I set,
Marveling at your deep compassion—
How to repay my debt?

Serving your mission is serving you—
To that I give my life.
Duty calling, seldom falling,
Free from undue strife.

To follow in your footsteps
Is always on my mind.
With each instruction followed,
My desires are realigned.

You give me true purpose,
You set my firm resolve,
To help guide our Society,
Complex problems to solve.

I strive to do much more,
But attachment holds me back
From being more bold in preaching—
Wish I had more of the knack.

Empowerment comes from you,
Gaurāṅga's strong mandate
To reach the souls in this land—
Their fortune you create.

Uncertain times in which we live . . .
Māyā strikes the heart
Of greedy takers loath to give.
Our purity sets us apart.

Since your mood of mercy flows
Toward each conditioned soul:
“Bring the fallen back to Kṛṣṇa!”
What else could be our goal?

Long day's service, then brief rest,
Early morning rise . . .
Living fully what you've taught us,
Going home our prize.

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,
When with such a strong desire
We work as you have shown us,
Our eagerness shall never tire.

Your servants at ISKCON Tucson, Arizona, USA.

(written by Sandāminī Devī Dāsī)

Ujjain

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble obeisances in the dust of your divine lotus feet on this most auspicious anniversary of your divine appearance. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

Due to the degrading influence of the Age of Kali, people have become extremely sinful. Naturally, the consequences of their sinful activities have started to become manifest all over the world in the most devastating way. The coronavirus outbreak has brought the entire world to a standstill, and no one is able to help—they can simply watch thousands of people die before their eyes.

At a time like this, when the world is almost on the verge of collapse, please let your mercy counteract this dreadful situation. Please give us the determination and strength to engage in the *saṅkīrtana* movement by taking shelter of the holy name and distributing the divine wisdom Your Divine Grace mercifully gave us in your books.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we devotees in Ujjain are humbly trying our best to serve Your Divine Grace under

the wonderful and able guidance of your dear disciple His Holiness Bhakti Chāru Swami. We humbly seek your kind permission to present a brief report of some of the significant events that took place at the temple over the last year by your causeless mercy.

Recently, Bharatiya Chitra Sadhna held a competition, calling for entries for their Ujjaini Short Film Fest. Contestants were invited to submit short films, “fiction or nonfiction, short documentaries, campus films, and films in other categories.” More than eighty participants from all over India took part. We are pleased to inform you that we presented a short documentary about Your Divine Grace’s life and achievements entitled *ISKCON’s Contribution to Society*, and it won first prize!

Your Divine Grace wanted the administrative people in society—especially government authorities—to sympathize with your movement. For your pleasure, the devotees in Ujjain have created preaching programs specifically for them, and we have already held more than twenty such programs based on the teachings of your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

You will be happy to know that the life-size *guru-paramparā mūrtis* that will be installed in your dream project at Śrīdhām Māyāpur’s Temple of the Vedic Planetarium are being crafted at ISKCON Ujjain by one of our world-class artists, His Grace Amala Bhakta Dāsa, under the expert guidance of Bhakti Chāru Swami. Apart from this, in 2019 ISKCON Ujjain’s *mūrti* department supplied more than sixty life-size *mūrtis* of Your Divine Grace to temples around the world. In 2019 we also built eighty-four altars—the highest number of altars to date in any one year. These altars are made from the finest teakwood available and supplied to your ISKCON centers and devotees in countries around the world.

By your blessings we continue to celebrate all festivals with increasing enthusiasm. The month-long Kārttika festival was especially gorgeous last year, with more than thirty thousand people visiting the temple during that month. Especially attractive was the seven-day seminar on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, along with distribution of a full plate of *prasādam* to each visitor.

We are also happy to report that your Avanti School of Excellence is progressing nicely. Devotees are trying hard to serve the children of the surrounding community by providing them with a quality modern education mixed with a powerful blend of Kṛṣṇa conscious teachings. Our unique approach and measurable results in terms of the character and competence of the children is attracting many parents, and the number of student registrations increases every year.

For your pleasure the devotees are developing a plot of land in Nalwa village, on the banks of the Gambhira River, and doing organic farming—demonstrating a sustainable way to grow fruits and vegetables—and cow protection.

Your Divine Grace emphatically told us to cooperate and develop loving relationships among ourselves. With this intention we invite devotees from various centers to give us their valuable association and inspire us. Some of our guests have included His Holiness Jayādvaita Swami, His Grace Bhūrijana Prabhu, Her Grace Jagattārīṇī Mātājī, His Holiness Bhakti Jivana Vrajānanda Mahārāja, His Holiness Bhakti Ārjava Prīti Vardhana Mahārāja, His Grace Dayārāma Prabhu, His Grace Chaitanya Charan Prabhu from Pune, His Grace Vaiṣṇī Vadana Prabhu, and many others.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, for your transcendental pleasure, here is a list of other significant events in 2019:

1. More than 45,000 books distributed.
2. Three devotees sent to serve in your Ajmer and Haroa temples.
3. The installation of solar panels to facilitate a better supply of electricity.
4. A grand *nagara-saṅkīrtana* prior to Nityānanda Trayodaśī and Gaura-Pūrṇimā, with Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi mounted on an elephant and Your Divine Grace riding a cart.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we beg at the dust of your divine lotus feet to allow us to become humble instruments as you serve the mission of your Guru Mahārāja and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Thank you very much. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

Your humble servants at ISKCON Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, India.

Vallabh Vidyanagar

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

Please accept our humble obeisances on this most auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā celebration.

It is only due to your causeless mercy that conditioned souls like us are able to practice devotional service in your wonderful temple, where Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Giridhārī, Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, and Śrī Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā shower their causeless mercy on all the conditioned living entities here by regularly giving their all-attractive and enlivening *darśana*.

This year we have big plans for increasing book distribution and have also increased our congregational preaching. We plan to introduce effective preaching programs to attract more souls to the lotus feet of our beloved Deities. Every year we also conduct a number of *yātrās*, *japa* seminars, and retreats to enliven and encourage the devotees.

You have several acres of land at the ISKCON Vallabh Vidyanagar center, which we use for cow protection and *go-sevā*. We care for about 108 cows and calves in your *gośālā* here. In the near future we will open a larger farm to provide better health and hygiene for the cows and calves. On this new land we will also grow enough flowers for Their Lordships' worship.

Last July we celebrated the annual Vidyanagar Jagannātha Ratha-yātrā festival on the auspicious day of Ratha-yātrā as it is marked on the Vaiṣṇava calendar. The festival was a grand success because it was the first time we had celebrated our Ratha-yātrā on that Ratha-yātrā *mahotsava* day, and more than twenty thousand devotees, pilgrims, and local people participated. This is a wonderful way to distribute *harināma* to the masses.

Beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda, please bless all the devotees at ISKCON Vallabh Vidyanagar that we may properly use the opportunity you have given us to serve and please Śrī Kṛṣṇa by following in your footsteps. We need your blessings and spiritual empowerment so that we can preach more effectively and expand the devotee community for the service of Their Lordships.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your servants at ISKCON Vallabh Vidyanagar Anand, Gujarat, India.

Villa Varṣāṇā

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Because of your immense mercy and compassion toward the entire world, you asked Śrī Kṛṣṇa to give His mercy to us so that we could understand the message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Bhagavad-gītā*. There was no other way for the Western countries, swamped by passion and ignorance and concerned only about money, sex, eating meat, and taking intoxication, to understand your Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. It didn't make it easier that we devotees were going around in orange robes, shaved heads, and *śikhās*, chanting strange songs in a language no one understood. Could anyone know or even have *some* idea what all this meant? Not at all! No one likes to shave his head, especially a hippie, or dress in orange robes or eat only vegetarian food. But because of the strength of your message and the power of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, chanting mantras, being vegetarian, thinking about karma, reincarnation, and other apparently unusual things, are now fashionable in our world—not only in the West but also in China, Russia, and Africa. It is a real miracle that we are living in such an amazing way.

But we are now a little bewildered because, while in all the ISKCON centers we were chanting the holy name, worshiping the Deity, going out on *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, and performing other devotional services, the entire world has suddenly been paralyzed by a supercontagious deadly virus. We knew that the materialistic world couldn't continue in the same destructive way. You once said that all the cities would collapse, but we didn't know how or when.

However, forty years ago you bought rural properties around the world so that your devotees could live in a natural way, independent of the cities. So again, this is another of your great visions and of your miracles. Something so special as having land and protecting and caring for cows—you called this the basis of our economy. You preached it again and again, but no one could understand why it was so superimportant until now.

Thank you again and again and again for so many nice miracles performed for our life and facility, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You saved us and all of civilization in so many ways. Even though your great work is still not well known, soon the entire civilization will recognize your great vision and compassion toward all people in all countries.

Eternally in the service of your lotus feet,

Your devotees at Villa Varṣāṇā, Malaga, Spain.

Villaggio Hare Krishna

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

As I am writing these few words for your pleasure, spring just arrived. Our gardens are full of blooming and colorful flowers, the grass is bright green, and fresh new leaves are decorating the branches of the trees. Unfortunately, nature is also showing another face, ugly and frightening, because I am writing from the epicenter of a world pandemic disease. People all around me are dying by the thousands like flies, and the atmosphere is pregnant with sadness, anguish, fear, suffering, and lamentation. In the middle of this hard struggle and survival of the fittest, I realize more and more the urgency of dedicating every moment in the service of your mission. Not a second should go in vain.

Every breath I take will be for you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!
 Every move I make will be for serving you.
 Every bond I break will be for approaching you.
 Every single day I will remember you.
 Every word I say will be to glorify you.
 Every night I will dream of you.
 Every smile will be for the joy you are giving me.
 Every cry will be for the feeling of emptiness in your absence.
 Every prayer will be for your mercy.
 Every claim I stake will be for shelter under the umbrella of your teachings.
 I feel I belong to you.
 My poor heart yearns for you.
 I look around and I see none like you.
 You are the greatest, you are my life and soul.
 I long for the transcendental shelter of your lotus feet.
 Jaya Prabhupāda! My master and savior!

Your servants at Villaggio Hare Krishna, Bregamo, Italy.

(written by Āli Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī)

Vṛndāvana

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your soft lotus feet, which carry the eternal fragrance of sandalwood and roses. All glories to Your Divine Grace. Thank you for appearing in this world just to bless the helpless people of Kali-yuga. You have given our lives real meaning, practical purpose, and eternal happiness. It is only by your causeless and limitless grace that we have been awakened to any degree of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

What a spiritual legacy you have left us! Here in Śrīdhāma Vṛndāvana, your transcendental books are prominent in every corner of your Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma *mandira*, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* constantly resounds in ecstatic *saṅkīrtana*, and sumptuous *prasādam* is available for everyone. *Mamāstu vṛndāvana eva vāsaḥ*; there is no other place we would rather serve, for we feel your eternal presence here every day. The simple process you have given us provides all anyone needs, in the most relishable form. You said you will live forever in your books. No faithful disciple who regularly reads your books feels any need to go outside to hear from those who don't aspire to become your servants—for no one else can give us surrender to Your Divine Grace, give all that you gave, be who you were, or do what you did. *Bhavān iva bhavān eva*: You are comparable only to yourself. Therefore we worship you in great joy—today, and every day.

Just a few decades ago, this was a remote field just outside of Vṛndāvana. Today, seemingly infinite throngs now crowd its courtyards day and night—in an often overwhelming demonstration of your unparalleled success. During one recent Kārttika festival I noticed that the main donor toward this temple’s original construction could hardly even elbow his way inside. Among so many visitors and pilgrims, nearly a thousand people every day chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* on *japa* beads and purchase as many of your books. Thus they become fortunate by dint of your brilliant foresight, deep compassion, and tremendous austerity. May we always remain grateful and try our best to serve their spiritual needs as per your strong desire. We feel especially fortunate to render service to the worldwide society of ISKCON devotees, for whom you established this Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple—hoping that they too may be refreshed and inspired to return to their own preaching fields, to then disseminate the “gentle rain” of your mercy throughout the entire planet.

We know that we have all been saved from so much ignorance and suffering by dint of your exemplary fidelity to your spiritual master’s orders. You taught and urged us to embrace the same level of faithful surrender to all the instructions we have received from Your Divine Grace in the *guru-paramaparā* system. As you used to say, “Nothing is new.” Really, all we have to do is become cent per cent faithful disciples, and the rest comes as if automatically—as promised by the *śruti*:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yatha deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ*

“Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.”

Each generation of ISKCON devotees, in order to preserve what their predecessors have bequeathed, have to embrace your mood, mission, and selfless spirit of faithful sacrifice. Even one generation that neglects to do so can extinguish ages of orthodox practice and spiritual examples given by our predecessors—standards you embodied by dint of your faith. It is a most weighty task to live up to what you expected of all those who would serve and faithfully represent you here in Vṛndāvana. We are simply unfit. Your mercy is absolutely essential to us.

Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, bless us to see all people and things as you would see them, to act as you would act, and to speak as you would speak. We know that you will never reject us as long as we are sincerely surrendered to following your instructions. Kindly forgive our innumerable shortcomings, and always guide us forward. With all the humility at our command, we submit ourselves today at your lotus feet and beg for your continued blessings. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your eternal servants at ISKCON Vṛndāvana, India.

(written by Mukunda Datta Dāsa)

Washington, D.C.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to you.

Because

Because you took the order of your Guru Mahārāja

And got on a cargo ship at a late age
 To eventually set up at 26 Second Ave., New York,
 And because you came with nothing
 You showed us how Kṛṣṇa came too
 Because you accepted from a brass bell shop
 A beautiful black marble *mūrti* of Kṛṣṇa
 And named Him Madana-mohana.

And because later you sent Madana-mohana to D.C.
 Along with a request for Yamunā Devī to make Rādhā
 In the sweet dancing pose you'd once sketched
 We now have the first Deity of Kṛṣṇa given to ISKCON
 In the nation's capital, a place that surely
 Needs reminding of our relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

And because of your books and your temples
 All over the world, one man from a small town
 Over an hour's drive from our temple
 One day saw his neighbor's son visiting from London
 Walking down the street chanting *japa*
 And they met and talked, and later the neighbor's son,
 Jaya Nitāi, brought him to our temple.

And because of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda,
 This gentleman, Michael, began what he
 Describes as "a transformation in his life,"
 Supported by his reading of the *Bhāgavatam*
 And his conversations at the Bhakti Lounge
 A place where we try to do the following:
 "One should always associate with devotees.
 Even if they do not teach you directly, their
 conversations among themselves will teach you.
 Association with wise devotees makes what was
 empty full. It turns death into immortality. It turns
 calamity into good fortune." (*Vasiṣṭha-śāstra*)

And because you have taught us that
Bhakti means loving service and offering
 Beautiful things to the Lord to make Him happy
 Michael, a wood-carver, made some wooden shoes
 For the Lord, and not just one pair but many pairs
 Made from all kinds of wood from all over the world
 Some shoes with one type of wood on the top
 And another different color and pattern on the bottom.

Sacred shoes from an elderly gentleman who
 Has just begun his spiritual journey in *bhakti*
 Reminding us that because you took the first journey
 West, because you cared, because you stuck with
 This crazy Western world, because you never gave up

On the power of the holy name, because you never give up
 On anyone who takes a step toward Kṛṣṇa, because you are
 Always here, always available, always accessible, always kind
 We are blessed, loved, and know we belong to Kṛṣṇa
 Always have and always will
 Because you came and reached out and loved us all.

Your servants at New Hastināpura, ISKCON's Washington, D.C., temple in Potomac, Maryland, USA.

(written by Ānanda Vṛndāvana Devī Dāsī)

Wiesbaden

*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*

We are so happy, lucky, and blissful that by your mercy we can be engaged in menial services in your fabulous ISKCON movement. When we enter the temple room and, by your mercy, are allowed to drape your *pavitra* around your neck and your *cādar* around your shoulders, and to place your bead bag in your lotus hand, you allow us fallen living entities to come in contact with your divine spiritual body. In this way we are blessed by you! Our gratitude knows no bounds. We know that one day we will become true lovers of Your Divine Grace and, by your mercy, lovers of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Forever deeply indebted to you, we are trying to remain your servants for eternity.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for agreeing to come to this world and save us fallen souls. Thank you for becoming manifest in our lives. We were waiting for you for so long. And we are still waiting for love and gratitude toward you to become manifest in all its beauty and fullness and fill all the space around us and more.

Thank you for giving us the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—and for the holy books that you wrote, translated, published, and distributed. Thank you for writing and explaining your books in understandable language.

Thank you for giving us the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, where we are continuing to learn to become your servants and the servants of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thank you for giving us religious regulations that we can follow in this life. Thank you for showing us your example of how to love and serve Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and how to serve the spiritual master.

Thank you for the *prasādam* that you distributed to all the three worlds. Śrīla Prabhupāda, we really want to hold onto your blessed lotus feet and serve you with love and devotion. We are still too stupid to do it seriously and with full faith. Please bless us so that we can satisfy Your Divine Grace and, by following in your footsteps, Lord Nityānanda and Lord Caitanya.

We were recently present in Māyāpur for the grand opening of the *pūjārī* floor at the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium. Amazing and breathtaking! Everyone should go to Māyāpur at least once in life. This *dhāma* is an open gate from the material world into the spiritual world—to the Vaikuṇṭha planets and beyond—and anyone who goes to Māyāpur will be elevated automatically.

From our hearts we thank all the devotees and workers who have contributed to creating this marvelous

Vedic temple, especially Ambarīṣa Prabhu and his good wife Svāhā Devī Dāsī, who have relentlessly pushed on the temple's mission to please you. Our very best wishes to them. Hare Kṛṣṇa!

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.17.27) Lord Kṛṣṇa states, "One should know the *ācārya* as Myself and never disrespect him in any way. One should not envy him, thinking him an ordinary man, for he is the representative of all the demigods."

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, your grandchildren saved our family by showing us the true meaning of life and bringing your books close to our hearts. We are incredibly thankful—so thankful that tears fill our eyes. We feel we have to become more active in your mission. Please bless us so that we can be useful in spreading your mission and feel the joy of being engaged in the Lord's service as *dāsa-dāsānudāsa* (Cc. *Madhya* 13.80) and sharing it with others, supported by chanting the holy name and taking *prasādam*.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for looking after us with so much love!

Your servants at ISKCON's Hari Nāma Desh, Wiesbaden, Germany.

Winnipeg

*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 our most humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. Your fame is spread all over this world and beyond! All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Today we celebrate the 124th anniversary of your appearance in this world. We offer this homage to you on behalf of your disciples, granddisciples, and uninitiated followers at ISKCON Manitoba.

Once again, by the mercy of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *guru-paramparā*, we have the opportunity to contemplate our good fortune in having you as the captain of our ship for crossing over the material ocean. By establishing and spreading this glorious Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, you have given us the unique opportunity to serve Kṛṣṇa in all aspects of life. Your books are very practical and remind us of your presence. They are your unique gift to the world, and especially to your dedicated followers.

In fact, you gave us many gifts. As the recipients of your gifts of love, training, and knowledge, we are attempting to keep passing your gifts on. We are careful to let new recipients know that these gifts actually come from you. If you had not come to us, those of us born in the West would not have had any idea about the glories of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Also, those of us born in India but who emigrated to the West would be rotting in our material gains.

On this blessed Vyāsa-pūjā day we pray to you for the intelligence, patience, and spiritual realization to cooperate with one another so that we can effectively help you in your mission of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Please continue to keep us in your service while we strive to advance in realizing this lesson of cooperation. Thank you for engaging us in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Your servants at ISKCON Winnipeg, Canada.

(written by Viśvambhara Kṛpa Dāsa and Vṛndā Devī Dāsī)

Yavatmal

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

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

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most respectful obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga!

It's said that a man is more kind to his grandchildren than to his own children. We are the most fortunate granddisciples of an eminent *jagad-guru*, the spiritual master of the whole world, Your Divine Grace. Our fortune knows no bounds. Humanity will never be able to repay you for the unconditional love you have given. While writing this offering, we remember the poem you wrote in 1935 for the Vyāsa-pūjā celebration honoring the sixty-first anniversary of the appearance of your beloved Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. The fourth stanza is particularly cogent at this time:

Forgotten Krishna,
We fallen souls,
Paying most heavy
The illusion's toll.
Darkness around,
All untrace,
The only hope,
His Divine Grace.

Nowadays, for its illusion the world is paying a heavy toll in the form of a pandemic caused by a disease called COVID-19. The world is currently submerged in an ocean of darkness. You said, "I want to change the way people think." We think that if people all over the world would simply take up Kṛṣṇa consciousness and follow the four regulative principles you gave your disciples, the face of the world would be different today. Therefore, during this season of distress, the only ray of hope is you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. We are fighting by using the divine weapons you armed us with.

You said, "Depend on Kṛṣṇa. It is not the doctor or the medicine or the place, but Kṛṣṇa who is the master to do everything." Even in your childhood, when your kite wouldn't fly, you called on Kṛṣṇa for help. We are sincerely trying to follow your instructions and fight back with the ultimate weapon: the holy name.

These hours of fear remind us of another incident in your life—the bombing of Calcutta during World War II. People were fleeing Calcutta, and you sent your sons to Navadvīpa, but you yourself stayed in Calcutta due to family obligations. You kept serving Kṛṣṇa while the bombs exploded in your neighborhood. Your valor still fills us with courage in the face of death. Many of your granddisciples are distributing thousands of plates of *prasādam* to the needy, and a few are also serving as medical practitioners, risking their lives for the welfare of all.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your books are the true encyclopedia in this world. You always quoted Lord Kṛṣṇa's words at *Bhagavad-gītā* 8.15: "This world is *duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam*—full of misery, and temporary." One must realize it. Unless we understand that this place is miserable, there is no question of getting out of it. It's time the world rethinks its many material plans. If people could develop just a little taste for spiritual life, that would be the ultimate use of the bad bargain of living in the material world.

To help, we are doing *saṅkīrtana* every day from 5:00–5:15 p.m. Please bless us to adhere to what you taught us. You said, “We are not always successful in our attempts at preaching work, but such failures are certainly not ludicrous. In the absolute field, both success and failure are glorious.” May we succeed in making Kṛṣṇa the center of our lives! May we satisfy the Lord in every sphere of life! That will be the only perfection of our lives!

All glories to you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your servants at ISKCON Yavatmal, Maharashtra, India.

(written by Prāṇanātha Dāsa)

Zambia

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble obeisances at the dust of your divine lotus feet.

Your ISKCON temple in Lusaka, Zambia, is five years old, and Kṛṣṇa conscious activities are increasing here gradually. With your mercy, the outreach activities have spread beyond the borders of Lusaka to other towns. Two verses from the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi-līlā* 9.41 and *Madhya-līlā* 25.264) especially inspire us:

*bhārata-bhūmite haila manuṣya janma yāra
janma sārthaka kari’ kara para-upakāra*

[Lord Caitanya said:] “One who has taken his birth as a human being in the land of India should make his life successful and work for the benefit of all other people.”

*jīva nistārite prabhu bhramilā deśe-deśe
āpane āsvādi’ bhakti karilā prakāśe*

“To deliver all fallen souls, Lord Caitanya traveled from country to country. He personally tasted the transcendental pleasure of devotional service, and He simultaneously spread the cult of devotion everywhere.”

With these two verses to motivate and lead us, we are trying to establish and support ISKCON centers in other towns. One such town is Kitwe, Zambia, and the other is Lubumbashi, Congo, on the border of Zambia. In addition to supporting book distribution and Food for Life events, we are assisting these two centers financially. These centers are very small, with just a few resident devotees practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. With utmost faith and sincerity, the members of ISKCON Zambia are trying to reach out and share the gift of *bhakti*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, there is no moment of the day that we don't remember you as our savior. The knowledge we have received from your books, lectures, and biographies is vast. It is so scientific and appealing. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for bringing knowledge of the scriptures to us and giving us the opportunity to engage in pure loving devotional service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. We shall always remain indebted to you for showing us the right path; otherwise Māyā would have dragged us into the darkest regions of Kali-yuga. We definitely have hope for returning back to Godhead with your mercy and the mercy of Guru and Gaurāṅga. Please continue showering your mercy upon fallen, conditioned souls like us.

Here in Zambia, the lives of many people have been transformed after they came in contact with your Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. They are practicing devotional service by chanting the holy name and reading your books—*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and others. We have regular book distribution events, not only in Lusaka but also in other towns. We have installed many *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sets in people's homes. The community is gradually growing, and more are becoming eager to serve your movement. We are trying to strengthen ourselves by engaging in *sādhana-bhakti*.

The year 2020 marks our sixth annual Lord Jagannātha Ratha-yātrā festival. It is only due to your mercy that Lord Jagannātha is showering His mercy in Lusaka. The congregation in Lusaka is busy making a new chariot so we can conduct the festival in other towns as well. Despite the current worldwide pandemic, we are hoping to hold this year's Ratha-yātrā in June.

Our goal for the upcoming months and years is to learn and practice spiritual life nicely and help many others take up this process as well. We are deeply grateful to you for your constant compassion, guidance, and protection. You are our savior and inspiration.

A couple of years ago we began a weekly program for the children and youth. Around forty children attend this class. They are learning Kṛṣṇa consciousness and becoming expert at reciting *Bhagavad-gītā* verses. Last year, on the anniversary of Lord Kṛṣṇa's speaking the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the children quizzed one another on various *Gītā* verses, surprising everyone with their depth of knowledge. The event was very successful and has been added to the list of important festivals regularly celebrated at the center.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please continue showering your mercy upon us so that our effort to build a new ISKCON temple is successful. With your blessings, Govinda's restaurant is successfully distributing *prasādam* to many and supporting the temple activities financially.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please bless us so that we can continue to be a part of your preaching mission and please you and Lord Caitanya.

Your insignificant servants at ISKCON Lusaka, Zambia.

Homages from



The
Publishers

Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (Africa)

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances on this auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

You came to the material world and brought with you the wealth of the spiritual world in the form of your books. Your books continue to touch and transform the hearts of so many across the African continent through their distribution.

The African BBT is ever indebted to you for giving us the opportunity to serve you through the translation and production of your books. The team is dedicated to fulfilling its mandate to have your books translated and published in as many African languages as possible. By the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas, we have been able to begin making your books available in Amharic, Chichewa, and Lingala.

In 2019 we published *Easy Journey to Other Planets* in Amharic (a language spoken in Ethiopia) and reprinted the English *Science of Self-Realization*. We also produced the second pan-African Śrīla Prabhupāda Vyāsa-pūjā book (digital edition only) with just under four-hundred tributes. We now have twenty-four titles in print. With more books in local African languages in production, we gratefully continue the service of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the form of your books.

The African BBT is grateful to His Holiness Jayādvaita Swami for his priceless association, guidance, and mercy. He is a constant source of inspiration, and we are ever thankful for his direction based on his deep understanding of your desires regarding the production of your books.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, with your every word you continue to transform an otherwise dull, grim, and dangerous place into one endowed with spiritual opulence. Thank you for allowing us to engage in this important service of producing your books for the African continent.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, we offer all our efforts at the dust of your lotus feet and pray that you may bless us so that we may please you by continuing our service to the *saṅkīrtana* mission.

Your servants at the offices of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust in Africa.

Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (Australia)

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

I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, who has opened my eyes, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance, with the torchlight of knowledge.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Your Divine Grace, who have mercifully delivered tens of thousands of fallen souls like myself.

It seems like a miraculous feat to have achieved what you did in a few short years, but when we consider your purity, it makes complete sense. When a soul is free of all material coverings, the divine qualities of the soul shine bright. Nothing is impossible for the pure devotees of the Lord, since they have the same qualities as the Lord.

*mūkaṁ karoti vācāraṁ paṇḍurṁ laṅghayate girim
yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande śrī-gururṁ dīna-tāraṇam*

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

So, unqualified as we are, by your mercy and compassion we are able to engage in the topmost levels of devotional life. Many have engaged in these elevated levels of *bhakti* and are able to render wonderful services in assisting you to push on your mission for Lord Caitanya. Others are offering more simple but very necessary service in the temples around the world. In all cases this is offered to our Lord through Your Divine Grace.

In the absence of your physical presence we push on, albeit with a multitude of missteps and faults. We need to deepen our focus on the process that you gave us in order to purify our hearts and simply become instruments of Your Divine Grace. For that we are going to need your blessings and guidance, which, unless you come directly into our hearts, we will readily find in your books.

Having full faith that you are, in fact, still with us, I turn to you on a daily basis for guidance and direction. However, my mind is always in the way, since it is wild and generally out of control. Your books are therefore essential, as you are without question present in your words. So we can test everything on the basis of your books.

So here I am, a product of your mercy—pushing forward and still able, only by the mercy of your devotees, to do something in your service. And that service is so multifaceted that there is no end to opportunities for me to serve, whether it be guarding a door or leading a discussion between a group of your leaders.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please keep me on your team in spite of all my shortcomings.

Your aspiring servants at the offices of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust in Australia.

(written by Nareśvara Dāsa)

Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (Latin America)

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Please receive this humble offering from the Latin BBT. In it, we wish to express our deep feelings, and although we are fraught with imperfections and make mistakes, we pray you will accept it.

Your Divine Grace, we owe you everything: your shelter has touched our lives, and therefore we can devote ourselves fully to serving a very important part of your heart, the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. How amazing your mercy is, for it has given us all kinds of protection in our effort to keep your dear publishing house fully operational! We pray for your blessings so that your books always remain in our hearts and give us the guidance we need to overcome all the setbacks we may encounter while doing our service; and we also pray that the flower of service in our hearts always blossoms by our watering it with your divine words, with which Kṛṣṇa is most pleased.

We also thank you for giving us a plentiful life, since in the service of Kṛṣṇa, of your words in the shape of books, and of the devotees, we have the chance to grow and understand that a life without service is devoid of value and will not fulfill our hearts. Therefore, we pray for you to keep us in service, and to give us the intelligence to expand and develop your mission. In that way, day after day we can contribute our best qualities to this publishing house so that it will make a difference in the world.

We are immersed in this dark Age of Kali, the age of strife and ignorance, and nowadays it is very hard to find a bona fide spiritual master. Out of your mercy, and only out of your mercy, we found you—or, rather, you found us—when we were lost. Your great qualities, such as truthfulness, knowledge, compassion, discipline, devotion, humility, faith, generosity, kindness (listing all of them would be an endless task) are unique and are reflected in your books, to which you dedicated so much care and effort because you knew it was the foundation of your movement. You saved us from all kinds of confusion, and now you have allowed us to serve you in your beloved BBT. Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, we ask you for your blessings so that we can carry out this service properly and in this way please you.

There are different departments of activity in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and a spiritual master, knowing the abilities of all his devotees, trains them in such a way that by their tendencies to act they become perfect. The *Bhagavad-gītā* makes it clear that one can attain the highest perfection of spiritual life simply by offering service according to one's ability.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thanks to your purports we are now fully aware of our constitutional position as souls and eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa; we can now know what comes next after this life. You allowed us to discover the workings of the world and of the universes; we have learned how to liberate ourselves from the unending chain of repeated births and deaths; we have received the complete and most confidential knowledge in the world. Please give us the intelligence to help more and more souls become familiar with this knowledge through your books.

Your intensity in preaching, in reminding us of our transcendental connection with Kṛṣṇa, is impossible to measure. It is the inherent quality of a liberated soul. However, you also conveyed to your most surrendered servants that same intense desire to preach at all times and places. That intense desire is evident in your books, so that when we go out to the streets, markets, or any other venue, we partake of the mood of taking your intense transcendental desire to millions of persons, and we receive the unmatched benefit of your gratitude, despite the fact that it is we who will always remain grateful.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you possess features that are hard to find in just one person—features of the poet, the scientist, the philosopher, the social critic, the counselor, the leader, the renounced devotee, the most perfect father and grandfather, the most compassionate teacher. You are the pure devotee whom Kṛṣṇa lent us physically for some time on this planet. You and Kṛṣṇa drew the perfect plan so that we would never lose your association and guidance. That perfect plan is called the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Without your books, we could not have you by our side every day. These books contain your personal glance, both on your institution and on each of your followers. Book production and distribution are the only things for which giving the best of ourselves makes sense. Without your books, we are worthless.

Existing for and because of your books,

Your servants at the offices of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust for Latin America.

Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (North America)

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace on the occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā.

You are the representative of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, who is the author of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the topmost Vedic literature. You have mercifully given us at the BBT this sublime text, and others, to care for, just as you have given other followers of yours Deities to care for. This is in some sense literally true, because *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the literary incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* itself.

*idam bhāgavatam nāma purāṇam brahma-sammitam
uttama-śloka-caritam cakāra bhagavān ṛṣiḥ
niḥśreyasāya lokasya dhanyam svasty-ayanam mahat*

“This scripture named *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the literary incarnation of God, and it is compiled by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the incarnation of God. It is meant for the ultimate good of all people, and it is all-successful, all-blissful, and all-perfect.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.40)

In one of your lectures you said,

Of course, here we don’t find such facility, but India, when we speak on the *Bhagavad-gītā* or on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we worship regularly with flower, with other paraphernalias required for worshiping. You see? And in the Sikh religion they also . . . they have no Deity, form of the Deity, but they worship the book, Grantha-Sahib. [Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.17, San Francisco, 29 March 1967]

In another lecture you said,

And it was worshiped in the temple as Deity, *śāstra*, not that it is available everywhere. It has become . . . Now press has made it very cheaper. But we should always understand that *granthas*, or the scriptures, should be worshiped as God. That is sound incarnation of God. It should not be neglected. Don’t neglect *Bhagavad-gītā* or *Bhāgavata* as ordinary books. You must be very careful. As you take care of the Deities, you should take care of the books also. [Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.25.37, Bombay, 6 December 1974]

You have entrusted us at the North American BBT with the responsibility of keeping your books in print and distributing them in this part of the world.

Originally, in India, before you came to the West, you were doing the service of translating the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and arranging for its printing and sales all by yourself. Now, when you are no longer manifesting your physical presence, we find ourselves in the position of assisting you in performing the services of printing and sales.

You did not come to the West until you had the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* published in three volumes. And when you arrived here you continued to translate, publish, and distribute further cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

This is your greatest gift to us and the world. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* itself says:

*dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsarāṇāṁ satāṁ
vedyaṁ vāstavam atra vastu śivadaṁ tāpa-trayonmūlanam
śrīmad-bhāgavate mahā-muni-kṛte kiṁ vā parair īśvaraḥ
sadyo hṛdy avarudhyate 'tra kṛtibhiḥ śuśrūṣubhis tat-kṣaṇāt*

“Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated, this *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* propounds the highest truth, which is understandable by those devotees who are fully pure in heart. The highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all. Such truth uproots the threefold miseries. This beautiful *Bhāgavatam*, compiled by the great sage Vyāsadeva [in his maturity], is sufficient in itself for God realization. What is the need of any other scripture? As soon as one attentively and submissively hears the message of the *Bhāgavatam*, by this culture of knowledge the Supreme Lord is established within his heart.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.2)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the pure representative of Vyāsadeva, and you have given us this *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, which is sufficient for establishing Kṛṣṇa within our hearts.

You are very merciful to us, even though were are not very much qualified.

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

“Kirātas, Hūṇas, Āndhras, Pulindas, Pulkaśas, Ābhīras, Śumbhas, Yavanas, members of the Khasa races, and even others addicted to sinful acts can be purified by taking shelter of the devotees of the Lord, due to His being the supreme power. I beg to offer my respectful obeisances unto Him.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.4.18)

Because we you have kindly allowed us to take shelter of you, we are becoming a little purified. By accepting us as your disciples and granddisciples, you are also behaving as the representative of Śrīla Vyāsadeva. As *dīkṣā-guru* or *śikṣā-guru*, you are the guru of us all.

On this day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, we thank you for allowing us to continue to assist you in your service to your spiritual master, to Śrīla Vyāsadeva, and to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Your servants at the offices of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust in North America.

Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (Northern Europe)

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

By your desire and mercy, Kṛṣṇa consciousness has spread all over the world. An important quality that allows this to happen is your willingness to trust and empower your disciples and granddisciples.

In your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.15.45 you write, “The spiritual master is certainly very merciful to his disciples, and consequently by satisfying him a devotee gets strength from the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

With this strength your followers advance in devotional service and achieve far more in serving you than anyone could have imagined possible. One amazing example of your empowerment is how your faithful disciple Brahmānanda Prabhu found a publisher for your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*:

So one day I get in the mail—there’s an envelope from Macmillan Company with a check and a letter on Macmillan letterhead ordering the record [titled “Krishna Consciousness”]. So I went up to Prabhupāda and asked him, “What should I do?”

So Prabhupāda said, “You go and deliver it personally, and you tell the person that you have a *Bhagavad-gītā* manuscript to publish.”

I said, “OK. Shouldn’t I bring the *Bhāgavatam* books to show that you’re already a published author?”

Prabhupāda said, “No. Don’t even mention it. You just tell them you have a *Bhagavad-gītā* to publish.”

I was the yes-man. Whatever Prabhupāda said, do it. No more, no less.

So I went in there, and the guy who had ordered the record was a junior, junior accountant who had nothing to do with publishing. Then all of a sudden a man walks in, and then the accountant introduces me to him. “This is Mr. James Wade. He’s our senior editor.”

I said, “Mr. Wade, pleased to meet you. I have a *Bhagavad-gītā* to publish.”

And he looks at me, “A *Bhagavad-gītā*? I’m looking for a *Bhagavad-gītā* to fill out our religion section. We have Buddha, and we have this and we have that. And the only thing I don’t have is a *Bhagavad-gītā*.”

I said, “Well, I got it.”

He said, “OK, I’ll publish it.”

He agreed on the spot. Can you imagine? I thought, “My God, this Kṛṣṇa consciousness is something. And this Prabhupāda, Swamiji, he’s something.” Because he just told me, “Just tell him you have a *Bhagavad-gītā* to publish.” And that’s what I did, and they agreed.

You are still giving your mercy and empowerment to ISKCON devotees today, and so we see that devotees are still translating more of your books into more languages in order to spread your mercy to countries that have had little contact with devotees. Devotees are also working to preserve past and present editions of your books and their manuscripts, protecting your generous legacy for future generations. Even with the world in lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, devotees are finding ways to distribute your books. As you wrote in 1975: “Do not worry, in spite of war, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will be distributed. We don’t care for war. Our preaching business will go on.” (Letter to Rādhāvallabha Dāsa, 21 August 1975)

Lord Caitanya is glorified as Patita-pāvana because He saved Jagāi and Mādhāi, who had committed sins of all description. You are also glorious as Patita-pāvana. You went to the West at a time when people were addicted to sinful activity, yet you loved them. Then you saved them by transforming their hearts and making them saintly. You loved those who came to you and you also love those yet to be saved. As more and more devotees advance and spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness around the world, your glorious pastime of saving the fallen shines ever brighter.

We pray that you will continue to give us your mercy so that we can serve you and your mission with integrity and fidelity to your words. We pray that we can serve as your instruments and achieve great things by producing and distributing your books near and far, in many languages. And we pray that we

have the humility and honesty to see that any credit we may receive in our service is actually your glory and thus we should offer it back to your lotus feet.

Your servants at the offices of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust in Northern Europe.

(written by Ananta Kṛṣṇa Dāsa)

Homages from



Ministries

ISKCON Daiva Varṇāśrama Ministry (India)

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

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

Om̐ śrī surabhyai namaḥ! All glories to Mother Surabhi! All glories to *varṇāśrama-dharma*! All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Hare Kṛṣṇa.

For your transcendental pleasure and the pleasure of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, Śrī Nṛsiṃhadeva, and the Pañca-tattva, we'd like to report on the following activities carried out over the last year. With your blessings, the ISKCON Daiva Varṇāśrama Ministry (IDVM) in India has successfully completed ten years of service and continues to endeavor to fulfill its mandate and spread awareness of *daiva-varṇāśrama* among devotees and in society in general. We continually try to fulfill the fifty percent of your mission Your Divine Grace said you left unfulfilled.

To achieve this, we organize courses each year at ISKCON's global headquarters in Māyāpur. This year we offered a six-day course on *Āyurveda* in cooperation with the Māyāpur Institute. The course was given by His Grace Dattātreyā Dāsa, who taught *ṛtu-caryāṁ*, *dina-caryāṁ*, *pañca-karma*, and other disciplines. The course was both well-attended and well-received.

The Ministry also reached out to villages through the Dharma Go Gram Yatra. We visited 108 villages across five Indian states with this initiative. The program included *go-pūjā*, *kīrtana*, discourses, the distribution of *saṁskāra-parts*, and sumptuous *prasādam* for all participants. Thousands of villagers accepted the *saṁskāra-parts* and pledged to chant one round of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* on *japa-mālā* every day. Children, teens, adults, old men and women—all stood enthusiastically in queues and waited their turn to receive a *japa-mālā* and learn how to chant the *mahā-mantra* on it. We also taught them to dance in *kīrtana*.

ISKCON Leads seminars were given at the Tāla sārī farm in Maharashtra, and were presented to four batches of students by Mādhava Dāsa, Hari Kīrtana Dāsa, Rāma Lakṣmaṇa Dāsa, and Ananta Tīrtha Dāsa. Several other seminars, such as courses on holistic farming, cow care, and multilayer farming, were organized at farms in Tulyānana, Karnataka, and elsewhere.

The Ministry also set up stalls at the ISKCON Leadership Saṅga in Māyāpur and reached out to devotees by distributing pamphlets and books on *daiva-varṇāśrama*. We also distributed valuable information about cow protection through our Om̐ Śrī Surabhi Campaign, and we built a stall showing *ahimsa* cloth, which drew special attention. Many devotees came forward and learned the practical art of making cloth. A good number of devotees came to all our stalls and appreciated the Ministry's initiatives.

The Varṇāśrama College at Sahyādri Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Kṣetra also offered courses this year, with eleven students attending. There were courses on cow care, organic farming, yoga, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and other subjects. The event was coordinated and led by His Grace Hari Kīrtana Dāsa, the Ministry's Director for Rural Development. Hari Kīrtana also continued his active preaching in villages and shared awareness about the importance of and need for *daiva-varṇāśrama*.

The Varṇāśrama Book Trust (VET), the Ministry's publishing wing, published *Make a Vṛndāvana Village* in Hindi. The book was translated from the English by Śyāmānanda Dāsa. Also, a hardbound copy of *Śrīla Prabhupāda: Speaking on Varṇāśrama*, compiled by Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī, was released through VET director Śrīpati Dāsa's efforts.

Mādhava Dāsa was appointed Deputy Minister for the IDAM in India.

In the present precarious situation, in which the world is fighting the coronavirus, Your Divine Grace's instructions to lead a simple, rural-based Kṛṣṇa conscious life are more relevant than ever. Your predictions that modern cities are unsustainable and will collapse are evident in the lockdown announced by governments around the world. We pray that you will give us strength so that we can promote and establish *daiva-varṇāśrama* for the welfare of the entire world.

Your servants at ISKCON's Daiva Varṇāśrama Ministry, India.

Padayātrā Worldwide Ministry

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, our supremely empowered *senāpati-bhakta*,

Please accept our humble and joyful obeisances at your lotus feet.

It's been another year witnessing a wonderful *padayātrā* explosion in India, and about a dozen annual walks in other parts of the world. We're trying to find ways to enthuse and inspire devotees in Europe, the Americas, Africa, and so on, to jump on the bandwagon of ecology and animal rights and organize walks around these two themes, which are now gathering hundreds of thousands of supporters.

Padayātrā is indeed expanding in Bhārata-varṣa. Besides its two ongoing walks, the All-India *Padayātrā* and the Telangana *Padayātrā*, last year new teams have taken to the road with oxcarts in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Gujarat. A form of fun-filled, short and easy-to-do *padayātrās* is now spreading around this country due to the enthusiasm and determination of Muralī-mohana Dāsa from Ahmedabad. This is the one-day *padayātrā*, especially geared to *grhasthas*, women, children, and other busy devotees. Muralī-mohana has conducted over forty one-day *padayātrās*, mainly in Gujarat, since 2016. Through his continual endeavor and our annual "Padayātrā Newsletter," we are trying to introduce his formula to all ISKCON temples and preaching centers. Other innovations, still in India, come thanks to my disciple Jayabhadra Devī Dāsī from Amravati, and these include a children's *padayātrā* and two Vaiṣṇavī *padayātrās*.

Since *padayātrā* means "moving temple," it works with aspects of ISKCON temples, so we are cooperating more and more with several ISKCON ministries and projects. To spread your glories and have the public come to know you better, we urge all *padayātrīs* to show and distribute DVDs of Yadubara Dāsa's powerful and heart-moving documentary *Hare Krishna! The Mantra, the Movement, and the Swami Who Started It All*. Appreciating this movie, last July American freelance writer Bridgette Jackson-Buckley wrote, "At a time when chaos on the world stage appears to be contagious, *Hare Krishna!* eloquently reiterates one of Swami Prabhupada's most pertinent messages that was brought to the West more than fifty years ago and yet remains vitally relevant today: Forget politics. What the world needs is a revolution of consciousness. . . . By raising our level of consciousness and expanding our awareness—in the midst of personal trials and global challenges—we can effectively alleviate not just our own suffering but also the suffering of those around us." A revolution in consciousness—that's the goal of all our *padayātrās*. We *padayātrīs* couldn't have stated it better.

We're also establishing contact with the Agriculture and Cow Protection Ministry to form a plan so that the 645 oxen now living on ISKCON farms and eco-villages can be fully engaged. Only a small percentage of them are used for agriculture or local transport, which leaves hundreds of them idle and available for

padayātrās, either around the farms where they live or for longer walks. Letting people meet, know, and appreciate these noble, gentle, useful animals is an integral part of our cow protection scheme. When the East Coast America Padayātrā started to use oxen, the *padayātrīs* preached intensely about the importance of cow protection, and a number of interesting articles appeared in the newspapers. Haribull! Haribull!

We are happy to announce that in 2020 the Padayātrā Worldwide Ministry will print volume two of the *Padayātrā* trilogy, *The Padayātrā Explosion*. It describes the more than one hundred *padayātrās* that were completed between July 1986 and the massive celebration of your centennial in 1996, with Padayātrā India as the leader and mother of all *padayātrās*.

Because of the coronavirus scare, Mother Earth is now getting a well-deserved respite as millions of people are confined to their houses and unable to drive their cars, fly on planes, or use other polluting machines. We pray that people will use this time to investigate the goal of life and what they really need. The roads are now deserted, and at some point there will be a scarcity of petrol and diesel, but millions of bullock carts on all continents will still be there to spread the holy names and infect everyone with the karunavirus of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's sublime mercy. The world will again be compelled to walk or use bullock carts as a mode of transport. Then "we can introduce many millions of such carts all over the world."

Just today we heard that workers in India had to leave big cities by foot: their factories or shops are closed because of the massive shutdown all over India, and there are no buses or trains running to transport them home. No work means no money, and no rupees means no food for themselves or their families back in their villages. Maybe this is the beginning of a healthy reversal: workers leaving the monstrous megalopolises to which they had run with the dream of getting ahead, and now returning to their villages to be satisfied with simple living in natural surroundings in the midst of caring families and friends. Probably most of them were once farmers, and they are now dreaming of the friendly oxen they left behind years ago. Oxen and bullock carts were and still are the solution.

Param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam! This is our report of some of the highlights of the events since your last Vyāsa-pūjā. We offer these humble efforts at your lotus feet and hope you are pleased. May you shower your merciful glance on all those who are actively participating, and we hope that your Padayātrā Worldwide Mission realizes Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's vision of spreading the holy name to more and more towns and villages.

Your servants at the Padayātrā Worldwide Ministry.

(written by Lokanāth Swami)

ISKCON Vaiṣṇavī Ministry

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

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

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

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī

Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanya and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

Our Divine Master, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this most blessed day of all sacred days, you, Kṛṣṇa's *senāpati-bhakta* and ISKCON's founder-*ācārya*, appeared on Nandotsava, the day after Janmāṣṭamī, 1896.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were born at 63, P. Tollygunge Road, Tollygunge.* At the time this area was a remote village south of that *gupta tīrtha*, the hidden holy place of India—Calcutta, now known as Kolkata.

In preparation for your birth, your mother, Rajani De, retired to her *māsi bāri*, the home of her sister Laxmimoni, a devout Vaiṣṇavī well known for her devotional practices and care of others. Returning to the expectant mother's estate was the custom for cultured families at that time. In a simple family delivery room close by, you appeared. On that day, the world's gloomy fate was irrevocably altered. A spiritual revolution with you at the head would later begin and transform the globe.

Once out of her confinement, your mother and your Aunt Laxmimoni regularly took you for *darśana* of the nearby ancient Deities Rādhā–Madana-mohana. Your innocent eyes would have been fascinated with the loveliness of Kṛṣṇa, with His large hands and delicate features, and His effulgent Rādhārāṇī, cast in brass. You stayed at Laxmimoni's house for approximately eight months before returning to your paternal home.

The famous jackfruit tree that shaded the delivery room still stands and still bears fruit—which in itself is unusual for a tree of that species and age. The soul encased in that tree surely would have rejoiced to witness your arrival, no doubt replicating the joy of the demigods in the heavens when you appeared on this planet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are certainly adored and honored in your ISKCON, but your fame has also spread widely throughout India and the world. His Holiness Vishvesh Tīrtha, the *pīṭhādīpati* or "pontiff" of the famous Śrī Kṛṣṇa Maṭha in Udupi, said of you:

Devotion to Kṛṣṇa was limited only to India, but Swami Prabhupāda took this devotion out of India and distributed it to anyone and everyone all over the world. That's why today we can see that people from all over the world are accepting devotional service and becoming devotees of Kṛṣṇa. In this way, they are becoming the best of humans.

Bhagīratha brought the Gaṅgā down from the heavenly planets, but Swami Prabhupāda brought the Bhakti Gaṅgā down from Goloka and flooded the whole world. In this way, Swami Prabhupāda has done something that is much better than what Bhagīratha did!

More so than any others, as Prabhupādānugas, your followers, we should accept it as our foremost duty to broadcast your unique position. As you state in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.13.14, paraphrasing Lord Caitanya's statement to Sanātana Gosvāmī at Cc *Madhya* 23.39: "*vaiṣṇavera kriyā, mudrā vijñeha na bhujaya*. A highly advanced Vaiṣṇava lives in such a way that no one can understand what he is or what he was." And although we can barely comprehend your illustrious position, your achievements reveal that you are indeed Kṛṣṇa's personal emissary. Being in your presence enveloped us in the inspiring embrace of unparalleled joy—and separation from you was accompanied by the cracking of our hearts.

You are the *viśva-ācārya*, or the world *ācārya*, the *jagad-guru*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, as we can see by your accomplishments. You set the whole world on fire with the flames of devotion, creating a spiritual revolution that is still expanding. We surrender to you as the actual *sampradāya-ācārya*. Even in the distant future, if members of your movement continue to serve you with heart and soul, they will make unparalleled advancement on the path back to Godhead.

This service in association and in unity is critical for individual and collective spiritual progress. You wrote with such compassion in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.12.37:

A devotee sees all living entities with spiritual vision and does not discriminate on the platform of the bodily concept of life. Such qualities develop only in the association of devotees. Without the association of devotees, one cannot advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. . . . We invite everyone, without discrimination; we request everyone to sit down and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and take as much *prasādam* as we can supply, and thus everyone is pleased with us. . . . *Muci haya śuci haya yadi kṛṣṇa bhaje*. It is said that even a cobbler or person born in the family of a cobbler can be elevated to the position of a *brāhmaṇa* (*śuci*) if he takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Any person who is purely Kṛṣṇa conscious and who engages in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra is the purest in the whole universe.

We members of your International Society for Krishna Consciousness should deeply meditate on those words. You did not discriminate on the basis of gender, social status, or a person's bank balance. Instead, you gave both boys and girls equal opportunity to render devotional service to the Lord and to you, our beloved spiritual master.

For ISKCON to continue to flourish as it did under the care of your physical presence, we would do well to remember how important it is to rise above the bodily concept of life, as you said so many times, such as in the purport quoted above: "Anyone who once utters the name of Viṣṇu immediately becomes purified, inside and outside (*yaḥ smaret puṇḍarikākṣam*)."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the purest of the pure and devoid of any faults. The *śāstra* describes that *amānitvā* and *prema* go hand in hand. One cannot achieve pure love of God without deep, true humility. Anyone who has had the causeless mercy to have met you or to have heard about your pastimes with us knows how profound your humility is.

So deep is your humility, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that you wrote the following in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.12.33: "[S]ometimes I think that even though I am crippled in many ways, if one of my disciples becomes as strong as Dhruva Mahārāja, then he will be able to carry me with him to Vaikuṇṭhaloka."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the beacon of light in this gruesome world, showing by your personal example how we should behave as your servants. By witnessing your humility, we are reminded not to be proud and focused on personal glory or our insignificant achievements.

Oh, Śrīla Prabhupāda, how merciful you are to have come and saved us!

In *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala*, Śrīla Locana dāsa Ṭhākura describes how Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself predicted the future appearance of a great *senāpati-bhakta* (commander-in-chief of the devotees), who would preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

In the *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* (1880s) of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, he also predicted the future appearance of a great personality who would go to the West, preach the message of Lord Gaurāṅga, and fulfill Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's prediction that His name would be heard in every town and village of the world. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wrote:

When will that day come when all greatly fortunate souls in countries such as England, France, Russia, Prussia, and America will take up banners, kettledrums, *mṛdaṅgas* and *karatālas* and thus cause the ecstatic waves of Hari Nama Kīrtan and the singing of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's holy name to rise in the streets of their towns and cities?

In the Vaiṣṇava line, the previous *ācāryas* selected and severely tested the earnestness and qualifications of their disciples. But among the special characteristics of the founder-*ācārya* is his infinite compassion. He accepts all those who come and commands his disciples to do the same.

In your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.12.36 you write, "[T]here is no one dearer to [Kṛṣṇa] than those who preach the gospel of *Bhagavad-gītā* to the world."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, because with indefatigable determination you tirelessly preached the message of Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, saving so many lost souls.

How can we repay you? Impossible! But we can endeavor with all our hearts to follow the path you

prescribed, by chanting the holy name and by serving all the devotees with care and compassion, following in your footsteps in regards to how you loved and cared for all of us. After all, by translating *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.11.14 you reminded us that “The Lord is very satisfied with His devotee when the devotee greets other people with tolerance, mercy, friendship, and equality.”

And how you please Kṛṣṇa so much, our dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, our light, our life! On this most auspicious day of your appearance, we pray that we may please you in some small way, no matter how unqualified we may be.

Your servants at the ISKCON Vaiṣṇavī Ministry.

(written by Krishnarūpa Devī Dāsī)

*In 1977 Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote to Saṅkarṣaṇa Dāsa, his first initiated Bengali disciple and also his grandnephew, and told him that he (Prabhupāda) was actually born at 63, P. Tollygunge Road, Tollygunge, not on Harrison Road (now Mahatma Gandhi Road), and that ISKCON should acquire that property. This was done in 2013.

Homages from



Other
Sources

Aguascalientes Preaching Center

Beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble and respectful obeisances in the dust of your divine lotus feet, which are the refuge of all souls in this material world.

You are always empowering your devotees so that they can spread the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. In February of 1975, just two weeks before your second visit to Mexico City, a fire broke out in the temple, and you empowered local devotees to repair the temple just in time for your arrival. They were able to do this by your mercy. You allowed it so that the devotees and nondevotees would benefit spiritually from your visit. And this was the case when you arrived. The temple was like new, thousands of people could be blessed to see you and hear from you, and a number of devotees were able to personally receive initiation from you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, it has been almost forty-three years since your departure from this earth, but we continue to receive your spiritual potency to preach Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *saṅkīrtana* movement worldwide. Śrīla Prabhupāda, please never stop pouring your and His mercy onto us so that we can continue, with that inspiration, to humbly serve you by enthusiastically spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness and thus one day satisfy you.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for your unlimited mercy.

Your aspiring and most fallen servants,

The devotees at the Aguascalientes Preaching Center in Mexico.

(written by Premānanda Dāsa)

The Australian Society for Krishna Culture

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances always and in particular on this occasion of your 2020 Vyāsa-pūjā day! All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am a fruitive servant. When I chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and remember the Lord, it is more like a matter of thanksgiving. Many countries, especially the USA, have thanksgiving days. Time and again I find myself in a situation where Lord Kṛṣṇa graces me with unexpected, incredible, and even unimaginable benedictions. Thus I feel His hand in my life, remember Him, and indeed become ecstatic and chant, chant, and chant. It is no wonder that you stated that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the nicest boss. As always, your statement is fully justified!

I also listen to such ecstatic kirtans as <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5ckdMUIVjc>, “Final day of parikrama,” by your talented disciple His Grace Baḍa Haridāsa Prabhu. As you have taught us, this is the *saṅkīrtana* sacrifice (*yajña*) in full swing, the specific Kali-yuga *dharma*. You say that *kīrtana* must be melodious. We may say that Baḍa Haridāsa Prabhu’s *kīrtanas* are not only melodious but also sweet and pleasing to the heart. We have Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy” and anthem of the European Union. But here, especially towards the end, we have the march of liberation and triumph over the fourfold material miseries—birth, death, old age, and disease. This is true religion, as opposed to “pretentious religion,” (CC *Ādi* 1.91). All glories to your disciple Baḍa Haridāsa Prabhu, who is, among many, many others, a worthy representative of yours!

As far as your disciples being your dancing elephants, I feel most like a dancing elephant when bouncing around on a nice wooden floor to the sounds of *kīrtanas* led by the likes of His Holiness Indradyumna Swami, His Holiness Bhakti-bhṛṅga Govinda Mahārāja, His Holiness Kadamba Kānana Mahārāja, His Grace Baḍa Haridāsa Prabhu, His Grace Mādhava Prabhu, His Grace Śrī Prahlāda Prabhu, and others. In all fairness, to this brief list I should also add Her Grace Jāhnavī Devī Dāsī, who is an excellent, graceful, and enthralling singer as well. Additionally, some of these personalities add an excellent, healthy, and welcome dose of Kṛṣṇa conscious humor to their performances. Mostly I am referring to the now-famous yearly Sacred Sound *kīrtana* retreat at ISKCON New Govardhana, in Murwillumbah, northern New South Wales, Australia, headed by the expert Ajita Prabhu. This is its fifth year. Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus epidemic, the news of the cancellation of the 2020 edition has just arrived (mid-March 2020). There is a similar yearly Sādhū Saṅga retreat event in Boone, North Carolina, USA, at elevation 1,016 metres. This elevation reminds us of Mahāmuni Vyāsadeva and the Himalayas. We know from your trip to St. Moritz, Switzerland, in 1973 (elevation 1,822 m), the year of my joining your ISKCON for good in Paris, France, that you do not like to visit such cold places. To you, it is St. Hellish. (*Prabhupāda Līlā*, Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami, SPL 7-9 Zurich and New York.)

This dancing—and the entire festival indeed—must be happening under the influence of the internal *hlādinī-śakti*; otherwise why would I feel inclination to dance with my old material body? I have noted this with others as well. The late Mahā-Vishnu Swami from India used to appear like a frail old man, but as soon as he absorbed himself in *śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ smaraṇaṁ*, Mahārāja would become very much alive and he would glow.

Sometimes, of course, Lord Kṛṣṇa just lets me dangle as well. But that is also His kind mercy for my ultimate benefit. I have no doubt about it. I accept it as a form of brainstorming.

With your spiritual genius, you have coined the abundantly used expression “your ever well-wisher” from the Sanskrit word *suhṛdam*: “The Supreme Lord is also described as *suhṛdam* (‘ever well-wisher’). The Supreme Lord is always a well-wisher, just like a father or mother. Despite all the offenses of a son, the father and mother are always the son’s well-wisher.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.25)

Similarly, you have coined the expression “The living entity is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa.” I still do not understand why you use the expression “part and parcel” and where it comes from. As you are using two different words, there must be two different meanings and there must be some distinction, even though superficially it may seem that “part” and “parcel” are the same. Or is it simply to be considered an idiom like in many other cases of literature?

By meditating on your smile, one actually becomes happy and smiley. This is because the guru’s pictures are not different from the guru himself, and one can almost see the muscles of your friendly transcendental face moving. You are so kind, Śrīla Prabhupāda! You are an ocean of kindness!

Śrī-guru karuṇā-sindhu, *adhama janāra bandhu, lokanāth lokera jīvana*: “Our spiritual master is the ocean of mercy, the friend of the poor, and the Lord and master of the devotees.” (*Śrī Guru-vandana*, from *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*, by Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura)

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.4.12 describes your personality very nicely:

Those who are devoted to the cause of the Personality of Godhead live only for the welfare, development, and happiness of others. They do not live for any selfish interest. So even though

the Emperor [Parīkṣit] was free from all attachment to worldly possessions, how could he give up his mortal body, which was the shelter for others?

It has become more difficult to distinguish reality from illusion and the cheater from the well-wishing and honest person. The distinctions between the two have become hazier. At the least, seemingly wrong or unconventional friends and relatives clamor, “Watch out! Scam, scam, scam!” There have been, however, an ashram break-in and theft, a tax office impersonator, and an attempt to steal bank account details, to name three crimes only since my last offering. People are becoming paranoid in their relationships with one another. This is a sign of the times. Let us, therefore, follow your advice: Why be satisfied with any less quality of love than the love directed toward the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa?

Because of his development of transcendental attachment for the Supreme Lord, a surrendered soul feels the presence of his beloved everywhere, and all his senses are engaged in the loving service of the Lord. His eyes are engaged in seeing the beautiful couple Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa sitting on a decorated throne beneath a desire tree in the transcendental land of Vṛndāvana. His nose is engaged in smelling the spiritual aroma of the lotus feet of the Lord. [Of which the mundane counterpart immediately provokes revulsion. (my own remark)] Similarly, his ears are engaged in hearing messages from Vaikuṇṭha, and his hands embrace the lotus feet of the Lord and His associates. Thus the Lord is manifested to a pure devotee from within and without. This is one of the mysteries of the devotional relationship in which a devotee and the Lord are bound by a tie of spontaneous love. *To achieve this love should be the goal of life for every living being.*” [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 1.55, purport; emphasis added.]

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving us the matchless gift, the *yuga-dharma*, strictly according to the rules of the *paramparā* system. You have not added or subtracted anything.

What a mighty gift! What a jewel of jewels! What a crown jewel! We only have to pray to develop the desire, perception, and ability to appreciate your gift at its proper value and full potential. You have delineated the straight path back home, back to Godhead, for the next ten thousand years of human civilization on planet earth.

Here is the evidence!

Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 18.55:

*bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ
tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśate tad-anantaram*

“One can understand Me as I am, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of Me by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God.”

(By the way, we note that this current rendition of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* 18.55 seems undoubtedly improved in comparison to the previous version. In the word-for-word of both versions we clearly find *yaḥ ca asmi*, or “as I am.” The passage from the third person to the first, nice and personal, is therefore fully justified. One may, however, ask where in the Sanskrit does “only” come from?)

You are not a cheap compromiser! Neither are you a foolish deviator! And most of all are you not a rascal cheater! All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

You are the best!

And you will always reside in the innermost chambers of our hearts. And our hearts will always remain at your holy lotus feet, ready to serve your instructions within our respective capacities.

In addition and in my humble opinion, we would do better to first become completely competent and conversant in the study and realization of your main three works, that is, *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and your presentation of the glorious *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, before moving to non-Prabhupāda books. That task, it seems to me, is the occupation of a lifetime. And just as at the time of incorporation

of ISKCON you insisted on “Kṛṣṇa consciousness” instead of “God consciousness,” we, your followers, if only as a marketing ploy, ought to insist on *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* when it comes to *Bhagavad-gītā*. Even though we may hold *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* in our hands, it seems to me that *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* is protected by some sort of veil, which dissipates under certain circumstances. This principle applies to all aspects of devotional service. This veil robs us of *ruci*, the taste of attraction for and understanding of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

When one is freed from all unwanted contamination, he advances with firm faith. When firm faith in devotional service awakens, a taste for hearing and chanting also awakens. After taste is awakened, a deep attachment arises, and from that attachment the seed of love for Kṛṣṇa grows in the heart. When that ecstatic emotional stage intensifies, it is called love of Godhead. Such love is life’s ultimate goal and the reservoir of all pleasure. In the beginning there must be faith. Then one becomes interested in associating with pure devotees. Thereafter one is initiated by the spiritual master and executes the regulative principles under his orders. Thus one is freed from all unwanted habits and becomes firmly fixed in devotional service. Thereafter, one develops taste and attachment. This is the way of *sādhana-bhakti*, the execution of devotional service according to the regulative principles. Gradually emotions intensify, and finally there is an awakening of love. This is the gradual development of love of Godhead for the devotee interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 23.11–15]

Furthermore, even though it is a unique and unavailable position to be your *dīkṣā* disciples, it ill behooves us to be proud of such a unique position. I am saying this for my own sake. In His dealings with the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa has sufficiently proven that He does not approve of pride. The initials ACBSP are far more prestigious than any mundane initials such as BA, MA, or PhD, and every member of ISKCON is your disciple—*śikṣā* disciple, that is. I may therefore propose the appellation ACBSPgen1, ACBSPgen2, ACBSPgen3, etc., to give everyone in the ISKCON family the honor of being recognized as your disciple.

Just as in the old days, when we joined your ISKCON, my current doctor, a 72-year-old remarkably fit Englishman and ex-serviceman, has reminded me in an indirect way to offer you my *daṇḍavats* immediately upon rising from sleep. To strengthen the psoas muscles, he has recommended a thirty-second exercise that is very much like *daṇḍavats*: resting on the forearms and toes, one keeps the body parallel to floor at a height of ten or twenty centimeters.

In thirty seconds, I can utter at least twice very distinctly the Sanskrit part of your two *praṇām mantras* and can use them as a rough stopwatch as well:

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

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

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

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

Robin, my current doctor, is such a dynamic personality that he gave me on the spot a practical demonstration on the floor of his practice. I was impressed, and I subsequently gave him a copy of your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Let us hope he will take full advantage. But as you said, one is benefited simply by touching the book. But as a preacher, one should not be satisfied with the bare minimum either. My previous

doctor was unfortunately unable to heal himself and died before the age of fifty. *Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!*

This chanting process is so inconceivably simple and sublime! Deceptively simple because “Even a child can take part in the chanting, or even a dog can take part in it.” Sublime because it delivers the highest benefit of human life: redemption from this material world.

[Uddhava said to Lord Kṛṣṇa:] O my Lord! Transcendental poets and experts in spiritual science could not fully express their indebtedness to You, even if they were endowed with the prolonged lifetime of Brahmā, for You appear in two features—externally as the *ācārya* and internally as the Supersoul—to deliver the embodied living being by directing him how to come to You. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.29.6, quoted at *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 1.48]

Here is the ultimate occupation, the ultimate shelter, and the ultimate medicine for the recalcitrant mind: the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, as well as the scrutinizing study, assimilation, realization, and bold preaching of Prabhupāda *vāñī*. This is the dynamic *samādhi* of Kṛṣṇa conscious activities, as opposed to the meditative *samādhi* of the *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* process!

I offer it back to you, my lord and master, as one would offer Ganges water back to Mother Gaṅgā:

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

Your servants at The Australian Society for Krishna Culture.

(written by Yādavendra Dāsa)

Back to Godhead Magazine

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

We find that throughout history Lord Kṛṣṇa empowers His pure devotees in this world to exemplify various exalted qualities. While it is hard to point to one particular characteristic of your devotion to the Lord as preeminent, your dedication to preaching is certainly a candidate for that distinction.

From the moment you met your Guru Mahārāja, you began to meditate on his request that you spread the teachings of Lord Caitanya to the English-speaking world. Following your Guru Mahārāja’s example, you always planned to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness by means of the printing press, and your first printing project in America was the relaunch of your *Back to Godhead* magazine. Soon, and for a number of years, your disciples’ preaching efforts consisted almost exclusively of street chanting and the distribution of BTGs. It was during those years that you regularly referred to *Back to Godhead* as the backbone of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

As with other declarations of yours, you didn’t reserve the “backbone” epithet exclusively for BTG. When ISKCON Press was printing small books, you referred to it as ISKCON’s backbone, and you also used the term to describe the “routine work” you enjoined for your disciples—rising early, attending the morning program, chanting sixteen rounds, and so on.

Your movement is now a thriving body with many backbones, and although BTG’s role in supporting that transcendental body is not as prominent as it once was, devotees around the world still find it

beneficial for preaching and for their own spiritual lives. We receive letters of appreciation from devotees who have been reading BTG for decades, as well as from people fairly new to Kṛṣṇa consciousness who eagerly await each issue.

Thank you for engaging us in the service of producing your magazine. It is a devotional opportunity that enlightened souls throughout the universe would strive lifetimes to achieve. We pray that we may always value this service and offer you a magazine that meets with your approval.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your servants at Back to Godhead magazine.

Bangkok Preaching Center

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your lotus feet. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

On this auspicious occasion of your appearance day, on behalf of the devotees of our preaching center I would like to write few paragraphs glorifying your transcendental contributions and reporting on our activities.

Our center has been officially open for about twelve years now. It is near two universities, and most of our resident devotees are students. They generally stay at the center for a few years before moving on with their lives in different parts of Bangkok and other parts of the world. It is pleasant to see how the ex-resident student devotees continue their spiritual life and preaching activities in their hometowns while fulfilling their family and other social responsibilities. Thus in our small way we have been able to assist you in spreading the mission of Lord Caitanya, who said, *prthivīte āche yata nagarāḍi-grāma / sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*: “In every town and village, the chanting of My name will be heard.” (*Caitanya-bhāgavata, Antya 4.126*)

In addition to the students, we have been trying to reach out to the local Thai people via *harināma-saṅkīrtana* and book distribution. Some have joined our center, but most have left after practicing for a few months. Over the years, as we have matured and gotten to know the Thai culture and language, we have been able to better understand them. Most Thai people are Buddhist, with strong and often hidden Hindu beliefs. Impersonalism, voidism, atheism, black magic, and materialism are prevalent, and sinful activities (especially meat-eating) are unrestrained. When presented with pure devotional philosophy centering on the personal form of God (Kṛṣṇa), and enjoined to fully surrender to Him without any material remuneration, hardly anyone could make it. Over the years we have learned to be more tolerant and compassionate toward people and accept their present level of faith in God. With this broader perspective, it has been much easier to relate to the local people. Overlooking their imperfections, we have been able to get people to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, especially in melodious *kīrtanas*, to offer and relish delicious *prasādam*, and to participate and assist in festivals. Some locals have now been staying in our center for several years and assisting us in helping you spread Lord Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* mission.

Your servants in Bangkok, Thailand.

(written by Antaraṅga Gopāla Dāsa and Sumādhurī-līlā Devī Dāsī)

Bhaktivedanta Archives

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to you, the most faithful servant of the *paramparā*, and its zenith.

Another year has passed, and your *vāṇī* remain ingrained in our hearts and service. The immense knowledge you provided to guide the neophyte and advanced souls alike endures, as we conserve and preserve this legacy and pictorial preaching history for future generations of devotees.

While your images continue to inspire our love for you, it remains your words, both in print and as transcendental sound vibration, that give us the faith and humility to serve you as the entrusted instrument of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The melodic sound of your voice takes us to that primal place deep within us, as you explain:

So sound is the original element of creation. In Sanskrit language it is called *śabda-brahma*. Brahman, or the Absolute Truth . . . first . . . becomes knowable by sound. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said, the Lord says, *raso 'ham apsu kaunteya prabhāsmi śaśi-sūryayoḥ / śabdaḥ khe. Śabda* means sound. If we want to see God, so let us hear first of all the sound vibration because that is the beginning. [Class on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.1, New Vrindavan, 1 September 1972]

While your direct disciples are leaving this world, your direct *vāṇī* continues to reverberate more and more and inspire.

We beg to remain your obedient servants,

The Bhaktivedanta Archives staff of the Vāṇī Samādhī.

Bhaktivedanta College

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to the dust of your lotus feet.

At *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.25.8, Devahūti says to Lord Kapiladeva:

*tasya tvam tamaso 'ndhasya duṣpāryādyā pāragam
sac-caṣṭur janmanām ante labdham me tvad-anugrahāt*

“Your Lordship is my only means of getting out of this darkest region of ignorance because You are my transcendental eye, which, by Your mercy only, I have attained after many, many births.”

You add this in your purport:

This verse is very instructive, since it indicates the relationship between the spiritual master and the disciple. The disciple or conditioned soul is put into this darkest region of ignorance and

therefore is entangled in the material existence of sense gratification. It is very difficult to get out of this entanglement and attain freedom, but if one is fortunate enough to get the association of a spiritual master like Kapila Muni or His representative, then by his grace one can be delivered from the mire of ignorance. The spiritual master is therefore worshiped as one who delivers the disciple from the mire of ignorance with the light of the torch of knowledge. . . . By the instruction of the spiritual master, the darkness of ignorance is removed, and thus the disciple is enabled to go to the side of freedom.

As you mention so many times (such as in your purport to SB 2.9.8), the main or, indeed, *only* duty of the disciple is to faithfully execute the order of the bona fide spiritual master.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I have been amazed at how seriously your disciples take your instructions and how they follow them faithfully, investing so much energy into explaining their primary importance to their disciples and trying everything to make sure those disciples also follow them. However, I also used to think that your direct disciples had a great advantage because they had met you personally and received your instructions directly. For the ensuing generations of disciples, however, I thought it inevitable that your teachings and instructions would fade.

This year, for the first time I had the opportunity to participate in the International Leadership Sanga in Mayapur. The theme was “Leading ISKCON into the Future”, i.e., strategies for ensuring that your teachings live on in the hearts of the coming generations of devotees. These future devotees, it was recognized, needed to be inspired to follow your instructions, to have full faith that these instructions are the only means for getting out of the mire of the post-modern world and getting to the free side to find the path of pure devotional service. Among the speakers of the Sanga, the second generation was strongly represented, and the audience had a fair amount of third generation disciples also. Almost all the lectures were of the highest quality, setting out principles and giving recommendations and methods to ensure that your teachings and instructions are passed down to future generations of devotees. Having accomplished this goal of undoubted importance, the Sanga had another strong message: it emphasized that each of us has a personal responsibility for the future of ISKCON. Most inspiring, at the Sanga we could meet role models among the representatives of both the previous generation and our peer generation, excellent people who think and behave responsibly.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, it has been clear to me for some time that the future of Bhaktivedanta College in Hungary depends on whether we can bring up the next generation of teachers. I was aware that a key factor for achieving this is that the future teachers not only have a high standard of knowledge and educational skills but also practice pure devotional service. My new realization, however, is that there is another important condition to ensure: the next generation of teachers should not only accept the unique importance of your teachings and mission but should also take personal responsibility for preserving and passing on the same, just as your beloved disciples did for us and the generations to follow.

Your loving servants at Bhaktivedanta College, Hungary.

(written by Mahārāṇī Devī Dāsī)

College TSKP

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

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

We offer our humble obeisances to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda on this anniversary of his auspicious appearance in this world. Just as with the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance prevalent at this time shall get light as brilliant as the sun from his writings and spoken words.

But It's Not the Time

Unemployment sky high,
Violent crimes on the rise,
Domestic violence the new norm,
Women and children now forlorn.

Streets becoming rivers of blood,
The hearts of all covered with crud,
Food prices up and morals down,
The educated no better than clowns.

Enmity and hatred as bombs explode,
Artificial economy implodes.
A tunnel with no light at the end,
Into utter despair man descends.

But it's not the time for Lord Śiva's dance!
Thus humanity must have one more chance.

We have the boat and favorable winds,
Just need a captain to assure a win.
The sunrise reveals you as leading the fleet,
To carry one and all to His lotus feet.

Books as time bombs now strewn all around.
A cloudburst of mercy pouring down.
Our position as God shall be relinquished.
Blazing fires of despair to be extinguished.

Historians will note this time, indeed,
When Your Divine Grace took the mission's lead
As the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement saved the day
And left all the *asuras* in total dismay.

Please engage us in Lord Caitanya's revolution
 So we'll teach others about this all-around solution
 By either distributing books or shoveling hay,
 For example is better than precept, they say.

Marveling at our good fortune each day,
 We now fall to our knees and fervently pray,
 "May all living entities find their retreat
 As particles of dust at your lotus feet."

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your aspiring eternal servants, the members of College TSKP.

(written by Dānakeli Devī Dāsī)

Eger Preaching Center

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to you.

I recently read a short article in which you were talking about how the US is mistakenly considered a materially advanced country. You pointed out that it was not so because even Americans cannot live peacefully, since they are constantly surrounded by crime and there are also many poor people in the country. But most importantly, you said, they take the pieces of paper known as money to be of real value while in times of an epidemic or war those pieces of paper cannot produce milk and grain.

We see time and time again how true your teachings are. While we may temporarily be blinded by the advancement of technology, our global karmic fate keeps revealing to us that money cannot buy happiness or safety, and that it also cannot buy food when production or transport is severely limited.

We are going through such a global challenge right now, with the onset of a deadly pandemic. Your teachings ring truer than ever. Certain foodstuffs have disappeared from supermarkets shelves as everybody tries to stock up for the hard times ahead, and there are even rumors that in a few months we will be unable to buy food even if we have the money because international transport is restricted and local farmers cannot produce enough to provide for entire countries. The pieces of paper known as money will have absolutely no value, whereas those who own a plot of land and a cow will survive.

If only the world had listened to your teachings! There is so much *ugra-karma* going on, and even with the glorious combined efforts of devotees around the world, it is hard to turn the tide. More than ever people are crazy for sense gratification, and as Kali-yuga progresses it becomes more and more difficult to bring about a spiritual revolution.

But there is still hope. Although Kali-yuga is certainly progressing, an increasing number of people around the world see through Māyā's lies and are ready to change their lives. Right now devotees are busy broadcasting your teachings online and are more enthusiastic than ever as more and more people turn to us for guidance during these challenging times. We are more than happy to share your teachings,

since we know for sure that they are the only hope people have. The silver lining in this terrible situation is that it is making multitudes of people realize that there is no real shelter in the material world.

Please bless us in our endeavor to serve you by preaching your teachings. Times like this are excellent reminders that the Western “civilization” is but a myth and what the world really lacks is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Your servants in Eger, Hungary.

Festival of India

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. And all glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

On this day we celebrate your appearance in this world. We celebrate your magnificence. We celebrate the unparagoned magnitude of what you gave and are still giving us. This day is when our world came to be bestowed with salvation. Today, one hundred and twenty-four years ago, is when our world changed.

At the age of sixty-nine you left heaven and descended into hell. With Lord Kṛṣṇa as your captain, you navigated the darkest depths of what Kali-yuga had to offer and triumphed like no other. Just as a lion casts aside bothersome flies, you cast aside our *māyā* and lifted us up, marking the first moment in history where non-Indians received training in Vaiṣṇavism.

You became our master, and we, your servants. As you guided us through this ocean of unlimited suffering, we became your arms and your legs, and thus you established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness just under a year after you landed on these shores. From that moment onward, your feats of wonder grew exponentially, as did your glory.

Circling the globe fourteen times, you established more than one hundred temples and initiated almost five thousand disciples on six continents.

You brought the unlimited mercy of Lord Jagannātha to us by inaugurating His blissful Ratha-yātrās, where members of the public were given the opportunity to experience his mercy, as well as to sample the products of the world’s first ever vegetarian restaurant chain.

You published the monthly *Back to Godhead* magazine, which at its height of circulation printed more than a million copies per issue.

You translated over sixty volumes of Vedic literature and authored over seventy books. You founded the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust to publish and distribute your works throughout the world, and to date your books have been translated into over sixty languages, and over half a billion pieces of literature have been distributed. Your works have such authority, profundity, and in-depth clarity that they have received worldwide acclamations from academic establishments such as Harvard, Oxford, Oberlin, Columbia . . . the list goes on.

You gave thousands of lectures, of which we recorded over two thousand. You gave a glimpse of your perfect mind through your conversations, of which we have over one thousand three hundred archived. You kept in touch with our disciples through your divine letters, of which we have over six thousand archived. You allowed us to capture your eminence in over thirty thousand pictures and more than seventy hours of film footage. You gave us your transcendental voice in more than twenty record albums of pure love.

Your list of achievements is wondrous, glorious, and impossible to catalog.

Through your words, your voice, and your physical form you gave us the most precious, priceless, matchless gift.

You gave us you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your humble servants on the Festival of India crew.

(written by Madhava Franchin)

Govinda Valley Retreat

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

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

A Miracle Worldwide

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You brought Kṛṣṇa, the oldest of the old,
to new audiences all over the world—
Kṛṣṇa, the freshest of the fresh and coolest of the cool.
For you it was so real, so normal to be with Kṛṣṇa,
and He . . . was with you.

Fifty years later we still wonder how you did it,
how you were in this world but not of it,
how everyone loved you and you loved everyone,
how you turned hippies into happies
and lowlives into living high forever.
We saw you do it, but we often fail to do it ourselves.

Fifty years later your ISKCON is expanding,
getting bigger and all.
But many of us miss the ease

with which you operated,
took down wall after wall,
how you won people's hearts
and put Kṛṣṇa in it.

For you Kṛṣṇa is real,
walking next to you,
telling you how
to write the books.
For us Kṛṣṇa is kind of real, too,
though we struggle being real ourselves,
being human on the transcendental path.

Fifty years later the world is changing and we wonder what to do,
how to reach people with the oldest message. "But for the new
is it different or should it all just be the same?"
we ask ourselves while we wonder how this all became.

We realize we only know so much,
Or so little if we had a humble touch.
We often wonder what you would do,
how you would present Kṛṣṇa now
for the many, not just a few.

Coronavirus: how would you deal with that,
teaching about calamities and how it is
that we are actually already dead—
"flapping dead bodies thrown in a distant forest"—
while caring for and being with people
in a very human and compassionate way?

We miss you, Śrīla Prabhupāda,
and we don't know what to do.
You taught us and you showed us,
but doing it ourselves,
we fall short.

We hope that soon in this confused society
there will be unity in diversity.
And we hope that within your ISKCON
that unity will be there too.

Your servants at Govinda Valley retreat Sydney, Australia.

(written by Padmanābha Dāsa)

Grihastha Vision Team (GVT)

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

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

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You are our Syamantaka jewel. Every day you produce valuable golden assets in temples, homes, communities, and businesses—wherever you are. You enrich our lives and give us hope. In this service you have given us, we are motivated to strengthen families and encourage “healthy marriages, happy families, and a stronger ISKCON.”

This year we produced another practical devotional marriage booklet, “The Vaiṣṇava Marriage Challenge,” worked with scores of couples in Russia or from Russia (in Vṛndāvana), held our seventh annual GVT couples’ retreat, collaborated with Chinese devotees in formulating the GVT initiatives to be implemented in their *saṅgas*, and saw our book, *Heart and Soul Connection: A Devotional Guide to Marriage, Service, and Love*, printed in Portuguese, Italian, Russian, and Chinese! (In addition to English). And our website, vaisnavafamilyresources.org, has reached 154 out of 195 countries in the world! Only by your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Only by your mercy!

We pray for your blessings so that our small but determined efforts will multiply exponentially, and that servants of Kṛṣṇa all over the world will learn how to have real Kṛṣṇa conscious marriages—thus enlivening and giving hope to millions in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s *saṅkīrtana* mission.

Aspiring for love and feeling unlimited gratitude in your service,

Your servants at the Grihastha Vision Team (GVT).

(written by Kṛṣṇanandini Devī Dāsī)

Ichalkaranji Preaching Center

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

All glories to Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu and His *senāpati-bhakta*, Your Divine Grace.

Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura, in his *Caitanya-maṅgala* (*Sūtra-khaṇḍa*, song 12, texts 562–565), refers to your appearance. Lord Caitanya is speaking of the reasons for His descent:

*nāma-guṇa-saṅkīrtana vaiṣṇavera śakti
prakāśa karibe āmi nija prema-bhakti*

“Chanting Kṛṣṇa’s name and qualities is the life and energy of the Vaiṣṇavas. I will reveal these activities and rejuvenate pure devotional service unto Myself.

*ei mate kali-pāpa karibe sañhāra
sabe cala āge pache na kara vicāra*

“In this way I will destroy all the sins in the Kali-yuga. So all of you, My associates, go ahead and take birth on the earthly planet before My advent, and don’t remain behind.

*ebe nāma-saṅkīrtana tīkṣṇa khaḍga laiṇā
antara asura jīvera phelibe kṛtīyā*

“Taking the sharp sword of the congregational chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra (*nāma-saṅkīrtana*), I will root out and destroy the demoniac mentality in the hearts of all the conditioned souls.

*yadi pāpi chāḍi dharma dūre deśe yāya
mora senāpati-bhakta yāibe tathāya*

“If some sinful people escape and, giving up religious principles, go to far-off countries, then my *senāpati-bhakta* will come at that time to give them Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

A *senāpati* is a military field commander. So Lord Caitanya is saying He will empower His dearest devotee—you, Śrīla Prabhupāda—to organize an army of devotees to help him spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness around the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have opened a preaching center in Ichalkaranji under the guidance our *dīkṣā-guru* and your beloved disciple, His Holiness Lokanāth Swami. In the last three years we have connected with many people. We now have three hundred devotees who are following the four regulative principles and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Apart from these, two hundred more devotees are following the four principles and chanting sixteen rounds. For your and Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Gaurasundara’s pleasure, we have purchased land for the Ichalkaranji preaching center, where people can come and chant the holy names, and from which we can spread the glories of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu.

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

Lord Caitanya predicted, “In as many towns and villages as there are on the surface of the globe, My name will be broadcast.” (*Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Antya* 4.126)

We have managed to organize three Ratha-yātrās and three Bhāgavata-kathās in the last three years in Ichalkaranji. All this is due to your mercy, received through your disciples.

We can simply repeat the verses written by His Holiness Jayapatāka Swami to express our gratitude unto you:

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

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

We were fortunate that previously, and this year as well, we were able to welcome and receive the All-India Padayātrā (started in your personal presence) at Ichalkaranji. This year we also welcomed and

received the All-Maharashtra Padayātrā, which started last year on the seventieth Vyāsa-pūjā of our Guru Mahārāja.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for kindly appearing on this planet to show us a way to Goloka Vṛndāvana, our eternal home. We hope that by your mercy we will rejoin you there by following the guidelines given by you and accepting the guidance of the present *ācāryas*. Please bless us so that we can serve Guru and Gaurāṅga as you have served your Guru Mahārāja. Please bless us with the strength to follow in your footsteps in service to our *śikṣā-gurus*, *dīkṣā-guru*, and your mission.

Your insignificant servants at the Ichalkaranji Preaching Center, Maharashtra, India.

(written by Sahasranāma Dāsa)

International Society for Cow Protection

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to you, our beloved spiritual master.

We hear their hoofs pounding the earth as they run, their dewlaps fiercely swaying from side to side, their long ears flopping in the wind. Where are they going? Are they running with fear away from harm?

A new, tasty hay bale is arriving, pierced by the tractor's spear and lowered into the silver hay ring. Fresh hay is pure joy for the cows unfettered by any fear or anxiety.

We humans are hoping and waiting for the unseen germ COVID-19 to pass us by or destroy us; in the meantime, the cows are joyful, their stomachs full. Humans are worried about their health, their longevity, and how long the government restrictions of isolation and "lockdown" will be necessary to preserve the health of as many people as possible. Then there is the fear of financial ruin due to the restrictions of isolation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have saved us from this mental anguish. You have given us a purpose, a mission that forces us above fear and loneliness. Your mission of cow protection has forced us out of self-pity, forced us to think first of the cows and their happiness. You have given us the holy name to take shelter under, both *japa* and *kīrtana*. You have given us your books to ease our minds with supreme knowledge. But for us here at ISCOWP, it is your cow protection mission that unites with our hearts most deeply. We hear your praises of how dear the cows are to Lord Kṛṣṇa. We hear your instructions about how we can become happy when the cows are happy.

People do not know what they are doing in the name of economic development. The influence of

Kali will keep them in the darkness of ignorance. Despite all endeavors for peace and prosperity, they must try to see that the cows and the bulls are happy in all respects. Foolish people do not know how one earns happiness by making the cows and bulls happy, but it is a fact by the law of nature. Let us take it from the authority of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and adopt the principles for the total happiness of humanity. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.17.3, purport]

Fortunately, the cows are easy to please. How uncomplicated they are! Even more wondrous is how appreciative they are of our smallest human efforts to care for them. Some hay, some fresh grass, some fly wipe, fresh cool water, sufficient pasture to roam, companionship with us, and their sisters and brothers are enough for them to be satisfied with their lives.

Following the worn cow path through the woods, we find Akshobhya, wearing his wooly winter coat, utilizing a fallen tree branch to scratch his forehead and then his neck. His heavy winter coat must itch as the weather turns warmer and spring approaches. Deeper in the bushes are Nara and Jahnava, enjoying a private moment of affection as Nara licks Jahnava's neck. Jahnava is in ecstasy until Nara forgets he has horns, and one lightly pokes Jahnava in the neck. Jahnava is a bit surprised but continues enjoying Nara's continuous licks. Jahnava is a resilient girl.

As the woods open to the fields, the cow path takes us through the front pasture. Padmagandha is guarding the pathway and not allowing anyone to walk beyond him. Anasuya is the first one to approach Padma, and they begin to swing their heads (both adorned with sharp-pointed horns) at each other, echoing loud clicking sounds when their horns clash. The battle goes on until Anasuya steps back and decides upon a different tactic. She approaches Padma with her tongue extended and gives him a few licks on his forehead. Anasuya then calmly walks beyond Padmagandha toward the new hay bale.

Most of the cows are gathered around the new hay bales, eating happily. Some members of the herd are sitting, eyes closed, ears perked up, peacefully chewing their cud. Sitting next to Amrita, we can hear her deep, rhythmic breathing. All three of the Brahmins in the herd breathe with the same otherworldly peacefulness. The ISCOWP staff and members provided the cows the hay, which has made them happy. When the cows are happy, everyone who helped make them happy is happy. Pleasing the cows pleases the human soul.

You have given us a simple solution to these most challenging times. We, as your disciples and granddisciples, must protect cows. Protecting the cows means keeping the cows happy. We must convince others to protect cows, and we must spread the knowledge of cow protection worldwide. Why? If we do so, you have instructed us, the entire world will become happier under the protection of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

A society devoid of cow protection and brahminical culture is not under the direct protection of the Lord, just as the prisoners in the jails are not under the protection of the king but under the protection of a severe agent of the king. Without cow protection and cultivation of the brahminical qualities in human society, at least for a section of the members of society, no human civilization can prosper at any length. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.14.34, purport]

Please, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, bless your devotees with the strength, knowledge, determination, and perseverance to establish cow protection worldwide for the happiness of the cows, all the inhabitants of the earth, and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Your servants at ISCOWP, the International Society for Cow Protection.

ISKCON Child Protection Office

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Like Ganges water offered back to the Ganges, we offer your words of inspiration and clarity on this auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā:

These children are given to us by Krishna, they are Vaisnavas and we must be very careful to protect them. These are not ordinary children, they are Vaikuntha children, and we are very fortunate we can give them chance to advance further in Krishna Consciousness. That is very great responsibility, do not neglect it or be confused. Your duty is very clear. [Letter to Arundhati, 30 July 1972]

We are honored to serve these special souls and those in charge of their care. Along with growing your international society comes the need to enhance child protection services across ISKCON. From prevention to response, office management to communications, there are many services that require dedicated attention of qualified persons in the respective areas. Supporting local management at the individual ISKCON centers to implement and maintain child protection standards requires a hearty team of devotees serving with the Child Protection Office. Year by year there are a growing number of devotees across the world doing their best to fulfill your intention of creating safe and loving communities for these children to advance on their path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We pray that by your mercy dozens more devotees will join this effort to make sure child protection standards are worthy of the Vaikuṇṭha children taking shelter of your movement.

With help from concerned and interested devotees, we aim to make this year one of significant progress. Working together to please you and to protect the vulnerable, we offer you another year of child protection services.

Your servants at the ISKCON Child Protection Office.

(written by Līlāśuka Devī Dāsī)

ISKCON Television

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

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

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

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

Forty-nine years have passed since we were introduced. You were just written words and a picture. It was a black-and-white profile. You held your finger up, apparently making a point. Quoting you, the caption read: “Godhead is light; nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead, there is no nescience.” “Nescience” was not in my vocabulary. Much later, I discovered that it meant lack of knowledge, ignorance; agnosticism. I looked up from the magazine cover to see a bus passing. It had an advertisement on the side promoting some product: “In your head, you know it’s right.” Hmmm. I glanced back down at the magazine. Kṛṣṇa in his Śyāmasundara form was on the cover. I’d never seen anything like it. He was indescribably beautiful. I didn’t know then that you had personally coached the artist. Every detail was under your direction. Nor had I ever heard the word “Godhead.” What was that? God, yes, but what was with this “head” thing. Yet, inexplicably, the entire presentation of words and picture seemed very familiar. I must have read the magazine, but I have no memory of anything except the cover.

Little did I know that you were the wizard behind all these “invitations” being distributed on streets in major cities of the world. By the time I received the magazine in 1971, you had already planted seeds in numerous countries. Devotees were ubiquitous in city centers. The chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa was becoming quite famous.

I moved into a “temple” (really, a dingy apartment) within three days of being handed that magazine. I didn’t need to meet you in the flesh to have been inspired to follow your orders. In literature, a character is created by five different types of descriptions: (1) appearance (you were mysterious and regal, confident and otherworldly); (2) what other people say about him (wise, kind, pure); (3) what he does (goes everywhere to talk about Kṛṣṇa, writes about Kṛṣṇa); (4) what he thinks (how to serve Kṛṣṇa, how Kṛṣṇa is doing everything); (5) with whom he associates (devotees). It was many months before I met you in person, but I immediately began to know you. When I finally saw you, I was overwhelmed with gratitude. Tears of gratefulness flowed from my eyes for hours. *Vāṇī* or *vapu*—the effect is the same. Though I didn’t have much personal time with you in the ensuing years, I felt ever closer. Whether working at ISKCON Press on Tiffany Place to print your books, or hearing your lectures, or offering you *prasādam*, my affection for you continues to grow. I see it in others who have come to ISKCON long after your departure in 1977. You are living art in sound. Your mercy keeps flowing. Every magazine or book is an ocean of your personal love. No wonder the younger generations venerate you. You live on—just as you told us. In fact, the younger generations often know you better! One devotee in India memorized all your pastimes recounted in the *Līlāmṛta* and the *Memories* series. He had a story for every question and occasion. The importance of hearing the descriptions of the Personality of Godhead for making advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness cannot be overestimated; similarly, the value of hearing the words and actions of a pure devotee are even more exalted. You have told us that there is no difference between chanting the name of Kṛṣṇa and chanting that of His pure devotee. Therefore we sing, “*Jaya Prabhupada! Jaya Prabhupada!*” in *kīrtana* and *bhajan*. Anyone who simply sees your picture or reads words from your books is purified.

The gateway to the temple in ancient Jerusalem was known as “the eye of the needle.” It was very narrow, and worshipers entered one at a time. Similarly, entrances to the old Indian temples have *gopuras* and spare passageways leading to the Deity. You, on the other hand, open your arms wide to all aspiring *bhaktas*. You embrace all the *mlecchas*, *yavanas*, and lowborn. You give the Gāyatrī *mantra* to women. Your heart is big enough to accommodate the entire world. In this mood, the Foundational Statement of your position in ISKCON was crafted and ratified by the GBC in 2013. All the present and future Iskconites recognize, or should, that through your mercy all of the sincere devotees can go home, back to Godhead.

You said that the *ācāryas* simply stay in the material world, appearing in one planet after another to

relieve the suffering of the conditioned souls. Certainly, there are mysteries that my tiny and confused intellect will never unravel. Your destination is surely one of them. I know that wherever you have gone, Your Divine Grace continues to light up this world and live to inspire the *jīvas* in order to wake them up to their birthright of unalloyed devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, that Blessed Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. You liked that term, “Blessed Lord.” You authorized its use not only in the *Gītā* but used it in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* without any reference to its other uses. As an adjective, “blessed” means worthy of adoration and/or sacred. How perfect to describe Śrī Kṛṣṇa! How appropriate to describe you, the manifestation of the Lord’s blessings.

Every Vyāsa-pūjā, I am reminded of how much service I haven’t done for Your Divine Grace. Yet you continue to engage me in working on Kṛṣṇa conscious movies, chairing the SABHA, chanting 16 rounds daily (only by your mercy), and giving me the best gift anyone could get—*sādhū-saṅga*. Health, happiness, wealth, fame—everything pales in the glow of the gift of good devotee association. That is how I see you living, guiding, counseling, commiserating—through your followers. Whether they and I have differences of opinion, by your divine mercy I love each and every one of them. Please continue to shower those blessings on me and all the souls fortunate enough to know about you.

Your fallen and useless servants at ISKCON Television.

(written by Nṛsiṁhānanda Dāsa)

Krishna’s Castle

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to your divine lotus feet. All glories to the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. *Param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*.

This new decade of the 2020s seems to be off to a terrible start, and in all probability many people will not make it to the new year. Unprecedented difficulties have arrived out of the blue, obviously a karmic reaction to the misbehavior of the people of Kali-yuga.

This is a great opportunity to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness through the weapon of *prasādam* distribution, as people find themselves in the extraordinary situation of facing empty supermarket shelves. Many fear an uncertain future.

To emphasize that in the material world there is danger at every step, and the Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the only solution, you often quoted *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.58, as you did in your purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.51:

*samāśritā ye pada-pallava-plavaṁ
mahat-padaṁ puṇya-yaśo murāreḥ
bhavāmbudhir vatsa-padaṁ param padaṁ
padaṁ padaṁ yad vipadāṁ na teṣāṁ*

“For one who has accepted the boat of the lotus feet of the Lord, who is the shelter of the cosmic manifestation and is famous as Mukunda, or the giver of *mukti*, the ocean of the material world is like the water contained in a calf’s footprint. *Param padam*, or the place where there are no material miseries, or

Vaikuṇṭha, is his goal, not the place where there is danger in every step of life.”

At this time the inhabitants of this material world are experiencing great danger, and we pray for your protection as we embark on this preaching initiative of increasing our *prasādam* distribution.

Your servants at Krishna’s Castle, in London, UK.

Mantra Lounge

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to your most auspicious appearance day!

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, today your team at Mantra Lounge Philadelphia (and most of the USA) has been placed under a “shelter-in-place” order, and, ironically, more than ever before it is being revealed how there is no shelter in this place for anyone. Everyone around the globe is busy tracking the death toll of a deadly virus, and we as a team wonder about the ravages of Māyā Devī and her 100% strike rate. When everyone is asking us “Why so much suffering?” “How do we cope?” and when anxieties abound and cheating spiritual leaders post articles on the internet like “Where Is God in a Pandemic? The honest answer is: We don’t know,” we find our shelter-in-place in your illuminating purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.10:

The devotees of the Lord are always anxious for the spiritual improvement of the general public. . . . In Kali-yuga, the duration of life is shortened not so much because of insufficient food but because of irregular habits. By keeping regular habits and eating simple food, any man can maintain his health. Overeating, over-sense gratification, overdependence on another’s mercy, and artificial standards of living sap the very vitality of human energy. Therefore the duration of life is shortened. . . . In this age, men are victims not only of different political creeds and parties, but also of many different types of sense-gratificatory diversions, such as cinemas, sports, gambling, clubs, mundane libraries, bad association, smoking, drinking, cheating, pilfering, bickerings, and so on. Their minds are always disturbed and full of anxieties due to so many different engagements.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, your skeleton team at Mantra Lounge has been working very sincerely this year. We steadied up our *prasādam* distribution service to three days a week at universities and at Mantra Lounge. We also saw an increase in the number of plates distributed daily. We have been distributing books steadily six days a week, and many books and *Bhāgavatam* sets are being appreciated by people on the streets and at various festivals, inspiring us very much. We were able to acquire several permits and licenses to more officially distribute your books. Even during the lockdown, we are struggling to somehow get *prasādam* out to people’s homes and feeling inspired by the shelter of the process you have given us.

However, this was also a year of disappointments and learning to remain steady in the face of apparent failures. While we saw people return to *bhakti* after long separations and enthusiastically take to the process again, we also saw people leave and learned that the results are not in our hands. It was not a year of very big numbers but instead of learning steady enthusiasm in the face of seeming reversals. People just get mesmerized by the glitter of “freedom” and the possible acquisition of “a relationship,” and then they slowly fade away. This is an unsettling experience while in the baby stages of our *bhakti*, because we wonder if we will remain relevant in fulfilling your desire to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness effectively. The reality of you sometimes giving class even to “empty” rooms started to dawn on us, and we could

see how these experiences are essential lessons for learning steadiness. While the “result consciousness” in rendering devotional service can be paralyzing, we find shelter in reading about your days of struggle in Jhansi, Vṛndāvana, and Delhi, and how you responded to the struggles.

His business in Allahabad had been burglarized. His servants had stolen all his money and medicine and anything else of value. It had been a loss of seven thousand rupees. Abhay read the news, laughed, and uttered the *Bhāgavatam* verse

*yasyāham anugrṇāmi hariṣye tad-dhanam śanaiḥ
tato 'dhanam tyajanty asya sva-janā duḥkha-duḥkhitam*

[The Personality of Godhead said: “If I especially favor someone, I gradually deprive him of his wealth. Then the relatives and friends of such a poverty-stricken man abandon him. In this way he suffers one distress after another.” (SB 10.88.8)]. . . .

When Abhay left the Bharati Bhavan, with its six-foot-high lettering—“LEAGUE OF DEVOTEES”—painted across the outside wall, he felt sad. It had been a natural, spontaneous success for him. The young, educated people of Jhansi had looked up to him from the start, and had it not been for the intrigue, he would never have left. But he felt he had no real choice. He had come as a family man on business and was leaving as a homeless *vānaprastha*, forced to take shelter of Kṛṣṇa. His plans were uncertain, but his desire was strong and his health good. So he moved on to Mathurā, carrying with him the Deity of Lord Caitanya. [*Śrīla Prabhupāda Līlāmṛta*, “Jhansi: The League of Devotees”]

Having read how hard you tried to keep the Bharati Bhavan, and how meticulously you enumerated thirty points to summarize the history of Bharati Bhavan, and how you then had to leave with the Deity and with unwavering determination, I felt it was all unfathomable. We are starting to see what is required to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness successfully, and how far we are from the mark. Those years of struggle in India are becoming very, very real for all of us, and the depth of your commitment, the strength of your determination to serve your Guru Mahārāja, is becoming somewhat real. In this regard, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gives a very interesting definition of *sādhū*:

Without doubt, a *sādhū*’s words possess power to destroy the evil propensities of one’s mind. In this way *sādhū*s benefit everyone who associates with them. There are many things which we do not disclose to the *sādhū*. The real *sādhū* makes us speak out what we keep concealed in our hearts. . . . He is a *sādhū* by contact with whom the weapons of his words can cause one to give up all mischievous behavior, all attachments to the non-absolute, and all imagined conceptions. [*Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava*, Volume I, Part Two, Chapter Two: “The Revolutionary Preacher of Truth”]

The quality described above can be seen repeatedly in your discussion with guests, such as the following:

Guest: But that’s all part of the same supreme consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Qualitatively, the one, but at the present moment, because we are materially bound up, therefore we find so many different consciousness. Do you think that your consciousness and my consciousness is the same?

Guest: Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: How? Do you agree with me? Do I agree with you?

Guest: Er . . . Not sure we would.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. We do not agree. Therefore your consciousness, different; my consciousness, different. When we agree, then it is the same. When we come to the point of agreement, then it

is the same. [Lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.11, New York, 22 July 1966]

As we try to rise above the disappointments, our strategic planning team is discovering the vast potential for growing Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Philadelphia. We have a humble desire that every house in Philadelphia has at least one of your books and that everyone knows Krishna Foods Philly and *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*. But the sheer scope of the task and the effort required is so gigantic that we feel like the dwarf wanting to reach the moon. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* you relate the story of the sparrow trying to empty the ocean because she wanted her eggs back. She tried to empty the ocean one drop at a time with her beak, and her determination attracted the attention of the famous bird-carrier of Viṣṇu, Garuḍa, who came to help her. We feel like that sparrow trying to empty the ocean, but our only hope is that we can attract your attention because only then will our purpose in Philadelphia be fulfilled.

We humbly pray that you bless us with the determination, steadiness, and fierceness required to push on this movement here in Philadelphia. You said organization and intelligence are required to move the movement forward. Please give us the intelligence required to push forward this movement. The dream that is Philadelphia in our heart's eye: a few hundred happy local devotees; a flourishing urban outreach center that is open seven days a week to offer meditation and exquisite *prasādam* meals to everyone; an urban garden that engages youth and attracts some to visit Gītā Nāgarī and consider moving there; programs to feed the homeless nourishing *prasādam* and programs to free the population of addiction to drugs through the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness; and most importantly, a copy of your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* in every home in the city.

We hope this vision is pleasing to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. We offer our obeisances at your lotus feet on this most auspicious day and humbly beg for the determination, intelligence, and organizational skill required to fulfill this plan. Please use us as instruments to establish *bhakti* in an impactful and trendy way in Philadelphia. While the entire city is trembling under the fear of Mahā-māyā, please bring forth the ocean of devotional service and contact with Yoga-māyā for all residents. Please grant us complete absorption in your mission, so we will not become greedy for worldly ideas of success. Please let us have a vision of your dream; let our attachment be to the fulfillment of your dream and not to who gets the credit for it. In a city ravaged by addiction, we humbly beg that we become addicted to your service, your mission, and your pleasure alone.

Your humble servants at ISKCON's Mantra Lounge in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

Radio Krishna Centrale

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

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

Most beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble and respectful obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

We at Radio Krishna Centrale bow down in the dust of your lotus feet, well aware that without you

we are nothing.

In your purport to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 17.185, you write:

Those who follow social customs and behavior forget to follow the path chalked out by the *mahājanas*; thus they are offenders at the feet of the *mahājanas*. Sometimes they consider such *mahājanas* very conservative, or they create their own *mahājanas*. In this way they ignore the principles of the *paramparā* system.

At the end of your purport to the same verse, you conclude,

One who tries to imitate the *mahājanas* just to become an imitative spiritual master is certainly far away from following in the footsteps of the *mahājanas*. Sometimes people cannot actually understand how a *mahājana* follows other *mahājanas*. In this way people commit offenses and fall from devotional service.

In a submissive frame of mind we beg Your Divine Grace to forgive us for our questionable behavior when, at times, forgetful of our true position and engrossed in a false perception of ourselves, we are led into thinking that we are more than what we actually are. Sometimes we stray even up to the point where we think, “We know better,” and thus we neglect to check if what we consider the best and the right thing to do is confirmed by you and if it conforms with your conclusions and personal behavior.

Please forgive us. We will avoid that at any cost.

§ § §

One is hard to be found, even since days of yore—
A soul of such glory, so kind and so pure
That even Lord Kṛṣṇa, the greatest of all,
Adores your feet and responds to your call.

Your teaching and guidance, beyond time and space,
Know no faults or limits—are free from mistakes.
The wheel-saw of time, with its grinding teeth,
For thousands of years will meet its defeat
In chewing and crumbling your books and your fame,
Since after you appeared, no one’s life is the same.

Your powerful movement will face everyone
So that even a rebel will come and become
The most happy and humble, a surrendered soul,
And by love and your mercy fulfill his life’s goal.
Of the spiritual sky you have opened the door,
And of love of Godhead you have plundered the store.

By flooding the world with your loving grace,
You’ve shown the True Beauty: the Lord’s lotus face.
Your lotuslike feet, an unsinkable vessel,
Grant shelter to people who struggle and wrestle
Within this dark ocean of nescience and fear,

If they meet one condition: being willing to hear.
 The sound of transcendence that flows from your mouth
 Will shrink that vast body, without any doubt,
 Again and again, by half and then half,
 Reducing to a hoof-print that's left by a calf.

You're father, you're master, you're everyone's friend;
 You're named "Prabhupāda" 'cause that's where you stand!
 And all living creatures within the three worlds—
 Men, angels, or demons—are struck by your words.
 My life is worth nothing without serving you,
 No matter how "spiritual," fresh, or new.
 And even if held in the Lord's warm embrace,
 This soul cannot live without Your Divine Grace.

§ § §

Dear Lord Caitanya, *mahā-vadānyāya*, please protect us from the ill-advised inner thought that "Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us everything we needed, and for this we will be forever thankful, but now it's our time, the time to walk with our own legs," the implied offensive thought being "Thank you and goodbye."

Please help us to never forget, no matter in which life, that we are forever dependant on Śrīla Prabhupāda and that "We should always remain a fool before the spiritual master."

Śrīla Prabhupāda-*kī jaya!*

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your menial, respectful servants at Radio Krishna Centrale, Italy.

(written by Narakāntaka Dāsa)

Rūpānuga Vedic College

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

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

O dear and majestic A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda, O lord who have fulfilled the real purport of your name, we are eternally indebted to you. May we realize the profundity of what you have

done for us and the inestimable magnitude of your auspicious qualities so that our hearts filled with the desire to dedicate our entire lives to serving and pleasing you.

O lord of endless enthusiasm, thank you for being a perfect role model, without which every day most of us would fearfully await the not-so-gentle caress of the hounds of hell.

O you who, like Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, protect the innocent, you have exposed the wasplike atheists' bogus "scientific" theories, which have somehow become "facts." May we follow in your footsteps and rip those theories apart with your teachings and place the entrails of their nonsense as garlands at your lotus feet.

O lord with a compassionate heart, like Prahlāda Mahārāja's, you shed tears seeing old men play golf, and thus you tirelessly gave us everything in your books. May we have the intelligence to read and distribute them profusely and truly educate the plethora of ignorant souls in this miserable world.

O genius, O profound administrator, like Pṛthu Mahārāja you have so expertly created a house the whole world can live in—ISKCON, a branch on the Caitanya tree. May we appreciate it and help it grow properly.

O faithful and true follower of the *paramparā*, you have so mercifully enlightened us so we can defeat the pandemic delirium of the Māyāvāda and Śūnyavāda philosophies. With the aid of your teachings, may this dim world become flooded with the light produced by the unlimited wattage of pure *bhakti*.

O lord who expertly engaged us in the rapturous activities of the *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, by which one rapidly climbs to the highest realms of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. May we take full advantage of our fortunate opportunity, which even intelligent demigods are eager to trade their positions for.

O greatest lord of our time, it is an honor to have helped you become the most prolific single author in the history of this *divya-yuga*. Thank you for allowing us the privilege of offering you this partial remuneration.

O faithful servant of your guru, O lionlike lord who have "done everything," may we all develop implicit faith in guru and Kṛṣṇa, as you have.

O miracle worker who have empowered your true followers with such qualities that a lowlife like myself can get a chance to help them please you. May this sublime legacy of touchstones making touchstones continue forever.

O lord who are so dear to Kṛṣṇa, please, please be so kind as to pray for us to that very funny, monsoon-cloud-complexioned butter thief:

- that we become the devotees you truly want us to be,
- that we don't stop short of attaining the *kṛṣṇa-prema* of the *rāgātmikā* devotees of Goloka,
- that we cooperate with each other in a spirit of love and trust,
- that we make progress in preaching that gives you full and ever-lasting satisfaction,
- and that we receive any other blessings you see fit.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

O loving lord with an oceanic smile, may we truly please you.

Your servants at Rūpānuga Vedic College, Kansas City, USA.

(written by Parameśvara Dāsa)

Śaraṇāgati

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

We are continually awed by your astute application of pure devotional service in all circumstances.

In the *Prema-vivarta*, Chapter 17, Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī replies to Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's query on duties in relation to *varṇāśrama*:

The sincerely devoted person intelligently executes, from amongst his prescribed duties of *varṇāśrama*, only that which is conducive to pure devotional service. And by diligently rejecting those duties which are detrimental, he attains the platform of pure devotion. Therefore, one should not be overly attached to stringently following the prescribed *varṇāśrama* duties, but one has to simply unflinchingly render unalloyed devotional service, and by so doing one emulates the hallowed path of saintly persons. Rejecting the overly rigid rules and regulations of *varṇāśrama* assists in elevating one to the platform of a pure Vaiṣṇava.

This encapsulates your mood, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness in a manner that was assimilated by men and women around the world with resounding success. You engaged everyone in the essence of the *Vedas*, devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, giving participants a taste of the nectar of devotion, supported by the transcendental knowledge of your Bhaktivedanta purports.

We pray to develop pure hearts to enable us to fully embrace the path of *bhakti* you have chalked out, and to be empowered to transmit that taste of *bhakti* to others.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in the very beginning, stresses pure consciousness: *dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsarāṇām satām vedyam*: "Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated, this *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* propounds the highest truth, which is understandable by those devotees who are fully pure in heart." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.2)

We pray that we may be able to fully develop this consciousness, for the welfare of all, following in your footsteps. Our happiness comes from satisfying your desire to make others happy in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We understand that the *gopīs* did not desire their personal happiness; rather they desired only the happiness of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa, seeing their selfless devotion, imposed pleasure upon them.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have kindly taught us the pinnacle of the absolute truth—satisfying the guru and Kṛṣṇa by bringing others closer to Kṛṣṇa. Let this be the goal of all our studies, occupational duties—everything, even disagreements.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you described that our *ācāryas* sometimes had differences of opinion about devotional service of the Lord, and that such differences are to be considered spiritual, as the goal is to serve Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. At times we see constructive dialogues between devotees from different angles of philosophical vision. At other times the discussions on apparent contradictions in your teachings seem more about being right than having respectful dialogue, piling quotes on scales to claim victory. At the worst they descend into judgmental, offensive banter. You described this to be like sons who start arguing while massaging the legs of the father and begin pounding on his legs.

Somewhere in these sorts of dealings, we become like the Vedic *brāhmaṇas* who were so obsessed with performing their ceremony perfectly that they missed the opportunity to serve and satisfy the cowherd boyfriends of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The cowherd boys gave śāstric evidence that the ceremony could be interrupted, but the *brāhmaṇas* were set in their strict observance of Vedic protocol to not break the ceremony.

Recently, we encountered a statement of your divine master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Mahārāja, which addressed understanding the varying statements of *śāstra*:

Kumāra: But why are there differences of opinion among various spiritual texts?

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda: One sees conflict when one views these apparently opposing opinions with one's material vision, but in the spiritual or enlightened understanding, perfect resolution is found to all such conflicts. In order to bewilder the demons and protect the confidential treasury from unauthorized people, a contradictory picture is painted from the outside. This only reflects the author's intention to maintain the confidential nature of scripture.

Again, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we pray that our hearts may become pure, lest we fall into material vision and be hindered on the simple, sublime path of *bhakti* and deprived of access to the most confidential treasury of your wisdom: unalloyed service to Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa, and Their intimate associates. We pray that all of us childlike disciples and granddisciples can take full shelter of your teachings, honor each other, and work cooperatively to imbibe your mood.

Your servants at Śaraṇāgati Dhāma, British Columbia, Canada.

Saskatoon Preaching Center

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this auspicious day, we offer you our most humblest obeisances!

We, the devotees of ISKCON Saskatoon, would like to offer our sincerest gratitude to you for providing us and generations to come with the opportunity to develop *kṛṣṇa-prema*!

You crossed continents and oceans, alone and elderly, to bring Kṛṣṇa consciousness to an unforgiving and demonic land, where *māyā* is endless and people's actions are unfathomable. You are the epitome of kindness, love, faith, tolerance, and courage, and your causeless mercy has inspired us and so many others to take up the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's name.

You said that devotees should remain connected as family, and we are striving to achieve this by holding weekly *sat-saṅgas*, congregational chanting, Sunday Feasts, and children's classes. ISKCON Saskatoon's Ratha-yātrā has also become a major event of the summer season, an event that many ask about and look forward to. We are currently going into our seventh year.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are a small community in Saskatoon, but with your blessings and the continuous support and guidance of His Holiness Bhaktimārga Swami, our congregation is slowly growing, as are our efforts with book distribution.

You have given us all we need to go back to Kṛṣṇa. Your determination to lead by example, and your faith in complete surrender to Kṛṣṇa, inspire us daily, and we beg that you continue to bless us so that we may continue to faithfully follow your instructions and inspire others to do the same.

Your servants at ISKCON's Saskatoon Preaching Center, Saskatchewan.

The Temple of the Holy Name in Prabhupāda Village

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet.

On behalf of the devotees here at the Temple of the Holy Name in Prabhupāda Village, we would like to offer you this homage on this most auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā. By your mercy, twenty-eight years ago this center was begun on Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva's appearance day, and this place has been the home of countless exalted devotees over the intervening years. Of late there are some newcomers, including young devotees and a newborn baby, and efforts are being made to take care of the residents and the cows and the temple with loving attention. Efforts to cultivate the land and grow vegetables and flowers are under way. You would be happy to see that your disciples here have been so steadfast for many decades and are such a wonderful example to all.

Śrī Śrī Parama-karuṇa Nitāi-Gaurasundara are taken care of exquisitely by Their *pūjārīs*, and devotees from surrounding cities come to see Their Lordships along with the beautiful cows here, Ganga and Jamuna. This year's Gaura-Pūrṇimā festival began with a wonderful Ratha-yātrā parade, with *harināma-saṅkīrtana* through the village and all the way to the temple to begin readings and plays about Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu by extraordinary devotee dancers and actors. The arrangements created a wonderful uplifting atmosphere, and book distribution went hand in hand. Some devotees felt that it was the best Ratha-yātrā they had ever attended, since in these serene surroundings they could become fully absorbed in pulling Lord Jagannātha along Prabhupāda Road and chanting the holy name with several generations of devotees.

You asked your devotees to start temples in every town and village, and having such beacons of your spiritual vision has given your Vaiṣṇava disciples a place to live and serve throughout their lives. Without your coming to the West and giving Kṛṣṇa consciousness to all who were receptive here, life in these times, especially now with the pandemic panic in the world, would be intolerable! Your desire to follow the instructions of your spiritual master was your all in all. Every endeavor you made and feat you accomplished was due to your intense love for him and Lord Kṛṣṇa! You wrote approximately seventy books on the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, sleeping only a few hours per day. You circled the globe fourteen times, visiting twenty-four countries, preaching, inspiring your followers, and making countless public appearances before multitudes of people, and you wrote more than six thousand letters to your disciples and others. You recorded more than twenty albums of devotional music and spoke daily on the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, delivering thousands of formal lectures. Over 2,200 were recorded and archived!

Because you inundated this world with your causeless mercy, we can be fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness every day of our lives, no matter what the situation is on this planet. We can take shelter of your books and music and lectures, and we can see the example of your devotees who have sincerely carried out your mission to this day, overcoming every single obstacle that could possibly be presented to them, without missing a beat. This is what you have given everyone indiscriminately! We are eternally grateful to you and pray we can serve you throughout this life and future lives!

Your most grateful servants at The Temple of the Holy Name in Prabhupāda Village, Sandy Ridge, North Carolina.

(written by Lalitā Devī Dāsī and Dinabandhu Guru Dāsa)

Temple of the Vedic Planetarium

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble and sincere obeisances. All glories to your compassionate mission to save the most fallen souls of this Age of Kali.

It is a mission in which we are most grateful to have been given a small part to play. ISKCON has blossomed into a worldwide phenomenon recognized by scholars, politicians, artists, and spiritualists in every corner of the planet. Thank you for all the trouble you endured to start this movement in New York. In the beginning, conditions were very daunting, and hardly anyone was seriously interested. But you persevered, and slowly the momentum began to build.

I was in New York in 1976 when you rode down 5th Avenue on the Ratha-yātrā cart, surrounded by throngs of your ecstatic disciples. This was a far cry from the days on the Lower East Side, where you had to tolerate craziness, lack of resources, and sometimes severe discomfort. Yet you persevered due to the potency of your spiritual master's instructions and your deep abiding faith in Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

As we approach the unfolding opening dates for the TOVP, the opposition and problems seem to be ever-ongoing and increasing. I take great solace in reading about your daily struggles in New York to begin your fledgling ISKCON.

This year we opened the *pūjārī* floor in preparation for moving Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, Śrī Śrī Pañcattattva, and Śrī Narasīnhadeva to their long-overdue new home. We have tried sincerely to follow your instructions and inspiration in building this temple and planetarium. There has been opposition from some, but we are steadfastly convinced of your instruction.

I know that it is only your inspiration and blessings that have gotten us to this point. Devotees from around the world have dedicated their lives and sometimes their life savings to help build this project. It is truly being built by the hands of all devotees. As Nityānanda Prabhu said,

*eka adbhuta mandira ei haibe prakāśa
gaurāṅga nitya-sevā haibe vikāśa*

“An astounding temple will appear and will engage the entire world in the eternal service of Lord Caitanya.” We anticipate that your glories will be ever-increasingly broadcast in all corners of the universe as well.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, it is our only desire to be able to serve you, birth after birth. You have saved us from a hellish existence; please allow us to serve you again and again.

Your servants at the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium, Māyāpur, India.

(written by Ambarīṣa Dāsa)

The Vedic Cultural Center (Thunder Bay)

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories, all glories, all glories to you!

My name is Prema-kīśora Dāsa. I am your granddisciple and a disciple of His Holiness Gopāl Krishna Goswami. Following your divine instructions and walking in the footsteps of your direct disciples, my wife Sunīti Devī Dāsī and I have established an ISKCON temple in Thunder Bay, Ontario. We have been serving in this remote community of northwestern Ontario for the last fifteen years.

Every year for the last ten years we have organized a Ratha-yātrā attended by about seven thousand people.

We have recently purchased a new temple property, which is more than eight thousand square feet in area. The unique temple we are planning to build on this land will be the largest temple in northwestern Ontario.

For the last two years, with your blessings, we have organized a Festival of India in six cities across northern Ontario. This year, since we have the problem of the coronavirus pandemic all across the globe, we are not certain about the fate of our summer festivals.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we need your blessings and your mercy so that we can continue to serve you and expand ISKCON's activities all across the northern communities in Canada.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for all your wonderful teachings.

Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Your servants at the Vedic Cultural Center, Thunder Bay, Canada.

Yashodapura Ashram

*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*

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, being fully devoted to Him. Your compassion for the fallen souls is limitless. Now the world is suffering to the fullest extent. Human beings have forgotten not only the ultimate goal of life, but also how to live properly. Materialism has become prominent in every

single breath of activity. At every step, people are running after temporary, glittering material opulences. Their ever-increasing material desires have no limit. In this way, people are not happy.

Here in Cambodia, where many years ago Lord Viṣṇu was glorified in the magnificent temple complex at Angkor Wat, people have now become full of unhappiness, bereft of satisfaction, what to speak of blissfulness. The Vedic culture is now lost here. People no longer worship the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the reservoir of all pleasure. Therefore we pray to you to kindly bless the local people so that they will seriously take up the devotional path and begin worshiping Kṛṣṇa. Some may come to the standard set by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in his famous song: *mānasa, deho, geha, jo kichu mor arpilū tuwā pade, nanda-kiśor!* “Mind, body, and family, whatever may be mine, I have surrendered at Your lotus feet, O youthful son of Nanda!” Then they could inspire other locals. In this way, more and more people will become devotees, the happiness of devotional service will prevail in society, and people’s lives will become meaningful.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, last October our center moved to a new location, near the center of the same town, Siem Reap. The property, ten meters by eleven meters, was purchased by His Grace Prasannātmā Prabhu, a Khmer devotee living in Canada. Hopefully it will be our stable place for awhile, unless Lord Kṛṣṇa has different plans for us. Some adjustments to the building were done by His Grace Kiśora Kṛṣṇa Prabhu on his last visit. We are thankful that by your mercy this new place has become manifest.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, last January His Grace Kāla Prabhu conducted a program titled “Kirtan Is 2020 Vision for Cambodia,” a program attended by dozens of devotees from several countries. The five-day program included a Ratha-yātrā and *kīrtana* in several spots in Siem Reap. This program brought awareness to devotees from outside about our activities here and also strengthened our association with many devotees via the *kīrtana* program. Also, we had a several-days’ program in the capital, Phnom Penh, with local contacts and the Indian community. Special thanks to Bhaktin Sukha, who made her apartment available when devotees needed a place to stay so they could attend the program. We pray to you that we might extend our activities there.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, some senior devotees visited us here to encourage us. His Holiness Kavicandra Swami, our GBC, visited our center for the first time and held several programs. Also, earlier His Grace Satyanārāyaṇa Prabhu, the BBT representative for the Far East and Middle East, visited us here in Siem Reap and held a discussion on several matters concerning translating your books into Khmer. Prasannātmā Prabhu has been translating the *Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is into Khmer and is making good progress. In addition, Kīrtirāja Prabhu was helped the center distribute your books. He distributes Khmer books, English books, and Hindi books at various locations in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. He also preaches to Hindi-speaking Indian communities.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, our Food for Life program was active at the January Ratha-yātrā and several times later on. Unfortunately, for the last two months this program has been inactive because of the pandemic. We hope to resume it when everything returns to normal. Meanwhile, we are working closely with Yashodapura Eco Village and the new Yashodapura Vedic Cultural Center, both situated in the countryside, about forty kilometers from Siem Reap. What you envisioned about the condition of the world is now really happening. Social, economic, and environmental chaos prevails everywhere. We are reminded that you said 50% of your mission was still unrealized, namely the establishment of *daiva-varṇāśrama* communities, which will be the only solution to the world’s problems. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

*jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

Your servants at Yashodapura Ashram, Siem Reap, Cambodia.

(written by Kumudākṣa Dāsa)

Yashodapura Eco Village

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

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāñī-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. Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.”

Hare Kṛṣṇa!

On this auspicious day of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Vyāsa-pūjā, we devotees at the Yashodapura Eco Village project in Cambodia would like to offer our humble homage to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is the founder-ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), which is established all over the world. Śrīla Prabhupāda directly or indirectly has sent his bona fide students to preach all over the world, including the countries of Indonesia and Cambodia.

The first time we came in contact with Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mission was when we were living at the student hostel in Lampung, Indonesia. His Holiness Bhakti Rāghava Swami invited us to be volunteers for the Cambodia Project in Siem Reap province. Mahārāja showed us great mercy by giving us the chance to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mission through the line of *guru-paramparā*. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Madhya 19.151) Lord Caitanya describes how the fortunate soul receives the seed of the creeper of *bhakti*:

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*

“According to their karma, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. Some of them are being elevated to the upper planetary systems, and some are going down into the lower planetary systems. Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. By the mercy of both Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service.”

So getting a chance to be involved in devotional service in Cambodia was a huge opportunity for us. Otherwise, what would we be doing? Maybe simply staying in our hometown and never experiencing such service in another part of the world.

Our main focus in our service here is to help establish the farm project and develop the village community. For the last five years we have been engaged in this village, purchasing land and building relationships with the villagers and the village authorities, and we also do some preaching through festivals (recently we had a Jagannātha Ratha-yātrā festival), house programs, and Food for life.

On our main plot of land, located two km from the local village, we keep our two cows and two calves, and we are also working closely with the local people to do agriculture.

Cows are a very important part of establishing a farm community, because cows and bulls are the foundation of Vedic culture. These days lots of people are exploiting the cows by pushing them to produce milk on dairy farms and, at the end the cows’ lives, slaughtering them. This is simply *ugra-karma*, the

demoniac activities of Kali-yuga, because they are killing their own mother, the cow.

Cow products include not only milk but all the ingredients of *pañca-gavya*: milk, yogurt, ghee, cow urine, and cow dung. Even if the cows don't produce milk, they can still produce *gomutra* and *gobar*, both very useful in establishing Vedic culture based on an agrarian lifestyle. Bulls are engaged in plowing, pulling the bullock cart, and other village technologies. The main thing is that cows and bulls should live on the farm and in various ways be connected to food production: *kṛṣi-go-rakṣya-vāṇijyam*.

And naturally, if cows are happy they will give us plentiful milk, so the focus is not on pushing them to produce more milk but on making them happy. This was shown by Kṛṣṇa himself in His *līlā* in Vṛndāvana—*go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca*.

We try as much as possible to do *go-pūjā* on the *pūrṇimā* days, as this is what the other *gośālās* are doing to promote the twelve-year Orī Śrī Surabhi Campaign. This is the global campaign for all cow-lovers and members of the global *varṇāśrama* mission, because cows and land are the main pillars of *varṇāśrama-dharma*.

A human civilization is advanced when its people follow the *cātur-varṇya* system, the system of four orders of life. There must be ideal, first-class men to act as advisors, second-class men to act as administrators, third-class men to produce food and protect cows, and fourth-class men who obey the three higher classes of society. One who does not follow the standard system of society should be considered a fifth-class man. A society without Vedic laws and regulations will not be very helpful to humanity. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.7.13 purport]

In this purport Prabhupāda has very clearly described the importance of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, and without land and cows it is impossible to establish such a community, because *varṇāśrama-dharma* follows a sustainable agrarian lifestyle based on land, cows, and Kṛṣṇa.

Nowadays, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have realized how important food production is. Without natural food production, the world will collapse due to the long days of lockdown everywhere. Our well-wishers who are helping us for many years here in Cambodia said, “The coronavirus situation is creating worldwide panic in many ways, including financial problems for many people. Now energy should go into planting crops for production of essential goods, because food prices will increase dramatically. . . . ‘Chant and plant’ should be the immediate motto for devotees everywhere, including Cambodia and India.” (His Grace Kāla Dāsa Prabhu, March 2020)

Chanting and planting are two basic urgent needs for the Cambodians, especially those who are living in the village. By being present in the village, we hope we can gradually bring back this Vedic culture through the preaching by example and village education system.

Recently we put on our second annual Ratha-yātrā in the village, and hundreds of people joined the procession, including guests from various countries. We are also developing a new phase of our project called The Vedic Culture and Education Center, located in the center of the village Chub, about 3 km from our main farm. This will allow our foreign devotees to stay and help us teach the villagers, especially teenagers and children.

We know that without the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda and all his instructions in his books, it would be impossible to do all these things, because without following *śāstra* we will never achieve the dreamed-of results.

*yaḥ śāstra-vidhim utsṛjya vartate kāma-kārataḥ
na sa siddhim avāpnōti na sukhaṁ na parāṁ gatim*

“He who discards scriptural injunctions and acts according to his own whims attains neither perfection, nor happiness, nor the supreme destination.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 16.23)

Only by boldly following the instructions given by Śrīla Prabhupāda will it be possible to help the people, who nowadays are suffering both materially and spiritually.

We are desperately offering our sincere prayer to Śrīla Prabhupāda, who is a pure devotee of the Lord and a friend of all living entities. May by his mercy all the fallen souls be delivered. His character matches the description of a *sādhū* given in the scripture: “The symptoms of a *sādhū* are that he is tolerant, merciful, and friendly to all living entities. He has no enemies, he is peaceful, he abides by the scriptures, and all his characteristics are sublime.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.25.21)

Hopefully we can always engage in devotional service to our spiritual master and all the Vaiṣṇavas in general. We hope more and more Cambodians join the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement and work with us to establish the farm community. We distribute happy dolls to the local families in the village so they can learn how to offer flowers, fruits, and incense and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* regularly.

We are deeply grateful for all the guidance we have received from all the Vaiṣṇavas. Please forgive us if we have directly or indirectly offended you.

O Lord, we pray that we keep the remembrance of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mission in our hearts for eternity.

We invite everyone to join our next *kīrtana* festival, which will be some time in November 2020, by Kṛṣṇa’s will.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s servants at Yashodapura Eco Village, Cambodia.

(written by Guṇāvatāra Dāsa)

