



“Prabhupāda: Yes, everyone should be dedicated, I or you. Does not... That is the success of life. Dedicate your life for Kṛṣṇa. That is the perfection. Even there are some faults, even dedicated life is noble life. Maybe, due to our past habits, we may commit some faulty action, but that dedicated life is sublime.”
— Morning walk: Mayapura, 1974

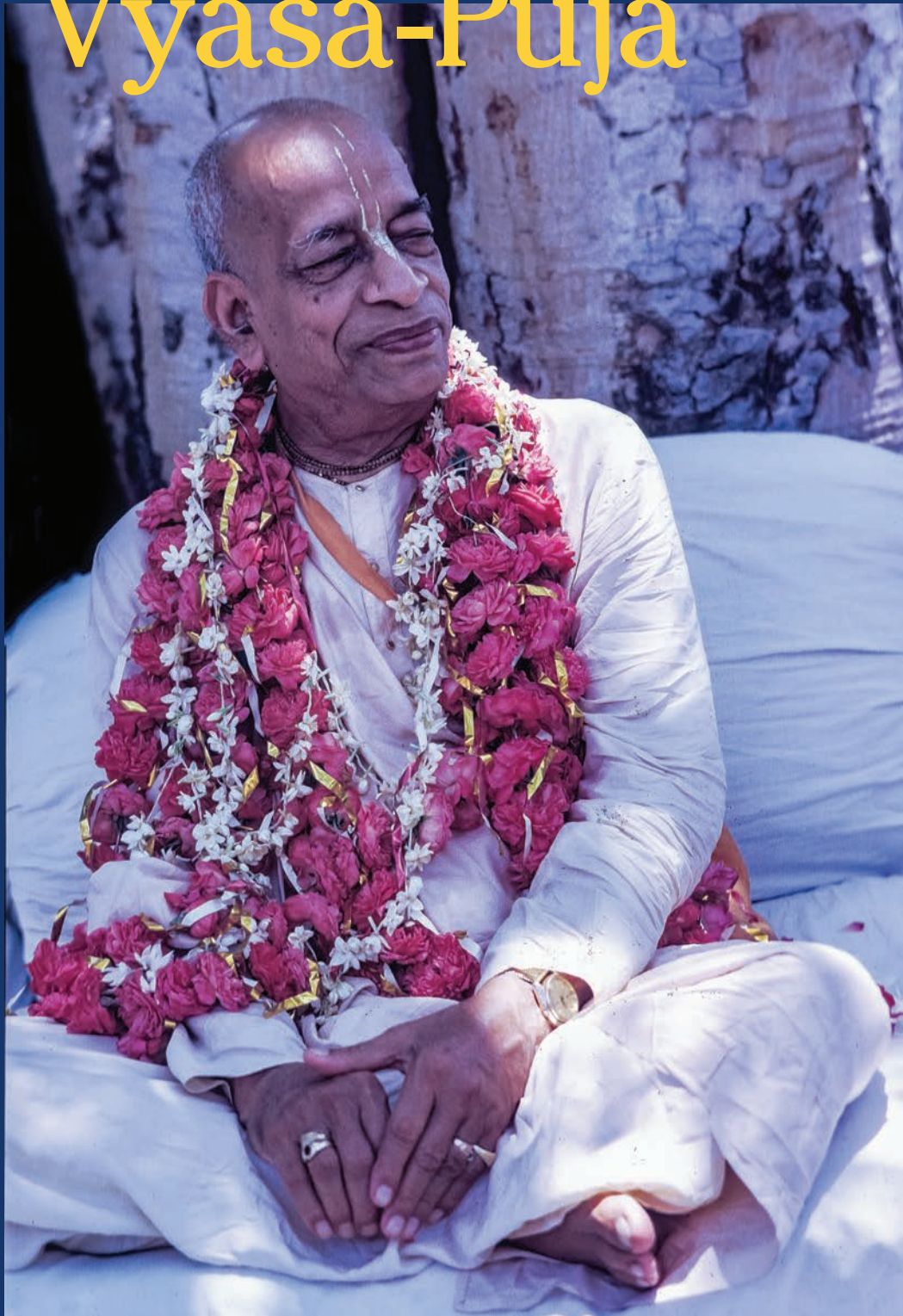
Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā

AUGUST 31, 2021

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



Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā



THE MOST BLESSED EVENT

AUGUST 31, 2021

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 31, 2021

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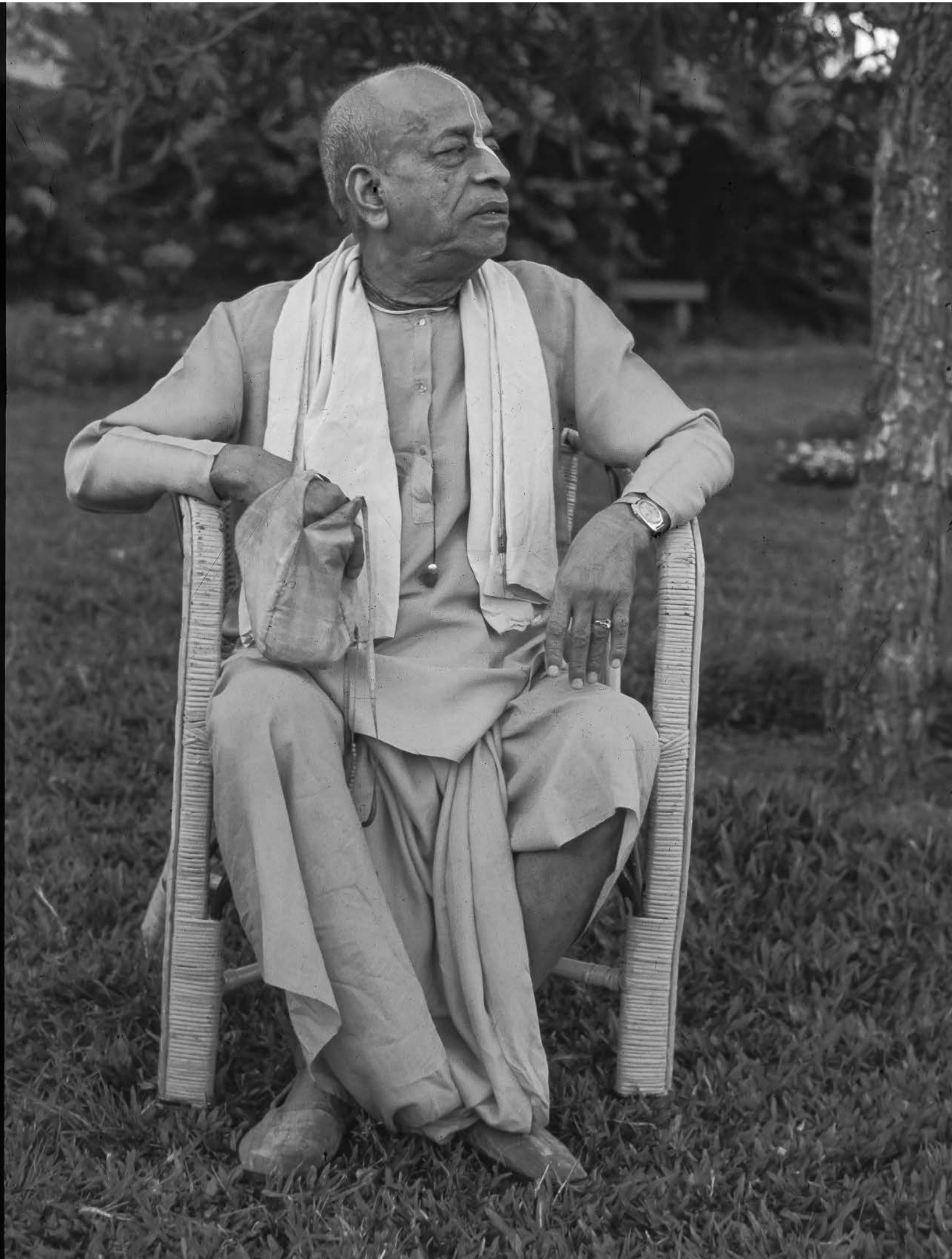
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Introduction

In this 53rd annual Vyāsa-pūjā book, some of the prominent themes include honoring the 125th anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s appearance, the challenges and triumphs that ISKCON has experienced in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and the urgent need to always keep Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mood and mission in the forefront of our consciousness as ISKCON continues to transition to a new generation of leadership.

This is the first Vyāsa-pūjā book since 1988 without an homage from His Holiness Bhakti Chāru Swami, who succumbed to COVID-19 in July of last year. Since the homages are submitted from January to May, the 2020 book contained his last offering, and in honor of this extraordinary devotee who was so dear to Śrīla Prabhupāda and to thousands of devotees in ISKCON, we reproduce that offering here:

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

We’re sure Bhakti Chāru Swami, certainly one of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s foremost valiant warriors, is with him now, helping to spread the rays of Lord Caitanya’s benediction moon.

Anuttama Prabhu has submitted a heartfelt offering in which he calls upon all sincere devotees to read or reread *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* and enrich their understanding of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s personality and the austerities he underwent to bring us Kṛṣṇa consciousness. An excerpt:

By hearing about you from proper sources, we better comprehend the challenges you faced, the decisions you made, the considerations you weighed in making your choices. Not that we just recite, as if memorized, “Prabhupāda had two heart attacks on the ship, and he didn’t have much money in NYC, and he fought for the Juhu temple, and he published lots of books, and he opened a lot of temples, and it all came out ok, and that was his wonderful *līlā*. *Jaya* Prabhupāda!”

That is simply not enough. We need to know more. We need to know that you didn’t “have” two heart attacks, you *suffered* two heart attacks. You didn’t just face some abstract obstacles, you *sometimes went hungry* because of lack of money as you pushed on your mission. In later years, *out of anxiety you couldn’t sleep* many nights as you worried about the problems your movement faced. *You cried sometimes* when reunited with disciples who had left you. *You laughed and told jokes* that left disciples bursting with laughter. *You were excited by new challenges*. *Your eyes twinkled when teasing* your disciples and their children. And *you became angry at*, but never envious of, those who were too proud or who offended the Lord.

In short, we need to understand that you are not a silent *mūrti* sitting on your *vyāsāsana*. You are an awe-inspiring *person*. A person who demonstrated love, and hurt, and humor, and enthusiasm (against unbelievable odds), and every other human and transcendental emotion. You faced every type of obstacle we will ever face, and more. You showed us how to live in faith, and hope, and joy.

I would like to thank Kaiśorī Devī Dāsī for again providing substantial help with editing the offerings this year. She has become an essential member of the Vyāsa-pūjā book team. I will forever be grateful that I have had a small role to play in keeping Śrīla Prabhupāda in the center of ISKCON by helping to prepare his Vyāsa-pūjā book every year since 1984. My heart overflows with gratitude that Śrīla Prabhupāda has allowed me to perform this service.

Draviḍa Dāsa
Vyāsa-pūjā Editor

The Meaning of Vyāsa-pūjā

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells us that He is present everywhere in the form of time, and that by time's power alone, everyone and everything is destroyed. The influence of time is so subtle that we feel it as change—changes we desire and changes we hate—at every moment. So time, which is Kṛṣṇa Himself, may appear to be a ruthless dictator. “Time is destruction, and all manifestations are to be vanquished by the desire of the Supreme Lord. That is the law of nature.” (*Gītā* 11.32, purport)

As long as we have the intention to dominate matter, as long as we want power and control, we are subject to creation and destruction under the superior power of God. However, for those who are searching for truth and happiness beyond the desire to exploit matter, there is a different plan. Throughout history such persons have been advised to seek the help of saints.

When a saintly Vaiṣṇava appears in this world, we never want to forget him. Although outwardly such saints come under the jurisdiction of time, inwardly they do not. The Vedic tradition, recognizing the importance of these saints, have instituted guru worship, to be performed annually by disciples, on Guru-pūrṇimā, which falls just before the first month of Cāturmāsya. *Sannyāsīs*, who were meant to lead society by their ideal example, were also to worship their gurus and their *paramparā* on their own birthday, along with worshipping Śrī Vyāsadeva on Guru-pūrṇimā.

Thus the Vedic culture, being the most comprehensive spiritual tradition known to humankind, established Vyāsa-pūjā in ancient times, and insisted that anyone desiring freedom from the tyranny of time accept the principle of serving and worshipping their spiritual master. This ancient institution of *guru-pūjā* was also meant to keep saints alive and present long into the future.

We members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness are fortunate to have been requested by Śrīla Prabhupāda not only to perform annual worship of our founder-*ācārya*, but to keep him firmly present in our lives through daily worship as well.

Sometimes in the midst of our busy lives in this passionate world, we overlook the significance of the debt we owe Śrīla Prabhupāda. Yet it is a fact that each of us, whether his initiated disciple, granddisciple, or great-granddisciple, lives within the shelter he established for us. In that shelter we are safe to serve, practice our *sādhana*, and express our personal faith.

Because we get knowledge, Vedic knowledge, from the *ṛṣi* we must be debtor. *Guru-ṛṇa*. Debtor to the spiritual master, to the sages, to the saintly persons—because we are getting knowledge from them. Therefore the Vyāsa-pūjā is there. Once in a year the disciples are worshipping the spiritual master and trying to repay what he has received from the spiritual master. Our relationship with God is a fact. [Lecture, 11 July 1974, Los Angeles]

We have heard Śrīla Prabhupāda speak on numerous occasions about the purpose of his Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. He never failed to warn us about the dangerous position in which we find ourselves in this world, which is fast entering the ignorance of Kali-yuga. He knew that degradation on all fronts is unavoidable, yet he still delivered to the West—and later again to India and the East—a message of hope. In the same July 1974 lecture he stated:

And how one can be happy? So many sinful activities are going on. How they expect to become happy? It is not possible. . . . Sober man becomes unhappy. *Para-duḥkha* . . . Especially Vaiṣṇava. A Vaiṣṇava has no problem for himself, but he has many problems for others.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda was first establishing his mission, he left Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma, where he

was living peacefully, where he was fully happy, and traveled to various places in India to share Kṛṣṇa consciousness and enlist the help of people he knew. Each of them respected his determination and devotion, but none of them believed he could bring about any significant change in the world. But they were all mistaken!

His mission was to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the world, and his vision for how he would accomplish this included publishing and distributing his books. In the *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* we read:

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s ambition was to replace mundane literature with transcendental. At least in every home there should be one piece of Kṛṣṇa conscious literature, he reasoned, because if a person read only one page, his life could be turned toward perfection. “If one percent of the readers become devotees,” he wrote, “that will change the world.”

When Śrīla Prabhupāda finally traveled to the West, he brought with him the *yuga-dharma*, the process that would transform the hell of the material world into Vaikuṇṭha. He called this process “devotional service,” a complete lifestyle centered on chanting God’s holy name and performing other services for Him. Introducing this consciousness was how he would change everything. In *Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda*, Bhakti Vikāsa Swami writes:

Starting with forty rupees and a trunk of books, Śrīla Prabhupāda started an international movement comprising temples, farms, schools, and multiple volumes of books published in all major languages. Arriving in America at “the fog end of his life,” within twelve years he made Hare Kṛṣṇa a household phrase and sowed the seeds of a cultural and spiritual revolution destined to change the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda created a house in which the whole world could live, and we, his dedicated followers, are asked to assist his mission in whatever way we can. As a Society, we should retain his transcendental vibrancy for thousands of years to come and thereby keep his mission alive and faithful to his vision for it.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the *avatāra* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa for Kali-yuga, who began the *saṅkīrtana* movement in Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, also showed by His own example the significance and purpose of Vyāsa-pūjā. In the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* we hear about Nityānanda Prabhu’s mysterious arrival in Māyāpur, and how Lord Caitanya (known then as Viśvambhara) sent all the Vaiṣṇavas out to find Him. No one could, and they returned, puzzled.

Nityānanda Prabhu represents the guru principle, and He was hiding; only if Viśvambhara Himself brought the devotees to where Lord Nityānanda was could they approach Him.

When Nityānanda Prabhu and Viśvambhara met, Their exchange was extraordinarily auspicious, and the Vaiṣṇavas were amazed to see the intense devotional sentiments They shared. The Vaiṣṇavas felt greatly fortunate to witness such loving exchanges. And once the two Lords were finally together, They became inseparable.

Viśvambhara said, “Tomorrow is the full-moon day of Guru-pūrṇimā. Where will You celebrate Vyāsa-pūjā?”

Lord Nityānanda wanted to observe the ceremony at the home of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, and Śrīvāsa happily accepted the proposal.

The following day, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita served as the *ācārya* for the Vyāsa-pūjā observance and, on Viśvambhara’s order, performed the rituals. Placing a beautiful garland in Lord Nityānanda’s hands, he instructed him to offer the garland to Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the compiler of the *Vedas*. Acting as if He were bewildered, Nityānanda did not follow Śrīvāsa’s direction but instead looked around Him until He saw Viśvambhara. Then, breaking the established principle of worship, He approached the Lord and draped the garland around His neck.

Here we are given an essential glimpse into the meaning of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā: This sacred event of worshiping the guru is meant to culminate in the worship of the *ādi-guru*, or the Supreme Person, who is the master of everyone and everything.

In a lecture given in Hamburg in 1969 to a new group of followers, Śrīla Prabhupāda enlightened us about the importance of praising one’s spiritual master and how that praise is passed on to the Lord:

All this eulogization about me, people, outsider, may think that “This man is being flattered and he is hearing his own eulogization.” But that is not the fact. It is the test, how they are receiving the message sincerely and . . . expressing their feeling. So it is going to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As it has come through the channel of disciplic succession, all these praises will also reach to Kṛṣṇa through that disciplic succession. So it is not personal thing. These things are required. . . . Just like in the military training, they are taught by the officers in a different way, in so many ways. Similarly, This is . . . training of Kṛṣṇa consciousness so that the feeling of pure consciousness will reach to Kṛṣṇa.

Later, at New Vrindavan, in 1972, Śrīla Prabhupāda again addressed his disciples on this topic:

So this is the position of a spiritual master. Don’t misunderstand that “This person is sitting very comfortably and taking all honors and contribution.” It is needed just to teach them how to respect the representative of God. This is the sum and substance of Vyāsa-pūjā.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī compares Lord Caitanya, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, to both a gardener (who plants and tends a tree) and the trunk of the tree itself (which supports, sustains, and generates the tree’s growth). In commenting on this analogy Śrīla Prabhupāda describes ISKCON as a branch of that unlimited tree, which is both created and sustained by Kṛṣṇa Himself. In order for our ISKCON society to become vibrant, healthy, and powerful, we must remain connected to the branch, the trunk, and the gardener. When we offer our dedicated homages to Śrīla Prabhupāda, this should be the internal purpose of our glorification. Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā is the opportunity we are given to remember our connection.

And one last reflection on this important day: Having a careful understanding of the meaning and importance of Vyāsa-pūjā is essential, but we should remember that there are no required formalities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Our experience and success in *bhakti* depend on our intention as we practice it. Govinda Dāśī describes how, in Montreal in 1968, she observed Śrīla Prabhupāda’s birthday without understanding the formal procedures of the Vyāsa-pūjā ceremony. With affection she baked Śrīla Prabhupāda the typical double-layer birthday cake one would offer someone celebrating a birthday in the West. After icing it, she brought it to his room with birthday candles aflame. He was surprised and raised his eyebrows in curiosity. When she told him this was how people celebrated birthdays in America, he simply nodded.

She said, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, now make a wish and blow out all the candles with one breath.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda caught on, and with one deep whoosh of air, he blew out every candle on the cake. Then he laughed and said, “I have done good?”

“Yes!” Govinda Dāśī laughed. “Now you will get your wish. But you don’t have to tell me or anyone what you wished for.”

“I wish only for Kṛṣṇa,” he said, smiling, his voice deep. “For Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa’s service.”

Now, over fifty years later, we are well trained in how to perform the proper ceremonies, yet at the same time may we retain a kind, loving, openhearted simplicity on this sacred occasion. And may we pray, as Śrīla Prabhupāda prayed, that one day, by his grace, we too may wish only for Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa’s service. This is the meaning of Vyāsa-pūjā.

Jagattārīṇī Devī Dāśī



The Universal Teacher

The following speech was given by Abhay Charanaravinda Dāsa (His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda) before the members of the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Bombay, in February 1936, on the occasion of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's Vyāsa-pūjā celebration.

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

“In the revealed scriptures it is declared that the spiritual master should be worshiped like the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and this injunction is obeyed by pure devotees of the Lord. The spiritual master is the most confidential servant of the Lord. Thus let us offer our respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of our spiritual master.”

Gentlemen, on behalf of the members of the Bombay branch of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, let me welcome you all because you have so kindly joined us tonight in our congregational offerings of homage to the lotus feet of the world teacher, Ācāryadeva, who is the founder of this Gauḍīya Mission and the president-*ācārya* of Śrī Śrī Viśva-vaiṣṇava Rāja-sabhā—I mean my eternal divine master, Paramahansa Parivrajakācārya Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

Sixty-two years ago, on this auspicious day, the Ācāryadeva made his appearance by the call of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda at Śrī-kṣetra, Jagannātha-dhāma, at Purī.

Gentlemen, the offering of such an homage as has been arranged this evening to the Ācāryadeva is not a sectarian concern, for when we speak of the fundamental principle of *gurudeva*, or *ācāryadeva*, we speak of something that is of universal application. There does not arise any question of discriminating my *guru* from yours or anyone else's. There is only one *guru*, who appears in an infinity of forms to teach you, me, and all others.

The *guru*, or *ācāryadeva*, as we learn from the bona fide scriptures, delivers the message of the absolute world, the transcendental abode of the Absolute Truth. We have heard so many times: *mahā-jano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ* (“Traverse the trail which your previous *ācārya* has passed”), but we have hardly tried to understand the real purport of this *śloka*. If we scrutinizingly study this proposition, we can understand that the *mahā-jana* is one and the royal road to the transcendental world is also one. In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [1.2.12] it is said:

*tad-vijñānārthan sa gurum evābhigacchet
samit-pāṇiḥ śrotriyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham*

“In order to learn the transcendental science, one must approach the bona fide spiritual master in disciplic succession, who is fixed in the Absolute Truth.”

Thus it has been enjoined herewith that in order to receive that transcendental knowledge, one must approach the *guru*. Therefore, if the Absolute Truth is one, about which we think there is no difference of opinion, the *guru* also cannot be two. The Ācāryadeva to whom we have assembled tonight to offer our humble homage is not the *guru* of a sectarian institution or one out of many differing exponents of the truth. On the contrary, he is the Jagad-guru, the *guru* of all of us; the only difference is that some obey him wholeheartedly, while others do not obey him directly.

In the *Bhāgavatam* [11.17.27] it is said:

*ācāryam mām vijānīyān nāvamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta sarva-deva-mayo guruḥ*

“One should understand the spiritual master to be as good as I am,” said the Blessed Lord. “Nobody should be jealous of the spiritual master or think of him as an ordinary man, because the spiritual master is the sum total of all the demigods.” That is, the *ācārya* has been identified with God Himself. He has nothing to do with the affairs of this mundane world. He does not descend here to meddle with the affairs of temporary necessities but to deliver the fallen, conditioned souls—the souls, or entities, who have come here to the material world with a motive of enjoyment by the mind and five organs of sense perception. He appears before us to reveal the light of the *Vedas* and to bestow upon us the blessings of full-fledged freedom, after which we should hanker at every step of our life’s journey.

The transcendental knowledge of the *Vedas* was first uttered by God to Brahmā, the creator of this particular universe. From Brahmā the knowledge descended to Nārada, from Nārada to Vyāsadeva, and from Vyāsadeva to Madhva, and in this process of disciplic succession the transcendental knowledge was transmitted by one disciple to another till it reached Lord Gaurāṅga, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who posed as the disciple and successor of Śrī Īśvara Purī. The present Ācāryadeva is the tenth disciplic representative from Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, the original representative of Lord Caitanya who preached this transcendental tradition in its fullness. The knowledge that we receive from our Gurudeva is not different from that imparted by God Himself and the succession of the *ācāryas* in the preceptorial line of Brahmā. We adore this auspicious day as Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā-tithi because the *ācārya* is the living representative of Vyāsadeva, the divine compiler of the *Vedas*, *Purāṇas*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Mahābhārata*, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

One who interprets the divine sound, or *śabda-brahma*, by his imperfect sense perception cannot be a real spiritual *guru*, because in the absence of proper disciplinary training under the bona fide *ācārya*, the interpreter is sure to differ from Vyāsadeva (as the Māyāvādīs do). Śrī Vyāsadeva is the prime authority of Vedic revelation, and therefore such an irrelevant interpreter cannot be accepted as the *guru*, or *ācārya*, howsoever equipped he may be with all the acquirements of material knowledge. As it is said in the *Padma Purāṇa*, *sampradāya-vihīnā ye mantrās te niṣphalā matāḥ*: “Unless you are initiated by a bona fide spiritual master in the disciplic succession, the *mantra* that you might have received is without any effect.”

On the other hand, one who has received the transcendental knowledge by aural reception from the bona fide preceptor in the disciplic chain, and who has sincere regard for the real *ācārya*, must needs be enlightened with the revealed knowledge of the *Vedas*. But this knowledge is permanently sealed to the cognitive approach of the empiricists. As it is said in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* [6.23]:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ*

“Only unto those great souls who simultaneously have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.”

Gentlemen, our knowledge is so poor, our senses are so imperfect, and our sources are so limited that it is not possible for us to have even the slightest knowledge of the absolute region without surrendering ourselves at the lotus feet of Śrī Vyāsadeva or his bona fide representative. Every moment we are being deceived by the knowledge of our direct perception. It is all the creation or concoction of the mind, which is always deceiving, changing, and flickering. We cannot know anything of the transcendental region by our limited, perverted method of observation and experiment. But all of us can lend our eager ears for the aural reception of the transcendental sound transmitted from that region to this through the unadulterated medium of Śrī Gurudeva or Śrī Vyāsadeva. Therefore, gentlemen, we should surrender ourselves today at the feet of the representative of Śrī Vyāsadeva for the elimination of all our differences bred by our unsubmitive attitude. It is accordingly said in *Śrī Gītā* [4.34]:

*tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

“Just approach the wise and bona fide spiritual master. Surrender unto him first and try to understand him by inquiries and service. Such a wise spiritual master will enlighten you with transcendental knowledge, for he has already known the Absolute Truth.”

To receive the transcendental knowledge we must completely surrender ourselves to the real *ācārya* in a spirit of ardent inquiry and service. Actual performance of service to the Absolute under the guidance of the *ācārya* is the only vehicle by which we can assimilate the transcendental knowledge. Today’s meeting for offering our humble services and homage to the feet of the Ācāryadeva will enable us to be favored with the capacity of assimilating the transcendental knowledge so kindly transmitted by him to all persons without distinction.

Gentlemen, we are all more or less proud of our past Indian civilization, but we actually do not know the real nature of that civilization. We cannot be proud of our past material civilization, which is now a thousand times greater than in days gone by. It is said that we are passing through the age of darkness, the Kali-yuga. What is this darkness? The darkness cannot be due to backwardness in material knowledge, because we now have more of it than formerly. If not we ourselves, our neighbors at any rate have plenty of it. Therefore, we must conclude that the darkness of the present age is not due to a lack of material advancement, but that we have lost the clue to our spiritual advancement, which is the prime necessity of human life and the criterion of the highest type of human civilization. Throwing bombs from airplanes is no advancement of civilization from the primitive, uncivilized practice of dropping big stones on the heads of enemies from the tops of hills. Improvement in the art of killing our neighbors by means of machine guns and poisonous gases is certainly no advancement from primitive barbarism, which prided itself on its art of killing by bows and arrows. Nor does the development of a sense of pampered selfishness prove anything more than intellectual animalism. True human civilization is very different from all these states, and therefore in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* [1.3.14] there is the emphatic call:

*uttiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varān nibodhata
kṣurasya dhārā niśitā duratyayā
durgam pathas tat kavayo vadanti*

“Please wake up and try to understand the boon which you now have in this human form of life. The path of spiritual realization is very difficult; it is sharp like a razor’s edge. That is the opinion of learned, transcendental scholars.”

Thus, while others were yet in the womb of historical oblivion, the sages of India had developed a different kind of civilization, which enabled them to know themselves. They had discovered that we are not at all material entities, but that we are all spiritual, permanent, and indestructible servants of the Absolute. But because we have, against our better judgment, chosen to completely identify ourselves with this present material existence, our sufferings have multiplied according to the inexorable law of birth and death, with its consequent diseases and anxieties. These sufferings cannot be really mitigated by any provision of material happiness, because matter and spirit are completely different elements. It is just as if you took an aquatic animal out of water and put it on the land, supplying all manner of happiness possible on land. The deadly sufferings of the animal are not capable of being relieved at all until it is taken out of its foreign environment. Spirit and matter are completely contradictory things. All of us are spiritual entities. We cannot have perfect happiness, which is our birthright, however much we may meddle with the affairs of the mundane things. Perfect happiness can be ours only when we are restored to our natural state of spiritual existence. This is the distinctive message of our ancient Indian civilization, this is the message of the *Gītā*, this is the message of the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas*, and this is the message of all the real *ācāryas*, including our present Ācāryadeva, in the line of Lord Caitanya.

Gentlemen, although it is imperfectly that we have been enabled, by his grace, to understand the sublime

messages of our Ācāryadeva, Oṃ Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṃsa Parivrājakācārya Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, we must admit that we have realized definitely that the divine message from his holy lips is the congenial thing for suffering humanity. All of us should hear him patiently. If we listen to the transcendental sound without unnecessary opposition, he will surely have mercy upon us. The ācārya's message is to take us back to our original home, back to God. Let me repeat, therefore, that we should hear him patiently, follow him in the measure of our conviction, and bow down at his lotus feet for releasing us from our present causeless unwillingness for serving the Absolute and all souls.

From the *Gītā* we learn that even after the destruction of the body, the *ātmā*, or the soul, is not destroyed; he is always the same, always new and fresh. Fire cannot burn him, water cannot dissolve him, the air cannot dry him up, and the sword cannot kill him. He is everlasting and eternal, and this is also confirmed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [10.84.13]:

*yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke
sva-dhiḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma iḥya-dhiḥ
yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij
janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ*

“Anyone who accepts this bodily bag of three elements [bile, mucus, and air] as his self, who has an affinity for an intimate relationship with his wife and children, who considers his land as worshipable, who takes bath in the waters of the holy places of pilgrimage but never takes advantage of those persons who are in actual knowledge—he is no better than an ass or a cow.”

Unfortunately, in these days we have all been turned foolish by neglecting our real comfort and identifying the material cage with ourselves. We have concentrated all our energies for the meaningless upkeep of the material cage for its own sake, completely neglecting the captive soul within. The cage is meant for the undoing of the bird; the bird is not meant for the welfare of the cage. Let us, therefore, deeply ponder this. All our activities are now turned toward the upkeep of the cage, and the most we do is try to give some food to the mind by art and literature. But we do not know that this mind is also material in a more subtle form. This is stated in the *Gītā* [7.4]:

*bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuḥ khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca
ahaṁkāra itīyaṁ me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā*

“Earth, water, fire, air, sky, intelligence, mind, and ego are all My separated energies.”

We have scarcely tried to give any food to the soul, which is distinct from the body and mind; therefore we are all committing suicide in the proper sense of the term. The message of the Ācāryadeva is to give us a warning to halt such wrong activities. Let us therefore bow down at his lotus feet for the unalloyed mercy and kindness he has bestowed upon us.

Gentlemen, do not for a moment think that my Gurudeva wants to put a complete brake on the modern civilization—an impossible feat. But let us learn from him the art of making the best use of a bad bargain, and let us understand the importance of this human life, which is fit for the highest development of true consciousness. The best use of this rare human life should not be neglected. As it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [11.9.29]:

*labdhvā sudurlabham idaṁ bahu-sambhavānte
mānuṣyam arthadam anityam apiha dhīraḥ
tūrṇaṁ yateta na pated anumṛtyu yāvan
niḥśreyasāya viṣayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt*

“Human life is obtained after many, many births, and though it is temporary, it offers the highest benefits. Thus a sober and intelligent man should immediately try to fulfill his mission and attain the highest profit in

life before another death occurs. He should avoid sense gratification, which is available in all circumstances.”

Let us not misuse this human life in the vain pursuit of material enjoyment, or, in other words, for the sake of only eating, sleeping, fearing, and sensuous activities. The Ācāryadeva’s message is conveyed by the words of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī:

*anāsaktasya viṣayān yathārham upayujjataḥ
nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe yuktaṁ vairāgyam ucyate*

*prāpañcikatayā buddhyā hari-sambandhi-vastunaḥ
mumukṣubhiḥ parityāgo vairāgyaṁ phalgu kathyate*

“One is said to be situated in the fully renounced order of life if he lives in accordance with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He should be without attachment for sense gratification and should accept only what is necessary for the upkeep of the body. On the other hand, one who renounces things which could be used in the service of Kṛṣṇa, under the pretext that such things are material, does not practice complete renunciation.”

The purport of these *śloka*s can only be realized by fully developing the rational portion of our life, not the animal portion. Sitting at the feet of the Ācāryadeva, let us try to understand from this transcendental source of knowledge what we are, what is this universe, what is God, and what is our relationship with Him. The message of Lord Caitanya is the message for the living entities and the message of the living world. Lord Caitanya did not bother Himself for the upliftment of this dead world, which is suitably named Martyaloka, the world where everything is destined to die. He appeared before us four hundred fifty years ago to tell us something of the transcendental universe, where everything is permanent and everything is for the service of the Absolute. But recently Lord Caitanya has been misrepresented by some unscrupulous persons, and the highest philosophy of the Lord has been misinterpreted to be the cult of the lowest type of society. We are glad to announce tonight that our Ācāryadeva, with his unusual kindness, saved us from this horrible type of degradation, and therefore we bow down at his lotus feet with all humility.

Gentlemen, it has been a mania of the cultured (or uncultured) society of the present day to accredit the Personality of Godhead with merely impersonal features and to stultify Him by claiming that He has no senses, no form, no activity, no head, no legs, and no enjoyment. This has also been the pleasure of the modern scholars due to their sheer lack of proper guidance and true introspection in the spiritual realm. All these empiricists think alike: all the enjoyable things should be monopolized by the human society, or by a particular class only, and the impersonal God should be a mere order supplier for their whimsical feats. We are happy that we have been relieved of this horrible type of malady by the mercy of His Divine Grace Paramahaṁsa Parivrajakācārya Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja. He is our eye-opener, our eternal father, our eternal preceptor, and our eternal guide. Let us therefore bow down at his lotus feet on this auspicious day.

Gentlemen, although we are like ignorant children in the knowledge of the Transcendence, still His Divine Grace, my Gurudeva, has kindled a small fire within us to dissipate the invincible darkness of empirical knowledge. We are now so much on the safe side that no amount of philosophical argument by the empiric schools of thought can deviate us an inch from the position of our eternal dependence on the lotus feet of His Divine Grace. Furthermore, we are prepared to challenge the most erudite scholars of the Māyāvāda school and prove that the personality of Godhead and His transcendental sports in Goloka alone constitute the sublime information of the *Vedas*. There are explicit indications of this in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [8.13.1]: *śyāmāc chavalāṁ prapadye śavalāc chyāmāṁ prapadye*. “For receiving the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, I surrender unto His energy [Rādhā], and for receiving the mercy of His energy, I surrender unto Kṛṣṇa.” Also, in the *Ṛg Veda* [1.2.22.20]: *tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam sadā paśyanti sūrayo divīva cakṣur ātataṁ . . . viṣṇor yat paramaṁ padam*. “The lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu are the supreme objective of all the demigods. These lotus feet of the Lord are as enlightening as the sun in the sky.”

The plain truth so vividly explained in the *Gītā*, which is the central lesson of the *Vedas*, is not

understood or even suspected by the most powerful scholars of the empiric schools. Herein lies the secret of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā. When we meditate on the transcendental pastimes of the Absolute Godhead, we are proud to feel that we are His eternal servitors, and we become jubilant and dance with joy. All glory to my divine master, for it is he who has out of his unceasing flow of mercy stirred up within us such a movement of eternal existence. Let us bow down at his lotus feet.

Gentlemen, had he not appeared before us to deliver us from the thralldom of this gross worldly delusion, surely we should have remained for lives and ages in the darkness of helpless captivity. Had he not appeared before us, we would not have been able to understand the eternal truth of the sublime teaching of Lord Caitanya. Had he not appeared before us, we could not have been able to know the significance of the first *śloka* of *Brahma-saṁhitā*:

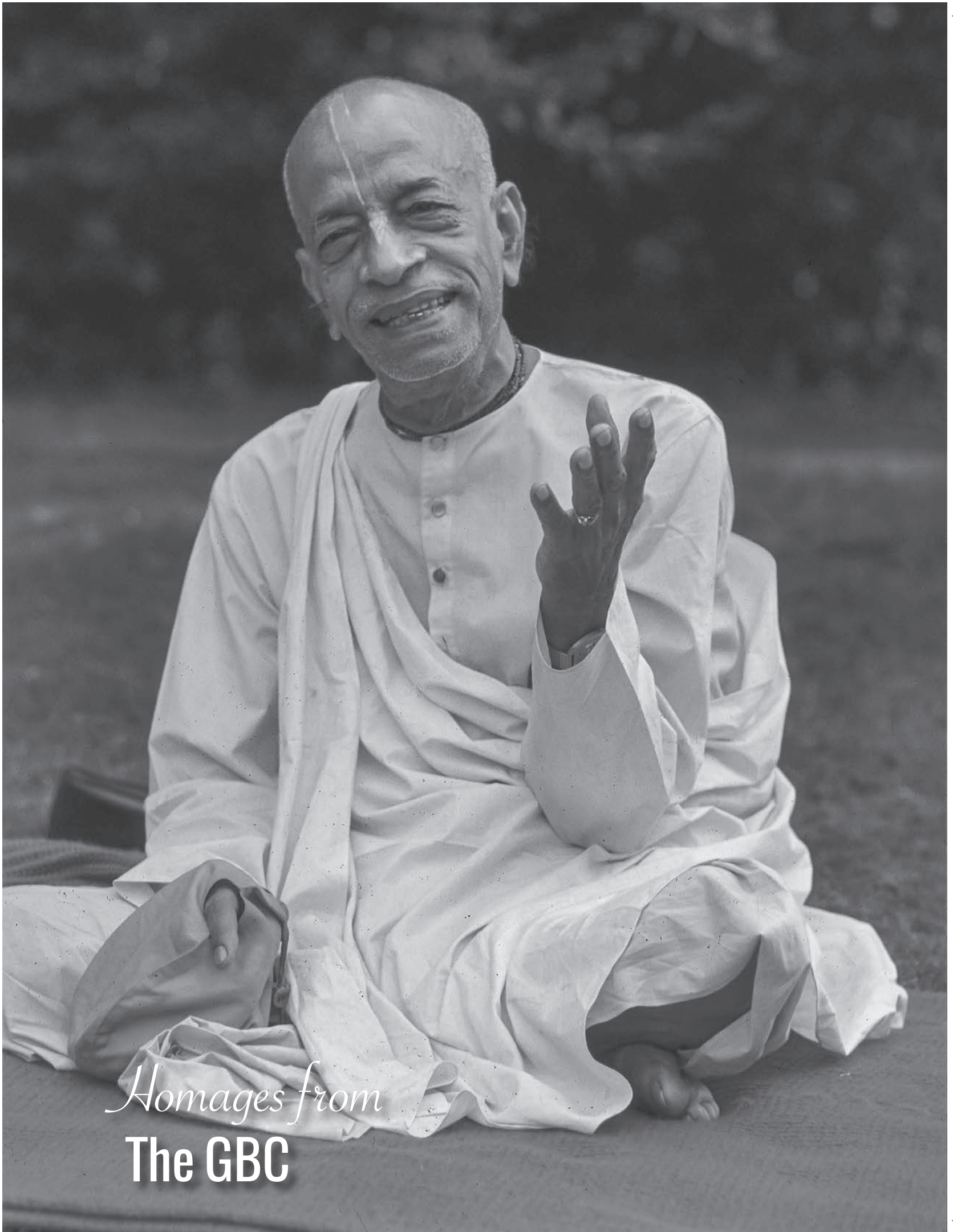
*īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

“Kṛṣṇa, who is known as Govinda, is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal, blissful, spiritual body. He is the origin of all, He has no other origin, and He is the prime cause of all causes.”

Personally, I have no hope for any direct service for the coming crores of births of the sojourn of my life, but I am confident that some day or other I shall be delivered from this mire of delusion in which I am at present so deeply sunk. 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.

ABHAY CHARAN DAS

For Members, Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Bombay



Homages from
The GBC

Anuttama dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*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*

Today we celebrate the 125th anniversary of your birth, or appearance in this world. One hundred twenty-five is an important milestone. It is a special opportunity for all of your disciples, granddisciples, and admirers to reassess your many accomplishments, to grasp more deeply your teachings, to better comprehend your personal example, and to reaffirm our sense of gratitude and commitment to you and to your mission.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, disciples are instructed to reveal their minds before the guru to seek his guidance. Thus, this year I wish to posit before you my thoughts and a fear I have. You write in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.18:

These are the miraculous effects of the association of *Bhāgavatas*. . . . The more progress is made in devotional service under the guidance of the *Bhāgavatas*, the more one becomes fixed in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. The messages of the book *Bhāgavata*, therefore, have to be received from the devotee *Bhāgavata*, and the combination of these two *Bhāgavatas* will help the neophyte devotee to make progress on and on.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the greatest modern devotee *Bhāgavata* and the giver of the book *Bhāgavata* to the entire world. Thus your association and guidance are essential for all ISKCON devotees who hope to make progress in spiritual life. But I fear that this fact may be lost with the passage of time.

As time passes by, and as your direct disciples, the respected elders of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, pass on, I fear that your association, your preeminent position, your mood and teachings may be minimized—or even forgotten.

Of course, in one sense that can never happen. Your *mūrti* will always sit in our temples. Your *praṇāma* prayers will always be chanted to begin our *kīrtanas*. Your books will always be published.

But my fear, Prabhupāda, is that the worship of your sacred form may become ritual; chanting your *praṇāma* prayers, just thoughtless repetition; your books, read less and less by ISKCON aspirants who are instead attracted by the words of contemporary charismatic preachers.

That is why today your Vyāsa-pūjā celebration is so important to all ISKCON members. It is a wakeup call—for now, and into the future. It should remind us to ask: Are we keeping you in the center of our lives and our communities? Are we looking to you to set the example and standards that we follow? Are we immersed in your teachings, your mood, and your vision? Are we understanding and applying both your strictness and your flexibility? Are we seeking guidance by regularly asking ourselves, “How did Śrīla Prabhupāda respond in a situation similar to what I face today?”

This past year I’ve tried to connect with you more deeply by again reading, then again rereading, your “official” biography, *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*. It’s a lovely book, Śrīla Prabhupāda. No one history, of course, can capture the whole picture of any great person, especially one as multifaceted as you. But I implore every devotee who reads this offering to consider the 125th anniversary an impetus to read as many biographies about Śrīla Prabhupāda as possible, especially the *Līlāmṛta*.

It's not just because your story, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is an amazing one—although it is. More importantly, with the march of time we need to better understand what a transcendental *person* you were (and are). Because we need you to remain *a living example for us*. Not just an historical figure, or an idol we admire.

By hearing about you from proper sources, we better comprehend the challenges you faced, the decisions you made, the considerations you weighed in making your choices. Not that we just recite, as if memorized, “Prabhupāda had two heart attacks on the ship, and he didn't have much money in NYC, and he fought for the Juhu temple, and he published lots of books, and he opened a lot of temples, and it all came out ok, and that was his wonderful *līlā*. *Jaya Prabhupāda!*”

That is simply not enough. We need to know more. We need to know that you didn't “have” two heart attacks, you *suffered* two heart attacks. You didn't just face some abstract obstacles, you *sometimes went hungry* because of lack of money as you pushed on your mission. In later years, *out of anxiety you couldn't sleep* many nights as you worried about the problems your movement faced. *You cried sometimes* when reunited with disciples who had left you. *You laughed and told jokes* that left disciples bursting with laughter. *You were excited by new challenges*. *Your eyes twinkled when teasing* your disciples and their children. And *you became angry at*, but never envious of, those who were too proud or who offended the Lord.

In short, we need to understand that you are not a silent *mūrti* sitting on your *vyāsāsana*. You are an awe-inspiring *person*. A person who demonstrated love, and hurt, and humor, and enthusiasm (against unbelievable odds), and every other human and transcendental emotion. You faced every type of obstacle we will ever face, and more. You showed us how to live in faith, and hope, and joy.

You are not just our Founder, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You are our *Ācārya*. It is essential that all of ISKCON—gurus and GBCs and novices alike—never forget that we can, and must, look to you as our example of how to live a Kṛṣṇa conscious life. How to live in the midst of success and failure; in the company of both kings and paupers; in sickness and in health; in wealth and in poverty; in fame and in obscurity; with family, and alone; at home, and abroad.

We know that you got angry, but that is not enough to know. Or we may think “Prabhupāda got angry, I can too.” We know you sometimes said people were living like “dogs, hogs, and asses.” We may think we can say that, too. But when we study your *līlā*, your *Līlāmṛta*, we learn that you—unlike us in our faint attempts to mimic you—said such things with purity, compassion, and love. This is the example that needs to remain alive in our hearts, in our minds, and in our words. Only in this way, *in active memory of you*, can your society and your followers hope to “make progress on and on,” to become happy, and to inspire others to adhere to the path of the *Bhāgavatas*.

So this is my fear. That unless we are consciously striving to go deep in our understanding of who you are, and your mood and your mission, although you are our founder-*ācārya* you may slowly become a silent *mūrti* for most of us.

But if we use this 125th year, and every year, as an opportunity to push ourselves to go deeper to understand you—to learn about your life, with its very human struggles as well as divine successes—then you will ever be alive for all of ISKCON. Then when we make decisions we'll look to your ever-fresh example, when we suffer we'll remember that it was for our sake you suffered even more than we do, and when we taste joy we'll remember that it was you who showed us how to laugh and love with meaning and purpose.

For ISKCON to continue, we can't just claim to be members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, or disciples of this guru or that guru. We must be Prabhupāda-*anugas*, Prabhupāda followers. And we cannot follow you—we will fail to follow you—if we don't immerse ourselves in your *līlā*, your *līlāmṛta*.

Aspiring to remember your example every day, and moment to moment, I pray to become qualified to be

Your eternal servant,

Anuttama dāsa

Bhakti Caitanya Swami

My dear Lord and Master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the savior of the whole world. And my savior.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.17.27), Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

*ācāryaṁ mām vijānīyān nāvamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta sarva-deva-mayo guruḥ*

“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.”

I first encountered this verse when reading the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* many years ago. It appears there as *Ādi-līlā* 1.46, and you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, give a very profound and pointed purport to it there. First you emphasize how the bona fide spiritual master is like a parent, without whose attentive service a child cannot grow up to become a proper adult. In a similar way, a disciple cannot come to the level of proper Kṛṣṇa consciousness without the dedicated help of the guru.

It never ceases to amaze me, Śrīla Prabhupāda, how you are helping us, directly by your presence in our lives in your service, and indirectly through our godbrothers and -sisters, to develop in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This Kali-yuga is such a hopeless time, as the *Bhāgavatam* says: “[In this age] men almost always have but short lives. They are quarrelsome, lazy, misguided, unlucky, and, above all, always disturbed.” If that were not bad enough, along comes the Covid pandemic, which compounds the craziness and drives even some devotees into extreme states of mind.

But, Śrīla Prabhupāda, with the anchor of your instructions your sincere followers are able not only to remain steady in this storm but also to find innovative ways to spread the mission of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in times that seemingly paralyze many of the well-intentioned and drive others into frenzies of foolishness that complicate an already bewildering situation.

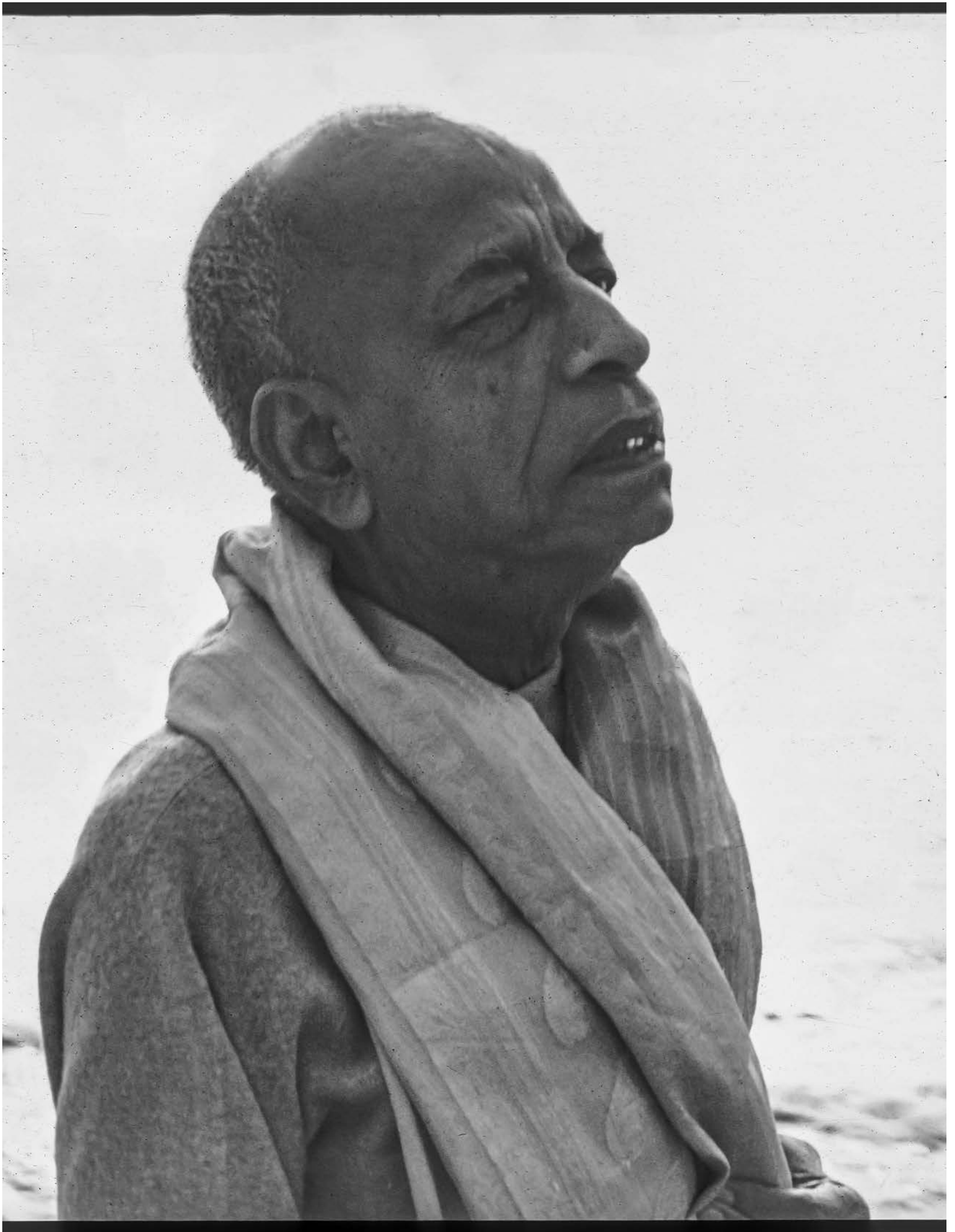
You go on in that purport to explain how the spiritual master is an *ācārya*, a “transcendental professor” who teaches the disciples the Vedic understanding in detail and gives them second births on the spiritual platform. Coming close to a bona fide *ācārya* such as yourself opens the doors to transcendence in ways no other person is able to do, and this is an act of such incomprehensible compassion that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are none other than the Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead, the *āśraya-vigraha*, or the form of the Lord one must take shelter of.

We have seen how being connected with you has revolutionized our lives. In happy times and sad, and even in these strange days of Covid, those who do as you have instructed continue making progress and experience the nectar of immortality in their lives. In the beginning of our devotee lives we didn’t really know what to expect, but whatever we had in mind, practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness under your protection has exceeded any ideas we had in terms of practicality and real experience.

Therefore our *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse tells us to never envy you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. We must never think that our future in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can ever be improved by concocting our own ideas and somehow avoiding what you have given us. As you say in the purport, “a bona fide *ācārya* is nondifferent from the Personality of Godhead, and therefore to envy such an *ācārya* is to envy the Personality of Godhead Himself. This will produce an effect subversive of transcendental realization.”

You are one of the confidential associates of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, or a manifested representation of Lord Nityānanda. Or quite likely, in your own transcendental way, both. My life is dependent on you, and other than your shelter there is nothing auspicious in my existence.

I humbly pray at your lotus feet to continue being merciful to this undeserving person, and please



keep accepting my small attempts at serving you. May your glories be spread throughout the three worlds!

Your servant,

Bhakti Caitanya Swami

Bhaktimārga Swami

*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*

Something New

It was our morning-time focus,
When we offered you a lotus
At *guru-pūjā*; all was so cheerful—
No trace of anything at all tearful.

It was the start of the year in Guyana,
Where in abundance grow the lotus and banana.
We didn't know what was coming—
Temple operations were smoothly running.

Then reports arrived in the month of January:
An attack came from a strange adversary,
An invisible creature who takes human lives,
A threat to children, men, and precious wives.

Theories of conspiracies began to surface
As to the origin of a virus to hurt us
Going by the name Covid-19—
A virus so ominous, dark, and mean.

The public demanded answers to the questions they asked
And were told, "To be safe, you must be masked,
And social distancing at six feet is standard,
While coming together is now abandoned."

This pandemic spreads at the pace of a cheetah,
And disease *is* mentioned in *Bhagavad-gītā*.
Locked in arms are Kali and Covid—
You direct us to Kṛṣṇa, or Govind.

It is not surprising that bad omens come:
śāstra states *duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam*.
Life's leisurely ways are cut short;
We know it to be a reality distort.

The vision you share makes it all clear;
You offer hope when trouble is near.
Your question: "Are you able and ready?"
The answer: "When *sādhana* and love are steady."

Prabhupāda, you are helping us through this;
Your teachings burn a hole through this crisis.
Vaikuṇṭha comes when the cycle is over, Only
when our hearts have that solid makeover.

Bless us to be tolerant like a tree.
Lessons on life are not always free:
They come at a price, we have to adjust.
It is as essential as the Earth's crust.

Your servant,

Bhaktimārga Swami

Bhaktivaibhava Swami

I offer my humble obeisances at the lotus feet of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura comments on his song *Nadīyā-godrume Nityānanda Mahājana* that the *mahāśaya* (great personality) on patrol plays his *karatālas* and calls out, "O people of faith! I do not wish to beg from you any worldly thing or mundane favor. The only alms I beg is that all of you honor the order of the Lord by chanting the name of Kṛṣṇa, worshiping Kṛṣṇa, and teaching others about Kṛṣṇa."

This statement by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura reminds me of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Following in full surrender the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Nityānanda Prabhu, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and his spiritual master, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, he played the *karatālas* and chanted the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Singlehandedly he delivered the treasure of the holy name to everyone he met, and gradually it started spreading all over the world.

Meditating on this miracle, I offer my prostrated *daṇḍavats* to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda did not beg for any worldly things or mundane favors. He did not travel all over the world to ask for anything. He delivered the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and the only alms he asked for was that people honor the order of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Nityānanda Prabhu, and the previous *ācāryas* by chanting the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Meditating on this miracle, I offer my prostrated *daṇḍavats* to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura comments further: “Invoke the true name of Kṛṣṇa. Specifically, by giving up *nāmābhāsa* (a hint of the holy name due to offenses), please chant the purely spiritual (*cinmaya*) holy name of the Lord.”

People never heard about offenses being committed against the holy name. They had no clue what an offense was. Śrīla Prabhupāda patiently taught those who took up the chanting of the holy name what the ten offenses against the holy name were. In his morning and evening classes, his conversations, his letters, and his Bhaktivedanta purports, he explained in the most scientific way to chant the purely spiritual (*cinmaya*) holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Meditating on this miracle, I offer my prostrated *daṇḍavats* to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes further that the holy name which is not yet purely chanted will naturally become the pure holy name, which bestows all divine perfections—but gradually. This is so because even though one may be situated in the darkness of ignorance, one is still not distracted by desires for *bhoga* (material sense gratification) and *mokṣa* (impersonal liberation), which are both unfavorable for executing devotional service.

Despite the struggle of his early disciples to purely chant the holy name, Śrīla Prabhupāda patiently continued to explain why *bhoga* and *mokṣa* are unfavorable for executing devotional service. By giving his association in manifold ways, by establishing the entire process of practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he provided his followers with the inspiration and spiritual strength to gradually develop a distaste for anything unfavorable for executing devotional service and thus approach the stage of chanting the purely transcendental holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Meditating on this miracle, I offer my prostrated *daṇḍavats* to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura explains further: “The supreme nectar (*paramāṁṛta*) of favorable service rendered unto Lord Kṛṣṇa will gradually become thickened until it breaks through your two bodies—the gross (*sthūla*) and the subtle (*liṅga*)—and will finally cause your eternal spiritual form (*aprākṛta-svarūpa*) to reawaken.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda provided the entire world with the training and education needed to gradually perform favorable devotional service as taught by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Bhakti-rasāṁṛta-sindhu*. The chanting of the pure holy name is verily the only true welfare of the living entity. There exists no higher benefit for anyone in the entire three worlds.

Meditating on this miracle, I offer my prostrated *daṇḍavats* to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s servant,

Bhaktivaibhava Swami

Bīr Krishna dās Goswami

*nama om̐ 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 prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Because of the departure of your dear disciple and my closest friend Bhakti Chāru Swami, this year has been challenging. We had been working together in Your Divine Grace's service for many years.

Philosophically we can understand the temporary nature of this world, but when it comes to experiencing the separation from Vaiṣṇavas, strong emotions naturally overwhelm us.

Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, in his prayer to the departed Vaiṣṇavas, states:

All at once they have gone to join Lord Gaurāṅga, the great dancer. To reach such a perfect personality as Lord Caitanya I can only break my head against the stone in the anguish of separation. They have all gone off together in their own *līlā*. Narottama Dāsa says, "Unable to obtain their association, I must simply weep." [*Ye Anilo Prema-dhana*]

In helping the disciples of Bhakti Chāru Swami deal with his departure, I have been reminded of the trauma I experienced when you departed this mortal world. I keep remembering the instructions you give in the Fourth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* regarding a disciple's mood when the spiritual master enters into Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes:

Similarly, a devoted disciple of the spiritual master would rather die with the spiritual master than fail to execute the spiritual master's mission. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.50, purport]

And

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. Simply by following on that line, one sees the Supreme Personality of Godhead. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.51, purport]

My realization of your words deepens with time. Not only do I need to be focused on serving your mission with my body, mind, and words, but I need to ensure that your mission will continue and increase with succeeding generations of devotees.

With the passage of time my own bodily mortality becomes more apparent. I pray to you that I will not fall into the illusion of seeing others pass away and thinking it will not happen to me.

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

“Every moment, every second, every day, every night there are so many hundreds and thousands of living entities going to the temple of death, or dying. But one who is living is thinking that ‘I will not die. I will live for good.’ That is the most wonderful thing in this world.”

I must endeavor to ensure that your legacy will remain prominent in this world. This is not an easy task. It requires that the understanding of your words, your example, your vision, and your intention be figuratively “carved in stone” in your ISKCON society. We must learn how to apply this understanding in changing times. In this way we can satisfy you by helping you create a spiritual revolution in the impious civilizations of this world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please give me the intelligence and strength to work together with your other followers to accomplish this.

Your servant,

Bir Krishna dās Goswami

Devāmrita Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

We glorify you for delivering the Western world from impersonalism and voidism.

Yet, you set in motion another extraordinary mission impossible: you dared present, to the ignoble West, what is a real civilization.

Exposing the primitiveness, you boldly taught the essential precepts and norms of real human life. Otherwise, how would “the developed world” ever know the actual human standard?

This inheritance you passed on to us still remains intact—despite the usual erosive effect of time. Constantly we ponder and deliberate the underlying themes you propounded. How to execute your desires is our life and soul.

You sought to redefine what is genuine social progress and advancement.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So they have mentioned “American Hindus.” [chuckles] [pause] It is a dead blow to the material civilization: “No drinking and no intoxication, no meat-eating, no gambling, no illicit sex.” Their whole civilization is finished. Because they stand on these things, four pillars.

Devotee: Therefore we must present a better civilization.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Eh?

Devotee: We must present a better civilization.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Not better or best. *The* civilization.

Five decades ago in the Wild West—despite pandemic hippiness—makeshift notions of a crude moral culture and social cohesion prevailed. But today’s version of a society posing as civilized is, on a mass scale, in many ways more barbarous and dangerous.

Your aging disciples can observe that even the primitive social mores and quasi-cultural attributes prevailing during our youth are in shreds—to the extent that, comparatively, the sixties and seventies can seem like Dvāpara-yuga.

During your days with us, thousands of refugees from the Neanderthal West flocked to your mission. But in India, the land of dharma and Kṛṣṇa, scant *jīvas* back then took shelter of your mission. Today the situation has dramatically reversed.

We can observe that aspects of the social terrain—the context, the milieu—do change over time. But the quintessential process you gave us—for watering the *bhakti* sprouts, creepers, and trees—remains as inconceivably effective as ever.

Early in 1977 you stated that the time would come when people would applaud your mission for having saved humanity in its most dire hour.

Darkening the sky, the dreadful storm-clouds of new viruses, environmental havoc, and nuclear warfare threaten the entire planet. Nevertheless, the life-sustaining *bhakti* seeds you planted and nurtured continue to grow.

By your fulfilling the desire of Mahāprabhu, what you granted the critically tormented world successfully persists as humanity's genuine hope and rescue.

Your lowly servant,

Devāmrita Swami

Dīna-śaraṇā Devī Dāsī

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda
All glories to your appearance!

I am falling at your lotus feet on this very special day
... with massive feelings of separation ...

What exactly happened that particular year, now a long time ago?
I was just a new devotee of two or three years ...
... I had just begun to understand your essential importance ...
... I had just ended the long spiritual search of my life at your lotus feet ...

I remember sitting at a table in the dining room of the Schloss
looking out into the gardens.
The sun shining between dark clouds
was lighting the dazzling green grass,
and the slim peepal trees were pointing straight up to the sky.

... somewhere in the background the sound of soft chanting ...

Suddenly the sun disappeared behind thick black clouds ...
 an unexpected wind coming from nowhere that blew for only a few seconds
 had all the tables and chairs rolling across the lawn and
 the slim peepal trees bending all the way down to the ground,
 as if offering deep obeisances,
 and the window glass trembling, threatening to burst.

... Somewhere in the background voices where screaming and shouting ...

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, had decided it was time to leave us,
 your young and inexperienced devotees.

... The ground was pulled away from under my feet ...
 A deep hole that took at least ten years to close opened in front of me.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
 I am falling at your lotus feet on this very special day
 ... with massive feelings of separation ...

.....
 Just starting to recover from your separation and
 just starting to appreciate the burden of love that you left us and
 just learning to love and appreciate your many disciples, my godbrothers and -sisters.

What exactly happened this year, 2021?
 Complete shutdown worldwide for now almost 1½ years.

A tiny virus has the whole world under its control.
 Industrial activities slow down
 while people at the brink of suffocation so painfully
 experience the loss of so many loved ones.
 Nature experiences a long needed relief ...
 the skies and waters become almost clear of all pollution,
 just to be polluted again within days of the end of the lockdown.

“God is perfect and complete and all His parts and parcels are perfect and complete.”
 It is presumptuous to think “we” need to improve His creation.
 “Not even a blade of grass moves without His consent.”
 “We can only beg Him to please remember us and to forgive us and
 relieve us from the reactions to our ravaging exploitation.”

This is His ultimate warning to this so-called advanced civilization.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
 I am falling at your lotus feet on this very special day
 ... with massive feelings of separation ...

I bow down at your Lotus Feet
every day before starting my service day.

I especially bow down at your Lotus Feet
on special days like Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva's appearance day.

I very specially bow down at your Lotus Feet
as if for the first time again today,
on this very special day of your appearance
. . . with massive feelings of separation . . .

Your wanting-to-be servant,

Dīna-śaraṇā Devī Dāsī

Gaurāṅga Dāsa

Karuṇā Mālā

Most revered Śrīla Prabhupāda,

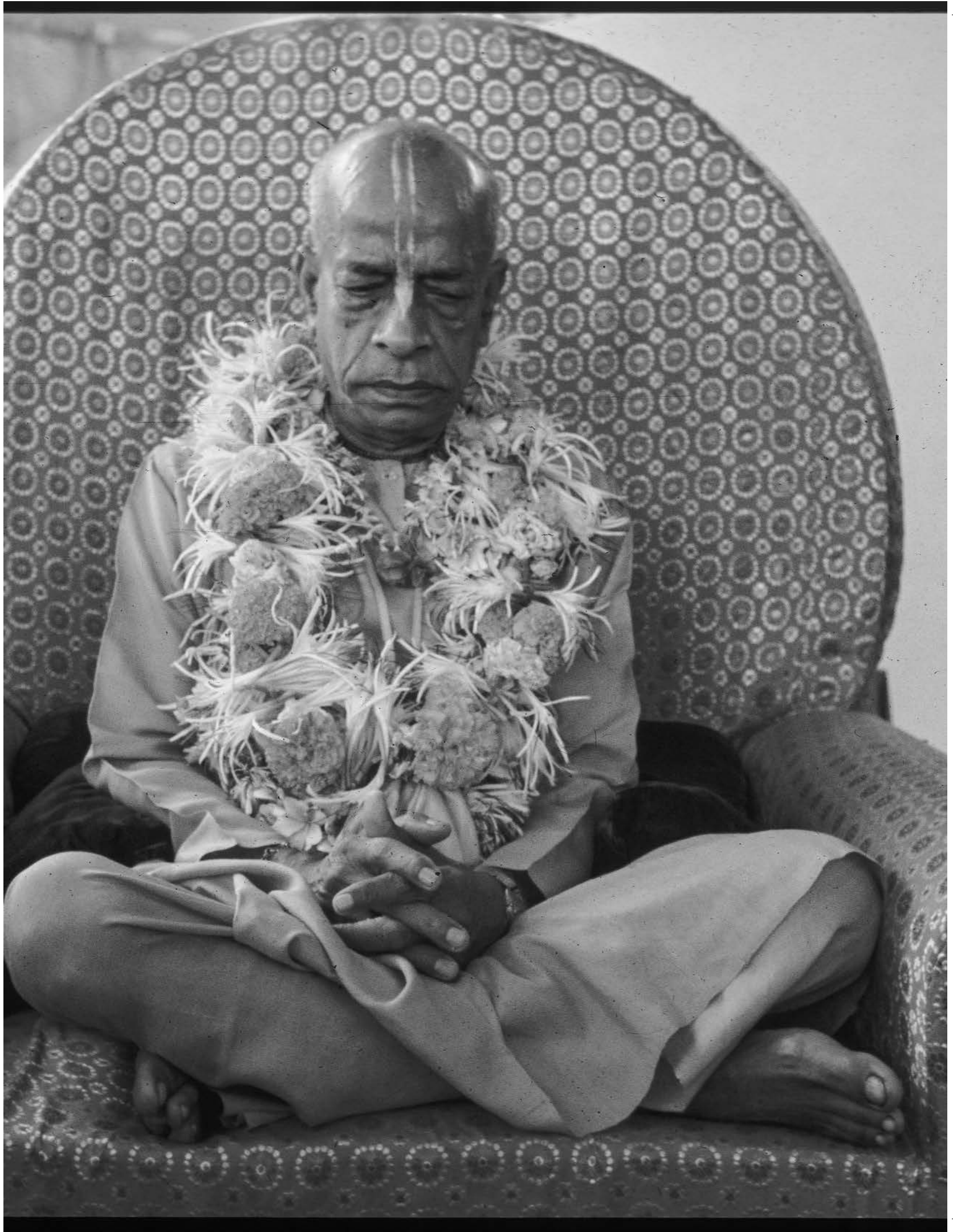
Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you, Gurudeva!

It's with a sense of wonder, a tinge of delight, and boundless gratitude that I pen this heartfelt offering unto your lotus feet. It's because of your causeless mercy that I am able to participate in this momentous occasion, your Vyāsa-pūjā on the 125th anniversary of your appearance, celebrated with splendor, joy, and worship all over the world. I consider myself blessed not only to participate but also to have an opportunity to write this offering. I see this as an attempt to purify myself and as a divine opportunity to introspect, to look back at how your Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement has transformed my life and shown me a path I never knew even existed at one point in time.

*cakhu-dān dilo jei, janme janme prabhu sei,
divya-jñān hṛde prakāśito*

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have unlimited love for Kṛṣṇa, your personality is an encyclopedia on leadership, your demeanor is a manual on resolute determination, your heart is a deep mine of compassion, and your life is a handbook on unshakeable faith—overall, you are an ocean of knowledge. It's a challenge for me to describe in this one offering how much you have inspired me on all these fronts. I'm not competent to do justice to all these facets at one go. So, I'll pick up one drop from that ocean, glorify you, and in that way express the feelings of my heart.

I have deep admiration for how you put devotee care at the center of all you did, despite a demanding



schedule spearheading a global spiritual movement and taking numerous whirlwind world tours. In fact, I have observed how, even while you criticized someone—a materialistic scientist, for example—your tone and tenor were saturated with compassion for that soul. What to speak of your concern for a devotee serving in your mission to spread the glories of Kṛṣṇa far and wide!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are *karuṇā-sindhu*, an ocean of compassion. As I dig deep into your *līlāmṛta*, I extract from that ocean pearls of great compassion (*karuṇā*) and present them here in the form of a garland (*mālā*). It is your *karuṇā-mālā* tossed around at different points in time that has wooed millions of people to Kṛṣṇa over half a century, and I am sure that it will continue to attract billions to our movement in the millennia to come.

Right from the early days of the movement, your compassion was abundant. You spotted youth in the West engaged in materialistic activities and patiently taught them the basics of devotional service. The months to follow would create what was later called the Hare Kṛṣṇa explosion. Let me share one well-known episode: the scene in San Francisco, early 1967, of Śyāmasundara Prabhu giving final touches to the first Jagannātha Deity with a cigarette in his hand. Now, any other twentieth-century saint would have erupted in anger, but the compassionate *sādhū* that you are politely made a statement that would reform the heart of Śyāmasundara Prabhu forever and help inspire him to then go on to create miracles in the decades to come, most prominently in relation to his association with the Beatles. Now, in these instances one might attribute much of the success to the sincerity of the devotees and your spiritual potency; however, at the root of it is your compassion. It was because you showed compassion to them at the earliest stages that they felt inspired by your warmth, which transformed their hearts and then sustained them in the movement so they would go on to perform what we see today as marvels.

Let me share a few more such events from your *līlā* that really inspire me, instances when you mercifully distributed care to people. From these *līlā* of yours I have taken lessons for life.

At 26 Second Avenue in New York, the foundational beginning of the movement, as the hippies started to come, people who had no conception of God and of course didn't follow the regulative principles, you still treated them as devotees because you saw potential. You cooked for them, cleaned for them, and took care of their health. You nourished their souls with philosophy and *kīrtanas*, which acted like medicine administered with great compassion. You deeply cared for their physical, mental, and spiritual welfare.

During the first Māyāpur festival in 1973, nothing was really built well. Jayapatākā Swami and other devotees had to undergo severe austerities, sleeping in all sorts of places. Some became sick. You would get up at night and walk around just to check the accommodations for the devotees. You were very concerned about the devotees' well-being—their accommodations, comfort, health, and *prasādam*.

In a lecture you gave on Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disappearance day, after recounting so many wonderful stories about your Guru Mahārāja and your relationship with him, you poured out your heart as you uttered, "I thank all of you very much." And then you added, "I thank you so much because actually you are all the representatives of my Guru Mahārāja . . ." Then there is a pause in the recording and you began to cry, and finally said in a choked voice, ". . . because you are all helping me to execute the order of my Guru Mahārāja."

Yamunā Mātājī recalls in her book how in 1972 you urged her to take devotee care as her responsibility. You called her to your room in the Rādhā-Dāmodara Temple and gave her this instruction, which sprung from your empathy. You genuinely understood that Westerners were not accustomed to the way of life in India and tended to fall sick. In fact, the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir guesthouse is a manifestation of your deep care for people. You really wanted devotees from all over the world to visit the *dhāma* often without needing to worry about basic necessities. Such a thought was ahead of the times: until the 1970s, the lone guesthouse in the vicinity was ISKCON's.

This shows such deep humility, Śrīla Prabhupāda. It moves my heart so much when a *paramahansa* of your stature, someone who revolutionized the *bhakti* movement in the twentieth century, expresses such ambrosial words of modesty.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I fall at your lotus feet to seek blessings on this auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā. This is yet another opportunity to deeply remember you and your *līlā*. Thank you!

Kindly continue to engage me in the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and to serve in your mission to spread *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* the world over.

Your ever-humble servant,

Gaurāṅga Dāsa

Giridhārī Swami

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, my heart is heavy with grief. Yesterday, your dear and dedicated disciple Pañkajāṅghri Prabhu left this world. He was such a pure-hearted and unassuming soul, loved by one and all. He and his twin brother Jananivāsa have been so dedicated to the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava in Māyāpur from the very beginning of Their Lordships' installation that you said: "The two brothers Pañkajāṅghri and Jananivāsa—there is no comparison. . . . These two are the best [*pūjārīs*] in the Society." We will all miss the saintly association of your devoted servant Pañkajāṅghri Prabhu. May he bless us with the same love and devotion he had for you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Bhakti Chāru Mahārāja's departure last year ushered in what my dear godbrother Bhūrijana Prabhu calls "the decade of tears." Inevitably many, if not most, of your disciples will depart over the next ten years. This will be a painful experience for those left behind, as Rāmānanda Rāya expressed in his conversation with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu:

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked, "Of all kinds of distress, what is the most painful?"

Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya replied, "Apart from separation from the devotee of Kṛṣṇa, I know of no unbearable unhappiness." [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 8.248]

Our attachment to devotees grows exponentially through the medium of service. As we serve them, our hearts open, and we then become the recipients of their mercy. "Kṛṣṇa is yours; you have the power to give Him to me. I am simply running behind you shouting 'Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!'" (Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura)

When one who has infused our hearts with Kṛṣṇa consciousness leaves this world and we are devoid of their personal association, naturally it is devastating.

You have taught us that *vipralambha-bhāva* is the foundation of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's philosophy:

Those who are in the disciplic succession of the Madhva-Gauḍīya-sampradāya should always feel separation from Kṛṣṇa, worship His transcendental form, and discuss His transcendental teachings, His pastimes, His qualities, His entourage, and His association. That will enrich the devotees to the highest devotional perfection. Feeling constant separation while engaged in the service of the Lord is the perfection of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. [*Kṛṣṇa* book, chapter 35: The Gopis' Feelings of Separation]

Few of us feel genuine and constant separation from Kṛṣṇa. But all of us do feel deep separation from

your devotees as they depart from this world one after another. The pain and intensity of separation heightens our remembrance of those devotees' qualities, service, instructions, and example as your committed and surrendered servants. As we feel separation from your servants, we simultaneously feel separation from you and from the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

You taught us from the beginning that service to your followers is service to you:

Regarding serving your godbrothers, this is a very good practice. The Spiritual Master is never without his followers, so to serve the Spiritual Master also means to be the servant of his disciples. When you want to serve the king, you must also serve his minister, secretary, and everyone who serves him. And to serve his servants may please him more than to serve the king personally. So the Spiritual Master is not alone. He is always with his entourage. We are not impersonalists. We take care of every part of the whole, as much as one should take care of his hat as well as his shoes. Both are equally important for the upkeep of the body. I hope that you will understand this rightly. [Letter to Śivānanda, 23 January 1969]

Fortunately for us, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you attracted many moons to your movement for us to associate with and serve:

One moon is complete to drive away the darkness of night. Not millions of stars required. What these millions of stars can do? One moon is sufficient. So our propaganda is to create one moon. You see?

But fortunately, by Kṛṣṇa's grace, many moonlike boys and girls have come to me. You see? Many moons. [chuckles] I was thinking of having only one moon, but Kṛṣṇa . . . I am hopeful that there are many moons, and in future they'll be doing very nice. [Lecture, 12 April 1969, New York]

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues to ravage the world and people are desperately looking for relief from their intense suffering, your many moons must unite and illuminate this dark and dying world with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda, we hear your call:

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Kṛṣṇa is described to be like the sun. The supreme powerful is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and His devotees are also bright and illuminating because they reflect the supreme sun. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 22.31) states:

*kṛṣṇa-sūrya-sama, māyā haya andhakāra
yāhān kṛṣṇa, tāhān nāhi māyāra adhikāra*

"Kṛṣṇa is bright like the sun. As soon as the sun appears, there is no question of darkness or nescience." Similarly, the present verse also describes that by the illumination of all the moons, brightened by the reflection of the Kṛṣṇa sun, or by the grace of all the devotees of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the entire world will be illuminated, despite the darkness of Kali-yuga. Only the devotees of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu can dissipate the darkness of Kali-yuga, the ignorance of the population of this age. No one else can do so. We therefore wish that all the devotees of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement may reflect the supreme sun and thus dissipate the darkness of the entire world. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi* 13.5, purport]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this most auspicious day of your appearance, I fervently pray that you allow me to serve your servants and unite with them to vigorously spread the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

*jaya śrī-caitanyacandrera bhakta candra-gaṇa
sabāra prema jyotsnāya ujjala tri-bhuvana*

“All glories to the moons who are devotees of the principal moon, Lord Caitanyacandra! Their bright moonshine illuminates the entire universe.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 13.5)

Your servant,

Giridhārī Swami

Gopāl Krishna Goswami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

When Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared on this planet over five hundred years ago, He predicted that the holy names would be chanted in every town and village of the world.

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

In *Caitanya-maṅgala* Locana dāsa Ṭhākura states that a powerful *senāpati-bhakta* would appear in order to propagate the holy names in every corner of the globe. Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda also predicted that a powerful personality would appear who would take the teachings of the Lord to every corner of the globe. You are that *senāpati-bhakta* who fulfilled the Lord’s prediction. Your spiritual master recognized your abilities at your very first meeting with him. He instructed you to take the message of the Lord to the English-speaking world. In 1936, just before Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura left the planet, he repeated the same instruction in a letter. You took your spiritual master’s instruction seriously. And in spite of facing serious challenges in India and America, you were determined to execute his order. You dedicated the First Canto of your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to him, writing, “He lives forever by his divine instructions, and the follower lives with him.”

This year we are celebrating the 125th anniversary of your divine appearance. This occasion will only come once. Devotees all over the world are enthusiastic to increase their service. In India the leaders are holding regular meetings to encourage every devotee to increase his or her service. Devotees are making plans to celebrate more festivals, increase book distribution, increase congregational preaching, open more temples, participate in more *harināma* parties, etc. Devotees have realized that to please you they should expand their service. Our communication team in Delhi is working with the government to release a silver coin in your honor. And there is a good possibility that the government will sponsor cultural programs all over India to glorify your divine self. In Delhi we are planning a big auditorium program in which either the prime minister or the president will be the chief guest. We are also planning a big auditorium program in every state capital of India in which we will have the governor or the chief minister as the chief guest.

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 crisis, which appeared to be under control last November here in India, has now resurfaced. A new, more dangerous variant of the virus has started spreading quickly, and thousands

have died or become seriously ill. As a result, state governments of India have imposed lockdowns and prohibited gatherings of more than fifty people.

The pandemic appears to be the result of expanding sinful activities. Many companies are now making vaccinations to help control the epidemic. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa reminds us that no one can escape birth, disease, old age, and death. Most people think that the vaccination is the cure of the pandemic, but you told us of the real vaccination: “If you keep yourself vaccinated with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then *māyā* has no power to touch you.” (Initiation lecture, Los Angeles, 16 July, 1969)

Necessity is the mother of invention. During the period when the temples were closed, devotees discovered online preaching as a positive alternative. This online preaching has given devotees more opportunities to preach. Today there are many online programs going on in almost all the temples and in devotees’ homes. In fact, the preaching is constantly expanding all over the world.

Your books continue to guide humanity. You stated that your books will one day be the world’s lawbooks. You also stated that everything we need to know is in your books. We should have complete faith in this instruction. To understand your books, we need to read them again and again. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the real motivating force in the preaching effort of ISKCON. History will recognize you as the savior of humanity.

In your purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 7.164, you clearly state the importance of both book distribution and temple construction:

For preaching, construction of temples is also necessary. The Six Gosvāmīs not only engaged in writing books but also constructed temples because both are needed for preaching work. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted the cult of His *saṅkīrtana* movement to spread all over the world. Now that the International Society for Krishna Consciousness has taken up this task of preaching the cult of Lord Caitanya, its members should not only construct temples in every town and village of the globe but also distribute the books that have already been written and further increase the number of books. Both distribution of books and construction of temples must continue side by side in parallel lines.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you very kindly engaged me both in your BBT work (book production and distribution) and temple construction. At present, due to your causeless mercy, in North India alone we have seven temples under construction. We are trying hard to complete three of them so we can offer them to you on Vyāsa-pūjā day, the 125th anniversary of your appearance. You visited Kurukshetra in 1975. You liked the location of Jyotisar, where the *Gītā* was spoken, and expressed your desire to have a Kṛṣṇa-Arjuna temple there. By the efforts of many dedicated devotees, the Kurukshetra temple is almost completed.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving me the facility to serve you. I pray for your causeless mercy so I may be able to continue to serve you in your glorious ISKCON movement.

Your fallen servant,

Gopāl Krishna Goswami

Govardhana dāsa

My Heartfelt Gratitude

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace on the 125th anniversary of your appearance within this world.

Your diary entry for 6 March 1966, in New York, reads:

According to Mayapur Panjika today is Adhivas day of Gour Purnima. Devotees at Vrindaban and Nabadwipa are enjoying the celebration. I am here alone without any devotee companion. But I have come here to serve the Lord and not for any personal happiness. I am prepared to live in hell if I am able to serve the Lord. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu wanted that His mission should be propagated all over the world and that is my objective. I do not mind the inconvenience personally felt.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you fulfilled a prophecy. By your grace, we have access to transcendental knowledge, an ancient timeless wisdom in a language we can understand. By your example, we have devotional service in a form we can execute. By your efforts, we have the institution of ISKCON, which binds us to a common goal and keeps us fortified in the association of devotees. By your desire, the world has easy access to the holy name, the highest, most sublime form of worship.

You fulfilled the desires of all our previous *ācāryas*, who wanted Kṛṣṇa's holy name to be uttered in every nook and cranny of this rather miserable world. In the mood of Lord Caitanya, you made the creation dance.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are forever grateful. Most grateful. Forever indebted. And most indebted to Your Divine Grace.

One of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa's greatest gifts to mankind is the disciplic succession. Originally empowered by the Lord himself, a chain of perfect teachers appears, uniquely qualified, as they were once themselves students—even in the case of Lord Brahmā, the creator.

We will forever have a living representative of the tradition that you boldly carried to foreign lands. Thus, we will always have a living role model in society—always personally present from one generation to the next. It's not that the members of the *paramparā* are interchangeable persons—they have their own personal attributes and personalities. Yet each one has a unique contribution, a unique quality, and a unique style. This is Kṛṣṇa's greatest gift to the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are Kṛṣṇa's greatest gift to the world. And for your followers, the greatest benediction is the opportunity to serve such a personality. By some inconceivable good fortune I stumbled upon your devotees and your books. Today your devotees and your books are, in truth, my only solace as I live out my remaining time within this mortal frame.

Just as the majestic beauty of a mountain cannot be seen from up close but becomes clear from a substantial distance, your full glory remains largely invisible to the world but will bloom with the passage of time.

I remain forever grateful for your kindness and for the opportunity to serve within your ISKCON.

Your ever-grateful servant,

Govardhana dāsa

Guru Prasād Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to your unlimited mercy, which provides the shelter of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet to this fallen world.

This is my last offering related to the twenty-six qualities of a devotee, the last two being *dakṣa* and *maunī*: expert and silent. You made the following observation regarding one of the predictions for Kali-yuga, *dākṣyaṁ kuṭumba-bharaṇam*: “In this age if one can maintain his wife and few children, ah, he is very expert. He is to be considered as *dakṣa*, very expert.” A few individuals may be expert in maintaining big commercial enterprises, communities, or even nations, but who can compare in expertise to you, who brought to this world the whole spiritual dimension, which is beyond matter, time and space? Even within the material domain you excel in every area of endeavor. *Bhajana*, *kīrtana*, preaching, cooking, hearing, showing compassion, logical argument, and so many more activities are all found in their maximum manifestation in you. Through Kṛṣṇa's empowerment you are even capable of detecting the motives and mentalities of your disciples and devotees.

You expect no less from the devotees of ISKCON. You said repeatedly that one should be superlative in every effort because all service to Kṛṣṇa, the most perfect person, should be first class. Not that one who becomes a devotee is therefore careless, or falsely detached; rather, a devotee should be increasingly competent in pleasing Kṛṣṇa. You give the perfect example, and we only have to follow!

Regarding *maunī*, or silent, you say that silence means not speaking nonsense. *Guru-mukha-padma-vākya*, *cittete koriyā aikya*: every word that emanates from your lotus mouth descends from and is embedded in the *yogamāyā* potency. No material sound is ever coming from you. All your words and expressions are steeped in pure *bhakti* and are meant only to please Kṛṣṇa. Therefore your quality of *maunī*, or silent, is in perfect accord with true silence, or not speaking anything unrelated to Kṛṣṇa

At *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.44 Śrī Prahāda Mahārāja prays:

*prāyeṇa deva munayaḥ sva-vimukti-kāmā
maunaṁ caranti vijane na parārtha-niṣṭhāḥ
naitān vihāya kṛpaṇān vimumukṣa eko
nānyaṁ tvad asya śaraṇaṁ bhramato 'nupaśye*

Those who try to achieve silence by artificial means, who live alone to avoid the troublesome atmosphere of material wrangling, are self-interested. You perfectly follow the essence of Prahāda's teaching—not abandoning the *kṛpaṇas*, the foolish and greedy persons, in favor of trying to silence the bombardment of the external world in solitude, but rather working to provide the only solution for humanity's suffering: the Lord's shelter.

Please bless me so that I can take full advantage of the shelter you have perfectly constructed for all: your words, which silence the constant vibration of material interference. Please allow me to always hear and relish the nectar of your sublime teachings.

Your aspiring servant,

Guru Prasād Swami

Hṛdaya Caitanya dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Before I joined I was suffering. I was depressed to think that others were more successful than I was and that I was suffering more than others—at least that's how I perceived my situation.

As soon as I came in contact with the devotees, at the age of thirty, by your mercy I got to understand better that we are spirit souls, and that we are by nature full of bliss, full of knowledge, and eternal. I learned that for lifetimes we have been dwelling in temporary material bodies, roaming around in this material world full of miseries, in an environment unnatural for the spirit soul.

Somehow or other people are attached to this situation and falsely declare that they are happy and want to remain as they are; thus they work hard to become prominent and successful in this material world. People want to control others and lord it over the material energy, but as they struggle to do so they simultaneously become more and more entangled and entrapped by their false ego. They focus on the little enjoyment they are able to squeeze out of this material body and out of the material world, all the while becoming more and more tightly bound by the ropes of karma, due to the material desires they have carried with them for many lifetimes.

Unfortunately for our egos but fortunately for our real self, you taught us that if we do not take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness in this very lifetime we will be baffled, we will fail. We could apparently be successful, but sooner or later we would run into a brick wall. If it's not the material energy that stops us, then Kṛṣṇa in the form of time will burst our bubble and take everything from us in the form of death—life after life, again and again.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you took birth in this material world only for our benefit. By your sacrifice and mercy, our cycle of birth and death has been brought into the light and your teachings show that it would be ridiculous to continue in this material world. We have been exposed for our lack of faith and our envy and egoism.

You, Lord Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee, are mercifully showing us how to wind up our stay in this material world, and you are giving us a glimpse of and a taste for our eternal home, the spiritual world. You are simply asking us to not be envious and to have faith in Kṛṣṇa and His pure representative.

You are engaging us in devotional service, and gradually the impurities in our hearts are being removed. You are also encouraging us to share that knowledge with others in the form of book distribution, *harināma*, and preaching.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, Covid-19 came around the corner and has by now, eighteen months later, affected the lives of many millions of people and thousands of devotees.



It's tough to fight an invisible enemy. It has affected the ethical, legal, and social life of everyone, including devotees. It's a very mysterious disease that has spread worldwide. Every aspect of this disease has given rise to so much confusion and so many opposing views.

People want it to be over as soon as possible so they can go back to their so-called normal situation and again become more and more entangled in material life.

Since high-tech industrialization takes people away from simple living and high thinking, it looks like Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu is working out a plan to make some changes on planet earth so circumstances are more suitable for *harināma saṅkīrtana* and devotional service.

The solution you gave us to overcome whatever calamity or problem we face is to take shelter of the holy name and the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

When Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago, He gave us His order to surrender, and when He appeared 535 years ago as His own devotee, as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, He showed us the path by which to cross the ocean of Kali-yuga.

The ten thousand years of the *saṅkīrtana* movement inaugurated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu provide the fallen souls of Kali-yuga with the opportunity to take to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, and thus be delivered from the clutches of material existence and return home, back to Godhead.

I am always very happy to hear that by the chanting of the holy name I can be saved, and I pray to your lotus feet and the lotus feet of my spiritual master that one day I can come to understand more deeply the potency of the Lord's holy name.

Your servant,

Hṛdaya Caitanya dāsa

Jayapatākā Swami

I offer my respectful obeisances to my spiritual father, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.

*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*

On this sacred day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, I am offering you my respectful homage.
A few months ago I heard a lecture you gave in Māyāpur in April 1975, where you said:

So one who is spreading *kṛṣṇa-upadeśa*, simply repeat what is said by Kṛṣṇa, then you become *ācārya*. . . . Suppose you have got now ten thousand. We shall expand to hundred thousand. That is required. Then hundred thousand to million, and million to ten million. So there will be no scarcity of *ācārya*, and people will understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness very easily. [Lecture on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 1.13, 6 April 1975, Māyāpur]

Also, it was revealed to me that on multiple occasions you mentioned that “thousands of gurus” are needed. As I listened to your lecture from 1975, I was thinking that your idea is the way to achieve Lord Caitanya’s prediction that in every town and village His holy name will be sung.

I know that many of my disciples read only a minimum to get their second initiation, but I thought that we could encourage them to read all your books and get all their degrees—not only Bhakti Śāstrī but also Bhakti Vaibhava, Bhakti Vedānta, and Bhakti Sārvabhauma—and then to read your *Līlāmṛta*, to understand both your life and your teachings. Although all this may be difficult compared with the present system of qualifying to become a *dīkṣā-guru*, if we motivate, encourage, and advocate that each devotee become a mature practitioner and exponent of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we could actually fulfill your mission, the mission of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

His Divine Grace Śrīla Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābājī had only two disciples—one a *bhajanānandī* and the other a *goṣṭhy-ānandī*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī’s *goṣṭhy-ānandī* disciple—you—spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. So if many disciples become mature devotees qualified to be *dīkṣā-gurus*, even if the large majority of them initiate only one or a few disciples, that is not important, because the relative few that are able to take up your mission and spread it like anything to the conditioned souls will make a great contribution. Although by the present system it is very easy (practically speaking) to become a *dīkṣā-guru*, still today we have fewer than a hundred *dīkṣā-gurus* after more than fifty years of ISKCON. The fulfillment of your vision that we should have tens of thousands and ultimately millions of *ācāryas*, initiating gurus, is nowhere in sight. So we need to set a specific goal that devotees read all your books exhaustively, and how to achieve this is by promoting, advocating, and motivating all the devotees to see that your vision of having tens of thousands and ultimately millions of gurus must be achieved. This may take a long time, but it is essential.

I heard today from the principal of our Māyāpur International School that fourteen students had received the Bhakti Śāstrī degree this year! So if our students study your books from childhood, they can achieve complete knowledge of your teachings. Please bless us so that we can fulfill your vision for millions of empowered preachers in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

I am very fallen. Somehow, I am trying to fulfill your instructions to me, but there is so much more

that needs to be done. I pray for your mercy that I will be able to fulfill your vision.

Your servant,

Jayapatākā Swami

Kavicandra Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*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-vāñī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, 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.”

I recite these verses many times daily and am waiting for realization. As Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura sang, *kabe ha' be bolo se-dina āmār*: “Please tell me, When will that day be mine?”

You are the full manifestation of Lord Caitanya’s mission due to being the perfect *rūpānuga*:

*ācāryere ājñā dila kariyā sammāna
'ā-caṇḍāla ādi kṛṣṇa-bhakti dio dāna'*

With great respect, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu requested Advaita Ācārya, “Give Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotion to Kṛṣṇa, even to the lowest of men [*caṇḍālas*].”

[Purport:] This is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s order to all His devotees. *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, devotion

to Kṛṣṇa, is open to everyone, even low-class men like *caṇḍālas*. One should follow this order in the disciplic succession stemming from Śrī Advaita and Nityānanda Prabhu and distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness without discrimination throughout the world. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 15.41]

That fact that you have reached out and tolerated me for so many years is proof that you are the full manifestation of Lord Caitanya’s mission. My dear Guru Mahārāja, you have given us so many sublime instructions, two of which are currently dominating my mind. The first is *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*, which means “inconceivably simultaneously one and different.” Material scientists cannot accept this concept, but it perfectly explains Kṛṣṇa. He is inconceivable, beyond belief.

Another thing that you asked us to discuss is “unity in diversity.” As we expand globally and attract more souls from many different backgrounds, there are more and more varieties of spiritual seekers, and thus we see more and more the need to understand how to apply this seemingly simple principle of “unity in diversity.” I pray that I can represent you and apply this essential principle.

The influence of the Age of Kali is increasing, as is the Golden Age of Lord Caitanya. Your books and lectures are spreading far and wide. Naturally demons do not like that, and we are faced with the task of teaching properly.

*loka-hita lāgi’ tomāra saba vyavahāra
āmi saba nā jāni gambhīra hṛdaya tomāra*

[Śrī Paramānanda Purī said to Lord Caitanya:] “All Your activities are for the benefit of people in general. We cannot understand them, for Your intentions are deep and grave.” [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya-līlā* 2.136]

*yāñra citte kṛṣṇa-premā karaye udaya
tāñra vākya, kriyā, mudrā vijñeha nā bujhaya*

[Lord Caitanya said to Sanātana Gosvāmī:] “Even the most learned man cannot understand the words, activities, and symptoms of a person situated in love of Godhead.” [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 23.39]

Of course, so many are relishing your writings and taking up *bhakti* and the *saṅkīrtana* mission with great zeal.

I pray that I will be able to imbibe your mission.

*kabe jībe doyā, hoibe udoya,
nija-sukha bhuli’ sudīna-hṛdoya
bhaktivinoda, koriyā binoya,
śrī-ājñā-tahala koribe pracār*

When will compassion for all fallen souls awaken within this Bhaktivinoda, and when will he thus forget his own happiness and with a meek heart set out to propagate by humble entreaty the sacred order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu? [*Kabe Ha’be Bolo* 8]

*mo-baḍa adhama jane kara kṛpā nirīkṣaṇe
dāsa kari rākha vṛndābane
śrī-kṛṣṇa caitanya nāma prabhu mora gaura-dhāma
narottama laila śaraṇe*

Narottama Dāsa prays to his golden-complexioned Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, “Please

cast Your merciful glance upon this most fallen soul and keep me as Your servant in Vṛndāvana. You are my only shelter.” [Prārthanā, Song 5: Prāṇeśvara! Nivedana Ei Jana Kare]

When will I be able to pray like Sanātana Gosvāmī?

*tabe tāra diśā sphure mo-nīcera hṛdaya
īśvara tumi,—ye karāha, sei siddha haya*

[Sanātana Gosvāmī said to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu:] “If You would please manifest Yourself within my heart and personally direct me in writing this book [*Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*], then, although I am lowborn, I may hope to be able to write it. You can do this because You Yourself are the Supreme Personality of Godhead and whatever You direct is perfect.” [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 24.327]

For me, even writing this short note is difficult. But, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have kindly given us the Pañca-tattva, and so . . .

*mūka kavitva kare yāñ-sabāra smaraṇe
paṅgu giri laṅghe, andha dekhe tārā-gaṇe*

By remembering the lotus feet of the Pañca-tattva, a dumb man can become a poet, a lame man can cross mountains, and a blind man can see the stars in the sky. [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 8.5]

Praying to accept your causeless mercy, I remain

Your still aspiring servant,

Kavicandra Swami

Madhusevita dās

*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*

Your Books,
Your Compassion,
Your Smiles,
Your ISKCON,
Your Devotees,
Your Patience,

Your Mission,
 Your Sweetness,
 Your Māyāpur,
 Your Vṛndāvana,
 Your Remembrance,
 Your Gentleness,
 Your Giridhārī,
 Your Humor,
 Your Rādhā-Mādhava,
 Your Instructions,
 Your Determination,
 Your Integrity,
 Your Love,
 Your Nitāi-Gaurāṅga,
 Your Example,
 Your Heart,
 Your Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā,
 Your GBC,
 Your Presence,
 Your Care,
 Your *Mahā-mantra* . . .

They Are All I Have,
 They Are All I Am.

Your insignificant servant,

Madhusevita Dāsa

Mālatī devī dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humbly offered obeisances. All glories to your divine presence, through which our lives are given ever-perfect shelter and guidance through the opportunity of daily submission to your lotus feet.

In trying to comprehend this beautiful crazy house that you “built” with the materials of Absolute Truth framed by love of God (Kṛṣṇa) so that “the whole world” could live in it (my mind ponders, Where is your room? Where are you living in this mansion? Are you even living in it at all?), I observe deep love in the hearts of all your disciples and followers, which is not always reflected in our actions and interactions due to conflicting imagery or interpretations—“Prabhupāda said this!” “Prabhupāda said that!”—to the degree that quoting you can even become precarious! Sparring over details, quarreling over philosophical nuances. A signature of Kali-yuga times . . . So I am left to ask myself, “What is my role

in service to you now in all this? What is my service to you in these last years or perhaps even days of my life supposed to look like? What can a perpetually conditioned soul such as myself offer to you and your movement at this time?

His Grace Vaiṣeṣika Prabhu said in a lecture that if you cannot do anything, then at least keep breathing. I think that about describes my situation: just keep breathing.

Recently I had a an interesting experience where I was asked to remove a deeply embedded tick from the body of a local devotee one morning before Deity greeting and Guru-pūjā. Somehow, I was quickly successful. But before performing the operation, I observed the minute creature's situation and compared it to my own. I offered a prayer to Śrī Nṛsiṃhadeva on its behalf, as I knew it would not survive the procedure, and prayed that I might also have the same tenacity to deeply embed myself in your loving devotional service, so much so that there would never ever be any possibility of my becoming extricated from you again.

The spiritual master is an ocean of mercy, the friend of the poor and the distressed. O Master, please remain merciful to me and keep me in the shelter of your lotus feet, by which no harm can befall me. Thank you for allowing me this rare opportunity to understand and perfect the human form of life.

Your eternal dāsī,

Mālatī devī dāsī

Nirañjana Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

This year has been a challenge. Involuntarily I've been confined in one place for over five months. Although I've been saying for many years that physically I need to slow down and travel a lot less, I neither planned nor expected it to happen this way.

By your mercy, however, my situation has been a wake-up call for me. Since the first day I arrived here, not one day has passed when I've not listened to one of your recorded lectures or conversations. Yes, I've also been reading and chanting. But it's from your lectures that I'm being constantly reminded that although I'm confined to one place physically, internally I really need to consciously keep moving, and in one direction.

I've heard you say many times that "Modern civilization is a condemned civilization." Of course, that theme registered in me practically right from the beginning, and it motivated me in my service—book distribution and preaching. But somehow, at some point, I lapsed into a different state of mind. Until recently my mindset was more like "Sure, this civilization is condemned, but I probably won't witness the collective punishment it's destined to reap in this lifetime." But now, taking another good look at the world and hearing a consistent message from you almost daily, I've felt a need to reconsider.

Here's just one of so many examples of what I've been hearing from you on this topic:

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So people are so degraded, and there is no education, and there are so-called leaders, they are themselves degraded, they are themselves blind. So what is the position of the

present society? It is very precarious condition. Therefore, at the end of Kali-yuga people will be more and more, more and more degraded. There will be no more preaching. Kṛṣṇa will come as Kalki *avatāra*, simply killing, simply killing. That's all. Finished.

Professor Regamay: But they have still 4,000 years of Kali-yuga.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Not 4,000, 400,000. So yes the time is coming. And now the partial killing is going on. You drop this . . . The atom bomb is ready. You have got; I have got. I drop on you, and you drop on me. Both of us, we're finished. This is going to be happening. People are so degraded. So unless one takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, there is no possibility of being saved. There is example, that grinding mill . . . You know, grinding mill?

Professor Regamay: Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, and the grains are put within it, and they are all smashed. But one grain who takes shelter of the center, the pivot, it is not smashed. Similarly, the modern civilization is such that everyone will be smashed. And one takes the central point shelter, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he will not be: *kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ prapaśyati*. So best thing is to take shelter of Kṛṣṇa and save yourself. [Room conversation, 4 June 1974, Geneva]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I'm not saying you were a doomsayer when you were physically present with us. You left the world, and especially your followers, with abundantly more than a doomsayer's message. You delivered pure, unadulterated Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and always did so with the ferocity of a lion. But, quoting your spiritual master, you also said that "This world is not a fit place for gentleman."

At this point in time I still can't travel and lecture. I can and do preach online, but now more than any time before this I'm remembering these words of yours:

Now we have got so many students and so many temples, but I am fearful that if we expand too much in this way that we shall become weakened and gradually the whole thing will become lost. Just like milk. We may thin it more and more with water for cheating the customer, but in the end it will cease to be any longer milk. Better to boil the milk now very vigorously and make it thick and sweet, that is the best process. [Letter to Hamsadūta, 22 June 1972]

There is still not a shred of doubt in my mind that the mission and example you left for your followers was to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness until one's last breath. As you have said, "A soldier should die fighting on the battlefield." I'm also convinced that the world is in the process of becoming more and more of "a fit place" for such vigorous propaganda.

Meanwhile, however, in your service I've decided that right now is the best time, as you said to Prof. Regamay, to "take shelter of Kṛṣṇa and save yourself."

Be strong so that you may not be rascal, and then you can do. . . . Otherwise, it will be impossible. How it is possible? A man is drowning. If you are strong enough, you can save him. But if you also become drowned, then how you'll save him? So the everything is there. Save yourself, save others. This is our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. First of all save yourself; then try to save others. Or both things can go on simultaneously. The same example: if you want to save somebody who's drowning, you must know that "I may not be washed away. I have to remain strong; then I can save him." [Conversation on roof, 14 February 1977, Māyāpur]

Thank you for anything I have of any value in this life, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Your eternal debtor in the dust of your lotus feet,

Nirañjana Swami

Praghoṣa dāsa

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

My Vyāsa-pūjā offerings to Your Divine Grace increasingly seem to involve my asking for your help. From a material point of view, it would be considered a little impertinent to ask someone for help on his birthday, but I am hoping my request is sufficiently selfless to avoid my being guilty of any offense. As your eternal grandson, I guess I'm also banking on a little extra leeway from my eternal grandfather!

You once commented, "If somebody says that 'I don't require any help from a spiritual master,' that is wrong."

Of course, we know that you are giving unfathomable help to us and everyone else, too, out of your selfless desire to deliver the fallen souls from the miserable ocean of birth and death. We also know there is no greater resource for the deliverance of those fallen souls than the very ISKCON you created, and it is your ISKCON that is the subject of my request

Specifically, I request you to help us preserve all you have given us, which is, by any objective measure, priceless. So naturally all your sincere followers desire to ensure that your ISKCON remains pure, potent, productive, and ever progressing, something you would be ever-increasingly proud of. Still, it is only with your blessings and mercy that our collective desire will be fulfilled.

While we understand that nothing can be frozen in time since the world constantly changes, we're also convinced that ISKCON must adjust to ensure, as best we can, that we remain relevant and able to attract as many people as possible to Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* mission. You were arguably the foremost proponent of the principle of *deśa-kāla-pātra*—presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness according to place, time, and candidate—but doing so while honoring Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's edict that we can change details but not principles is not always an easy course to navigate, as you so expertly did.

It is in this mood that I approach you on your Vyāsa-pūjā to request you to inspire us and guide us as we confront the many challenges that arise as we struggle to honor the trust you placed in us to lead your movement in the 21st century

As the world increasingly makes decisions based on the temporary, your crucial message of the irrelevance and folly of doing so shines as a beacon for us. Simultaneously, this very fixation on the temporary creates ever more obstacles for us to break through—not the least of which is the widespread misunderstanding that eternal principles based on spirit are not callous and cruel but rather constitute the only solution to all problems.

So keeping intact the principle of preaching according to *deśa-kāla-pātra* while sweetening the medicine to help people swallow it is a detail we need to get right. Medicine that is either too bitter to swallow or so diluted as to be ineffectual will be of no use to either the dispenser or the patient.

Fixed in our faith in you as our foremost master physician, we remain ever grateful to you and ever dependent on your virtuoso and authoritative leadership.

Your servant,

Praghoṣa dāsa

Prahlādānanda Swami

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

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

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

The Supreme Lord directs His creation with perfect organization and intelligence. For example, to benefit the inhabitants of the universe, Lord Kṛṣṇa placed planets in precise orbits with fixed time cycles, and He created the sun to provide the universe with heat and light. Also, Lord Kṛṣṇa arranged for each person's digestive system, which, when healthy, digests and assimilates food after eating and which eliminates any unnecessary remains. With similar perfection the Supreme Lord gives His sincere devotees the necessary intelligence to efficiently and effectively execute and organize His mission so that His children can come back to the spiritual world.

Just as a material body has many organs and systems, so too ISKCON, which is a body of Lord Kṛṣṇa, has many activities and programs to fulfill Lord Kṛṣṇa's purposes. These purposes are explained throughout the Vaiṣṇava scriptures and are summarized in *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.65–69:

[65] Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend. [66] Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear. [67] This confidential knowledge may never be explained to those who are not austere, or devoted, or engaged in devotional service, nor to one who is envious of Me. [68] For one who explains this supreme secret to the devotees, pure devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me. [69] There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.

Accomplishing these purposes begins with making arrangements for people to hear about Lord Kṛṣṇa from mature and expert devotees. Such hearing should inspire people to take up the process of *sādhana-bhakti*.

Those engaged in this process of regulated devotional service can also be trained how to worship the Supreme Lord in the temple and in their homes. Such worship gradually qualifies them for steady devotional service, in which they can easily and without deviation fix their mind and intelligence on Lord Kṛṣṇa's names, forms, qualities, associates, and pastimes.

ISKCON's purpose is to help devotees become absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. All its programs and activities should advance pure devotional service so that devotees can be constantly absorbed in deep loving remembrance of the Supreme Lord. ISKCON's actual wealth and treasure is its members' selfless and loving commitment to Lord Caitanya's mission. Intelligently organizing ISKCON around the Supreme Lord's transcendental purposes will bring about such a valuable treasure within the movement and in devotees' lives.

Prahlādānanda Swami

Rādhānāth Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my sincere obeisances and my heartfelt gratitude.

As time is passing, especially in these challenging days, we are experiencing more and more the physical departure of beloved Vaiṣṇavas—those who are very dear to you.

In your life and teachings, you have taught us to deeply seek shelter of Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga in all conditions of life. In that shelter, you have given us entrance into the beauty and grace that is inherent within the heartbreak of loving service in separation.

In a world of suffering and death, you are giving us the path to experience spiritual joy in our eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and to share that happiness with one another and with the world. You have given us the holy names of Rādhā-Govinda, the Vaiṣṇava literature, the holy dhāmas, and the eternal flow of mercy descending through the ācāryas of our guru-paramparā. I pray to be forever absorbed in seeking shelter of these matchless gifts.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, our devotional lives are dependent on Your Divine Grace. You have made historic sacrifices to give us a worldwide devotional community that allows us to appreciate, practice, and exchange Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Now, you have entrusted all of us with this gift.

I pray that the inevitable issues that confront us will not distract us from what is truly valuable—the legacy of your compassion. This legacy lives forever in the hearts of those who love you. You gave us Kṛṣṇa. In Kṛṣṇa, we are forever together.

I pray to forever aspire to be a sincere servant of your servants.

Rādhānāth Swami

Rāmāi Swami

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

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

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. 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.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in your purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.15 you write:

There are two classes of men. Some of them are full of polluted material things within their hearts, and some of them are materially free. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is equally beneficial for both

of these persons. Those who are full of dirty things can take to the line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness for a gradual cleansing process, following the regulative principles of devotional service. Those who are already cleansed of the impurities may continue to act in the same Kṛṣṇa consciousness so that others may follow their exemplary activities and thereby be benefited.

I am very fortunate that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is beneficial for both types of people because I am definitely in the category of one with many polluted things in the heart. By your mercy, I have been engaged in the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and someday I may come to the level of being free from impurities.

In fact, at my initiation you said that all the new disciples should become pure as quickly as possible. Kṛṣṇa is *pavitram*, pure, and to associate with Him nicely we should be of the same spiritual nature. I am still endeavoring, Śrīla Prabhupāda, but sometimes I stumble. Please help me become 100% completely fixed in devotional service to the Lord. Help me stay on the path, without my mind wandering to other places. As Lord Caitanya says, let me taste the real nectar we are always hankering for.

Here at New Govardhana, every Ekādaśī the devotees see and listen to your lectures on a screen in the temple room. How wonderful and powerful they are! Your words cut through *māyā* like a hot knife through butter. How learned you are! You continually quote from many different *sāstras* to emphasize your points in an authorized manner. How compassionate you are! Patiently you explain everything clearly in a constructive way to uplift people to the transcendental position.

If I could possess one ten-thousandth of your qualities, I am sure I would advance rapidly in my Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but I know I do not have even that many. For me, advancement is slow. However, I have faith that if I hold on to your lotus feet and associate nicely with devotees in ISKCON, ultimately I will go back home, back to Godhead. Or, being purified, I will get an opportunity to serve you and the Lord again in this material world. Either way will be perfection for me.

His life of virtuous thought and deed
The lives of others did exceed.
From whom but Prabhupāda shall I hear
Those words that ever charm my ear?

No one like Śrīla Prabhupāda shall be—
A wonderful guiding light for me,
He of high and noble mind,
Gentle, modest, meek, and kind.

Ignorant we were, just foolish youth;
We clung to him for constant truth,
Yearning to stay by his holy side
To hear instructions that were bona fide.

Sacred texts he presented clear and pure,
An offering that shall always endure.
He was always ready to speak and give
Knowledge of where we eternally live.

Devotional service, with its every limb,
Brilliantly taught and explained by him.
Like a king with a powerful, wondrous bow,
He drove away *māyā* and made us glow.

He filled my soul with nectar so high,
I began to feel bliss, though a fool was I.
The more he gave, the more I drank—
For this kind mercy, him I'll ever thank.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is my only hope,
Without whom I could never cope.
With suppliant hands and reverent head,
I must always remember what he said.

He is dearer to me than light and life;
My existence before was only strife.
Please, Prabhupāda, always show the way
To someone like me who goes astray.

Your servant,

Rāmāi Swami

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

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

My dear and most respected spiritual master and eternal father,

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

Just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu is honored as *mahā-vadānyāya*, the most munificent of all forms of the Lord, whose magnanimity manifested even beyond Kṛṣṇa's limitless kindness and mercy, likewise your vision—your mission—expansive beyond comprehension, has irrevocably captured my heart! Expressed in your own words:

Sarve sukhino bhavantu. That is the Vedic mission. Let everyone become happy. *Sarve sukhino bhavantu.* Let everyone be happy. And without being happy, nobody can execute Kṛṣṇa consciousness. [Initiation lecture, 4 June 1969, New Vrindavan]

Due to your untiring desire to bring this vision into the lives of unknown multitudes of the most unfortunate Kali-yuga-victimized souls, bereft of knowledge of life's goal and how to achieve it, resulting in the Western world's "culture of no culture," Your Divine Grace courageously ventured forth to give one and all the gift of *true* happiness by the means of *genuine kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

As one such lost soul, wandering in the darkness of ignorance in pursuit of ideals that would have led me only to a life of frustration and intractable illusion, just as in an untold number of lifetimes prior to this one, I was one of the fortunate recipients of your causeless mercy.

One fine day, as a young college student I experienced a series of events that resulted in a profound realization of "the gift of life": access to awakening of genuine unadulterated *sukha*, which you had personally given to me. One fine day, by providential arrangement, in a few moments I palpably perceived many lifetimes of illusion *at once* being lifted from my whole being. The experience was both vivid and startling. Profound gratitude, in waves, filled my heart again and again. I knew, then and there, that I was deeply indebted to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and that I *must* reciprocate somehow with you and assist you in your mission.

Fifty-one years later, as a committed peon soldier in your army, commissioned to carry forth your *sarve sukhino bhavantu* mission, I often interact with your sincere followers who express in a refrain the following sincere contemplation, although the language and mood vary from person to person:

I feel a growing yearning to go beyond the stage of mechanical performance of the *vidhis* of *sādhana-bhakti*. I know what Rūpa Gosvāmī says on the topic, and I have faith in his words and in the *bhakti* process he has given. However, I feel I am not progressing, at least not in a palpable way. What to do?

Along with invoking the essential teachings of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, which disclose Rūpa Gosvāmī's *śikṣā* on how to "go further," I feel compelled to request such persons to somehow reconnect with their primordial deep sense of gratitude, which initially lifted them from the throes of darkness into the light of devotional life. When the heart is genuinely touched by natural gratitude, impetus to move from a nondynamic, spiritually stagnant position then begins to flow again, naturally flowing along the *rūpānuga* path for those who hold dear to their hearts those who cling tightly to Rūpa Gosvāmī's lotus feet.

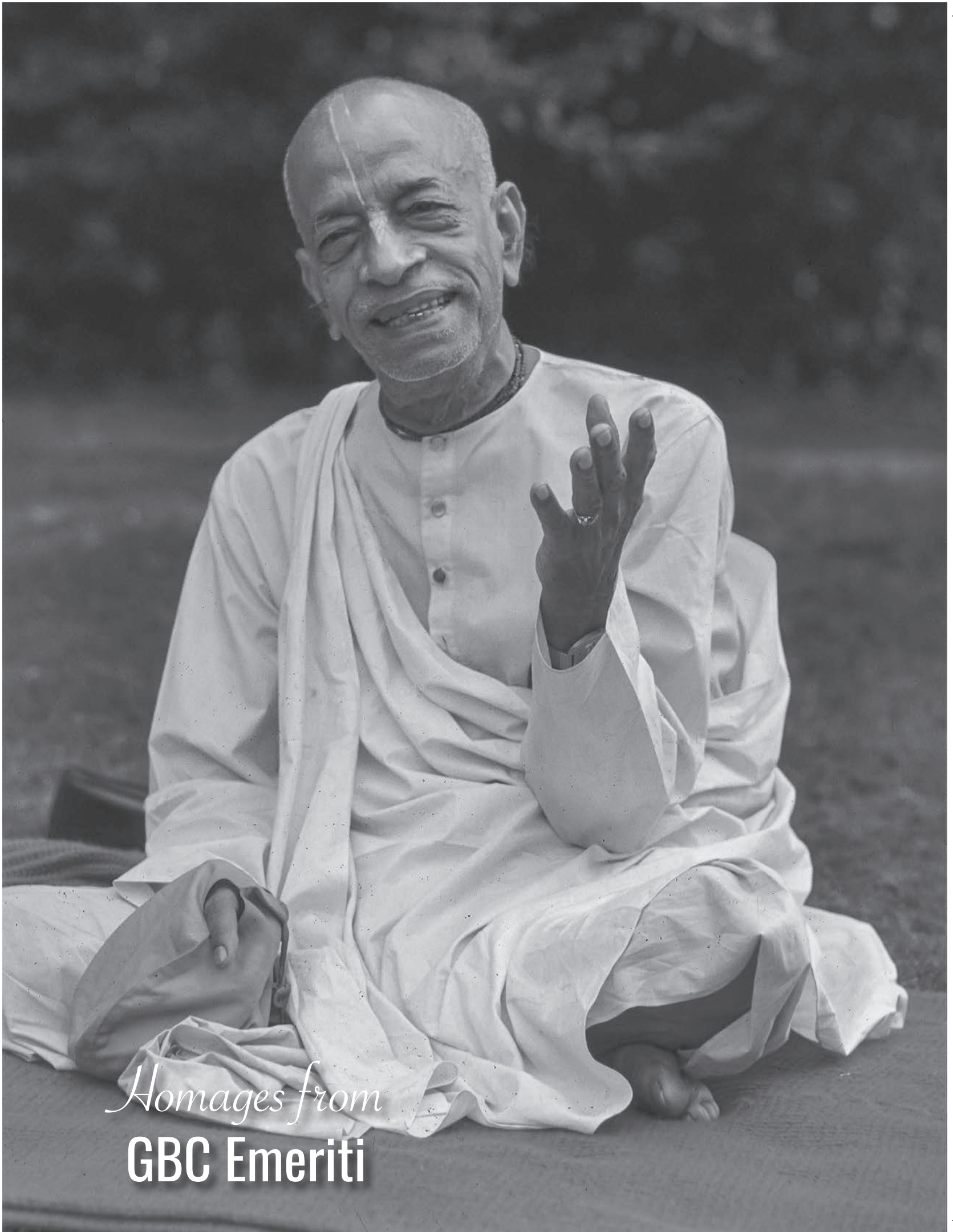
Śrīla Prabhupāda, for me you are the foremost representative of Rūpa Gosvāmī!

Sarve sukhino bhavantu. That is the Vedic mission. Let everyone become happy. *Sarve sukhino bhavantu.* Let everyone be happy. And without being happy, nobody can execute Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I am at your feet, begging for your continued mercy with a heart filled with sincere gratitude to you. Please keep me forever and ever engaged in your service, as a menial soldier in your mission.

Your humble servant,

Romapāda Swami



Homages from
GBC Emeriti

Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Please accept my humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to you!

This year we are celebrating a double jubilee—the 125th anniversary of your divine appearance in this world, and the 50th anniversary of your visit to Moscow, which we consider the official date of the inauguration of ISKCON in the countries of the former Soviet Union.

Fifty years is a long enough period, especially in the Kali-yuga, when time increases its pace like never before, to reflect on milestones and to take stock. On this day we can note numerous achievements of ISKCON in Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union—millions of books distributed, temples and centers established in all major cities, *saṅkīrtana* parties plowing the streets, etc. We can proudly say that against all odds your movement is being more and more accepted by the people and is becoming recognized as a genuine spiritual tradition. However, the main achievement is not any of these but the mere fact that ISKCON has survived so many struggles and successfully passed through so many crises. And the credit for this, without a doubt, is overwhelmingly yours.

Looking back, we can remember all those challenges: the intense pressure of the atheistic propaganda in the 1970s; the severe persecutions, including incarceration of devotees in prisons, labor camps, and psychiatric hospitals, during the 1980s; the uncontrolled influx of crowds of people during the chaotic 1990s; the major crisis of faith and the turmoil of the 2000s; the attempts to marginalize our movement in 2010s. These were difficult tests—any one of them could have wiped out ISKCON completely. But every time, when the difficulties came, you were there to help your creation. Every time, some of your instructions took the lead and saved ISKCON in Russia.

During the '70s your flawless logic and unflinching faith, which shone through every line of your books, helped the first devotees rid themselves of the doubts generated by atheistic propaganda and dedicate their lives to spiritual practice. By your mercy the very idea of God, which most people in Soviet Russia regarded as an unproven hypothesis at best, became the self-evident truth for the first devotees.

In the '80s, when the state persecutions of your followers started, you protected us by instilling unflinching faith in the holy name and the spiritual master. This faith, derived from your books, enabled devotees to survive interrogation by the KGB and incarceration in prisons, labor camps, and psychiatric hospitals. This faith literally saved many of us in the most difficult situations, helping us overcome innumerable sufferings.

In the chaotic '90s millions of people in Russia abruptly lost their meaning in life. They became aimless, despondent, and disoriented when communism suddenly fell. At that time your instructions about the true meaning of life gave hope and solace to tens of thousands of true seekers. The ideals of renunciation of material enjoyment and going back to Godhead proclaimed in your books became the guiding principles of their lives and saved them from meaningless material existence. In those days, your instructions to distribute your books and preach to everyone became most important in the minds of the devotees, because the devotees themselves experienced how your books filled the spiritual vacuum in their hearts and helped other people endure all the twists and turns of life. At that time of “Hare Kṛṣṇa explosion” in Russia, it appeared that very soon, in a few months or years, the whole country would become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Then at the very end of the '90s the Russian devotees had to go through a major disaster: one of the leading gurus left ISKCON. The childish fanatical faith was smashed to pieces, together with the utopian hope of converting the whole country overnight. As we entered the aughts, Kṛṣṇa forced all devotees to reflect on what they actually believed in and what they really wanted to achieve in their lives. Again, your instructions, Śrīla Prabhupāda, became our saving grace. This time they were the instructions about the ultimate goal of spiritual practice—love of God. We also read in your books, as if for the first time, how we

should live in this world while engaging everything in His service. The recent shock we underwent helped many Russian devotees discover the real depth of Lord Caitanya's teachings presented in your books. Many of us started hankering for deeper knowledge and understanding. And therefore we witnessed a rapid development of many systematic courses in the scriptures, mainly the *Bhagavad-gita*, *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, *Nectar of Devotion*, and *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam*. In this way our broken faith was restored.

Then came the 2010s. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement continued to grow in Russia, but the people who were joining now were in stark contrast to the recruits who had joined during the turbulent nineties and aughts. The preaching of renunciation of the material world, so natural in the beginning, could not attract people anymore. Also, personal spiritual progress, which had previously seemed like a victorious blitzkrieg, turned into a protracted campaign with no certain outcome. Once again you came to the rescue. During this time we discovered a “new” Śrīla Prabhupāda. We found in your books many instructions on how to take care of Vaiṣṇavas, how to establish relationships with outsiders, including representatives of other religions, and how to build Vaiṣṇava families and raise children. Your image as a great missionary, a stern preacher of renunciation of the world, a profound philosopher and saint, was now enriched with more personal features and became even closer and sweeter.

In this way, for five decades you have guided us and helped us overcome all obstacles. You have done whatever it takes to protect the tender sprout of our faith, and if someone still failed to thrive in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it was his or her choice, not your fault.

The 2020s have come, a time when we have to withstand yet another test, perhaps the most difficult and painful. During all these fifty years you again and again sent your faithful disciples to help us. Fulfilling your will, they would visit Russia and preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness here. Lovingly they took care of your followers here and protected our spiritual life. Their devotion, insight, and experience, their hard labor, knowledge of the scriptures, and enthusiasm, and, most importantly, their unshakable faith in you and your mission, led us neophytes in spiritual life along the difficult spiritual path, protecting us from many mistakes and helping us overcome many impediments.

An offering to you on this day would be incomplete without mentioning their names, because the real glory of a spiritual master is determined by the qualities of the disciples he was able to raise. All of them are living manifestations of Your Divine Grace. Gopāl Krishna Mahārāja, Kīrtirāja Prabhu, Harikeśa Prabhu, Prabhaviṣṇu Prabhu, Nirañjana Mahārāja, Indradyumna Mahārāja, Bhaktivaibhava Mahārāja, Gopīparāñadhana Prabhu, Bhakti-bhṛṅga Govinda Mahārāja, Rohiṇī-suta Prabhu, Mukunda Mahārāja, Pūrṇacandra Mahārāja, Śivarāma Mahārāja, Bhakti Vikāsa Mahārāja, Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Jayapatākā Mahārāja, Bhakti Tīrtha Mahārāja, Bhakti Chāru Mahārāja, Bhakti Caitanya Mahārāja, Lokanāth Mahārāja, Rādhānātha Mahārāja, Prahādānanda Mahārāja, Śācinandana Mahārāja, Mandākinī Devī Dāsī—these are the names of only some of them.

Now the generation of your direct disciples, obedient to the inexorable force of time, is beginning to leave this world, joining you. Their imminent departure will be the most difficult test for ISKCON in Russia. The devotees in Russia will face a most difficult task of preserving the unity of your movement and not breaking up into several warring camps, interpreting your teachings in different ways. We will have to become a recognized religion in the society without losing the preaching spirit and avoiding the temptation of secularization. We will be expected to maintain the depth of spiritual experience that you set as the goal and described in your books, and not to turn ISKCON into yet another religion that simply promises salvation after death. We will need to resist the increasing pressure of the society and the environment, which in Kali-yuga is becoming increasingly demonic, and at the same time maintain the highest, uncompromising spiritual ideal of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. All these are not so difficult now, when your faithful disciples and followers are with us, guiding and helping us. But what will happen when we lose this advantage?

It's time to ask ourselves a question: which of your instructions will become most relevant for us in this decade and will help us accomplish all these gigantic tasks? Of course, we will need to put together all those instructions we have already extracted from your books and put them into practice. In order for us to cope with these difficult problems, your faith in Lord Caitanya and the holy name, your compassion for

people and detachment from the material world, the depth of your spiritual experience and the vastness of your knowledge of scriptures, and, finally, your humanity and kindness—all these must become ours. But there is yet another layer of your instructions, without digesting which we will hardly be able to withstand the upcoming trials with dignity: these are your instructions on the role of the *ācārya*, that is, you, in the life of each of your followers.

Unfortunately, some people in your movement have questioned your instructions, comparing them with the words of your predecessors, finding contradictions in them or pointing out differences from the instructions of the scriptures. Unfortunately, I had to talk with “devotees” who even criticize you for placing too much emphasis on faith in the spiritual master. They consider this to be the cause of all the problems in ISKCON, the root of *laukika-śraddhā*, mundane, superstitious faith, etc. Proud as they are, they believe that they can understand *śāstra* by their material intelligence and in this way develop “real *śāstrīya-śraddhā*” and reach a higher destination. They forget that the *ācārya*’s words are not inferior to the *śāstra*.

Here is what Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes about this in his *Tattva-sūtra*:

Devotees of the Supreme Lord are not controlled by scriptures, because their activities are harmonious with divine wisdom. Therefore when realized devotees ordain any new arrangement, it should be accepted as a religious code even if not found in the scriptural directions of previous sages.

In fact, those who question your instructions reject the words of our *tattva-ācārya*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, who writes in his *Tattva-sandarbha* (*Śrī Sarva-saṁvādinī* 9.16):

Tatra vaiduṣe ca vipratipattiḥ bhramādi-nṛ-doṣa-rāhityāt, śabdasyāpi tan-mūlatvāc ca: “The instructions of wise people free from the four defects inherent in all conditioned souls (tendency to commit mistakes, etc.) are the root of *śabda*.”

Ultimately, those who question your instructions reject a verse from the *Upaniṣads*, a verse which, according to one of your disciples, you considered the most important instruction of the scriptures:

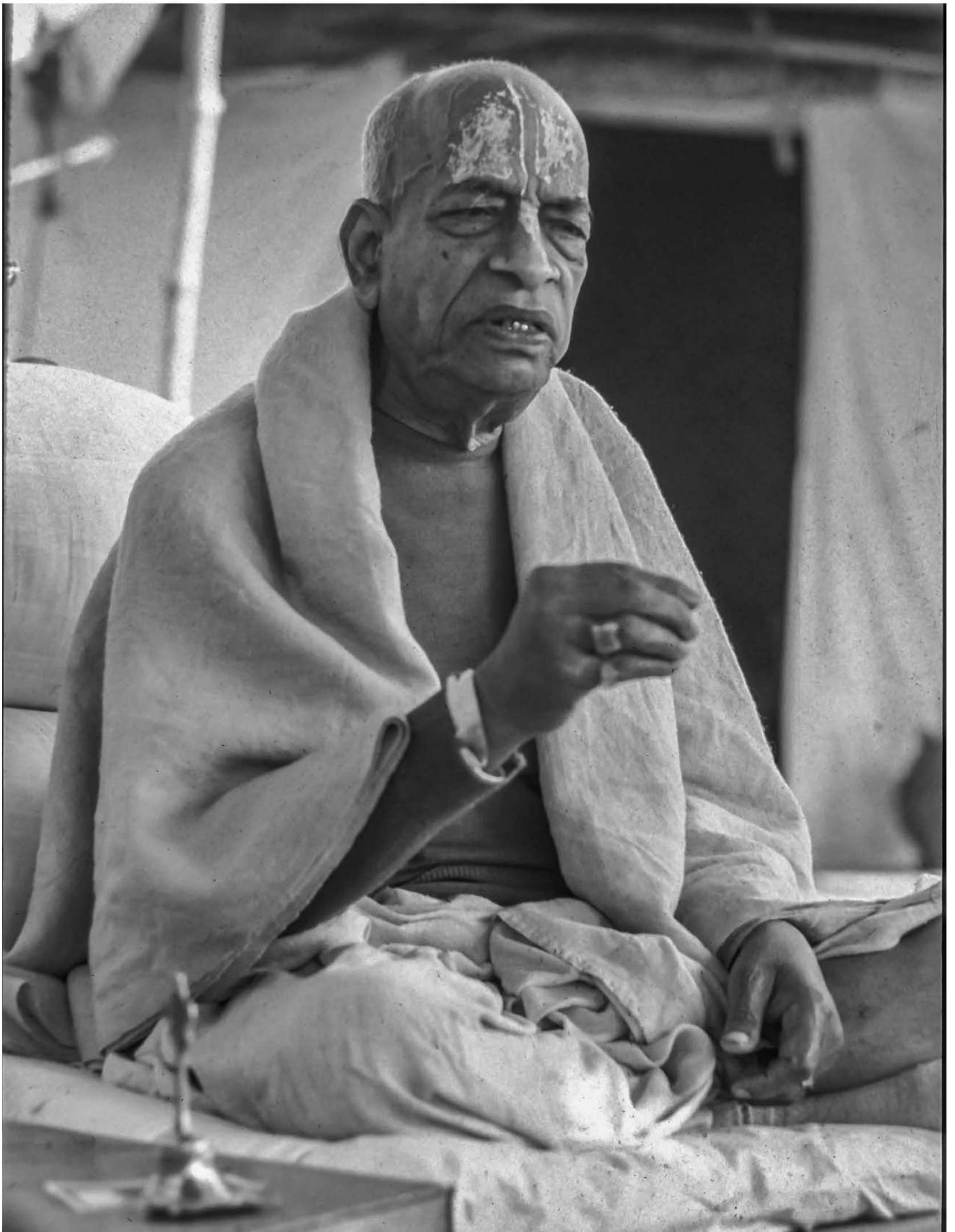
*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanah*

“Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of the Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.” (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.23)

Because those who question your instructions declare the transcendental sound of the scriptures to be the subject of their empiric studies and foolishly place themselves above the *ācārya*, they themselves are the ones who breed *laukika-śraddhā*—not real faith but a mere shadow of real faith. There have always been and will always be such people in the material world, for this world is a place of exile for those who want to protect their independence. They forget that the main role of the *ācārya* is “to release us from our present causeless unwillingness for serving the Absolute and all souls” (from your *Vyāsa-pūjā* offering to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī in 1936). Relativizing your instructions, such people, sometimes without realizing it, simply want only to maintain their independence and the right to interpret the scriptures themselves, as if the *śāstra* could be understood by material intelligence.

Over and over again you emphasized the preeminence of the *ācārya*’s orders—sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly—when you talked about your relationship with your spiritual teacher. Many times you quoted the words of Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura from his commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.41, sometimes directly quoting, or sometimes paraphrasing them:

Whatever order I receive from my guru, that is my life and soul. I don’t mind whether I’ll be



liberated or not, whether I will be successful or not. That is not my concern. My only concern is to see whether I am factually, faithfully carrying out the order of my guru. [Morning Walk, 5 April 1974, Bombay]

Your direct disciples have assimilated this lesson so well, their faith in you as the representative of Kṛṣṇa is so strong, that no other thought can cross the mind of anyone who closely associates with them. Their faith in you has become the foundation of our faith. The foundation is the most important part of a building, but most often it is invisible. In the same way, we, often not even noticing this, have built our entire spiritual life on this faith in you, the faith that we have received from your direct disciples.

Now is the time for us to make your disciples' unflinching, implicit faith in your instructions, especially in the role of the *ācārya*, our deliberate faith. If we manage to do this, we will solve all the difficult problems we are facing now. We will be able to maintain the unity of ISKCON because you want this and your desire will have become ours. We will be able to gain recognition for the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement by society at large and at the same time retain the missionary spirit and not degrade Kṛṣṇa consciousness into an ordinary worldly religion, like so many others in this world, just because you lived the life of an ideal Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava missionary. We will be able to pass on living spiritual experience to the new generations of your followers, and not just promise them bliss after death, because our faith in you will allow us to attain real spiritual experience ourselves. Finally, we will be able to resist the onslaughts of demonic ideas and tendencies and keep the uncompromising ideal of Kṛṣṇa consciousness intact despite all challenges, because you expect this from us.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, these are some of the thoughts that came to my mind as I looked back at the difficult road ISKCON in Russia has traveled over the past fifty years. I will end my offering to you with the traditional prayer to please give us the intelligence and strength we need to overcome the obstacles that time holds for us. However, I know that this prayer is not necessary. At all critical points you have come to our aid, leading us along this difficult path. The same will happen now: you will lead ISKCON out of the difficult decade of the 2020s—strengthened and renewed, firmly believing in the saving power of the holy name and the teachings of Lord Caitanya, and even more grateful to you and your faithful followers.

Your servant and a disciple of your disciples,

Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami

Bhūrijana dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*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 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, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

All glory to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who tirelessly did so much for mankind.

A shopping visit to a local mall and a few minutes of a forced viewing of a video while waiting in a doctor’s office both reminded me of your striking answer to a probing question.

I had heard that when you were asked at an airport about your vision—what you actually saw when you viewed the world and its people—you answered, “So many flapping dead bodies.”

An eloquent yet sadly accurate description of a dark tragedy: People awake yet dreaming; actors mouthing hollow lines, disbelieving their own words. Blank faces masking internal emptiness and pain. The lives of youths charting “new” paths lock-stepping the false footsteps of their parents. I saw the empty and meaningless blindly stepping from the cliff of life toward the abyss.

But, Prabhupāda, far greater than your stark warnings was your guiding souls to Vraja, that jeweled land of play, joy, dance, and sweetness. You presented us with the ticket, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, and bade us hastily board that mystic mantra-airship by always chanting Kṛṣṇa’s holy names. You offered us live books that reciprocate with those who read them. You captured first our eyes then our minds with visions of divine Deities. You led us to mysterious holy mountains and rivers. You created a Society offering both friendships that could last a lifetime and a worthwhile mission, a cause, a purpose that awards hope to ourselves and others. You placed in our hungry mouths truly nourishing food.

Indeed, your Lords and masters were hidden in these items that you placed within our empty hearts. And in *your* heart was that golden land, with your presence there beckoning us to join you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please bless me, and your other followers, with pure-hearted desires to please you, as well as the taste, wisdom, and strength to not rejoin you alone and empty-handed. Your gifts spring from the only true well-spring of life. May we value them and distribute them to others.

Your aspiring servant,

Bhūrijana dāsa

Girirāj Swami

How Shall I Take Shelter of One More Merciful Than You?

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Śrīmad-Bhagavatam, Canto Three, Chapter Two, verse 23 is very significant. Not only is the verse

beautiful, but it also has historical significance, because when after sixteen years Śukadeva Gosvāmī came out of the womb, he left home immediately, and his father, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, followed him into the forest. And when Vyāsadeva came close enough to his son for Śukadeva to hear, he recited two verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, one describing Kṛṣṇa's beauty, from the Tenth Canto, and one—this verse—describing Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

When Śukadeva Gosvāmī heard these two verses—the one describing Kṛṣṇa's mercy and the one describing Kṛṣṇa's beauty—he became attracted. Although liberated, he became attracted by Kṛṣṇa's transcendental qualities, and he came back to hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from his father.

I quote this verse today because it reminds me of you—how shall I take shelter of one more merciful than you?

*aho bakī yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭaṁ
jighāṁsayāpāyayad apy asādhvī
lebhe gatiṁ dhātry-ucitāṁ tato 'nyaṁ
kaṁ vā dayālurṁ śaraṇaṁ vrajema*

TRANSLATION

Alas, how shall I take shelter of one more merciful than Him [Lord Kṛṣṇa], who granted the position of mother to the she-demon Pūtanā although she was faithless and had prepared deadly poison to be sucked from her breast?

PURPORT

Here is an example of the extreme mercy of the Lord, even to His enemy. It is said that a noble man accepts the good qualities of a person of doubtful character, just as one accepts nectar from a stock of poison. In His babyhood, the Lord was administered deadly poison by Pūtanā, a she-demon who tried to kill the wonderful baby. And because she was a demon, it was impossible for her to know that the Supreme Lord, even though playing the part of a baby, was no one less than the Supreme Personality of Godhead. His value as the Supreme Lord did not diminish upon His becoming a baby to please His devotee Yaśodā. The Lord may assume the form of a baby or a shape other than that of a human being, but it doesn't make the slightest difference: He is always the same Supreme. A living creature, however powerful he may become by dint of severe penance, can never become equal to the Supreme Lord.

Lord Kṛṣṇa accepted the motherhood of Pūtanā because she pretended to be an affectionate mother, allowing Kṛṣṇa to suck her breast. The Lord accepts the least qualification of the living entity and awards him the highest reward. That is the standard of His character. Therefore, who but the Lord can be the ultimate shelter?

The Lord is absolute. He is all good for everyone, and He is neutral toward everyone. He is always thinking of how to do good for others. So even if one approaches Him as an enemy, He will try to do good for the person, as in the case of Pūtanā. Although she came to kill Kṛṣṇa by administering poison from her breast, He elevated her to the position of a nurse, like a mother, in the spiritual world. And as merciful as He is, you are even more merciful.

You said that it is a mark of a good man that he sees the good side, not the bad side, of others. You gave the example of your guru mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta had a disciple named Kuñjabihārī dāsa—people used to call him Kuñja Bābū—who, you said, came to do business with your guru mahārāja, to profit personally from his relationship with him and from his service in the Gauḍīya Maṭh. But you said that your guru mahārāja didn't focus on Kuñja's dark side, that he was coming to make business, but on his bright side, that he was coming to offer service.

In your conversation with Bob Cohen on February 28, 1972, in Māyāpur, you said,

Pūtanā Rākṣasī—she offered Kṛṣṇa poison. But Kṛṣṇa is so nice that He thought, ‘She took Me as My mother,’ so He took the poison and delivered her. Kṛṣṇa does not take the bad side. A good man does not take the bad side—he takes only the good side. Just like one of my big godbrothers—he wanted to make business with my guru mahārāja, but my guru mahārāja did not take the bad side. He took the good side. He thought, “He has come forward to give me some service.”

So, this verse reminds me of you: How shall I take shelter of one more merciful than Your Divine Grace? There was no one more merciful than you. Lord Nityānanda is most merciful, and you manifested the same quality of mercy as Nityānanda Prabhu.

In Bombay you received a phone call from the temple president in Calcutta, who reported that one of your earliest disciples from America had come to Calcutta and was smoking *gañjā*, marijuana, and asked what to do. You instructed your secretary to relay your response: “Tell him that if he doesn’t stop smoking *gañjā* I will reject him.” Afterwards, Tamāl Krishna Goswami asked, “Is it true that if he doesn’t stop smoking *gañjā* you will reject him?” And you said, “No—I cannot reject anyone. The mercy of Lord Nityānanda has no limit.”

Then, maybe two years later, we were in Juhu, and you had a disciple who fell into bad company and was living on Juhu Beach with a bogus, so-called yogi and doing tricks. He was putting a coin in one ear and then making it come out the other—different strange things to collect money—and he was known as your disciple and as a member of ISKCON. So, Tamāl Krishna Goswami approached you and said, “This is happening, and he is giving you a bad name and giving ISKCON a bad name. You should reject him.”

And again you replied, “I cannot reject anyone.”

Tamāl Krishna Goswami asked, “But don’t you have to draw the line somewhere?”

And again you said, “The mercy of Lord Nityānanda has no limits.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the manifest representative of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, and your forgiveness is like His. How shall I take shelter of one more merciful than you?

Another, similar quality of yours is that you were always willing to give someone a chance to take up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Around 1976 a strange man with a PhD came to the Juhu temple and said he wanted to join, and you invited him to stay upstairs with your personal staff, in the flat adjoining yours. And you spent quite a bit of time with him. Hamsadūta Prabhu was visiting at the time, and he told you, “Prabhupāda, you are just wasting your time with this man. He is never going to amount to anything.” But you kept spending time with him. And in the end, the man left; he never did amount to anything. But when Hamsadūta mentioned that to you—“I could see that he never was going to amount to anything”—you replied, “I wanted to give him a chance.”

Another person whom you encouraged was Dr. C. P. Patel, who would almost always accompany you on your morning walks on Juhu Beach. You had a friendly relationship with him, but Dr. Patel would sometimes speak like a Māyāvādī. You would accuse him, “You are a Māyāvādī!” and Dr. Patel would reply, “No sir, I am a Vaiṣṇava, a pure Vaiṣṇava.”

One morning Dr. Patel and you had a huge argument. Dr. Patel would bring up different so-called holy men of India, and if they were not up to standard you would criticize them. So, one morning you were criticizing one of Dr. Patel’s favorite revered so-called saints of India, and Dr. Patel and you had a huge argument. He raised his voice to you, and you raised your voice to him—the two of you were literally shouting at each other. And Dr. Patel’s friends, his cronies, were trying to pull him away, saying, “Don’t upset Swamiji; he has a heart condition.” And eventually they pulled him away.

Back at Hare Krishna Land, Tamāl Krishna Goswami approached you in your room and asked, “What is Dr. Patel’s position? Is he a Vaiṣṇava or a Māyāvādī, an impersonalist?”

In response, you told a story about a man who could speak many languages. In whatever language people addressed him, he would respond fluently. No one could figure out where the man was actually from.

After much discussion, a neighbor said, “I will find out.” So, one day, when the man was preoccupied,

the neighbor came up behind him and gave him a big whack. And when the man started to curse in his native tongue, his origin was disclosed.

“Dr. Patel is like that,” Prabhupāda said. “He can speak very expertly. He can sound like a devotee, sound like a Vaiṣṇava, sound like a Māyāvādī, sound like anything. But when I gave a slap where it really hurt—this so-called saintly person that he revered—his real language came out.”

“So, why do you put up with him?” Tamāl Krishna asked. “He is so offensive.”

“It is our duty to engage everyone,” you said. You wanted to give Dr. Patel a chance. And as the years passed, Dr. Patel developed great affection for you, and after you left this world he wrote a beautiful article for *Back to Godhead* about his relationship with you. The article was titled “My Life’s Most Precious Moments,” with the subtitle “A Bombay doctor wins the title ‘big fool’ and loves it”—because you would always call Dr. Patel a *mūḍha*. You would say, “I am not saying—Kṛṣṇa is saying: *na māṁ duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ*. [Anyone who doesn’t surrender to Kṛṣṇa is a *mūḍha*, fool.]”

So, how shall I take shelter of one more merciful than you? Your Divine Grace had so many wonderful qualities, but your most significant quality, for us especially, was your extreme mercifulness.

You had a good friend in Bombay named Bhogilal Patel, who was extremely pious. The first devotee to meet him was Gargamuni, and when Gargamuni was explaining your work, Bhogilal wept profuse tears of appreciation.

One day some years later, Bhogilal Patel came to meet you in your flat at the back of Hare Krishna Land. I had a close relationship with Bhogilal, so I brought him up to meet you. The two of you were talking and, as is natural in a conversation, when you were speaking I would look at you, and when Bhogilal was speaking I would look at him. But at one point, while Bhogilal was speaking I looked at you, which you were not expecting, and I saw that you were looking at me with such love and affection, like a father or a grandfather (by age, you were more like my grandfather). I was surprised that you were looking at me with so much love. But as soon as you saw me looking at you, you changed your expression and became very grave and serious. I think it was some special mercy that I got a glimpse of how much love you had for us, which you didn’t usually show very openly. Your love for us was manifest in your care for us and your giving us the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and engaging us in Kṛṣṇa’s service.

You were very reserved about touching people, including even disciples. In 1971 in Gorakhpur, as guests of Hanuman Prasad Poddar of Gita Press, we were staying in his large estate, Śrī Krishna Niketan, which had previously been his personal residence.

You were traveling with your small Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities, and you wanted to establish an altar for Them in Sri Krishna Niketan. You wanted some foliage for the altar, so you sent me and a few other devotees to collect some. I went out to a thicket and was collecting branches with leaves. I wasn’t tearing them live—I was looking for branches and leaves that had fallen. I just kept going deeper into the woods and collecting more and more foliage, and eventually I had a huge bundle, as much as I could possibly carry.

So, I lugged the bundle back to Sri Krishna Niketan and up the stairs, and when I reached the temple room you were there and the altar was being set up. I just dropped the bundle on the floor and offered my obeisances. And while I was on the floor you patted me on the back. It was one of the only times—maybe the only time—that you physically touched me. I looked up and saw you smiling broadly. I didn’t know if you even needed any more foliage, but you were pleased by my effort.

Again I ask: Śrīla Prabhupāda, how shall I take shelter of one more merciful than you?

Thank you for your ongoing causeless mercy, which, like Nityānanda Prabhu’s, has no limit.

I pray to serve your merciful lotus feet eternally, and in doing so, to share your sublime mercy with others.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your eternal servant,

Girirāj Swami

Guru Gaurāṅga Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*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*

All I ever really needed to know, I learned from you.
You opened my eyes through your books, lectures, and letters.
You enlightened me in classes, on morning walks, and in room conversations in Paris, New Māyāpur, Vṛndāvana, Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, Mumbai, and Geneva.
You taught me through your disciples everywhere.
Most wonderfully, you inspired me personally by your own example and association during an indelible ten-day visit to ISKCON Geneva in 1974.

- You first revealed yourself to me through the blue Collier-Macmillan abridged *Bhagavad-gītā*, teaching me that I am spirit soul (*aham brahmāsmi*), not this body (*ahaṅkāra*).
- You convinced me that sense gratification never leads to happiness but to misery and repeated birth and death.
- You explained that all living entities have fallen under the control of the illusory energy but may be released from the clutches of illusion by Kṛṣṇa's will.
- You gave me hope that some day or other I may be delivered from this mire of delusion in which I am so deeply sunk.
- You instilled in me the conviction that I am nothing but a tiny servant of the almighty absolute Godhead.
- You proved that "Absolute is sentient" and removed impersonal calamity from my life.
- You taught me that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has a cheerful, lotuslike countenance with ruddy eyes like the interior of a lotus, and a swarthy body like the petals of a blue lotus.
- You demonstrated that if Kṛṣṇa likes He can also make my power to speak suitable for the understanding of others.
- You convinced me that real knowledge is that everything is the property of God (*īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*) and that "no land belongs to the Americans or to the Swiss people or to the Indian people."
- You wrote me that "we are teaching people to become first-class yogis in Kṛṣṇa consciousness."
- You made it crystal clear that I cannot live peacefully without accepting God as the center of everything.
- You taught me that there is no scarcity in God's kingdom, and that any lack is just due to our mismanagement.
- You wrote me that "*jñāna* alone is no good unless the *jñānī* surrenders to Kṛṣṇa."
- You made me understand that the beautiful *Bhāgavatam* compiled by the great sage Vyāsadeva teaches first-class religion and completely rejects *kaitava-dharma* (cheating religion).
- You convinced me that the purpose of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is to make lovers of God: "It does not matter whether one follows Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, or this 'ism' or that 'ism,' but one must become a lover of God."

- You recounted funny stories of Gopal Bhan, the court jester of Rāja Krishnachandra, to make broader, serious points.
- You wrote me that “we find no instruction in the *Bhagavad-gītā* except devotional service, or *bhakti-yoga*.”
- You demonstrated that dying will happen to my body one day, too.
- You described “the process for going back to Godhead” in my initiation letter, signed by your hand in Delhi on December 10, 1971: “Follow the regulative principles, chant at least 16 rounds of beads daily, read our literatures, go for street Sankirtan, etc., and keep yourself engaged in Krishna’s business 24 hours so that you will be really happy in this life and in the end reach the supreme destination.”
- You demonstrated in the close quarters of a small ISKCON temple in Geneva that no matter how early I rose in the morning to sneak a peek at what you were doing, you were already up before me chanting *japa* or speaking your translation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (Fifth Canto) into a dictating machine.
- You wrote me that I should “work with great enthusiasm in Paris to make Krishna more prominent than Napoleon and the Eiffel tower.”
- You sent an aerogramme from Vṛndāvana to warn me “not to accept the interpretation of an outsider” regarding Kṛṣṇa’s statements in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.
- You showed me the love and care you felt for devotees who had left ISKCON (a leading GBC member) or who were ill (one of your earliest disciples) or disabled (a courageous *bhaktin*).
- You emphasized the importance of being prepared to preach by having me sit down next to you and sight-translate aloud excerpts from the book of a famous French-speaking Māyāvādī professor whom you were scheduled to meet the next morning.
- You remembered me—even though I was unsure you would—by beckoning for me to come sit next to you in the waiting room of Santacruz Airport in Bombay in order to chat casually with me about the President of the Council of State of Geneva before we boarded an Indian Airlines flight to Calcutta.
- You relied on me as your French-speaking interpreter at big preaching events in Geneva and Paris.
- You wrote me from Melbourne that you are “very much encouraged to hear of our increased sankirtan movement and return to Geneva to open up still another chapter in Lord Caitanya’s conquest of the world.”
- You assured me that “[the Geneva] police will eventually accept us and our sankirtan activities, [which] will go on unchecked if we simply have the determination to continue our preaching work under all circumstances”—and you were right.
- You gave me the courage to go on door-to-door *sankīrtana* in low-income housing projects in the Geneva suburbs to sell French translations of your as-yet-unpublished books to be delivered at an indeterminate date in the future.
- You told me that you “tasted first-class milk in Switzerland and that it is the world’s best unless one has got one’s own cows.”
- In the kitchen of the Geneva temple you showed me how to rehydrate dried, sliced bitter melon and pan-fry it with ghee until browned and crispy.

Life has continually examined me to verify whether I have understood your teachings. And ultimately death, the great examiner, will do so as well.

This too you taught me, Śrīla Prabhupāda. As I said at the outset of my tribute to you, my divine master, “All I ever really needed to know, I learned from you.”

Your eternal servant,

Guru Gaurāṅga Dāsa

Mukunda 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*

Only you
Can make this world seem right
Only you
Can make the darkness bright

On a morning walk on September 30, 1975, in Bombay (now Mumbai), you had a lively conversation with a Dr. Patel. While the two of you were discussing Christianity, you beautifully encapsulated the *sa vai puṁsām* verse in four English words that referred to Jesus Christ: “He is our guru.”

Endlessly mutable, places of misery
The *Gītā* explains
A sovereign country
Brings nothing but pains

What a goodly outside evil hath
Handsome demons in need of a bath
Make national borders bastions of wrath

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please stand beside me and guide me
Through the night
with your love from above.
Only you
Can make the darkness bright
Only you
Can make this world seem right

Your servant,

Mukunda Goswami

Śivarāma Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

On your appearance day, allow me to offer some words of homage to your ISKCON, which you said was not different from you and your body. Please permit me to praise you in this way.

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda describes the genesis of one of his books to be a desire tree from the spiritual forest of goodness, a *kalpavṛkṣa* that he brought to the world of men in the form of songs. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I believe that you have also traveled through that same forest and transplanted another desire tree in the form of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, ISKCON.

Like the residents of Vaikuṇṭha, desire trees have limitless attributes, such as beauty, opulence, and wonder, and these attributes are abundantly present in ISKCON. Of them, the one that now takes front and center in my mind is the attribute of mercy, ISKCON's benediction of spontaneous loving devotion.

For practicing devotees, love of Kṛṣṇa means ecstatic love, or *bhāva-bhakti*. In *The Nectar of Devotion* you explain that such perfection generally takes place by effort, *sādhana*, and in the exceptional case by mercy, *kṛpā*. To be more precise, the last stage in which devotees rise from *sādhana* to *bhāva* also requires special mercy, as implied by the verse beginning *śuddha-sattva-viśeṣātmā*. But this mercy depends on effort.

How does mercy come? By the speaking, glancing, and good wishes of an advanced devotee. The rule of thumb given by *ācāryas* is that devotees can give what they themselves have. Thus a *prema-bhakta* can give any form of devotion, a *bhāva-bhakta* can give *bhāva* and faith, and a practitioner can give faith in *sādhana*.

My conviction and realization—one shared by your other followers—is that you are a *paramahansa prema-bhakta*. Thus without a doubt your blessings can award the rarely-attained perfection of *bhāva-bhakti*.

Will you give that mercy?

In the twelve years of your preaching pastimes you repeatedly assured your followers that by offenseless *nāma-saṅkīrtana* they would attain perfection. The *sādhana* for that attainment was chanting sixteen rounds and following the regulative principles. By such a forthcoming effort we were guaranteed a corresponding mercy disbursed from the storehouse of your ever-well-wishes and transcendental teachings.

Thus, by your words, presence, and blessings you guaranteed a mercy by which your direct disciples could rise to the stage of *bhāva*. That was Lord Caitanya's mission, and is ISKCON's "main business."

Now you are no longer physically present, but your ISKCON remains, as does its empowerment to give love. And so the same combination of *sādhana* and *kṛpā* assures all serious devotees that they too can attain *bhāva-bhakti* in this life. Then with the blessing of *bhāva* they can take birth on the planet in the material world where Kṛṣṇa is enacting his pastimes and there gain qualification to return to the spiritual world, Goloka Vṛndāvana.

What if, for some reason, worthy devotees in ISKCON cannot find the association of living *gurus* and Vaiṣṇavas to bless them with love?

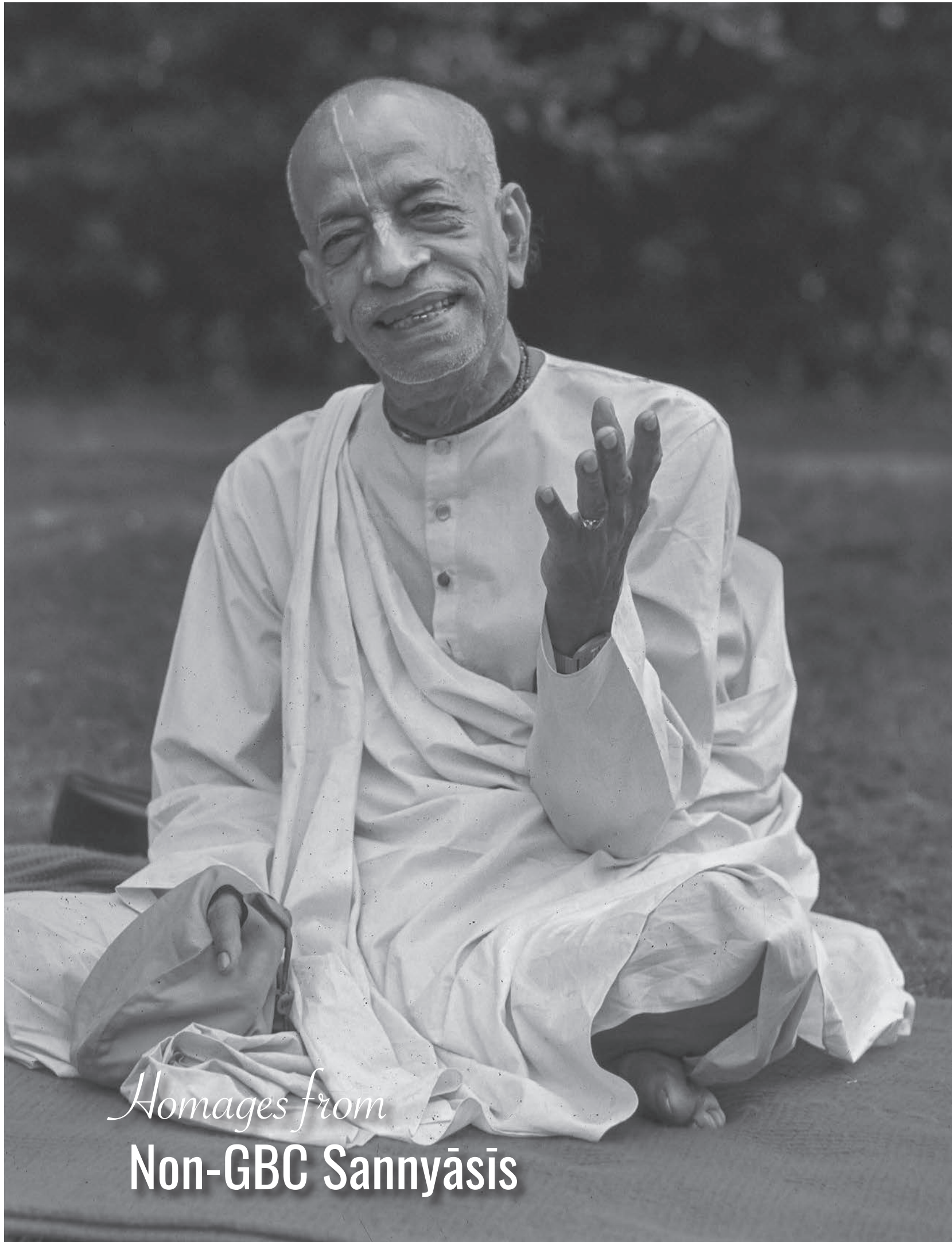
Then your mercy and instructions are there for all succeeding generations of followers not initiated by you. They too can attain the same result. That was your promise: chant sixteen rounds and follow the regulative principles.

Thus, ISKCON assures that devotees will be able to attain ecstatic love from a qualified spiritual master, or alternatively through your blessings, books, and eternal presence.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda! Thank you for blessing us with the desire tree of ISKCON, a *kalpavṛkṣa* that yields fruits too numerous to name, and from which the juicy fruit of loving devotion, falling from its branches of mercy, reigns supreme.

Your servant,

Śivarāma Swami



Homages from
Non-GBC Sannyāsis

Amala-bhakta Swami

I offer my humble obeisances unto to my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, having taken shelter of His lotus feet. My respectful obeisances unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva through your books and recordings, and spiritually liberating the imprisoned souls of all countries, which are filled with impersonalism, voidism, materialism, and atheism.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, I can never thank you enough for the incredible amount of transcendental mercy you have so lovingly bestowed upon my life, for you have transformed it from death-filled to deathless, from fear-filled to fearless, from anxiety-filled to anxietyless, and from having temporary happiness to having everlasting happiness.

Thus, my debt to you is eternal, unforgettable, unrepayable, and inconceivable.

Thank you so very much!

Your eternal servant,

Amala-bhakta Swami

Bhakti Cārudeṣṇa Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

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

It's a real pleasure for me to send you a Vyāsa-pūjā message every year.

What else can I do to please you? I don't really know, since I know very well that I lack the capacity to do much more.

But at least I must show a sign of gratitude to you for revealing yourself to me.

One way or another, I think you have heard my prayer to allow me to be attached to you through the association of your pure and sincere disciples. As Lord Kapiladeva says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.20):

*prasaṅgam ajaraṁ pāśam ātmanaḥ kavayo viduḥ
sa eva sādhuṣu kṛto mokṣa-dvāram apāvṛtam*

“Every learned man knows very well that attachment for the material is the greatest entanglement of the spirit soul. But that same attachment, when applied to the self-realized devotees, opens the door of liberation.”

This is surely the reason I still have some little attraction to your holy movement, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mission.

Nowadays we are attending seminars and spiritual courses to learn how to develop qualities like compassion, tolerance, and determination in devotional service, to advance in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Because you already had those qualities in full before leaving India for America in 1965, Kṛṣṇa could not have chosen a better person than you to spread the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu all over the world.

To ordinary vision you appeared to be just an old man without any money or support. But you had Kṛṣṇa and strong faith in your guru, and so you conquered Māyā in the world and then success and victory came to you.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.78) Sañjaya says,

*yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pāṛtho dhanur-dharaḥ
tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama*

“Wherever there is Kṛṣṇa, the master of all mystics, and wherever there is Arjuna, the supreme archer, there will also certainly be opulence, victory, extraordinary power, and morality. That is my opinion.”

Although you are no longer physically present with us, it is because of you that Lord Caitanya’s prediction is being fulfilled and the chanting of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s holy name is spreading to every town and village in the world.

You empowered your sincere followers, and they are acting nicely for the pleasure of the Vaiṣṇava communities.

All glories to you again and again!

The servant of your servants,

Bhakti Cārudeṣṇa Swami

Bhakti Gauravāṇī Goswami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet.

Today marks the 125th anniversary of the most blessed event, your appearance in this world, an event that changed the course of the world forever. And this year I will personally celebrate the 50th anniversary of my first meeting you in your *vāṇī* form, another most blessed event that changed my life for good.

Counting Blessings

1

Blessed the day when you appeared in Calcutta,
sent by the Lord to spread His glory

and rescue the fallen, lost in the gutter,
forsaken slaves under the whip of Kali.

2

Blessed the day when you took up your pen
to translate the *Bhāgavata*'s eternal message
for the planet's fortunate women and men,
in desperate need of hope and courage.

3

Blessed the day when you came to the city
of New York, known as the rotten big apple,
where drunkards and hippies evoked your pity
while you endured their madness and babble.

4

Blessed the day when you transformed a gift shop
into a matchless Hare Kṛṣṇa temple,
a shelter for seekers to rise to the top,
a place of pilgrimage for the faithful.

5

Blessed the day when you took the chanting
of Kṛṣṇa's name to Tompkins Square Park,
where your bongo playing and fervent singing
changed it into a spiritual landmark.

6

Blessed the day when you sent your disciples
to Europe, to Hamburg's Botanical Garden,
where I saw them chanting like *Vaikuṇṭha* minstrels,
voices from heaven on a sacred mission.

7

Blessed the summer of '71, when I met you
in printed form, your *vāṇī* incarnation,
and blessed the summer of '72,
when I met you in person to receive initiation.

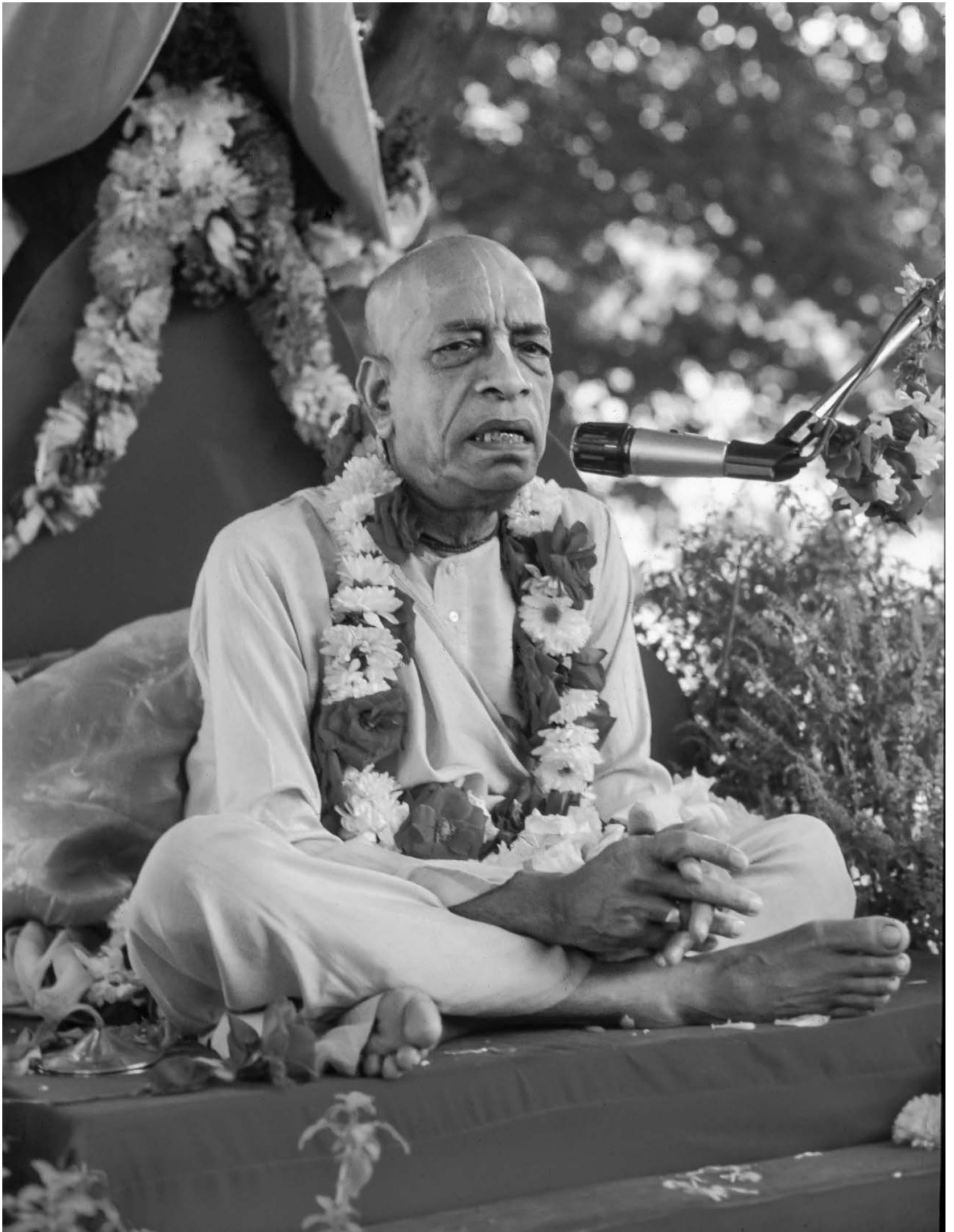
8

Blessed the day when you gave the order
to take Kṛṣṇa's words across every border.
O Prabhupāda, may I heed your call
and distribute your mercy to one and all.

Aspiring to follow in your blessed footsteps, I remain

Your ever-grateful servant,

Bhakti Gauravāṇī Goswami



Bhakti Narasimha Swami

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Please accept my insignificant obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace. All glories to your great movement, ISKCON.

In August of 1965, following the instructions of your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, you traveled to America with a mission to share the timeless wisdom of Kṛṣṇa consciousness with the Western world.

On July 11, 1966, you incorporated the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and stated that it had seven explicit purposes. One of them was “To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Krishna, the prime entity, and thus to develop the idea within the members and humanity at large that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Krishna).”

Thus you invited people to come together and become part of an institution whose focus is centered on Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Being. It is the nature of the soul to want knowledge of the Supreme Being and the soul’s relationship with Him. Feeling a sense of belonging in a Kṛṣṇa conscious community further fosters and solidifies us in our relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

This movement is not static. The word *movement* means that we are moving along the path of *bhakti* and giving knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others. Thank you for engaging us, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

The servant of your servants,

Bhakti Narasimha Swami

Bhakti Prabhāva Swami

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam teaches us in many ways how pure devotees exhibit exalted qualities. Last year when I facilitated the Bhaktivedanta course for the Māyāpur Institute, I became absorbed in the pastimes related in the Eighth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in particular the appearance and activities of Lord Vāmanadeva. While hearing how He took away everything from Bali Mahārāja, I remembered that once Ātmatattva Prabhu told us about a rich Indian man who came to see Your Divine Grace. The industrialist said, “I have a factory in Delhi, a factory in Jaipur, . . .” and he proceeded to list everything he had. But then he added, “I have all of this, but I can’t sleep at night.”

You replied, “You can’t sleep because you have so many things. Give them to me and you can sleep peacefully.” Then you turned to your secretary and said, “Take his address!”

The man then said, “No, no, Swamiji, I can come anytime.”

You then replied, “We should also be able to come to you anytime,” and then to his secretary: “Take his address!” Again you addressed the Indian businessman: “If you give some of your things to Kṛṣṇa, you will be peaceful.” The man was smashed and gave his address. In this exchange you exhibited the mood of Lord Vāmanadeva taking everything from Bali Mahārāja.

A bit earlier in the Eighth Canto, when I was going through the pastime of Mohinī-mūrti, the Lord's all-attractive feminine form, I remembered the Lord as Madana-mohana, one of the three principal Deities of Vṛndāvana. Madana-mohana helps us achieve *sambandha-jñāna*, or knowledge of our relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and Govindajī helps us achieve *abhidheya-jñāna*, or knowledge of how to act in that relationship, the art of rendering devotional service. Madana-mohana, means the “supreme enchanter,” or “one who can enchant even Cupid.” During a lecture in Atlanta on March 2, 1975, you said:

One Christian priest in Boston, he was astonished by seeing our devotees. He issued one leaflet that “These boys are our boys, and before this movement they did not care to see us or come to the church, and now they are mad after God.” This is the certificate of a Christian priest.

Before your arrival in Boston in 1965, many *yogīs* had already come to preach in America. But despite their preaching of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, they were not able to make even one devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. But Your Divine Grace attracted thousands, turning them into sincere devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa. This means that the Lord gave you some of the powers of Madana-mohana. You were empowered to give them *param dṛṣṭvā nivartate* (Bg 2.59), the experience of a higher taste that negated the lower taste.

Your extraordinary empowerment is only a spark of the Lord's unlimited powers. But Your Divine Grace has been endowed with these capabilities for the execution of the mission of your spiritual master. You have the power to bring us all back to Godhead. In Kali-yuga our situation is one of “hope against hope.” But you have the power to bring us back to Godhead. The words of a pure devotee must come true. This has been demonstrated by Nārada Muni's curse of the sons of Kuvera—Maṇigrīva and Nalakūvara. Kuvera was the treasurer of the demigods, a very responsible man, and Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva were two of his sons. Yet they became so animal-like and irresponsible that on account of being intoxicated they could not understand that they were naked before Nārada Muni. To punish them while also blessing them, the sage cursed the two demigods to remain as trees for a hundred years (in the time of the demigods), while also being able recall their previous condition of life and why they had become trees, and ultimately to be fortunate enough to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead face to face by His causeless mercy. Later Lord Kṛṣṇa, as part of His Dāmodara *līlā*, felt obliged to fulfill the words of Nārada Muni, and thus He pulled down the two trees, liberating the now purified brothers. The Lord fulfills the wishes and prayers of His pure devotees, and consequently He will also fulfill the prayer you wrote onboard the *Jaladuta* as part of your poem *Mārkine Bhāgavata-dharma*:

My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, . . . most of the population here [in the West] 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 understand 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 become 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.

You prayed for all of us in such a wonderful way. Our only hope is that Lord Kṛṣṇa will fulfill your prayers and bring us back to Godhead after accepting our service and purifying us despite our present impurities and our being constantly tossed up and down by the strong waves of passion and ignorance within this ocean of nescience. We pray for your mercy. Please empower us to continue your mission with great enthusiasm despite all the obstacles posed by the polluted atmosphere of the Age of Kali, as well as more recently by the restrictions imposed upon us due to the Covid-19 pandemic. If we can attract people to Kṛṣṇa consciousness with a spark of the powers of Madana-mohana and teach them how to surrender

their lives to the Lord, as exemplified by Bali Mahārāja, then our lives will be successful.

Lord Buddha deluded the atheists by telling them to reject the *Vedas* and follow Him. But Buddha is an incarnation of the Lord. In that way Lord Buddha made the faithless faithful to Him. Similarly, Your Divine Grace also made the faithless faithful to you and to Lord Kṛṣṇa's teachings. As such, you have been empowered by the Lord to make faithless people in Kali-yuga faithful to the Lord. Please also grant us a spark of that empowerment so that we can overcome the challenges we face in our preaching and attract many souls to your lotus feet. That will be the perfection of our lives.

My spiritual master, your personal servant Bhakti Chāru Mahārāja, left this world last year, on July 4, 2020. Please, if you so desire, bless me so that I can follow the personal instructions he gave me for fulfilling your mission.

Your servant,

Bhakti Prabhāva Swami

Bhakti Prabhupāda-vrata Dāmodara Swami

*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 disciples, granddisciples, and general followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Please receive my humble attempt to glorify our *jagat-guru* on this anniversary of his divine appearance in this mortal world, a world enshrouded by the Age of Kali.

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, (*Madhya* 22.54), Lord Caitanya tells Sanātana Gosvāmī: “The verdict of all revealed scriptures is that by even a moment’s association with a pure devotee, one can attain all success.”

Moreover, during a lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.1.6, Śrīla Prabhupāda explained:

Father, mother you will get, anyone. Even you become a serpent there is father and mother. . . . Even in human society, every man is born a *śūdra*. *Samśkārad bhaved dvijaḥ*. He requires a second birth. . . . Just like we give second birth, initiation. The second birth, the father is the spiritual master and the mother is the *Vedas*.

What follows should reveal the relevance of these two references.

Previously on these Vyāsa-pūjā days I have sometimes tried to indicate the depth of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s tolerance and mercy by referring to my own meetings with him and how he, to put it very succinctly, saved me. But now I have another case in point, namely my material father, whose transformation, though not as dramatic as my own, also tells a story—a true story—of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s glorious bestowal of mercy upon the most fallen.

At first (except for one incident described below) my father had practically no appreciation for my soon-to-be guru and his teachings. However, although I was no artist, he actually sacrificed some money to acquire my attempted portrait of Śrīla Prabhupāda, nicely framing it to hang very prominently over the fireplace. However, alas, once I joined he took it down. (I have no idea what he did with it at that point.)

On another occasion, he loudly complained, “You’ve become a *monk*!” (Implication: How *horrible*!) When I tried to reason that I was previously a “monkey” and rhetorically questioned what he would rather I be, a monkey or a monk, after about ten seconds of reflection he boldly declared, “A *monkey*!”

But a crucial incident had taken place, a prelude of sorts to what was to follow. Some years earlier, in 1966, impelled by his desperation to discover some solution to my, well, insanity (which was greatly exacerbated by an overdose of LSD) Herb (my first father) somehow managed to locate the whereabouts of the elderly Indian Swami who (despite my otherwise incoherent utterances) I repeatedly described to him and to others. It was by sheer causeless mercy that my anxious dad felt the impulse to consult with Śrīla Prabhupāda. It must have been Paramātmā who enabled him to locate the Second Avenue storefront and achieve the *darśana* of “the Swami.” (I doubt that Swamiji’s fledgling group had yet made it into the Yellow Pages.) Conversing directly with the Swami, Herb inquired as to what might be done to cure me? The first response was but a simple acknowledgment: “*There is something wrong with that boy.*” But then Śrīla Prabhupāda rounded out that assessment by confidently assuring Herb that “*We can fix him up!*”

Let me note here that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s great, unfathomable mercy did not fructify very quickly, for neither the father nor the son. (For instance, it took me nine years to finally move into the Boston ISKCON Temple.)

Now back to the early 1970’s, when my father detected that I was really becoming quite attached to Swami Bhaktivedanta. At that time the following telling exchange occurred:

Herb: But I’m your *father*!

(Bhakta) Lon: Yes, but please understand that now I have *two* fathers: you are my material father, and Bhaktivedanta is my spiritual father.” [“Bhaktivedanta” was the name by which my father invariably remembered and referred to Śrīla Prabhupāda.]

Herb: “Hmm . . .”

The point here is that he showed acceptance, however reluctantly, of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s fatherly role for me, and that I had indeed acquired a second “father.”

But Herb’s appreciation of Śrīla Prabhupāda, or, to put it another way, the evidence of Prabhupāda’s mercy upon him, manifested only very gradually. Years of atheistic skepticism and even an unfortunate incident of blasphemy (to which I responded by immediately distancing myself . . .)—those kinds of years went by.

But, nonetheless, Herb was gradually warming up to the Swami, to “Bhaktivedanta” . . .

One time, perhaps in 1990, he drove me to an airport and commented, “Why do you have to *daven* so much?” (*Daven* is the Jewish [i.e., Yiddish] word, for semiaudible prayer, and it was Herb’s way of describing my *japa* chanting.) He next opined that “Bhaktivedanta doesn’t want you to *daven* so much!” (Wow!) To that I replied by telling him that my guru wanted me to chant *more*, not less . . .

And now for the anecdote that should justify my having taken my readers’ time up to this point . . .

When Herb was reaching a ripe old age, say around 77, I visited him with several devotees. When I mentioned that my father had obtained Śrīla Prabhupāda’s direct *darśana*, Herb vociferously exclaimed, “I spoke with Bhaktivedanta before *any* of you!” Perhaps divinely guided, I then said to him, “But dad, you’re not interested in philosophy or religion, so why are you now so exuberant?” And here is his own spontaneous reply:

What do you mean? He’s a great man! He started the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement all over the world! And I spoke with him first!”

For me, Herb’s expression was the decisive factor, the proof that despite the slow “gestation period” of over thirty years, Śrīla Prabhupāda had indeed bestowed his mercy upon this otherwise fallen soul. It was that early *satsang* (lasting way more than only “one eleventh of a second”) that made all the difference.

Such is the potency of Kṛṣṇa’s pure devotee, His great general for Lord Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* army. *Jagat-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya*!

From the fortunate son,

Bhakti Prabhupāda-vrata Dāmodara Swami

Bhakti Rāghava Swami

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

I was born in the darkness of ignorance, and you, my spiritual master, opened my eyes with the torchlight of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances into you.

*namo brahmaṇya-devāya go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca
jagad-dhitāya kṛṣṇāya govindāya namo namaḥ*

“My Lord, You are the well-wisher of the cows and the *brāhmaṇas*, and You are the well-wisher of the entire human society and world.” (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 1.19.65)

om śrī surabhyai namaḥ! om śrī gurave namaḥ!

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. This year we are fortunate to be celebrating your 125th appearance anniversary.

You remain our well-wisher and a source of ever-increasing inspiration. By your exemplary personality and undaunted preaching efforts, you continue even today to attract so many conditioned souls. You are the only beacon of hope for all of humanity. We cannot fathom our great fortune.

The world has changed tremendously in the last twelve months, with the traveling and preaching activities of your devotees severely curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In many, many ways, however, this pandemic has underlined to all of us the ever-increasingly urgent need to spread the message of Lord Caitanya as quickly and as widely as possible. And by your continued inspiration, devotees have discovered innovative ways to continue spreading your mission.

Although you stressed the distribution of your transcendental literatures, you also emphasized the absolute necessity of demonstrating the practical application of our philosophy. And for that to happen, you gave very specific instructions: 1) establish *gurukulas*, 2) establish *varṇāśrama* colleges, and 3) establish Vaiṣṇava Vedic villages.

As you rightly point out in the introduction to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, “There is a need for the science of Kṛṣṇa in human society for the good of all suffering humanity of the world, and we simply request the leaders of all nations to pick up this science of Kṛṣṇa for their own good, for the good of society, and for the good of all the world’s people.”

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please allow me to be an instrument, however insignificant, in spreading your glories and your mission, the only remedy for a misguided humanity.

Please keep me forever at the dust of your lotus feet.

Your humble servant,

Bhakti Rāghava Swami

Bhakti Rasāyana Sāgar Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you and all your sincere followers!

The year 2020 was very special because, despite the pandemic and all the troubles associated with it, due to the special blessings you've bestowed upon this very fallen soul, I've had plenty of wonderful engagements and opportunities to help you further your mission and take another step toward achieving the very first purpose you set for us in ISKCON:

“To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all people in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and achieve real unity and peace in the world.”

When I visited Germany, devotees informed me about a very interesting fact, that the very first worshipable Deity, acknowledged by modern historians and scientists, was the Lion Man, discovered near the present city of Ulm, the birthplace of Albert Einstein, a city that also has the tallest church in the world. And now the 40,000-year-old Lion Man is displayed in the local museum there.

I could not miss the opportunity of visiting Him with a few devotee friends. We had a chance to chant the Nṛsiṁha *praṇāma mantra* for Him and circumambulate the glass pillar He is situated in. It was good, but I really felt that He is pretty lonely there, since hardly anyone knows who He really is, and nobody worships Him or offers Him even a small fruit or flower! So I got the desire in my heart to do something as a service for Him, especially after I learned that about 200 kilometers away we have the only ISKCON temple on the planet (as far as I'm aware) dedicated exclusively to the worship of Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva! Then when I remembered your words in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.24.42, I realized none of this was a coincidence: “*Kāraṇātmane*: everything has a cause. The theory of chance is repudiated in this verse. Because everything has its cause, there is no question of chance.”

So I could see a clear link between the fact that the Lion Man was worshiped on German soil 40,000 years ago and the fact that His worship has also been happening every single day for decades together in the neighboring Siṁhāchalam temple. Then we looked at a map of Germany and discovered that the coat-of-arms of the state of Baden-Württemberg, where the Lion Man was discovered, has three lions on it, and the two neighboring states each have a lion as well. With so many correlations, I thought it would definitely be worth trying to organize a conference and a festival for the Lion Man. We would invite many scholars, both devotee and nondevotee, as well as historians and community leaders, with the goal of understanding what message the Lion Man has carried throughout the centuries, hidden in His enchanting smile. By uniting the ancient past with modern cultures across the globe, He could definitely bring about the solution everyone is so eagerly awaiting—eternal victory of spiritual powers over the evil of hedonistic materialism, which is destroying our planet and our lives at the present moment. By the power of the time factor, more and more people are understanding and supporting this notion. That's why I thought that right now is the best moment to bring forward our message and values from the level of some exotic religious beliefs, as they're perceived by most people at mainstream scientific and government levels.

To realize this plan, we will need the full support and involvement of the leadership of ISKCON Germany, but I had some doubts if the GBC representative, Mother Dīna-śaraṇā, would be interested in supporting the project, since it was not a regular preaching project but something that has never been done before. But to my surprise and delight, she was so extremely interested and enthusiastic about the project that she brought together leaders from Germany and other European countries to organize it in the best way. I was quite surprised. So I asked why she was so interested. She told me that prior to joining ISKCON she had had a strange dream in which she went into the mountains and saw a cave from which some light was

emanating. When she entered she saw a group of people worshipping a lion on an altar! After she woke up she couldn't understand the meaning of her dream, but upon joining ISKCON she finally understood who that worshipable lion was. It's interesting that the Lion Man was discovered in a cave and that in India there are many ancient cave temples dedicated to Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva. Now it was clear that the reason for her enthusiasm was to realize the mission that had brought her to the movement.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, our attempts at establishing a working relationship with the Museum of Ulm have been delayed. But I'm hoping and praying that we will eventually succeed, and we beg for your blessings to proceed with our conference and festival centered on the Lion Man. My great hope is that by the time your Vyāsa-pūjā book is published this year, we will already have established a partnership and a solid plan for organizing the event.

Another great opportunity I've had this year was to assist in bringing the great legacy of your beloved disciple His Holiness Bhakti Tīrtha Swami—the Institute for Applied Spiritual Technologies, or IFAST—which is rapidly growing globally under the capable leadership of His Grace Caitanya Candra Caran Prabhu and his leading disciple, Mallikā Mālā Devī Dāsī, to become part of the United Religions Initiative, or URI, which is the biggest grassroots interfaith organization on the planet. We've conducted a seven-day Global Interfaith Forum for Transformation, or GIFT, as an online event dedicated to the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week. Our event introduced everyone to the concept of spiritual technologies and was hugely appreciated by all the participants and URI leaders, who are now willing to support any of our initiatives.

But our biggest undertaking is a project to establish a partnership with the government of Indonesia, which is officially a God conscious country. The partnership's goal would be to assist the government in realizing their ruling principles of Pañca Śīla. Since establishing this partnership is a very difficult task, involving uniting all the variegated religions in the country for the sake of providing spiritual solutions on the national level, we ardently pray to you for the power of your blessings to accomplish it. And once it happens in Indonesia, we can gradually scale it up to include other countries as well.

As the years go by, I'm realizing more and more how unqualified I am, even to have the privilege of association with your followers, what to speak of being one and attempting to serve you in any way. But your kindness and patience are simply amazing, and therefore I'm still hopeful to be able to continue my attempts to serve you, no matter how strange they may appear.

Your aspiring servant,

Bhakti Rasāyana Sāgar Swami

Bhakti Sundar Goswami

*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*

I was lost in the material world. I knew I needed to search for a perfect spiritual master so I could know how to harmonize my actions with his teachings. I wanted to achieve perfection, and I knew I needed the proper guidance to achieve that goal.

In my quest for perfection I found Śrīla Prabhupāda, my eternal master and guide, and I accepted him with my heart and soul. I could understand that Kṛṣṇa directed me to Śrīla Prabhupāda out of His causeless mercy and because He saw my desperate need for His pure devotee.

By serving the spiritual master with devotion, one attracts his attention. The disciple's devotion to his guru resembles the crying of a baby demanding his mother's milk. When a hungry baby cries, his mother's milk flows involuntarily from her breast to feed her child. Similarly, when a disciple attracts the attention of his spiritual master with his devotional service, the spiritual master offers the disciple his treasure chest filled with knowledge and spiritual realizations, and in this way the guru satisfies the spiritual hunger the disciple suffers in his search for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the divine reality. If the hungry child doesn't cry, how will the mother's milk flow? If the thirsty *cātaka* bird doesn't fervently pray, why should the cloud pour down its nectarean rain?

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the perfect representative of Kṛṣṇa, inspired in our heart real devotion, thus diverting us from our own selfishness and false egoism, which are the greatest obstacles to understanding the Absolute Truth. Śrīla Prabhupāda is the transparent medium through whom we serve Kṛṣṇa and thus achieve our eternal, blissful life full of knowledge. Of course, the spiritual master must be perfect to turn the selfishness of his disciple into love of God, Kṛṣṇa.

The divine holy name that Śrīla Prabhupāda instilled in my heart produced specific spiritual effects. By remembering Kṛṣṇa, I gradually moved away from my own self-centeredness and self-awareness and placed Kṛṣṇa and Śrīla Prabhupāda at the center of all my love and attention.

Praying for the blessings of the Vaiṣṇavas on this very auspicious 125th anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance, I remain

His very lowly servant,

Bhakti Sundar Goswami

Bhakti Vighna Vināśa Narasiṁha Mahārāja

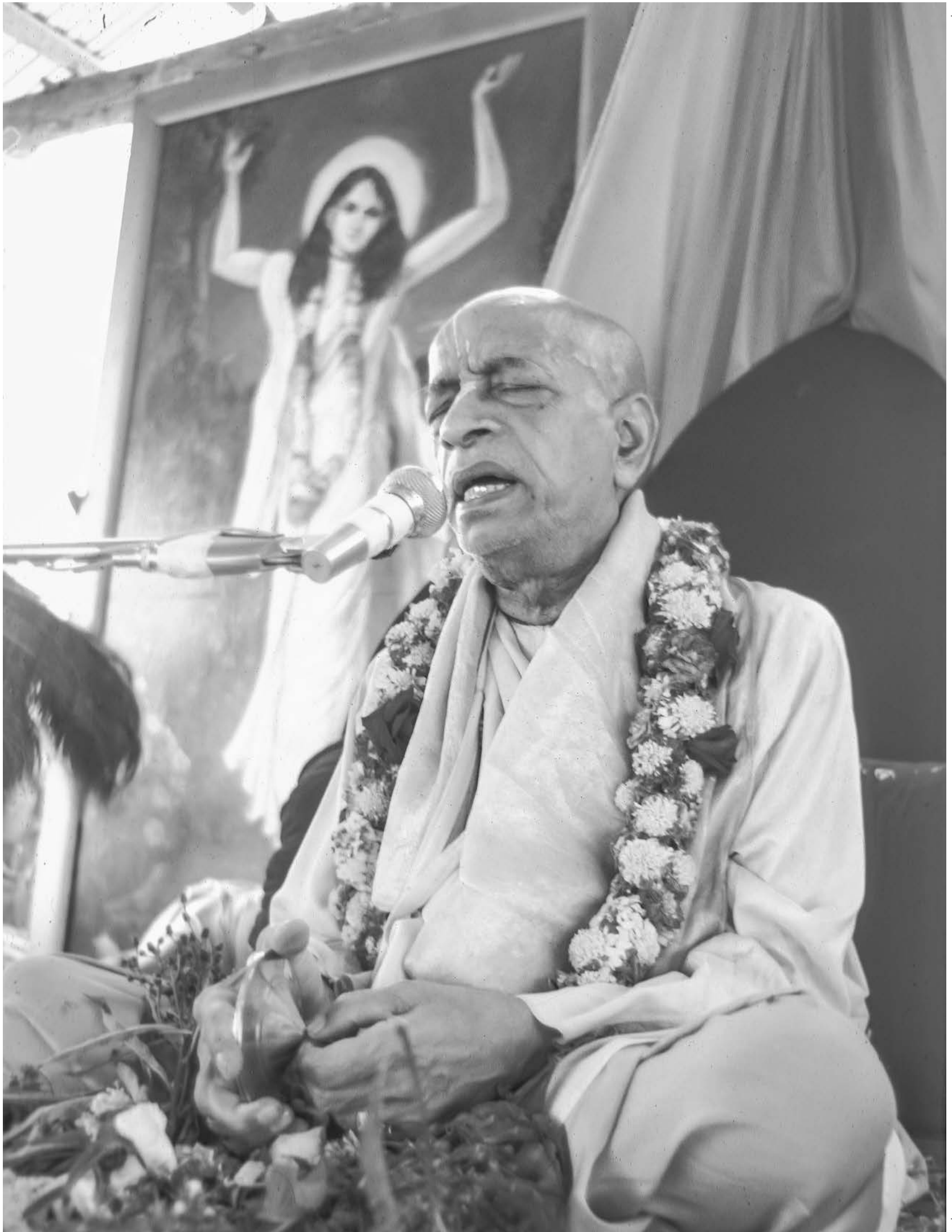
My dear spiritual father,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace. All glories to the *saṅkīrtana* mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, whose banner you raised around the planet and by so doing gave the world the opportunity to participate in the chanting of the holy names of the Lord.

This is my fiftieth year in your service. You mercifully accepted me as a disciple during your visit to London in 1971. I do not have a colorful track record over these years. I had my problems from time to time, but somehow I managed to hold on to your lotus feet and have kept myself alive in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I am not a big devotee or leader. I am just an insignificant servant of Your Divine Grace who understood the importance of your mission. We often heard you say that we should want to do something useful with our life. We have had many births in the material world, and we were never happy or satisfied in any of them. When I heard these words from your lotus mouth, they entered my dirty heart and I was inspired to commit myself to the service of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

I know that in the future there will be many more devotees, and they will all want to distribute the



holy name and teach the path of *bhakti*. Lord Caitanya predicted that the chanting of the holy names would be heard everywhere. If we do not go to the remote corners of the world, then in the future others will go there and get the credit. We want to see that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, get the credit for bringing the *mahā-mantra* to every town and village on this planet.

Your Divine Grace was kind enough to spend ten days in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1974. The temple president was your capable American-born disciple Guru Gaurāṅga Dāsa, who had arranged a full schedule of lectures and meetings with dignitaries. After a few years the management changed and it was decided to relocate the temple to Zurich. Your Divine Grace was sorry to hear of this, since you considered Geneva an important city worthy of a Kṛṣṇa conscious center. A few years ago a young south Indian lady moved to Geneva with her family and took up the task of reintroducing Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the people of Geneva. She started a *Bhagavad-gītā* study group. Every week, by means of the internet, I join her group in the study of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Having a *sannyāsī* present encourages the participants. Other outreach programs, such as festivals, park programs, children's classes, and cooking classes, are also arranged successfully. Gradually we hope to revive ISKCON in Geneva.

Your Divine Grace visited Moscow in 1971 and saw that the people of Russia were receptive to the Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy. As a small service every year, I spend one month traveling around Far Eastern Russia. Last year we opened a new center with a restaurant, located in one of the most remote regions of Russia, Kamchatka. This region is accessible only by air but still has a population of over 100,000. Our center there is further proof that the mercy of Lord Caitanya is being distributed to every town and village.

Last night one of our elderly devotees in northern China left her body, and just as she was about to depart a group of four devotees arrived to perform *kīrtana* for the passing soul and perform the last rites before the cremation. Lord Caitanya's mercy is unlimited, and it has reached the most remote and isolated regions of the world. At your first meeting with your spiritual master you argued that India should first get independence before trying to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but your spiritual master pointed out that the message of Śrī Caitanya cannot wait for some political adjustment. In the same mood, we are continuing to go everywhere and distribute the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

On this auspicious day we thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for kindly bestowing your mercy on the world.

May I always be engaged in service as a particle of dust at your lotus feet.

Forever the servant of your servant,

Tridaṇḍī Bhikṣu Bhakti Vighna Vināśa Narasimha

Bhakti Vinoda Swami

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

As the people of the world navigate the pandemic as a sudden excruciatingly painful experience, your prophetic purports are all coming true in a most realistic way, and questions abound in the hearts of all sensitive human beings on the globe. They are forced to deeply reconsider their lifestyles, the bungling leadership, climate-change agonies, the greed economy, renewing and reviving their faith in God actively,

and, for the simply atheistic, the strong possibility of the existence of God, etc. Under duress and in the confines of their homes, people are pondering their lot: “No one can give us shelter! Yes, we are all alone!”

Introspectively and from your purports, I understand that the virus is Māyā’s way of rudely awakening the rascals in a godless civilization who fail to see the interconnectedness between man, nature, and God, Kṛṣṇa. The delicate and caring mother earth and man’s siblings, which abound on the planet in sync with the vibration of mother nature, have been trounced, exploited, bullied, and killed at the hands of brash, barbaric human beings who are proud of their so-called advancement through their extractive economy. That Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the supreme solution to all the philosophical, scientific, social, and personal problems of humanity is obvious to anyone who is familiar with your books, but the rascals will not accept it until such a violent shake-up occurs.

At this juncture, the world’s stage is full of opportunities for devotees to move in and present your Kṛṣṇa conscious solutions. During the pandemic I have become much busier than usual and was excited at the opportunity to try out a new outreach strategy online.

In Western Tamil Nadu and Kerala, devotees have been very busy with online sessions, contacting thousands to give them much-needed succor and counsel, while many other volunteers distributed *prasādam* to the needy and stranded. It was a unique experience to see your purports come alive from the pages of your books! Your mercy reached far and wide, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your Divine Grace desired that the mercy of the Pañca-tattva engulf the whole world and drown the populace in *harināma-saṅkīrtana*! To this end, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave yourself—your life and all that you had—to establish ISKCON as a shelter for the whole world. You showed us that your active compassion is no lip service rendered from within ramparts, or words in print alone, but a dynamic, arduous effort impelled by deep love for a suffering humanity in the clutches of Māyā.

On this auspicious occasion of the 125th anniversary of your birth, at the Kerala BBT we plan to release your nine-volume *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* set in the native Malayalam language. In “God’s Own Country,” as the communist state of Kerala is touted in the international tourism realm, and in the land of Śaṅkarācārya, these sweet pastimes of Lord Gaurāṅga and His simple, crystal-clear explanations of the *Vedānta-sūtra* will resound with a revolutionary boom, to say the least. The sincere devotees comprising the BBT staff and their assistants on this project seek your blessings, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and hope to please you with this effort.

A large project encompassing a temple for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, a museum, an academy, and many other facilities is being developed in Coimbatore on an eight-acre site right in the center of the city. An enthusiastic community of devotees seek your blessings to finish this project as soon as possible and inaugurate it this year as an offering to Your Divine Grace!

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I seek your blessings on behalf of all the devotees who help in my area of service, in your mission to spread the message of Lord Caitanya and bring happiness to lost souls by giving them your books and the holy name.

As I advance in age, the same lectures and writings of Your Divine Grace I have been hearing and reading for so long draw me into greater depths of realizations concerning this world of illusion that tugs at my deep-rooted subtle attachments. I feel the blissful beckoning of surrender from the sweetest Lord Gaurāṅga and His devotees. It’s all your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and that of the wonderful devotees you have nurtured!

On this most auspicious 125th anniversary of your appearance, I seek your blessings to be a fearless preacher, blessed with the transcendental intelligence to propagate the cult of Kṛṣṇa consciousness as Your Divine Grace desired, in full cooperation with the authorities and showing due compassion and mercy toward the devotees and newcomers.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for 125 years of your presence on this planet!

Your servant,

Bhakti Vinoda Swami

Candramauli Swami

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

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Our most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories unto you.

Of the many principles you taught on how to live in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the one that seems most relevant at present is that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not dependent on anything material or impeded by the same.

With the worldwide presence of the new coronavirus, preaching opportunities are more readily available than ever before—at least this has been my experience. Without the burden (some say the luxury) of travel, through the internet we are daily reaching many persons with the message of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

When the need is great, the message has greater efficacy for those who hear it. It appears that many people are experiencing uncertainty due to the pandemic, mainly because of their dependence on what's happening in the social and political environment. Therefore there is confusion and fearfulness. Because a devotee is fully dependent on the infallible protection of Lord Kṛṣṇa, he is fearless. As you write in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.13.13:

Fear arises because of a lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness; otherwise there cannot be any fear. For one who has taken shelter of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, this material world of fear becomes hardly dangerous at all. . . . This material world, in which there is fear and danger at every step (*padam padam yad vipadām*), is not meant for those who have taken shelter at Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Such persons are delivered from this fearful world. Everyone, therefore, should take shelter of the Supreme Person, who is the source of fearlessness, and thus be secure.

This is the message that is always needed, especially at the present time:

Demons are increasing. Demons are increasing. But don't be afraid. Kṛṣṇa is there. Just like Kṛṣṇa's mother and father were so much . . . harassed by Kāṁsa. But at the end, Kāṁsa was killed by Kṛṣṇa. [Class on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.28, Los Angeles, 3 October 1972]

So we may be harassed for the time being, but Kṛṣṇa will save us:

This is *śaraṇāgati*. *Avaśya rakhibe kṛṣṇa viśvāsa pālana*. The *śaraṇāgati* means, surrender means that "Kṛṣṇa will save me. I, I'll not do anything against the devotional service. Even there is torture." . . . Just like Prahlaḍa Mahārāja. He was tortured by his father. . . . Kṛṣṇa's mother was tortured by her brother, not outsider. So the demons are so rascal, they don't care for son, sister, mother. No. "As soon as it is against my personal sense gratification, I must finish this." But be sure that Kṛṣṇa will save. We have got so many instances. As Prahlaḍa Mahārāja was saved by . . . Narasimhadeva from the hands of his father, Hiraṇyakaśipu, Devakī was saved, Vasudeva was saved from the hands of Kāṁsa, so you will be also saved. Because there is promise in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.31]: *kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ prañaśyati*. Kṛṣṇa says, "Make it a declaration throughout the whole world that anyone who is My devotee, he'll never be annihilated. He'll be protected. I'll give him protection." [Class on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.28, Los Angeles, 3 October 1972]

Our general message is “Chant more—chant always—the Lord’s holy names”:

A devotee accepts the distress of this material world as happiness only due to the causeless mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. By His personal behavior, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu showed that He was never distressed but always happy in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. One should follow in the footsteps of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and engage constantly in chanting the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Then he will never feel the distresses of the world of duality. In any condition of life one will be happy if he chants the holy name of the Lord. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.17.30 purport]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am eternally indebted to you and fully grateful for your mercy, which comes in many different ways, but mostly I’m grateful for the opportunity to act on your behalf, although I am unable.

A fallen disciple,

Candramauli Swami

Candraśekhara Swami

*nama om̐ 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,

What were we to do
Before we all met you

It isn’t hard to see
And yet it’s hard to be

I wish I had been quick
But I liked being sick

Even now, even now, I feel like outside looking in, did I even begin

Life waits for no one
But seems to just drag on

Philosophers just ramble
 Everything gets scrambled
 I wanted easy terms
 For I was not concerned

Nor did I even know
 The winds were all that blow

Even now, even now, I feel like outside looking in, will I just begin

You think there is a way
 You think there'll come a day
 You think someone must know
 You think someday you'll go

It all must make some sense
 But sitting on the fence

When the Truth does come
 It's easier to run

Days go by, days go by, I feel like outside looking in, did I even begin

Someone mentions God
 And everyone applauds

But things go on the same
 As in some crazy game

High words flap in the breeze
 But there is no relief

A light is there to view
 And that light is you

Even now, even now, I wonder when you speak, I wonder what you mean

Many years have passed
 And memories elapsed

Trials of such fire
 We thought we might expire

Days we knew it all
 Days we dropped the call

Nights we wished would end
 While searching for a friend

Years go by, years go by, I try to try, and to keep the light

Have I done enough
Have I done enough

The answer must be no
Apologies in tow

Every question deeper
Every hill gets steeper

Controversies brewing
Antagonisms stewing
For death we must prepare
Our help, that, we must share

Even now, even now, how can this be so easy and so hard at the same time?

But we are locked to the future, each and every one
And success will come, each and every one
You, our guide and comfort, each and every one
One day, we will laugh, we will laugh

Your servant,

Candraśekhara Swami

Dānavīr 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*

According to the Vedic literature, the spiritual master acts as an intermediary between the Supreme Lord (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) and individual *jīva* souls such as ourselves. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda became the spiritual master of the world because he obeyed the order of his spiritual master, Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa Parivrājakācārya 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja Prabhupāda, by translating and commenting upon the pristine Vedic texts and by distributing them everywhere.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught Sanātana Gosvāmī that there are three subjects of the *Vedas*: 1) the relationship between Lord Kṛṣṇa and ourselves (*sambandha*), 2) acting in that relationship (*abhidheya*) and 3) attainment of the ultimate goal (*prayojana*), which is love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Śrīla Prabhupāda established temples, schools, and farm communities so that persons interested in learning more about the *Vedas* could participate by visiting and residing with the devotees.

His Divine Grace has taught that a person without a qualified spiritual master is like a ship without a rudder. Both fail to reach their destination. All souls yearn to cross the wide ocean of pain, anxiety, and repeated birth so that they can enjoy life forever. Like Śrīla Prabhupāda's other disciples, I had been wandering aimlessly for what seemed like an eternity throughout the material world's 8.4 million species. Naturally we love him like no other because he actually saved our lives from being ruined by uncontrollable desires—lust, anger, greed, and madness.

*tvaṁ naḥ sandarśito dhātrā dustaraṁ nistitīṣatām
kalim sattva-haraṁ puṁsām karṇa-dhāra ivāṇavam*

“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)

And as we love him like no other, Śrīla Prabhupāda keeps a special place in his heart for each of his loyal followers. Therefore, I pray that on this most auspicious 125th anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance in this world, the Lord, His representative (Śrīla Prabhupāda), and their Vaiṣṇava devotees will continue to tolerate me and to bless me with their eternal association and service.

Aspiring servant,

Dānavīr Goswami

Hridayānanda dāsa Goswami

*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,

I offer my sincere obeisances at your feet. Your mission, your vision, to firmly establish the *yuga-dharma*, *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, throughout the world is the ultimate inspiration and goal of our lives.

You taught us:

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

“*Saṅkīrtana* of Kṛṣṇa's names is the dharma of the Kali age. Without Kṛṣṇa's power, there is no spreading of that dharma.” *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya* 7.11)

Just as Lord Kṛṣṇa commanded Arjuna, “Just be My instrument” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 11.330), so you urged

us to try to become Kṛṣṇa's instruments. Just as Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself had already slain the warriors whom He urged Arjuna to fight, so you revealed to us that Lord Caitanya has already spread His *saṅkīrtana* movement around the world. Arjuna had only to fight a war already won by Kṛṣṇa, and we have only to spread a *saṅkīrtana* movement that Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself has already spread.

"Why don't you take the credit?" you challenged me. "Otherwise, Lord Kṛṣṇa will give the credit to other devotees."

I personally heard this from you on a morning walk in Rancho Park, Los Angeles. On this, your sacred appearance day, I pray that you may inspire and guide me to fully embrace Lord Kṛṣṇa's most generous, loving offer—to become His instrument in spreading the *harināma-saṅkīrtana* movement.

Your servant,

Hridayānanda dāsa Goswami

Janānanda Goswami

*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-śūṇyavādi-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.

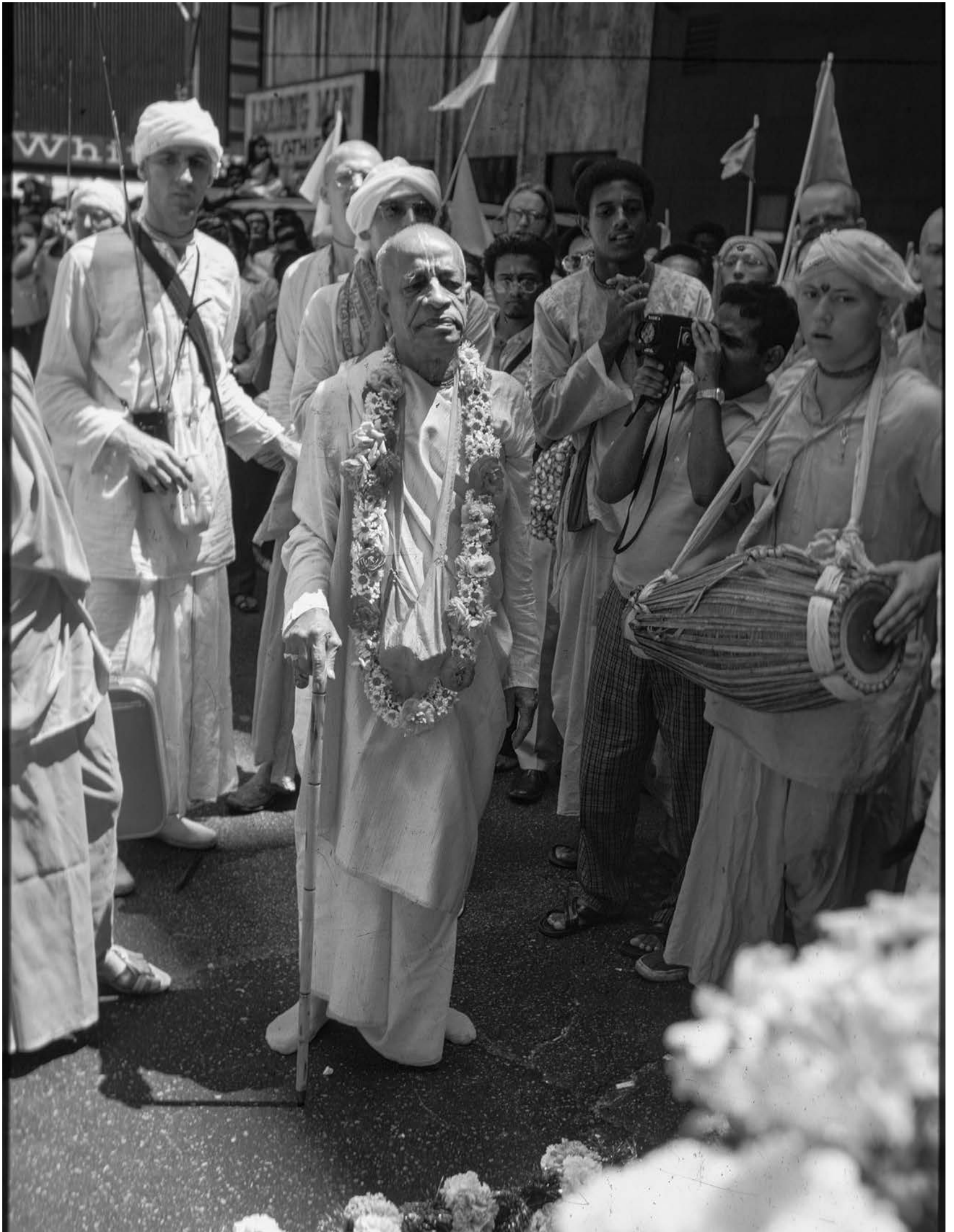
Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I fall prostrate at your lotus feet, insincere though I am. On this day you so mercifully give us the chance to focus wholly and solely upon your association—our only hope to awaken Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

"O King Rahūgaṇa, the perfectional stage of devotional service, or the *paramahansa* stage of life, cannot be attained unless one is blessed by the dust of the feet of great devotees. It is never attained by *tapasya* [austerity], the Vedic worshiping process, acceptance of the renounced order of life, the discharge of the duties of household life, the chanting of the Vedic hymns, or the performance of penances in the hot sun, within cold water, or before the blazing fire." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.12.12]

In other words, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the property of His pure, unconditional devotees, and as such only the devotees can deliver Kṛṣṇa to another devotee; Kṛṣṇa is never obtainable directly. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 2.3.23, purport]

I am not a devotee, but somehow I have the great fortune to associate with those who are, so there is still hope.



It is stated in the *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya*, and quoted in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.229): “A man will take on the qualities of a person with whom he associates, just as a crystal takes on the color of an object next to it.”

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda—I will try to absorb my mind in the dust of your lotus feet, hoping that some of your divine qualities will appear in my dark heart. When will I smear that dust all over my body and fully embrace your instructions? When will I make your mission my life and soul? Eternally indebted, we glorify you:

To godforsaken lands you brought the holy *bhakti* tree.
You crossed the ocean great to set the whole world free.

Alone you spread the holy name, the only *yuga-dharma*;
In the park you chanted, capturing all by your loving charm.

You gave the world the chance to know that God is personal;
With Deities, temples, *prasādam* you made Him accessible.
You opened up the treasure chest, allowing all to enter in,
No matter what their background, even full of sin.

You taught the world the secret of where to find true love
And happiness, peace of mind, descending from above.

A lifestyle you gave and showed, to bring us to *sattva-guṇa*.
Farms, schools, temples, books were coming very soon.

A simple life, but thinking high, a motto you did hold,
Compelling us to follow—your preaching was so bold.

You traveled on your conquest, no obstacle could stop,
Showing how to preach the message till this frame does drop.

Relentless, you wavered not, your message ever fixed:
Bhakti never fructifies unless it is unmixed.

Fearlessness, compassion, love, and deep humility,
Tolerance, determination, true equality—

These qualities you showed, which are inert within each soul
Covered by illusion, ignorant of life’s true goal.

You challenged every doctrine that opposed the Absolute;
Speculative science and philosophy you really gave the boot.

No scientific jargon was an obstacle to your scheme;
You impregnated truth within the mundane academe.

A revolutionary never known, to bring us all back home
With *saṅkīrtana*, every town and village, previously unknown

Has spread to every continent, to almost every town,
And all conditioned souls in its waves will surely drown.

The sweetest process, freely given: chanting the holy names.
You empowered *dvi-pada-paśus* to carry out your aims.

The seeds you scattered everywhere, most yet to fructify,
That in the future they would sprout and ever multiply.

Incarnations are innumerable, your qualities the same.
Into this world from Goloka *dhāma* so mercifully you came.

Like the Four Kumāras, you spoke the highest truth.
Like them, you did appear to be a fountainhead of youth.

Like Varāhadeva you challenged the greatest ass on earth;
Like no one else you shattered the illusion of our birth.
Like Nārada you traveled to everywhere you could;
You preached the purest *bhakti* path for everybody's good.

Nara-Nārāyaṇa's austerities to yours do not compare;
Patita-pāvana manifest gave everyone their share.

Like Kapila, you expounded the truth, defeated the atheist,
The Māyāvādīs, Śūnyavādīs, and all the craziest.

Like Ṛṣabhadeva, you showed the world the sheer futility
Of mundane social intercourse, so clear and vividly.

You milked the earth like Pṛthu-rāja, relieving all distress
Of numerous fools and rascals struggling in their mess.

Like Matsya you did rescue the scriptures as they are
From deviant interpreters, leading us afar.

Like Kūrma you supported each and everyone,
Allowing us to churn the nectar of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Like Lord Nṛsiṃha you destroyed all demonic traits,
Protected the devotees, relieved them of their weights.

Like Vāmana you tricked us by the beauty of your heart,
Took everything for Kṛṣṇa, and that was just the start.

Like Paraśurāma you slew all the so-called heads;
With the sharpened axe of *śāstra*, you put them in their beds.

Like Rāma, you rescued Sītā and returned her to Her Lord,
And showed us bunch of monkeys how our life was so absurd.

You engaged us in the mission to build bridges 'cross the sea
And release the captive *jīvas*, setting everybody free.

Like Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, your presence is sublime,
Transporting us to a realm beyond the mundane time.

“Kṛṣṇa is the *summum bonum*, origin of all.”
Loudly you proclaimed this with your clarion call.

Like Buddha, you were self-composed, compassion to its hilt.
Nourishing true *bhakti*, lest our creepers they might wilt.

Fearlessly, like Kalkideva, you severed sinful thought.
With “the sword of knowledge” you slash our pride, practically to naught.

Like Viśvakarmā you gave the world the gem TOVP,
Like Dhanvantari, the medicine to really set us free.

To counter all pandemics, you taught us what to do:
Amala-harināma the only safe way through.

You are Śrī Vyāsa personified, it's clear as a bell—
The only hope to save mankind from falling down to hell.

Your literary contribution—unexcelled does it stand.
Each word that you deliver, so expertly you planned.

Ten thousand years these books you gave will stand as etched in stone,
The lawbooks for mankind—a guide to the unknown.

O Prabhupāda, you embody all *ācāryas* of the past,
The empowered representative of all the *avatāras*.

The mood of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi you surely epitomize,
And all subsequent practitioners you do harmonize.

You gave association like never seen before,
The only hope for one and all, you opened up the door.

O Prabhupāda, I've drifted far from the spirit that you gave,
To a proud and lusty hypocrite, an egotistic slave.

You are the only hope for a cretin like myself,
Full of envy, pride, duplicity—nothing but a helf.

Lord Nityānanda taught us in this fallen Kali Age
That everyone's like a Mādhāi, no one is a sage.

Fifty years have passed since the day that somehow there you were
Before me in my degradation—you appeared in my blur.

You floated in as BTG, into that lowly place,
This fallen soul you did call “this message to embrace.”

Have mercy, Lord, on one and all, so all may have a chance
To hear and chant the holy names, even here in France.

The *senāpati-bhakta*, the savior of the earth,
Delivers each and everyone from the cycle of rebirth.

And in such simple human ways you welcomed all who came.
Everyone is eligible, simply “Come and chant the name.”

Actually you are with us now, as if you never left.
Forgetting you are here, we will certainly be bereft

Of the jewel of *śuddha-bhakti*, the most valuable of them all,
As Dhruva realized at last; at your lotus feet we fall.

In all the worlds there’s never been, nor will there ever be,
One like you, O Prabhupāda, the topmost devotee.

The Supersoul has manifest as Śrīla Prabhupāda.
At his lotus feet we fall prostrate, remain forever bound.

There is no shelter anywhere else in all the three worlds.

Your fallen servant,

Janānanda Gosvami

Kadamba Kānana Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Once in a day of Brahmā, once in a thousand cycles of four *yugas*, out of His causeless mercy Lord Kṛṣṇa appears as Lord Caitanya to flood the world with ecstatic *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Four hundred years after His most recent appearance, you appeared as Lord Caitanya’s transparent medium, and when the time was right you came to the West, carrying pure love of God in your heart, and also carrying the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the book about pure devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the English language. You were ready to give the world Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

You went to New York, seeing it as the gateway to the world. In the small “Matchless Gifts” storefront,

with only a band of new, young, hippie followers, you started the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

From your chanting under a tree in Tompkins Square Park, *kīrtana* spread to the streets of the world.

Your followers reached Amsterdam, my hometown, the hippie headquarters of Europe, and then you personally visited and installed Lord Jagannātha.

You opened our darkened eyes with transcendental knowledge. In Amsterdam you came to the central Dam Square and saw Hotel Krasnapolski. “Ah, Hotel Kṛṣṇa Polski,” you said and forever changed Dam Square. Now whenever we see the hotel we see Kṛṣṇa.

In Vṛndāvana you were at home with Kṛṣṇa, and there you made a home for us, the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir. There I grew up in spiritual life, in your temple in Vṛndāvana, where Kṛṣṇa is so directly present. While staying in the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple I quickly realized that even after your physical departure you are still more present than Kṛṣṇa, Himself. Only by turning to you will we come to Kṛṣṇa.

Devotional service is my saving grace. I am not Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who could incessantly chant the holy name. I am not Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, the personification of renunciation. I am just a common man. But I am chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa every day, following the four regulative principles, and I am doing some practical service. I do service wherever I can—in Vṛndāvana, in Māyāpur, in Europe, in Australia, and in the US. It is not so significant, but I try to make a contribution to your movement.

Now I am an old man, almost the age you were when you went to America. I pray I may do something more meaningful for your movement before this life is over. I hope I can inspire many people to give their lives to serving you in your movement. I pray for pure devotional service, and that I may awaken a desire in others for the same. You are Hanuman, I am a spider—still let me try to do something for your pleasure.

Your servant,

Kadamba Kānana Swami

Keśava Bhāratī Dāsa Goswami

Letting Śrīla Prabhupāda Speak for Himself Part Three

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept millions of my wholehearted obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to your unprecedented service to your Guru Mahārāja and to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s *saṅkīrtana* movement. Indeed, you singlehandedly founded and nourished a branch of the tree of pure devotional service planted by Lord Caitanya Himself, a branch that is still growing despite the efforts of some to choke it with the poison of dissension.

On this 125th anniversary of your appearance in this world, I offer your own translation and purport to you, as a worshiper of Mother Gaṅgā offers a palmful of her own waters to satisfy her. The quote is *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 17.185.

TRANSLATION

[Lord Caitanya said to the Sanodiyā *brāhmaṇa*:] “A devotee’s behavior establishes the true purpose of religious principles. The behavior of Mādhavendra Purī Gosvāmī is the essence of such religious principles.”

PURPORT

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gives the following commentary on this passage. A *sādhū*, or honest man, is called a *mahājana* or a *mahātmā*. The *mahātmā* is described thus by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.13):

*mahātmānas tu mām pārtha daivīm prakṛtim āśritāḥ
bhajanty ananya-manaso jñātvā bhūtādīm avyayam*

“O son of Pṛthā, those who are not deluded, the great souls, are under the protection of the divine nature. They are fully engaged in devotional service because they know Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, original and inexhaustible.”

In the material world, the word *mahātmā* is understood in different ways by different religionists. Mundaners also come up with their different angles of vision. For the conditioned soul busy in sense gratification, a *mahājana* is recognized according to the proportion of sense gratification he offers. For instance, a businessman may consider a certain banker to be a *mahājana*, and *karmīs* desiring material enjoyment may consider philosophers like Jaimini to be *mahājanas*. There are many *yogīs* who want to control the senses, and for them Patañjali Rṣi is a *mahājana*. For the *jñānīs*, the atheist Kapila, Vasiṣṭha, Durvāsā, Dattātreya, and other impersonalist philosophers are *mahājanas*. For the demons, Hiraṇyākṣa, Hiraṇyakaśipu, Rāvaṇa, Rāvaṇa’s son Meghanāda, Jarāsandha, and others are accepted as *mahājanas*. For materialistic anthropologists speculating on the evolution of the body, a person like Darwin is a *mahājana*. The scientists who are bewildered by Kṛṣṇa’s external energy have no relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, yet they are accepted by some as *mahājanas*. Similarly, philosophers, historians, literary men, public speakers, and social and political leaders are sometimes accepted as *mahājanas*. Such *mahājanas* are respected by certain men who have been described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.3.19):

*śva-vid-varāhoṣṭra-kharaiḥ saṁstutaḥ puruṣaḥ paśuḥ
na yat-karṇa-pathopeto jātu nāma gadāgrajaḥ*

“Men who are like dogs, hogs, camels, and asses praise those men who never listen to the transcendental pastimes of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the deliverer from evils.” Thus on the material platform animalistic leaders are worshiped by animals.

Sometimes physicians, psychiatrists, and social workers try to mitigate bodily pain, distress and fear, but they have no knowledge of spiritual identity and are bereft of a relationship with God. Yet they are considered *mahājanas* by the illusioned. Self-deceived persons sometimes accept leaders or spiritual masters from a priestly order that has been officially appointed by the codes of material life. In this way, they are deceived by official priests. Sometimes people accept as *mahājanas* those who have been designated by Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura as *dhāṅga-vipras* (imposter *brāhmaṇas*). Such imposters imitate the characteristics of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and they envy Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who was certainly a *mahājana*. They make great artificial endeavors, advertising themselves as great devotees of the Lord or as mystic hypnotists knowledgeable in witchcraft, hypnotism, and miracles. Sometimes people accept as *mahājanas* demons like Pūtana, Tṛṇāvarta, Vatsa, Baka, Aghāsura, Dhenuka, Kālīya, and Pralamba. Some people accept

imitators and adversaries of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, such as Pauṇḍraka, Śṛṅgāla Vāsudeva, the spiritual master of the demons (Śukrācārya), or atheists like Cārvāka, King Vena, Sugata, and Arhat. People who accept such imitators as *mahājanas* have no faith in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Rather, they accept godless cheaters who present themselves as incarnations of God and cheat foolish people within the material world by word jugglery. Thus many rascals are accepted as *mahājanas*.

It is those who are devoid of devotional service who sometimes mistakenly accept persons with mundane motives as *mahājanas*. The only motive must be *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, devotional service to the Lord. Sometimes fruitive workers, dry philosophers, nondevotees, mystic *yogīs*, and persons attached to material opulence, women, and money are considered *mahājanas*. But *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.3.25) gives the following statement about such unauthorized *mahājanas*:

*prāyeṇa veda tad idaṁ na mahājano 'yaṁ
devyā vimohita-matir bata māyayālam
trayyāṁ jaḍī-kṛta-matir madhu-puṣpitāyāṁ
vaitānike mahati karmaṇi yujyamānaḥ*

In this material world, *karmīs* (fruitive actors) are accepted as *mahājanas* by foolish people who do not know the value of devotional service. The mundane intelligence and mental speculative methods of such foolish people are under the control of the three modes of material nature. Consequently they cannot understand unalloyed devotional service. They are attracted by material activities, and they become worshipers of material nature. Thus they are known as fruitive actors. They even become entangled in material activities disguised as spiritual activities. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* such people are described as *veda-vāda-ratāḥ*, supposed followers of the *Vedas*. They do not understand the real purport of the *Vedas*, yet they think of themselves as Vedic authorities. People versed in Vedic knowledge must know Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Vedaīs ca sarvair aham eva vedyaḥ*. (Bg. 15.15)

In this material world a person may be famous as a *karma-vīra*, a successful fruitive worker, or he may be very successful in performing religious duties, or he may be known as a hero in mental speculation (*jñāna-vīra*), or he may be a very famous renunciant. In any case, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.23.56) gives the following opinion in this matter:

*neha yat karma dharmāya na virāgāya kalpate
na tīrtha-pada-sevāyai jīvaṁ api mṛto hi saḥ*

“Anyone whose work is not meant for elevating him to religious life, anyone whose religious ritualistic performances do not raise him to renunciation, and anyone situated in renunciation that does not lead him to devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead must be considered dead, although he is breathing.”

The conclusion is that all pious activity, fruitive activity, religious principles and renunciation must ultimately lead to devotional service. There are different types of processes for rendering service. One may serve his country, people and society, the *varṇāśrama-dharma system*, the sick, the poor, the rich, women, demigods, and so on. All this service comes under the heading of sense gratification, or enjoyment in the material world. It is most unfortunate that people are more or less attracted by such material activity and that the leaders of these activities are accepted as *mahājanas*, great ideal leaders. Actually they are only misleaders, but an ordinary man cannot understand how he is being misled.

Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura says, *sādhū-śāstra-guru-vākya, cittete kariyā aikya*: “One should accept as one’s guide the words of the *sādhū*, the *śāstra*, and the *guru*.” A *sādhū* is a great personality like Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the *śāstras* are the injunctions of revealed scriptures, and the *guru*, or

spiritual master, is one who confirms the scriptural injunctions. Accepting the guidance of these three is the actual way of following the great personalities (*mahājanas*) for real advancement in life (*mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ*). A man covered by illusion cannot understand the proper way; therefore, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, *dharma-sthāpana-hetu sādhura vyavahāra*: “The behavior of a devotee is the criterion for all other behavior.” Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself followed the devotional principles and taught others to follow them. *Purī-gosāñira ye ācaraṇa, sei dharma sāra*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally followed the behavior of Mādhavendra Purī and advised others to follow his principles. Unfortunately, people have been attracted to the material body since time immemorial.

*yasyātmā-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke
sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma iḥya-dhīḥ
yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij
janeṣu abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ*

“A human being who identifies this body made of three elements with his self, who considers the by-products of the body to be his kinsmen, who considers his land of birth worshipable, and who goes to a place of pilgrimage simply to take a bath rather than meet men of transcendental knowledge there is to be considered like an ass or a cow.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.84.13) Those who accept the logic of *gaḍḍālikā-pravāha* [one man is doing; “Oh, I shall do it.”] and follow in the footsteps of pseudo *mahājanas* are carried away by the waves of *māyā*. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura therefore warns:

*miche māyāra vaṣe, yāccha bhesē,
khāccha hābuḍubu, bhāi
jīva kṛṣṇa-dāsa, e viśvāsa,
ka’rle ta’ āra duḥkha nāi*

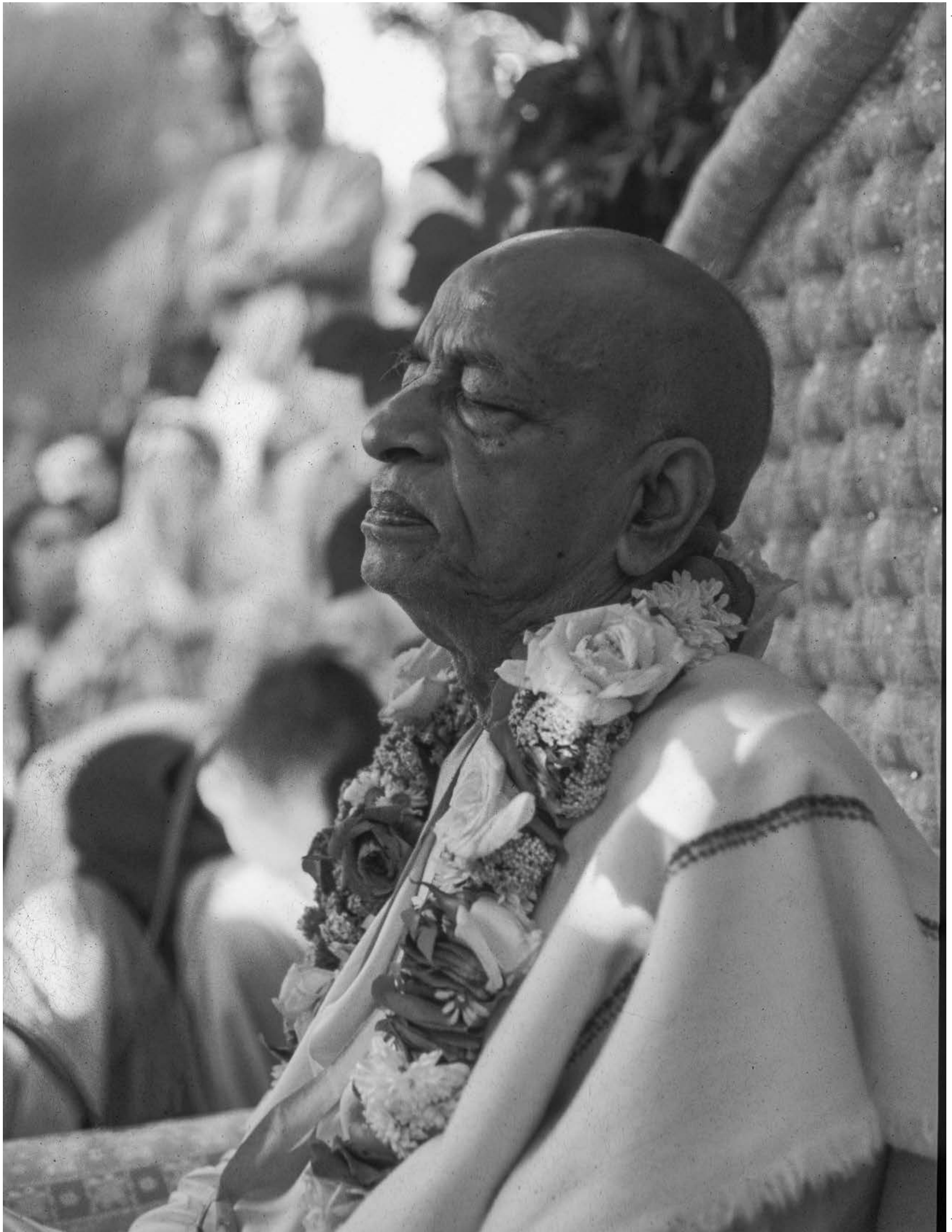
“Don’t be carried away by the waves of *māyā*. Just surrender to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, and all miseries will end.” Those who follow social customs and behavior forget to follow the path chalked out by the *mahājanas*; thus they are offenders at the feet of the *mahājanas*. Sometimes they consider such *mahājanas* very conservative, or they create their own *mahājanas*. In this way they ignore the principles of the *paramparā* system. This is a great misfortune for everyone. If one does not follow in the footsteps of the real *mahājanas*, one’s plans for happiness will be frustrated. This is elaborately explained later in the *Madhya-līlā* (Chapter Twenty-five, verses 55, 56 and 58). It is there stated:

*parama kāraṇa īṣvare keha nāhi māne
sva-sva-mata sthāpe para-matera khaṇḍane*

*tāte chaya darśana haite ’tattva’ nāhi jāni
’mahājana’ yei kahe, sei ’satya’ māni*

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-vāṇī—amṛtera dhāra
tiñho ye kahaye vastu, sei ’tattva’—sāra*

People are so unfortunate that they do not accept the instructions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Instead, they want to be supported by so-called *mahājanas*, or authorities. *Tāte chaya darśana haite ’tattva’ nāhi jāni*: we cannot ascertain the real truth simply by following speculators. We have to follow the footsteps of the *mahājanas* in the disciplic succession. Then



our attempt will be successful. *Śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-vāṇī—amṛtera dhāra*: "Whatever is spoken by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is an incessant flow of nectar." Whoever accepts His words as reality can understand the essence of the Absolute Truth.

No one can ascertain the Absolute Truth by following the philosophy of Sāṅkhya or the *yoga* system of Patañjali, for neither the followers of Sāṅkhya nor the *yogīs* who follow Patañjali accept Lord Viṣṇu as the Supreme Personality of Godhead (*na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇum*). The ambition of such people is never fulfilled; therefore, they are attracted by the external energy. Although mental speculators may be renowned all over the world as great authorities, actually they are not. Such leaders are themselves conservative and not at all liberal. However, if we preach this philosophy, people will consider Vaiṣṇavas very sectarian. Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī was a real *mahājana*, but misguided people cannot distinguish the real from the unreal. But a person who is awakened to Kṛṣṇa consciousness can understand the real religious path chalked out by the Lord and His pure devotees. Śrī Mādhavendra Purī was a real *mahājana* because he understood the Absolute Truth properly and throughout his life behaved like a pure devotee. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu approved the method of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī. Therefore, although from the material viewpoint the Sanoḍiyā *brāhmaṇa* was on a lower platform, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu considered him situated on the highest platform of spiritual realization.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.3.20) states that there are twelve *mahājanas*: Brahmā, Nārada, Śambhu, the four Kumāras, Kapila, Manu, Prahlāda, Janaka, Bhīṣma, Bali, Śukadeva, and Yamarāja. To select our *mahājanas* in the Gauḍīya-sampradāya, we have to follow in the footsteps of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His representatives. His next representative is Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, and the next representatives are the Six Gosvāmīs—Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Sanātana, Bhaṭṭa Raghunātha, Śrī Jīva, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, and Dāsa Raghunātha. A follower of Viṣṇu Svāmī's was Śrīdhara Svāmī, the most well-known commentator on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He was also a *mahājana*. Similarly, Caṇḍīdāsa, Vidyāpati, and Jayadeva were all *mahājanas*. 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.

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are our *mahājana*, our founder-*ācārya*. As your disciples and followers, our duty is to follow you, not imitate you.

I must be friendly. Friendly. Poet. And expert. And silent. Silent worker, not advertising [myself]. Silent. These are the qualifications of Vaiṣṇava. So we must try to follow; not imitate, but follow. Follow, that is nice. [Class on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.13, Los Angeles, 30 May 1972]

Your eternal servant,

Keśava Bhāratī Dāsa Goswami

Krishna Kshetra Swami

Offering reverential 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.

In my Vyāsa-pūjā offering to you last year, I attempted to express appreciation for your great confidence in the success of your mission, a confidence based on your deep faith in the order of your spiritual master and in all-powerful Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Now I wish to reflect further on this special quality you have exhibited, to better appreciate your greatness and thereby to grow in my own confidence in your service.

I recall a pithy statement by you in your purport to the introductory verse of the *Śrī Īṣopaniṣad*: “All forms of incompleteness are experienced due to incomplete knowledge of the Complete Whole.” This sentence reverberates so deeply with your devotional conviction. I can understand from it that the inverse of this statement applies to yourself: You have complete knowledge of the Complete Whole, such that you do not experience any form of incompleteness. And because of such freedom from incompleteness, you are able to so powerfully bring us in the vicinity of the Complete Whole.

I say “in the vicinity” because one way I can appreciate the Complete Whole in terms of greatness and integrity of being is as a great mountain that one may approach and thereby feel its vibrant grandeur. I am reminded of Mount Govardhana, whom Lord Kṛṣṇa urged the Vrajavāsīs to worship because it generously provided all needs for them and for their cows. Govardhana thus represented the “complete whole” for the Vrajavāsīs, such that they could confidently embrace Lord Kṛṣṇa’s proposal to worship Govardhana rather than the demigod Indra. Indeed, as you have narrated in your book *Kṛṣṇa, The Supreme Personality of Godhead*, at one point Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Divine Cowherd Complete Whole, happily revealed Himself as Mount Govardhana.

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, had a great longing to be in the vicinity of Mount Govardhana, as indicated by your wish to perform Govardhana *parikramā* just days prior to your *tirobhāva-līlā*. Thus I meditate on you being ever situated at the foot of Govardhana, inviting us to join you there in His service.

Thinking of mountains in general as symbols of wholeness and completeness, I am also reminded that in China, where by your mercy I am sometimes able to visit and associate with your Chinese devotees, an ancient tradition identifies Five Sacred Mountains (in five different regions of China). These mountains are said to have been formed in prehistoric times by the body of a certain creator who is known in Mandarin as “Pan Gu” (suggesting a notion of a *virāṭ-rūpa* form of divinity). To me, what is significant about this is that the Chinese (Taoist) tradition says that each of us have within us Five Sacred Mountains.

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in your knowledge of the Lord’s completeness, have so kindly and confidently brought us to the proximity of these Five Sacred Mountains, who are none other than the five members of Śrī Pañca-tattva. You have awakened us to discover that Lord Caitanya and His associates, like grand mountains of noble completeness—each of them individually complete and collectively most complete—are situated in our hearts, inviting us to be in their complete shelter. In their proximity, we can very quickly and easily understand what is the Complete Whole—its grand and exalted nature, and especially its sweetness and joyfulness.

In this way, by your mercy, I may have a glimpse of what it means to experience completeness, as your eternal servant, and thus confidently be able to help others to discover the Complete Whole in the Five Great Mountains of Śrī Pañca-tattva.

Your aspiring servant,

Krishna Kshetra Swami

Lokanāth Swami

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this 125th anniversary of Your Divine Grace's appearance, I offer my most prostrated, humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

As I write this year's Vyāsa-pūjā offering, year-long celebrations are going on in honor of Your Divine Grace's 125th birth anniversary. These celebrations coincide with the 50th anniversary of the first Hare Krishna Festival at Cross Maidan, Bombay, in 1971. For me, year 2021 represents the golden anniversary of my first-ever meeting with Your Divine Grace and Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī. I still vividly recall every minute of the 1971 Hare Krishna festival, when you addressed the thousands of people who attended this eleven-day event. Your *darśana* and instructions flowed with abundant benevolence and struck a chord in me. I had finally found the answers to how I could serve society and humanity at large. You quoted a verse from the *Bhāgavatam* stating that by pouring water on the root of a tree one nourishes the trunk, branches, leaves, and everything else. Similarly, one can serve humanity by serving Kṛṣṇa, who is the seed-giving father of all living entities. I personally etched your words into my heart and mind. They not only made my life meaningful, but clarified my life's mission.

One could say that I was conceived during that Hare Krishna Festival at Cross Maidan. In the time between the end of that festival and the next one, a year later, I had resolved to join Your Divine Grace's movement, but I did not know the whereabouts of the Hare Krishna devotees in Bombay. Then, at the beginning of 1972 there was another Hare Krishna festival, at Hare Krishna Land, Juhu. This time I wasted no time submitting my application to the temple president, Girirāja Dāsa Brahmācārī, to join ISKCON and immediately became a full-time devotee. With this, my nurturing and development continued.

I was finally delivered during Kārttika, 1972, in Vṛndāvana, when during initiation Your Divine Grace handed me my beads and said, "Your name is Lokanāth." Then, just a few months later, in January 1973, I was recommended for second initiation. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you transformed a cowherd farmer's son and elevated me to the status of a *brāhmaṇa* by giving me the Gāyatrī mantra and engaging me in the personal services of Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī, of whom I had *darśana* for the very first time, along with you, at the 1971 Pandal Festival.

In early 1975 our new Governing Body Commission (GBC) representative for Bombay, Gopāl Krishna Dāsa, in consultation with you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, informed me that I had been assigned the post of co-president of the Bombay temple. ISKCON was being branded as an American-European movement; therefore I understood that my appointment was also a means of minimizing claims that only foreign disciples were in charge. Although I took up this newly added management responsibility as per Your Divine Grace's wishes, I still had the desire to travel and preach. I approached you for *sannyāsa* initiation, which you kindly awarded me in Vṛndāvana on 6 December 1975. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I always carry close to my heart the instructions you gave me on that day:

So you should always keep yourself fixed up in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is not very difficult. Strictly follow the rules and regulations and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra as many times . . . for a *sannyāsī*, you should increase. Then you will be fixed up. And go on preaching.

*bhārata-bhūmite manuṣya janma haila yāra
janma sārthaka kari kara para-upakāra
[Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 7.128]*

This is Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission, that every Indian should learn what is this Kṛṣṇa consciousness and preach it all over the world. That is His order. So from that platform you go

on preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. By executing the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, you'll be glorified, the country will be glorified, and the whole world will benefit.

After the Māyāpur-Vṛndāvana Festival in 1976, you freed me from my services at ISKCON Bombay by approving my traveling and preaching with the new Nitāi-Gaura World Traveling Saṅkīrtana Party. You satisfied my inner desire to travel and preach and thus fulfill the role of a *sannyāsī*. After about six months or so, after we had been vigorously preaching and traveling by bus through the North Indian states—holding festivals, distributing your books, and performing *saṅkīrtana* everywhere—you were pleased with our preaching results and reports. When you met with us in Delhi, we informed you that the permits for the Mercedes buses from Germany that we had been using had expired. Your response was “You don’t need to travel with a bus in India. You can go by bullock cart.” It was then, on 1 September 1976, on the auspicious day of Rādhāṣṭamī, that you instructed me to start the Bullock Cart Saṅkīrtana Party, with its first tour going from Vṛndāvana to Māyāpur. While expressing your great pleasure with how the Bullock Cart Saṅkīrtana Party was successfully preaching from village to village, Your Divine Grace wrote a prophetic statement: “We can introduce many millions of such carts all over the world.”

The Bullock Cart Saṅkīrtana Party was victoriously carrying on its mission on the road. Śrīla Prabhupāda, on Gopāl Krishna Prabhu’s request you instructed me to start the BBT Traveling Saṅkīrtana Book Distribution Party and manage both parties simultaneously. I was on the road with this Book Distribution Party when you wrote a letter to me dated 30 July 1977:

Our Lokanath Swami is just like Saint Tukarama. The whole of India and specifically your Maharashtra are enthused with Krishna. Now you have to revive their Krishna Consciousness. This is Tukarama’s country . . . so revive them by the process of the sankirtana movement. I am very glad that you are preaching village to village and will cover all of Maharashtra. . . . Organise very solidly and thus increase the number of books distributed, the number of devotees made, and develop centres of Krishna consciousness everywhere.

And then finally, during Kārttika 1977, you asked me to arrange for a bullock cart because you wanted to start your travels, making Govardhana your first stop. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you had expressed a desire to go on bullock-cart *parikramā*. You had personally trained me in such bullock-cart traveling, and now I had the experience as well, and so you felt I was the right person to make all the arrangements. Although I had organized the bullock cart and made all the necessary arrangements for your traveling to Govardhana, this plan had to be dropped due to the delicate condition of your health.

But by suggesting this idea, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you had ingeniously set the scene for our undertaking the pilgrimage with more vigor and dedication, this time with a bus party. You wanted to go on pilgrimage with a bus party and visit all the holy places in India. As the new travel plans were being discussed, you gave me one more, final instruction: “You will be the leader [of the bus party].” Amidst all these preparations, on the unfortunate day of 14 November 1977, you suddenly left us. Because one of your last wishes was to go on pilgrimage in a bullock cart, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have been executing your will ever since, and for your pleasure ISKCON *padayātrā* devotees have walked over 300,000 kilometers to date in India and worldwide.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in your physical presence you were there for me at every step of the journey, purifying and empowering me during the six-year-plus spiritual journey that commenced at on 25 March 1971 at Cross Maidan, in Bombay, and concluded on 14 November 1977 in Vṛndāvana.

You have been with me for the past fifty years, to this very day, this very moment. All your *vāñī*, all your personal instructions, have kept me focused on my service to Your Divine Grace. I have no purpose in my life other than what your will is for me. I am made of your mercy.

*jogyatā-vicāre, kichu nāhi pāi,
tomāra karuṇā-sāra*

*karuṇā nā hoile, kāndiyā kāndiyā,
prāṇa nā rākhibo āra*

“If you examine me, you will find no good qualities. Your mercy is all that I am made of. If you are not merciful unto me, I can only weep, and I will not be able to maintain my life.”

Your humble servant,

Lokanāth Swami

Pārtha Sārathi Dās Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace. All glories to your wonderful disciples, granddisciples, and other sincere followers.

Recently I have been reading volume one of *A Transcendental Diary*, by my senior godbrother His Grace Hari Śauri Prabhu. On page 491 I read the following excerpt regarding *kṛpā-siddhi*, which I found very stimulating and enlivening (you are in New Delhi on March 25, 1976):

“So even a person merged in the mode of ignorance can by some good fortune surrender to Kṛṣṇa?”

“Not good fortune,” Prabhupāda told us. “God, Kṛṣṇa, says, ‘You do it. Here! Immediately you become fortunate.’ There is no question of waiting for becoming fortunate. You become fortunate immediately. Suppose if I say ‘Take this bag, \$100,000.’ You can take it. Immediately you become rich man. Why don’t you take it?”

Understanding Prabhupāda’s point that even good fortune is dependent on the mercy of the Lord, Gurudāsa Mahārāja asked how *kṛpā-siddhi* works.

Prabhupāda’s reaction took us all by surprise. “*Kṛpā-siddhi* means that you are not willing to take this bag of money. I say, ‘Take it! Take it! Take it!’” He suddenly turned and very vigorously pushed Gurudāsa in the stomach, as if he were trying to give him the imaginary bag.

Everyone broke out laughing, and Gurudāsa Mahārāja was simultaneously astonished and delighted at the sudden abrogation of the formal guru-disciple relationship. Śrīla Prabhupāda continued the mimicry and the pushing. He feigned resistance —“No!”—and then began pushing again. “That is *kṛpā-siddhi*. Even you are unwilling, I give you in your pocket, push it. That is *kṛpā-siddhi*.”

Forty-eight years ago I was walking and scuffling along on High Street in Oxford, UK, on a dismal, cloudy, rainy, windy, cold winter’s day. Typical weather for England. I was minding my own business, wearing my favorite brown leather World War II flying jacket. I was returning from the Employment Bureau, where they had diligently given me money for doing nothing. It was called the dole. I recall hearing a piercing, clashing sound from across the road outside Woolworths. It was the sound of a full-on *kīrtana*

with *karatālas* and drums. I hardly looked because I wanted to avoid any type of commotion. So I put my head down and carried on and walked straight into Prabhaviṣṇu Prabhu, who was wearing bright saffron and had an amazing smile on his Irish face. He thrust into my stomach an invitation to a program the devotees were holding at Oxford Town Hall that very night. He said, “Take it, take it, take it!” Being literally accosted in the street by this representative of *Vaikuṇṭha*, I was startled and disarmed.

At Prabhaviṣṇu Prabhu’s insistence I took the invitation and give a donation—and found myself instantly bankrupt. I didn’t have much money, but whatever I did have disappeared into Prabhaviṣṇu Prabhu’s hand. Thoughts raced through my mind: “Yes, let me go, let me see what it’s like.” I thought of inviting my brother, who was two years younger than I. Then I reconsidered: “He’s not so interested in spiritual life, higher thoughts, meditation, yoga, etc. After all, spiritual life is an individual, personal, and quiet affair, not to be shared with anyone.” At least that’s what I thought at the time. I took the invitation and walked to my house, which was twenty minutes away from Oxford’s City Centre.

Putting on my best pair of dirty Levi jeans, smelly socks, motorcycle racing boots, and favorite leather jacket, I took my mother’s bicycle and rode to the Town Hall. Carefully locking the bicycle outside, I walked in and met Janānanda Prabhu. His smile was amazing and effulgent, stretching from one side of his face to the other. He seated me in a room with an assortment of about twenty other variegated specimens of human life. His Holiness Revatīnandana Swami spoke in a very deliberate and extremely powerful and dynamic way about something to do with birth, death, and different species of life. Although I did not understand anything, I was convinced he knew what he was talking about—if you know what I mean.

Thus far nothing had really clicked. Then the audience stood up with the devotees and they had a *kīrtana*. I remember Mahāviṣṇu Prabhu, Prabhaviṣṇu Prabhu, Janānanda Prabhu, and Revatīnandana Swami leading the *kīrtana*. As soon as I heard the holy name, tears started falling from my eyes. I really didn’t know what was happening. I felt my hairs standing on end and profuse tears flowing from my eyes—then the penny dropped!

This is *kṛpā-siddhi*. Now forty-eight years later I am still surviving and being nourished by this *kṛpā-siddhi*, which is coming from our *guru-paramparā*—Your Divine Grace, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora Dāsa Bābājī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī.

Thank you for directing this *kṛpā-siddhi* on me. I pray that I can assist my godbrothers, godsisters, and your granddisciples to give this *kṛpā-siddhi* to the conditioned souls in the Kali-yuga.

Somehow I have been situated in South Africa for the last forty-seven years, trying my best to preach to the various communities.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the embodiment of *kṛpā-siddhi*, and by your *kṛpā-siddhi* I can eventually understand Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma and awaken my eternal relationship, or *sthāyi-bhāva*, with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Bowing down at the lotus feet of my godbrothers, godsisters, and all their disciples, I pray that I can eternally remain in their association and realize my good fortune of having your *kṛpā-siddhi*.

Your servant,

Pārtha Sārathi Dās Goswami

Rāma Govinda Swami

Dear Parama-pūjyā Param-guru Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Param Gurudeva! In the 1990s, when I first came in contact with an ISKCON devotee in Botswana and attended a couple of lectures on *Śrī Bhagavad-gītā* there, I saw a book of yours entitled *The Science of Self-Realization*. I had a lot of interest in understanding the topic of self-realization, which is described by many saintly persons, so I bought it. I used to attend any *satsang*, without discrimination, and I'd heard many speakers talk about self-realization. But unfortunately I could never get a clear understanding of it. Then I started reading your *Science of Self-realization*. In the first chapter, entitled "Seeing the Aim of Human Life,"* I came across this statement of yours:

We must always remember that this particular form of human life is attained after an evolution of many millions of years in the cycle of transmigration of the spirit soul. . . .

Param Gurudeva! This particular statement attracted me because I had always heard that the human form of life is rare and difficult to achieve. But how and why? I never understood. I used to recite *Śrī Rāmāyaṇa* very frequently. There also Lord Śrī Rāma says that only by great fortune does one get this human form of life, which is desired even by the demigods, and that it is the door to *mokṣa* (liberation). So the first chapter of *The Science of Self-Realization* made me think and impelled me to read the entire book. That first chapter gave me very good insight into self-realization. I saw that what was spoken by Lord Śrī Rāma in *Śrī Rāmāyaṇa* was also spoken to King Yadu by the *avadhūta brāhmaṇa* in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.9.29). I always encourage newcomers to this wonderful Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to read this great scripture, *The Science of Self-Realization*.

*durlabho mānuṣo deho dehinām kṣaṇa-bhaṅguraḥ
tatrāpi durlabham manye vaikunṭha-priya-darśanam
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.29)*

"For the conditioned souls, the human body is most difficult to achieve, and it can be lost at any moment. But I think that even those who have achieved human life rarely gain the association of pure devotees, who are dear to the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha." Thus I realized that without the association of Vaiṣṇavas, *vaikuṇṭha-priyas*, it is not possible for anyone to continue on the spiritual path and perform devotional service. In many purports you write that you established ISKCON temples so that like-minded people can gather together and hear and discuss *kṛṣṇa-kathā* and perform devotional service. This is very true, especially

*Now entitled "Discovering the Self"

in my situation. Without the blessings and guidance of the devotees of Botswana ISKCON, I never could have continued in devotional service.

In a conversation presented in the book *Life Comes from Life*, you say,

Living beings move from one bodily form to another. The forms already exist. The living entity simply transfers himself, just as a man transfers himself from one apartment to another.

In many other places you mention that this life is the preparation for the next life. In other words, one's activities in this human life determine the destiny of the living entity. If a human being continues to exist in ignorance, he will get thrown into the animal kingdom after leaving this body, but if he surrenders to the Supreme Lord through a bona fide spiritual master and engages in devotional service, he can be elevated to the spiritual world.

Many times in your divine purports to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Bhagavad-gītā*, you state we must do all the various activities of devotional service just to please Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. If we are serving for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord and have no personal desires, we will be elevated to the spiritual planets after death.

The great sage Kavi, one of the famous Nava-yogendras, said the following while instructing King Videha (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.36):

*kāyena vācā manasendriyair vā
buddhyātmanā vānusr̥ta-svabhāvāt
karoti yad yat sakalāṁ parasmai
nārāyaṇāyeti samarpayet tat*

“In accordance with the particular nature one has acquired in conditioned life, whatever one does with body, words, mind, senses, intelligence, or purified consciousness one should offer to the Supreme, thinking, “This is for the pleasure of Lord Nārāyaṇa.”

At *Bhagavad-gītā* 12.6 and 7, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa says the following to Śrī Arjuna:

*ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi, mayi sannyasya mat-parāḥ
ananyenaiva yogena, mām dhyāyanta upāsate*

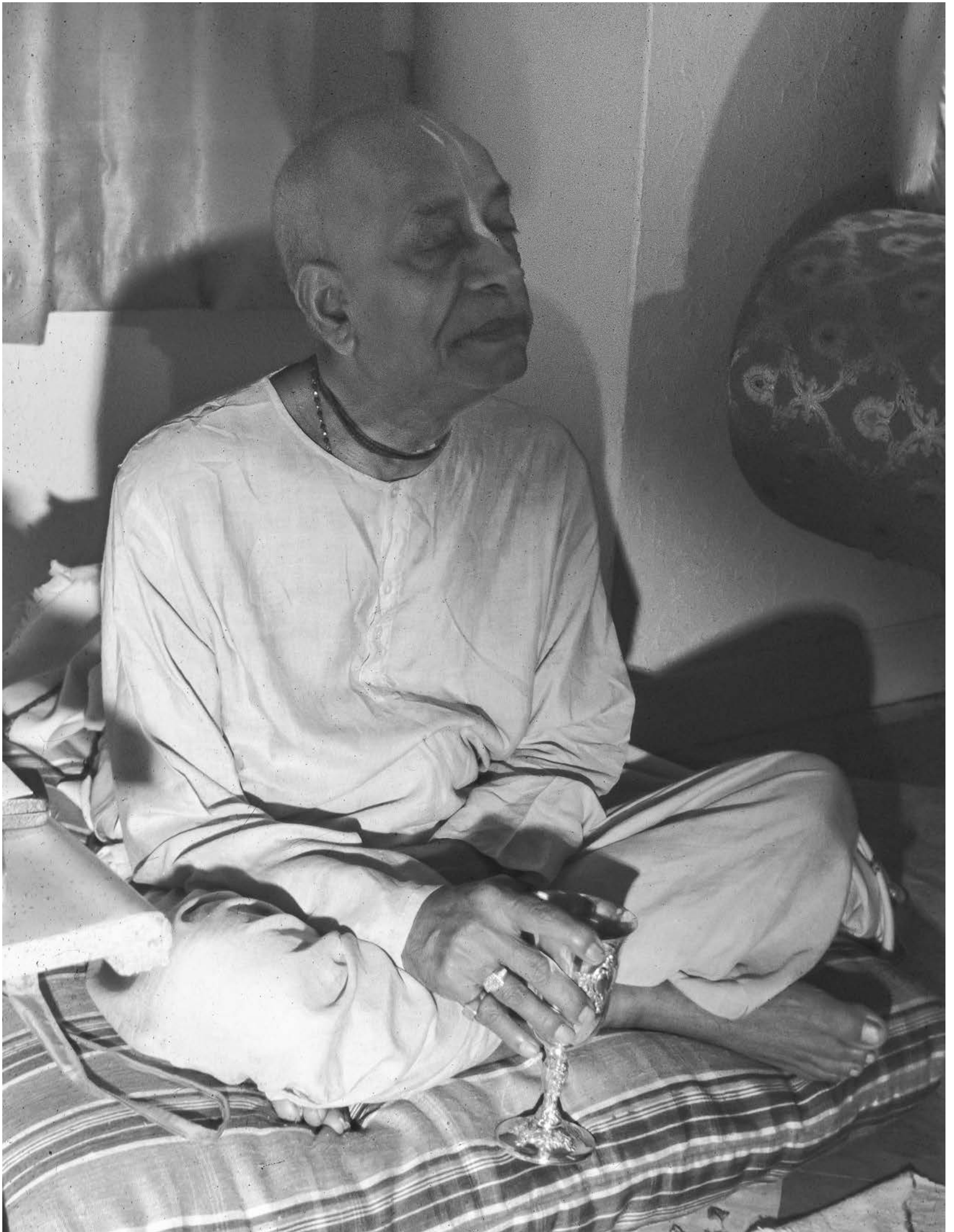
*teṣāṁ ahaṁ samuddhartā, mṛtyu-saṁsāra-sāgarāt
bhavāmi na cirāt pārtha, mayy āveśita-cetasām*

“But those who worship Me, giving up all their activities unto Me and being devoted to Me without deviation, engaged in devotional service and always meditating upon Me, having fixed their minds upon Me, O son of Pṛthā—for them I am the swift deliverer from the ocean of birth and death.”

In your purport to this verse, you write, “It is explicitly stated here that the devotees are very fortunate to be delivered very soon from material existence by the Lord. In pure devotional service one comes to the realization that God is great and that the individual soul is subordinate to Him. The duty of the soul is to render service to the Lord—and if he does not, then he will render service to *māyā*.” I can realize how fortunate I am just because of your mercy. Otherwise, it would not have been possible for a common person like me to engage in the wonderful service of Their Lordships. Just by reading your purports, I and many souls like me have become fortunate and taken up devotional service so we have been able to experience the wonderful mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

Paraṁ Gurudeva! It is quite surprising to me that each time I read your purports I get a fresh understanding. Your purports are transcendental, and therefore I feel it is not possible to fully know the depth of the transcendental knowledge they contain. I came to understand that the Lord will reveal Himself and the knowledge about Him in proportion to our purity, surrender, and engagement in devotional service.

Paying obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet, I humbly pray that you bless me so I can continue



to serve the mission of your wonderful Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in the association of Vaiṣṇavas.
The servant of your servant,

Rāma Govinda Swami

Śacīnandana Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to you.

Recently I have read several books about you written by your disciples who were with you, who spoke to you, and who were trained by you. This has helped me to think of you often, and thus to be with you.

It is said in the ninth act of the *Caitanya-candrodaya Nāṭaka* that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu showers His mercy on this world in three ways:

First, by directly appearing before His devotee, as He did for the many thousands of pilgrims who came to Jagannātha Purī yearly.

Second, by personally entering His devotees' hearts, as He did in the case of the highly advanced Nakula Brahmācārī.

And third, by appearing in His devotees' thoughts. Thinking of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu can be done at any time by anyone—even when the Lord has moved on to another universe.

Similarly, you showered your mercy on the world when you were here, traveling the globe by plane to be with your disciples and so many other souls, who could then see you directly.

You have also entered the hearts of many advanced disciples and other followers who, by your grace, have been able to accomplish extraordinary feats of service that astound the whole world.

And you appear in the thoughts of many disciples, other followers, and people in general who hear from you and hear about you, thus feeling your presence. In this way you enable them to change the course of their lives. This is most pronounced when they follow your teachings. Your pure devotion is infectious and can be felt strongly even though you have concluded your earthly pastimes.

Your continued spiritual protection is giving me increasing hope that all will be well as I serve under your shelter. I am deriving this confidence from a little exchange you had in 1974 in Mumbai with Mr. Sethi, who was very devoted to you. Mr. Sethi helped you in many ways to complete the building of your temple for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī. You told Mr. Sethi that you considered it your duty to provide accommodations for your disciples. Then you revealed to him the marvels of serving you:

“Just as you are building these rooms for my disciples here at Hare Krishna Land, Lord Krishna is making your rooms ready in Krishnaloka.”

“I am a sinful man,” Mr. Sethi replied. “How can I go to Krishnaloka?”

“That I will see to,” you answered him. “This is not your duty. I will see that you go to Krishnaloka.”

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, from my witnessing your glorious activities in the past and present, my confidence in you is miraculously increasing without cease. Please always give me a place in your glorious service.

Your humble servant,

Śacīnandana Swami

Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami

How Bold You Were!

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

How bold you were to lead Hare Kṛṣṇa *kīrtanas* before audiences who had never heard the word “Kṛṣṇa,” and you induced them to sing in response. How bold you were to immediately lecture on Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, to people who had never heard of Him. You broke through the barrier of their ignorance and told them that Kṛṣṇa was God. You quoted many verses from the *Bhagavad-gītā* as evidence, although they couldn’t understand a word of Sanskrit. You trusted that the transcendental sound vibration would purify them. And so you freely gave it out, although they didn’t know the language. You had a thick Bengali accent; the theological/philosophical concepts were entirely new to Lower East Side NYC/San Francisco youth.

Yet you were charismatic and charming. As the *Village Voice* reporter who interviewed you in the Bowery loft said, “I just plain liked the guy.” But you didn’t water down the teachings; you didn’t “dumb down” the philosophy. So today, when I listen to your early classes at 26 Second Avenue or your talks to outside groups and one-time lectures to students at colleges, I am simply amazed at how bold you were, diving at once into the heart of Kṛṣṇa consciousness without any fear or hesitation. I love you for being so straightforward. Every time I hear you speak, it builds my faith more and more.

Your eternal servant,

Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami

Sri Krishna Chaitanya Swami

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet! All glories to Your Divine Grace on this most auspicious occasion of the 125th anniversary of your appearance.

It gives me great joy to write this offering as a brand-new *sannyāsī*, just initiated less than a week ago on Gaura Pūrṇimā by your dear disciple His Holiness Lokanāth Swami.

When you arrived in America on September 17th, 1965, I had just been born a few months earlier. I was born across the street from Central Park, in New York City, where later you would enjoy your morning walks. My Aunt Nancy would attend your *kīrtanas* in Tompkins Square Park, and later she encouraged me in spiritual life with Gaṅgā Jal that she brought back after a trip to India.

The first books of yours I read were the volumes comprising the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Later I shared your *Easy Journey to Other Planets* with my father. My mother was enthusiastic to serve. Once she picked up His Holiness Lokanāth Mahārāja from the airport. She left this world on your disappearance day in 2015. I'm grateful to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for creating so much auspiciousness for my family amidst the dreary sludge of Kali-yuga in New York City.

The most important instruction I have received from your books is the importance of humility. We see your own example of humility. How deep the quality is in you!

When you write about yourself, you use phases like the following:

- “not worthy or fit”
- “very fallen and insignificant”
- “I am nonentity”
- “I am dependent on your mercy”
- “personally I am completely incapable.”
- “It is beyond my power.”
- “I have no credit.”
- “I am a worthless person.”
- “I am so feeble and unworthy.”
- “I am the lowest of the all creatures.”
- “I am simply messenger.”
- “only a teeny attempt, a humble attempt”
- “simply a humble servant of my spiritual master.”
- “I am so sinful that I cannot even approach Krishna.”

“[I]f we study our own qualifications, there is none—rather I have got so many disqualifications.” (Letter to Brahmānanda Dāsa, 10 March 1969)

“Practically there is no credit for me, if there is any credit it goes to my Spiritual Master, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Prabhupāda, Who is helping me by sending so many good souls like you in this movement. Whatever is being done, it is due to His Divine Grace only. So my business is just to carry out His order. That is the way of disciplic succession; and as you have all come to help me, if you also follow the same principles then our combined effort to serve Lord Krishna will be surely successful.” (Letter to Dayānanda Dāsa, 26 March 1969)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your constant conclusion is “All credit goes to my Guru Mahārāja.”

Please bless me, Śrīla Prabhupāda, so that I can imbibe this mood of humility and always understand

that all credit goes to my Guru Mahārāja, His Holiness Lokanāth Swami, as well as to you and the entire *paramparā*. If I can fully imbibe this mood, I am confident that I can be empowered to serve your mission of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

Thank you very much.
Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*

Your insignificant granddisciple,

Sri Krishna Chaitanya Swami

Śukadeva Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your divine lotus feet. For years I have been offering obeisances at your lotus feet many times every day as I enter or leave the temple. Every time I bow down, I feel protected and safe. As I read your purports, I become so sure about the journey I am on in my life, i.e., devotional service, starting with chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* as my only goal and business.

Explaining the absolute nature of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, you have so convincingly said that doing anything pleasing to Kṛṣṇa is all chanting. Being conscious of Kṛṣṇa and going about the chores of life is all chanting. Of course, in the consciousness of Kṛṣṇa, one will not act or talk nonsense. This means simply chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa can transform our consciousness from mundane to transcendental. Activities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness are all free from the influence of *tamas* and *rajas*. This also means that a person chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa will, in due course of time, certainly become a gentleman.

The process you have handed down to us from the *guru-paramparā* easily extricates us from material bondage, even while we're in the material world in a material body, and even while taking care of the material body as well. Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is so powerful and transcendental that one can clearly experience one's spiritual nature, or spiritual self. I sometimes wonder, having not met you physically, how it is that I so strongly feel your presence and your compassion. What a great fortune to be one of those who had direct association of your *vapu!* Yet you have said that one actually associates with the spiritual master through his *vāñī*, and that everyone can therefore associate with you through your books. Because you are so transparent and pure, associating with you through your books, lectures, and instructions gives us a glimpse of Kṛṣṇa's unlimited grace, compassion, and love. You so clearly convince us that our true nature is spiritual and that our real business is rendering devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The material body is always miserable, but you have taught us how to make the best use of a bad bargain by engaging the body in devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, specifically *vipralambha-sevā* (loving service in separation). Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for appearing in our lives and showing us how to fulfill the famous Vedic dictum: *Asato mā sad gamaya. Tamaso mā jyotir gamaya. Mṛtyor māmṛtaṁ gamaya.*

Your ever-aspiring servant,

Śukadeva Swami

Trivikrama Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the whole world has had to adjust its lifestyle. Many people in the world have fallen victim to distress and mental illness due to the fear and the changes that have occurred. But by your mercy, and the mercy of Lord Caitanya and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, we have been able to rise to the challenge. We have come to realize that this process of *bhakti-yoga*, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is always available in any circumstance simply by our sincere desire to access it. We know from the many statements given in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and in your classes, that this world is a certified place of suffering. Therefore we are not surprised to see the upheaval that is being wrought by this disease. Our next challenge will come from old age and death, but we are confident that by your mercy we will be able to tolerate these sufferings also and not have to see another birth in this world.

This confidence is not due to pride, but on the contrary it is due to our firm conviction that we are but tiny souls and have no ability to overcome the onslaught of material nature. But by your grace we have come to firmly believe in the words Lord Kṛṣṇa speaks at *Bhagavad-gītā* 7.14, where He says that by surrendering unto Him we can easily cross beyond this otherwise insurmountable material nature.

We had the great good fortune of being with you in your last days in Vṛndāvana and seeing firsthand how you were attached neither to staying in this world or leaving it. Once we heard you say that you were not attached to staying in this world or leaving it because in either case you would be doing the same thing—serving Kṛṣṇa. Thank you for showing us this example and giving us the instructions and faith that will enable us to also come to this same realization as death approaches.

Eternally indebted to your person, I remain, with affection,

Your insignificant servant,

Trivikrama Swami

Varṣāṇā Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

The perfect lives and teachings of saintly devotees confer a precious eternal inheritance upon the souls of this world. Infused with love of Kṛṣṇa, they personify His compassion, grace, and blessings. They teach us how to see Kṛṣṇa's glories, feel His love, and hear His message in and through every aspect of His natural world.

As such, the sun can represent Śrī Kṛṣṇa—the active principle of illumination. The moon then becomes the more passive and intuitive nature, whose wisdom is received through reflection. Expanding further, the stars of heaven, assembling as constellations to dance across the vast tapestry of the nighttime sky, symbolize the *ācāryas*. With celestial powers beyond the scope of mortal vision, they expand the luster of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Even in the absence of the sun and moon, the influence of these saintly devotees

serves as our guiding light, especially during the dark night of the soul.

Their pastimes and precepts reveal profound spiritual realities, shedding light on the inevitable challenges, obstacles, victories, and realizations of all who have gone before. For those who follow in their footsteps, they brighten the horizon, showing the way while teaching us how to perceive and reach our ultimate aspiration. They extend an invitation to join with their associates, to be included among those most fortunate souls who dance the journey on an enlightened pilgrimage of transcendental song. Through their ability to touch, inspire, connect, and empower us, their stories become our story.

They come to this world only for the benefit of others. Their selfless service, the hardships they endure while here, the thankless tasks they undertake on our behalf, and the affectionate personal care displayed in all their dealings instill in us a desire to emulate them.

Mine was a generation lost in its quest for truth. We pursued sets of ideals, abstract philosophies, impersonal concepts, and future circumstances to fill the inner void, as if the key to peace and love awaited somewhere and sometime outside of us. With your appearance, our hearts awakened to the truth already living both amidst and within us. How rare in life is the golden opportunity to meet a pure devotee of Vṛndāvana bearing messages from home!

In the barren soil of the Western world, you discerned some potential that had not yet become manifest. Your humility softened our hearts, transforming them into fertile ground made receptive to the seeds of devotion. Having initially planted the seed of faith, you continued to serve as gardener, cultivating our tender creepers with compassion, encouragement, and love.

Our first meeting seems so long ago and yet so near at hand. Those of us in New Vrindavan were exceptionally blessed with your physical presence here in 1972. We had the extraordinary experience of celebrating both Śrī Kṛṣṇa-jaṇmāṣṭamī and Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā with you, allowing us to witness how you worshiped Kṛṣṇa on the day of His appearance and, in reciprocation, how He glorified you on Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā.

We followed your footsteps physically and spiritually as they led us into a vast new frontier concealed behind the veil of all we had once accepted as reality. In the light of this dawning truth, the most precious concepts of love, devotion, compassion, forgiveness, and sacrifice took on a life beyond mere words. We saw them personified in you as sacraments, touching and revitalizing the very essence of our existence, the deepest core of our hearts.

Never had we met anyone who loved so unconditionally. It was self-evident that you carried Śrī Kṛṣṇa in your heart. Gradually, you bestowed insight into the wonderful nature of Kṛṣṇa's mysterious heart. You are the one to grant that realization, for as Kṛṣṇa dwells in the heart of His pure devotees, they reside in His heart as well.

Rising in the east to spread light and life as foretold, the dawning rays of your influence reached western shores in due course of time. The blessings of Kṛṣṇa followed in your footsteps as you circumambulated the globe, transforming lives, like a touchstone, everywhere you journeyed. The poetic prophecy Kavirāja Gosvāmī offered in praise of Lord Caitanya was fulfilled in you, who strung a garland of the Holy Name and *prema* to embrace all of the earth.

You came to prepare, train, and accompany us on our journey back to home. You restored life to our comatose souls with the immortal nectar of the Holy Name. You revealed the purport of “die to live,” granting us entrance into the munificent current of *vraja-rasa*, as it flows in and through the *paramparā*.

We so yearned for you to stay with us physically so that your vision for New Vrindavan would properly become manifest through your continuous guidance. Instead, an unprecedented darkness befell when you withdrew your mortal pastimes from the vision of this world. It all seemed so dissonant. In your disappearance pastime, we felt that we had not only lost you, but we had lost ourselves as well. The darkness we endured before meeting you seemed to have returned with a vengeance. The light of your association vanished beneath the horizon; our lives were plunged into the dark night of the soul.

All of nature reflected and confirmed the depth of our loss. Flowers which had blossomed in your footsteps now wilted, joining in our mourning. The sun and moon seemed to fade. The breezes stirred leaves in the trees, whispering your message. Autumn showers felt as though *devas* were crying. Trees shed their foliage, covering the paths on which your footprints had lingered.

Upon your departure from this world, our hope seemed utterly crushed, leaving no other recourse than to turn, in renewed earnest, to your instructions, books, and memories. You told us numerous times that everything is contained within your books, that you live forever in your instructions. You assured us that since you were always chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, if we did the same there would be no disconnect between us. While we had accepted this with faith, our realization had remained theoretical. It was now clear that your *vāṇī* was our only remaining shelter.

Although we had been studying your books all along, it was always with the benefit of your personal presence. Deprived of that advantage, we were led to go deeper, seeking the essence of all that you had taught and exemplified. Yearning like *cātaka* birds, we kept our sights turned upward awaiting rains of mercy, never looking back to the ground below where you initially found us.

With the introduction to love-in-separation came memories of my childhood pastor echoing meaningful statements from Jesus: “Seek and ye shall find...I have so much more to teach you, but you cannot bear to hear it now...It is better that I leave so that the Holy Spirit can lead you into deeper intimacy...[so] that the spirit of truth can come upon you, as your ongoing counselor and comforter. He will lead you into deeper communion with me.”

Seeking further insight and confirmation, we turned to our favorite—*Kṛṣṇa* book, where your voice and mood are quite tangible. You describe how the Vrajavāsīs found solace and shelter while enduring separation from Kṛṣṇa by remembering His loving words, absorbing their hearts in His pastimes, and living life to the fullest, all in eager anticipation of His imminent return. For He had promised he would, indeed, return. From the pages of *Kṛṣṇa* book a parallel experience emerged as we found the dynamic of ever-increasing love of the Vrajavāsīs for their beloved Kṛṣṇa being reflected in our relationship with you, Kṛṣṇa’s dearmost representative.

While we had formerly sustained our enthusiasm with the eager anticipation and preparation for your next visit, your physical presence in our lives remained all too close for deeper reflection.

Following in the footsteps of the Vrajavāsīs in the absence of their Kṛṣṇa, we found our hearts naturally drawn to go more deeply into your *vāṇī*. At long last, all that we had seen and heard before began to fall into proper place as the larger story opened in new chapters, inviting our eager participation. It was as if further volumes of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* were unfolding before our eyes.

These subsequent chapters awakened an inner wisdom to discern subtle light within the darkness and a deeper love within the pain. Thereafter, a new dawn approached on an internal dimension.

Within the darkest times, the self-effulgent jewels of blessings, pulsating like the stars above, appear more prominent. Indeed, even Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared in this world at the hour of midnight, and Lord Caitanya appeared in the shadow cast by a lunar eclipse.

The ecstasy of separation in and of itself cannot remain the final goal. Rather, it serves as a catalyst to encourage the heart to grow fonder, to nourish certain reunion. And when reunion takes place at last, it is witnessed and reflected in eyes that have been anointed with the salve of enhanced devotion. Thus the object of love appears even more attractive and radiant than before.

Truly, after those joyous times of walking and talking with you, followed by the painful anguish of separation, we are now invited to enter the deepest mystery of communion as it unfolds in your physical absence. The fundamental lessons you initially imparted were the seeds which blossomed in time. Therein a new realm unfolded where you personally extend the sweetest assurance.

The way you continue to deal with us makes it increasingly clear how intensely Kṛṣṇa yearns to develop a deep relationship with His parts and parcels; one that is so intimate, so close, so enduring and steadfast that nothing and no one can disrupt it. In this light, joy reawakens refreshed in the hope that within one ending, a new beginning awaits. One that awards a relationship with you even more profound than what we had known before. Now you are calling us to look within, to confront the subtler shadows lingering in the valleys of our internal landscapes.

The deep darkness gradually gave way to new light, revealing that solitude of heart need not be lonely or isolating. A true encounter with you transcends past remembrances and future hopes, integrating time and space within the present moment. Here and now is the opportunity to gaze into the mirror as you

hold it before our eyes. Therein awaits the liberating power of your presence, which frees us from past regrets and future fears. Your loving example grants us courage to face the shadows within and around us, which are not to be feared as much as the initial temptation to repress and deny them. Turning toward our shadows, accepting them as teachers, reveals within our greatest despair the first indications of everlasting light, directing us to the areas in our lives still in need of love, compassion, understanding, and grace.

Truly, separation from you has compelled us to descend to the furthest and darkest recesses of our own hearts, to invite the Holy Name to illumine us from deep inside. Communion in the solitude of heart progresses to sharing within a community of the faithful, and from there, by Lord Caitanya's grace, to the mission of preaching and distributing the love of Vṛndāvana, thereby expanding the rays of the benediction moon.

Although you, the external manifestation of the Supersoul, are no longer physically walking beside us, the realization that you are now living within us dawns as we attempt to delve more deeply into the Vrajavāsī spirit; to share your gifts with others, to touch their hearts as you did ours, to find how you are dictating our thoughts, words, and actions. May our transformed lives testify to your ongoing presence. Following in the footsteps of the Vrajavāsīs, who sustained their lives by *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, we will nourish our hearts by the process increasingly known and loved as Śrīla Prabhupāda Memories. This keeps your legacy ever fresh, alive, and growing.

The final pastimes of your mortal presence shook our lives to the very core, serving as a challenge to test our faith. As the representative of Lord Nityānanda, you remain forever the firm foundation on which to build our spiritual lives. You serve as the perfect mediator between God and man, fully understanding and representing both parties and endearing yourself to the hearts of all.

In gratitude for the fond memories you have impressed upon our hearts, we worship Nandotsava, the most perfect day for your Vyāsa-pūjā. Kṛṣṇa's mysterious appearance occurred while darkness covered Mathurā; it was only on the following day, Nandotsava, when the truth dawned in the hearts of the Vrajavāsīs that the long-anticipated son of Yaśodā had appeared in order to fulfill all their desires. How appropriate and significant for your appearance to take place on the joyful festival day of Nandotsava.

Among countless souls wandering aimlessly through dark labyrinths of material nature, amidst the clouds of worldliness, shadows of empiric theology, and mists of illusion, you have appeared as our Morning Star, a luminary bearing special significance. You rise daily to brighten the predawn sky, heralding the sun's rebirth at daybreak, thereby representing the process of initiation. Foretelling eventual homecoming, you continue to shine in the world, guiding souls who have lost their way back to the path from creation to Creator. May the light of your pastimes and precepts dawn within our hearts and continue spreading to all the world, lifting our consciousness high above the dark and fearful shadows. Bless us that we may internalize the truth in all you have taught and exemplified.

By watching over us in *japa*, during the precious *brāhma-muhūrta*, the Morning Star reflects the revelation of the Holy Name from His initial dim glimmer in *nāmābhāsa* to the full luster rising in *śuddhā-nāma*, highlighting *kṛṣṇa-prema* as the ultimate goal. May you continue to grant us access to the substantial nature personified in that transcendental sound, who is more radiant than the sun.

May this spirit of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā awaken daily remembrance of your ongoing appearance as you continue to light up this world and shine within our hearts until the darkness is completely dispelled. Guide us, we pray, onward across the ocean of birth and death to the self-effulgent landscape on the distant shore, to the embrace of our eternal homeland. With this blessed assurance, each year we celebrate Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā with ever-increasing joy and appreciation, acknowledging the reality of your enduring presence in our lives moment after moment, here, now, and forevermore.

Your eternal servant,

Varṣāṇā Swami



Yadunandana Swami

*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*

*mām upetya punar janma duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam
nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ saṁsiddhiṁ paramāṁ gatāḥ*

“After attaining Me, the great souls, who are *yogīs* in devotion, never return to this temporary world, which is full of miseries, because they have attained the highest perfection.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 8.15)

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

For more than a year now, the world has been affected by a pandemic that is disturbing the dynamics in the lives of people in all countries. And during this period, your Kṛṣṇa conscious teachings have been confirmed once more. You always taught us that the material world we are presently living in is a place of suffering and that we are meant to engage our lives in pure devotional service and, at the end, go back home, back to Godhead. By often quoting *Bhagavad-gītā* 8.15, you would emphasize that the material world is certified as a place of suffering and that everyone should wake up, become Kṛṣṇa conscious, and return to the abode of Kṛṣṇa. In your purport to this verse you write:

Since this temporary material world is full of the miseries of birth, old age, disease, and death, naturally he who achieves the highest perfection and attains the supreme planet, Kṛṣṇaloka, Goloka Vṛndāvana, does not wish to return. The supreme planet is described in Vedic literature as *avyakta* and *akṣara* and *paramā gati*; in other words, that planet is beyond our material vision, and it is inexplicable, but it is the highest goal, the destination for the *mahātmās* (great souls). The *mahātmās* receive transcendental messages from the realized devotees and thus gradually develop devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and become so absorbed in transcendental service that they no longer desire elevation to any of the material planets, nor do they even want to be transferred to any spiritual planet. They want only Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa’s association, and nothing else. That is the highest perfection of life.

Due to these merciful teachings you have given us, we are able to happily live through the precarious suffering conditions of life by enthusiastically discharging the nine processes of devotional service in the association of other devotees.

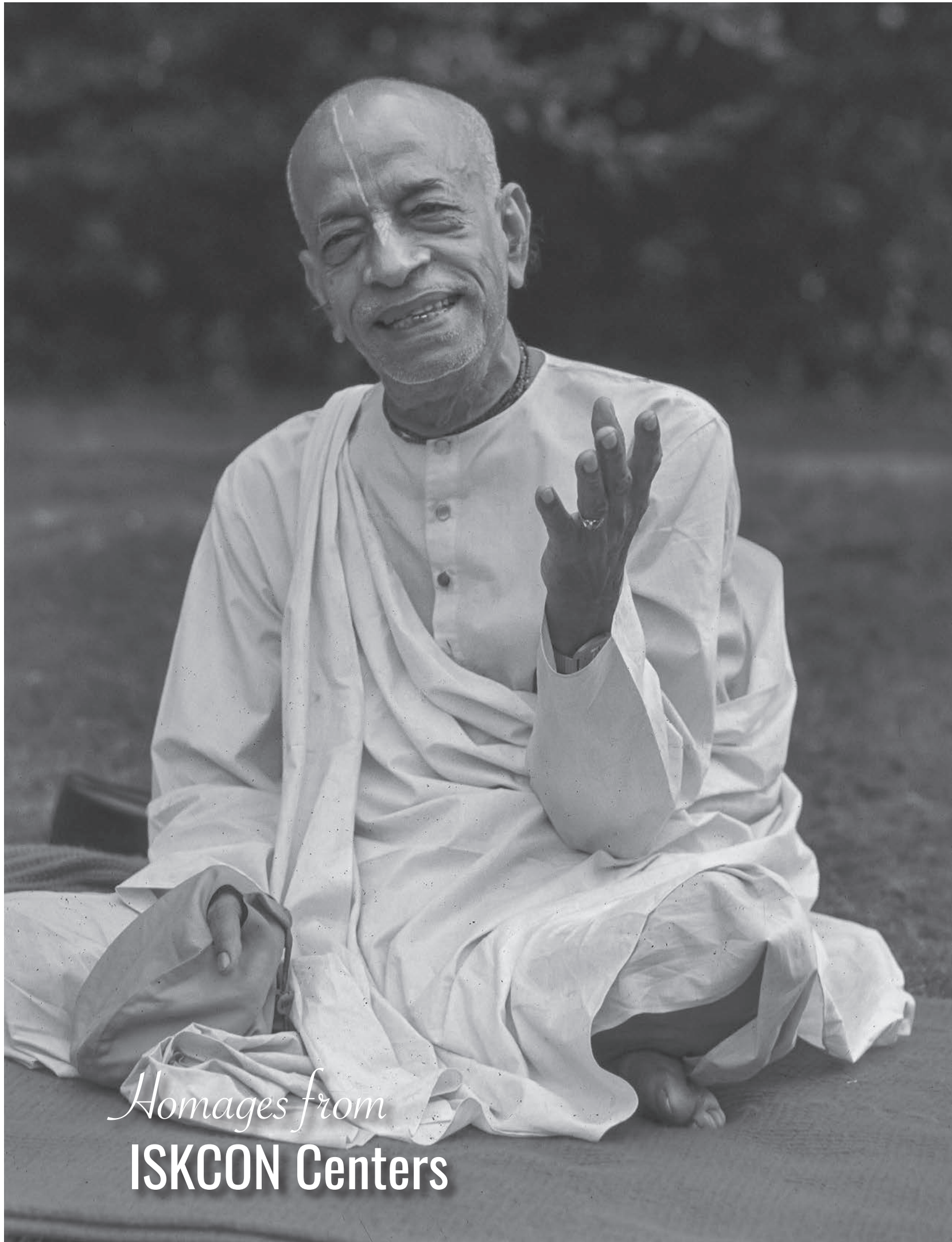
Due to government restrictions during the pandemic, many devotees around the world have been unable to directly associate with other devotees. As a result, we are now conducting many online Kṛṣṇa conscious programs, which are opening new opportunities for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As you taught us, since pure devotional service is the constitutional position of the soul, it cannot be checked by material conditions. The material world follows its pattern of changing perpetually. The good news, however, is that we are able to engage in pure devotional service no matter what happens around us. This is the result of your kindness and mercy.

Thank you very much, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the matchless gifts you have given us. We are eternally grateful to you.

Please give us the inspiration, the intelligence, and the strength to rapidly and successfully spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness around the world during this pandemic period. Ultimately, ignorance is the true pandemic, and Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the panacea that fully cures it.

Your grateful servant,

Yadunandana Swami



Homages from
ISKCON Centers

Allahabad

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

We have been trying to serve your mission here at ISKCON Allahabad, which is a holy place very dear to you. You received *harināma* and *brāhmaṇa dīkṣā* from your Guru Mahārāja here, and it is here where you resided and carried out your Prayag Pharmacy business. Despite fragile health, you came here to attend Kumbha Mela during your final pastimes. So in many ways Allahabad, which has been officially renamed Prayag by the Indian government, is very dear to Your Divine Grace.

But ISKCON Allahabad has not yet been able to build the large temple that befits this city's spiritual stature. Nor has it been able to take possession of your heritage sites, namely, your place of initiation, your residence, and your pharmacy building. Our failure in this regard has been a matter of concern and heartache for quite some time. So on this occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā, we beg you to be merciful to us and bless us and empower us to assist you in carrying out the will of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Your servant,

Advaitācārya Dāsa, temple president

Struck with Wonder
(by Śyāmānanda Dāsa)

When one ponders with intelligence,
Śrīla Prabhupāda, on your great diligence
In making our hearts for Kṛṣṇa grow fonder,
We are all struck with wonder.

When one takes complete shelter,
Śrīla Prabhupāda, of the process you brought,
Quickly does he cross illusion's border
And on the other side is struck with wonder.

When one spreads your message around,
Śrīla Prabhupāda, to him Kṛṣṇa is surely bound.
His life transforms and turns the corner.
Then he looks back and is struck with wonder.

Dispensing bitter Vedic medicine in palatable form,
Śrīla Prabhupāda, is a miracle you perform.
As millions of Vedic books your publishers tender,
The so-called religious man is struck with wonder.

Hippies, scholars, saints, and celebrities—
 Śrīla Prabhupāda, all of them adore your divine qualities.
 Upon your life and teachings when they ponder,
 They are most certainly struck with wonder.

Love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa you freely distribute,
 To obtain which Śiva and Brahmā are forever astute.
 Both vagabonds and Vedic *paṇḍitas* in this flood go under.
 The world is witness and is struck with wonder.

Hunger relief for the poor, vanity relief for the rich,
 Hostels for students, *āśramas* for celibates, and smoky incense sticks . . .
Back to Godhead magazines fly out even as the sellers flounder.
 The Hare Kṛṣṇa explosion has everyone struck with wonder.

Chants of “*Jaya Jagannātha!*” in London rend the skies
 As His ornate cart Nelson’s Column defies.
 As the Lord of the universe appears in every country’s corner,
 All are amazed and struck with wonder.

“*Impossible* is for fools,” you say.
 “Work for Kṛṣṇa night and day.”
 The unprecedented success makes you seem to grow younger.
 Śrīla Prabhupāda, you yourself are struck with wonder.

This poem is based on the following expression of wonder by Śrīla Prabhupāda:

Sometimes I become surprised how I have written this [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*]. Although I am the writer, still sometimes I am surprised how these things have come. Such vivid description. Where is such literature throughout the whole world? It is all Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. Every line is perfect. [Conversation, 28 June 1977, Vṛndāvana]

Your servants at ISKCON Allahabad, India.

Ankleshwar

*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,

We are unable to glorify you properly, but by your mercy we will try to write a few words glorifying you from our heart, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

1. You are a *nitya-siddha* born in a divine family with all transcendental qualities (*daivī sampat*)
2. You are a perfect spiritual master with clear vision and a clear goal: to fulfill Lord Caitanya's prediction and your spiritual master's order to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.
3. You are the most merciful spiritual master, a perfect representative of the *guru-paramparā*.
4. You empower everyone who is receptive to your message, being the personified mercy shower of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates
5. No one showered as much mercy as you have upon the fallen souls of Kali-yuga.
6. You have realized 100% the famous statement in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi 5.142), namely, *ekale īśvara kṛṣṇa, āra saba bhṛtya*: "Lord Kṛṣṇa alone is the supreme controller, and all others are His servants," and you have preached this foundational truth all over the world.
7. You are like fire when opposing Māyāvādīs and Māyāvāda philosophy, but like a soothing, cooling rain of nectar when dealing with devotees.
8. You shower love and care upon all.

Your servants at ISKCON Ankleshwar, Gujarat, India.

Athens

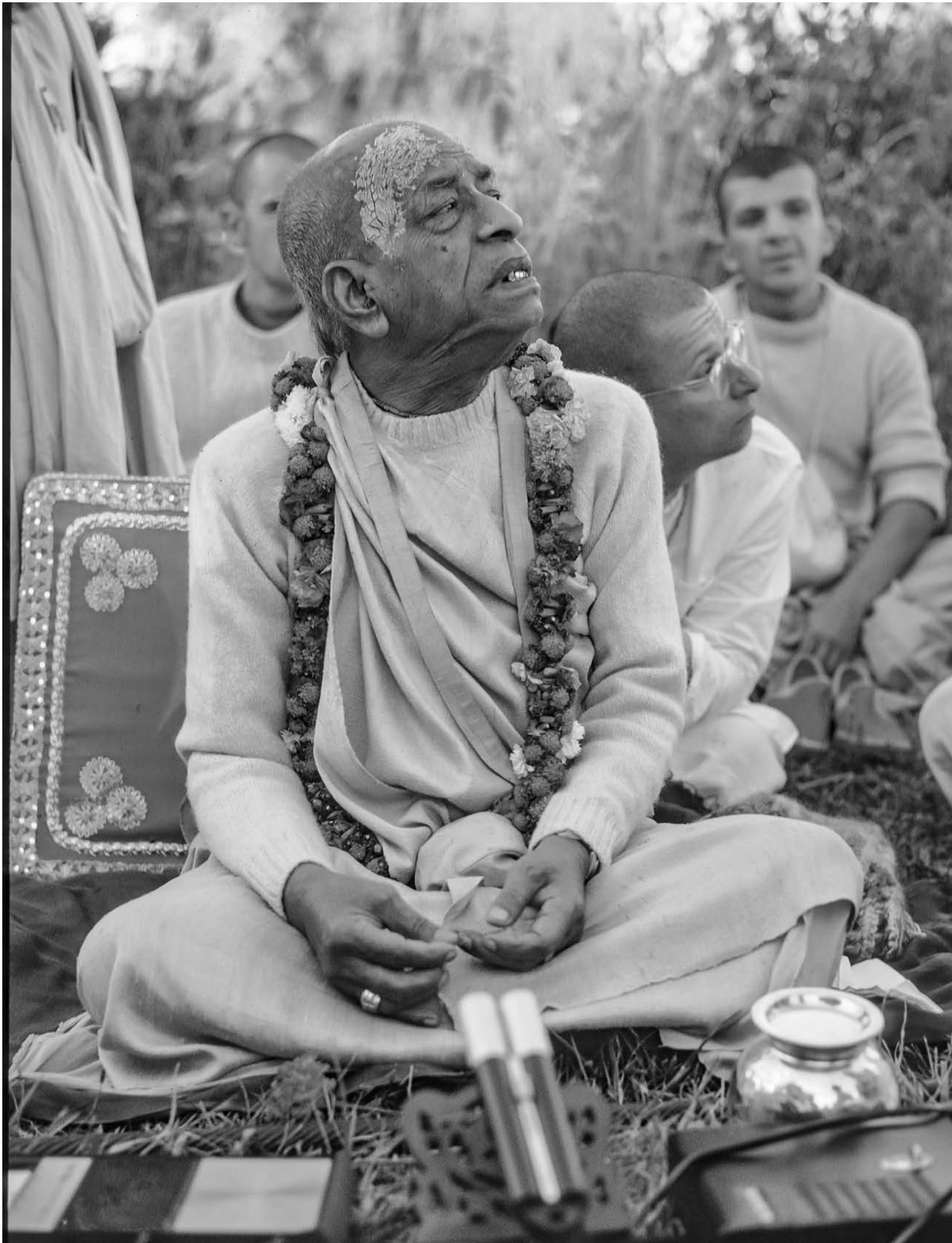
Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are my very life and soul! Please let me offer, at the dust of your divine lotuslike feet, my most heartfelt obeisances.

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, more than ever this year it's necessary for me to focus on your instructions, which are your real and ultimate "lotus feet." The instructions—this is the real inheritance left us by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, especially in His *Bhagavad-gītā* and from all the great *ācāryas*. *Vapu*, or your physical presence, may be there or not, and we know it will not last forever, but your *vāṇī* will be there forever, available whenever we want to make real advancement toward the real goal of life: "Serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master by spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness to every corner of this planet!" Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, I thank you very much for sending me to Greece, the country known for its culture and philosophy. Now the Greeks can come to know the real culture and philosophy. Thank you very much, my divine master. You are my life, and spreading your glories is my very life's breath!

I am the servant of your servants, forever at your lotus feet, knowing very well that at your lotus feet I can find Śrī Kṛṣṇa and all other perfections of life: *śrī-guru-caraṇe rati, ei se uttama-gaṭi!*



Your aspiring servants at Śrīla Prabhupāda-loka, ISKCON Athens, Greece.

(written by Dayānidhi Dāsa)

Bangkok

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace! Hare Kṛṣṇa, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

As per your desire, we are endeavoring to fulfill what you said is the main purpose of an ISKCON temple/center: to provide spiritual education. Thus at our center we are conducting a variety of educational programs. During our weekly Saturday program, consisting of *kīrtana*, class, and feast, during the class members of the congregation take turns sharing their realizations of a *Bhagavad-gītā* verse. Currently, we are reading chapter 2, verse 24. We also translate the class into Thai to encourage and cultivate local Thai devotees. At least once a month we have an initiated Thai devotee speak.

The Covid-19 pandemic has encouraged us to have several online classes/discussions with Thai translations: *Kṛṣṇa* book every Wednesday evening, given by His Holiness Bhakti-viṅhna-vināśa Narasimha Mahārāja; *Caitanya-bhāgavata* every Monday evening, given by His Holiness Kavicandra Swami; *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class every Saturday morning, given by His Grace Antaraṅga Gopāla Prabhu and His Grace Nimāi-Śacīsuta Prabhu; *Spiritual Warrior* class, given by Her Grace Suchāru Mātāji; and every other Tuesday a Nectar of Congregational Preaching class, given by His Grace Antaraṅga Gopāla Prabhu. We have an online Sunday school based on the *Bhagavad-gītā* and materials from iskcondesiretree.com, with participants from different parts of Thailand, and taught by Her Grace Sumādhurī-līlā Mātāji and Her Grace Kānu-priyā Mātāji.

Following in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya, we try to give the mercy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the general Thai public via weekly Sunday-afternoon *harināmas* and book distribution in different parts of Bangkok, mostly in *talats* (markets). Śītalātmā Prabhu and several other devotees are using Facebook, WhatsApp, and other social media—the new *bṛhat-mṛdaṅga*—to share *Bhagavad-gītā* verses and quotes in both Thai and English, with contemporary pictures. We also share our classes, event pictures, and videos on Facebook, and are reaching out to many local and international people in this way. *Kīrtanas* and *haṭha-yoga* at Lumpini and Rajamangala Park also attract new Thai people. Our *bhakti-vṛkṣa* programs in Sukumvit 12 (at Bhaktin Nippi's home) and other outreach programs at the universities are also ongoing.

Currently, several former and current students and devotees, particularly Arcana Mātāji, Nimāi-Śacīsuta Prabhu, and Bhakta Yogaram, are helping with various services at the center. And we have been traveling and doing programs to help integrate and standardize the various ISKCON Thailand centers (there are twelve at the moment). A group representing the various temples/centers has been created, and we hold weekly classes covering spiritual and managerial topics, where devotees share their realizations and issues.

Your servants at ISKCON's Ramkamheng (ABAC) Center, Bangkok, Thailand.

(written by Antaraṅga Gopāla Dāsa and Sumādhurī-līlā Devī Dāsī)

Bareilly

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

*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*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, although I always consider myself a very learned and moral person, in truth I am the greatest fool, steeped in ignorance. Therefore I am unable to adequately glorify your contribution to my life and to the lives of countless others also.

Before connecting to ISKCON and your divine teachings, my life was totally inclined toward sense gratification at any cost. I had no idea that I was suffering due to my sinful life.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, your divine teachings have given me the right purpose for my life. Now I understand the importance of human life and how can I make my life pious and perfect. To provide me and other fortunate souls with our actual benefit and security, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you took on tremendous burdens and performed inconceivable sacrifices. You are without a doubt our most dear well-wisher.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda on this very auspicious occasion of the 125th anniversary of your birth, on behalf of all the devotees in Bareilly I beg you for your divine, causeless mercy:

- Please give us the strength to follow your divine instructions very honestly and faithfully.
- Please bless us so that we can properly follow in your footsteps.
- Please bestow upon us the capacity to cooperate despite the umpteen challenges, difficulties, and ironies of Kali-yuga.
- Please bless us so that we can chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* with proper mood and concentration, regularly study your transcendental books, and listen with rapt attention to your transcendental lectures.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please give all the devotees of Bareilly shelter at your divine lotus feet.

Your servants at ISKCON Bareilly, India.

(written by Bhīma Arjuna Dāsa)

Baroda

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

All glories to Your Divine Grace. Please accept our most respectful obeisances unto your divine lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this, your most auspicious and glorious appearance day, we at ISKCON Baroda pray for Your Divine Grace's blessings. In his *Caitanya-maṅgala* (*Sūtra-khaṇḍa*, song 12, texts 564–65), Śrī Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura refers to your divine appearance, where Lord Caitanya speaks of the reasons for His descent:

*ebe nāma-saṅkīrtana tīkṣṇa khaḍga laiṇā
antara asura jīvera phelibe kāṭiyā*

“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.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, Your Divine Grace is that *senāpati-bhakta*, who has blessed the whole world with wonderful Kṛṣṇa consciousness, fulfilling the desires of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You have delivered not only the sinful people of far-off countries but also those of Bharata-varṣa. To deliver us from material nescience, Your Divine Grace especially came from the spiritual world and gave us the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi's mercy, many wonderful scriptures like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, and wonderful festivals, including Ratha-yātrā, celebrated around the world. You also revealed the glories of the *dhāmas*, gave us *parikramā*, *pada-yātrās*, and the *gurukula* and *varṇāśrama* systems, wonderful devotee association, Deity worship, and much more. And you gave us beautiful temples, which are like oases in the midst of the desert of the material world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you connected all those came in contact with you to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and engaged them according to their capacity, giving them the opportunity to advance in spiritual life. You are still doing this through your glorious movement.

By your causeless mercy, we at ISKCON Baroda are trying to serve Your Divine Grace in various ways. ISKCON Baroda is conducting a number of festivals in a grand way. Among them, Ratha-yātrā and Janmāṣṭamī have become the festivals of Baroda City. It's due to your mercy that over a lakh of people come to pull the chariot carrying Their Lordships Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva, and Subhadrā Mahārāṇī, along with Śrī Sudarśana. Lakhs of people also visit our ISKCON temple on Janmāṣṭamī.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, during the pandemic lockdown, ISKCON Baroda has distributed *prasādam* to ten thousand people a day. On the temple premises we distribute *prasādam* to seven hundred people a day.

Since physical gatherings are restricted by the pandemic, all festival celebrations and events are broadcast online so that everyone can participate. Book distribution has also been organized online using innovative techniques through social media, etc. Regular education and training programs are also offered online, along with online youth preaching events. Also, devotees in the congregation are conducting online *bhakti-ṛkṣa* programs. All this is possible only by your causeless mercy. The devotees of ISKCON Baroda are trying to render all these services simply for your pleasure.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we beg your forgiveness for whatever offenses we have committed and are committing every day to your divine lotus feet. Please forgive us and kindly shower your blessings on us so that we can serve Your Divine Grace with unflinching faith and devotion and without committing offenses.

Your servants at ISKCON Baroda, India.

Bhaktivedanta Manor

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, our founder-*ācārya*.

Here at Bhaktivedanta Manor we've tried to rise to the unique opportunities offered by the years 2020 and 2021. Our temple theme for both years has remained unchanged: Coming Closer to Kṛṣṇa. During these two special years we have felt a strong need to do just that—to come closer to Kṛṣṇa.

In 2020 we grieved deeply for Śrutidharma Prabhu and other stalwart devotees who passed on. We dealt with our fear of the COVID virus and learned how to function during a pandemic. Happily, we can report that devotees, your grandchildren, planted and harvested organic crops on our farm. Our volunteers called over 2,500 congregational members to offer them help and comfort. We taught our congregation how to celebrate Janmāṣṭamī and other Vaiṣṇava holy days at home with their families. Our School of Bhakti did exceptionally well, holding online retreats and classes, with 10,000 students attending. Throughout, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we consistently emphasized your teachings.

Our temple stayed open daily throughout the pandemic for private *darśana*, and in 2020 over 120,000 people came before Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gokulānanda, Śrī Śrī Sītā-Rāma-Lakṣmaṇa-Hanumān, Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, and you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. As they left, we offered them *prasādam*.

We started a Manor ecosystem for communication and collaboration between our many departments. These departments—*bhakti-ṛkṣa*, mentorship, *saṅgas*, book distributors, volunteers, and others—met online regularly with their team members. Our accomplished VIP communications team met online with distinguished dignitaries from the religious, political, and business fields.

To help those in need, devotees cooked and offered 11,000 meals for distribution. We gifted 600 of our patrons with beautiful appreciation hampers. And for National Health Service workers and the homebound, volunteers dropped off meditation packages and *prasādam*. And we're happy to report that Tulasī-devī has remained vibrant throughout this period.

Over 160 volunteers assisted 11,000 callers through Kṛṣṇa's Helpers hotline. We broadcast plays, *kīrtanas*, and talk shows. Especially delightful was the book distribution program: Manor devotees distributed 60,864 books in 2020, inspired by knowing that this service is especially pleasing to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

By your grace, one devotee received first initiation and two received second. For the first time, we

instituted full-time security to protect our property. Our *gośālā* stayed open when possible, allowing guests to feed our cows.

We're pleased to inform you that the resident devotees remained happy, healthy, and strong in their Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We attended local events when it was considered safe to do so, and we produced short weekly videos to entertain and enlighten the devotees and our congregation.

By your grace, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we at Bhaktivedanta Manor have much to be thankful for in 2020 and 2021. And we have much to look forward to, as 2023 marks half a century of devotion: it will be fifty years since you installed Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gokulānanda. We're starting to plan gorgeous events to celebrate that historic milestone.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for all that you've given us. Your mercy is all that we are made of.

Your servants at Bhaktivedanta Manor, UK.

Brahmapur

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept crores of our humble obeisances. O *patita-pāvana*, we pray at your lotus feet that you bestow your mercy on us so we can glorify you properly.

In this so-called advanced modern era, every entity is rapidly running toward destruction. We feel extremely fortunate because we have received this wonderful Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy from you and so have escaped the cage of Kali's illusions.

We express our heartfelt gratitude at your lotus feet for this strong ISKCON boat, which is an expression of your causeless mercy for liberating the countless fallen souls drowning in the ocean of misery. We beg you to give us the strength to serve your mission by giving us the ultimate shelter of your lotus feet.

This year the construction of our temple is going on rapidly. We're focusing on finishing the interior design, marble work, grid ceiling, altar, and the main temple gate. We have registered another one-acre plot at Khallikot.

Our weekend book distribution program, carried out both by our congregation and the ISKCON Youth Forum, is also doing very well. This year we are giving more stress to youth preaching, especially college preaching, the Bhaktivedanta Academies for Culture and Education, and youth festivals. We seek your kind blessings to do more book distribution and to spread your message far and wide.

Your servants at ISKCON Brahmapur, Odisha, India.

Brampton

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances unto the dust of your divine lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace! All glories to your services! All glories to all your efforts to spread *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, the only means by which one can transcend the material ocean! All glories to you for translating the scriptures so that we can understand the supreme position of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa! All glories to your divine appearance day! All glories to Śrī Śrī Gaurāṅga!

Ohe Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura, O ocean of mercy, please be merciful to us, for we are constantly aspiring to serve the servants of your servants. We have no qualification or any good qualities, and so, on your appearance day we seek your blessings to receive even the smallest drop of your divine mercy. Your mercy will be of immense help as we try to fix our minds in perfect consciousness, which is the key to serving in the right mood. One can receive the mercy and compassion of the Lord by serving the lotus feet of Śrī Guru. You have dissipated the darkness of the world with the lamp of knowledge, showing us the beautiful form of the Lord and His beautiful pastimes with His most intimate devotees. You are a true *senāpati* of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who descended only to unconditionally offer *kṛṣṇa-prema* to all suffering souls.

For genuine seekers of divine knowledge, you have painstakingly translated and compiled the Vedic texts, which continue to act as a torchlight for humanity at large. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.7.44 reveals that great personalities almost always accept voluntary suffering because they see the suffering of the people in general. This is considered the highest method of worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is present in everyone's heart. Your books are the splendid jewels that help us realize our constitutional position, thereby replacing our ignorance with divine consciousness. You showed us how to surrender to the Lord and worship Him with love and devotion and thus make our lives perfect. We aim to etch the principle you taught us to "Always remember Kṛṣṇa and never forget Kṛṣṇa" on our hearts as we submit to the divine plan of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīrīdhārījī.

You propagated the principle of "simple living and high thinking," which we consciously practice in our daily lives. By following your example and leading a life of humility and compassion toward everyone, especially those drowning in this material ocean, we beg to receive the highest mercy, love of Godhead. Personifying this principle of humility, Śrī Uddhava prayed to take birth as a blade of grass or a shrub in Vṛndāvana, and he realized his desire by taking birth as a blade of grass at Śrī Govardhana. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are an ocean of mercy, the savior of everyone, and we pray to you to save us from this material world. Please save our souls.

Clean my heart, nourish my goal,
In the dust of Vṛndāvana may I eternally roll.
With your teachings I realize I am just a mole.
O Śrīla Prabhupāda, please save my soul!

You show the light toward Kṛṣṇa, the Whole,
Yet my uncontrolled mind takes its toll,
For I anxiously await my dole.
O Śrīla Prabhupāda, please save my soul!

Śrī Kṛṣṇa and you play the same role.
You bring us His knowledge, by which we can scroll.
Following in your footsteps, we'll get parole.
O Śrīla Prabhupāda, please save my soul!

O *gurudeva*, we seek your mercy in our begging bowl.
 Please burn my desires as an engine burns coal.
 I am rotting in this material hole.
 O Śrīla Prabhupāda, please save my soul!

Chanting the holy names saves from Māyā's patrol.
 A drop of your mercy can bring the topmost unroll.
 Our surrender to Kṛṣṇa you can control.
 O Śrīla Prabhupāda, please save my soul!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, it's so easy to be engulfed by Kṛṣṇa's external energy, Māyādevī, as she casts her snares at every juncture. If we're not conscious of our constitutional position at all times, we can easily fall prey to her in too many ways. However, by your clear instructions on the importance of *sādhū-saṅga*, you showed us how to dovetail our actions in Kṛṣṇa's service. You instilled the *bhakti-latā* seed, which drives us to execute sincere devotional service to the Supreme Lord. The primary way to be protected from the onslaught of Māyādevī in this Age of Kali is to keep ourselves in strong devotee association. It is this association that gives rise to all auspiciousness and success, as stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, at *Madhya-līlā* 22.54: *lava-mātra sādhū-saṅge sarva-siddhi haya*.

His Holiness Bhaktimārga Swami has been one such strong and pivotal devotee with whom we've been able to associate. He constantly ensures that we are well guided and that our actions are in line with *guru*, *sādhū*, and *śāstra*. His vision to follow your mission always encourages us to think of different ways by which we can engage ourselves in executing devotional service for the pleasure of Their Lordships.

At the onset of 2020 the world was affected by a new pandemic, the Coronavirus. However, it was only by your "*Karuṇa* over us," Śrīla Prabhupāda, that we were able to stay afloat in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The pandemic has been a blessing in disguise for many who have used it as a great opportunity to dive deeper into the ocean of mercy and improve their absorption in Śrī Kṛṣṇa. As temples across the globe had to shut down (many still remain closed), we sought alternative ways to keep the congregation connected and add new members. Our weekly Sunday love feast programs continued without a break via video conferencing. During this period we have been able to invite many new speakers from different parts of the world, and they have nourished our souls as we have gotten a glimpse of the different flavors of Kṛṣṇa consciousness around the world.

Under one of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's instructions, expressed in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā*) 7.128—*yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra' ei deśa*—and the first two purposes of ISKCON you listed, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are happy to inform you that we have formally started offering sincere candidates who are following the minimum ISKCON requirements essential and systematic training in the Vedic texts. ISKCON Brampton recently launched the BAEC (Bhaktivedanta Academy of Vedic Education, Canada), where we have offered a variety of courses. The BAEC's *bhakti-śāstrī* degree course attracted twenty-seven enrollees so far, and the ISKCON disciple course has twenty applicants registered.

BAEC's Sunday school has about sixty students receiving a Kṛṣṇa conscious education through a set curriculum. A subsection of the BAEC's Sunday School, known as "Vaikuṇṭha Yuva," consists of young people who have graduated from the Sunday school and have now actively taken up temple services in various departments. They have been integral to supporting the temple, especially by handling the Master of Ceremonies *sevā* for the Sunday love feast programs. And they are team members during our festivals. Some kids have actively started engaging in *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, singing different melodies of the *mahā-mantra* as well as absorbing themselves in various Vaiṣṇava *bhajan*s. Recently, for Gaura-Pūrṇimā 2021, ISKCON Brampton organized a six-hour *kīrtana-melā*, led by the kids and youth. This has opened the way for many other such events in the future, and many more youth to take active part in spreading the holy names.

About seventy-five campers from around Canada and the US participated in our first-ever virtual

summer camp, called Kalpataru. We also led a virtual spiritual *yātrā* to Māyāpur that attracted over 160 new attendees, all of whom benefited and learned about the *dhāma* from this program.

By your divine mercy, the hard work and sincere dedication of our book distribution team enabled them to exceed their target of 5,000 books distributed in 2020. Ultimately, ISKCON Brampton ended up distributing 5,722 books, of which 3,233 were large books, 721 medium books, and 1,768 small books. This includes 48 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sets. We aim to increase our distribution for 2021 by setting our target at 6,000 books. This year we hope to distribute two thousand *Bhagavad-gītās* and fifty *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sets. Please bless us so that we are able to achieve this goal while remaining humble as we perform this most vital service.

The in-house communications team at ISKCON Brampton has streamlined the temple's online activities under set norms while enhancing our preaching on a number of new, front-line services, mainly dealing with social-media management. The team has added new services, such as a new website with dedicated pages to promote book distribution and the BAEC, writing newsletters, designing unique posters, managing our Facebook and Instagram pages, etc. The team, a mix of old and new devotees, now have some inspiring young talent, who are constantly trying to scale up the quality of our services. The strong leadership has been a guiding force to lead our youth into a wide spectrum of services, such as graphic design, handling audio and video interfaces, MC *sevā*, etc. Our Instagram page is actively adding new followers every month, and we are happy to share with you that recently we have crossed the line to a little over a thousand followers.

In order to maintain stronger devotee association, two new *saṅgas* have made their way into the ISKCON Brampton community—one for Vaiṣṇavas and one for Vaiṣṇavīs. Both *saṅgas* are engaged in sharing and learning during their events. New topics are discussed, and they invite both local and international speakers. The Vaiṣṇavī *saṅga* has further evolved by adding the Sakhī Book Club, which focuses on reading your books each week.

Our finance team has successfully implemented electronic tax receipts for all the devotees.

Finally, our Festivals Team, the crown jewel of ISKCON Brampton, has again, under their strong and visionary leadership, handled all the major festivals in 2020, and taken vital care of the social distancing protocols. Their detailed and dedicated service brought absolute bliss to the hearts of all devotees, who earlier were feeling sad separation from Their Lordships, especially when the temple had to shut down. You will be happy to know, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that the Ratha-yātrā was the highlight of 2020, as three sets of Deities were carefully mounted on three separate carts, which then visited the homes of the devotees who had sponsored the festival. A total of eighty-seven families received the mercy of Lord Jagannātha coming personally to their homes to bestow special mercy on them and show that He is always by their side. When the government restrictions eased a bit for a short time, devotees got the opportunity to come to the temple and take *darśana* of Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīrdhārījī at festivals like Nityānanda-trayodaśī, Gaura-Pūrṇimā, and Janmāṣṭamī.

The path is long, and there is lots yet to be done to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness far and wide. For this we pray to receive your unlimited blessings, by your divine mercy, so that we may become humbler than a blade of grass while executing our services. May we eternally receive shelter under the shade of your divine lotus feet.

Your insignificant and unqualified servants at ISKCON Brampton, Ontario, Canada.



Budapest

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

In the past year I had to face challenges I had not had to meet before. For many, life was turned upside down because of a tiny virus. One and a half year ago, we wouldn't have thought the world could change from one day to the next. As I see it, people need Kṛṣṇa consciousness more than ever. When an unexpected difficulty comes our way, we often think of it as a temporary condition and think that even if we have to do some austerity for a while, undergo some kind of difficulty, we can cope with that. In the meantime, we cherish the hope that after a while the calamity will disappear and we can continue with our usual lifestyle where we left off. I think many people thought this when the COVID pandemic began—that even if temporarily we had to accept a few restrictions and difficulties, after a while everything would be restored and we could live our lives as we were used to doing.

But almost a year and a half has passed since the pandemic began. The first wave has been followed by a second, stronger wave, and now a third that has been worse than the second, and now the future seems more uncertain. Many people are starting to realize that the lifestyle they were used to, what they had considered normal and accepted, enjoyed, and been comfortable with, is finished once and for all. Now they are forced to reevaluate their goals and make new plans, since they are unable to resume life as it used to be. Many have come to the point where they understand that it's no longer just about coping while they survive a temporary setback: they have to adjust to a new world and lifestyle, with new goals needing to be set.

Now, many people are in the process of this reevaluation, and so this time has become a wonderful opportunity for us to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If we are able to address people in the proper way and present them with a lifestyle based on spiritual values, as we have learned it from you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, then we will witness unprecedented success in our preaching.

There was no pandemic when you arrived in the US in 1965. Nevertheless, society was undergoing a great rearrangement, not only in the United States but around the world. There was a group in society who realized the futility and idleness of living in a consumer society, since such a society could provide no real happiness to the soul and so could not really satisfy the self. Many people at the time understood this to the point that they made new life goals. At least, they understood that the path they were walking, which was their parents' path, was not feasible for them. As with the present pandemic, they realized the need for change, but they had no clue what else they could do.

You arrived at the perfect time to show the way; you gave purpose to life and real meaning to existence. You blessed the whole world with your grace, as your spiritual master had asked you to do, and you preached the message of Lord Caitanya all over the world. You came to teach us to serve and love Kṛṣṇa. You sanctified the three worlds with the dust of your lotus feet, being fully engaged in preaching the glories of the Lord throughout the entire world. Nārada Muni tells Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja that even Kṛṣṇa recognizes and worships you for acting in this way (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.14.42). You yourself confirmed this when you wrote in your purport to this verse:

As admitted by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.69), *na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu kaścin me priya-kṛttamaḥ*. The *brāhmaṇas* preach the cult of Kṛṣṇa consciousness all around the world, and therefore, although they worship Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Lord also recognizes them as worshipable. The relationship is reciprocal. The *brāhmaṇas* want to worship Kṛṣṇa, and similarly Kṛṣṇa wants to worship the *brāhmaṇas*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you had no desire other than to satisfy Kṛṣṇa, and He, in reciprocation—obvious to us all—worshiped you by fully empowering you to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world for many generations to come.

When people get to the point of understanding the need to reevaluate and formulate new goals, and they then become serious about searching for the truth, they will meet you, the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON, and you will show them the way out of the material world by giving them true knowledge and real guidance. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.2.31 the demigods and saints, headed by Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, offer Kṛṣṇa the following prayer:

*svayaṁ samuttīrya sudustaraṁ dyuman
bhavārṇavaṁ bhīmam adabhra-sauhṛdāḥ
bhavat-padāmbhoruḥa-nāvam atra te
nidhāya yātāḥ sad-anugraho bhavan*

“O Lord, who resemble the shining sun, You are always ready to fulfill the desire of Your devotee, and therefore You are known as a desire tree [*vāñchā-kalpataru*]. When *ācāryas* completely take shelter under Your lotus feet in order to cross the fierce ocean of nescience, they leave behind on earth the method by which they cross, and because You are very merciful to Your other devotees, You accept this method to help them.”

This verse also expresses the relationship and reciprocation between a pure devotee like you and God. You left behind a process for our benefit. By that great fortune you enabled us to cross the fierce ocean of nescience. Kṛṣṇa worships you by fully accepting and certifying your process. For that, we are eternally indebted to you.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please bless us that in this present situation, when the whole world is reevaluating, when people are thinking about finding a new basis for their lives, setting new goals, being open to new ways of life and new value systems, by following in your footsteps we will be able to be successful in preaching to them, knowing well that it is all your glory and merit. Please allow us to worship you by preaching and making your movement even more successful.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving us the opportunity to serve you in Budapest.

Your servants at ISKCON Budapest, Hungary,

(written by Gurūttama Dāsa)

Calgary

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to you!

Today we are celebrating the 125th anniversary of your holy appearance, and all your spiritual children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren feel ecstatic. Although it has been forty-four years since your departure from this material world, it never really feels that we are without you. You are always here with us through your words, both spoken and written.

The world is in the clutches of a horrible pandemic. Many are dying due to the disease, and many more are suffering due to lost jobs, anxiety, and isolation. The temples are closed and devotee association is limited to immediate family members. For us, your followers, we can see all this as part of material life, so we are using the situation as an opportunity to strengthen our spiritual lives.

In your introduction to the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, you encourage us to use all our resources in the service of Kṛṣṇa. In your lectures you spoke about how technology can be used to serve Kṛṣṇa. We at ISKCON Calgary have accepted technology as a medium for temple worship and devotee association. Our congregation has been using Zoom, Facebook, and WhatsApp, and so has been able to provide opportunities for *darśana*, *kīrtana*, and spiritual talks on a regular basis. By using technology we have been able to increase our book distribution scores for the fifth year in a row. Your books are now placed at Little Free Libraries and in hospitals, hospices, airports, motels, and funeral homes, and we are seeing new people reach out to us to know more about you and Lord Kṛṣṇa. Our congregation is also involved in multifaith events and doing outdoor *harināma* to give people a chance to hear the holy names.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we look forward to the day when our ISKCON centers will be open again and devotees will freely associate and travel to holy places in India. Many devotees at ISKCON Calgary desire to see the TOVP, where devotees are celebrating your 125th appearance anniversary by installing your *mūrti* and inaugurating your *vyāsāsana*. We at ISKCON Calgary are also celebrating this day with great enthusiasm. We hope the pandemic will be over in the next few months and we will be able to come together in person to show our appreciation for you.

Very often newcomers to the temple ask why we pay obeisances to you and worship you in our centers. We explain that you are our beloved preceptor, and that by offering you our reverent homage we show our humility in accepting Lord Kṛṣṇa's teachings through you. If they read your books, very soon we see these same individuals worshipping you with reverence. This gives us great pleasure. It is Lord Kṛṣṇa's reciprocation with you for the service you have offered him. These newcomers' newfound faith in your words and glories is our humble offering to you.

Please accept this Vyāsa-pūjā offering from ISKCON Calgary, and bless us so that we may continue serving you in your mission while experiencing the unlimited joy of sharing Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Your insignificant servants at ISKCON Calgary, Canada.

Chandigarh and Panchkula

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble obeisances. Kindly accept this humble offering on this most auspicious occasion of your appearance day.

Lord Caitanya appeared on this planet to deliver the countless fallen souls, and He predicted that in all the villages and towns of the world the holy name would be propagated. Once, you told your disciples that the task of preaching to the Western world had been left to Your Divine Grace to do. You took all pains and faced many struggles to fulfill the desire of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and your beloved spiritual master.

Being an *ācārya*, you exemplified the various aspects of Kṛṣṇa consciousness perfectly. You showed by your good example how one should preach, cook, manage, worship, deal with devotees, deal with the outside world, and safeguard and nourish Kṛṣṇa consciousness in a simple and sublime way. Once

you said that the word “impossible” exists only in a fool’s dictionary. That you would say this suits your personality, for you yourself made the impossible possible by transforming thousands of materialists into spiritualists—and then millions more after your disappearance. Everything you did was for the sake of the whole of humanity. Lord Kṛṣṇa says that the topmost devotees are always engaged in welfare activities for the general populace: *sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ*. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are an embodiment of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, which you distribute freely as a cloud indiscriminately distributes rain.

You persevered through many struggles and tolerated criticisms from the ignorant while pioneering this ISKCON society, establishing a strong foundation for the propagation of Lord Caitanya’s mercy for countless generations to come.

Once, in Vṛndāvana, you mentioned you wanted to go to Chandigarh to preach, as this is a beautiful place for preaching. You came here on October 13, 1976, and held a five-day pandal program, which was attended and appreciated by thousands of people. Soon thereafter we acquired a large piece of land for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and the Vedic institute.

By your mercy, many preaching programs are going on nicely here. Although for more than a year the world has suffered from the coronavirus pandemic, the message you gave us runs so deep, penetrating our hearts, that it appeals to everyone who hears it. We have conducted regular programs at Punjab University, CCET, and nearby colleges. Through these programs many pious youths are becoming connected to the temple.

During the last book distribution marathon, by your divine grace our devotee community distributed 250 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sets and 40,000 *Bhagavad-gītās*. *Sanikīrtana* devotees traveled to various cities, towns, and villages in the Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh and distributed your mercy in the form of your books. During World Holy Name week, the Chandigarh temple came in second in the world for chanting the maximum number of extra rounds: 130,000. And during our *Bhagavad-gītā* marathon, the Chandigarh temple came in second in the world in the small temples category.

You will be pleased to know, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that the prestigious Panjab University in Chandigarh has started a one-year certificate course in the *Upaniṣads* and *Gītā*, in collaboration with your Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and *Śrī Īśopaniṣad*, along with the *Kena Upaniṣad*, translated by your illustrious disciple His Holiness Bhānu Swami, are being taught by ISKCON devotees. The teaching is going well.

Also, we have been invited to conduct seminars for two months on moral and spiritual education at the Government Medical College in Chandigarh under the extracurricular activities program for students. Seven seminars were conducted in April and May of this year, attended by 150 MBBS students.

An interfaith meeting was called by the British Deputy High Commissioner in Chandigarh on March 16, 2021. This was attended by representatives from Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, and ISKCON. We presented the philosophy of true *sanātana-dharma*, as taught by Your Divine Grace, which was appreciated by all.

In Panchkula we have a very beautiful temple. What’s unique about this temple is that it has five altars, which are managed by a vibrant congregation. By your mercy we have also started youth preaching there. Twenty-five or thirty young people come to these programs regularly.

We have made plans to preach in three states—Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh—along with the Union Territory of Chandigarh. Without your mercy nothing is possible. *Kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana*. You are the transparent medium giving us an opportunity to give the mercy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and serve our *guru-paramparā*. We are deeply grateful for your giving us one of your most dedicated disciples, His Holiness Gopāl Krishna Goswami, as the GBC of this temple.

We pray to your lotus feet that we may take to this process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness with heart and soul and expand this precious movement far and wide. We pray for our good *sādhana*, *sevā*, and *sambandha*, and to become humble instruments in your hands.

Your insignificant servants at ISKCON Chandigarh and Panchkula, India.

China

Dear Grandfather Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

I am a fallen but very fortunate soul. By Lord Kṛṣṇa's grace I received your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, which I read with full attention. Then I read all your other books. Your books purified my soul and were the foundation of my practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. On this most auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, please allow me to represent the devotees in China and report to you on the publishing and distribution of your books in China and how Kṛṣṇa consciousness is developing here.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the savior of all the fallen souls and very compassionate toward all those trapped in this Kali-yuga, including, of course, the souls in China. You traveled around the world to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and China was not forgotten. In the early 1970s you dispatched your illustrious disciples Bhūrijana Prabhu and Jagattārīṇī Mātāji to Hong Kong to preach to the Chinese. They very diligently served in that kingdom of Kali and eventually established an ISKCON Hong Kong center. You later visited Hong Kong twice, and you also kindly initiated the then sole aspiring Chinese devotee, Yaśomatī-suta Prabhu, who had translated your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* into Chinese. By your mercy and instruction, it was printed and published, and finally the people in this country were able to access your mercy through that transcendental book.

In 1976 you instructed your extraordinary disciple Tamāl Krishna Goswami to go to China. However, due to the political situation, the mission had to be put on hold for some time. Then, in 1980, after China's political reform and more open policies, Tamāl Krishna Goswami was finally able to come to China. Since then, the *yātrā* has blossomed and your books have been rapidly translated and printed. As of today, your main books—*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *The Nectar of Devotion*, *The Nectar of Instruction*, *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, and part of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*—have been published and printed in China, along with your main biography, *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*. Those books have established a positive foundation. Many people in China are becoming devotees by reading your books. In 2020, the Chinese devotees put more effort into distributing your books, thus distributing your mercy widely to the people of this land. It is worth mentioning that last December the devotees enthusiastically joined the world Christmas marathon competition for the first time, and sure enough, many more books were handed out than in previous years. You must be very pleased to hear such news, for you always stressed, "Distribute books, distribute books, distribute books."

With your books being widely distributed, the number of Chinese devotees has naturally increased. The early Chinese devotees are maturing steadily, and we have more ISKCON spiritual masters traveling and preaching in China. The GBC, headed in China by Giridhārī Swami and Candraśekhara Prabhu, is leading the development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in China, and the China Mission Committee and Strategic Planning Team have also been active. Now our management system here in China is organized and productive. There are online lectures every day, but also educational training seminars and workshops for both the devotees and the public. The GBC College program has also started to train future leaders. It is not hard to see that Kṛṣṇa consciousness in China has a bright future.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are deeply grateful for your mercy. Book distribution is the real way to preach, and your books are the foundation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Whenever I read your instructions about book distribution I am thrilled by them. The following is a quote from a morning lecture you gave on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in Los Angeles in January 1974:

There is no literature in the whole universe that compares with the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It is unparalleled. Every word is for the benefit of human society—every word. That's why we stress book distribution. If the book goes to a person, he will be eternally benefited. If he reads just one

verse, his life is successful. Even if he reads one word. What a wonderful thing it is. Therefore we stress, please distribute books, distribute books, distribute books.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I believe that all your teachings will inspire many future generations of your followers to distribute increasing numbers of your books. In this way they will awaken people's dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness and help people in Kali-yuga experience unlimited transcendental happiness. Please bless the Chinese *yātrā* to continue to grow despite increasing restrictions, and give us the intelligence to serve you and the mission of Lord Caitanya.

Your servants in Mainland China.

(written by Pañcatattva Dāsa)

Côte d'Ivoire

Dear founder-*ācārya jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your holy feet. All glories to you. All glories to the *guru-paramparā*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we simply thank you for giving us purpose and a goal to our lives. In his *Iṣṭa-deve Vijñapti* Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura writes:

*hari hari! bifale janama gonāinu
manuṣya-janama pāiyā, rādhā-kṛṣṇa nā bhajiyā,
jāniyā śuniyā biṣa khāinu*

“O Lord Hari, Lord Hari, I have spent my life uselessly. Although I have obtained a human birth, I have refused to worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and in this way I have knowingly drunk poison.”

Before encountering Kṛṣṇa consciousness we had a myopic understanding of God as the supplier of mundane sense objects for human beings in this material world. We had no idea of the individual soul's connection with the Supersoul. This is why the message in your books really makes sense to us. We were living the lives of cats and dogs, as corroborated in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (3.8.10): *yo vā etad akṣaram gārgy aviditvāsmāl lokāt praiti sa kṛpaṇaḥ*. “He is a miserly man who does not solve the problems of life as a human and who thus quits the world like the cats and dogs, without understanding the science of self realization.”

Who will not appreciate and love a personality like you? O *patita-pāvana*, what a joy it is to remember you on the occasion of your divine Vyāsa-pūjā! You came to give the best gift to the world, the only medicine for our material consciousness. You often said that the temples are like hospitals to cure our tendencies for sense gratification and help us discover our real identity as spirit souls living in a body. But do we visit these hospitals? Sometimes we may, but do we agree to take the medicines prescribed to us by the doctors, our spiritual masters? Very often not, and that is really unfortunate.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are here again, prostrate at your holy lotus feet, continuously begging for your mercy.

Your granddisciples in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

Czech Republic

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

I have once again been requested to write a few words for your annual Vyāsa-pūjā book. I feel very much obliged to the disciples of your disciples, who are doing their level best to spread and consolidate the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in the Czech Republic, thus making it strong and healthy. Although your ISKCON branches in the Czech Republic, a small country of ten million inhabitants, have existed for only three decades, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is well established here. It is recognized by the government and the public as an authorized spiritual association of pure devotees.

First and foremost, I feel much obliged to the *brahmacārīs* from the Prabhupāda Bhavan center in Brno, headed by the tall, stalwart, and always blissful Saṅkīrtana Prabhu, along with Sureśvara Prabhu, Daityasūdana Prabhu, and others. They distribute hundreds of your books each day on the streets of the Czech Republic, in *dhotīs*, even during the winter and even during the pandemic! I feel much obliged to Jaya Keśava Prabhu and Rājendranātha Prabhu, *brahmacārīs* from the Nitāi-Navadvīpacandra Mandira in Prague, as well as to Madhusūdana Prabhu, a blissful *brahmacārī* from the Krishna-Court farm community near Prague. Madhusūdana Prabhu has been distributing your books for more than two decades at Prague's most frequented pedestrian zones. Of course, there is also Phalgu Gaurāṅga Prabhu, a *gṛhastha* who currently lives with his wife and young daughter in the city of Ostrava. He distributes hundreds of your books, in a *dhotī*, every week of the year.

Then there are the cooks and their assistants at Prague's three *prasādam* restaurants. I am very much obliged to them for their devotion, accountability, and endurance. For more than twenty years Jananidhi Prabhu has gotten up every day before 4 A.M. and then traveled by train and bus to start his cooking by 6 A.M. at the Govinda Restaurant in the center of Prague. Maṇḍalibhadra Prabhu gets up even earlier and comes by bicycle to the Govinda Restaurant & Prasad Delivery Service, run by our Krishna-Court farm, to start cooking at 4 A.M., so that Bhakta Josef and Bhakta Zdenek can start catering to their "*prasādam*-hungry" clients by 11 A.M. Lomāñcita Prabhu and Gadādhara Prabhu, who both get up before 4:30 A.M., travel each day from a remote village to the Balaram Restaurant, near the center of Prague, and start cooking by 6 A.M. During the pandemic your *prasādam* restaurants in Prague have delivered hundreds of meals every day. The Krishna-Court farm also runs a Govinda restaurant in a nearby provincial town. Tuṣṭa Gaurāṅga Prabhu is their most experienced cook. Not far away is the popular Madhava bakery, serving lunch menus and snacks. The owner of the Madhava bakery, Hamsāvātara Prabhu, often gets up at 1 A.M. to prepare fresh bread dough. People stand in line from early in the morning to get the best bread and rolls in town.

Then there are your *pūjārīs* and temple cooks. I am particularly obliged to Ālānātha Dāsa Brahmācārī. He has been serving Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Navadvīpacandra in Prague for more than a quarter of a century. He is also the head cook and a great preacher. He lives in a small room above the temple and accepts only simple *prasādam*. Vidyāgati Prabhu, who lives with his wife and two children in a nearby village, has been the head *pūjārī* for over a quarter of a century. Because we live close by, my wife Vṛndāvanī Devī Dāsī and I regularly visit the Nitāi-Navadvīpacandra Mandira and the Krishna-Court farm to attend festivals and lectures.

I am very much obliged to Nila Mādhava Prabhu and his wife Rādhikā Sundarī Devī Dāsī. Nila Mādhava Prabhu organizes regular festivals for the devotees and congregation at the Hare Krishna preaching center in Prague, a twenty-minute tram ride from the main station. For thirty-six years he has been organizing Ratha-yātrā festivals. He even organized Ratha-yātrā festivals during the communist period, although practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness was at that time forbidden in the Czech Republic.

I am much obliged to Nitāi-Navadvīpacandra Prabhu for creating the comprehensive online resource

www.prabhupada.cz. Among other publishing activities, he and his assistants translate into Czech your lectures and the books written by your disciples, and this facilitates access to your teachings for the Czech-speaking devotees and congregation.

Of course, I am much obliged to my dear godbrother and pal, Czech native Maṇidhara Prabhu, a bold and dedicated book distributor, who is a great source of inspiration not only for the book distributors in the Czech Republic but also for book distributors in Germany, Croatia, the UK, and elsewhere. And last but not least, I am very much obliged to my dear godbrother His Holiness Bhaktivaibhava Swami, the GBC representative for the Czech Republic. In recent years he has been spending a lot of time here, inspiring his disciples and giving valuable advice to the members of the Czech ISKCON Regional Council.

There are many, many other Vaiṣṇavas in the Czech Republic whom I should glorify—the devotees who run our farm communities, the temple presidents, especially Narākr̥ti Prabhu and his wife Rāsabihārī Devī Dāsī, as well as all the devotees who manage and maintain the temples, our homeschooling teachers at the local *gurukulas*, our *kīrtana* leaders, the yearly Padayātrā organizers, our BBT translators and logistics and publishing managers, the members of our congregation, etc. I beg forgiveness that due to my limitations I am not able to mention the names of all these wonderful devotees.

Ananta-koṭi vaiṣṇava-vṛnda kī jaya! Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for keeping us under the shelter of your lotus feet.

Your servants in the Czech Republic.

(written by your disciple Jayagurudeva Dāsa)

Delhi

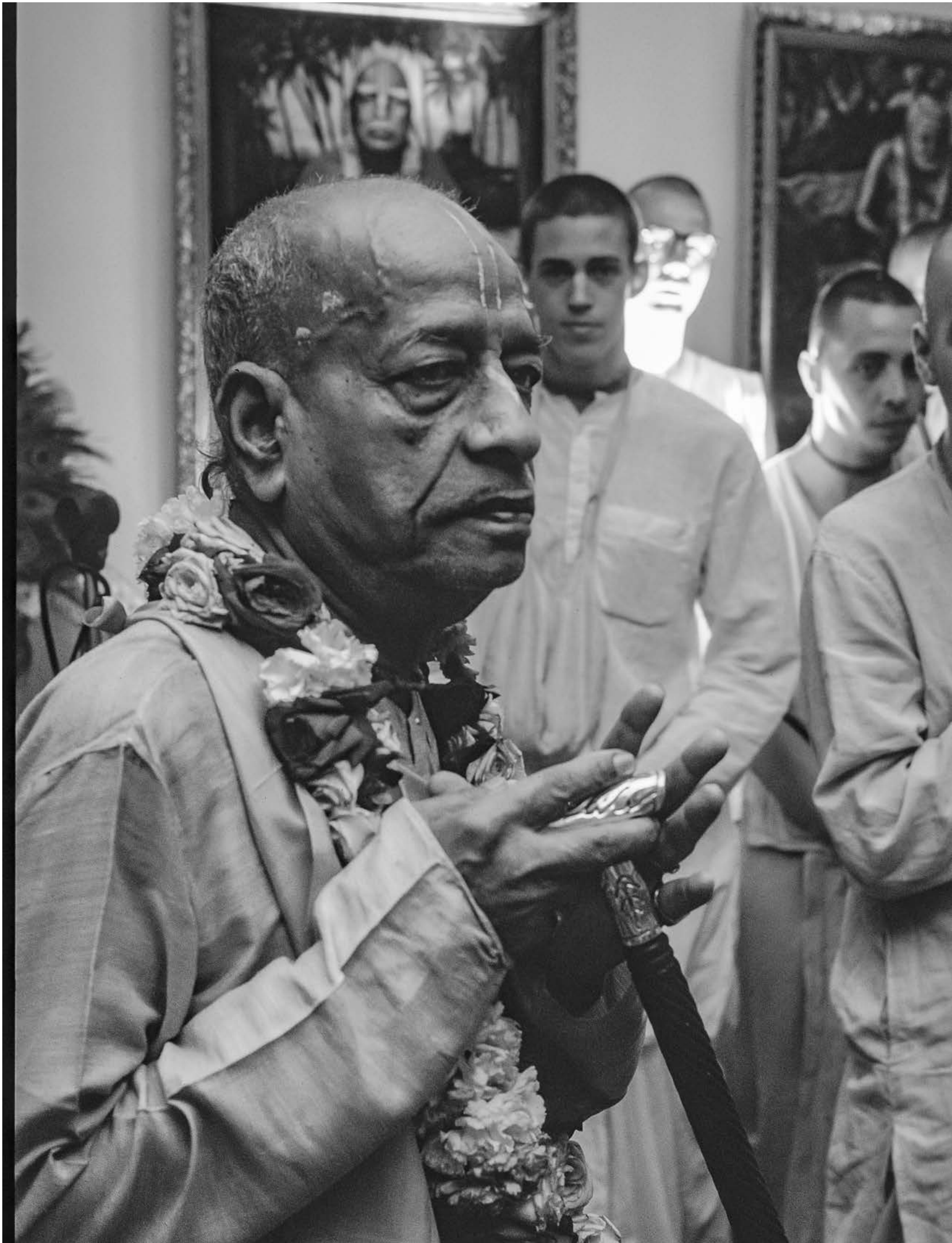
Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace. All glories to your glorious Vyāsa-pūjā.

Māyāpur is your place of worship, Vṛndāvana your home, and Bombay your office. But we devotees in Delhi sincerely believe that here is where your family business operates out of. Here is where you distributed books in blazing summer heat, braving attacks by stray cattle, where you endured virtual poverty, where with great endeavor you got your First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* printed. Here is where you met the Prime Minister and presented him with a set of your *Bhāgavatams*, and also where you placed your books in all the major libraries, many of which still have the sets placed there by Your Divine Grace and your early disciples. His Holiness Gopāl Krishna Goswami has always inculcated in us the firm faith and conviction that everything happening here in the service of Kṛṣṇa is due to Your Divine Grace.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Pārtha-sārathi were personally installed by you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and today, with the temple full with nearly two hundred *brahmācārīs*, and with thousands of congregation members in and around Delhi-NCR, we pray that Your Divine Grace is pleased. These days, as great luminaries such as India's prime minister, the chief ministers of states, cabinet ministers, chairmen of leading corporations, bureaucrats, judges, senior lawyers, leading doctors, chartered accountants, and media celebrities throng the temple, we pray that Your Divine Grace is pleased.

We pray that Your Divine Grace is pleased that despite the Covid-imposed lockdown, online preaching



services have increased. Once, to increase transcendental competition among temples, you famously remarked that you would personally visit and reside in the temples that distribute the most books. Śrīla Prabhupāda, by your mercy, ISKCON Delhi topped the world *saṅkīrtana* scores for 2020—world no. 1 yet again! This might last only for a year. We hope and pray that you will continue to reside here, Śrīla Prabhupāda. In 2020 ISKCON Delhi, with its *brahmacārī* book distributors in *saṅkīrtana* buses and its hundreds of congregation members braving the risk of infection, distributed nearly a million of Your Divine Grace’s books, including half a million mahā-big books.

And as we embark on our ambitious plans for celebrating the 125th anniversary of Your Divine Grace’s appearance, we hope to connect with thousands of young spiritual seekers through possibly the world’s largest online program. And as we continue to reach out to the general public and earn goodwill for ISKCON through the Covid Care Center in Dvārakā and the thousands of plates of *prasādam* distributed daily to the needy and isolated during this second-wave-imposed lockdown, we pray that Your Divine Grace is pleased.

Kindly bless us that ISKCON Delhi remains the headquarters of your family business and your biggest book distribution wing. Kindly bless us so that we may double the number of *brahmacārīs*, congregation members, books distributed, and *prasādam* plates distributed, and above all that we will surrender fully to Your Divine Grace.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s 125th Appearance-Anniversary Celebrations *kī jaya!*

Your servants at ISKCON’s Śrī Śrī Rādhā–Pārtha-sārathi Temple in Delhi, India.

(written by Mohanrūpa Dāsa)

Detroit

*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*

Our dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most respectful obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet, offered with utmost gratitude for giving us shelter.

In these critically challenging times, we are saved by the protective umbrella of our ISKCON family members and their constant guidance and blessings. We do not know if we would have survived without our most merciful Deities, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kuṅjabihārī, whom you gave us. They have protected our minds, bodies, and spirits by keeping us fully engaged in Their loving services. Even during this time of severe restrictions due to the pandemic, you gave each of us the opportunity and ability to participate without interruption in the loving devotional service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kuṅjabihārī.

At *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is 4.11, Lord Kṛṣṇa states:

*ye yathā mām prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ*

“As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Pṛthā.” This important verse gives us the motivation and strength to increase our surrender and continue on the path you gave us.

During these times, neither the government nor any other agency has been able to protect us. Hospitals have been filled with critically ill patients, and morgues are filled with dead bodies. The government therefore called for curfews and lockdown. Temples were ordered to close. But out of our love and sense of duty, under all circumstances we wanted to continue our services to the most merciful Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kuṅjabihārījī and the other Deities here. The only way we have had the strength to perform these services is by remembering the prayers you gave us in your greatest gift to humanity, your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Uttarā prays to Kṛṣṇa at *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.9:

*pāhi pāhi mahā-yogin deva-deva jagat-pate
nānyarṁ tvad abhayarṁ paśye yatra mṛtyuḥ paraspāram*

“O Lord of lords, Lord of the universe! You are the greatest of mystics. Please protect me, protect me, for there is no one else who can save me from the clutches of death in this world of duality.”

Even though the world is in turmoil, by your causeless mercy alone all the devotees at your Devasadan Mandir have been able to work together and finish some important tasks and projects for Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure. The Deity altar walls are now clad with the best quality marble, which will both beautify the altar and make the walls easy to keep clean. We replaced the roof of our *tulasī* room, where more than a hundred *tulasī* plants reside. We also replaced the roof of the surrounding area, which includes the altar balcony and the balcony of your room. Parts of the temple have been repainted, and we will continue that work until we have completed it. Our faith has been strengthened by our experiencing first-hand how Lord Kṛṣṇa always protects anyone who takes shelter at your lotus feet.

O savior of the whole universe, we beg you to give us the good fortune to continue, while we are in these bodies, to participate in the loving service of your lotus feet and of our most merciful Deities, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kuṅjabihārījī. Please hold our hands tightly because we have a tendency to run away from you.

Begging for forgiveness of our unlimited offenses to Vaiṣṇavas, we remain

Your humble servants at Devasadan Mandir, Detroit, Michigan, USA.

(written by Jagad-Guru Dāsa)

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 our most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you!

We continue to be in the grip of the dreadful COVID-19 virus. In a way this has been a blessing in disguise for most of us, as we have been able to use technology to stay in touch online with more and more members of the ISKCON family you established, and we are now meeting devotees from all over the world. We take solace in your teachings and instructions in your talks, letters, and invaluable books. You have accomplished what nobody else could have and built a worldwide family that is your ISKCON. You became the initiating guru to a generation of devotees in the past and are the instructing guru for the present generation and for many generations still to come. Although you have left this material world to go back to the Supreme Father, you live with us forever and guide us through your priceless books. By the mercy of your most sincere disciples, some of us have had the wonderful opportunity to become insignificant members of your ISKCON family, and we consider ourselves very much blessed for that.

Every day hundreds of thousands of people are born on this planet. However, there can be nobody who can do what you did. You are a unique personality. It is not an exaggeration to say that there was no one like you in the past and there will never be anyone like you in the future— *anena sadṛśaḥ kaścit na bhūto na bhaviṣyati*. You explained Lord Kṛṣṇa's instructions in the *Bhagavad-gītā* so eloquently. Today, many people are able to read your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and, through your wonderful purports, get Kṛṣṇa's message as Kṛṣṇa intended it to be heard. As Kṛṣṇa says,

*bahūnāṁ janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ*

“After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.19)

You are that rarest of great souls. You dedicated your entire life to the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa and uplifted countless fallen souls all over the world by giving them transcendental loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa. You came to the Western world to propagate *kṛṣṇa-prema*, as you were ordered to do by your Guru Mahārāja, and you worked tirelessly to further Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission. You shared your love for Kṛṣṇa with everybody. Today, many people are chanting the holy names of the Supreme Lord because of your efforts and your precious gifts to humanity. One lifetime is not enough to praise the stellar contribution you made to human society at large.

Under the difficult circumstances imposed by COVID-19, it is now even more important for us to serve you sincerely and please the Supreme Lord. Kindly continue to shower your mercy on us and help us get through our miseries. As many of your disciples and the disciples of your disciples are getting older, it is our solemn duty to strictly follow your teachings and encourage the younger generations to become better devotees and better human beings and to make our lives meaningful. We should all continue to strive to strengthen the movement started by you and keep ISKCON flourishing forever.

Jaya Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your most humble servants at ISKCON Edmonton, Canada.

Gainesville

*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*

Unique

“Unique” is quite an adjective.
It can’t be modified
by “somewhat,” “more,” or any other
adverb one may try.

A thing’s unique, or it is not.
Unique, as well, is he
who acts in great, transcendent ways
no others can conceive.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are
a soul unique like this,
who managed the impossible
and brought your matchless gifts.

Your books, a massive library
of transcendental pages,
for every seeker of the truth,
uniquely advantageous.

*The devotees at Krishna House, ISKCON
Gainesville, Florida, USA.*

(written by Kālakaṇṭha Dāsa)

The sole founder-ācārya of
a worldwide institution
uniquely poised to vaporize
affliction and illusion,

Uniquely sitting in the hearts
of Vaiṣṇavs everywhere,
your loving glance unfailing through
our rapture, our despair.

You are unique, our one and only
Śrīla Prabhupāda.
If any fool attempts to take
your place, he’s always flawed.

O Prabhupāda, please let me
as a speck of dust reside
with countless others at your feet,
uniquely satisfied.

Gītā Nāgarī

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble and loving obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace on this most auspicious occasion of the 125th anniversary of your appearance.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, while the planet is in turmoil, and as ISKCON globally reexamines how we are continuing to spread the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, we feel we have been blessed with a special service opportunity here at Gītā Nāgarī.

A recently started Farm Study program, where the cream of the crop of American college students live with us and engage in devotional service, was inaugurated in response to the pandemic. We received over one thousand applications by the time the program was starting its second semester. Now hosting fifty-four students, we see more and more the great opportunity with which we've been blessed. Not only are these students being given the opportunity to live a healthier life—in nature and following a plant-based diet and an intentional community lifestyle—they are also being exposed to the all-auspiciousness of Kṛṣṇa! When they come, they fall in love with the cows, their diets become *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*, they attend classes on *bhakti*, and they enthusiastically chant and dance in *kīrtana*. The latest fashion trend among them is to wear *kañṭhi-mālā*. Śrīla Prabhupāda, we ardently pray to you for the compassion and intelligence to properly care for this rivulet within the flood of Lord Caitanya's movement.

Meditating on your prophetic words about the need to be able to engage the masses of people who will “flock to our farm communities,” we are striving to make Gītā Nāgarī more and more of a service wonderland. Our current wonderland consists of caring for our beloved Rādhā-Dāmodara Deities and Their herd of eighty-five cows and oxen, along with the apiary, dairy, community-supported agriculture program (which last season provided for 108 households), Fresh Express food distribution program, and now this influx of young, intelligent college students to help push on these projects.

On this very auspicious day we would like to express our deep gratitude to you. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to engage in the topmost activity: service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thank you for transforming our lives, which were once filled with zeros, by adding the one of Lord Kṛṣṇa in front of them, thus giving our lives meaning and significance. And thank you for so masterfully creating this wonderful society—one that is kept afloat and propelled forward by your guidance and prophetic words.

We sincerely pray to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that we can effect transformation in the world by showing a living example of a compassionate way of life—a life with Kṛṣṇa in the center and all living entities respected as His parts and parcels. You have so graciously given us this lifestyle. Please make us your instruments in its further dissemination.

With love and gratitude,

Your servants at the Gītā Nāgarī Farm Community in Port Royal, Pennsylvania, USA.

(written by Dāsyā Prema Dāsa)

Glastonbury

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept our humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

*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*

Today we are celebrating the 125th anniversary of your appearance. With each passing year we discover newer and newer aspects of your immense glories and qualities. Your Vyāsa-pūjā day gives us a wonderful opportunity to contemplate your sublime, oceanic character. Although almost fifty-six years have passed since you arrived in the US—on September 18, 1965—that most auspicious day plays over several thousand times in the hearts of your devotees. Many people arrive in the US each day, but your arrival in the US was not an ordinary event. Rather, it signified great fortune for humanity and the lost souls who are suffering in this material world.

Due to your appearance in this material world and your subsequent arrival in the United States, many lost souls now understand that we are suffering due to our lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is by reading the books you tirelessly wrote for the benefit of all that we realize that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not a luxury but our most fundamental need. By Kṛṣṇa consciousness we can live peacefully and happily even in this material world. Anyone can understand this by experiencing a spark of your mercy through your books or representatives. All living entities are searching and yearning for Kṛṣṇa. Some realize it, and some do not.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have heard in your lectures that you have not changed anything in the message, that you are just a postman delivering Kṛṣṇa's message to us. But you are not just a postman delivering a message; you have started an entire spiritual postal service. Now there are thousands and thousands of devotees working in your postal system under your direction, tirelessly delivering Kṛṣṇa's spiritual message to millions of lost souls.

We have read in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.69) that one who shares the message of Kṛṣṇa with devotees is extremely dear to Him. Whenever we read or hear this verse, our mind always goes to you. You have not simply shared Kṛṣṇa's message, but you have made it so easily accessible, intelligible, and relishable that it has transformed the hearts of millions. You have inspired generations of devotees to take up Kṛṣṇa consciousness and share it with others. We are confident that your teachings and instructions will continue to provide guidance and inspiration to devotees for thousands of years to come.

This past year and a half has been a difficult time. The entire world nearly came to a standstill due to the ongoing pandemic raging throughout the world. For a time we had to close our temples to the public and have even lost some stalwart devotee soldiers to the disease. At first there were practically no outreach programs. But this mission is so urgent that it cannot wait for any material condition or disturbance to subside. Taking inspiration from you, devotees came up with innovative ways to start outreach programs. You taught us that everything can be used in the service of Kṛṣṇa, and now devotees are diligently finding new ways to use technology to serve you and Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, now more than ever we have efficient and impactful preaching programs. We hold programs each morning and evening, with additional programs on weekends. Multiple *bhakti-vṛkṣas* are operating, and new people are getting connected to your mission.

Devotees have also found new ways to distribute your books over the internet and through other technological channels. Last year, as the pandemic raged in the US, we distributed more than 3,700

books, including 1,397 *Bhagavad-gītās*, 47 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sets, 4 *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* sets, and 74 *Kṛṣṇa* books. This year is looking even more promising. Please give us your blessings so we can increase book distribution manifold.

We have also been able to make significant improvements at the new temple in Glastonbury, and we hope you like them.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you came to this world to fulfill Kṛṣṇa's mission, and because of your glories and compassion you are prepared to bestow mercy freely on all. We pray to Kṛṣṇa that He gives us the strength to continue to serve you and your mission. You said that ISKCON is your body and that one who serves ISKCON serves you. We take your instruction to serve ISKCON as our foremost mission in life, and we pray to you to empower us to serve wholeheartedly with body, mind, and words. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your humble servants at ISKCON Glastonbury, Connecticut, USA.

(written by Gaṇapati Govinda Dāsa)

Guyana

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Your Vyāsa-pūjā is an extremely auspicious and pleasing event for the world because you appeared on this day. Your appearance has ushered in goodwill for the entire world, which otherwise would have been bereft of auspiciousness. Indeed, the *śāstras* proclaim that actual auspiciousness begins for the living entities when they come in contact with a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Your glorious contribution to the world, ISKCON, with all its diverse preaching goals, serves as the best example of your extension of mercy.

On this most glorious occasion, as we celebrate the 125th anniversary of your appearance, we are happy to inform you that all your granddisciples and congregational members here at ISKCON Guyana are enthusiastically working to increase the *saṅkīrtana* movement for the spiritual benefit of all. We value the support you provide through your ISKCON network, and we are able to participate with and be inspired by the association of your dear servants and loving followers, both locally and internationally.

We are aware that we will always fall short in sufficiently glorifying Your Divine Grace properly if we don't sincerely commit ourselves to following your instructions, rendering needed services, and pushing on the preaching. On the other hand, if we strictly follow your instructions in a disciplined way, we are confident that we will be protected and properly guided. May we develop faith that if we follow your guidance the right foundation will be created so that we can deepen our relationship with the Lord and thus easily recognize His presence in our lives. On this auspicious day, let us remember and recognize with gratitude all the tools you have given us to make us perfect.

Therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we pray to you as follows: As we continue our efforts to serve you, kindly allow us to feel your divine presence while we worship you, while we read your Bhaktivedanta purports, while we chant the holy name, while we interact with one another, and while we devise and implement various preaching strategies. We pray that through these channels you will be ever present in our lives. Today we make a fervent appeal that you bless us to be unified in our desire to serve in a strong spiritual

relationship with you, knowing well that our relationship with Kṛṣṇa begins with our relationship with you.

We have frequently reflected upon these words of yours: “Your love for me will be shown by how you cooperate with one another after I am gone.” As servants of the servants of your servants, we are constantly meditating on how we can please you. The most significant way is by working together in harmony to push on this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, making your mercy available to as many people as possible. In our quest to preach, it is so important that we learn to sacrifice our egos and self-interest for your satisfaction.

Today, on the 125th anniversary of your divine appearance, our hearts are filled with gratitude, and we pray to always remain in the shade of your lotus feet. You are our true benefactor and master, and we beg only to continue working together in your service. As we gather today to reflect and celebrate your Vyāsa-pūjā, we bow down at your lotus feet, our hearts brimming with appreciation and hope. May we please you by working in a cooperative spirit to develop and refine our ISKCON centers within the Guyana *yātrā*.

Your servants of ISKCON Guyana.

(written by Paramātmā Dāsa)

Hong Kong SAR

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

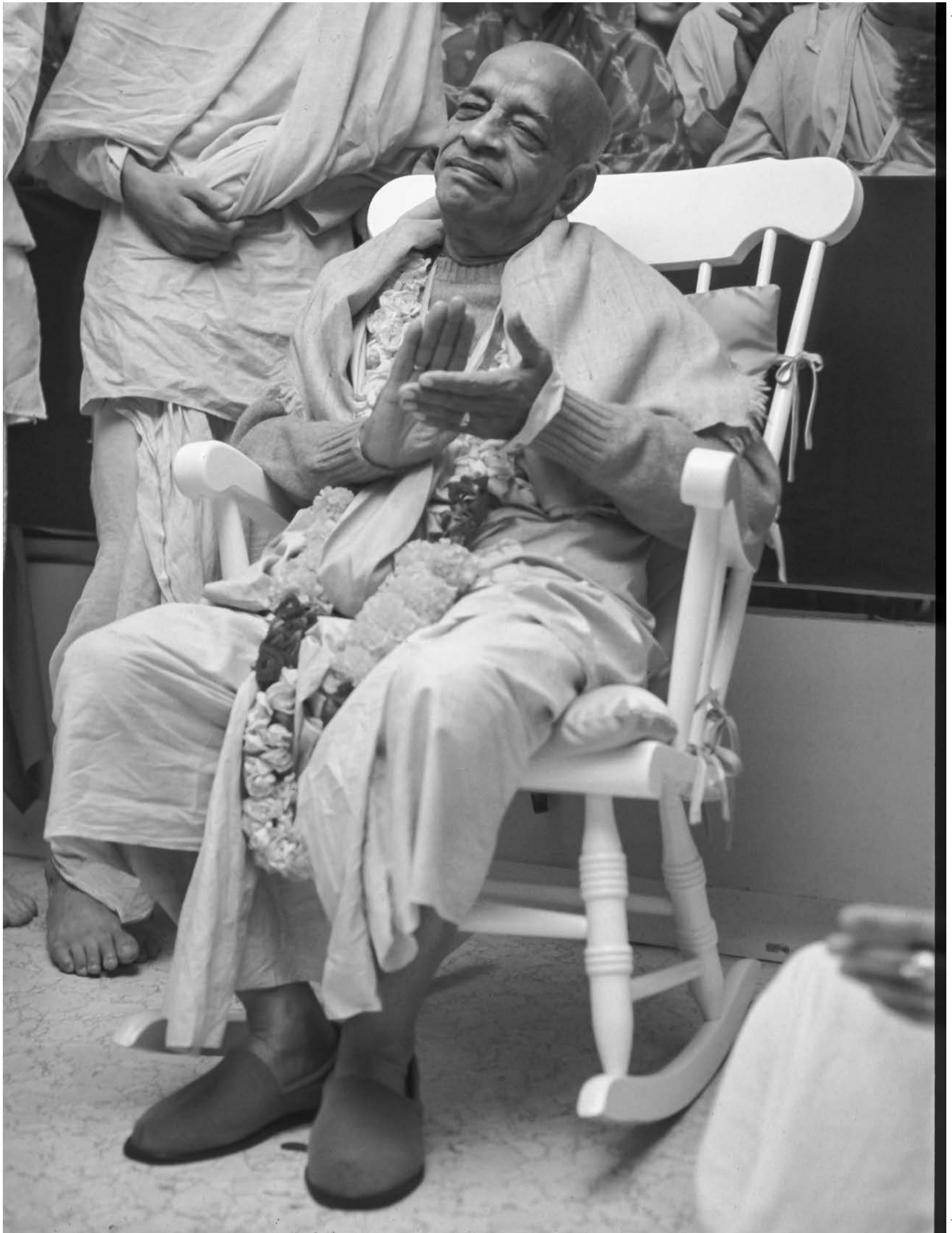
Please accept our humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

On this most auspicious day of your appearance, let us offer our highest gratitude to you. You spent your life fulfilling the instructions of your Guru Mahārāja, His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, to preach in English in the Western world. By establishing ISKCON in 1966, overseeing its growth, and translating and then publishing vast amounts of Vaiṣṇava literature, you succeeded in spreading Lord Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* movement to every town and village in the world.

Hong Kong, one of the most materialistic cities in the world, also received your mercy. The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in Hong Kong began in 1970 with the efforts of your surrendered disciples Bhūrijana Prabhu and Jagattāriṇī Devī Dāsī. By the mercy of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi and with the tremendous efforts of many unalloyed devotees, the movement gradually gained momentum and developed roots in Hong Kong, and in December 2020 we celebrated our fiftieth anniversary. During the festival we paid tribute to the pioneers of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in Hong Kong, who spent much time and energy establishing an ISKCON Hong Kong *yātrā*.

On May 16, 1976, you wrote a letter to Yaśomatī-suta Prabhu, the first initiated Chinese devotee:

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your translation into Chinese of the first 6 chapters of the Bhagavad Gita. It is a great triumph and is very well done. Somehow or another now push it amongst the Chinese. . . . Do not be concerned that there may be some difficulty in preaching to the Chinese. Krishna has designated you to raise them to the higher level. Caitanya Mahaprabhu’s mission is to raise the degraded to the high platform. So Krishna has sent you amongst the Chinese people to save them . . . so don’t be disheartened and go on with the work, you’ll get strength.



With your empowerment and mercy, the Hong Kong *yātrā* has grown steadily since those early years. At present, although we remain small, we have evolved into a vibrant community with a good mix of devotees from many countries, all of whom are dedicated to serving the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement with everything they have. Many of your disciples visit the Hong Kong *yātrā* regularly, thus giving continued encouragement and guidance to the devotees serving here. Many of your granddisciples engage in various services, including outreach programs, festival celebrations, book distribution, Deity worship, *prasādam* distribution, teaching yoga, university preaching, and many, many other services.

Last year was a very difficult year for the whole world, and Hong Kong was no exception. What started with political instability in Hong Kong, beginning in 2019, moved to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. We passed more than a year of uncertainty and turmoil. The temple was temporarily closed to the public. However, by your mercy and the efforts of your followers, the Deity worship, festival celebrations, and regular temple programs continued without interruption despite all the hardships and inconveniences, although there were fewer attendees. Devotees continued to preach, using innovative means like online *kīrtana* programs, reading sessions, lectures, and so on.

As you often said, “What is the difficulty?” With full faith in the holy name and your instructions, we firmly believe that all difficulties can be overcome, and that there will always be better ways to serve Lord Caitanya’s mission. When the whole world has become chaotic, people tend to become more receptive, more willing to inquire about and receive spiritual knowledge.

During Kārttika 2020 we conducted the Dāmodara street program in the busy streets of Hong Kong. We set up a table with a picture of Lord Dāmodara, and invited the people walking by on the street to offer a lamp and a prayer to the Lord. Many people heard the holy name for the first time, and with tears in their eyes offered prayers to Lord Dāmodara. We also distributed books and *prasādam* and accepted donations from the public during those events. While the whole world is lamenting the loss of wealth due to the global lockdown, and so many are deeply bewildered about how to deal with the pandemic, devotees have been feeling fulfilled, sharing your teachings and the mercy of Lord Caitanya with the public.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for reciprocating with the sincere efforts of devotees who remain fixed in devotional service despite all the suffering and confusion of living in the material world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, kindly continue to bestow your mercy on us. Only by your blessings can we get the strength to overcome the difficulties of the material world and continue striving to serve you and Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, the presiding Deities of Hong Kong, with full conviction and devotion.

Your aspiring servants at ISKCON Hong Kong SAR.

(written by Jayaśrī Devī Dāsī)

ISKCON Austin

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Among the countless lost souls who have since time immemorial been suffering like anything in the cycle of birth and death, wandering through the 8,400,000 species, those of us who have somehow or other been able to come in contact with you are the most fortunate souls in this entire material existence.

Whether we met you personally, met one of your disciples or granddisciples, or were simply most fortunate to come into contact with you directly through one of your books—this is our unlimited good fortune.

Since we are now suffering like anything here in this material existence, we are begging you to place your lotus feet powerfully within our hearts to drive away all the lust, greed, anger, madness, illusion, and envy that have so totally contaminated our hearts since time immemorial. Thus purified by your infinite mercy, we will then be able to awaken pure love of Kṛṣṇa within our hearts, make the whole world Kṛṣṇa conscious, and become fully qualified to resume the original identities we once had in the spiritual world before we made the most foolish mistake of trying to enjoy separately from Kṛṣṇa.

Your servants at ISKCON Austin, Texas, USA.

(written by Sankarshan Dās Adhikārī)

ISKCON Manitoba

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga! All glories to you!

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this 125th anniversary of your appearance, we offer this homage to you on behalf of your disciples, granddisciples, and other followers at ISKCON Manitoba. We are very unqualified to glorify your qualities, which are unlimited and supremely pure. I am most fallen and most fortunate at the same time to be part of your ISKCON body, the house you built in which everyone can live in peace and harmony.

One hundred and twenty-five years ago, you appeared on planet earth to bestow your divine blessings on fallen souls like us in the form of your writings, temples, and farm communities. I heard that you once said that one's grandfather is more merciful than one's father, and you therefore asked your disciples to pray to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for their progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I am fortunate to have *you* as my grandfather in spiritual life. Your love and care for your disciples, followers, and others amazes me whenever I hear from your disciples about how you see Kṛṣṇa in every living entity and good in any criticism. You gave amazing gifts to this world by giving us a Kṛṣṇa conscious lifestyle—temples, *prasādam*, festivals, management to perform, books, education, and *kīrtana*.

I feel fortunate to be writing this offering and expressing my gratitude to you for being my savior. When I came to ISKCON—your ISKCON—being a soul fully covered by ignorance and in the clutches of *māyā*, I was unable to recognize your position. I used to pray to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhikā-ramaṇa that They please allow me to understand your glories and express my gratitude to you. Then a very sweet devotee gave me the book *Prabhupāda*. I started reading, and the more I read the more I cried. By the last page, I had been very much touched by your compassion, humility, selflessness, and tireless efforts.

From that day forward the respect for you in my heart has increased. There are not enough words to express my gratitude for how you saved me from the hellish condition of my life. From a life full of passion leading to ignorance, when I was almost going to drown myself in a sinful condition, out of your causeless compassion you pulled me out and gave this undeserving soul the most precious gift of the holy name.

This past Gaura-Pūrṇimā your disciple Bhaktimārga Swami put his faith in us and gave us the responsibility to serve as co-temple presidents of ISKCON Manitoba. Please give us your blessing so that

we can serve Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His mission of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

On this blessed Vyāsa-pūjā day, we pray to you for the intelligence, patience, and spiritual realization to be able 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.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are still not doing justice to this gift. We bow down to your lotus feet and beg for your mercy and spiritual strength so that we can perform our *sādhana* sincerely, respect the holy name, and read those scriptures for which you gave up your nights' sleep to translate. Once again, kindly pull us out of ignorance. Please make us a humble medium in your divine mission.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for engaging us in your divine service!

Your servants at ISKCON Manitoba, in Winnipeg, Canada.

(written by Viśvambhara Kṛpā Dāsa and Mahāsundarī Rādhikā Devī Dāsī)

ISKCON of Silicon Valley

Our dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

We, your servants at ISKCON of Silicon Valley, because of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, have been practicing devotional service mostly at home. More than ever, our devotees have taken shelter of your instructions to read your books and distribute them in innovative ways. We are also regularly getting together online to hear, chant, and complete managerial services. Despite the disturbances caused by the pandemic, the devotees have remained strong and determined in devotional service.

Our devotees chant *japa* and have *kīrtana* with their families at home, and also worship their home Deities; they join together on Zoom for ISV's regular classes, which have continued without stoppage during the pandemic. We have even found a high-tech way to have *kīrtana* together online. In these ways and others, without interruption the devotees have continued the regulated practices of devotional service you have prescribed.

Around the world, many devotees thought that it might be impossible to distribute your books during the pandemic. However, here at ISV, when we remembered how you executed the order of your spiritual master despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles, we decided to follow your lead and push on with book distribution despite the hurdles.

The result was that, by your mercy, 2020 was the biggest book distribution year we've ever had at ISV.

Amazingly, during this pandemic, which for many people has been a torturous time, the great majority of our devotees are happily engaged because of following the three staples of devotional practice that you most recommend: chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, reading your books, and distributing your books. In a letter dated March 30, 1967, you wrote: "If you chant always Hare Krishna, read my books, and preach this philosophy sincerely, then Krishna will provide you with all facility, and you will not fall down into material entanglement."

As we attempt to absorb ourselves in these three services, we are practically experiencing how Lord Caitanya is providing us with all facility. He is not only revealing to us newer and newer ways to spread

the *saṅkīrtana* mission, but He is also sending monetary support, as well as new devotees who are eager to serve the mission. We feel that all these benefits are coming to us because we are faithfully trying to follow these three recommendations of yours. Your instructions are so powerful that they are effective despite whatever is going on in the material world.

In chapter 87 of *Kṛṣṇa The Supreme Personality of Godhead*, you confirm that following the bona fide spiritual master's directions is the only foolproof way to overcome obstacles on the path of devotional service, or in life in general:

One has to accept a bona fide spiritual master and work according to his direction. Then it is possible to cross over the nescience of material conditions. Śrīpāda Śrīdhara Svāmī has composed a nice verse in this connection, in which he says, "O all-merciful spiritual master, representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, when my mind will be completely surrendered unto your lotus feet, at that time, only by your mercy, I shall be able to get relief from all obstacles to spiritual life, and I shall be situated in blissful life."

In your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.2.31, you reconfirm the same principle:

Kṛṣṇa will accept a devotee who strictly follows the regulative principles and the method prescribed in the various books and literatures published by the authorities. The *ācārya* gives the suitable method for crossing the ocean of nescience by accepting the boat of the Lord's lotus feet, and if this method is strictly followed, the followers will ultimately reach the destination, by the grace of the Lord. This method is called *ācārya-sampradāya*. It is therefore said, *sampradāya-vihīnā ye mantrās te niṣphalā matāḥ* (*Padma Purāṇa*). The *ācārya-sampradāya* is strictly bona fide. Therefore one must accept the *ācārya-sampradāya*; otherwise one's endeavor will be futile.

So it is by your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that our Deity worship, educational programs, festivals, *prasādam* distribution, book distribution, and all the other services you've given us are continuing without stoppage.

We therefore intend to hold fast to your lotus feet by continuing to follow your directions, come what may. Our confidence in you, our founder-*ācārya*, has only increased during these turbulent times. We know that by following your instructions and your example we will not only overcome whatever obstacles arise from material nature, but we will also attain the spiritual world, by your divine grace.

Thank you for showing us not only how to stay above the fray of the material world, but also how to make our way together back to the spiritual world, by following your clear and simple directions.

Your servants at ISKCON of Silicon Valley, California, USA.

(written by Vaiṣeṣika dāsa)

Jamnagar

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for giving us the opportunity to glorify your transcendental qualities every year on Vyāsa-pūjā. You had a burning desire to make the whole world Kṛṣṇa conscious, and through your missionary efforts millions of people have been attracted to and are becoming involved with this movement. Your Divine Grace also saved me from material life and gave me a chance to experience spiritual life. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you started this movement alone, and you attacked *māyā*, the illusion that binds the living entities to the material world. For that purpose you constantly wrote essays and books and gave lectures. You never tired of preaching *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

You are a perfect guru who, just like a perfect physician, knows how to diagnose a disease and prescribe the perfect treatment for it. You gave this treatment to your patients, your disciples, to cure them and bring them back to a healthy condition.

Your books are your greatest contribution to this world. They give full knowledge of topmost spiritual life. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have so many divine qualities, but I want to refer to two of them here:

Determination: At *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.33 Kṛṣṇa describes determination in the mode of goodness. The translation and purport to that verse perfectly describes your transcendental determination to serve Kṛṣṇa in all circumstances:

Translation: “O son of Pṛthā, that determination which is unbreakable, which is sustained with steadfastness by *yoga* practice, and which thus controls the activities of the mind, life, and senses is determination in the mode of goodness.”

Purport: “*Yoga* is a means to understand the Supreme Soul. One who is steadily fixed in the Supreme Soul with determination, concentrating one’s mind, life and sensory activities on the Supreme, engages in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That sort of determination is in the mode of goodness. The word *avyabhicāriṇyā* is very significant, for it indicates that persons who are engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness are never deviated by any other activity.”

Patience: Even though you are such a great devotee, you lived with hippies and patiently worked among them while always remaining equipoised.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, by your kind mercy you gave me a chance to serve Kṛṣṇa in this movement and gave me responsible work. I have no qualifications to perform such tasks. I am still struggling with my conditioning. So please be merciful to this poor soul and grant me your shelter.

As I pass my days in ISKCON, more and more I see your desire for what ISKCON could become, and I see that fulfilling your desire is a challenge for all ISKCON leaders. I feel the same challenge in my own service. So I pray at your lotus feet that by your mercy I can overcome these challenges. Please enlighten us through your Kṛṣṇa conscious instructions and give us more and more strength to carry out our tasks. I am trying to surrender to you more and more. Please pull me up. Please always engage me in your service. Your Divine Grace, you are a Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura. Only you can give us Kṛṣṇa. I am a poor fellow, simply running behind you, crying.

Your servants at ISKCON Jamnagar, India.

Krishna's Castle

Our dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you and your divine inspiration.

In the spring of last year, as a global pandemic brought the planet to a standstill, we found ourselves in a unique situation. Temples, mosques, churches, and gurdwaras, as well as most charities, all closed. At the same time, many people found themselves facing serious hardships they were not accustomed to. This gave us opportunities to be inventive with our *prasādam* distribution. The phenomenal escalation in the demand for our free *prasādam* was paralleled by a massive increase in volunteers to help us with the enormous quantity of meals we were now cooking. We found people from all walks of life selflessly volunteering their time and skills. The situation seemed to bring out the good nature in many people; the pandemic appeared to awaken people's inquisitiveness into the higher values of life, spiritual values, and ultimately, about a change in lifestyle. Many gravitated to our food distribution service and, aside from volunteering, requested books. We found that people from all faiths and denominations put their differences aside and happily worked together, creating lasting friendships and a deep respect for your movement.

In Bombay, in March 1974, in a lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 3.14, you stated:

Annād bhavanti bhūtāni—simply by dry lecture, how they will feel happy? There must be sufficient food grains so that people may live happily, the animals may live happily. . . . Kṛṣṇa does not say that “You fast and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.” He does not say. Kṛṣṇa is not so impractical. He says, “Eat very nicely, keep very nicely, and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Make your life successful.” That is Hare Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not one-sided. It is all-embracing. *Sarve sukhino bhavantu*. Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement wants to see everyone happy. Without being happy, how you can remain peaceful? That is not possible.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for your personal sacrifice in leaving Vṛndāvana to expand the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement worldwide. This selfless act on your part has given us the opportunity for so much fun and happiness as we attempt to follow your wishes.

We thank you for giving us the chance to chase big rhinos around London.

Your servants at Krishna's Castle, ISKCON, City of London, UK.

(written by Paraśurāma Dāsa and Mokṣalakṣmī Devī Dāsī)

London (Soho)

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

This year, the members of our Krishna Club for children have taken advantage of the wonderful opportunity to write an offering to you on behalf of ISKCON London. You have always placed importance on cultivating Kṛṣṇa consciousness in children. By your mercy Krishna Club was set up in late 2018 with the desire to serve the community in this way.

Each session, the children are exposed to your teachings and experience bliss from chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, participating in *kīrtana*, learning about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, speaking about Kṛṣṇa, reciting *śloka*s, and performing other devotional activities. Below are some words of appreciation from these children. Please bless them, the future of our movement, to always be enlivened in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and maintain a desire to spend their lives serving you.

From Krishna Club children:

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

We offer our humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you!

It is an honor to write this offering to you. You have given us something more valuable than any jewel—an opportunity to become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Thank you for teaching us about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and making us realize how important Kṛṣṇa is. Without you, we wouldn't know anything about Kṛṣṇa. Without you, we wouldn't be able to speak about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Thank you infinitely for expanding our knowledge of the Supreme Lord.

You have given us books to read and the holy names of Kṛṣṇa to chant; these would otherwise have been a secret. You have given us so many ways to please Kṛṣṇa. You are so amazing.

You have taught us that Kṛṣṇa is always with us. Many people think that God isn't here, but you have explained that God is everywhere. Without you, we would be committing a lot of sins and wouldn't offer anything to Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are very inspirational and merciful. We learn a lot from you. As one of us writes, "When I go to Krishna Club, I tell everyone what I learned from Śrīla Prabhupāda, and when I am older I want to preach and tell everyone about Prabhupāda and his lectures."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, our words are not enough, but we pray that you accept this small offering. You are a great soul. We bow to your lotus feet with love and respect, and we pray that with your blessings we can attain pure devotion for Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Your servants in Krishna Club, ISKCON London (Soho), UK.

London (South)

*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*

1-2-5 Keeping the Spirit Alive

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we never met you,
but your presence still feels true.

We never saw you,
but your charisma certainly shines through.

We never heard you,
but within us the power of your *vāṇī* grew.

We never shared your *kīrtana*,
yet behind the holy name you made us run.

We never traveled,
but you're always there when we're alone and unraveled.

We never served you personally, Gurudeva,
but the path of *bhakti* you did pave.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, our temple is small
but our hearts are big.
We want to make you proud.
May the angels of Goloka sing!

This year is your one-two-five.
Our endeavor is to “keep your spirit alive.”
But truth is, Vaiṣṇavas never die.
It's *our* hearts that pain and cry.
Yes, we are celebrating your 1-2-5,
but truth is, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
we're begging *you*
to keep *our* spirit alive . . .

From “the little people” with big hearts,

Your servants at ISKCON South London, UK.



Malaga

*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*

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Recently I heard in a recorded lecture given by my *gurudeva*, His Holiness Bhakti Chāru Swami, that you once boldly stated that “In ISKCON, everyone is a pure devotee.” He further mentioned that, initially, the devotees were shocked to hear this and even doubted it, but later you explained how all your devotees, even the new *bhaktas*, are pure. You compared new devotees to mangoes. A new *bhakta* is like a green mango. If the mango remains on the tree, in due course of time it will ripen and attain its natural qualities of sweetness and juiciness. Similarly, if we each remain in ISKCON’s shelter, seeking guidance from your sincere and dedicated followers, by your grace we will each become empowered with the knowledge and potency needed for spreading Lord Caitanya’s essential message through the ISKCON movement, which you established all over the world.

Due to the worldwide pandemic, the last year and a half has been an exceedingly difficult period for humanity at large. We have lost many wonderful and powerful devotees. Among the first to leave us was my *gurudeva*, Bhakti Chāru Swami, who left this mortal world like a brave soldier. Since we have been bereft of his personal association, now an intense realization has entered us about the utmost importance of serving our guru’s *vāṇī*.

Devotees all over the world have been spreading the holy names of the Lord by engaging more vigorously than ever in various preaching activities. Due to the lockdown, we have not been able to open the temple to the public, but we have been active on social media platforms. We have been broadcasting daily classes on Facebook and holding lectures on Zoom almost every day. Through this technology we are drawing bigger audiences from all sorts of nationalities, people who can now benefit from your teachings and understand them in their native languages, since video-conferencing software allows multilanguage translation.

It is only due to your causeless mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that your institution, ISKCON, has done so wonderfully well at making an excellent use of this bad bargain. Thank you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, for continuing to bless us from the spiritual world.

Your humble servants at ISKCON Malaga, Spain.

(written by Vinod Vihārī Dāsa)

Maple

*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,

This is the 125th anniversary of your appearance on this earth,
What a wonderful day September 1, 1896, was, the auspicious day of your birth.

“A personality will soon appear and he will travel all over the world
spreading the teachings of Lord Caitanya.”
This was the foretold prediction of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura,
who was himself a preceptor *ācārya*.

Of course, he was predicting your appearance, Śrīla Prabhupāda,
the great personality who would soon be known as “Bhaktivedanta.”

You would fulfill Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī’s grand plans
to spread the holy names across both local and foreign lands.

We cannot fathom life without your mercy and presence.
Without your magnanimity we would have no reason for existence.

When you arrived in America you asked Kṛṣṇa to make you dance.
You knew that your goal was to bring so many out of ignorance.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your heart was full of grace and compassion.
You took the risk to boldly come to the West instead of peacefully residing in Vṛndāvana.

You would face so many difficulties and obstacles,
But despite all these tests you conquered the struggles.

With no material possessions you traveled to America,
fully dependent on the desires of your Guru Mahārāja and Kṛṣṇa.

Scores of temples and thousands of devotees is what you envisioned.
You could see the future, saying that time was the only separation.

You came among the hippies and so much degradation,
where morality and humanity were all but abandoned.

In this environment you would take up the endeavor;
you would demonstrate the proper path so ties to *māyā* could be severed.

Somehow you would accept anyone who was willing to listen and surrender.
You brought many diverse individuals to selflessly serve Lord Kṛṣṇa together.

You would inspire all of us to serve to our utmost potential.
With your purity and determination the results were exceptional.

What you did for these lost souls is simply astonishing.
You would inspire neophytes to make changes that were life-transforming.

Before your arrival our lives were meaningless.
It's amazing that our fortunes would change because of your mercifulness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are Kṛṣṇa's representative personified.
You taught pure philosophy, ensuring the message and every instruction were bona fide.

Your vision was a home in which we could all live in a worldwide organization,
and in the International Society for Krishna Consciousness this came to fruition.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave us the prescription for lasting relief.
Before that we were in illusion, using Kṛṣṇa's possessions like thieves.

You were fearless and faced scholars, journalists, and religious leaders in discussion.
You would establish the accuracy of Vaiṣṇava philosophy without deviation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have given us structure, framework, and a solid foundation.
Now it is our duty to give others this wonderful *bhakti* tradition.

All we need to do is follow your instructions and guidance;
if we focus our lives with Kṛṣṇa at the center, nothing will be left to chance.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for taking us out of the clutches of *māyā*, illusion.
Thank you for saving us and giving us a solution.

Thank you for working day and night to dictate, preach, and provide wisdom.
Everything we need is in your books, from *Bhagavad-gītā* to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Thank you for awakening us out of darkness and making us see.
Thank you for blessing us with your unwavering mercy.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please always bless us with your merciful glance.
Please allow us to serve you and Kṛṣṇa, no matter the circumstance.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, there is so much that we owe you.
All we can say is thank you, thank you, thank you!

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your humble servants in Maple, Ontario, Canada.

(written by Mīnākṣī Devī Dāsī)

Mauritius (Bon Accueil)

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your lotus feet!

It is with utmost pleasure that we express our feelings of gratitude on this all-auspicious day of your appearance. Just as the sun rises to dispel the darkness of night and brings brightness to the world, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, your appearance in this world has had the same effect on the darkness of our ignorance. Since early last year, the world has been shaken by an invisible, microscopic virus, and millions of people have died from it around the world. This pandemic has made us realize the ephemeral nature of our very existence. The death toll keeps increasing by the thousands every day. Though many ISKCON temples are closed to the public, Deity worship is going on. Even at home we are getting full association of devotees online. Nectarean lectures by ISKCON's leading preachers are pouring in via the social network, immersing the devotee community in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is all due to your causeless mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for it is you who established ISKCON throughout the world. Amidst the fearful atmosphere, devotees are constantly chanting the holy name, listening to lectures, and reading your books. They are confident that whatever happens is under the jurisdiction of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The credit goes to you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, for inculcating this attitude in us.

Through your vivid presentation of the Vedic knowledge in your books, you have given us the essence of our life. You have taught us that this life is indeed a preparation for death. You have given the world the chanting of the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—which allows human beings to make the best use of a bad bargain. In our partial confinement, we are witnessing young, emerging devotees take the lead in arranging lectures and *kīrtanas* practically every day for the benefit of everyone. In Mauritius, devotees are organizing 24-hour *kīrtanas*, Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta readings, online *japa* sessions, online readings of your books—the list seems endless. This 125th anniversary of Your Divine Grace's appearance is being celebrated in a grand way. This year we were blessed by the initiation of two local *sannyāsīs*. This shows how the *bhakti* seed Your Divine Grace planted so many years ago has gradually grown into a *bhakti* creeper ready to spiritually sustain many devotees in its multiple branches.

We will always be indebted to you, our eternal *śikṣā-guru*, and your spiritual sons, whom you left behind among us to look after us and guide us. Amidst all these expressions of gratitude to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we would like to mark the departure of one of your dearest sons, His Holiness Bhakti Chāru Swami, who has been guiding us for a long time as our spiritual master. There is no doubt that you must have called him to assist you in some more important mission, yet we deeply feel the pangs of separation from him.

Since Mahārāja's departure, by the mercy of many devotees we have endeavored to remain maximally engaged in devotional service. Still, we beg you to bestow your constant mercy on us so that we will always maintain our enthusiasm to engage in the service of the devotees and help propagate the holy name.

With this, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, we wish you a very happy appearance day.

Your faithful servants at ISKCON's Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir, ISKCON Vedic Farm, Bon Accueil, Mauritius.

Mexico City

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

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

*om̐ ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmilitar̐ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda, my dear Guru Mahārāja,

Please accept this most insignificant offering on behalf of all your devotees at ISKCON Mexico City on this most auspicious day of your holy Vyāsa-pūjā celebration around the world. Thank you for giving us the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

In one of your lectures you said, “This *saṅkīrtana* movement is the incarnation of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu.” In the most holy land of Vṛndāvana, in your Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple, you were preaching the topmost knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the fountainhead of religion. By traveling the world fourteen times and preaching the glories of the holy name, while translating your precious books, making devotees, and, most importantly, preaching the glories of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* all over the world, my dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you showed us what a great *ācārya* and powerful preacher you are.

From the very beginning of your movement, you empowered your disciples with *bhakti-śakti* to perform many incredible activities never before seen and to establish in a very short time your Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world. By your unlimited causeless mercy and by the direct guidance and instructions of your Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī, you came to the West. By visiting all the main cities in the world, you saved us from hell; you saved us and shaved us, too.

By your great mercy, we were fortunate enough to see you when you came to your temple in Mexico City, a temple that became a *tīrtha* after you touched it with your lotus feet in both 1972 and 1975.

Also, thank you for sending us the beautiful Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities in 1973, which you named Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madana-Gopāla. These beautiful Deities had presided at a *paṇḍāl* preaching program in India, with thousands of people in the audience and your disciples onstage, nice *kīrtana*, you lecturing, *ārati*, *prasādam*, and the very high standards of Deity worship you established all over the world.

You mentioned that you would like to have the same standards observed at the Mexico City temple, and that something was not right with the Deity worship there. You asked who the *saṅkīrtana* leader was and, to everyone’s surprise, you said that he should become the head *pūjārī*.

You are the *saṅkīrtana* army general of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s movement. Your instructions and desires for the devotees in this temple were that they should read your books for five hours each day, maintain high Deity worship standards, and have good book distribution. You told us that *saṅkīrtana* and Deity worship have to be on the same level, like railroad tracks, in order for the train to run smoothly.

At the reception for your arrival, while we worshiped your lotus feet with *pañcāmṛta*, *ārati*, and flower garlands, you smiled and said, “This arrival reception is very much pleasing to me. I like it very much. This is the only temple that made very nice arrangements for me at the airport. Thank you all so much.” You were especially referring to the arrangements the devotees had made with the airport authorities so you could avoid customs. You did not like all those airport formalities. From the airplane we drove you in a limousine, escorted all the way to the temple by two police officers on motorcycles.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you showed your compassion for all the conditioned souls on this planet. In 1972,

during your first visit to us, you gave us transcendental bliss by coming into our lives. When a news reporter asked you on a live news show whether you could give your blessings to all the people of Mexico, you replied, “Yes, all the people of this country of Mexico have my blessings.” In 1972 that was approximately fifty million people. You went to speak on this show at 11:00 P.M., after preaching all day at the Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM), one of the best universities in Latin America.

Devotees have told many stories of meeting people on the street who said they saw you on TV and then asked for your books. Thank you for coming to Mexico City and into our lives.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, dear Guru Mahārāja, what an amazing personality you are! You descended to this world in the holy land of Bengal, the same place where Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu performed His pastimes. You preached the glories of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu worldwide and exhibited pure love for Him. You were always full of bliss.

Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, help us complete and develop the TOVP in Māyāpur-dhāma, your ISKCON world headquarters, under the supervision of Śrīmān Ambarīṣa Prabhu and his good wife, Mother Svāhā.

Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, let me be your eternal servant, and may you always be the object of my vision. Also, please destroy my pride and illusion. My mind and intelligence are contaminated by wicked inclinations. I meditate on your lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please protect us and kindly shower your compassion throughout your ISKCON movement.

Your servants at ISKCON Mexico City, Mexico.

(written by Ramanya Dāsa)

Miami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this earth, having taken shelter at His lotus feet. 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, we glorify you daily for kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. One of Lord Caitanya’s purposes in appearing in this world was to offer the opportunity to all people to not only engage in devotional service according to the strict rules and regulations, but in particular to engage in the highest level of spontaneous devotional service, which is experienced by the Lord’s eternal

associates who accompanied Him to enjoy pastimes in Vṛndāvana during His appearance five thousand years ago. The other reason was to introduce the religion for the Age of Kali—the congregational chanting of the Lord’s holy names—which is necessary for us to achieve the first purpose.

Although there are unlimited incarnations of the Lord—as many as the waves in the ocean—the Lord appears in His original transcendental form only once in each day of Lord Brahmā. At that time He relishes His transcendental pastimes on earth with His pure devotees, who serve Him in the pure roles of servitorship, friendship, parenthood, and conjugal love. After relishing these intimate pastimes to His full satisfaction, He ends His earthly pastimes. At that time, He considers:

For a long time, I have not bestowed unalloyed loving service to Me upon the inhabitants of the world. Without such loving attachment, the existence of the material world is useless. Everywhere in the world people worship Me according to scriptural injunctions. But simply by following such regulative principles one cannot attain the loving sentiments of the devotees in Vrajabhūmi. Knowing My opulences, the whole world looks upon Me with awe and veneration. But devotion made feeble by such reverence does not attract Me. By performing such regulated devotional service in awe and veneration, one may go to Vaikuṇṭha and attain the four kinds of liberation. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 3.14–17)

In your purport to verse 16 in this section, you kindly explain:

By following scriptural injunctions, one may enhance his appreciation for the glories of the Lord, but there is no chance for one to enter into personal dealings with Him. Giving too much attention to understanding the exalted glories of the Lord reduces the chance of one’s entering into personal loving affairs with the Lord. To teach the principles of such loving dealings, the Lord decided to appear as Lord Caitanya.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as the pure representative of Lord Caitanya and the whole *paramparā*, in the early years of The International Society for Krishna Consciousness, you gave us *The Nectar of Devotion* and *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*. Both of these wonderful books are essential for us to realize and benefit from what Lord Caitanya gave the world. *The Nectar of Devotion*, which is a summary study of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta Sindhu*, is the complete science of devotional service. In *The Nectar of Devotion* you have taken us from the most basic principles of devotional service to the fine details of purely loving Lord Kṛṣṇa in the mood of the inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi. In *Kṛṣṇa* book, you have given us ninety chapters of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s wonderful transcendental pastimes.

In ISKCON’s early days we used to read together a chapter of *Kṛṣṇa* book each evening while drinking a glass of hot milk—just before sleep. Your purpose for giving us Lord Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes so early in the movement was the hope that we might develop an attraction for these pastimes and gradually aspire to join them. In *The Nectar of Devotion*, chapter 16, in the section called “Eligibility for Spontaneous Devotional Service,” you write, “There is a gradual development of the ambition to become like a particular devotee, and this activity is called *rāgānugā*.” You are referring to a later stage of *sādhana-bhakti* called *rāgānugā sādhana-bhakti*, when the devotee starts hankering for and endeavoring to develop the mood of a particular inhabitant of Vṛndāvana. We cannot start to develop such a mood unless we first become attracted to Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, and that comes from regularly reading and discussing them.

In addition to giving us these two wonder books, you also gave us *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and others. All these books help us to first gain knowledge and appreciation of the greatness of the Lord, and then, after doing so, to progress to a higher stage of gradually realizing the great gift Lord Caitanya came to give us.

You gave us Deity worship, which in the beginning helps us become regulated in devotional service, along with attending *maṅgala-ārati*, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, and following the four regulative principles. However, in time, we will develop an attraction for the personal form and activities of the Lord that we’ve

read about, and this will help us give up all desire for material enjoyment and gradually develop the desire to enter the Lord's pastimes, as Lord Caitanya desired.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in so many ways you have expertly organized ISKCON so that everyone may become swept up by Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement. Here at ISKCON Miami we are trying our best to follow your instructions. For the past year the world has experienced the blowout from the COVID-19 pandemic. Like devotees in temples all over ISKCON, we are trying to do our part to represent you as the most expert deliverer of Lord Caitanya's message. We pray that you will continue to guide us through all current and future obstacles so we can increase our expertise in carrying on the mission of Lord Caitanya.

Your humble servants at ISKCON Miami, Florida, USA.

Monterrey

*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*

Our beloved spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to you! Happy Appearance Day!

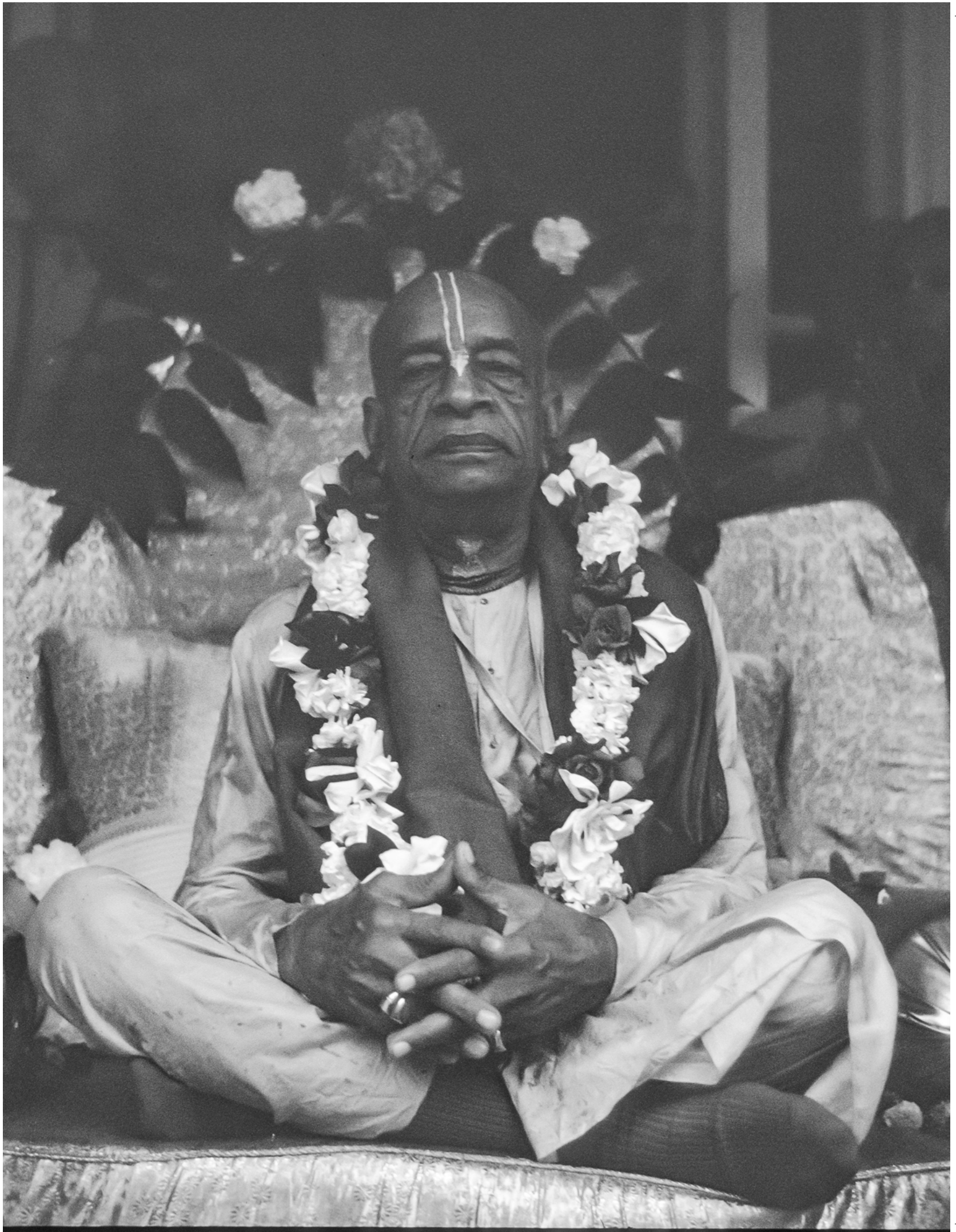
It is a true honor to speak about you on your Vyāsa-pūjā day. The more I listen to your beautiful pastimes, the more my love and gratitude for you grow. Your qualities are beyond extraordinary!

I am amazed just thinking about how much deep love and compassion you had for us, the fallen souls, and how you dedicated all your talents, intelligence, body, time, soul, and patience to leave us the unique legacy of having spread Kṛṣṇa's love around the world. It was not an easy job—not easy at all! You faced so many obstacles, but you never gave up. You never gave up even when your life was at risk! You relied on Kṛṣṇa and became His instrument to save countless souls from the emptiness, darkness, and sadness of ignorance. You are a true inspiration and example for all of us. You gave our lives purpose. You empowered us to be the best versions of ourselves, and encouraged us to spread this transcendental love and happiness to others. You did not focus on our flaws but on what we could become. You used your wisdom to make transcendental knowledge more accessible to our dull minds, no matter how attached to material desires we were! You gave us hope and peace and a very high form of happiness that we had never experienced before. You also gave us a spiritual family that allows us to learn and stay strong and remember you and keep going. What a blessing!

So finally, I want to say only two words from the bottom of my heart: Thank you! Thank you so much! We sincerely thank Kṛṣṇa for the great blessing of having you in our lives. You are a true gift to the entire world, and therefore your pastimes and mission will be remembered until the end of time.

Your servants at ISKCON Monterrey, Mexico.

(written by Lakṣmī Priyā Devī Dāśī)



Montreal

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

*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*

For me, and maybe for other devotees my age, you remain an awe-inspiring but somewhat mysterious figure—just beyond our reach. Steeped in your own glories, you always glance over us like a compassionate grandfather.

And so lovable you are! Gleaming in your Vaiṣṇava dress, you harbor within you the deepest love. You always seem to have the right thing to say; your words have the daring of youth and the depth of a thousand oceans.

*yāñra citte kṛṣṇa-premā karaye udaya
tāñra vākya, kriyā, mudrā vijñeha nā bujhaya*

“Even the most learned man cannot understand the words, activities, and symptoms of a person situated in love of Godhead.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 23.39) You never tried to cheat others or adulterate the message to flatter someone, and that makes you great among teachers.

* * *

Over the past year and a half, due to the unprecedented situation created by the Covid-19 pandemic, devotees worldwide have seen how difficult it is to live without the company of your disciples. Who, then, can imagine what the world would be like if you yourself hadn’t traveled everywhere, undergoing all risks to spread the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the lotus-eyed Lord? If you hadn’t blessed the world with all those temples, refuges for weary conditioned souls? If you hadn’t entrusted the precious mercy of the *sampradāya* into the hands of your sincere disciples?

Personally, in our few meager years of devotion, most of our association with you has come through reading your books. In this way we have always found an infallible shelter, where all our doubts are destroyed. The powerful vibration that streams from your heart pierces through the thickness of our forgetfulness and awakens profound feelings of awareness, gratitude, and bliss. “If you want to associate with me,” you said, “then read my books.”

* * *

I wish someday I could understand one fragment of your glories and then speak about them. That, of course, is up to you. One thing I am able to know now is that you saved us from hell and that our lives belong to you.

I pray that you may one day look down with compassion on this lowly servitor, who is humbly trying to make your glories known as widely as possible.

Thanking you with every one of our breaths, we remain

Your servants at the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Manohara temple in Montreal, Canada.

(written by Prāṇa Gaurāṅga Dāsa)

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.

You have elaborately taught us the consequences of violating the laws of nature. The COVID-19 pandemic is a practical example of one such consequence humanity is facing due to its unrestricted violations of the material laws. It has also had a big impact on our temple programs due to the lockdown.

The most auspicious occasion of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī 2020 was celebrated with the resident devotees. We encouraged our donors and well-wishers to sponsor silver *kalaśas* for the *abhiṣeka* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabhihārī. Inspired by your motto “Utility is the principle,” we performed a virtual *kalaśa abhiṣeka*. Due to the temple lockdown, visitors were not able to get the mercy of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabhihārī in person, so for about a month after Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, we distributed Their Lordships’ mercy in the form of *prasādam* to residents who lived in the vicinity.

Several devotees at your “office” were infected by the coronavirus. By your mercy and the mercy of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabhihārī, all of them have recovered and are again engaged in their services.

During the December 2020 book distribution marathon, we scored 372,684.50 book points, which included 150,541 *mahā*-big books. We also distributed 1,546 sets of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and 117 sets of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Our book score for 2020 was 460,882.50. Kindly give us your blessings and inspiration to distribute more books this year.

We have begun to distribute your transcendental books in a new arena in Mumbai: we established a permanent bookstall at the Mumbai Central Railway Station. During the inauguration of this stall, we remembered how you took your final train journey to Vṛndāvana from the same station. We sincerely hope that this bookstall will give train passengers an opportunity to acquire and read one of your books as they take their own long journeys, because your books have the potency to cause a spiritual revolution in their lives.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, before you went to the US you wanted to build a temple on a piece of land in Juhu, which was then like a minijungle. Lord Kṛṣṇa fulfilled your desire by bringing the owner of that land to you so you could acquire it. The whole process of acquiring the land turned into a big fight, and you led the battle relentlessly from the front, like a commander in chief. In the end you were victorious and then declared, “It was a good fight!” You wanted someone to write a book about it. Your trusted commander, a leader on the field of that fight, His Holiness Girirāj Swami, penned a historical account, now published as *I’ll Build You a Temple: The Juhu Story*. This book was released on the auspicious occasion of Makara-saṅkrānti, January 14, 2021, the anniversary of the inauguration of the beautiful marble palace you wanted to build for your dearest Lordships, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabhihārī. May this book be an inspiration for generations to come. It is an important chapter in the history of the establishment of ISKCON.

The government of Maharashtra is giving ISKCON fifty acres of agricultural land in the village of Dap-

chary, in Dahanu Taluka, not far from your Talasari farm. This land will be used for protecting cows and bulls. Please guide us to establish a proper cow protection facility for your pleasure.

Our records show that we have not used 29,655 square feet of the basement area permissible on our Hare Kṛṣṇa Land under the present Development Control Rules. As permission for this available basement area will lapse when the new Coastal Regulation Zone rules come into effect, we have submitted a proposal to the municipal authorities for the construction of a new basement. We pray for your blessings so that we can get this approval in time, because the additional basement will greatly help meet our need for space, both now and in the future. Please give us the proper intelligence to make this new basement an important addition to fulfilling your desire to make Hare Kṛṣṇa Land the “first class preaching center in the world.”

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for engaging us in the service of your dear Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabhihārī.

Your insignificant servants at ISKCON, Juhu, Mumbai, India.

Mumbai (Mira Road)

Our dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Antya 1.79, we find this verse:

*priyaḥ so 'yaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ saha-cari kuru-kṣetra-militas
tathāhaṁ sā rādhā tad idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama-sukham
tathāpy antaḥ-khelan-madhura-muralī-pañcama-juṣe
mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya spṛhayati*

“My dear friend, now I have met My very old and dear friend Kṛṣṇa on this field of Kurukṣetra. I am the same Rādhārāṇī, and now We are meeting together. It is very pleasant, but I would still like to go to the bank of the Yamunā beneath the trees of the forest there. I wish to hear the vibration of His sweet flute playing the fifth note within that forest of Vṛndāvana.”

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote this verse on a palm leaf after hearing Lord Caitanya chant another verse during Ratha-yātrā that no one but Svarūpa Dāmodara could understand. Later Lord Caitanya read Rūpa Gosvāmī’s verse and was very pleased that Rūpa Gosvāmī could His mind. Similarly, on the occasion of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s sixty-third birthday, you wrote a poem that included this stanza:

Absolute is sentient,
Thou hast proved,
Impersonal calamity
Thou hast removed.

In this simple stanza you captured the essence of your spiritual master's preaching against the Māyāvādīs, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Mahārāja took it as an indication of how well you knew his mind. You were delighted when you heard that the couplet pleased your spiritual master. As Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī knew Lord Caitanya's mind, so you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, knew your *gurudeva's* mind.

Once, when you were lecturing on the twelve *mahājanas* mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, a devotee glorified you, calling you the thirteenth *mahājana*. You then immediately told that devotee that he was the fourteenth *mahājana*! But you are the true *mahājana*, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

- As Lord Brahmā created the universe, you created ISKCON.
- As Nārada Muni travels throughout the universe spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, so you circled the globe fourteen times to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- Lord Śiva is called Āśutoṣa, which means he is easily pleased. Similarly, you are easily pleased even by small gestures. For instance, one simple man offered you flowers, and you were very pleased with him.
- As the Kumāras instructed many persons in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, so you instructed many persons in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.
- As Kapila Muni established the devotional Sāṅkhya philosophy, so you established the devotional Sāṅkhya philosophy and defeated Māyāvāda philosophy.
- As Manu created progeny to fill the universe, so you filled the world with Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees.
- As Prahlāda was determined in his devotion in every situation, so you were determined in your devotion in every situation.
- As Janaka Mahārāja always practiced what he preached, so you practiced more than what you preached.
- As Bhīṣmadeva set an example of being Kṛṣṇa conscious while dying, so you showed us how to die in a Kṛṣṇa conscious way.
- As Bali Mahārāja surrendered completely, so, writing that you are a puppet in the hands of the Supreme Lord and ready to dance as He desires (*Mārkine Bhāgavata-dharma*), you showed how completely surrendered you were.
- Śukadeva Gosvāmī spoke *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. You translated *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and gave it to us.
- Yamarāja instructed the Yamadūtas about how Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme controller and he himself was not, so you said, "I am not God and you are not God—we are all servants of God."

Below is ISKCON Mira Road's preaching report during the COVID period. Śrīla Prabhupāda, when you told Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura that India should first gain its independence before we could think of preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told you that preaching is beyond all social, political, and economic considerations. Preaching should be done in all circumstances; it's the most important endeavor, the most urgent need of the hour. Following this mood, and despite the worldwide COVID-19 lockdown and the difficult socio-economic situation it has created, for the last year and a half our ISKCON Mira Road spiritual warriors have been preaching relentlessly.

- ISKCON Mira Road and the Thane center offered *khichari prasādam* to thousands.
- We conducted Ratha-yātrā, Janmāṣṭamī, Rādhāṣṭamī, and Vyāsa-pūjā online.
- The Rādhā-Giridhārī homeschool continues to be conducted successfully online and has just celebrated its annual events and outings with parents.
- The Thane center conducted all its festivals offline, giving many devotees an opportunity to participate.
- The Borsheti *gośālā* is taking care of many cows, resulting in the distribution of cow products in and around the Mira Road–Thane areas.
- The Telugu congregational devotees, the Gujarati congregational devotees, and the Bengali

congregational devotees conducted all their programs, and many have completed their *bhakti-śāstrī* degrees.

- The Worli center installed beautiful deities of Śrī Śrī Jagannātha-Baladeva-Subhadrā. Youth programs and congregational programs are in full swing. The devotees plan to start a Gauranga Lila Rays preschool.
- Through Bhaktivedanta College, more than two hundred devotees have completed their *bhakti-śāstrī* degrees in either English or Hindi.
- No lockdown could lock down our preaching, and all our preachers very enthusiastically went online to do their preaching service.
- The Vapi center celebrated an auspicious cornerstone-laying ceremony for the temple's *garbhagrha*, and temple construction is in full swing.
- The Vasai center had a successful Sadhu Ashram cornerstone-laying ceremony, attended by more than two hundred families. This small center is developing nicely. It's on the bank of Rāma-kunḍa, which was established by Lord Paraśurāma.
- The Virar center is also developing nicely, and we are looking for permanent land.
- The Devotee Care program is going on properly. Devotee Care leaders conducted online classes and virtual Janmāṣṭamī festivals with various groups.
- The Character Management Course sessions have engaged over two hundred young boys and girls in more than a hundred webinars and outings. This has resulted in many young people beginning to chant sixteen rounds.
- For Bhādra Pūrṇimā we distributed 120 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sets, and during the December marathon 15,000 *Bhagavad-gītās*.
- The Narasimha Institute for Child Education (NICE) has been hard at work. During the summer vacation thirty *mātājīs* created an online summer camp and engaged more than two hundred children in Kṛṣṇa conscious activities. Over three hundred children created an online exhibition of Lord Caitanya's pastimes. NICE teachers approached over thirty schools and performed online *dīpa-dāna*. Sixteen schools participated, with five thousand children offering lamps to Lord Dāmodara during the months of Puruṣottama and Kārttika.
- The Deities at the Mira Road temple are very nicely taken care of by the *brahmacārīs* and many sincere and dedicated devotees from the congregation.

We pray that in preparation for the celebration of the 125th anniversary of your appearance, we, your instruments, will take stock of our humble position relative to your glorious position and always remember your example and our dependence on you. Please bless us so that your Vyāsa-pūjā will be not only a celebration of the past but a commitment to the future. Please bless us so that this future will be one of heartfelt service to you, to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and to the world.

Your insignificant servants at ISKCON's Mira Road temple in Mumbai, India.

Nava Vraja Dhāma

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances! All glories to your lotus feet!

This is a special year for the Krishna Valley community: the king and queen of Nava Vraja Dhāma, the presiding Deities of the Hungarian *yātrā*, Tribhuvana Sundara Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara, arrived here twenty-five years ago. When the devotees saw Them for the first time, they felt boundless joy, and that sight was engraved on their hearts forever. This wonderful event, however, could not have taken place without you, who appeared in this material world 125 years ago to fulfill the desire of Kṛṣṇa and your spiritual master that you spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world.

This past year and a half posed countless challenges to everyone on this planet. The COVID pandemic, other diseases, departures, lockdowns, and the economic downturn have reminded us that this material world is not our home. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you brought us Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the chance to transcend the difficulties of this material world by cultivating spiritual life. You gave us a means to return home, back to Godhead. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for this invaluable gift. Please bless us so that Krishna Valley can participate in the completion of your mission by showing an example of a *varṇāśrama* society for the world to follow.

This past lockdown period has had a profound effect on our community. Some of us fell ill and we lost relatives, acquaintances, and friends, and yet despite all these difficulties the devotees stood firm and performed their services. This attitude and their love for you helped the community carry on your mission despite all difficult conditions.

Krishna Valley was affected by the pandemic in several ways, but our society was able to cope with the difficulties through the devotion and enthusiastic service offered by the devotees. We increased our efforts to achieve self-reliance, extending our gardens so that we could produce more food. Our manufacturing department now produces fabric from fibers we grow locally, and many products are made entirely of local raw materials. Our *gośālā* devotees began building a treadmill that, when completed, will be the only one of its kind in Europe.

Since September our *gurukula* has been teaching a locally developed curriculum approved by the Hungarian government. Our preachers are exploring new ground by availing themselves of online channels.

Despite the pandemic, a large number of guests visited New Vraja Dhāma, and we even held our three-day summer village festival as usual. Our community is constantly growing, and several families have moved to Krishna Valley. During such a testing period, the strength of the community, the trust between members, and the solidarity and service attitude have all been critical. As you taught us, “Cooperate!”

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, we thank you for your causeless and boundless mercy, which enabled us to enter your spiritual family. Please bless our community with the gift of trust, the strength of solidarity, the sanctity of service, the depth of love, and the desire of devotion.

Your servants at Nava Vraja Dhāma, Somogyvamos, Hungary.

New Dvārakā

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

A Vyāsa-pūjā offering is an opportunity to glorify your exalted character and many accomplishments. That can not be done in a few paragraphs—many books are required. Here our attempt will be to express our appreciation for some aspects of your great contribution, in hopes that our attempt will please you.

Before coming in contact with the knowledge that you brought first to United States and then to the rest of the world, none of us had any idea that we were something other than our bodies, that we were actually spiritual beings who had an eternal loving relationship with a supreme spiritual being, Kṛṣṇa, or that by engaging in devotional service to Him we could revive our awareness of that relationship, to the degree that we could experience it even during our lifetimes, and what to speak of after that, when we would appear in our original spiritual bodies in a transcendental realm where Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees reside eternally. In your purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 10.4–5, you write:

Those who are confident that they are not the material body, that they are spiritual parts of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and who are therefore engaged in the transcendental service of the Supreme Godhead, having nothing to fear. Their future is very bright.

And in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.6.18 you describe that bright future:

The inhabitants of [the Vaikuṇṭha] planets are liberated from birth, death, old age, and diseases and have full knowledge of everything; . . . They have nothing to do there except to render transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord.

Perfectly representing your spiritual master and the other members of the disciplic succession, you blessed us with the knowledge that can change one's life infinitely for the better, forever! If someone were to try to minimize your as utopian or a bluff, our response would be that you gave us all the information we need so that we can live our lives in a way that will enable us to realize the truth of what you taught us. Tens of thousands of your followers around the world are practically applying the knowledge you gave us in their lives and can attest to the fact that what you gave us is true and that the process for realizing it works.

The devotees at the New Dvārakā temple, on behalf of whom I am writing this offering, provide excellent examples of the validity of all you taught us. Inspired by your example and your teachings, many devotees here have dedicated their lives to serving you in various capacities. Some are nearing the fifty-year mark in their devotional careers. It's obvious that they are meditating upon an instruction that you gave on at least several occasions, as in this excerpt from a letter you sent from Vṛndāvana in 1975 to a devotee in New Dvārakā:

Now it is up to you all how to manage it. If you cannot increase it, you should at least maintain what I have given you. You cannot accuse me that I have not given you anything. So it is a great responsibility you now have.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, we would never dream of accusing you of not giving us anything. No one in their right mind would. Rather, we would like to praise and honor you for giving us *everything*. Everything we need to both maintain and spread your movement. Everything we need to go back to Godhead, taking a lot of people with us. On this special occasion, we pray that you bless us with whatever we require to continue serving you until the end of our lives, and beyond.

Your humble servants in New Dvārakā, Los Angeles, California, USA.

(written by Bhṛgupati Dāsa)

New Govardhana (United States)

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you!

*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*

We here at New Govardhana Dhāma, in San Diego, are most fortunate to be a part of your worldwide ISKCON family. We deeply appreciate, respect, and love you as our most esteemed well-wisher and our most beloved founder-*ācārya*, our Śrīla Prabhupāda!

This past year and a half has been a very challenging time due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic has caused much death and misery throughout the world, which in turn have caused much uncertainty and flux in society at large. It has also impacted your ISKCON, where it has brought on sickness and the premature passing of some of your dear followers. Although deadly disease is part of this material existence, the pandemic has brought this to us in a very challenging form. As you have told us so many times, this material world is not our true home and is always beset by the miseries of birth, death, old age, and disease, which all come with having a material body in this realm of *māyā*. Due to your kind grace and guidance, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have actual transcendental knowledge and the practical means to apply it. From you we have received what we need to help us and others navigate the treacherous waters of this material existence and find true solace in loving devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Here at your New Govardhana temple we feel very blessed to have such a sincere community of devotees, comprised of both those who live and serve in your temple and those who live outside but are fully committed to serving you and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī, Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, and Śrī Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā Devī. Having this foundation of a loving community of devotees, we can say that although we have also been affected by the challenges presented by COVID-19 over the past year and a half, we have kept moving forward in our efforts to render service to you, to the Deities in your temple, to your devotees, and to your heartfelt mission, which is to share Kṛṣṇa consciousness, everything that you've given us, for the benefit of others.

Over the course of this challenging period, in spite of how the pandemic has impacted a number of



devotees who would normally be able to help with service at the temple, service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī has gone on nicely due to the dedication of Their *pūjārīs* and cooks, and the support of others who have come forward to ensure that Their service would continue uninterrupted. Book distribution has increased this year, since so many of your devotees here are committed to distributing your books during the year and on through the Christmas marathon. The daily temple programs, including morning and evening classes, *kīrtanas*, and *darśanas*, have gone on nicely, and all these could be viewed online when the temple was not able to allow guests to attend. The Thursday Krishna Lounge program and the Sunday Krishnafest, along with other festivals, have also been going on even though they had to be adjusted due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Devotees in your community here also came through to help financially and thus ensure that our temple's bills would be taken care of during this difficult period. In addition, we are very happy to let you know that your temple is now free and clear of its mortgage debt due to many of your followers in the San Diego temple community coming forward to help clear this financial burden.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on another very personal note, we here at New Govardhana want to thank you for your most gracious and loving foresight in what you have given us in the form of the loving association of a community of devotees and friends. Last year our community lost one of your spiritual granddaughters to cancer, my daughter Śyāmālī Dāsī. Śyāmālī was born here in New Govardhana thirty-six years ago, and due to your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, she grew up in a community that was created by you through your mission, full of loving family members, friends, and well-wishers from the very day she was born. Because of you, because of how you gave Kṛṣṇa to us in the form of your words, your example, and your books, along with your ever-loving presence, which is always with us, and which was reflected so nicely by those she grew up with here, she grew up knowing she was cared for and loved by you, Lord Kṛṣṇa, her family, and Kṛṣṇa's devotees in so many wonderful ways.

Śyāmālī was such a sweet soul, and she shared her life of loving devotional service here in our New Govardhana community, and in so many places around the world. Her sharing of her devotion and love over the course of her life, and during her preparation for death, deeply moved the hearts of all who knew her. While Śyāmālī prepared herself to leave this world, her spiritual master, Indradyumna Swami, her loving husband and family, your devotees and her many friends and well-wishers from around the world all came together to be there for her in so many wonderful ways. With all of this heartfelt support surrounding and embracing her, she was able to fix her mind on Kṛṣṇa with determination, love, and full faith in Him and His Holy Names. In all of this the devotees simply reflected your boundless care and compassion, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

We all miss Śyāmālī so very much, but we also feel solace in our hearts, knowing she left under the shelter of your mercy and blessings. Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, through your caring so much for our dear Śyāmālī Dāsī, both her life and her passing away were very auspicious, a vivid example of how far-reaching your spiritual vision is and how your loving kindness is present with all of us now and for all time to come.

Thank you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, for all the gifts you have given us out of your boundless mercy—gifts that continue to unfold in depth and wonder, like the opening of a beautiful thousand-petaled lotus. Each petal of this transcendental lotus reveals more and more of the treasure that you have shared with us, and that you continue to share with us, through your loving example, your amazing teachings, both recorded and in your books, your preaching, your mission, and your dedicated and loving followers.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you so much for coming from the transcendental realm of Goloka Vṛndāvana to this world to captivate us all with your unsurpassed kindness, with the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's sweet holy names, and with the true and clear understanding you brought to us of what our real goal in life is, along with the means to achieve it. All of us here in New Govardhana Dhāma pray to always be engaged in your loving service and to be able, by your kind mercy and blessings, to increase our service to you and your mission in sure and steady ways so as to please you more and more.

Sincerely and with love,

Your servants at New Govardhana Dhāma, ISKCON San Diego, California, USA.

(written by Yamunā-pati Dāsa)

New Raman Reti

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our obeisances at your divine lotus feet. We humbly make this attempt at offering prayers and glorification of you and your activities. Each year your disciples, granddisciples, and great-granddisciples gather to appreciate the gift we have that is your presence in our lives.

It is the weekend of Gaura-Pūrṇimā here. This can cause one to ask a simple question: How is it that persons who have no Vedic background, no prior contact with the Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, and no training in the devotional line coming from Śrī Kṛṣṇa can find such enthusiasm, such happiness, and such joy in the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu?

The answer is as simple as it is amazing: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Fifty-six years ago, packing basically nothing but some dry cereal, a trunk filled with books, a few clothes, and the weighty instructions of your guru, you boarded the *Jaladuta* and came to a place of questionable readiness for your message, New York City. After those monumentally important fifty-six years of history, we find that all over this earth planet in, dare one say, almost every country, there are members of your International Society for Krishna Consciousness celebrating Gaura-Pūrṇimā—some on a grand scale, some in a simple, humble manner—all under the instructions and guidance of Your Divine Grace. How is this possible, one can ask?

Well, to go back to the very beginning, we can examine one particular item that was in your luggage on that most important trip. A trunk of books. But not just any books in a trunk. The English translations of the First Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* of none other than Śrīla Vyāsadeva. But more to the point, also included were what would become the world-respected Bhaktivedanta purports on these verses of the *Bhāgavatam*. Little did anyone really know what was in store for the world.

In our Gauḍīya history we find the story of another trunk of books. This is, of course, the trunk filled with the famous books of the Gosvāmīs of Vṇḍāvana, being sent to Bengal by Śrīla Jīva Goswami to spread the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness far and wide beyond the borders of Vṇḍāvana. That trunk was stolen and its contents at first misunderstood and misvalued by the thieves. But through the opening of not only the trunk but its spiritual contents under the guidance of a saintly person, the books' real value became fully understood and, in a dramatic way, lives, futures, and entire cities were transformed.

Similarly, and with no less dramatic impact, your Bhaktivedanta purports have guided thousands whose lives transformed in ways that also brought about changes far beyond their personal lives. These very words that Kṛṣṇa spoke through you as you studied in your mood of deep devotion in Vṇḍāvana, preparing for this extremely challenging task given to you—these same words—changed the lives, fortunes, and spiritual futures of everyone they came in contact with. While some may doubt such a statement, it is proven by clear scientific evidence. In the field of science, if an object comes in contact with another object and changes that object's nature, that catalyst is understood to be the cause of that change. And if this circumstance is repeated time after time and the same result is achieved, then it is accepted as a scientific fact that the catalyst can indeed change the nature of the object with which it comes in contact. Isn't this without doubt the reality of your Bhaktivedanta purports coming in touch with the misguided, confused, and unclear lives of so many, time after time after time? The result for one who allows these Bhaktivedanta purports, these words of divine wisdom, these guiding lights in the dark and troubled times of Kali-yuga, to repeatedly wash over them, clarifying the spiritual reality of the creation, is that one's very consciousness, one's covered eternal nature, becomes cleansed and prominent. This is the power that was packed tightly into that so-called innocent trunk, which to the uninformed contained just a few books.

This was indeed your mission. As Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī arranged for Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, and Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita to deliver the books of the Gosvāmīs of Vṇḍāvana to all of Bengal and Orissa, so Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta saw in you upon your very first meeting that same potency, that same

ability, and gave the instruction to you, “Spread this message in the English-speaking countries.” You began by writing for the various journals and monthlies of your guru’s *maṭhas*. These writings pleased and impressed Bhaktisiddhānta to the point that he noted to the editors, “Whatever he writes, print it.” Thus the groundwork of your future preaching was laid.

Then came the years you spent in Vṛndāvana. Those of us who have visited Vṛndāvana, fallen in love with Vṛndāvana, and desire one day to live in Vṛndāvana, can only imagine the strength of character and the vow of austerity coupled with the desire to serve Guru and Gaurāṅga that were required to leave that sacred place and come to New York City in the waning days of beatnikdom and blossoming days of hippiedom. You could have happily, peacefully, and fully spiritually lived out your days there in Vraja, and that alone would have assured your spiritual success. But ever vigilant to your guru’s order, you came to the most unthinkable place. Sumati Morarji, on whose steamship you were granted passage, warned, in fear for you, “Swami, you will die there!” Such a contrast was that place to your Vṛndāvana.

Many years ago, while visiting America, Śrī Vishvambhar Goswami (the since departed head of the Rādhā-Ramaṇājī temple) said, after being given a tour of your places of pilgrimage in New York City, “Many people in India appreciate what your Prabhupāda has done. *But* until they come and see *where* he has done, they cannot understand his greatness!” (speaker’s own emphasis)

Therefore, as we gather to celebrate this 125th anniversary of your divine appearance in this world, let us all gather around the foundation of your Bhaktivedanta purports! Let us reaffirm our dedication to daily hearing and reading them. Let us with enthusiasm share them with the rest of the world. Let us take full shelter of them and thus take full shelter of you. In this mood, we honor your appearance day and pledge to always serve your divine lotus feet.

Sincerely,

Your followers at New Ramaṇ Reti Dhāma, Alachua, Florida, USA.

New Tālavana

*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*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Daṇḍavat praṇāmas. Please accept these flowers made of words expressed in sentences and paragraphs to glorify your gracious and liberal acceptance of the poor conditioned souls of this dark age.

Without you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we would have drowned in the ocean of nescience covered by the gross modes of ignorance and passion. Because of you, we swam ashore to the Kṛṣṇa conscious beaches of your divine lotus feet. Those feet are constantly serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, through Lord Caitanya’s disciplic succession. Following them takes us out of darkness into the light of Godhead.

Serving you is nondifferent from serving the Supreme Lord and His other pure devotees. Your mission and service are pure transcendence, beyond time and space while simultaneously here, now, within the sphere of time and space. They can take souls conditioned by material nature and transform their character and consciousness, thus making them into pure devotees of the Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and relieving them of countless pains and sufferings in the cycle of birth and death.

You gave and taught us a mantra that is the greatest panacea for the whole world. All you asked in return was for us to give it purely to others. You have no material interest. Your only interest is in pleasing Guru and Gaurāṅga. You sacrificed your life to serve them and engaged your disciples and followers in their service. You were relentless about getting the job done, and you stood up to all obstacles.

Fearlessly, you taught the message of your *paramparā* and organized an institution to accommodate your devotees and facilitate their service. As a commander, you did not allow anyone to exploit either your institution or others. You pursued a path of nonviolent cooperation for the good of your mission, people, and the world in general. The only suffering anyone experiences under your lotus feet is the negation of material attachments, but that is easily supplanted by the addition of the Godhead you carry in your heart, words, and books.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept us fools and rascals and allow us to continue purifying our insignificant selves by our humble attempts to please you. Pleasing you is the perfection of our lives. We strive to experience your pleasure moment to moment. *Danḍavat praṇāmas* at your lotus feet again and again, O Gurudeva.

Your servants at New Tālavana Dhāma, ISKCON Mississippi, USA.

(written by Yogīndravandana Dāsa)

New Varṣāṇā

*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*

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this most auspicious 125th anniversary of your appearance day, please accept our most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories, all glories, all glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! And all glories to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī, the principal Deities at ISKCON Auckland!

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, 125 years ago you appeared in this mortal world to spread Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission to every corner of this planet, and within twelve short years you built a wonderful house where we feel cared for and spiritually protected by your wonderful arrangements.

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, today we, the members of ISKCON Auckland, want to express our most

profound gratitude for your unfailing, unconditional love and compassion for all of us, proved by how you left your ideal situation in Vṛndāvana and underwent so many hardships just to save us by giving us Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We are deeply honored and privileged, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that you brought us into your Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava family. We remain eternally indebted to you!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, it has been said many times—and we have heard it—that you built a house in which the whole world can live. We see living proof of that here at New Varṣāṇā. The congregation belonging to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī has continued to grow and flourish over the years. Śrīla Prabhupāda, it's our great fortune that by your mercy all classes of people in Auckland are seeing ISKCON Auckland favorably and are accepting Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

First of all, thank you for giving us amazing festivals. Several platforms have been established from which we can promote Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For example, every Friday we perform *harināma* in the city of Auckland, and every fortnight we distribute *prasādam*. Every Saturday we hold a *harināma* in a different suburb of Auckland, and we have started monthly *prasādam* distribution at schools and in various communities. The Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī temple is becoming a popular venue for weddings among our guests, as they get to relish high-quality *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*. Thank you for your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Book distribution is also going on nicely.

Every year we organize a Food Festival and a Holi festival. The Food Festival draws from 2,000 to 3,000 people, who enjoy varieties of *prasādam*. Our grand Holi festival draws more than 10,000 people to the temple and is our biggest preaching event. Many of the people it attracts are young Westerners, an audience we would not usually find at the temple. But they come for Holi and get the opportunity to take *darśana* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī, taste *prasādam*, and hear the *mahā-mantra*. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda for offering this big platform by which we can introduce them to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

At the end of the year we try to take advantage of the Christmas parades in Auckland by including our Ratha-yātrā cart in the processions; outside Auckland we have the opportunity to do ten or twelve Ratha-yātrās, and people get a chance to take *darśana* of Śrī Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā and hear the holy name.

A few years ago we inaugurated RISE (Rūpānuga Institute for Spiritual Education), and we have seen many students come forward to enroll in courses like *Bhakti-śāstrī* and the ISKCON Disciple Course, and also in several seminars. We hope to offer more such courses and seminars in the future.

This year we launched KrishnaKula, a Sunday school program for children ages 5–14. We have had wonderful responses from parents. Hopefully in the future we can also engage the parents in some Kṛṣṇa conscious activity.

Our future plans include opening a restaurant at New Varṣāṇā, and we also hope to set up yoga classes to attract the locals.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for engaging us and allowing us to be part of this great mission. Please bless us in our humble endeavors to reach out to as many people as we can simply *to please you!* Thank you for being personally present in your books and instructions. Thank you for your unlimited mercy and for showing us the path back to Godhead.

We beg to remain eternally at your lotus feet!

Your most fallen servants at New Varṣāṇā, ISKCON Auckland, New Zealand.

New Vrindaban

*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,

Lord Caitanya states, *prthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*: “In every town and village throughout the world the chanting of My name will be heard.” (*Caitanya-bhāgavata, Antya-khaṇḍa* 4.126)

Even very advanced Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas could not fully comprehend that this verse meant exactly what it said. Your absolute faith in this prediction and the Lord’s order that the holy name of Kṛṣṇa be chanted in every town and village of the world supercharged your preaching and sparked the Hare Kṛṣṇa explosion we are lucky to be part of today. Totally fearless and spontaneously innovative, you infused your deep conviction into our shallow hearts. We try to run behind you as you demonstrate what it means “to try your best and depend on Kṛṣṇa.”

Following the order of the spiritual master may appear inconceivable to a disciple, and that is acceptable. However, a disciple should never hesitate to follow such an instruction, nor should the disciple consider it impossible to carry out. You told us that along with the order of the spiritual master comes the ability to execute it. Your transcendental activities have proved that to the whole world.

New Vrindaban is a direct manifestation of your heart’s desire to give shelter to your devotees and simultaneously transform the hearts of pilgrims into lovers of Kṛṣṇa. Our tiny brains have not yet been able to understand how to manifest simple Vṛndāvana village life and simultaneously become the great Tirupati-like pilgrimage site you envisioned for New Vrindaban.

Our pilgrimage facilities have gradually improved since your encouraging letter of November 10, 1975, where you said:

I am glad to note that Indians are coming and that you are constructing a large kirtana and prasadam hall and also guest rooms. It is very good you are constructing these guest rooms because they were needed. According to our program we will have to also construct seven temples so you should do it and it will actually be a New Vṛndavana in America.

This year saw significant infrastructure work on the new Rādhā-Gopīnātha temple, and even through the pandemic we have hosted as many pilgrims as we can handle. One thing we are very happy to inform you is that our book distribution to pilgrims here at New Vrindaban has skyrocketed!

However, your instructions to develop a simple village and live without modern amenities has not manifested, even though you wrote:

Yukta Vairagya means that we should simply accept the bare necessities of our material part of life, and try to save time for spiritual advancement. This should be the motto of New Vrindaban and should be an ideal village where the residents will have plain living and high thinking. [Letter to Hayagrīva Dāsa, 14 June 1968]

Therefore this year’s New Vrindaban offering will also give you a glimpse into one humble attempt to capture that instruction:

Our dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this 125th anniversary of your appearance, please accept our worthless obeisances from your devotees located in the New Jamuna Valley, just a couple of miles from the Rādhā-Vṛndāvanacandra temple. By your mercy there are now four *bhaktas* who have joined us, and they are very inspired by your vision for transcendental simple living. We are in the process of embellishing our small encampment here in a serious attempt to bring into practical shape your ambitious plan to “make Vrindavan.” Your original vision for us was to live in a simple village based on the principles of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, with the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the center.

In accordance with your instructions, we have just completed building a simple temple from recycled materials. We are endeavoring with our whole hearts to create a self-sustaining spiritual village within the greater New Vrindaban community—that is, depending completely on nature’s gifts and milk from the cow. You asked us not to depend on modern civilization, warning us that it is doomed by the will of providence and can collapse at any moment.

We have already produced gallons of maple syrup, our fruit trees are blooming, and our large gardens are ready for spring planting. Our new outdoor kitchen is up and functioning.

You instructed:

Produce all of your basic necessities of life locally. You never need to go farther than what an ox can take you in one day. You can get your food grains sufficiently . . . rice, dal, wheat, vegetables, milk, and sugar. From these five or six items you should be economically free. That you have to do! Not for trade to get money . . . then it will be failure . . . these farm communities will save the world in its darkest hour. At any cost, do it!

So thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving us this wonderfully challenging engagement, which is absorbing us in the devotional service of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and eternally benefiting the unlimited citizens of the earth, including human beings, animals, and plants!

Your humble servants at New Vrindaban Dhāma, West Virginia, USA.

New York

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

We, your servants at Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda temple, ISKCON New York City, on the most auspicious occasion of the 125th anniversary of your most merciful appearance in this world, humbly offer you our deepest gratitude and appreciation. It is difficult to put into words the impact you had on the world from the time you left Calcutta. By divine arrangement you chose to come to New York City to begin the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Your worldwide ISKCON was founded here in 1966 at the tiny 26 Second Avenue storefront. As related by Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvāmī in your main biography, *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*:

Of course, he was now working in extremely limited circumstances. “The principal place of worship, located at 26 Second Avenue, in the city, county, and state of New York,” was the sole

headquarters for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Yet Prabhupāda insisted that he was not living at 26 Second Avenue, New York City. His vision was transcendental. His Guru Mahārāja had gone out from the traditional holy places of spiritual meditation to preach in cities like Calcutta, Bombay, and Delhi. And yet Prabhupāda would say that his spiritual master had not really been living in any of those cities, but was always in Vaikuṇṭha, the spiritual world, because of his absorption in devotional service.

Similarly, the place of worship, 26 Second Avenue, was not a New York storefront, a former curiosity shop. The storefront and the apartment had been spiritualized and were now a transcendental haven. “Society at large” could come here, the whole world could take shelter here, regardless of race or religion. Plain, small, and impoverished as it was, Prabhupāda regarded the storefront as “a holy place of transcendental pastimes, dedicated to the Personality of Krishna.” It was a world headquarters, a publishing house, a sacred place of pilgrimage, and a center from which an army of devotees could issue forth and chant the holy names of God in all the streets in the world. The entire universe could receive Kṛṣṇa consciousness from the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, which was beginning here. [*Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, Chapter 18: “Breaking Ground”]

Everyone knows the importance of New York City. You yourself said that New York is the most important city in the most important country of the world. Everyone looks to New York as the example and origin in all fields of human endeavor. Therefore we can understand that maintaining and expanding the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement here is so important. The following recollection from your dear disciple Pañcaratna Prabhu clearly reveals your own consideration that New York is the *most* important preaching project:

In January 1976 I was serving in ISKCON New York as the general manager/vice president, and we had recently completed our shift to Manhattan, to 340 W 55th St. Our temple president, Gopijanavallabha, had just resigned and joined the traveling Rādhā-Dāmodara party. In a few months Madhudviṣa Mahārāja was going to take over as both GBC and TP of the New York temple, so I was serving as acting president. The previous year, in order to facilitate the smooth operations of the temple while a large group attended the festival in India, I went several weeks ahead for pilgrimage (my first), and then came back when the main group arrived in Māyāpur.

So, this year I planned to do the same, and I arrived in India a few weeks before the festival was to begin. When I got to Māyāpur, I was soon approached by Bāṇabhaṭṭa Prabhu, a member of the Nāmahaṭṭa Saṅkīrtana party, who was temporarily serving as the temple commander. He asked if I could help with the preparations for the festival as they were very shorthanded, and I agreed. By the time the festival began, I had many responsibilities. In the months previous, we had been hearing that Śrīla Prabhupāda was asking for more devotees to come serve in India, and I had contemplated how nice it might be to be asked to join the India team. I was thinking that I would get more direct association with Śrīla Prabhupāda in this way. When the New York devotees arrived with Madhudviṣa Mahārāja, Bhavānanda and Gargamuni Mahārājas approached Madhudviṣa Mahārāja to ask if I could stay to serve in Māyāpur. He responded that since he was new in his position, he would like to confer with Śrīla Prabhupāda. As I remember, when we went to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s room he appeared to be reflecting on some disturbances in Indian politics or something like that and commented: “We can’t expect the whole world to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. But at least there should be one ideal place.” I took this to be referring to the development of Māyāpur. Madhudviṣa Mahārāja then introduced the topic by saying, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, we know that Māyāpur is your most important project.” Śrīla Prabhupāda interrupted and said, “No, New York is my most important project.”

Your momentous and deeply profound appreciation of the importance of New York is a great source

of inspiration for us to rise heroically and enthusiastically to serve your mission here. The past year and a half has been very challenging due to the pandemic, yet by Rādhā-Govinda's mercy and protection, all essential services are going on uninterrupted and are even increasing!

Rādhā-Govinda's daily *sevā* is being wonderfully maintained. Their Lordships delight the devotees with so many beautiful clothes, ornaments, and flower garlands. Govinda's restaurant is being maintained nicely by your dedicated followers and praised by all who dine there. Another transcendental enhancement to your "most important project" is that the NYC *harināma* party, ably led by your granddisciple Rāmārāya Prabhu, has taken shelter at your Rādhā-Govinda Mandira. As a result, your transcendental book distribution, which has steadily increased over the last three years, is increasing more and more.

Your museum has now been reestablished in a beautiful room that facilitates public viewing and guided access! So many sacred items of yours are now on display, such as the shoes you wore as you boarded the *Jaladuta* and then walked all over New York City in during your first year here.

Your New York temple has been appropriately designated an "International ISKCON Project," joining your Mumbai, Māyāpur, and Vṛndāvana projects! Property values in the area around the temple have skyrocketed, adding great prestige and respectability to the temple, which in the future, with the cooperation of your servants locally and around the world, will be fabulously developed and expanded!

In the meantime, your temple is being repaired, maintained, and fearlessly protected by your able and loyal servants here at ISKCON New York City.

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. Krishna 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 Dāsa, 3 July 1973]

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Please bless us so we can carry on and somehow be effective instruments in fulfilling your will and desires to serve your "most important project." Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda and ISKCON New York *yātrā dhāma kī jaya!*

With all the love, respect, and humility at our command, we remain

Your servants at Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda temple, ISKCON New York City, USA.

Noida

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances unto your lotus feet. This year we are celebrating the 125th anniversary of your divine appearance. Out of great compassion for the conditioned souls trapped in this material world, you started this glorious Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, which offers shelter from the all-devouring forest fire of material life.

Although you were instrumental in saving millions of souls, you always took a humble position by offering all credit to your dear spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. In a lecture you

delivered on his disappearance day, with great concern and intense feeling you appealed to your disciples to push on the movement even in your absence.

So on this divine occasion of your appearance day, we wish to present you with a report of how the devotees at ISKCON Noida are trying to serve your desire to push on the movement. The following list describes our feeble attempt to push on the movement for your divine pleasure. The year 2020 was unique in the history of humankind, as the whole world was in lockdown. Although this year proved to be one of immense financial distress for many people, it provided devotees eager to spread the glories of the Supreme Lord with a great opportunity in disguise.

- During the lockdown, for two months straight ISKCON Noida distributed 5,000 plates of *prasādam* per day.
- The Bhaktivedanta Academy launched a number of online courses, and more than a thousand students participated.
- We have four *bhakti-śāstrī* courses running simultaneously, with 150 devotees scheduled to graduate with a *bhakti-śāstrī* degree this year.
- We held various online programs, such as seminars on Zindagi (life), Parivartan (transformation), and Leadership Excellence. These programs helped us increase our outreach.
- During the last December marathon, ISKCON Noida stood seventh in India, distributing 28,000 transcendental books.
- A new project was initiated at the Expressway land.
- We conducted many webinars and offered regular courses at various colleges, including Sharda University, Amity University, and Noida Institute of Engineering and Technology.

This year, during which we are celebrating the 125th anniversary of your birth, we have pledged to do much more as an offering to your divine self. We seek your divine blessings to be able to fulfill our pledges for your pleasure.

Your insignificant servants at ISKCON Noida, India.

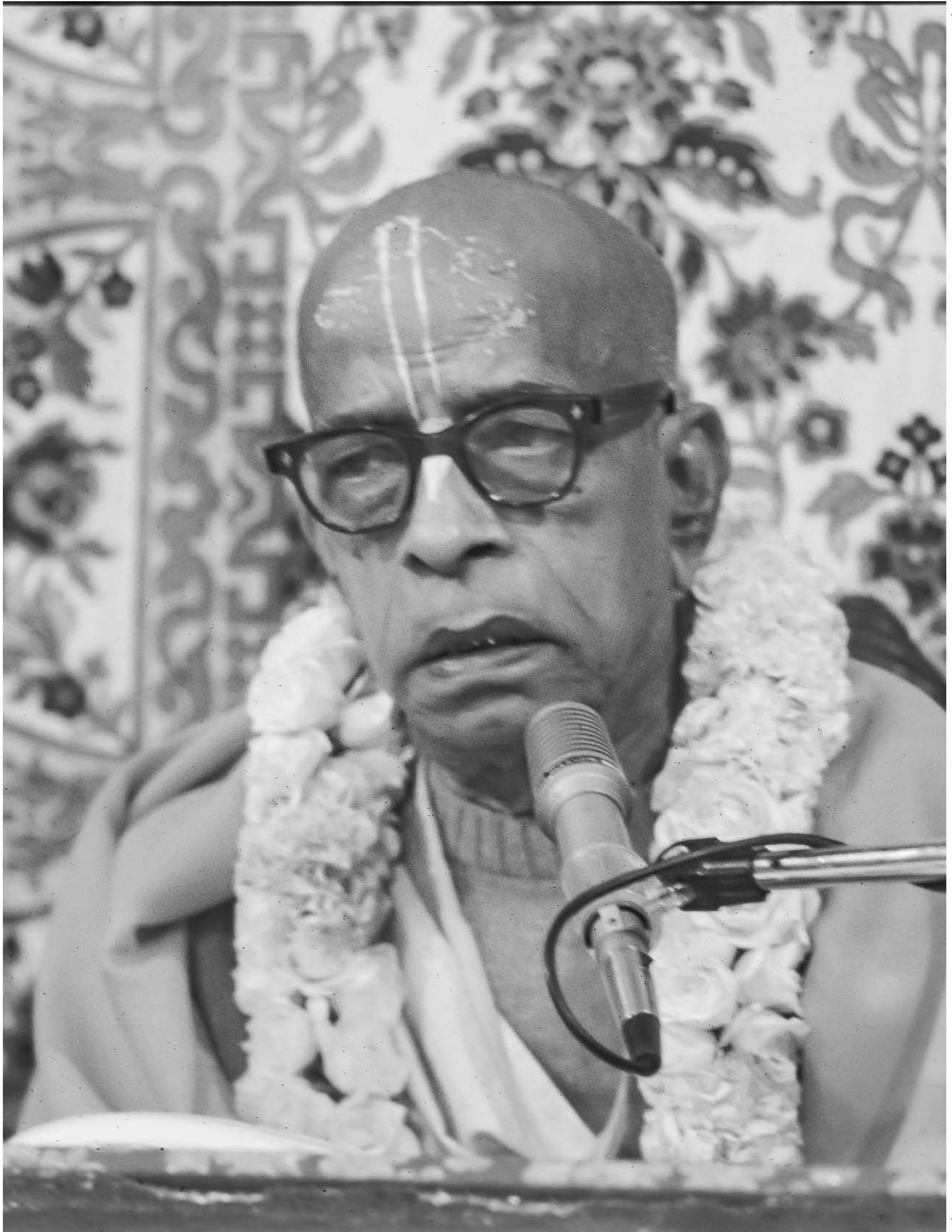
Ottawa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. On this most auspicious occasion of your appearance anniversary, we submit a few words of appreciation to express our heartfelt gratitude for the gifts have offered and continue to offer to us and humanity at large.

We have asked several devotees to write:

Guruprasāda Dāsa: The predicament humanity faces in Kali-yuga is well described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This age is full of faults and not at all conducive for making spiritual progress. In fact, the age's influence is such that people in general care about nothing except sense gratification. In such circumstances, your presence in our midst through your spoken words, in videos, and in your writings—in short through ISKCON—is so great a fortune for us that we are unable to fully describe it. We recollect the words Śrī



Śaunaka Ṛṣi spoke to Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī on behalf of the sages assembled in the Naimiṣāraṇya forest: “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)

In your purport to this text you state:

The Age of Kali is very dangerous for the human being. Human life is simply meant for self-realization, but due to this dangerous age, men have completely forgotten the aim of life. In this age, the life span will gradually decrease. People will gradually lose their memory, finer sentiments, strength, and better qualities. A list of the anomalies for this age is given in the Twelfth Canto of this work. And so this age is very difficult for those who want to utilize this life for self-realization. The people are so busy with sense gratification that they completely forget about self-realization. . . . The whole system of education is geared to sense gratification, and if a learned man thinks it over, he sees that the children of this age are being intentionally sent to the slaughterhouses of so-called education. Learned men, therefore, must be cautious of this age, and if they at all want to cross over the dangerous ocean of Kali, they must follow in the footsteps of the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya and accept Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī or his bona fide representative as the captain of the ship. The ship is the message of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the shape of the *Bhagavad-gītā* or *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are our captain, so we are confident of our safe journey back home, back to Godhead. Thank you for guiding us on this journey.

You gave us the most important message: the purpose of human life means achieving spiritual perfection—reawakening the inherent love of an individual soul for the Supreme Soul, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This message is relevant to people of all age groups. We know it factually and we hear it often in conversations among the devotees. The words of appreciation and gratitude expressed by devotees from different age groups in the ISKCON Ottawa community are included below.

* * *

Harināmāmṛta Dāsa and Śyāmala-gopī Devī Dāsī:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanah*

“Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of the Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.” (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.23)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you demonstrated the above quote from the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* in your life, setting the example for others. You also enabled so many others, by your example and instructions, to realize the same benefit.

You left India alone on a steamship to fulfill the order of your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, to spread the message of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* to the Western world. You established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in 1966, much to the surprise of a handful of your followers in the first and, at that time, only temple. By your causeless mercy you accepted anyone, irrespective of their background or qualifications. Responding to your genuine care, many became your followers. You engaged them in various ways, starting with street *harināma-saṅkīrtana*. Growing spiritually under your care and guidance, many took on other services, including book and magazine publishing and distribution.

You didn’t miss an opportunity to preach about the genuine spiritual path of *bhakti* to individuals, groups, or cultural and educational institutions. Kindly continue to bless us so that even as senior citizens we will continue to serve ISKCON to the best of our abilities. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Lilāmohini Devī Dāsī: I will never stop thanking you for the books you gave us. I feel very fortunate that I came in contact with this transcendental knowledge in this life through your books. His Holiness Nirañjana Swami says about you and your books that “they have a special sweetness. He gave us everything. They have the capacity to awaken the heart and help us realize the urgency of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

* * *

Ānandamayī Devī Dāsī: The year 1896 was one of the most auspicious years in this Kali-yuga, and September 1 was the most auspicious day in that year. It was the day you mercifully appeared in this world, which is full of miseries, ignorance, and impermanence. Your mission started in your childhood, when you showed by your own example how Kṛṣṇa conscious children can behave. You were always devoted to Kṛṣṇa, and so were keen on conducting a small Ratha-yātrā festival for Lord Jagannātha. The biggest portion of your life you spent in the *grhastha-āśrama*, with family members who were often not supportive of your very special mission. You took on these family struggles to show us, the future generations who are for the most part *grhasthas*, what it is like to be an ideal *grhastha* despite any difficulties that we may encounter.

You showed complete dedication to your spiritual master and his instructions and became a perfect instrument in his hands to carry out his incredible mission.

In 1996, a hundred years after your appearance, I came to ISKCON Ottawa for the first time and soon resolved to take shelter of your instructions. I am a rascal who does not realize her full fortune, and I have not yet taken full shelter of your instructions. Nevertheless, I feel your mercy and presence in my life every single day. This signifies your unlimited glories and compassion. I earnestly pray that I will, one day, become a worthy servant of yours and a worthy disciple in our *sampradāya* so that I can render some meaningful service to your wonderful mission.

* * *

Bhaktin Anne: This year has been both a test and a gift and has brought me closer to you. You taught me how to use my faith and prayer muscles to navigate difficulties. As a result, the realization that there is no way I can live without Kṛṣṇa consciousness has sunk deeper into my heart, and this strengthened and revitalized my spiritual life. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave us everything that matters. You gave us the roadmap to go back to Kṛṣṇa and created a culture that protects and enlivens devotees’ endeavors to continue your mission. I feel deeply grateful that you called me to join your ranks, and I bow at your lotus feet with great awe and reverence.

* * *

Bhakta Sharat: Having been born in a Hindu family, I was fortunate to know of Kṛṣṇa from childhood, but my approach to Him was one of awe and reverence. I had no conception of developing an intimate relationship with Him in various mellows, and the truth is that I might never have known about it. However, through your books and disciples you rescued this fallen soul who was drowning in the deep ocean of nescience. Whenever I hear your disciples speak of you, my love and admiration for you deepens and my faith strengthens.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please forgive this rascal as he keeps stumbling on his spiritual path. Guide me, Śrīla Prabhupāda, so that I may overcome all impediments on my spiritual path. Please bless me with pure, unconditional, and unmotivated love for Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi. Please bless me with wisdom and intelligence, Śrīla Prabhupāda, so that I may better understand Kṛṣṇa. Please bless me with devotion so that I may develop the eagerness to render loving service to Kṛṣṇa, to you, and to the devotees.

* * *

Bhakta Surendra: I do devotional practices in Kṛṣṇa consciousness because of the ISKCON centers near the various locations where I've resided over the past few years. Your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* taught me the importance and actual meaning of surrender. I am amazed and inspired when I see people around the world become attracted to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, irrespective of their cultural background. This is a clear demonstration of the fact that loving devotional service is universal, beyond any material designations, for it pertains to the intrinsic nature of the soul. My humble prayer is that I will never move away from this path of *bhakti* under any condition.

* * *

Bhaktin Yashica: Śrīla Prabhupāda, I was fortunate to grow up in a very amicable atmosphere, surrounded by your devotees, who showered me with unconditional love. From my childhood I've been surrounded by *hari-kathā* and *hari-nāma kīrtana* because of my parents' active participation in the local ISKCON centers wherever we've resided. I also learned that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that since we are all His children, each of us has an eternal loving relationship with Him. Now, as a teenager, I have the great fortune of serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His devotees in different ways. I love to participate actively in special programs, such as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, Ratha-yātrā, Vaiṣṇava saṅgas, and *kīrtana-melās*, because I get to know other teenage devotees. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for establishing ISKCON and giving us your books, the *mahā-mantra*, and the *kīrtana* culture!

* * *

Guruprasāda Dāsa: Śrīla Prabhupāda, ISKCON and its members are already guiding hundreds of thousands on the true path of unmotivated devotional service to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In the future, more and more will benefit similarly, in increasing numbers, demonstrating your status as the preeminent *jagad-guru*. We know the *sāstras* declare that one cannot adequately repay the gifts given by the spiritual master. Nonetheless, it's our duty to try. By following your instructions and serving your mission in the mood of mutual cooperation, we want to please you to whatever extent we can.

Thank you again and again, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your humble aspiring 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*

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble obeisances at your lotus feet as we celebrate this 125th anniversary of your birth. For your pleasure, we, the devotees at ISKCON Pandharpur, would like to submit a report of the major activities we performed in 2020.

We completed the construction and decoration of a beautiful large bathing *ghāṭa* on the eastern bank of the Chandrabhaga River, in loving memory of Your Divine Grace and under the inspiration and guidance of your dear disciple His Holiness Lokanāth Swami.

It was our desire to offer this beautiful *ghāṭa* in the service of pilgrims last year, but that wasn't possible because we found ourselves caught in the coronavirus pandemic. With your blessings and mercy, we plan to make that offering this year, with the Honourable Chief Minister of the Government of Maharashtra presiding over the function. We have also opened an attractive Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma children's park at this *ghāṭa*. We are in the process of adding sanitation areas for the pilgrims.

There has also been much improvement in upgrading the temple and its premises. The temple premises have been beautified with the addition of paving blocks. We are expanding the Deity kitchen and backup area by building a new floor above the existing kitchen. We are also opening a spiritual shopping market behind the temple. We have also built a parking lot for temple vehicles.

As part of devotee training and care, we have started daily *Bhagavad-gītā* classes and *brahmacārī* classes thrice a week. We started the Personality Development Course (PDC) course, under the New Bhakta Department.

The year 2020 saw major setbacks as the entire world went into lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic. We were locked down on the temple property for almost a year—no one was allowed to go out and no one was allowed to come in from outside the temple premises. Adding to this calamity, there was a flood. This year, ISKCON Pandharpur was hit by another, more massive flood, which caused us severe losses.

Still, the devotees courageously faced the challenges and have proven victorious. All services have been reinstated. Despite these hurdles, we distributed about 150,000 plates of *prasādam* to the needy during the pandemic. The lockdown became a blessing in disguise. We conducted a Bhakti-śāstrī course at the temple, and all the devotees passed it with flying colors. We registered an Educational Institute under the ISKCON Education Ministry. This is the platform where we started online courses, inspired by His Holiness Lokanāth Swami and with guidance from His Holiness Sundara Caitanya Goswami and Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Swami.

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, since this year we are celebrating the 125th anniversary of Your Divine Grace's appearance, we have planned various events in different categories, to be organized throughout the year—congregational preaching, youth preaching, campus preaching, and preaching in the temple. Please give us the strength and intelligence to make these plans successful for your pleasure.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving us the priceless gift of service to Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Pandharinātha and devotees all over the world.

We aspire to always remain the servants of the servant of your lotus feet.

The devotees at ISKCON Pandharpur, India.

Pānihāṭi

*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*

Most respected and worshipable Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Kindly accept our most respectful and humble obeisances at the dust of your divine lotus feet on

this most auspicious occasion of your appearance day.

The monstrous, deadly Covid-19 pandemic that has ravaged the whole world for the last year and a half has been a nightmare and curse that has claimed so many precious lives. We are still failing to come to terms with the unmatched loss of your beloved son and one of the bravest and finest soldiers in your army, His Holiness Bhakti Chāru Swami, under the shelter of whose constant guidance and encouragement we conducted our preaching missions and several projects, one of them being the compilation of a book on the spiritual glory and history of Pāṇihāṭi-dhāma, entitled *The Glorious History of Pāṇihāṭi: The Place where Lord Caitanya Resides Eternally*.

We witnessed intently how Mahārāja was exact in deciphering your mood, and instead of remaining confined to a room in Ujjain he decided to march to America to bolster the preaching movement there, even when the situation in America was so hellish. At a time when people were afraid even to step out of their houses in fear of being attacked by the coronavirus, he set out for America as a true hero, disregarding the threat of the pandemic. His journey finally ended in a blissful reunion with you. The quality of a tree is known by the quality of the fruits it bears. Mahārāja is a fruit belonging to the tree of the perfect spiritual training he received from you in the form of your teachings, instructions, and the way you practically demonstrated those teachings and instructions by your personal example. It is therefore through his sacrifice that we also understand the extent of your sacrifice for us and how you taught your disciples to do the same.

For example, in your last months you wanted to go to Gītā-nāgarī. In 1976, you were still traveling despite feeling weak and having an extraordinary excess of mucus. When you were coming down the elevator in the New York temple, some of the devotees said, “Prabhupāda, maybe you should rest for a month.” But you stepped out of the elevator, looked at the devotees, and said, “Just like Arjuna, I want to die on the battlefield.” And then you walked a little farther and said, “And you should also do the same.” This explains why Mahārāja embarked on a most hazardous journey to America. He did what you instructed and, by following in the footsteps of your glorious son, we are trying to do the same.

Despite the onslaught of the devilish coronavirus, we haven’t stopped but have forged ahead with our preaching mission, because it is on this that you placed maximum emphasis and literally wore out your body after plunging into this mission. You taught us by using dictating machines, microphones, typewriters, etc., how to make the best use of modern technology for preaching the message of Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya. The doors of all houses had to remain closed during the lockdown, but the door of the Lord’s mercy remained open in the form of daily classes on Zoom. These classes devotionally enriched and spiritually nourished all the participants. The lockdown had little effect on our outreach; on the contrary, our outreach increased. By Your causeless mercy, we were successful at keeping Lord Caitanya’s mercy flowing in this way.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you will also be overjoyed to know that during the lockdown we regularly fed *prasādam* to five hundred people, thus complying with your instruction that no one should go hungry “within a ten-mile radius” of a temple. This was another way we didn’t hesitate to distribute Mahāprabhu’s mercy even when the virus was frowning at us. So many devotees from our congregation and our other well-wishers wholeheartedly contributed to make this distribution a huge success.

What is most encouraging, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is that we have such a dedicated group of young boys who are pursuing *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* with such sincerity and seriousness in accordance with your instructions. Youth preaching has always been our main focus, and at present we have twelve dedicated youth preachers and many young people who are ready to serve your movement and spread your glories in numerous innovative ways on YouTube and Facebook and other social media platforms. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you will also be very pleased to know that in this youth forum there is an efficient book distribution team, who have vigorously distributed your books even during the pandemic. They have helped us secure the eighth position in the small temple category throughout the world, according to the “World Sankirtan Newsletter.” Śrīla Prabhupāda, again and again we request you to mercifully shower your grace upon them so that in the light of your grace these fresh buds may bloom to their fullest and spread the aroma of their devotion in all four directions, thus attracting people to your ISKCON, close to your lotus feet.

It is worth mentioning, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that we fared well during the Bhadra Pūrṇimā campaign despite the COVID crisis, distributing 182 *Bhāgavatam* sets in 2020—more than the 157 we had distributed in 2019. We are sure that after reading this, your face is decorated with a broad, nectarean smile. That broad, nectar-filled smile is our greatest prize, and we always look forward to winning it.

It was your prediction, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that one day the Pānihāṭi center would become an important center. We have acted tangibly to facilitate the fulfillment of your divine prediction by striving relentlessly to make Pānihāṭi secure pride of place among holy pilgrimage sites. Our center has taken active steps to secure as heritage sites Danda-mahotsava Tala, where Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī was “punished” by Lord Nityānanda—and as a result the famous festival of chipped rice and yogurt was celebrated—and Gauranga Ghat, the site where Mahāprabhu arrived in Pānihāṭi. If we succeed, this means that these two sites will undergo massive infrastructure development, helped by an inflow of government funding, and will begin to attract many pilgrims and tourists to Pānihāṭi. Also, although holy sites unfortunately tend to become infested by indecent activities or acts against society, and this has always sent a negative message to people outside Pānihāṭi, the stringent corrective measures the government is expected to take will preserve the sanctity of the places here, and the glories of Pānihāṭi Dhāma will spread far and wide.

There are so many projects, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that we want to undertake for your pleasure. But there are great challenges, too. We are thankful for them. The more challenges we face, the more dependent we become on your mercy, and that helps us not to be foolishly egotistical about our own tiny strength. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura appropriately sang, *jogyatā-vicāre, kichu nāhi pāi, / tomāra karuṇā-sāra*: “When I examine myself I find nothing of value. Therefore, your mercy is essential to me.” Our strength lies not in identifying our own small capacities but in identifying ourselves solely as your grandchildren, whom you personally empower to perform mammoth tasks for Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure. So no matter what obstacles come our way, may we always say:

We can move mountains,
We can drink the ocean.
Don’t you know who we are?
Prabhupāda’s beloved grandchildren.

Always praying for your causeless mercy, we remain

Your servants at ISKCON Pānihāṭi, West Bengal, India.

Perth

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our respectful and humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace, to the Vaiṣṇava *paramparā*, and to the devotees of the Lord.

In 1975, your transcendental lotus feet landed on the ground of Perth, one of the most remote cities in the world. For ten days you remained here and carried on with your regular activities—instructing disciples, meeting interested people, going for morning walks, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, etc., with the sole intention of establishing Kṛṣṇa consciousness here.

Forty-six years have gone by, and your mission is slowly taking deep root in Perth. By your inspiration, ISKCON Perth has taken its first steps toward constructing a new temple for Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Śācinandana. We sincerely invoke your blessings to complete this project for your pleasure.

The current temple in the hills of the city attracts many guests for festivals and Sunday feasts. Your Govinda's restaurant is open every day of the week, distributing numerous plates of *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*. Every Friday there is an ecstatic *harināma*, with a throng of devotees loudly glorifying the Lord's holy names. But perhaps our most salient achievement is our congregational expansion: nowadays, there are many devotees residing in Perth. These congregational devotees are loyal followers of your instructions, as found in your books, and incredibly determined to fulfill your desires. There are many regular outreach and home programs throughout the week, an ever-growing children's Sunday school, and various initiatives and training programs to strengthen the devotees' practice and understanding of the path of *bhakti* as chalked out by Your Divine Grace and the previous *ācāryas*. We envision having many, many home centers, with hundreds of thousands of families applying and sharing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This expansion is in line with a prediction you made in the early days of your preaching. You said on that occasion that one day our temples would be like churches—a few devotees living in the temple and the majority living outside. The devotees who heard you at that time could barely realize your farsightedness. We pray that we can humbly contribute to making your vision a reality.

In this way, Śrīla Prabhupāda, bit by bit we are endeavoring to fulfill your mission for the benefit of all conditioned souls. We want that “one day” this remote corner of the world will also become inundated with devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and that the desires you state at the end of your introduction to *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, quoting the *Gītā-māhātmya*, may be fulfilled:

Therefore, *ekaṁ śāstram devakī-putra-gītam*: let there be one scripture only, one common scripture for the whole world—*Bhagavad-gītā*. *Eko devo devakī-putra eva*: let there be one God for the whole world—Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *Eko mantras tasya nāmāni*: and one hymn, one mantra, one prayer—the chanting of His name: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. *Karmāpy ekaṁ tasya devasya sevā*: and let there be one work only—the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The humble servants of your servants at ISKCON Perth, Australia.

Phoenix (United States)

Our dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Please accept our most respectful obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you! All glories to your mission! All glories to your continued inspiration!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, another year has gone by, a year like no other in current times, a year where we have had to learn to live a new normal. We lost many of your dear sons, daughters, grandchildren, and well-wishers, and the fight continues. It has not been easy, but we have remained afloat thanks to your mercy. When you decided that it was time to come to the West, following the instructions of your Guru Mahārāja, you had a mission to fulfill, an order to execute, and despite adversity you succeeded. At a fragile age you took a huge risk for us: you left India and came to a place filled with Kali's favorite elements. But empowered souls like you, special envoys of the Lord, have only one mission: to rescue the fallen souls and guide them back home, back to Godhead.

For months the world has come to a halt—a tiny virus proved deadly for humanity—but it was during these tough times that we have learned to better appreciate the holy name, the association of devotees, and, for some, the meaning of surrender.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we understand the great importance of your mission, the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Kindly bless us so that we can focus on it. Bless us so that we can share with others the most wonderful gift you entrusted us with: the holy name of the Lord.

We pray that you forgive our shortcomings and accept our service. We have a lot to learn and to appreciate, but as we have said before, you gave us the blueprint; now it is up to us to follow the instructions. Then one day, when our hearts are cleared of *anarthas*, when we awaken the sincere desire to engage in devotional service, we will meet you at the pier, where the boat you are captaining will be waiting for all those surrendered souls you have rescued, ready to take them back home, where they will forever serve by your side.

In the meantime, please allow us to serve you for the pleasure of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava Hari and for the benefit of all, always, with your mission in mind.

Your aspiring servants at ISKCON Phoenix, Arizona, USA.

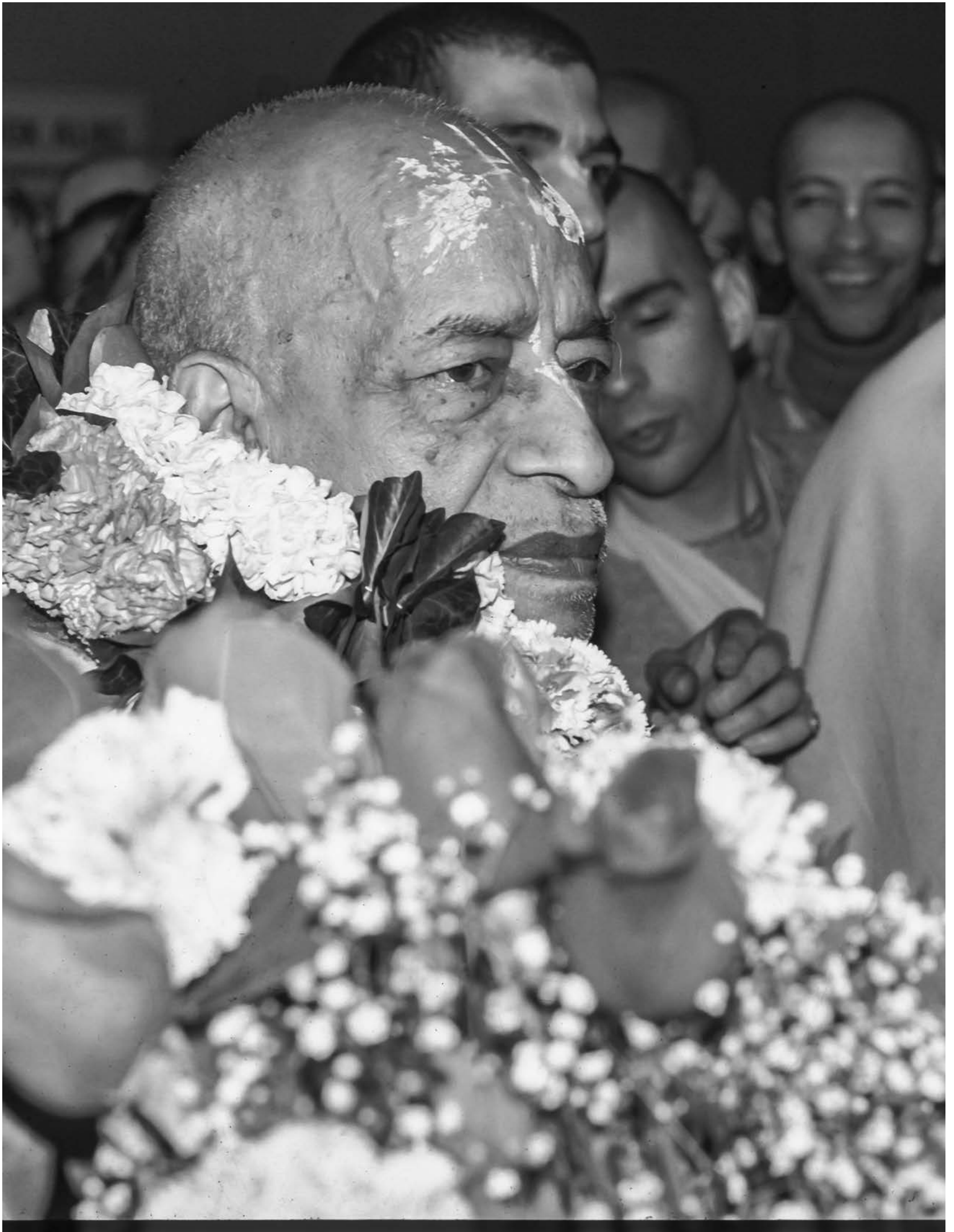
Sandton

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*

Please accept our most humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet. All glories to you and your divine mission. On behalf of our ISKCON Sandton *yātrā* we would like to offer the sincere services of all the devotees who have contributed to your temple and preaching mission here over the past year.



Even our combined efforts to serve your lotus feet can never begin to repay you for the priceless gift you have given each of us: an opportunity to be a part of the *saṅkīrtana* mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—to share the message of Godhead and revive our deepest love for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. We pray that you will be pleased by our book distribution, *harināma*, *pūjārī sevā*, daily *sādhana*, and other services. Although our contributions may be small, please allow us to become instrumental in your mission, so that Kṛṣṇa will reveal how He can make the impossible possible.

We have already experienced how, although we may be undeserving, Lord Kṛṣṇa made it possible for us to meet and serve you, His pure devotee. You explained, “A pure devotee is he who loves Kṛṣṇa without any material desire. Such pure devotees are very rare.” Just by observing your life and teachings, and by hearing about your pastimes from your disciples, we can begin to understand your glories. Śrutakīrti Prabhu, who was your personal servant for three years, shared many of your pastimes, revealing how you showed us how to use everything in Kṛṣṇa’s service and desire nothing for personal sense gratification. By hearing from your disciples, we are able to catch a glimpse of your exalted position.

In all the three worlds, the rarest boon is to meet a pure devotee like you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. This is our great fortune! Although now we suffer the bittersweet pain of separation from you, still, we can find you in your books. You have written over eighty volumes of spiritual literature to light the way back home. The legacy of your books will surely continue to guide and nourish your followers for generations to come. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Madhya 19.151) Lord Caitanya states, “By the mercy of the spiritual master who is a pure devotee and by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, the fortunate soul wandering throughout the universe from body to body can receive the seed of devotional service.” By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa one gets guru, and by the mercy of guru one gets Kṛṣṇa. It is only by mercy that we have been allowed to meet you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and it is only by following your instructions that we can attain pure love for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. *Yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto ’pi*: without the mercy of the spiritual master, one cannot make any advancement. May we each continuously seek shelter at the lotus feet of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the *param-guru* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

In your later years, in 1965, you gave up the sweet and sheltering residence of the holy *dhāma* and journeyed to the concrete jungle of material life in the United States to fulfill the instruction of your spiritual master. You arrived in the West with only a few dollars and your precious books, with no support and a lot of discouragement from your family, friends, and godbrothers. But you had full faith in the holy names and in the mercy of your *gurudeva*. Even in the face of so much difficulty, you never gave up your fierce determination and brilliant confidence. In only a few years you established ISKCON and inspired hundreds of disciples to begin and maintain dozens of centers throughout the world. You built a house the whole world can live in. How many thousands of souls would be spiritually homeless without you? *Ebe jaśa ghuṣuk tribhuvana*: your fame is spread all over the three worlds. Though we may not be able to understand the full extent of your glories, still, we can find eternal inspiration from even a brief encounter with you. Many of your disciples have expressed that one moment of your association was enough to fuel their spiritual enthusiasm for the rest of their lives.

May your compassion for each of us melt our hearts and continue to inspire us to serve by following your instructions and your mood. Even through all the challenges we face individually and collectively, let us never deviate from serving your divine mission. You said that we can show our love for you by how much we cooperate with one another. May we show our love for you by accepting our challenges as opportunities to deepen and strengthen our relationships with one another, with our spiritual masters, and with the holy names.

Please accept the contributions made toward your mission by our ISKCON *yātrā* at Sandton. We are eternally grateful for the blessings you continue to shower on us. May we continue to show our gratitude through enthusiastic service. We pray that you will always be pleased to reside at our temple. Please accept our heartfelt prayers to please you as we gaze at the sunrise of the universal *saṅkīrtana* movement, in hopes that our contributions can positively assist with the inevitable spread of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s holy names to every town and village. By your mercy, may our *bhakti* creepers flourish and grow toward the

lotus feet of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and may many more thousands of souls be inspired to embark on the quest for self-realization. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

With gratitude and sincerity,

Your servants at ISKCON Sandton, South Africa.

Seattle

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances in the eternal dust of your transcendental lotus feet. All glories to you on your auspicious Appearance Anniversary!

On this most sacred day,
to Prabhupāda I pray.
Please tell me what to say;
kindly reveal the way.

Your writings are the lawbooks
for the next ten thousand years;
in every cranny and nook
we must share your teachings clear.

O Prabhupāda, with your guiding hand
show the escape route from this dreamland,
as I still don't fully understand
how to surpass my illusions grand.

Separation is the highest love
on the path of the Truth Absolute.
Your mercy is all I am made of,
trailing your perfect steps resolute.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please don't stop speaking,
for I still have not properly heard you.
With greed your rope of *bhakti* I'm seeking
to pull me from this mire I'm sinking through.

Like the sparrow who was determined
to retrieve her eggs from the ocean,
despite great difficulties and pain
you bestowed the gift of devotion.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, alone I possess no force;
lacking purity and faith, I feel no remorse.
Your causeless blessings offer the only recourse
while I cry Kṛṣṇa's names until my voice is hoarse

Your servants in Seattle, Washington, USA.

(written by Anubhāvānanda Dāsa)

Solapur

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you appeared in this material world like an ocean of mercy, truthfully spreading Lord Caitanya's message boldly to every town and village. Who will not take shelter of your lotus feet? You gave us the topmost devotional service of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, *golokera-prema-dhana*, chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and honoring delicious *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*.

In this Age of Kali, this age of hypocrisy, you became a true friend to us, our “ever well-wisher,” as you always signed your letters. It's by your blessings and mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that we have our Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara temple in Solapur. After many years of preaching, this year we received our letter of approval from the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry to install full-size Deities of Rādhā-Dāmodara. All the preparations are now in full swing, following all standards set by the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry—namely by Your Divine Grace. Please bless us to continue with this service for your pleasure.

We have over three hundred initiated devotees in the congregation, and a small temple on four acres of land, with a *goshala* that has twenty cows and calves. As you taught us, simple living and high thinking. Here in Solapur all the devotees are practicing their Kṛṣṇa consciousness as per your direction, following the rules and regulations. You have given us the nectar of transcendental knowledge through your valuable books.

This year we distributed more than five thousand *Bhagavad-gītās* during the *Gītā* marathon, and a very special offering for you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is that in March 2021 ISKCON Solapur was ranked fourth in the world among small temples in the World Sankirtan Newsletter.

On this auspicious day, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we invoke your blessings upon us so that we may be able to give up lethargy and be ready to fight on your behalf—to successfully practice and preach the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in and around Solapur. The spiritual master gives guidance, but it is the duty of the disciple to follow his instructions properly. Therefore, please bless us so that we can renew our commitments to you. Please bless us so that we may gain more and more love, faith, devotion, and dedication to following in your footsteps through the *guru-paramparā*.

Thank you once again for giving us this wonderful gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

For your pleasure, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have taken some *saṅkalpas* as an offering to you for the auspicious 125th anniversary of your birth:

1. Chanting 1.25 lakh extra rounds in a year.
2. Distributing an extra 25,000 plates of *prasādam*.
3. Distributing 1,250 of Your Divine Grace's books.
4. Gathering 125 new devotees for a *nitya-sevā* of Rs.125 or Rs.1,250.
5. Inviting senior devotees to glorify Your Divine Grace and showing some of your videos on the last Sunday of each month.
6. Holding 125 house programs.
7. Offering 1,250 preparations on Your Divine Grace's appearance day (we are gathering 125 *mātājīs* for the *sevā*).
8. Distributing 25 sets of the *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*.
9. Performing street *harināma saṅkīrtana* at fifty places around the city.
10. Exhibiting 125 drawings and color illustrations of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, done by the Prahlād School kids.
11. Arranging 25 one-day *padayātrās*.
12. Arranging for your *abhiṣeka* to have a 125 *tīrtha jals*.
13. Gathering 125 new Nitya Cow Sevaks.
14. Arranging 125 *Bhāgavata kathās*.
15. Planting 125 *tulasī* plants and giving 1,250 *tulasī* plants in charity (*dāna*).
16. Making 25 new devotees at every preaching center or *nāmahatṭa*.
17. Distributing pamphlets about your life and spiritual journey.
18. Offering 1,250 preparations during Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara's *prāṇa-pratiṣṭhā mahotsava*.
19. Collecting and then sending 1,250 of your quotes to be printed by the media.

Your humble servants at ISKCON Solapur, Maharashtra, India.

Suriname

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Words fall short when it comes to describing your glories. O ocean of mercy, we fall at your worshipable feet and pray for a droplet of your mercy.

Undergoing so much hardship, fifty-six years ago you set out for the West with pure love for Kṛṣṇa in your heart, wanting to spread the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu around the world. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu broke open the great storehouse in which the great ocean of love of Godhead was kept. Out streamed massive waves of devotion. Like ignorant children, the world and its people were tossed by these waves, unable to reap their benefits. All hope seemed lost, until one day the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa accompanied by magical cymbals and bongo drumming were heard emanating from Tompkins Square Park. Upon hearing these spiritual vibrations, Bhakti Devī became excited! Tulasī Mahārāṇī showered her blessings! Nārada Muni played His *vīṇā* in ecstasy! Lord Jagannātha smiled out of love! Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Gaurāṅgasundara danced! Drowning lessons had begun!

The lost and misguided souls who were being tossed by the strong waves of *bhakti* finally learned to utilize these waves properly! It is because of your causeless mercy, O Śrīla Prabhupāda, that we can even

dream of trying to drown in this ocean of love of God. Trying to keep our heads above this ocean means remaining in *māyā*, struggling to remain in the shadows of darkness.

You came into this material devastation in order to show us true love and real compassion, and to snatch us out of the shadows of darkness. You granted us the shelter of Śrī Nāma Prabhu for free, and guided us without material motivation.

Your Divine Grace, you are so full of selfless love, and you spread hope wherever your name is chanted. You are like the sun, spreading rays of *bhakti* as far as the eye can see. You are like the rain, falling everywhere without discrimination.

Please let us forever remain at your lotus feet like raindrops on a lotus. We hold on to your *dhotī*, since you once said that you will bring us back to Godhead through the back door.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, after we had hankered for years, your divine, life-size worshipable form has finally arrived at our Paramaribo temple. We will have it installed with all fanfare and festivities by your disciple His Grace Virabāhu Prabhu. With your arrival, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we know that Vaikuṇṭha will be set loose in the land of Suriname. As if we were your puppets, Śrīla Prabhupāda, please, make us dance, make us dance, make us dance as you like.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, devotees have had a small setback in attending the programs regularly, but we held on to your standards and have not missed *maṅgala-ārati* and all other daily offerings to our beloved Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Gaurasundara, even for a day.

This year's goal for Food for Life is set at 10,000 plates, and we have plans to distribute massive numbers of your nectarean books.

Though there is nothing we can do to repay Your Divine Grace, we, the devotees of the ISKCON Suriname *yātrā*, are eternally indebted to your lotus feet and will always do our utmost best to make you pleased with us.

Even if the stars fall from the sky,
Even if the oceans rise very high,
We will always be your instruments . . .
We will forever be your instruments . . .

Even if the sun does not rise,
Even if the wind does not feel nice,
We will always be your servants . . .
We will forever be your servants . . .

For with you all fear is lost,
For with you the six urges are tossed,
Please let us stay in the shadow of your lotus feet.
Other than this there is nothing we will ever need!

Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*

Your servants in Suriname.

Taipei

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

COVID-19 has been raging all over the world since early last year and has caused severe distress and a number of disasters. Such a sudden epidemic reminds us that the material world is unreliable and the material body impermanent and fragile. This situation also reminds us that attachment to the material can only be disappointing, and that only the spiritual path can liberate us from these dangers and sufferings.

Because Taiwan is an island, the borders were promptly closed. The people of Taiwan are by nature very cooperative, and so they cooperated with the various epidemic prevention measures. Compared with other parts of the world, the number of people infected here is much smaller. Even though this island is a relatively safe place, many programs and assemblies in the Taipei *yātrā* were restricted due to the pandemic. Although there are many challenges, we are continuing with *harināma saṅkīrtana* on weekends. Also, *prasādam* distribution through Food for Life has greatly increased this year, and many new devotees are being engaged in this service.

Due to the travel restrictions, it has become impossible for visiting *sannyāsīs* and overseas preachers to come and give us their valuable association and guidance, as they have in previous years. Although we have reduced many activities, the devotees are using the convenience of modern technology to connect through online classes and programs and thus maintain their vitality and enthusiasm.

In response to the epidemic, many spiritual masters and senior devotees, such as His Holiness Nṛsiṁha Swami, His Holiness Giridhārī Swami, His Holiness Asita Kṛṣṇa Swami, His Grace Mahātmā Prabhu, His Grace Kṛṣṇa Baladeva Prabhu, and His Grace Chandrasekhar Prabhu, have been using Zoom and other internet media to conduct lectures and give their association. Compared with traditional methods, networking online is less restricted by time and place. These senior preachers also provide a variety of themes to attract devotees and their friends to join their events. Despite these difficult times, in March of this year a most fortunate devotee has received her *harināma dikṣā* online from His Holiness Giridhārī Swami.

In a lecture give on March 5, 1969, in Hawaii, on the day after Śrī Gaura-Pūrṇimā, you quoted Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura: “If people do not come to hear this philosophy, don’t be discouraged. You sit down in a room and try to preach. The four walls will hear you. Don’t be disappointed.” Now we are glad to report to you that sometimes there are only four walls around the devotees who are lecturing, but the message can cross the limits of space via the internet to devotees around the world.

Another piece of exciting news is that due to the increasing exchanges between Taiwan and India in recent years, there is a chance that the government of Taiwan will offer public land to build an Indian temple to enhance the cultural and religious exchange between the people in the two places. For this reason we are now preparing relevant materials to make this idea happen so there can be a stable base for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness on this island. We are very confident about this because you opened 108 temples. In addition, many other temples were and are being built by your disciples and granddisciples all over the world. While things are not yet certain in this regard, by your inconceivable mercy and the unlimited profound love of Kṛṣṇa and His dear devotees, all the devotees in Taiwan are eagerly looking forward to this dream coming true by our joint efforts. We all sincerely pray for your blessings to make everything possible.

Your servants in Taipei.

(written by Braja Bihārī Dāsa)

Teluk Intan

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to you!

You remove our ignorance and darkness through your books.

You are the only one who can save this world from destruction.

You made Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa known to the world in a way that everyone could understand.

You established temples all over the world for people to come together and appreciate Deity worship, chant the holy name, hear discourses on *bhāgavata* philosophy, and partake of delicious *prasādam*.

You taught that surrendering to Lord Kṛṣṇa and practicing *bhakti-yoga* constitute the only means of deliverance from this world of suffering.

You taught that only pure love for Kṛṣṇa can cause Him to bestow His full mercy.

All over the world you chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and taught others to chant so that they would be liberated from birth, death, old age, and disease and go back home, back to Godhead.

We wish you a most blissful Vyāsa-pūjā.

Your humble servants at ISKCON Teluk Intan, Malaysia.

Tokyo

*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*

Dear respected Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to your mercy and your divine presence in your disciples. All glories to you on this auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā.

It is said that Your Divine Grace created a house in which the whole world could live. But you also created a system by which the whole world could engage in *bhakti*. There is no disqualification, no reason, no excuse for anyone not to engage in Kṛṣṇa's service.

Today, as we sit to pen a few lines as an offering to Your Divine Grace, we cannot help but think of all the challenges you faced when you were trying to spread the word of Kṛṣṇa across the world.

Now, as we try to continue your mission of purifying the land of the rising sun, we are celebrating the tenth anniversary of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda's installation and the Funabori-Tokyo temple inauguration, which incidentally coincides with the 125th anniversary of your divine appearance. Hence this year has a very special significance for us.

This past year has been really challenging, not only for us at ISKCON New Gayā, Japan, but also for the world. We have been faced with unforeseen circumstances, and the ongoing pandemic has forced us to make decisions we never thought we would have to make. The year 2020 started with clusters of the virus spreading in different parts of the world. Devotees in Japan had plans to travel to the holy *dhāmas* in India, celebrate festivals, go out on *harināma*, etc., but as we entered the month of March the overall situation became dicey. Several countries decided to implement complete lockdowns to avoid the spread of the virus. Japan was also forced to go into such an emergency mode, and closing schools, workplaces, restaurants, etc., became unavoidable. The biggest impact was when travel restrictions were implemented: devotees could neither enter nor leave Japan.

We also had a challenging decision to make about how the temple would function. Together, the devotees decided to close the temple for *darśana* and allow only a limited number of *pūjārīs* into the temple to do the Deity worship. This was a very difficult decision, as each devotee, supporter, and member of the congregation had a different opinion. But a decision had to be made to respond to the Tokyo government's request that places hosting public gatherings be closed. Also, we felt closing the temple was necessary to assure we would achieve our prime objective of preventing any impact of the virus on the day-to-day service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindajī, Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, and Śrī Śrī Jagannātha-Baladeva-Subhadrā.

As we faced the idea of lockdown with no overseas travel, no gatherings, and no programs, we looked for ways to carry on the preaching work. Different global initiatives helped us start holding online *kīrtanas*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* classes, group readings of your books, and other forms of online association with devotees.

Everything went online, and devotees struggled to adapt to the situation, but as always we were guided by your instruction that preaching should go on regardless of the circumstances. We were able to take advantage of the situation by conducting online classes and gaining the *saṅga* of senior Vaiṣṇavas, which otherwise would not have been possible. Book distribution was strengthened through online meetings and sending books by post.

As the pandemic situation started to improve, we reopened the temple in a restricted way. Our grand planning and donation drive for Janmāṣṭamī was a huge success. All the devotees and temple supporters joined in the festival with full enthusiasm while following the necessary restrictions to prevent infections.

By the mercy of Their Lordships, the devotees collected about twelve million Japanese yen through the Janmāṣṭamī festival—the biggest collection to date for ISKCON Japan, and that, too, in such adverse circumstances. Kṛṣṇa has His own plans, and devotees have their own means to fulfill them.

Devotees at ISKCON Japan participated in the global initiative to distribute two million copies of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. We set a target number of 501 *Gītās*, but we were able to distribute 1,136 *Gītās* and, overall, 3,150 books. This is also one of the highest distribution totals for us in recent times during the December marathon.

As our online preaching spread to different parts of Japan, we saw an increase in new devotees joining these online programs. By your mercy, Japanese, Indian, and Russian devotees were initiated and helped us spread the holy names in Japan. The main highlight of this year is that most of these initiated devotees are young locals who can become the leaders of the next generation of the Japanese *yātrā*.

Another milestone devotees managed to achieve was the publication of the new edition of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* in Japanese, which had been pending for quite some time. Devotees are now planning to distribute this newly published book all over Japan.

Your causeless, unlimited mercy has given us the strength and courage to face the difficult pandemic situation. Reading your books, hearing your lectures, and performing *saṅkīrtana* have all intensified. All this has been made possible by our meditating on the instructions in your purports, which give us different ideas on how to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in these most challenging conditions.

A few important milestones we are working toward this year:

- To distribute 12,000 Japanese *Bhagavad-gītās*.
- To pay off the temple bank loan of 36 million JPY.

- To set up administrative processes so that more of the devotees' time and energy can be engaged in *sādhana* and preaching.

Thank you very much, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for all the mercy you have showered upon us, and we continue to beg for your mercy so we may accomplish small and big things.

Your servants at New Gayā, Tokyo, Japan.

Toronto

*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,

We offer this glorification to you on the auspicious occasion of your 2021 Vyāsa-pūjā.

*gurudeva!
kṛpā-bindu diyā, koro' ei dāse,
tṛṇāpekṣā ati hīna
sakala sahane, bala diyā koro',
nija-māne sprhā-hīna*

“Gurudeva! With a drop of mercy make this servant of yours humbler than a blade of grass. Give me the strength to bear all trials and troubles, and free me from all desire for honor.” (from *Śaraṇāgati*, a compilation of songs by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura)

We are blessed by your determined effort to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness to every town and village. We prostrate ourselves at your lotus feet, begging for your mercy and the continued opportunity to assist you in fulfilling Lord Caitanya's prediction that his *saṅkīrtana* movement would spread worldwide.

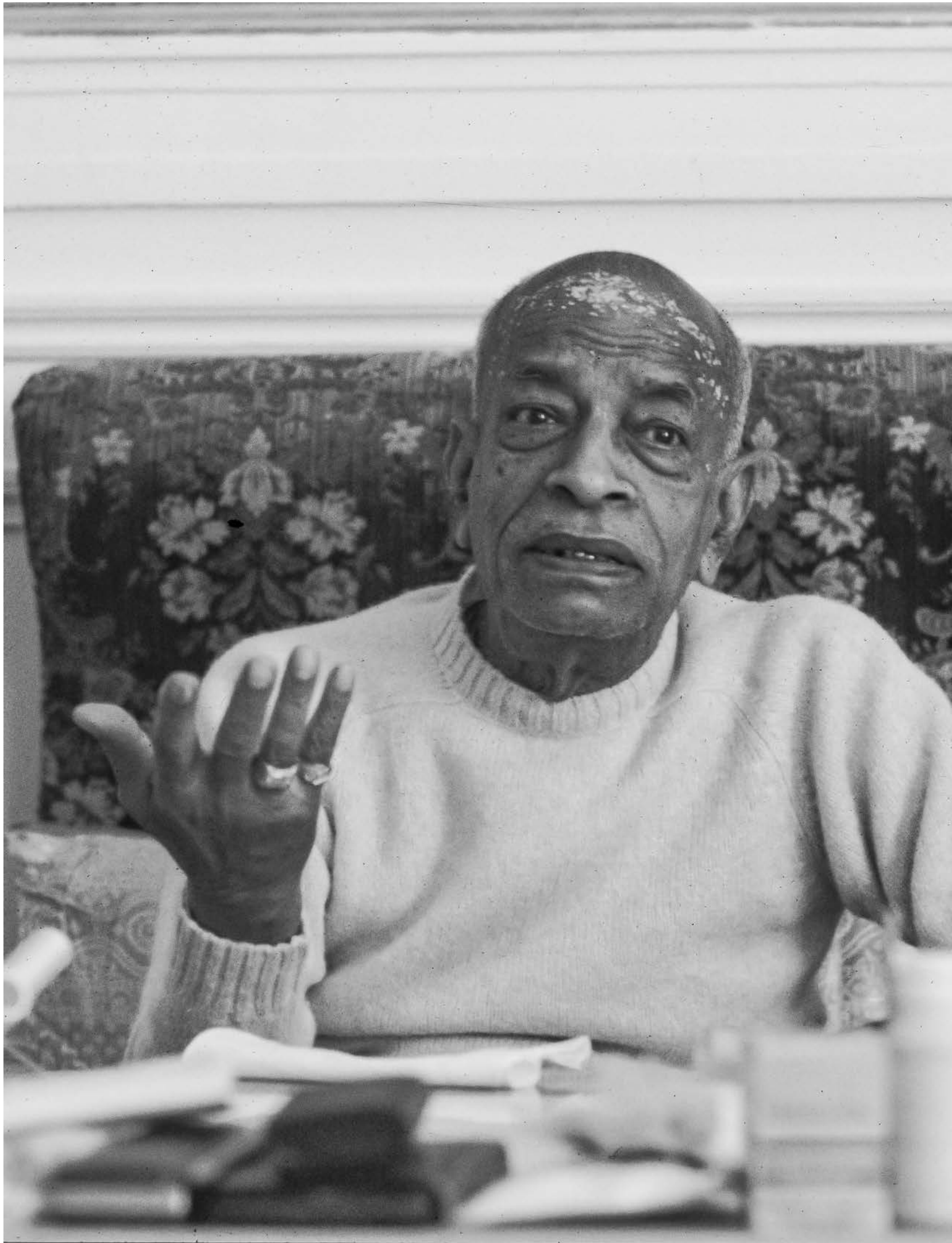
The past year has seen unprecedented challenges around the world, as the COVID-19 virus brought humanity to a virtual standstill, with lockdowns of many communities, including our temple.

We have had to learn new ways to preach and spread the glories of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṣīracora Gopīnātha, but by your mercy and pure desire, we have prospered.

Our temple classes and greeting of the Deities have become virtual, and we are now able to stream these events directly into the homes of our congregation. So despite difficulties, the devotees at New Remuṇā are carrying on your mission very nicely.

The year 2020 saw our *saṅkīrtana* team leading in book distribution. You told us that book distribution is very dear to your heart, and we are very happy to be able to serve you in this way. We would like to report the following:

Our Live to Give campaign was successful in distributing a total of 12,424 *Bhagavad-gītās*, with another 12,151 sponsored.



Altogether a total of 21,925 books were distributed, which includes 246 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sets, 22 *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* sets, and 21 other sets of books. We were fourth in book distribution in North America.

You taught us that the temples are for preaching, and so in this spirit we are actively opening satellite centers and encouraging the communities around them to chant, dance, and be happy.

Our Ratha-yātrā festival, which is one of the largest and best known in the movement, took on a different form last year due to the pandemic restrictions. By the mercy of Lord Jagannātha, Lord Baladeva, and Śrīmatī Subhadrā, we were able to stream a glimpse of the parade to homes far and wide. Viewers watched as the deities rode in a Mercedes convertible “chariot” along the parade route. The devotees added commentary for the online viewers. This expanded program allowed us to hold *kīrtana* and classes over twelve days, and the combined effort of area devotees and visitors brought a Vaikuṇṭha mood to the festival.

As you mention in your purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 8.17, while explaining the influence of Kali-yuga: “There is an abundance of strife, ignorance, irreligion, and vice, true virtue being practically nonexistent.” Kali-yuga is progressing all around us, and the material energy is at a boiling point, not only in Canada but around the world. Every day we hear of terrible atrocities and inhumane acts against Mother Earth and all sorts of living entities.

Everyone is looking for peace and happiness. The only solace for humanity at large is to understand that they are not their bodies but are pure spirit souls, part and parcel of the Supreme Whole, Kṛṣṇa.

You gave us the key to getting out of this material world, and we pray that you are pleased by our neophyte attempts to please you and that you will give us the strength to continue chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Your servants at New Remuṇā Dhāma, Toronto, Canada.

Tucson

*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*

A Daughter's Rap

I ponder your nobility,
Marvel at your ability,
Wonder at your humility,
Charmed by your tranquillity.

When challenged, you're serenity,
With children, sly passivity,
To devotees, total purity,
To the world, such credibility!

For ISKCON, you're stability,
Engaging with agility
Your principle, utility,
Not a mood of futility.

No gender nix-ability,
Just spirit capability,
Bhakti's invincibility—
You welcome us to infinity.

Displaying remarkability,
With no trace of debility,
You show the possibility
Of earth's sustainability.

You've given us facility
To act with flexibility,
Evincing great mobility
While teaching with gentility.

Your writings' readability,
Full of *rasa*, not sterility,
Showing God's adorability
And ageless likeability.

You see our trainability,
A spark of suitability,
Our rounds with audibility.
Your incredible incredibility!

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, who but Your Divine Grace would lovingly accept my nontraditional offering?
At ISKCON Tucson, Arizona, we follow your lead to find novel ways and means to flood the inhabitants
here in the desert with your mercy ocean.

Your servants at ISKCON Tucson, Arizona, USA.

(written by your daughter in service, Sandāminī Devī Dāsī)

Ujjain

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble obeisances in the dust of your divine lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace. All glories to your all-glorious ISKCON.

The entire planet is celebrating the 125th anniversary of your divine appearance in this world with great pomp. The whole world loves you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, because you gave them unconditional love. Your major temples are organizing mega-events to commemorate this most auspicious occasion in a remarkable way. In this ocean of incredible offerings, please accept our toddling endeavors to express our gratitude at your divine lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are an ocean of mercy. You gave us extensions of the spiritual world in the form of your temples. We can feel this at your temple in Ujjain. Last summer, when the whole world was struggling with the deadly spread of the pandemic, locked down in their homes, we were submerged in an ocean of spiritual association, especially in the divine shelter of your dear son, His Holiness Bhakti Chāru Swami. Some of us were locked down inside the temple campus, and it was a constant festival of spiritual upliftment. Even for those who were physically outside the campus, there was so much association via technology that we each felt this situation to be an opportunity to grow in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

However, our days of bliss turned into acute agony when His Holiness Bhakti Chāru Swami went back to Your Divine Grace. Your dear followers reminded us that you called him back to you. Throughout his life Mahārāja prioritized service to your lotus feet, and when you wanted him to rejoin you, he followed that call immediately. However, for us, who depended on his shelter and guidance in our service to you, we felt lost, hopeless, and orphaned. We felt that providence had plundered us entirely.

Mahārāja always reminded us that Your Divine Grace is our ultimate shelter, and as he would not always be available, ISKCON would take care of us. These words became realizations for us this year. After his disappearance, your true followers sheltered us in all possible ways. Although the pandemic caused travel restrictions, and so coming to Ujjain was not possible for many months, every single day different senior devotees from the movement, including your more senior disciples, gave us their most valuable association, guidance, affection, and love. We were submerged in the ocean of compassion they created for us. Despite their already huge and important ISKCON responsibilities, His Holiness Gopāl Krishna Goswami kindly agreed to be our GBC here, and His Grace Bāsu Ghoṣa Prabhu became our regional secretary. We offer ourselves at the lotus feet of all your dear servants with grateful hearts and sold-out existence. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you really built a house in which the whole world can live!

We wish to build a *puṣpa samādhī* for His Holiness Bhakti Chāru Swami. However, due to some legal issues, it is taking a long time to get the necessary permissions. By your mercy everything is possible, so we beg your kind empowerment so that, if you desire it, this endeavor becomes successful.

In the midst of the externally alarming pandemic and the internal setback of losing our spiritual master, we have tried to render some insignificant services for your pleasure. You always wanted devotees to distribute more and more of your books and also to study them scrutinizingly. This year we started our first Bhakti-vaibhava course for the resident devotees. The devotees also tried to distribute as many of your divine books as possible. During the last Bhādra Pūrṇimā and winter marathon, we distributed 228 sets of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 30 *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* sets, 10,486 *mahā*-big books, 148 big books, 106 medium books, and 7,800 small books.

This year also marks the fifteenth anniversary of your Ujjain temple. We had a wonderful celebration, with many senior devotees around the movement addressing us, including eight of your senior disciples. We also published *Avantika* magazine, highlighting the temple's fifteen-year journey. In remembrance of His Holiness Bhakti Chāru Swami, we published *Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Lord and Master of My Heart* and *Prabhupādagata Prāṇa*. Both books are centered on His Holiness's dedicated service to Your Divine

Grace. Similarly, on Gaura-Pūrṇimā and other festivals, we were blessed to have the association of many GBC members, *sannyāsīs*, and other senior devotees, who spoke to us online.

Since there are restrictions on our going out to preach freely due to the pandemic, apart from regular programs we are also trying to push our preaching through online platforms. In February, we organized an “Uddipan” festival. More than ten thousand people participated and heard the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness for three days. There were also a number of follow-up programs to cultivate these participants properly in spiritual life. Thousands of people have responded well to this festival.

We also organized a Gita Leadership Contest (GLC), during which we teach the whole *Bhagavad-gītā* to participants in eighteen days. This year, six hundred people registered for the course and learned the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

Your *gośālā* at the Nalwa land is progressing gradually. This year the cows got their new shed, and a few new projects were initiated to make the *gośālā* self-sufficient, such as producing cow-dung cakes and vermicompost, which we will sell, and buying a new tractor. The altar and *mūrti* production unit at Ujjain is also developing extensively. We did major renovations and also purchased a chrome machine, which increased the scope of our service. Many temples and devotees around the world are giving us the opportunity to supply them with your divine *mūrtis*, as well as altars and other devotional products. By your mercy, the production of the *paramparā mūrtis* for the TOVP is also progressing nicely.

We received a special award for “Excellence of Service” from the local government for our Food for Life program during the lockdown. Inspired by His Holiness Bhakti Chāru Swami, our devotees sent out *prasādam* daily to coronavirus patients, as well as to doctors and other health workers. After the temple was reopened to the public, we also started distributing *prasādam* to all visitors.

In our humble way we continue our preaching at different places in Madhya Pradesh and nearby states. Only by your mercy are many sincere souls becoming connected to your movement. Thousands of people are reading your books and chanting the holy name. Last year thirteen fortunate souls joined the temple as full-time devotees. We can see this expansion as simply a reflection of your causeless mercy.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, COVID-19 has also affected many of our devotees. By your mercy, most of them have recovered. Unfortunately, a few left their bodies. We beg you to kindly give them eternal shelter at your lotus feet. We also pray for the health of all your dedicated followers so that they can serve you more and more and lead us for many, many more years in the ongoing fight against the evils of the fallen Age of Kali.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we received your divine mercy through your dear disciple His Holiness Bhakti Chāru Swami. His physical absence has severely affected us, and we depend on the divine instructions he left behind for us to follow. He always emphasized the three main instructions he received from Your Divine Grace:

1. No matter what happens, never leave ISKCON.
2. The GBC is the ultimate managing authority of ISKCON.
3. “Your love for me will be shown by how you cooperate with one another.”

We beg at your divine lotus feet that we always remember these three instructions and accept them as our life and soul.

Begging to remain humble servants of your servants,

Your devotees at ISKCON Ujjain, India.

Vallabh Vidyanagar

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. We would like to express our gratitude to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for all that you have given to this world. You blessed us all in so many ways and with so many gifts of love and support.

- You gave us the process of hearing and chanting.
- You gave us the mission to preach in every town and village.
- You gave us the reason to feel compassion.
- You gave us the opportunity to go back to Godhead.
- You gave us Kṛṣṇa, the all-attractive Supreme Personality of Godhead.

How can we ever repay you, Śrīla Prabhupāda?

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your teachings have saved us from the darkest ocean of ignorance. This we have personally experienced during the pandemic. The year 2020–2021 has brought humankind to its knees in surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, because an infinitesimal but deadly virus has taught them many lessons. This year we have taken shelter of your books and saved ourselves from the clutches of *māyā*. Death awaits everyone, but a Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee is not afraid of death. Your teachings have removed our fear and increased our faith in the holy name.

This entire year passed in lockdown, and because of restricted *darśana* devotees were not able to come and take *darśana* of the Lord. This made us realize that Kṛṣṇa is nondifferent from His holy name, so we tried to take complete shelter of the holy name.

Our movement lost so many stalwart devotees who were such assets in ISKCON, so we had the opportunity to recollect their contributions to ISKCON and their dedication at your lotus feet, which has been a real inspiration for us.

Even though the situation was tough, by the Lord's mercy we could celebrate almost all the festivals for the pleasure of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī, Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, and Śrī Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrāmayī. We were able to distribute *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* to the needy in and around Anand District and Vidyanagar, and to persons who visited the temple. Unfortunately, we have not been able to hold any *saṅga* on the temple premises for an entire year. However, we are facilitating *saṅga* by holding online *darśanas* and classes for our well-wishers and the devotees associated with the temple.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please bless us to remain strong and free from the clutches of *māyā*. On this most auspicious day of your divine appearance, we fall at your lotus feet and beg for your kind mercy again and again so that we may never deviate from the association of your surrendered devotees. May we always remain somehow engaged in helping the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Your servants at the ISKCON temple in Vallabh Vidyanagar, India.

Vancouver

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

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

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

Our beloved eternal, spiritual grandfather, 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 Śrī Rādhā-Madana-mohana and Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi!

It is our great fortune that we are able to take shelter of your lotus feet in this lifetime, through your disciples. You left behind a marvelous, ever-expanding global home to nurture our Kṛṣṇa consciousness and allow us to escape the gruesome hold Māyā-devī had on us. What hope do we have outside this great society, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, which is none other than your divine body? Your teachings in the form of thousands of audio and video recordings and many volumes of books are the life-air of this body, and the holy name is its soul. We, the members of ISKCON, are parts and parcels of this divine body, and are thus obligated to work cooperatively and serve the whole. By serving cooperatively, we keep the body nourished and grow exponentially. Your direct disciples have been doing marvelous service in expanding this transcendental movement. Now it is our turn to follow in their footsteps, carefully preserve what our predecessors have accomplished, and continue to grow and move forward with your blessings.

As you instructed, we should not become complacent. One must always try to make advancement in spiritual life. If we do not progress, then we will regress. Having realized this, we at New Gokula Dhāma are striving to build a new temple, a mini *adbhuta-mandira*, for your pleasure and the pleasure of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madana-mohana. We are also trying hard to improve our congregation through devotee-care efforts, outreach, and youth programs. We have just begun and still have a long way to go. Only by the mercy descending through you and your disciples can we hope to accomplish what we have begun.

This past year has been a strange one, with the outbreak of the pandemic, lockdowns, temple closures, and no personal association among devotees. It is a great challenge to stay focused in Kṛṣṇa consciousness without that in-person association. However, with the help of technology we have managed to stay connected and, in fact, have noticed an increase in participation of devotees attending *maṅgala-ārati* and morning *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* classes on the virtual platform. Those who are sincere in their endeavor continue to grow in Kṛṣṇa consciousness despite all odds. And others derive great inspiration from this steadfastness. This I attribute to your special mercy, which comes through your teachings in the form of great inspiration and purity. Your Divine Grace has enabled us to overcome the barriers created by the pandemic.

Dear grandfather, thank you for sending a wonderful team to build a new home for Their Lordships and yourself. It will cost \$15 million. Navin Maharaja Prabhu (not a *sannyāsī*) is our chairman, and it is his vision that is taking shape, with your mercy. We feel if we do not build now, then our next generation(s) will not be able to build due to a lack of interest caused by the advancement of Kali-yuga. With this project we plan to make the temple self-sufficient, not dependent on donors. So we will build a multipurpose hall, a Govinda's restaurant and gift shop, and an auditorium to educate or bring awareness to visitors about what ISKCON is doing internationally. We plan to create a nice structure, as you envisioned for the Temple

of the Vedic Planetarium (TOVP)—a building with a dome modeled after the US Capitol. We'll have a two-storied, circular prayer hall, with north and south blocks. It will have balcony seating for VIPs, classrooms, and a huge dining hall. To make it a tourist attraction, we will also add nice landscaping. Please shower your mercy on us to make this dream come true so that the project can manifest as soon as possible.

We humbly beg you to shower your kind mercy on us and Navin Prabhu, Jaya Govinda Dāsa, Jānakī Jivana Dāsa, Mathurā-līlā Devī Dāsī, Nārada Muni Dāsa, Omkāra Dāsa, Jadurāṇī Devī Dāsī, Rajan Prabhu, Navneeth Prabhu, and Sanjay Prabhu, so that we all serve Their Lordships and you with sincerity. As you said, "If you are sincere, Kṛṣṇa will help. Everything belongs to Him. He will provide."

Bless us to build a wonderful united community at New Gokula Dhāma in which all can live and enjoy peacefully by serving you and Their Lordships with loving, caring, friendly relationships and lots of patience and tolerance.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madana-mohana *kī jaya*.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā Madana-gopāla *kī jaya*.

Śrī Śrī Jagannātha-Baladeva-Subhadrā and Sudarśana *cakra kī jaya*.

Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi *kī jaya*.

Lord Nṛsiṁha and Prahlāda Mahārāja *kī jaya*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya*.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your ever humble servants at New Gokula Dhāma, Vancouver, Canada.

Villaggio Hare Krishna

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

This year, on the occasion of the most auspicious event of your Vyāsa-pūjā, I would like to borrow some words from a Western song, because I find them more than suitable to depict your appearance in my life.

When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary,
When troubles come and my heart burdened be,
Then I am still and wait here in the silence,
Until you come and sit awhile with me.

I open one of your books in the silence of the early morning hours, and I feel your presence near me. Your Divine Grace is here, speaking timeless wisdom, and as the soothing breeze of your words enters my ears, the fatigue of innumerable lives spent in this world vanishes.

The exhaustion of countless battles against the witches of lust, greed, laziness, doubts, duality, etc., burdens my heart, but as I hear your pure chanting and preaching, all obstacles subside, and finally my mind finds peace.

Oh, what a great fortune to have met you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! You raised me up from the darkest well of ignorance, from the quagmire of petty grievances and desires, to more than I can deserve.

You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains,
 You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas,
 I am strong, when I am by your side,
 You raise me up . . . to more than I can be.

The law of gravity has no power over your mercy: even if my tendency is to fall down again and again, you keep raising me up, helping me to cross mountains of false ego and impersonal inclinations. As the best of captains, you are expertly steering my boat across the stormy dark seas of nescience to the sunny shores of the lotus feet of our beloved Nitāi-Śacīsuta.

By remembering your resolute, fearless character I can honestly say that I feel strong in my fights against *māyā* and her innumerable agents, and by remembering your unflinching determination I find the strength to stay till the end on the path you have traced for us.

Oh, what a great fortune to have met you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! You are everything to me: the most loving father, the eternal well-wisher, the absolute master, the spotless example, the dispeller of all doubts and fears, and my constant shelter.

By filling my days with myriad occasions for serving your priceless mission, and filling my unstable mind with thoughts of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, you are raising me up from a poor mediocre existence to heights that I could not even imagine, certainly to a greater position than I deserve.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for beautifying my life in countless ways. Your Divine Grace is the most precious and brilliant jewel, and I hope to be able, one day, to reflect a ray of your light.

Your servants at Villaggio Hare Krishna, Bergamo, Italy.

(written by Āli Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī)

Vṛndāvana

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*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*

We offer our prostrated obeisances to you again and again at your lotus feet, here at your home at Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandira, in the dust of Vraja. As I write this offering in February, 2021, I reflect on a most unusual year that has just passed for everyone in the world, including your followers, but it is also one that you prepared us for in your lectures and books.

We couldn't have imagined that there would be a time at your Mandira when even the Janmāṣṭamī festival would be closed to everyone except the few who live in the temple compound, yet it happened, and we were again closed on the next day, on the anniversary of your divine appearance. It was a shock to so many of us who had become complacent, not understanding your message, which you gave so clearly.

For some it was a pleasant reminder of what Vṛndāvana was like when you opened the temple in

1975. The sound of car horns and rickshaws has been replaced with the sound of cooing peacocks and parrots. The few who live in the temple and attended the programs could feel your presence strongly, up close and personal. It was a reminder of simpler days—the times when you walked among us on what was then known as Chhatikara Road and gave each of us your personal, loving guidance. That same dirt road would later become a four-lane boulevard named after you. It was given your name because you literally put Vṛndāvana on the map for spiritual seekers around the world, and all who entered this sanctified land would understand that you were the means by which they had come here.

Month after month, hundreds of your dedicated servants prayed for the day when they could again take *darśana* of your divine Lordships in this most beautiful temple—the place where you personally supervised almost every detail as the construction went on. For many it was as if their very life airs had been taken away, and we were left crying and praying for the day when we could again have your *darśana*.

Now, as we write this offering, we see just how fortunate we are. The separation we have experienced has only increased our desire to serve the true controllers, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, and Their most transcendental ambassador. Normally, as we write this homage to you, it would be a quiet time in Vṛndāvana, but it is just the opposite. It is like Kārttika in February. Your home is flooded by thousands every day. They have also been locked down and are now eager to come to Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandira and witness the life you brought to Vṛndāvana.

They are eager to see you in your *samādhi*, to meet the person who brought the Vṛndāvana atmosphere to towns and villages all over the world. They may also visit other temples, but they recognize that here there is life. It is you who have filled us all with life. They become transfixed, listening to the *kīrtana* as they take *darśana*. They are awestruck by the beauty of the Deities and, stopping in front of the *kīrtana* party, most times they have to be asked to move so more can come inside the temple.

We realize our immense fortune that by your divine grace we have been locked up in Vṛndāvana. More and more we can understand the priceless gift you freely gave us. By your mercy you gave us residence here. All you ask is that we pass this precious gift on to all who enter.

One day back in the seventies, in your sitting room, a disciple declared that we are all your puppets. You smiled and, raising your hand in the air like a puppeteer, replied, “Yes, but I want you to go like this, and you are going like this.” It was such a subtle movement that it was almost imperceptible that your two movements were distinctly opposite. It is only because of your unflinching faith in following your Guru Mahārāja’s instructions that you accomplished all that he wanted, despite the fact that we were just learning how to follow in your footsteps.

During the month of Kārttika in 1972, you explained some of the glories of Vṛndāvana to Hayagrīva Prabhu and others as we sat in your room at the Rādhā-Dāmodara Mandira. As soon as he arrived in your sitting room, with a beaming smile you asked, “So, how are you finding Vṛndāvana?” Hayagrīva replied, “I never thought such a place could exist. Just passing the bazaar was an experience in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” Still beaming effulgently, you replied, “Remember? On 26 Second Avenue I was telling you and Kīrtanānanda and others about this Vṛndāvana atmosphere, how I was always longing for it there in New York.” And later you declared, “Now I have hundreds of temples to go to, but I still like it here best of all.”

Your longing was our good fortune. We observed that wherever you went you carried this Vṛndāvana atmosphere with you. You established Vṛndāvana satellite temples all over the world. You did it in every way possible. Even your rooms around the world were similar in their simplicity and carried the same atmosphere as your rooms in Vṛndāvana. It was natural for you. You were satisfied sitting on a straw mat, facing the wall to honor *prasādam*, your *thāli* on a small table (*chowki*) just a few inches off the floor.

We pray daily that you pull our strings so we can serve you according to your desire. While the temple was closed, many projects have been thoughtfully carried out by the management to further enhance the beauty of what you left us so many years ago. The temple entrance is being updated to show the grandeur of your home and *samādhi*. Even the Deity rooms are being remodeled so that your Lordships can be given the space They require after forty-five years of acquiring jewelry and gorgeous outfits. Many other areas have been renovated, with the desire that you can remain proud of your servants here.

Just now we are preparing for Kumbha-melā—a festival that will bring crores of *sādhus* and seekers to Vṛndāvana over the next five weeks. We are trying to closely follow your instructions by offering all the simple programs you demonstrated to us. Everyone who comes will be given *prasādam* to the sound of *kīrtana* and offered your transcendental books. It is with this method that you brought Kṛṣṇa consciousness to all corners of the world.

We pray that you allow us to continue to serve you year after year, no matter what goes on in the world, and that we feel completely protected by you. We pray that you continue to make us dance according to your desire. In this way our lives will be successful.

Praying to always remain at your lotus feet, we remain

Your insignificant servants at Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandira, ISKCON Vṛndāvana, India.

(written by Śrutakīrti Dāsa)

Washington, D.C.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to you!

As the pandemic spread worldwide, your ISKCON demonstrated its resilience as it found ways to keep going amid mandated temple closings and restrictions on shared physical space. Initially, we felt confused and afraid. How would we sustain our spiritual lives without engaging together in the five fundamental activities for spiritual advancement: devotee association, chanting the holy name, hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, residing in a holy *dhāma*, and worshiping the Deity? (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 22.128).

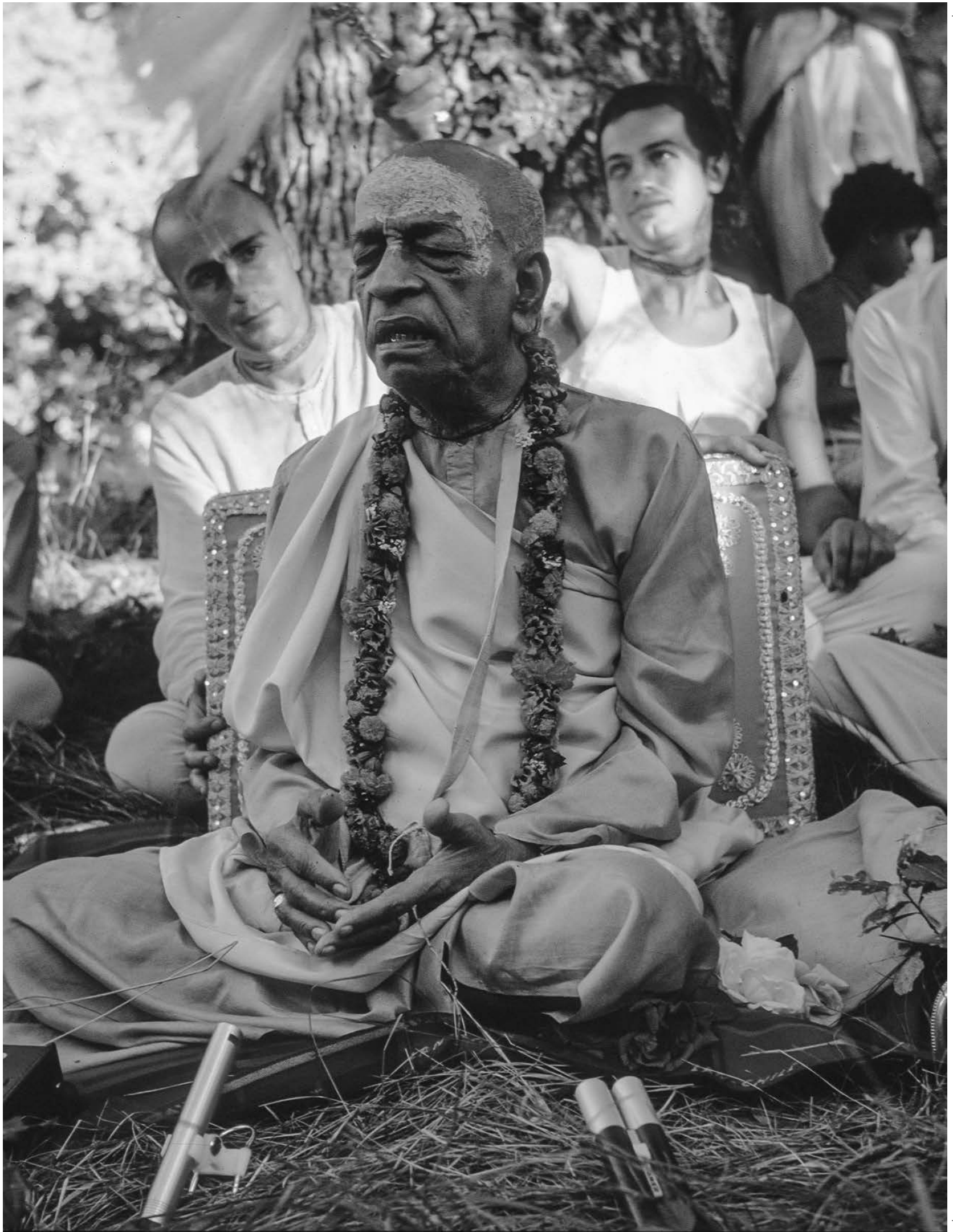
How would we engage in the six loving exchanges you said were your purpose for ISKCON's inception: offering gifts in charity, accepting charitable gifts, revealing our minds in confidence, inquiring confidentially, and accepting and sharing *prasādam*? (*The Nectar of Instruction*, text 4)

We creatively adjusted through boxed *prasādam* give-aways, online book distribution, Zoom classes, Zoom *kīrtanas*, Zoom *japa* sessions, and Zoom *parikramās* and retreats. Yet our hearts still yearned for real-time connections—sacred spaces that nourish us with attentive, affirming, appreciative, affectionate support as we wrestled together with life's daily challenges.

Forced to plumb deeper for meaningful *saṅga*, we turned to one another and admitted our pain. We lived out your mandate to reveal our minds to one another: "If I am in trouble . . . I open my mind before you and you try to help me" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.24, purport). These small *iṣṭha-goṣṭhīs* (spiritual discussions) that welcomed life's challenges provided us shelter from life's internal and external storms and engendered our growth.

We allowed ourselves to care and be cared for—perhaps for the first time—behaviors we'd coveted when we read about them in your books. We'd assumed that such reciprocal love was reserved for the purest. Instead, we found sharing our burdens, no matter how bleak, made us feel wiser, inspired, and less weak.

We discovered that revealing our minds and being listened to in confidence was part of the devotional process. It's what makes us resilient against internal and external forces. It's what helps us cope.



And throughout this process, we learned that ISKCON was much more than a physical place. It's a network of souls who inspire one another by being authentically present while submissively listening to the Lord speak from within each of our hearts as we collaborate in your mission, through your divine grace.

Your servants at ISKCON of Washington, D.C., USA.

(written by Rambhoru Devī Dāsī)

Wiesbaden

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances! All glories to your lotus feet on this especially auspicious day, the 125th anniversary of your appearance!

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are all very neophyte devotee families. We have no understanding of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We have no understanding of loving service to Kṛṣṇa. We are unfortunate souls, lost in this material world. Still, we have been blessed with the incredible fortune of being able to associate with ISKCON devotees. Despite the very little tangible progress in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness, every day we feel freshness and happiness and deep meaning in our lives because of your presence and the presence of our Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Your mercy has opened the doors to our spiritual lives, and despite all obstacles, we are able to overcome all difficulties and continue on the path of spiritual life. Our love for you enables us to overcome material attachments and dedicate our lives to Kṛṣṇa.

Thank you for your books, which nourish us and by which we can stay in contact with you. We beg you to please bless us with unconditional love for serving the servant of your servants so we can return to the spiritual world.

From the bottom of our hearts we want to thank you for keeping a watchful eye on each of us. We admire you and wish to follow your example so that we can be a little bit like you. You have inspired so many people by always remembering Kṛṣṇa and never forgetting Him. Please teach us to do the same!

Thank you for the torch of knowledge, without which we would be lost, and for your disciples who have themselves become gurus and who guide us. Following your example, they live the selfless lives of renunciants and dedicate all their energy to preaching to fallen souls like us.

This is a special letter to you, ISKCON's founder-*ācārya*, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, on your 125th appearance day. Thank you for your books, which conquer the whole world. Thank you for your example, your perseverance, your faith, and your teachings on how to never forget Kṛṣṇa.

Thank you for all your wise disciples, who guide neophytes like ourselves without oppressing us, but who instead help us find the balance between material obligations and spiritual life.

Words fail us as we try to express our gratitude to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving us so much love and knowledge. You are an extraordinary person. Words simply fail us.

In your advanced age you translated spiritual books and went to America to give us an unprecedented treasure by which we have learned to serve Kṛṣṇa. Thank you for your grace and helping us to serve the devotees. May your books reach as many people as possible and give their lives meaning.

Thank you again and again for allowing us to serve in ISKCON and have the precious association of the devotees. Thank you for also giving us the opportunity to serve the Deities. May we be allowed to do so until the end of our lives.

There are no words to explain how grateful we are to be able to read your books, even if we don't always understand everything. Still, we continue to read, and bit by bit we begin to understand. We promise that we will continue to chant and dedicate our lives to Kṛṣṇa more and more.

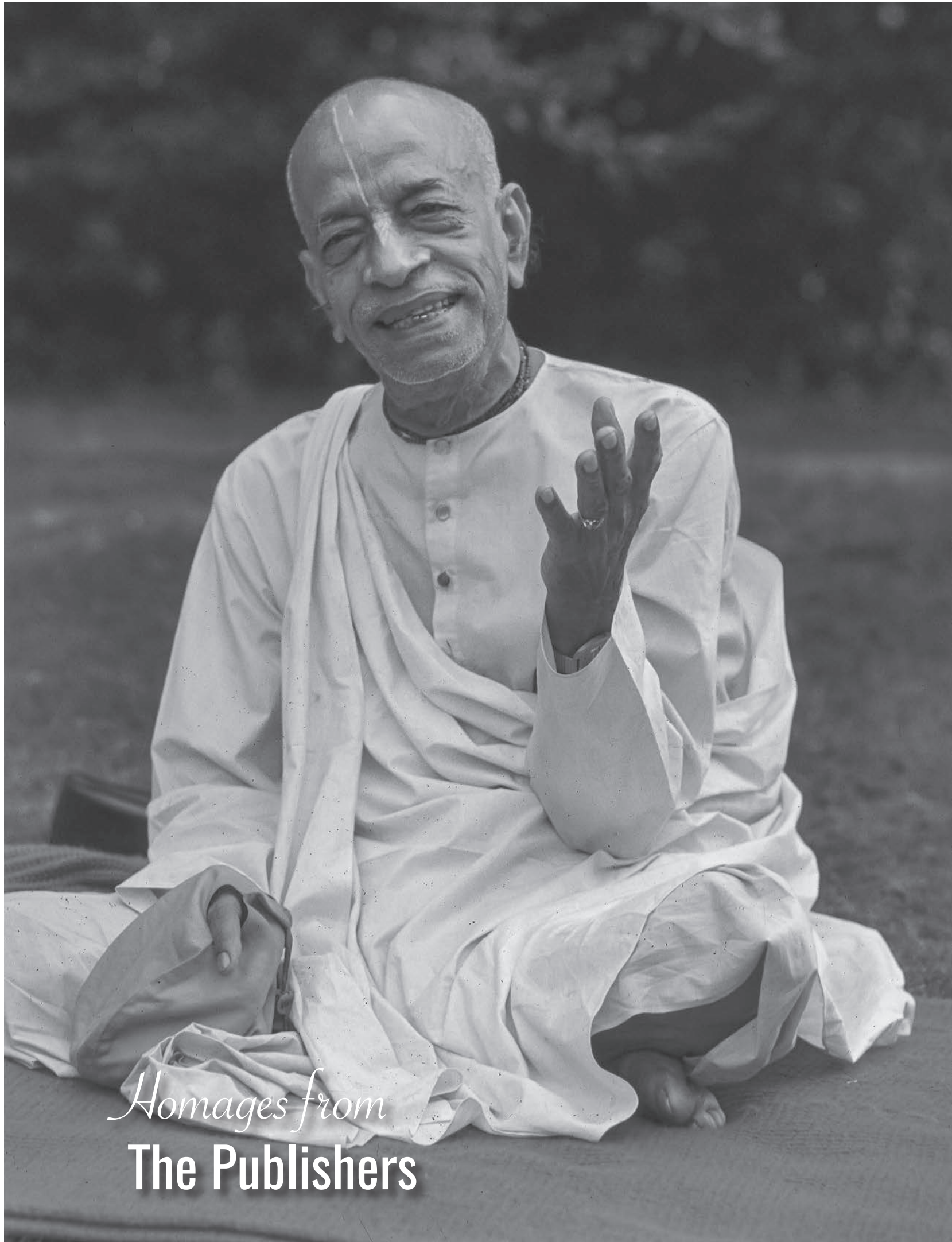
Thank you for allowing us to serve in this community. I thought I knew Kṛṣṇa, but little did I know that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, would teach me much, much more about Him. Kṛṣṇa has blessed us with many gifts. However, you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, gave us the most blessed gifts of all: the chanting of the holy name and our service to Kṛṣṇa.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving us parents that look after our spiritual lives. Thank you for guiding us through the difficulties of life, and thank you for the association of your devotees. Without your blessings we could not practice spiritual life. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

We are all so grateful for your open heart. Thank you for teaching us to live a proper, honest, and beautiful life with true faith and the highest form of love ever extended. We hope to be good devotees and inspire others with our service. We seek love of Kṛṣṇa and we sing His holy name. Your teachings will heal us and support others by giving hope, energy, and the right direction for happy living.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this very auspicious 125th anniversary of your appearance, please accept our humble and surrendered obeisances.

Your servants at ISKCON Wiesbaden, Hari Nama Desh, Germany.



Homages from
The Publishers

Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (Africa)

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

In November of 1935 you traveled to Śrī Vṇḍāvana-dhāma to meet your dear spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. At the holy place of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa he gave you a very pivotal instruction, namely, “I had a desire to print some books. If you ever get money, *print books*.”

In your *Nectar of Devotion*, we read that the third offense against the chanting of the holy name is to disobey the orders of the spiritual master. At times an instruction of the spiritual master is difficult to execute immediately. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you showed us by your own example how even if the guru’s instruction cannot be immediately executed, the disciple should always cherish the desire to do so. You were faced with many challenges in fulfilling your spiritual master’s desire that you print books, but you were always meditating on how you could follow this instruction. And therefore, it came to fruition. You never ignored his request, nor did you give up when you encountered the many obstacles that presented themselves. You never wavered in your determination. Although when you tried to print the first *Back to Godhead* magazine in war-torn India you were denied paper due to government restrictions, you persisted and eventually got permission to print. To save money you even walked to the printers and skipped breakfast. Later you minimized your sleep to translate and comment upon many volumes of Sanskrit and Bengali scripture. You remained impervious to the circumstances and soldiered on for the pleasure of your spiritual master.

In the third verse of *The Nectar of Instruction* Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī states:

*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 viśṇoḥ 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.”

Pure devotional service means to always serve Kṛṣṇa with love, for His pleasure. And to please Kṛṣṇa with our loving devotional service we have to also please the spiritual master, for that is the way of the culture of *bhakti*—to be a servant of the servant of the servant. *Gopī-bhartuḥ pāda-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ*. (Cc. Madhya 13.80)

If you love someone, naturally you want to please that person, and to please that person we will do anything, and from there determination naturally manifests, since the purpose is not one’s own comfort or convenience but rather the pleasure of the object of love. Transcendental love is all-encompassing, selfless, and deep, in stark contrast with material infatuation, which is self-centered and shallow. You showed us what true love for the spiritual master is, and in turn what true love for Kṛṣṇa is. You manifested that love through your determination, which you once described as follows:

So determination, your enthusiasm, patience, working in the regulative principle. These are the different functions of determination. Determination means one word of all these things—enthusiasm,

patience, working hard with confidence. These are different features of determination. [Lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 6.16–24, 17 February 1969, Los Angeles]

When we look at the development from *śraddhā* to *prema*, we can see that this verse of *The Nectar of Instruction* forms an essential component of faith (*śraddhā*), the first step on our journey back to Kṛṣṇa. You have so expertly taught us how to apply this verse and, in so many other ways, how to live in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Your unbreakable determination to publish, print, and distribute as many books as possible is especially inspiring for those of us who are part of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Thank you for showing us what it means to remain determined in our devotional service despite any uncomfortable situation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this most auspicious occasion of the 125th anniversary of your appearance in this world, we pray that we may be able to adopt your mood of always being the servant of the spiritual master. Please bless us so we may always remain determined and enthusiastic to further the *saṅkīrtana* mission under your guidance, especially through printing your books. We have heard that you said the BBT is your heart, and as servants of the BBT we pray that we can always serve and please you by enthusiastically engaging in book publication and distribution, which are so dear to you.

Your servants at the offices of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust in Africa.

Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (Australia)

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

For your pleasure, here are the quantities of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* copies, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sets, and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* sets the BBT provided to the local Australia and New Zealand ISKCON centers in the past twelve months:

Bhagavad-gītā As It Is (hardbound) . . . 22,694
Bhagavad-gītā As It Is (softbound) . . . 21,483
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam sets . . . 448
Caitanya-caritāmṛta sets . . . 148

As I write, we have 1,500 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sets, 25,000 copies of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* hardbound, and 20,000 *Kṛṣṇa* books ready to be shipped from the printer to our Sydney warehouse.

The outside of the warehouse has just been repainted, and we are constantly endeavoring to keep

the inside well stocked, organized, and clean. We try our best to dispatch book orders to our ISKCON customers in a timely manner.

Over the last few years there has steadily developed a local market for your books in foreign languages. Thus we have added the following languages to our inventory: Japanese, Korean, Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Hindi, Gujarati, Nepalese, Telegu, Bengali, Tamil, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian. We even stock one of your books in Pidgin English! All this interest in foreign-language editions of your books is evidence of the universal appeal of the knowledge they contain, which transcends all national and language boundaries and brings a much-needed unifying message of hope to a very disturbed planet: chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and be happy!

Under His Holiness Devāmrita Swami's oversight, Mahārṣi Prabhu and other devotees trained by your disciple Gopīparādhana Prabhu are continuing the invaluable work of producing high-quality translations of the works by the Six Gosvāmīs. The beautifully produced *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* and *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* have become much-appreciated books among the international devotee community.

Girirāja Mahārāja's much-anticipated new book, *I'll Build You a Temple—The Juhu Story*, published by the Australian BBT, has been very well received by devotees around the world.

Devāmrita Maharaja's book *Hiding in Unnatural Happiness*, also published by the Australian BBT, has become an international bestseller and is building many bridges connecting people to the treasure house of your books.

We pray that you are pleased by the humble efforts of the Australian BBT team to maintain the book publication operations in this part of the world. Please bless us so that we can carry on this valuable service in the way most pleasing to you.

Your servants at the offices of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust in Australia.

(written by Daṇḍakāraṇya Dāsa)

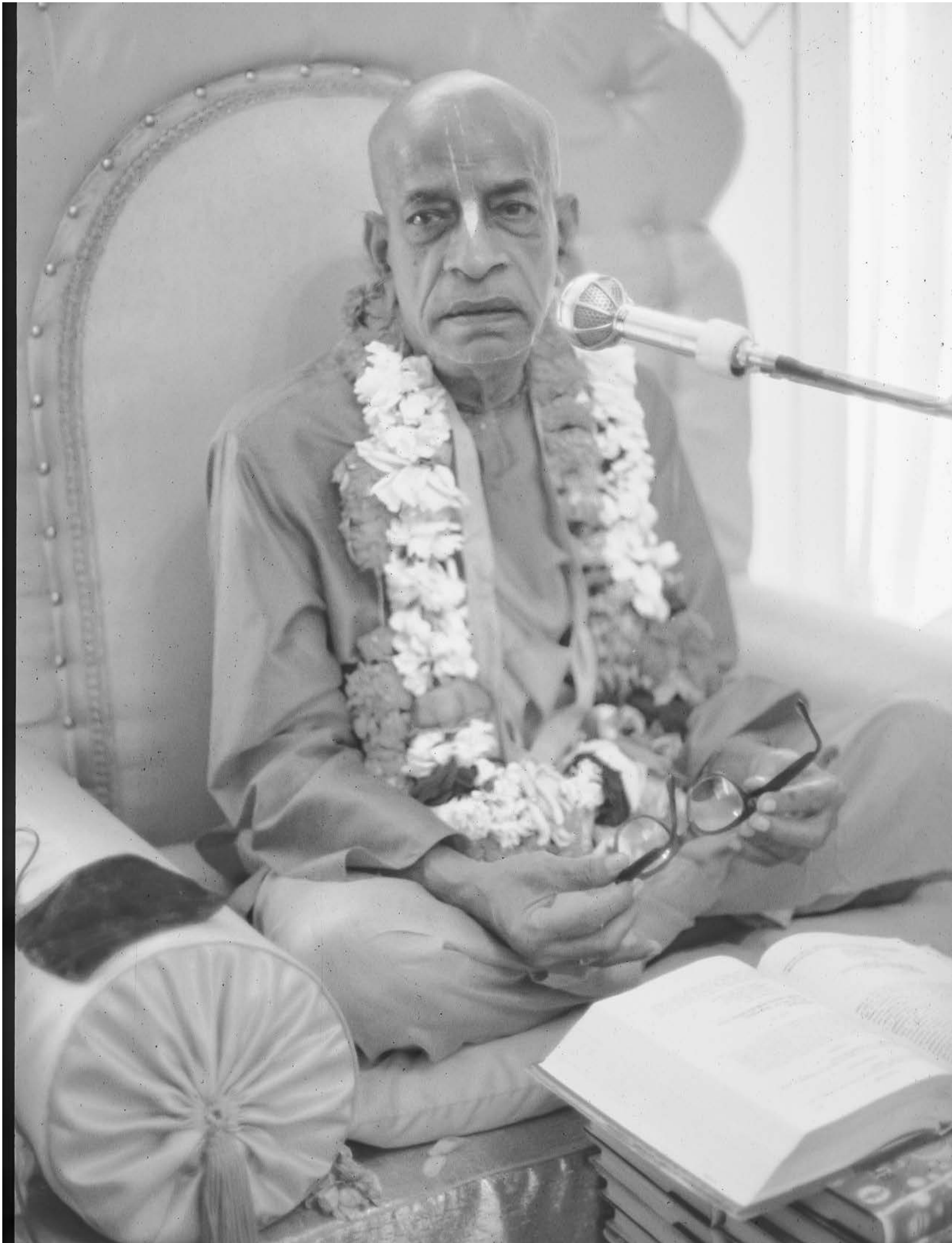
Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (North America)

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*

Amazingly, although 2020 was in many ways a catastrophic year because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the devotees in North America sold \$2,252,811 worth of books, while in 2019 sales totaled \$1,897,104. This represents an increase of 19%! Who can understand the sincerity of your servants and their blessings from Lord Kṛṣṇa? The world was falling apart, yet book distribution not only held steady but seriously increased.



By material standards this makes no sense, but your *saṅkīrtana* mission is not under the modes of nature.

In 2020, 2,937 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sets were sold and 645 *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* sets, while in 2019, 2,080 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sets were sold and 492 *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* sets.

In 2020, 44,923 hardback *Bhagavad-gītā*s were sold and 240,907 softbacks, while in 2019, 36,685 hardback *Bhagavad-gītā*s were sold and 204,450 softbacks.

That book distribution significantly increased while the whole world was on lockdown is a result of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mercy and yours, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

We pray that we may stay engaged in your *saṅkīrtana* mission throughout this lifetime and join you to continue that mission in the next.

Your servants at the offices of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust in North America.

Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (Northern Europe)

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances and my words in glorification of Your Divine Grace. All glories to you.

I thank Lord Kṛṣṇa for blessing us with the gift that is you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Thank you for being the bright light in my life. Thank you for being so magnificent and generous. Everything you have done continues to amaze me. Your dedication to your spiritual master's instruction is just so inspiring—your courageous travel to the West, to a completely foreign culture, on a merciful and persistent mission to give us access to the Absolute Truth, in a language that we understand.

Thank you for persevering through all the struggles and challenges to write and distribute your books and to establish this great movement that has bloomed and reached millions of people worldwide, including myself in this cold Swedish countryside, where I meditate on you and your great accomplishments right now.

Your revolutionary drive and spirit have brought this nectarean service of publishing your books and worshiping the Deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa all the way from Vṛndāvana to here. Surrounded by forests and lakes, we have this oasis, this *dhāma*, where everything is centered around Śrī Śrī Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī, you, and your wonderful books. Constant blissful engagement. It is really fabulous.

You have created such a chain reaction through your disciples and granddisciples, and you are still bringing the right people together at the right time so that your unique mission moves forward and expands. Everyone here is serving you so nicely. I am forever grateful to you and your servants.

Inspired by my father's listening to recordings of your lectures, a couple of years ago I asked him to put some of your recordings on my phone. Now I'm hooked on the daily experience of listening to your huge audio archive. Right now, for me, it's May 1975. What bliss it is to put my headphones on and travel around the world alongside you and your disciples, getting a glimpse into the delightful dynamics you have with your disciples. Being able to follow you and being present at your lectures, interviews, room conversations, and morning walks is such a blessing.

I adore and admire you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I so appreciate your compassion toward anyone who comes to you, and the attention you give to them. I am in awe of your great humility and intelligence,

your ability to engage everyone, every single one of us, in Kṛṣṇa's service. I am so inspired by your patience, dedication, and focus on each individual and by your brilliant ability to uniquely explain the transcendental science of Kṛṣṇa to those who have come to you. You understand where their questions and arguments are coming from. To teach them, you elegantly find the perfect examples and analogies. You are the ultimate preacher.

During a very interesting conversation you had with a Christian man in Melbourne in May 1975, the man said, "Well, I have kept you long enough." To which you replied, "No, you can keep me engaged whole day and night, provided you have got time. We are meant for this purpose. If anyone can understand God consciousness, that is a great profit for us." This is marvelous.

The manifestation of your service-minded attitude in your sincere followers is what I get to witness here all the time. It's so exciting to see your devotees cooperating locally and internationally, with more than a hundred devotees working with this BBT, in all parts and time zones of the world.

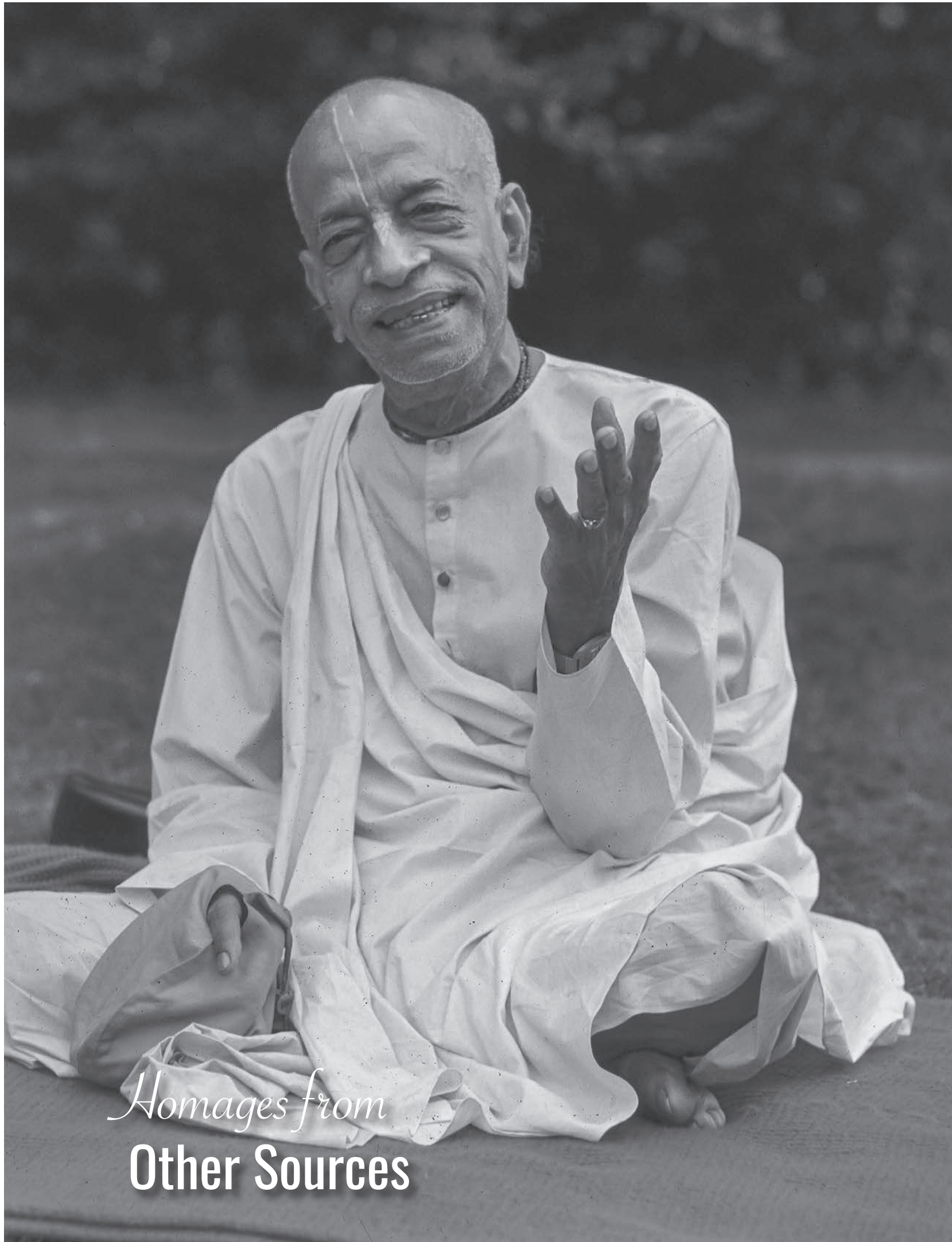
When a deadline is pressing, book production happens around the clock. Happily and steadily the devotees are getting more and more expert in using modern technology to publish your books in a variety of languages. So many print books, ebooks, book apps, audiobooks, and more. Your book distribution program is glorious and all-encompassing. Everyone gets a chance to come in contact with Kṛṣṇa. You are reigniting our eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

There is much for me to learn, much to practice, and so much service to perform. I feel really fortunate that from a very young age I have been able to associate with you, together with the devotees, in front of Śrī Śrī Gāndharvikā-Gīrīdhārī, reading your translations, diving deep into your purports, and relishing the firm fact that I am allowed to learn from you, the absolutely best teacher. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Thank you for leading me out of illusion and ignorance. May I strive to please you and Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Forever in awe of you and eager to continue being taught by you, I beg to remain

One of your servants at the offices of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust in Northern Europe.

(written by Viola Odorata Viśākhā)



Homages from
Other Sources

The Australian Society for Krishna Culture

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

We offer our 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 and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Your message of good spiritual will to save us from repeated birth and death is very rich, and we find ever-new and encouraging passages in your writings and in writings about you. For example, you told your personal servant His Grace Nanda Kumāra Dāsa that calling out for Kṛṣṇa through the regular chanting of sixteen rounds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra will protect us from falldown, just as a child is protected from falling by holding the hands of his parents. What a thoughtful, simple, and touching example!

In Kṛṣṇa book, Chapter 20, you write, “This age, Kali-yuga, is compared to the cloudy season of the living entities. In this age, real knowledge is covered by the influence of the material advancement of civilization.” This is true eloquence, short and to the point. And it is so relevant.

I thank you for filling my life with meaningful service. The desire to distribute your books has sustained me throughout my life. You said that by the distribution of your books throughout the world, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will automatically increase. There have been many intense moments, though. I remember how in Logan, Queensland, a follower of Islam stole my books. His manifest purpose was not to read them but to destroy them, and I accused him of being a thief, which he denied. It was only after the intervention of the shopping center security officer that he agreed to return them.

On another occasion, in Townsville, three dogs viciously attacked me. It is definitely the “dharma” of the more assertive dogs to bark, attack, and bite. The use of your effective “hut” technique saved me from painful bites. An description this technique can be found in Satsvarūpa dās Goswami Śrīla Prabhupāda Nectar 2.2: “You Do Not Know the Process”:

While Prabhupāda and the devotees were walking on the beach in California, a large Doberman pinscher approached them, snarling and baring his teeth. Prabhupāda continued walking peacefully, but Nanda-kumāra stopped and tensely faced the dog. This challenge only provoked the dog into more threatening and growling until Nanda-kumāra turned and ran to catch up to Prabhupāda. As soon as he ran, the Doberman pinscher pursued him, barking and threatening to attack. Before the dog reached them, however, Prabhupāda suddenly turned. He crouched with his feet somewhat apart, raised his cane high over his head, gave a loud “Hut!” — and made a growling sound at the dog. At this display from Prabhupāda, the dog turned and retreated quickly back to its house.

In the early days (1973) in Paris’ Latin Quarter, some members of the public used to climb on my back as I was distributing books.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I beg to thank you very much for your staunch determination in executing the

saṅkīrtana movement, and the perfect example you set in doing so. As always, I am eternally grateful for your kind mercy and broad vision. I find that I am afraid of the disabilities of old age and look forward to joining you as soon as possible, if I may. This material world is mostly about deceit and violence. As you wrote in your Perfection of Yoga, “For one who takes to spiritual culture, this material world is actually unfit. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī used to say, ‘This place is not fit for a gentleman.’”

Despite all my shortcomings, I aspire to remain a particle of dust stuck at your lotus feet,

Your servants at The Australian Society for Krishna Culture.

(written by Yadavendra Dāsa)

Back to Godhead Magazine

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Some of your disciples, especially those who had your close association, have remarked that even though you had definite plans for how to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world, you also adapted to circumstances. If something was not working, you were ready to try something else. While acknowledging that the success of your preaching endeavors and those of your disciples was up to Kṛṣṇa, you still challenged us to use our brains to come up with ideas on how to preach. You also stressed that spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness involves not only recruiting new members but also maintaining the current ones.

Back to Godhead magazine is an example of a creation of yours whose mission has changed over the years. There are many reasons for this, but the reality is that the growth of your movement has steered BTG to becoming a magazine for ISKCON’s ever-growing membership rather than as primarily an outreach magazine.

Because of the magazine’s evolution, some devotees, especially those who knew BTG as an outreach tool, wonder if it still has a role to play in the movement. One reply to that concern is that you said that BTG’s purpose is to provide a place where your followers can express in their own words what they learn by reading your books. BTG still provides that opportunity. It’s a magazine of kṛṣṇa-kathā; that in itself is a reason for its existence.

Because your disciples and granddisciples have been busy translating and writing books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the years since your transcendental departure, ISKCON members now have an overwhelming choice of things to read. Still, many devotees cherish receiving their beloved BTG every month. In general, despite the prominence of digital media, magazines continue to have their appeal. And, of course, your voice and presence are still conspicuous on the pages of BTG, and we who have the great fortune to produce the magazine strive to keep it to the high standard you wanted.

Like everything in life, the future of BTG is unknown. But by your mercy we will continue to dedicate our efforts to make “The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement” a publication that pleases you. That will be its success, and ours.

Your servants at Back to Godhead magazine.

Bhaktivedanta Archives

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

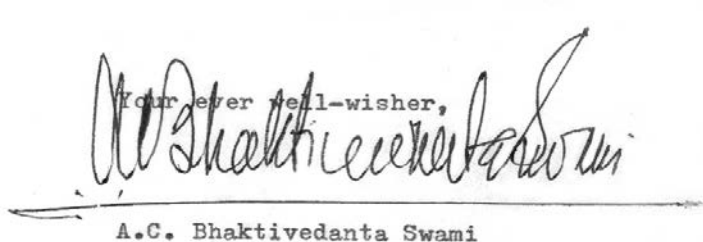
We offer out humble *praṇāmas* at your lotus feet.

Another year has passed without you physically here to inspire us. However, you have mercifully left us a legacy of knowledge and your image to soothe our minds and souls.

In its collection the Bhaktivedanta Archives has your handwritten documents spanning from the 1940s to the 1960s, including some written on the backs of Soviet propaganda, giving the reader the contrast between the binding material world and the spiritually liberated world. Other samples of your handwriting contain your musings about current world (pre-1965) situations and their solutions.

It is easy to reflect on you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, sitting on a small wooden chair, looking out at the *samādhi* of Śrīla Rupa Gosvāmī, and writing these jewels of wisdom and devotion. It was Lord Caitanya who said, “The handwriting of Rūpa Gosvāmī is just like rows of pearls.” Indeed, you, dear *gurudeva*, strung in your own hand the pearls of *bhakti* in the shade of Rūpa Gosvāmī.

And who can forget how you signed your letters with a prominent “A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami”? You are indeed our ever well-wisher.



Your ever well-wisher,
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Your servants at the Bhaktivedanta Archives.

Bhaktivedanta College

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to the dust of your lotus feet!

Just as one can never finish reading your books but can only read them again and again, so one must also study the biographies describing your pastimes again and again. The one especially worth reading again and again is the wonderful *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, written by Satsvarūpa Mahārāja, because it reveals countless aspects of yours, one after another, shedding light on the uniqueness of your personality and mission.

You manifested one of your most fundamental characteristics at the start of your preaching in America: you made one fantastic plan after another and were never discouraged by recurring failures. An ordinary



man who attributes his success to his own abilities would have soon desisted, but you had firm faith in your Guru Mahārāja's instructions and Kṛṣṇa's will as the real sources of success and, considering yourself a humble servant, simply did your duty for their pleasure and pioneered the preaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the West.

Your ultimate accomplishment is considered a miracle by many—a miracle that can be conjured by great saintly persons without effort. However attractive such a simplistic explanation may seem, considering your achievements “physical” miracles is actually a huge underestimation of your work and glories, because it denies the immense effort you put into your mission throughout the years.

As I see it, whatever you *achieved* was not the greatest miracle, because each and every one of your successes was the result of the careful planning and preparation that you did for years. The real miracle, then, is that in the face of so many hardships and setbacks you could maintain your inspiration throughout all the years of executing your mission, and also inspire so many others, especially your disciples and granddisciples into the present, to make immense efforts not for themselves but for Kṛṣṇa.

Bhaktivedanta College was founded and is now operated by your continuous inspiration and that of your disciples. It is one of the biggest engines of preaching in Hungary. I fervently hope that we will be able to pass on the wonderful knowledge left to us in your books, but also that we can awaken in the hearts of our students the desire to adopt a sincere spiritual practice and to perform undeviating devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. This will be possible only by your continued inspiration.

Your loving servants at Bhaktivedanta College, Hungary.

(written by Mahārāṇī Devī Dāsī)

Child Protection Office

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Hare Kṛṣṇa. Please accept our obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

You inspire us to dedicate ourselves to the service of others. You showed us the path through your words and example. By establishing ISKCON you created a safe haven in which souls could be born into Kṛṣṇa conscious communities around the world. It is our duty to cultivate that safe haven for the generations of Vaiṣṇavas joining Lord Caitanya's movement from childhood.

You emphasized the importance of schools and of raising children with love and encouragement. Your statements guide us:

“The protection of children gives the human form of life its best chance to prepare the way of liberty from material bondage.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.5, purport)

“So take care of these children. If you can make one child Kṛṣṇa conscious, it is a great service. Kṛṣṇa will be very pleased. So, so many children will come.” (Lecture, New Vrindaban, 22 June 1969)

“If we are able to make a whole generation of our children into fine Krishna Conscious preachers, that will be the glory of our movement and the glory of your country as well. But if we neglect somehow or other and if we lose even one Vaisnava, that is very great loss.” (Letter to Stokakṛṣṇa Dāsa, 20 June 1972)

You make it clear that loving, Kṛṣṇa conscious care of children is essential:

“Please also take care of the children. They are our future hopes, and the adolescent age is the most dangerous age. It is the turning point of one’s life. In this age, if you take care of the children, surely they will come out first class Krishna Conscious devotees.” (Letter to Hayagrīva Dāsa, 7 November 1969)

“Regarding your question should force be used on children, no, there shall be no forcing the children to do anything. Child should not be forced. This is all nonsense. Who has devised these things? If we want them to become great devotees, then we must educate the children with love, not in a negative way.” (Letter to Brahmayya Tirtha Dāsa, 10 December 1972)

Your teachings drive us to enhance the standard of care for children, whether we be parents, teachers, management, or leaders:

“Forcing will not make me agree. But if there is love, oh, I shall gladly do it. That is bhakti, that is Krishna Consciousness. So similarly, if we train children by developing and encouraging their propensity to love Krishna, then we shall be successful in educating them to the topmost standard.” (Letter to Rūpa Vilāsa Dāsa, 18 November 1972)

When we consider your unequivocal statements, we see that we have room for growth in developing programs to support Vaiṣṇava youth:

“I may inform you that all our children born of the Krishna conscious parents, they are welcome and I want hundreds of children like that. Because in future we expect to change the face of the whole world, because child is the father of man.” (Letter to Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsi, 21 August 1968)

Please bless us to be successful in our attempts to serve these great souls.

Your servants at the Child Protection Office.

The Festival of India

*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*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Words cannot express the heartfelt gratitude we have for all the service and guidance you have provided for the fallen conditioned souls, for every thousand miles we have traveled across the North

American continent is but an inch compared to your own transcendental globetrotting. But in following your instructions we have been able to spread the benediction moon that is the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement to hundreds of thousands of people—every year giving them a taste of Lord Jagannātha’s mercy. Every single plate of *prasādam* distributed, every book handed into inquisitive hands, and every ear that has heard the transcendental sound vibration of the holy name has been made possible by Your Divine Grace. You have impacted the lives of millions, including our own, and we are eternally grateful. So on your Vyāsa-pūjā day, we offer our most humble obeisances and pray that we can continue to engage in service to you and Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Your humble servants comprising the Festival of India crew.

(written by Kṛṣṇa Prema Pālavan Dāsa)

Govinda Valley

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

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

While walking to school as a young boy, I often gave thought to the purpose of life, what perfection and success might involve, and what would be required for me to achieve them. I came to accept that “going to heaven” was our ultimate goal (as this was consistently impressed upon us at our Catholic primary school), and it seemed logical that—at the very least—one would need to become a priest or nun to have any realistic chance of achieving that. If this was not the case, then why would anyone choose such a life? I concluded, as a matter of inevitability, that I would also need to make the same choice. However, suggesting as it did a certain bleakness, my sentiments remained mixed in wanting to pursue that path. It wasn’t an easy choice to make. Still, the path to heaven continued to hold a compelling allure, calling to all that was good and noble in the human spirit.

Though distracted through my teenage years, when I entered the university I found myself again grappling with the issues of life and death, purpose and commitment. By now I was beginning to understand—from reading Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books—that “returning home, back to Godhead” was (generally speaking) the ultimate goal of life. Furthermore, I understood that in the successful pursuit of this goal the status of a “pure devotee” seemed to be the minimum requirement.

As usual, however, the devil is in the details. What exactly is a “pure devotee,” and how exactly does one go about becoming one? To what activity particularly and in pursuit of what ideal specifically should one become committed? Arriving at a rock-solid conclusion regarding these questions is not as straightforward as might be assumed. Within the vast realm of spiritual endeavor, even within our own tradition, numerous options assail and beckon. Eager aspirants inspired by the charismatic, the assurance of quick success, the privilege of special access, can easily succumb to the many cults, fads, practices, personalities, places, and objects being vehemently touted as the thing to have or do, the place to be, or

the person to be with. With so much on offer—so many possibilities and prospects—confusion is common, deception rife, and, more likely than not, one will make mistakes.

By great good fortune, however, I quickly developed the conviction that short of somehow or other satisfying the desire of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the whole concept of perfection, either as a process or an outcome, amounted to nothing more than hubris or delusion. At least, whatever my own spiritual possibilities might be, they simply did not—could not—extend beyond what was contingent upon serving and somehow satisfying Śrīla Prabhupāda. This conviction, and the course it has consequently dictated—apart from making my personal path very simple and clear—is the only treasure I possess. But its exponentially increasing value is so great that I constantly thank all the powers that be that I have somehow acquired it.

Now, as I reflect on the impulses I first felt in childhood, I can clearly see how all the grand ideas of “going to heaven” or “going back to Godhead” or “becoming a pure devotee” have found cheery resolve in the service of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Under the benign rule of such service, my life—wonder upon wonder—has been rendered sane. And not just sane, but practical, viable, doable. I may even say—to the extent to which I can act in proper accord—meaningful! Śrīla Prabhupāda and his service now constitute my sole security, my confidence, my great good hope. As to whether such an adherence indeed constitutes the highest of possible gains, which—as a matter of deductive truth—I firmly believe, the point remains entirely moot. For regardless of where all this may lead, I am not capable of understanding or aspiring to more than that.

This conviction, along with the satisfaction and serenity it brings, remains the only fruit of whatever grace I may have received in the course of my life. Within it, however, lies no feeble concession to inadequacy or weakness. Rather, there exists the quiet and even prideful certitude of a rare thing hard-won and finally achieved. Within this experience the anxieties that first arose in me as a young boy have attained their final repose. And one day, were such to truly become “all that I am made of,” that day would surely see me full in all that perfection and success truly comprise.

On behalf of all the members of the Govinda Valley community, Sydney, Australia.

(written by Ātmārāma Dāsa)

Halifax ISKCON

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble obeisances under the dust of your lotus feet, which are the refuge of all the conditioned souls in all the material universes.

What great joy to know that we are also part of your glorious family! Indeed, you built an abode in which everyone can live peacefully and harmoniously. What else do we need? We cannot thank you enough. Because of your transcendental vision, ISKCON Halifax (Atlantic Canada) is blossoming. New devotee families are making Halifax their home. We are in the process of opening a new ISKCON center here and hoping to incorporate in it a Govinda’s restaurant. By your mercy, ISKCON Halifax has also been successfully running a Little Krishna Vedic Club since October 2020, where kids between the ages of six and ten are learning the Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life. We are nourishing devotees and newcomers by organizing weekly Sunday programs along with various Vaiṣṇava festivals.

We at ISKCON Halifax pray on this most sacred day that you will continue to forgive us for our shortcomings in serving you, that you will give us extra mercy so we can understand how to live by the principles of devotional service you taught us, and that we can continue to taste and propagate the nectar of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Your indebted servants at ISKCON Halifax, Canada.

(written by Angiras and Anchal)

Ichalkaranji Preaching Center

Our dearest, beloved spiritual grandfather, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet on this most auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā celebration, the 125th anniversary of your appearance. All glories to Your Divine Grace. All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

Vāsudeva Ghoṣa, an eternal associate of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, expressed this thought: *yadi gaura na hoito, tabe ki hoito*: “If Lord Gaura had not appeared, then what would have become of us?” Similarly, His Holiness Jayapatākā Swami said, “*Yadi Prabhupāda na hoito, tabe ki hoito*.” We simply cannot imagine what our current situation would be if you had not appeared, O Prabhupāda.

Therefore, on this very auspicious day, from the core of our hearts we would like to express how very grateful we are to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for bestowing your mercy on fallen *jīvas* like us. You gave us a precious jewel, His Holiness Lokanāth Swami, whom you called our Saint Tukarāma. As a result we are all able to understand Your Divine Grace’s teachings and what our great *ācāryas* expect from us and how we are supposed to behave and live.

With your divine blessings, here are some of the activities that we successfully conducted here during the recent past, as well as the activities we hope to accomplish in the near future.

Over the past few years, with your divine blessings and the dedicated efforts of the devotees, we successfully conducted three *bhāgavata-kathās*, three Ratha-yātrās, one *harināma* with the Maharashtra *padayātrā* and in the presence of His Holiness Lokanāth Swami, and two *harināmas* with the all-India *padayātrā* prior to the coronavirus period.

Every Ekādaśī we hold a *nāgara-saṅkīrtana*. Your granddisciples also offer *Bhagavad-gītā* courses, and we held a grand welcoming of the all-India *padayātrā*. This past year we were twice blessed by the association of the Maharashtra *padayātrā*. We run *bhakti-ṛkṣa* programs, home programs, a recitation of all the *Bhagavad-gītā ślokas* on the Advent of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and a Kāna fun school for young children.

We were also blessed by the divine presence of a number of *sannyāsīs*, including His Holiness Rāma Govinda Swami, His Holiness Bhakti Rāghava Swami, His Holiness Rūpa Raghunātha Swami, and our *dīkṣā* guru, His Holiness Lokanāth Swami.

All our activities are carried out under the invaluable guidance of His Holiness Lokanāth Swami, who is managing Maharashtra, as per your instructions.

Moving into the present, for your divine pleasure we would like to perform 125 *harināma nāgara-saṅkīrtanas*, distribute 25 sets of *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, chant 108 extra rounds starting from Gaura-Pūrṇimā and continuing until your divine, auspicious appearance day—making a total of 13,500 extra rounds—and make many more people fortunate. Up until now, 2,735 *jīvas* have been made fortunate with 2,200 recorded videos (as of January through March). As Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu states: *prthivīte 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.”

We have also acquired two acres of land, on which we plan to build a temple for the pleasure of Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga. Please bestow on us the strength to succeed in Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mission by making spiritual progress and pleasing the authorities chosen by you.

Thanking you once again, we remain

Your humble servants at ISKCON Ichalkaranji Preaching Center, Maharashtra, India.

International Society for Cow Protection

*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 to you, our beloved spiritual master.

Ever charming, ever attractive, eternally young Kṛṣṇa is a cowherd boy. Wearing precious jewels, cowherd Kṛṣṇa plays His flute, which makes the cows stop munching the luscious grass and lift their heads in search of their greatest benefactor, little boy Kṛṣṇa. How happy the cows are! How happy is Śrī Kṛṣṇa to see the cows happy! As a cowherd boy, their joy is His joy.

Soft, doe-eyed, beautiful cows are looking at Kṛṣṇa with love. Uncountable numbers of them in love with Kṛṣṇa. All live in a lush, green, flowering countryside, frolicking with the Lord of the universe and his vivacious, loyal young friends. We can smell the fragrance of the Vṛndāvana forest, for it abounds with fruit trees, flowers, and vegetables. We can smell and feel the sweet-flavored breezes, which refresh us. We can hear the cowherd boys splashing in the Yamunā River, the frogs croaking in the forest streams. You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, have brought us the spiritual world filled with the cows mooing to their cowherd boys and their leader, the mischievous blue boy, Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa grew up in a village of *vaiśyas*, responsible for the happiness of the cows. His friends were not princes but village boys who were also cowherds. Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His cowherd playmates knew and called each cow by name. When each cow responded by mooing, the cowherd boys thoroughly enjoyed the exchange. Herding cows took up most of their days. When they played, they played near to where the cows grazed—cows everywhere in their lives. Surrounded by cows.

Besides the sheer joy and transcendence Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s village life gives us, there is a serious message you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, sent us. Lord Kṛṣṇa is a cowherd boy! The Lord of the universe spent His time herding and caring for cows! Teaching us about Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a cowherd boy tells us how important it is to protect cows—how important it is to make and keep the cows happy.

Such an everlasting transcendental gift you gave us! Hearing your descriptions of Kṛṣṇa’s eternal pastimes in the village of Vṛndāvana, surrounded by countless cows who each cherish His association, saves our minds from fear and anxiety resulting from the ever-increasing tumultuous events of our current

times. We can bring our minds to the eternal vision of the beautiful, attractive, young blue boy, Kṛṣṇa, playing with and protecting the happy, doe-eyed, soft-to-the-touch cows of Vṛndāvana.

How different our world is from the village of Vṛndāvana! We live in an age where uncountable numbers of cows are tortured, slaughtered, and eaten. How different! In our hearts and minds we can give our lives to protecting cows, keeping them happy, and by doing so we can leave this age of cruelty toward cows and enter blissful Vṛndāvana, where the cows are always happy and never suffer. We enter Vṛndāvana by your mercy! Your causeless mercy! Your gift! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Your servants at International Society for Cow Protection, Inc. (ISCOWP).

ISKCON Germany-Austria-Liechtenstein-Switzerland National Executive Council

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

The members of the ISKCON Germany-Austria-Liechtenstein-Switzerland National Executive Council ask you to please accept our humble obeisances at your lotus feet on this very auspicious 125th anniversary of your appearance.

As your innocent children and grandchildren, we each look up at the sky and wonder where you are at this moment. Disciples and granddisciples attain success in spiritual life when they are trained by an expert spiritual master. Whether personally or through your books, you have trained us all so expertly. May we be able to hand down your legacy as you have handed it to us.

You traveled around the world in order to make the process of loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa accessible to all people. To places you could not visit yourself, you sent your intimate associates. You ensured that every soul on this planet has an opportunity to get in touch with the gift of love for Kṛṣṇa. You did this when you were physically present, you are still doing it today, and you will continue to it for millennia through your movement, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, and through your books and followers.

How fortunate we are to have been able to associate with such a great soul as you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, whose only mission in life was to become an instrument in the Lord's hands! Your mood of full surrender to the divine will, the sincerity and humility expressed in your words, your love for the suffering living beings, and your unconditional faith in the Supreme Lord—all these made a deep, lasting impression on our hearts.

We also see a great need for this mercy in the world, and therefore we want to spread your glories and distribute your books. We understand that book distribution is the greatest welfare activity we can perform. Our desire is to give individuals a chance to overcome the dreadful conditions of material life and to give society a model by which to live together peacefully.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we ask you today, on the 125th anniversary of your appearance day, for a special blessing: please empower us to use all the facilities you have given us—your movement, your instructions, your books, the chanting of the holy names, the *prasādam*, the beautiful temples—to make your mercy accessible to a multitude of souls in our countries.

As a group that works together daily on the affairs of ISKCON in Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland, we ask for your blessings so that we can work cooperatively for many years to come, for your pleasure and for the welfare of ISKCON members and society at large.

Your servants, who are trying to be humble and surrendered,

Members of ISKCON Germany-Austria-Liechtenstein-Switzerland National Executive Council

Israel Nāma-haṭṭa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our respectful obeisances unto the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

In an attempt to realize unlimited mercy and glorify you on this auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, we would like to quote a wonderful verse from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta—Ādi-līlā* 9.50: “When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the great gardener, sees that people are chanting, dancing, and laughing and that some of them are rolling on the floor and some are making loud humming sounds, He smiles with great pleasure.”

Your purport:

This attitude of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is very important for persons engaged in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In every center of our institution, ISKCON, we have arranged for a love feast every Sunday, and when we actually see people come to our center, chant, dance, take *prasādam*, become jubilant, and purchase books, we know that certainly Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is always present in such transcendental activities, and He is very pleased and satisfied. Therefore the members of ISKCON must increase this movement more and more, according to the principles that we are presently trying to execute. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, thus being pleased, will smilingly glance upon them, bestowing His favor, and the movement will be successful.

Although Israel is considered the hub of three world religions, and for thousands of years such holy messengers of God as Jesus Christ and Mohammed have come here, still, today the godlessness of Kali-yuga prevails. This land needs Lord Caitanya’s causeless mercy.

Attempts to bring the *saṅkīrtana* mission to Israel began in the 1970s, when you sent two of your disciples here to plant the first seeds of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Since then, many devotees have taken responsibility for the preaching, and have opened temples and started farm projects and restaurants. To date, about 200,000 BBT books have been distributed here in Hebrew, Arabic, English, and Russian. Over the past seven years, 50,000 of your books have been distributed by the Russian-speaking ISKCON community alone.

The Russian-speaking ISKCON community in Israel, known as “Israel Nama-haṭṭa,” started holding regular *harināmas* here over twenty years ago. It is historically known that glorifying God in Israel is an ancient tradition. King David and his son King Solomon, who lived more than three thousand years ago, encouraged people to chant God’s holy names.

Today, by your grace and the blessings of Lord Caitanya, the *saṅkīrtana* mission is expanding all over the country. Thanks to the guidance and inspiration of the leaders of the Israel *yātrā*, His Holiness Kavicandra

Swami and His Grace Jagadīśa Prabhu, hundreds of devotees are now participating in *harināma-saṅkīrtana*.

Especially during this past very difficult year and a half, the symptoms of Kali-yuga you mention in your books and lectures have become clearly visible. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to the families of those who have died from the coronavirus. But people have been losing their illusions and their faith in the modern way of life and are starting to look more toward their spiritual foundations. Interest in the knowledge you so carefully passed on to our generation is growing every day. The preaching is increasing, and many new people are joining the movement.

Recently, we conducted the first-ever *harināma* and book distribution in Tel Aviv's Muslim area of Old Jaffa. Many Jews, Arabs, and Christians greeted the devotees with joy, chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa with them, and danced to the sound of the *kīrtana*. We hope our humble efforts to assist you in serving the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Israel will attract the Lord's merciful glance, and that the movement will be successful here.

Your humble Russian-speaking servants in Israel's Nāma-haṭṭa program.

Krishna Center Fredericton

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

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

Respected Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are most unqualified to write an homage to Your Divine Grace on this most auspicious day of your transcendental appearance in this world. However, very mercifully, your dear disciple His Holiness Bhaktimārga Swami has requested us to write this offering to you, representing all the devotees connected with ISKCON Fredericton.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave so many profound and invaluable gifts to this world that they cannot be truly evaluated, even by great souls. Starting from your books, temples, the process of *saṅkīrtana*, your transcendental instructions on virtually all practical, philosophical, and devotional topics, the opportunity to worship Deities of Kṛṣṇa, endless opportunities to serve the Lord in so many ways, the daily opportunity to accept and share *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*—these are only a sample of your gifts. You gave us these gifts in the midst of all kinds of difficulties. You sacrificed your time, sleep, and health for us. The greatest gifts you left behind for future generations are your books and your most committed representatives, who continue to guide us lovingly in so many ways, teaching us to assimilate your pure teachings and live by them.

At the Krishna Center in Fredericton we are blessed with the association of visiting senior devotees, especially His Holiness Bhaktimārga Swami, and *brahmacārīs* from ISKCON Montreal. Through their example and precepts they teach us the ways of loving exchanges among temple devotees and congregation members. Their loving guidance is giving us great strength and inspiration for understanding and applying your teachings, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

The Krishna Center has been involved in community preaching, book distribution, and *Bhagavad-gītā* study. The last year and a half was very difficult for us because of the pandemic, and we were forced to

close the Center due to a lockdown. But by Kṛṣṇa's mercy and yours, the restrictions were reduced around Kārttika, and we celebrated by singing *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam* and offering sacred lamps in various people's homes. We visited about twelve houses at that time and held two large programs for students as well.

During the *Bhagavad-gītā* marathon we were able to collect a good number of donations for sponsoring *Gītā* distribution. We also distributed *Gītās* to more than sixty families in the city.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you left us with great family members, who take care of one another without any personal desires. ISKCON is a huge house where devotees of many different ethnicities can live and still maintain themselves and serve together. This is possible only because you taught us to keep Kṛṣṇa in the center. We serve Kṛṣṇa and your lotus feet, and this keeps us enthusiastic and energized. We are like young children, with many limitations and defects. Kindly bless us, Śrīla Prabhupāda, so we can please your direct servants through these efforts and thus please you.

Your insignificant servants at Krishna Center Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada.

Milton ISKCON

Our dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble and respectful obeisances unto your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace on this auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā day, the 125th anniversary of your appearance. We fall at your lotus feet and beg for the ability to properly glorify your divine and magnanimous character.

We are extremely grateful to you for all you've done for us. We cannot really understand how much compassion you have for the fallen conditioned souls of this world.

This past year and a half has affected everyone. The COVID-19 pandemic spreading across the world has put everyone in lockdown, something unprecedented in recent world history. There's a lot of fear and stress among people in general.

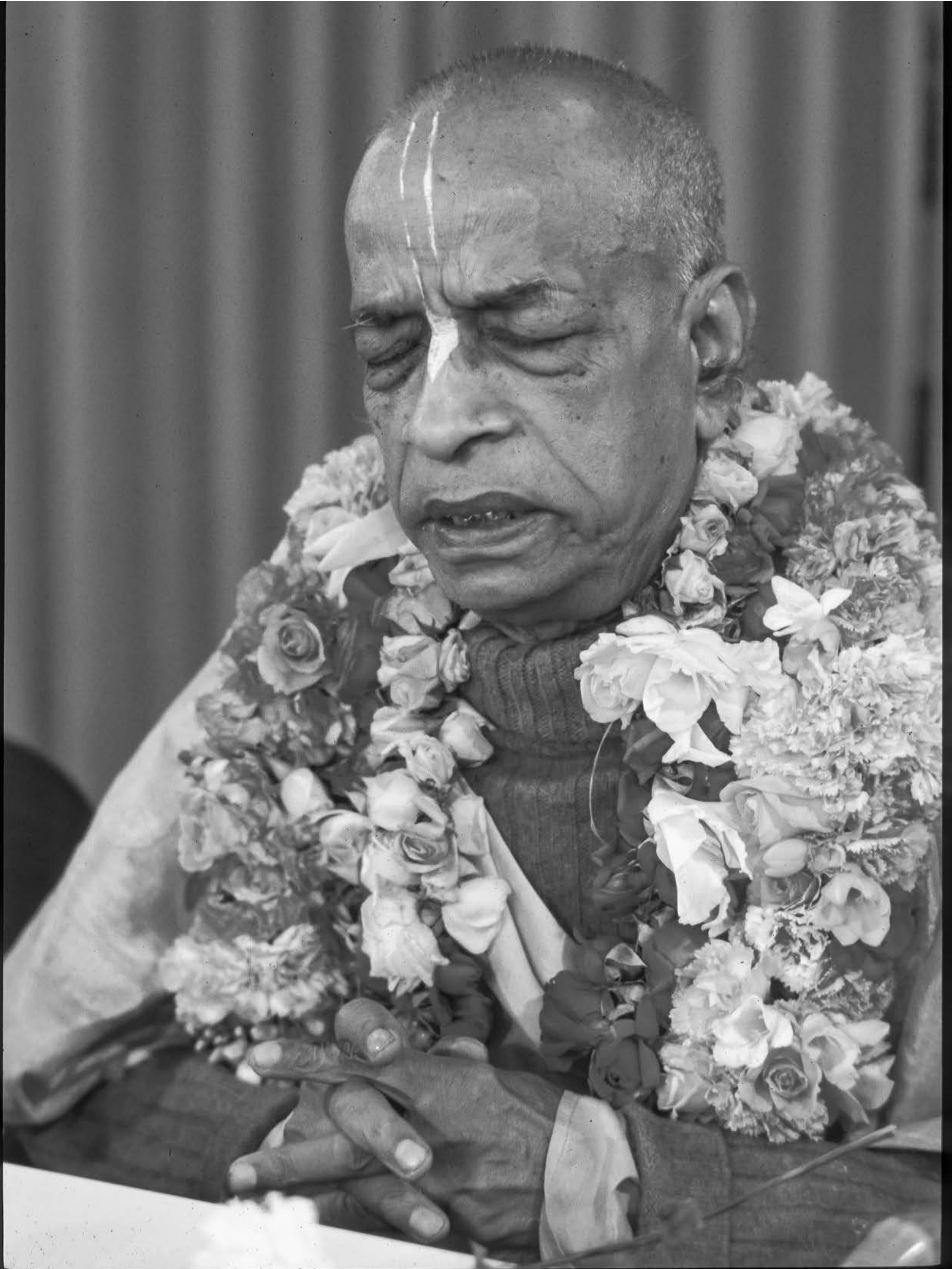
On seeing this onslaught of Kali-yuga, we have become more and more convinced that your ISKCON movement and your books are the only hope for saving humanity. During the pandemic, devotees found new ways to associate with one another using video-conferencing technology. Devotees came up with innovative ways to distribute books, again using technology in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa. So despite the challenges, the preaching work continued and was never stopped.

We're amazed to see how your ISKCON movement is flourishing day by day. There are many new temples and preaching centers popping up across the world. Tens of thousands of devotees are chanting the holy name in each and every part of the world. Millions of your books are being distributed. This is all happening by your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

You made such a great sacrifice when you traveled by cargo ship across the Atlantic at an advanced age, suffering two heart attacks on the way. You did this because of your unflinching faith in the order of your spiritual master, whose desire was for you to spread the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to the West.

You are the savior of the fallen souls in this material world, and we can never repay you or thank you enough for what you have done for us. Without Your Divine Grace, we would never have known the real purpose of human life.

We at ISKCON Milton are a small group of your granddisciples trying to become your servants. We are very happy and grateful to you for providing us an opportunity to assist you in some small way as we try to advance your preaching mission in the Halton region of Ontario, Canada.



Our only desire is to connect each and every soul visiting ISKCON Milton to your teachings, and to provide them with the opportunity to go back home, back to Godhead.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you'll be happy to know that ISKCON Milton has grown from eight families in 2017 to more than thirty families today. These families are accepting the message you brought and seriously practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

At the beginning of the pandemic we started an online *japa* circle. Several devotees come together and chant their sixteen rounds in the early morning hours, taking inspiration from one another. Several new devotees have drawn inspiration from those sessions and have begun chanting sixteen rounds daily.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you'll be happy to hear that your devotees at ISKCON Milton also distributed twenty-three sets of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* during the 2020 Bhādra-pūrṇimā Campaign, along with 2,149 *Bhagavad-gītās* during the December book distribution marathon. We're convinced this was possible only by your blessings and causeless mercy. We always try to follow this statement of yours: "Books are the basis, preaching is the essence, utility is the principle, and purity is the force."

On this 125th anniversary of your divine appearance, the devotees of ISKCON Milton are attempting to acquire a place of our own for your temple here—a place from which the message of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu can be broadcast to the entire Milton area. We want to make this new temple an offering to you on this most auspicious occasion.

We seek your blessings and mercy so that we can continue to follow in your footsteps and serve the Lord and His devotees with full enthusiasm. Our only desire is to please you by becoming more and more enthusiastic to spread the holy name everywhere in this area. We pray that you empower us and make us instruments in spreading the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu so that the whole Milton area becomes fully Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Your insignificant aspiring servants in Milton, Ontario, Canada.

Muskoka ISKCON

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Hare Kṛṣṇa! Please accept our humble obeisance. All glories to Your Divine Grace and to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, this is our first ever effort to express ourselves directly to you, and we are excited to have an opportunity to write this offering for your Vyāsa-pūjā day. We are very thankful to our spiritual master, His Holiness Bhaktimārga Swami, for giving us this opportunity.

We are writing on behalf of your ISKCON Muskoka congregation. Śrīla Prabhupāda, the devotees here started Kṛṣṇa conscious activities in the Muskoka area in 2020 with a Ratha-yātrā. The second major service we performed was the book marathon in December 2020. With your blessings and under the guidance of His Holiness Bhaktimārga Swami, we then registered ISKCON Muskoka in January 2021. Recently we held our first official Gaura-Pūrṇimā festival, celebrated online via Zoom. Participants joined the celebration from various parts of Ontario. We see this online platform as the future of ISKCON preaching centers.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, with your blessing we have started a Food for Life program in Orillia, Ontario, and we will try to expand it to another town in the Muskoka area.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are planning to start a Facebook page and website for ISKCON Muskoka. We are also planning to start a Sunday school at multiple locations around the Muskoka area. We need your blessings to empower us to continue your legendary work.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we beg your forgiveness for all our mistakes and your help to keep our spirits high so we will keep striving for unalloyed devotional service. Please teach us how to remain grounded and always surrendered to you. Again and again we beg for your guidance on our path of surrender and devotional service.

Last but not least, we all *thank you very much* for giving meaning to our human lives. We wish that by working cooperatively we will bring a smile to your lotus face.

Eternally indebted to you, we remain

Your servants at Muskoka ISKCON, Canada.

(written by Nimāi-Nitāi Dāsa and Mokṣa-līlā Devī Dāsī)

Niagara ISKCON

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your lotus feet. On this occasion of Vyāsa-pūjā 2021, please accept this offering from your spiritual grandchildren at the newly formed ISKCON Niagara project.

On November 1, 2020, the first day of Kārttika, ISKCON Niagara was launched online. All of us involved aspire to please you with our sincerity, to serve your divine grace through this ISKCON Niagara project. Presently, due to the global pandemic, we have weekly online programs each Saturday, and also hold special events. As soon as it is safe to do so, by your mercy we will procure a physical location.

The vision put forward by ISKCON Niagara’s directors, council members, and sincere members of the congregation is that we construct a “Temple for Transcendental Realization” based on your teachings as they are found in ISKCON’s mission statement, that we distribute *prasadam*, that we focus on “Sound and Scriptures,” create a guesthouse and retirement community, establish organic farming, and hold retreats to “Revive, Restore, Rejuvenate.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, whenever you opened a new ISKCON center, you always prayed to the predominating Deities of that place: “My dear Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, if you so desire . . .” With similar sentiments we pray at your lotus feet: “Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, if you so desire, please help us accomplish the project’s vision, which we’ve outlined above.”

We realize our limitations, but having taken shelter of you through your sincere followers and your books, we attempt to worship Your Divine Grace just as one worships the Ganges by offering her own water to her.

Your *vāñī*, or instructions, and the association of Vaiṣṇavas are the best things that have happened to us in our journey toward self-realization, and we are eternally indebted to you, with pleasure, for these things! Please consider us your surrendered servants. We may have many inebrieties, but you are our shining savior in spiritual armor, protecting and guiding us.

Some of us have been in your glorious movement for several decades. Contemplating your *praṇāma-mantra*—*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale*—we see that by your mercy you revealed a glimpse of yourself. We are astounded; our appreciation for you has reached new heights.

How dear you are to the Divine Couple! Having descended from the highest plane for the pleasure

of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa (and Caitanya Mahāprabhu), you sacrificed Their direct association and came to the material world out of pure compassion. The *gopīs* sing of your wonderful acts of compassion. In the *Gopī-gītā* chapter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, at text 10.31.9, they sing to Kṛṣṇa, *tava kathāmr̥tam . . . bhuvi gṛṇanti ye bhūri-dā janāḥ*. Personalities like Your Divine Grace are indeed the most munificent, fulfilling the desire of Caitanya Mahāprabhu by broadcasting the nectar of Kṛṣṇa conscious subject matter (*kṛṣṇa-kathāmr̥ta*), which is filled with spiritual power, all over the world.

Our desire is to become preṣṭha, dear to Your Divine Grace. Some say that going back to Godhead is the most important goal, but we prefer to follow the mood of Prahāda Mahārāja, who offers this prayer to Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva: “My dear Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, because of my association with material desires, one after another, I was gradually falling into a blind well full of snakes, following the general populace. But Your servant Nārada Muni kindly accepted me as his disciple and instructed me how to achieve this transcendental position. Therefore, my first duty is to serve him. How could I leave his service?” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.28)

Similarly, we pray to Kṛṣṇa: My dear Kṛṣṇa, your dear servant Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted us as his granddisciples. May we always remain engaged in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s service.

Your aspiring servants at Niagara ISKCON, Canada.

(written by Satcitānanda Dāsa)

Oakville ISKCON

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances on this auspicious day of Your Divine Grace’s appearance.

We are so grateful to you and shall remain forever indebted. You happily accepted unimaginable difficulties just to save some undeserving beings like us. You left Vṛndāvana, the abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, undertook a grueling sea voyage, and lived among drug addicts simply to please your Guru Mahārāja and Kṛṣṇa.

It has been a very difficult year and a half for all of us. The pandemic has taken its toll on many of us. Physical association with devotees has become a rare occurrence. Temples are closed to devotees, and everything has become virtual and rather “impersonal.” At times, we feel as if life has stopped, and we wonder if it will ever become “normal” again. Anyway, as your dear disciple His Holiness Bhaktimārga Swami always says, “Be a warrior, not a worrier.” So we shall continue to make the best of a difficult situation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are a small group of devotees here in Oakville. With your blessings and the continual guidance and support of your dear disciple Bhaktimārga Swami, we have started a small center here. We don’t yet have a physical location, but we will have one as soon as the pandemic is over. For now, all our *saṅgas* are virtual—not what we prefer, but it’s the best we can do under the circumstances.

As a group we have weekly *saṅgas* and, by your blessings, our group is expanding slowly but surely. In addition, we have your granddisciple Her Grace Pañcamī Devī Dāsī running a *bhakti-vṛkṣa* group on Fridays and a Sunday school for kids of various ages. Also, we have some out-of-the-box ideas, like “Storytime with Her Grace Prema Gaurāṅgī Devī Dāsī,” where many kids join in to listen to Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.

Although the pandemic is still upon us, we have a plan this year to bring Lord Jagannātha, Lord Baladeva, and Śrīmatī Subhadrā Devī out to the park for the first time in Oakville! Please bless us, and maybe have a word with Kṛṣṇa to somehow make it happen.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have given us all the tools necessary to get out of this material world. Reading

your *Līlāmṛta* gives us the courage to continue our battle with *māyā* and provides constant inspiration to surrender to Kṛṣṇa. Please bless us so we can follow in your footsteps and somehow become instrumental in bringing some more lost children back to Kṛṣṇa.

Your servants at the Oakville ISKCON Centre, Ontario, Canada.

Osaka Preaching Center

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

You started the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement by preaching to American youths, who became attracted to and felt they wanted to serve you. Then those young people became your disciples. The deep bond they had with you inspired them to follow your instructions and help you spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in countless ways.

You taught that chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is the best way to cure the sickness caused by material consciousness and revive our eternal blissful, spiritual consciousness. Among the many young people you encountered in those early days in New York City, a fortunate few became devotees by following your instructions. You said only pure devotees can chant purely, and pure chanting is fit to offer to Kṛṣṇa. You also said “Purity is the force.”

In 1970, when you returned to India from America, you brought with you ten American disciples, whom called your “dancing white elephants.” Within a month twenty more disciples arrived. You did *kīrtana* with these thirty disciples. The men among them shaved their heads, put on *tilaka*, wore saffron clothes, and went out on *harināma-saṅkīrtana* every day.

By showing people the *Hare Krishna* movie, directed by Yadubara Prabhu, we can easily explain you and Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others. I was once interviewed by ITV, and the interview became part of the “New Hare Krishna World” series as no. 102.

Later, I was initiated by Kavicandra Swami. The first order my guru gave me was to prepare a feast with Jalāṅgī Devī Dāsī. He blessed us by saying, “You might think you can’t do something, but Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda will definitely help you. So please proceed with confidence.”

That’s why we are continuing to cook feasts for more than twenty years in this same place and distribute the *prasādam* to many guests. This is due only to the mercy of you, Kṛṣṇa, and our Guru Mahārāja.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, because you brought us to the *paramparā* coming down from Kṛṣṇa, we can do devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We pray that for a long time we will be able to continue holding regular Hare Kṛṣṇa programs featuring chanting, dancing, and feasting.

Your servants at ISKCON’s Osaka Preaching Center, Japan.

(written by Satsvarūpa Dāsa)

Prabhupāda Village

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

First, I would like to beg your forgiveness for my offenses to you. When you came to the Big Island of Hawaii in May 1975, I was a brand-new devotee on the ISKCON farm project you so graciously visited. Out of forgetfulness, during the *ārati* I offered the ghee lamp to all the devotees first and to you last. I did the same with the water and flowers. You so graciously accepted my unethical offerings with such humility. You passed your hand over the flame of the ghee lamp and then touched your hand to your head, you bowed your head when I sprinkled the water on you, and you leaned forward and smelled the flower when I offered it to you. You showed no sign of anger, but still, I'm impelled to beg your forgiveness, for I know I didn't act respectfully.

After this, in my uncultured, youthful, brash way, I was walking here and there in our makeshift temple, making too much noise, and so I was requested to walk more softly. After some time I forgot this instruction and again went back to walking with heavy footsteps. I was then told to go outside. After the farm was sold, out of a desire for fame, adoration, and distinction I went through all endeavors to be the number-one collector and book distributor in the Honolulu temple. To reach this goal I abusively intimidated the conditioned souls I approached so they would offer their hard-earned money to your temple. I caused so much turmoil and bad publicity for your ISKCON movement during those years.

Lord Caitanya refused to grant *kṛṣṇa-prema* to His mother because she had blamed Advaita Ācārya for influencing Lord Caitanya's brother, Viśvarūpa, to take *sannyāsa*. When Mother Śacī understood this, she paid her obeisances to Advaita Ācārya, begging His forgiveness, and was then granted *kṛṣṇa-prema* by Lord Caitanya. Similarly, after so many years I now beg forgiveness for the offenses I committed to you. Please accept my sincere apologies and continue to guide me forward on the path to the spiritual world, Goloka Vṛndāvana.

For the past twenty-five years I have been living here at Prabhupāda Village, North Carolina. We are part of your ever-expanding ISKCON society. On behalf of the temple here, I want to extend our gratitude and appreciation for you coming into all our lives. We all remember, pray to, and glorify you every day. We feel your positively powerful spiritual influence in an ever-increasing way as the years pass. An ordinary person is gradually forgotten as time passes, but as the sun rises and sets repeatedly, we remember you more and more. We associate with you by regularly chanting Kṛṣṇa's names, listening to your lectures, reading your books, and following your other instructions. Our lives are dedicated to serving you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and our purpose in life is to please you. Because we are your servants, please engage us in your service. We exist as extensions of your desires, so please feel free to engage us accordingly. Thank you. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your servants at Prabhupāda Village, North Carolina, USA.

(written by Śauri Dāsa)

Radio Krishna Centrale

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

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

Most dear and beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble and respectful obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

With our hearts filled with joy, we at Radio Krishna Centrale throw ourselves in the dust of your lotus feet—those lotus feet that have glorified this earth by walking on its surface. You are the crest jewel among Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pure devotees, completely engrossed in pure love of Godhead—so much so that anyone who comes close to Your Divine Grace, no matter how stonehearted he or she may be, can, simply by osmosis, experience the profound feeling that is nothing other than a nectarean flow of pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness pervading his or her heart.

Such is the intensity of your desire to please the Lord and bring everyone back home, back to Godhead, that by merely moving from place to place you spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness as if it were an epidemic. By opening temples, starting preaching centers, and introducing all kinds of preaching programs that embody your pure, unalloyed devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, you generated so many outbreaks of Kṛṣṇa conscious infections. One after another, anyone who approaches the places of such contagions becomes infected by this Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So just as an infectious disease becomes a pandemic and takes over the whole world, so the spiritual infection of your pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness has spread all over the planet.

The symptoms of this infection are as follows: persons start to feel disturbed, uncomfortable in their ordinary lifestyle. This is followed by an increasing sense of exhaustion, caused by their having dedicated so much time to gathering material comforts and achievements. Then comes a growing awareness of the real self, followed by a gradual indifference toward material sense gratification, followed by a feverish rise in interest in Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa conscious activities. Increasingly, these people find it more and more difficult to breathe the oxygen of materialism—so much so that they can no longer breathe it at all and have to dive deeply into the spiritual atmosphere of selfless devotional service to Your Divine Grace’s lotus feet in the association of their devotee friends.

In some people, these symptoms seem less evident; others may appear asymptomatic. Still, the infection has entered their consciousness and will act at the proper time, even if it remains dormant for years or even into another life. Nonetheless, all infected people function as healthy carriers of the disease and can infect others just by telling them what they have heard about Śrī Kṛṣṇa and directing them toward Your Divine Grace’s devotees and books.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, just as there are things that can contain the rapid spread of a material infection, so there are things that can block the spread of a spiritual pandemic. *Prajalpa*, or talking about material topics instead of pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness as we find it discussed in your perfect books, is one example. Another is eating food instead of pure *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* offered to the Deities. Doing either of these is like covering our mouths with a mask during a viral pandemic. That same blockage occurs if we use our noses to smell only the scents of this world rather than the fragrance of sacred *tulasī* leaves, incense, and perfumes offered to the Lord.

Likewise, being in the company of nondevotees and avoiding close contact with highly Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees is tantamount to social distancing. Similarly, watching TV, going to movies, pubs, and dance halls, attending gatherings for gross or subtle material sense gratification, and avoiding Kṛṣṇa’s festivals and spiritually contagious sacred places, such as temples and ashrams, where the atmosphere of pure

Kṛṣṇa consciousness prevails, is equivalent to keeping ourselves safe from the Kṛṣṇa conscious infection.

Similarly, dwelling in a place surrounded by worldly images, objects, and literature, including books written by philosophical speculators and so-called elevated spiritualists, including *sahajiyā* devotees, while removing spiritually infectious elements like Śrī Kṛṣṇa's worship paraphernalia, pictures of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees, and Your Divine Grace's books, which are filled with pure, unadulterated Kṛṣṇa conscious words and images, is compared to keeping everything clean and sterilized to protect against infection.

Letting people in general receive Kṛṣṇa consciousness in only very small doses or in some watered-down form could lead to a kind of "herd immunity" to the infection of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Injecting them with a variant modified by the material modes of goodness, passion, and ignorance might vaccinate them, giving people the ability to develop antibodies that fight the infection of pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness, greatly reducing the immediate effects of the pure contagion.

However, in the end, none of these preventative measures really works. You are such an exalted, extraordinary, and pure devotee of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa that Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself manifested His full presence through Your Divine Grace.

Your chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and your *kṛṣṇa-kathā*—the transcendental sounds flowing from your lotus mouth, recorded in your wonderful literary works—is well above any ordinary purity or offenseless chanting. You are distributing nothing less than pure *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

That's why your infection of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so overwhelmingly successful. It will never go away, but is here to stay. Willingly or unwillingly, everyone will eventually be infected. And this is the plan Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu enunciated: *prthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma / sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*—"In every town and village, the chanting of My name will be heard."

At *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.25, Nārada Muni describes how he became infected with Kṛṣṇa consciousness:

*ucchiṣṭa-lepān anumodito dvijaiḥ
sakṛt sma bhuñje tad-apāsta-kilbiṣaḥ
evam pravṛttasya viśuddha-cetasas
tad-dharma evātma-ruciḥ prajāyate*

"Once only, by their permission, I took the remnants of their food, and by so doing all my sins were at once eradicated. Thus being engaged, I became purified in heart, and at that time the very nature of the transcendentalist became attractive to me."

Your Purport

Pure devotion is as much infectious, in a good sense, as infectious diseases. A pure devotee is cleared from all kinds of sins. The Personality of Godhead is the purest entity, and unless one is equally pure from the infection of material qualities, one cannot become a pure devotee of the Lord. The *bhakti-vedāntas* as above mentioned were pure devotees, and the boy became infected with their qualities of purity by their association and by eating once the remnants of the foodstuff taken by them. Such remnants may be taken even without permission of the pure devotees. There are sometimes pseudo devotees, and one should be very much cautious about them. There are many things which hinder one from entering devotional service, but by the association of pure devotees all these obstacles are removed. The neophyte devotee becomes practically enriched with the transcendental qualities of the pure devotee, which means attraction for the Personality of Godhead's name, fame, qualities, pastimes, etc. Infection of the qualities of the pure devotee means to imbibe the taste of pure devotion always in the transcendental activities of the Personality of Godhead. This transcendental taste at once makes all material things distasteful. Therefore a pure devotee is not at all attracted by material activities. After the elimination of all sins, or obstacles on the path of devotional service, one can become attracted, one can have steadiness, one can

have perfect taste, one can have transcendental emotions, and at last one can be situated on the plane of loving service of the Lord. All these stages develop by the association of pure devotees, and that is the purport of this stanza.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please keep us all very close to your lotus feet at all times so that your formidable infection of Kṛṣṇa consciousness will eternally infect us and kill for good the terrible false identity that has overpowered us since time immemorial. We promise we won't move an inch from your shelter. Your Divine Grace is our life and soul. We always think of you. Working sincerely and tirelessly to serve your instructions is the only way we have to soothe the feeling of separation deep in our hearts.

We take the opportunity of this holy occasion to renew our plea to Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi: The inexorable time factor is a manifestation of Your power and, as such, is completely under Your control. You can make us forget or remember. Please, whatever may happen to us in this life or another, never take from us the memory of our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda or his teachings and pastimes. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your humble and respectful servants at Radio Krishna Centrale, Italy.

(written by Narakāntaka Dāsa)

Rūpānuga Vedic College

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you.

In your *Nectar of Instruction* you write that the International Society for Krishna Consciousness is meant to facilitate the six loving exchanges between devotees. I see this as a reality. In your centers around the world, devotees are engaging in these wonderful acts of love: giving gifts and accepting gifts, revealing their minds in confidence and inquiring confidentially, and giving *prasādam* and accepting *prasādam*.

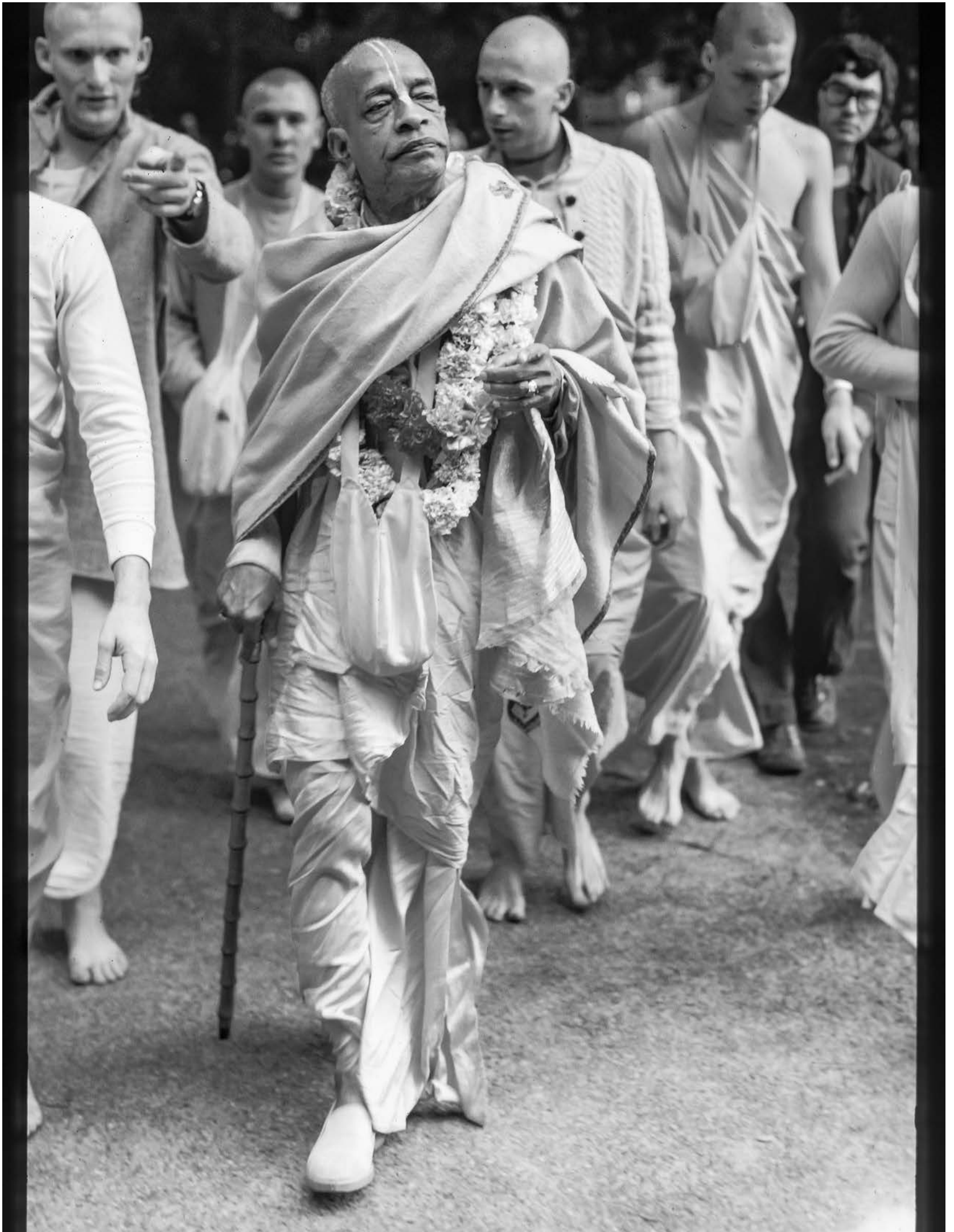
Members of your ISKCON can go to any part of the world and be warmly welcomed by loving Vaiṣṇavas who are dedicated to you and reflect your divine qualities. In addition, members of the general public can immediately feel the loving reciprocation of Vaiṣṇava culture when they come in contact with a devotee. Thus they may feel great impetus to become devotees themselves, at least on some level.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you personally exemplified the six loving exchanges. When we read the letters you wrote to your students, we see just how loving and encouraging you were toward them. You truly exhibited the purest state of unconditional love that any of us have ever experienced. By your mercy, your disciples and granddisciples are inheriting your loving quality and sharing that with others.

In our temple, by giving newcomers a chance to experience the Vaiṣṇava culture of loving exchanges, we hope to help many of them begin practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness in earnest and take your instructions very seriously. We so much need your mercy to do this. With you and Kṛṣṇa as our center, we strive to simply please you.

Your servants at the Rūpānuga Vedic College, Kansas City, Missouri, USA.

(written by Krishna Bhagavān dāsa Brahmācārī)



Saṅkīrtana Mission, Germany

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances, all glories to your lotus feet.

As a very dear and sincere servant of Lord Caitanya, you made the most precious gift of *kṛṣṇa-prema* accessible to the whole world. Unfortunately, the people of the world still haven't understood the great value of gift they've received, since a large portion of society remains engrossed in sense gratification. The transcendental knowledge you teach is far beyond the concepts of the material world; it can help people become free from the problems of the material world, and it gives access to loving service to Kṛṣṇa.

By your example and through your books, you show how sublime Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are. You want everyone to receive the Lord's mercy. We see a great need for this mercy in the world, and therefore we want to spread your glories and distribute your books. We understand that this is the greatest welfare activity we can perform. Our desire is to give as many people as possible a chance to overcome the dreadful conditions of material life, and to give society a model by which they can learn to live together in peace in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Both goals require that we attain a deep understanding of you and your teachings.

In our own lives we want to become transparent and truthful servants of your mission. By taking shelter of the holy name and the *bhakti* process, we want to face our impurities and develop the conviction, mercy, and purity necessary to change the atheistic environment of this world into a place where the worship of Kṛṣṇa can be found everywhere. We beg you for your mercy so that we can become qualified for this very important, urgent service. We pray to be allowed to continue it for the rest of our lives.

Thank you very much, Śrīla Prabhupāda. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Your servants at the Saṅkīrtana Mission, Germany.

Śaraṇāgati Dhāma

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

We beg to acknowledge the mercy we have received from you—mercy that you are pouring down on us like a cloud pours rain and that is relieving our parched hearts in this desertlike Kali-yuga. This mercy sustains us. We also beg forgiveness for any improper behavior or offenses we may have committed while trying to serve you.

We feel fortunate to be able to live in the association of devotees here at Śaraṇāgati Dhāma, which is somewhat removed from the chaos of the material world during these challenging times. Due to your grace, we understand that Śaraṇāgati is not only a geographical location but a state of consciousness. Surrender. Śaraṇāgati implies approaching Kṛṣṇa for refuge and protection. Only through this surrender can we find true safety. You have given us this opportunity to attain such shelter. You taught us by your

example and gave us your instructions. Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, give us the desire, intelligence, strength, and faith to follow your directions so that we may engage fully in devotional service and feel Kṛṣṇa's love and protection.

You are always reminding us that “Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not an artificial imposition on the mind. This consciousness is the original energy of the living being. When we hear the transcendental vibration [Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare] this consciousness is revived.”

In words you spoke in November 1972 in Vṛndāvana, in a class on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.31, we find solace and inspiration:

We are always in touch with Kṛṣṇa, but at the present moment, due to the illusory energy of *māyā*, we have forgotten that we are always connected with Kṛṣṇa. . . . This illusion, this dirty thing, has to be removed; then our original relationship will be established and our life will be perfect.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we long for that day!

Here at Śaraṇāgati, the devotees have many different services, such as Deity worship, maintaining the temple, teaching, preaching, counseling devotees, farming, cow protection, forest maintenance, raising our families, chanting the holy names, studying your books, and honoring *prasādam*—and while performing them, we are each faced daily with many choices. Please guide us to choose thoughts, words, and actions that are in line with your instructions, your *vāñī*. We strive to stay always in your association in this way.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are an ocean of kindness, mercy, and love. You are the true friend of the poor. You are freeing us from the darkness of ignorance. Our good fortune is inconceivable. No amount of chosen words are sufficient to express our gratitude to you for showing us the real Śaraṇāgati.

Your servants at Śaraṇāgati Dhāma, B.C., Canada.

Saskatoon Preaching Center

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble obeisances!

A year has passed, and here we are, still locked into color-coded zones and bubbles. As we pass through these times where there have been few constants, the one thing that has remained constant for all the devotees at ISKCON Saskatoon is that we are in the Kṛṣṇa zone. Indeed, we feel this with even more fervor than in past years.

While many lives have been taken by the pandemic, on the strength of the wise teachings you have imparted we see the pandemic as a stark reminder that this material life is temporary and that we have to be serious about practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness and regaining our eternal life in the spiritual world.

You overcame the tremendous difficulties you met on your arrival in North America, and you created a worldwide movement! We are so thankful to you for creating this mission and giving us shelter at your lotus feet, giving us an opportunity to be better and do better.

Without your sacrifices, your perseverance, your faith, and your blessings, we could not remain in a zone where Kṛṣṇa is our center. We thank you wholeheartedly for your guidance, delivered to us through your faithful disciples. While we are by no means a large community, our congregation is devoted, and we beg for your continued blessings to bring us ever closer to the Supreme. Without your mercy, we have no hope.

Your servants at the ISKCON Saskatoon Preaching Center, Saskatchewan, Canada.

The School of Bhakti

*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,

This offering is from the School of Bhakti, a newly created educational enterprise being developed at Bhaktivedanta Manor in Watford, England.

There is a famous saying: “May you live in interesting times!” Often attributed to the Chinese (but not really proven that it comes from them), it works as both a blessing and a curse. “Interesting times” can refer to opportunity, growth, and breakthroughs, or it can refer to disturbances, troubles, and discomforts.

The past year and a half has really exemplified the second scenario. The pandemic is still raging, loved ones are being infected or even leaving their bodies, and there are concomitant geopolitical machinations that so often go hand in hand with such situations, causing further consequences in societies.

Devotees at the Manor have had to really adjust their spiritual practices, with restricted *darśanas* and a lack of live interaction, both of which have affected how we gather, hold courses, and a host of other things.

The Manor is also in a period of transition. Last year some of our very senior, stalwart leaders left this world. It has been hard, but new leaders are now starting to come forward, with new ways of thinking. There seems to be a cultural transformation going on at the Manor.

Inspiration to Form the School of Bhakti

These circumstances have fostered our establishing the School of Bhakti, which is an evolution of the educational wing at the Manor, previously known as the College of Vedic Studies. Through the School of Bhakti we are trying to develop a dynamic educational hub and spiritual and intellectual hothouse that will resonate with and speak to people from all strata of society, inspiring many souls to live by your teachings.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the ultimate innovator and come from a long line of innovators. Our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* perfected the art of making our teachings relevant to the generations to which they

belonged. They did this expertly and without compromising the principles and essence of the teachings. It may have felt like walking a tightrope, often in times of adversity, whether that adversity be external political forces or the internal fossilization and rigid ritualism into which Vedāntic culture has fallen at various times over the past few centuries. All glories to our *ācāryas*!

Then you arrived, built on their foundation, adapted whatever had to be adapted, and gave the *pièce de résistance* in spiritual innovation and preaching strategy: you managed to bring an entire spiritual culture, with all its nuances, to a society entirely alien to it, one with no frame of reference for what you were bestowing. And yet here we are, over five decades later. So many incredible Vaiṣṇavas are now enlightening us here in the *pāścātya-deśas* because of what you established. It is mind-boggling.

Now the challenge is upon us to adapt and share your teachings with a fast-changing culture and society. In some respects we are certainly growing and there is much to celebrate, but in other respects we really need to make ourselves more relevant to a wider society so that we don't miss key opportunities to connect with people.

Boiling the Milk!

We may thin the milk till it becomes useless, or we may boil it until it becomes thick and sweet. So now we have got enough followers, let us train them up perfectly in the philosophy and activities of the Kṛṣṇa Consciousness way of life. Unless all of my students become very much fixed up in their spiritual progress, what is the use of so many programs for expansion? [Letter to Stokakṛṣṇa Dāsa, 20 June 1972]

This statement by you has been the School of Bhakti's driving force as we form our vision, mission, and what it is we are pledging to the people we wish to serve: to provide a universal spiritual process rooted in your teachings—one that people can embed into their lives and be empowered to share. For masses of people to imbibe your teachings to such a degree, and then to give what they've absorbed to others, requires a substantial apparatus and standard of spiritual education.

At the Manor there is a mood that this should be the focus of our strategies going forward. Previously, we've been more focused on community building, as that was what was needed due to the circumstances. Now, the *raison d'être* of all the Manor's offerings to you should be to provide relevant, dynamic, spiritual education infused with solutions that speak to twenty-first-century considerations.

The Manor has always empowered devotees to share your teachings, but the School of Bhakti will simply try to upscale the number of devotees who can become capable of sharing your teachings in a structured and sensitive manner.

Until now, most of our significant preaching has been due to the efforts of ISKCON's gurus, traveling *sannyāsīs*, and others who are exceptionally gifted speakers in our movement. Many of them have come to the Manor from time to time. We pray that this tradition may continue; we love all of these Vaiṣṇavas and always want their association. At the same time, we feel it's important to develop and invest in the homegrown talent we have in our community and to strengthen our own educational roots and develop our own educational voice.

Hence we have set up a teaching hub within the School of Bhakti where we take local devotees with an aptitude for sharing knowledge and train them in the art of preaching in its various forms, alongside whatever śāstric study they may be doing. Subsequently, they will teach on behalf of the School of Bhakti and grow and develop as teachers, and then train other devotees to also develop into wonderful teachers and facilitators of your teachings. This facilitation can be done by themselves teaching courses, holding weekly gatherings, or even creating publications like our regular magazine and the books we have in the pipeline.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we would really like you to guide our teachers and speak through them at the School of Bhakti and make sure that, along with being relevant, they also present your teachings without mental concoction.

Collecting the Milk!

Due to the pandemic, the past year and a half has been difficult when it comes to sharing your teachings, but we have been trying. Along with the difficulties came breakthroughs and, following in your footsteps, our devotees have certainly scoped out new opportunities to connect with the community and beyond.

This innovation has mainly taken the form of using online conferencing platforms and has worked out wonderfully in terms of range and access to individuals. Through our online courses and workshops, we are now attracting people from various parts of the country and often various parts of the world. We are attracting people we have not seen before, who could never have visited the Manor to attend a live program.

The level of gratitude people have been expressing is humbling and inspiring, and we're developing close bonds with many souls. The pandemic conditions have certainly helped devotees become closer, and the School of Bhakti has been instrumental in that. It is evident that even when things become somewhat normalized in the outside world, the online preaching platforms will continue to be an integral part of our operations. With the development of new bonds and renewed friendships, a community of sorts is starting to build around the School of Bhakti. Individuals are forming regular workshops around our activities, and many individuals are becoming engaged in services with the School of Bhakti, not just benefiting passively.

So far, we have talked a lot about new beginnings, new devotees, and fresh approaches. But we are also very aware that none of this can happen without the involvement of our long-term senior devotees at the Manor. It is because of their efforts that we can endeavor in this direction. We pray to you that we can properly involve and include our senior devotees on this journey toward developing the School of Bhakti. We pray that not only can we please them but that they will consider themselves part of the School of Bhakti and always share their expertise, experience, and guidance to help this program become a richer and more authentic and mature experience for all.

Finding the Right Balance

We need your blessings, Śrīla Prabhupāda, so that we can develop our community effectively. You had a vision of what a Vaiṣṇava community should be like in terms of its values, loving interactions, and selfless, personal mood. We are not there yet, but we are striving to reach that standard. We hope that in the name of community and service we do not become too bureaucratic but retain our dynamism.

There are two sides to this. One is developing a certain mood within our community, and another is how we present ourselves to the wider society so that they'll see the benefit of what we are offering. As a result, we have been changing how we do things, so everything is attractive to a wider audience. And this does not just apply to our courses, retreats, and websites but to the Manor itself. How we speak, how we see new people, what we sell at the shop, what *prasādam* we provide—everything.

How we manage and operate the School of Bhakti must be accounted for, too. We have had to adopt some corporate processes to make ourselves more accessible on a larger scale to the wider society. Naturally, this has caused some consternation in some of our devotees, who fear that we may lose the warm, loving, cozy mood that comes from Vaiṣṇava association. Of course, we would never want to sacrifice that.

You readily adopted infrastructures from the world outside ISKCON into your movement, such as management ideas from the Indian Railway system. You developed the ISKCON management structure while protecting the culture and mood of our movement, so it would not become a faceless corporation. There is a fine balance between the two. But you did it, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in some incomprehensible way, and we know that with your blessings, we can too.

Developing Stronger Bonds with the Wider Family

Apart from our endeavors to “boil and collect the milk,” we have also been reaching out to other departments within the Manor to strengthen the activities going on in your service. We have an amazing team of devotees at the School of Bhakti, each of whom is excited, enthused, and sincere. And together we are trying new avenues of preaching, such as developing outreach strategies through our Manor farm and giving Kṛṣṇa consciousness through the platform of developing ecologically self-sustaining systems—something you always wanted. As mentioned previously, we have a burgeoning publications division developing within the School of Bhakti that is showing a lot of promise, with a number of devotees coming forward to write for our literary projects. Our magazine is going from strength to strength in each issue, and the quality of the writing is getting better and better. However, we do need to work on giving our publications the exposure they deserve.

Going even wider, the School of Bhakti is building relationships with ISKCON congregations around the world. In one of your final statements you mentioned how our love for you would be shown by how we cooperate with one another. With that in mind, we are striving to help other centers share your teachings with the wider society. This could entail sharing content for courses with other centers, helping to develop teachers in other areas, or even setting up online workshops for various congregations, and so on.

In this regard, the School of Bhakti has already developed affiliations with two centers, one in Lexington, Kentucky, in the US, and the other in Argentina. This has set a precedent for us in developing more partnerships with other centers in the world. Additionally, it is broadening our vision in terms of how we share Kṛṣṇa consciousness with very different groups of people.

In its first year, the School of Bhakti has already taken on somewhat of a global element. With your grace, we will attempt to go as far as we can with this; at the same time, we will give all care and attention to the needs of the Manor community. “Think globally, act locally” is the maxim, if we are not mistaken!

Seeking Blessings Once Again!

We hope this offering gives you a decent picture of what some of your servants at the Bhaktivedanta Manor have been up to in developing the School of Bhakti. We do not know where you are right now—whether you are with Kṛṣṇa in Goloka or, at Kṛṣṇa’s behest, you are in some other region sharing Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s holy names. Possibly both? Wherever you are, we humbly beg you to glance mercifully on us and empower us at the School of Bhakti so that we can be a success for you, please you, and bring more and more souls to your lotus feet.

Your insignificant aspiring servants at the School of Bhakti, Bhaktivedanta Manor, Watford, England.

Sri Lanka Temple Construction Project

*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*

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

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

My dear Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

I did not know that I was in ignorance until I met the ISKCON devotees in Germany in 1973. I had the opportunity to see you personally and have your association during your morning walks around Schloss Rettershof. I also got the opportunity to serve you and perform your *guru-pūjā* in the holy *dhāma* of Vṛndāvana at the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple. These are the two memorable moments of my life with you. I did not understand the value of your association at that time, but I now realize that I have been blessed, by your causeless mercy.

Now, after serving you for more than forty-eight years, I continue to realize how much more there is to be done. Just as your mercy is unlimited, so the service to be rendered to your lotus feet and to Lord Kṛṣṇa is also unlimited. You have enlightened the world with the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Sri Lanka is the first place you visited, briefly, on your way to the US to start your mission. In remembrance of that visit, we want to build a beautiful, grand temple here where thousands of devotees can visit and receive your mercy. The temple’s land is located just a few minutes from where you walked while the *Jaladuta* was anchored in the harbor for a short time.

Because of the shelter you created in the world—a place where anyone can rest and find his or her way back to Godhead—I am trying to serve you by constructing a temple in Sri Lanka where everyone can seek shelter and be delivered from material life, which is full of bondage and suffering. Kindly bless me so that my desire will be fulfilled and your causeless mercy will be showered on the people of Sri Lanka so they can enjoy the essence of *bhakti-yoga*.

Your humble servants at the Sri Lanka temple construction project.

(written by Mahākartā Dāsa)

Stouffville Preaching Center

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisance. All glories to you on this the most auspicious and holy occasion

of the 125th anniversary of your appearance. We offer our most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. Once again we are fortunate to be celebrating your divine appearance on this planet. We find totally inadequate our expression of debt and gratitude to you. As Uddhava expressed his inability to glorify the Supreme Lord, as Ananta Śeṣa with his many mouths cannot describe the transcendental glories of Kṛṣṇa, so even with a million mouths we would be incapable of expounding your transcendental qualities and achievements. “Even the most learned man cannot understand the words, activities, and symptoms of a person situated in love of Godhead.” (Cc. *Madhya* 23.39)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we were wandering in the darkest ignorance, and Your Divine Grace, by your causeless mercy, saved us. You have created this wonderful ISKCON society and have made it clear that by serving Hari, Guru, and the Vaiṣṇavas we are always connected with you and thereby will achieve the highest goal of life.

The Stouffville community is a humble attempt to serve your mission in the service of Lord Caitanya. With your blessings we are able to reach the local community and help them connect with Kṛṣṇa through your profound teachings. They are always receptive to topics about Kṛṣṇa. We are holding weekly *Bhagavad-gītā* classes and *kṛṣṇa-kathā* sessions. We have a wonderful group of kids, and are focused on giving them a spiritual and moral education based on your instructions. The parents are also inspired by their kids’ spiritual and cultural edification. We are striving to strengthen the congregation and develop our children and young people. Indeed, the future of our movement is so much brighter with the cohesive, wholehearted, and joyful participation of the members of our congregation.

We hope we never forget even for a moment what you have done for us. With all our energy we will help keep the congregation happy and prosperous by spreading Kṛṣṇa’s divine message. We want to take care of the devotees nicely throughout their Kṛṣṇa conscious lives so that they will remain strong and healthy in their pursuit of spiritual life.

We pray to you to give us strength so that we can remain fixed in service, following your precepts.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Your servants at the Stouffville Preaching Center, Ontario, Canada.

Temple of the Vedic Planetarium

*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*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

The Temple of the Vedic Planetarium, your personal offering to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and our *paramparā*, is almost complete, by your grace and mercy. As you said, when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is pleased, the temple will be built. We are seeing this happen before our very eyes. The spiritual world is descending upon us in another form, as a window, a portal, through which we may experience and also enter Lord Caitanya’s divine abode and *saṅkīrtana-līlā*.

Our small minds cannot fathom the causeless mercy and opportunity you are bestowing on the entire universe and its conditioned *baddha-jīva* residents. From Lord Brahmā to the *indragopa* germ, all are bound to matter by *māyā* through the “mystery of forgetfulness,” as you called it. We are very much afraid of this forgetfulness, and our prayer is that we may have the strength to serve your mission in some small way and be instruments to carry forth the Lord’s purpose: *paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām / dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, despite all our plans and efforts, the year 2020 was a great challenge. Due to the influence of a world-devastating virus, there was a pandemic that literally closed down many countries economically and socially. India was no exception, and for six months your entire ISKCON Māyāpur campus was completely shut down. The temple was closed, no visitors were allowed, and no construction was permitted.

Financially, our flow of income to the project also dwindled to about 77 percent of the anticipated amount, as devotees around the world were unable to maintain their pledged monthly payments and donations. Due to the above constraints, we had to postpone the installation of your new *mūrti* in the TOVP, which was to have happened this past February, and had to make the most painful decision to push the Grand Opening of your Temple of the Vedic Planetarium to 2023.

However, with the cooperation of our project management consultancy firm, Cushman & Wakefield, as well as vendors on whom we rely for goods and services, we were able to extend our credit with them despite our inability to pay bills, and construction resumed on a limited scale in September 2020. Below is a report for you of recently completed, current, and future works as we progress toward the Grand Opening, now rescheduled for 2023.

DESIGN STAGE (September, 2018–March 2019)

1. Interior design
2. MEPF and security design
3. IT design
4. Acoustics & audio/visual design
5. Lighting design

TENDER DESIGN (November 2018–April, 2019)

- Stage 1: Fire and security & PHE
- Stage 2: Electrical and HVAC
- Stage 3: Security and lighting
- Stage 4: Civil and interiors
- Stage 5: AV and IT
- Stage 6: High side works

CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

1. *Pūjārī* room floor completion: January 2019–February 2020
2. Nṛsiṁhadeva wing: September 2020–September 2022
3. Main temple floor: September 2021– September 2023

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED (2019)

1. *Pūjārī* room floor
2. Coffered ceiling framework (main temple floor)
3. Fire protection and detection system in complete building
4. Plumbing and sanitary fixtures in complete building

CONSTRUCTION IN PROGRESS (2022 Completion)

1. Nṛsinhadeva wing
2. Coffered ceiling in main temple floor
3. Main temple marbling and GFRC columns
4. MEP in complete building

CONSTRUCTION IN PROGRESS (2023 Completion)

1. Main temple civil and interiors
2. MEP high side and capital goods installation works
3. Testing and commissioning and move management

It is our great hope that there will be no further obstacles to our progress, especially regarding the installation of your new worship-pose *mūrti* in October of this year. We are arranging a huge installation festival and *abhiṣeka* ceremony, and are encouraging every single devotee and follower of ISKCON to welcome you by sponsoring the *abhiṣeka*. It is our firm belief that by installing you in the temple at this time, prior to the temple opening, you will be there to personally guide and oversee our activities and make certain we are on track to relocate your beloved Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava to Their new home, as you desired, by 2023.

Please continue to infuse us with the ability to carry forth your order so we can finally offer you this temple. As the Ganges is worshiped by offering her own water to her, the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium is already in your heart, and we are simply offering it back to you.

Your insignificant servants,

Ambarīṣa Dāsa and the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium team.

Vedic Cultural Centre

*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 my humble obeisances. All glories, all glories, all glories to you.

My name is Premkishor Dāsa, and 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 preaching center in Thunder Bay, Ontario. We

have been serving in this remote Northwestern Ontario community for the past fifteen years. For the past eleven years we have been organizing a Ratha-yātrā festival, attended by over seven thousand people.

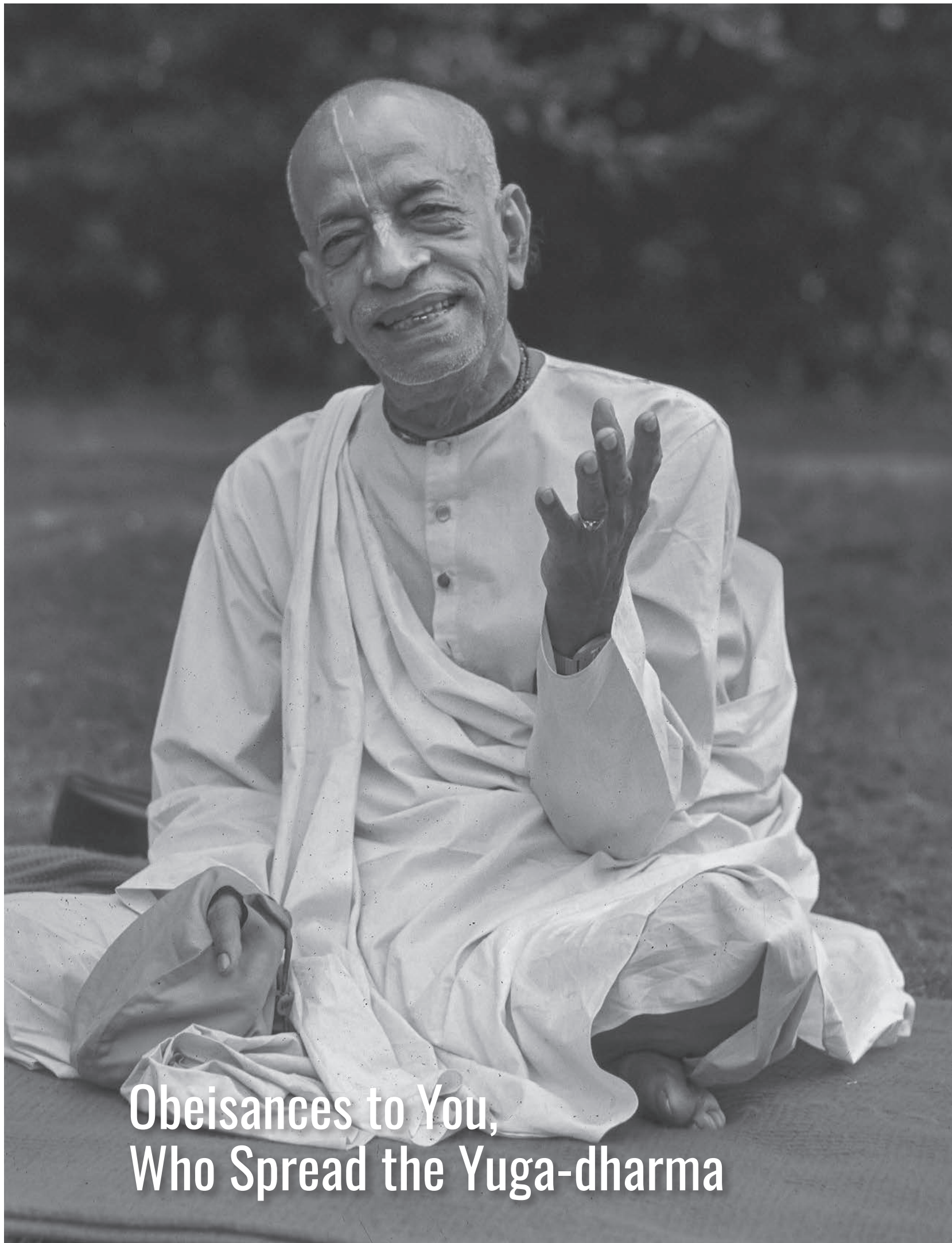
Recently we purchased a new temple property that is over eight thousand square feet. This new temple will be unique to the area and the largest in Northwestern Ontario. Building renovations are in progress, and we plan to inaugurate the new temple on Janmāṣṭamī, August 30, 2021. It is our sincere request that you please bless us so we can manage this project.

For the past two years, with your blessings, we have organized a Festival of India in six cities across Northern Ontario. This year, because of problems related to the coronavirus spread across the globe, we are not certain we can hold these summer festivals.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we need your blessings and mercy to continue serving you and expanding ISKCON's activities across Canada's northern communities. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for all your wonderful teachings. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your servants at the Vedic Cultural Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada.

(written by Premkishor Dāsa and Sunīti Devī Dāsī)



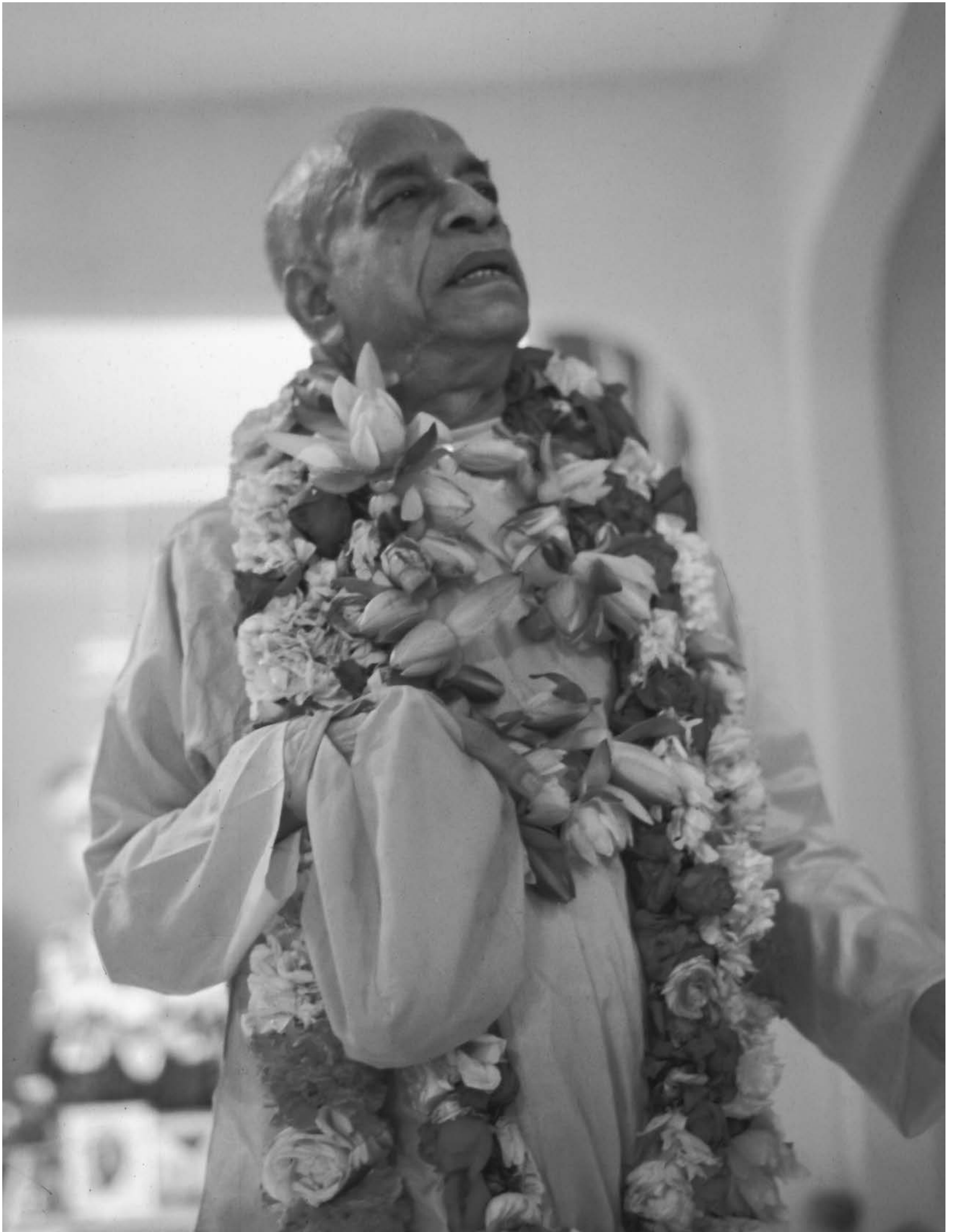
Obeisances to You,
Who Spread the Yuga-dharma

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

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

*namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādī-pāścātyā-deśa-tāriṇe*

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



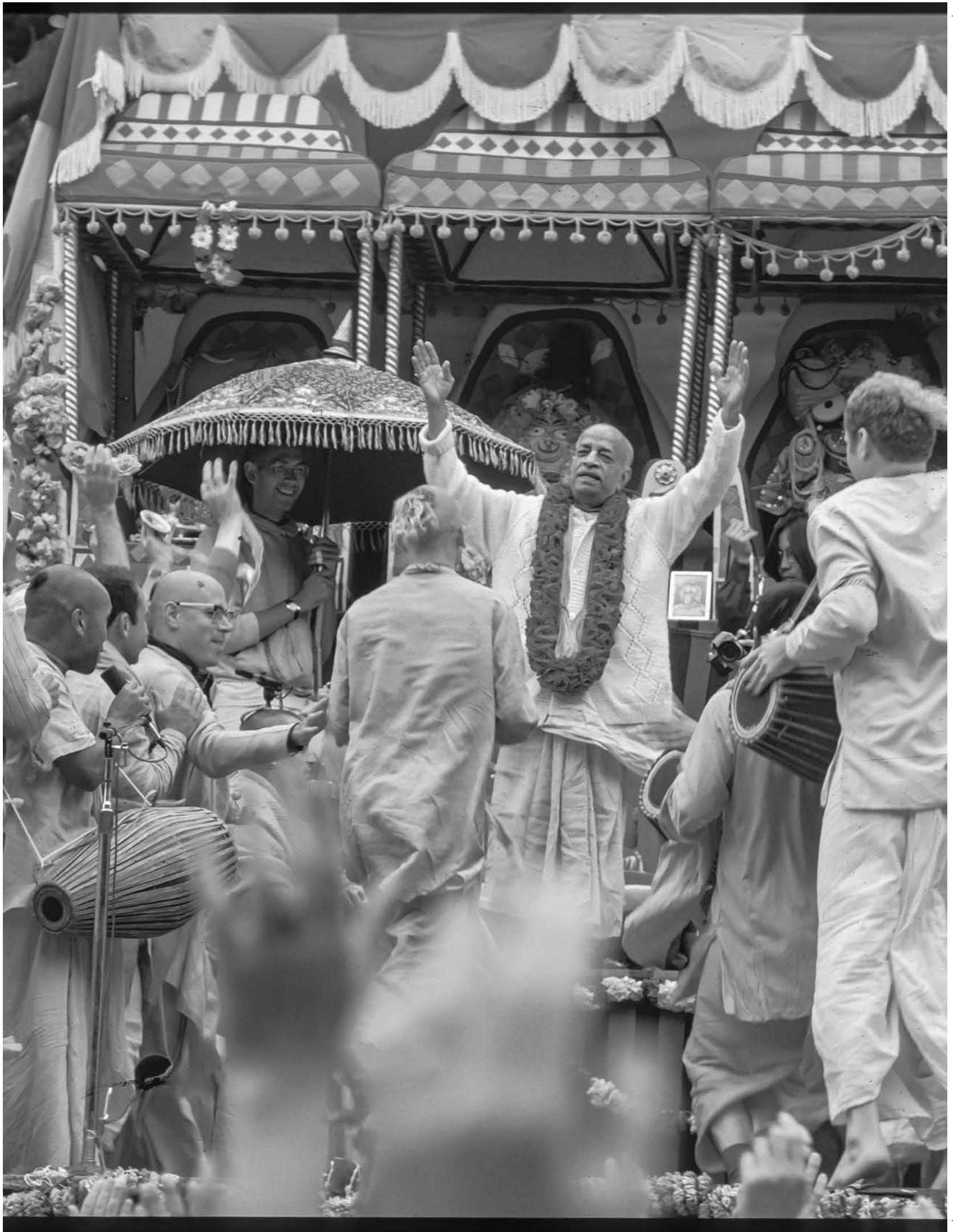
*etāvān eva loke 'smin
pumsām dharmah paraḥ smṛtaḥ
bhakti-yogo bhagavati
tan-nāma-grahaṇādibhiḥ*

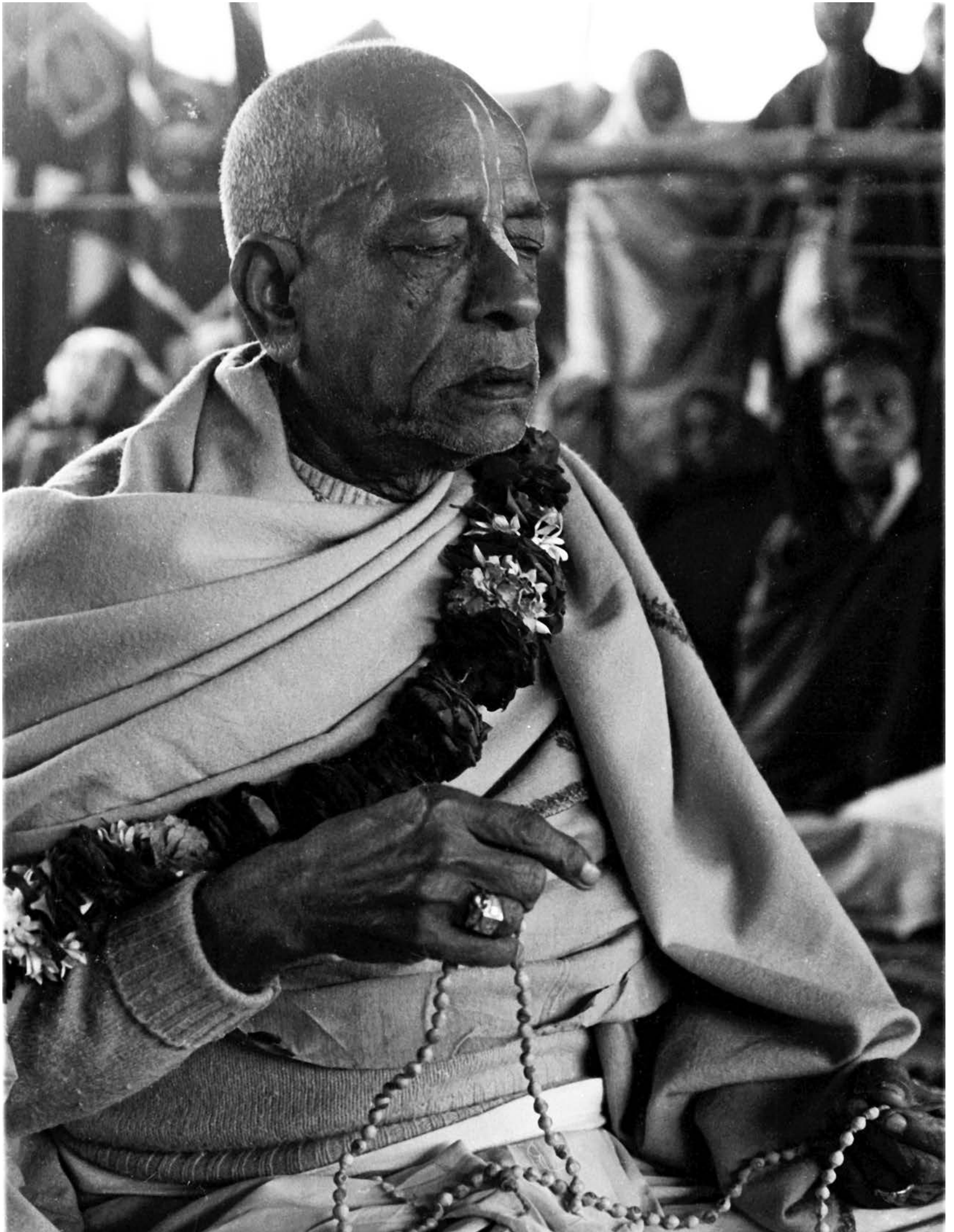
Devotional service, beginning with the chanting of the holy name of the Lord, is the ultimate religious principle for the living entity in human society.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.3.22 —

Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, *āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra’ sarva deśa. Yāre dekha tāre kaha . . .* There is no question of who he is, what he is, where he is born, whether he is civilized, uncivilized, capitalist, communist, or this or that, Indian, American, African. Never mind. Whatever he is, simply request him, “Oh, please chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.” Do yourself, chanting, and this will make you advanced, and the friend you meet, oh, he’ll someday, because the, if he takes . . . Even if he does not say, if he simply understands that “Here is something,” and says, “Yes, it is very nice. It is very nice,” then also he gets the result.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Lecture: 1967, San Francisco —





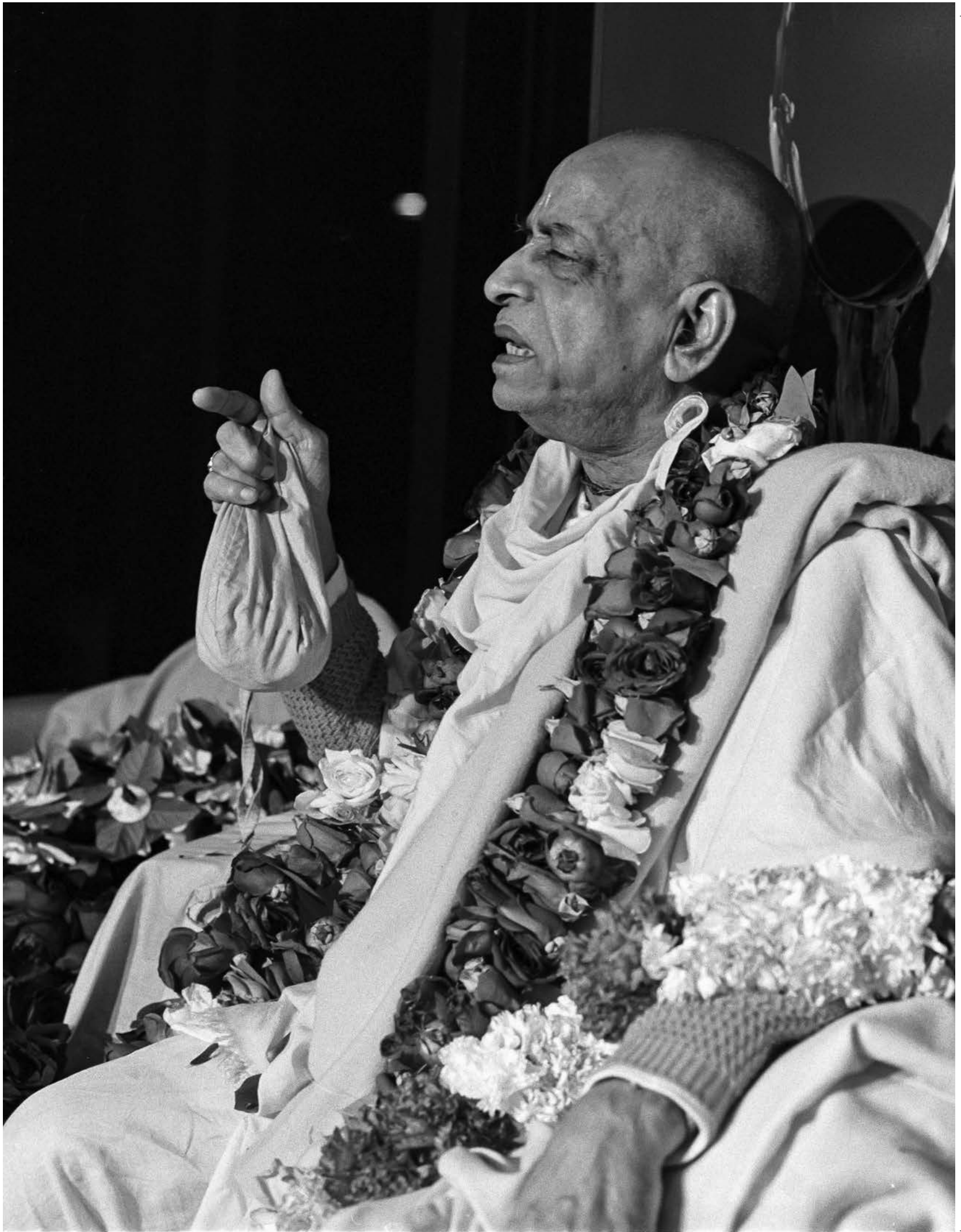
*āpannaḥ saṁsṛtiṁ ghorām
yan-nāma vivaśo gr̥ṇan
tataḥ sadyo vimucyeta
yad bibheti svayam bhayam*

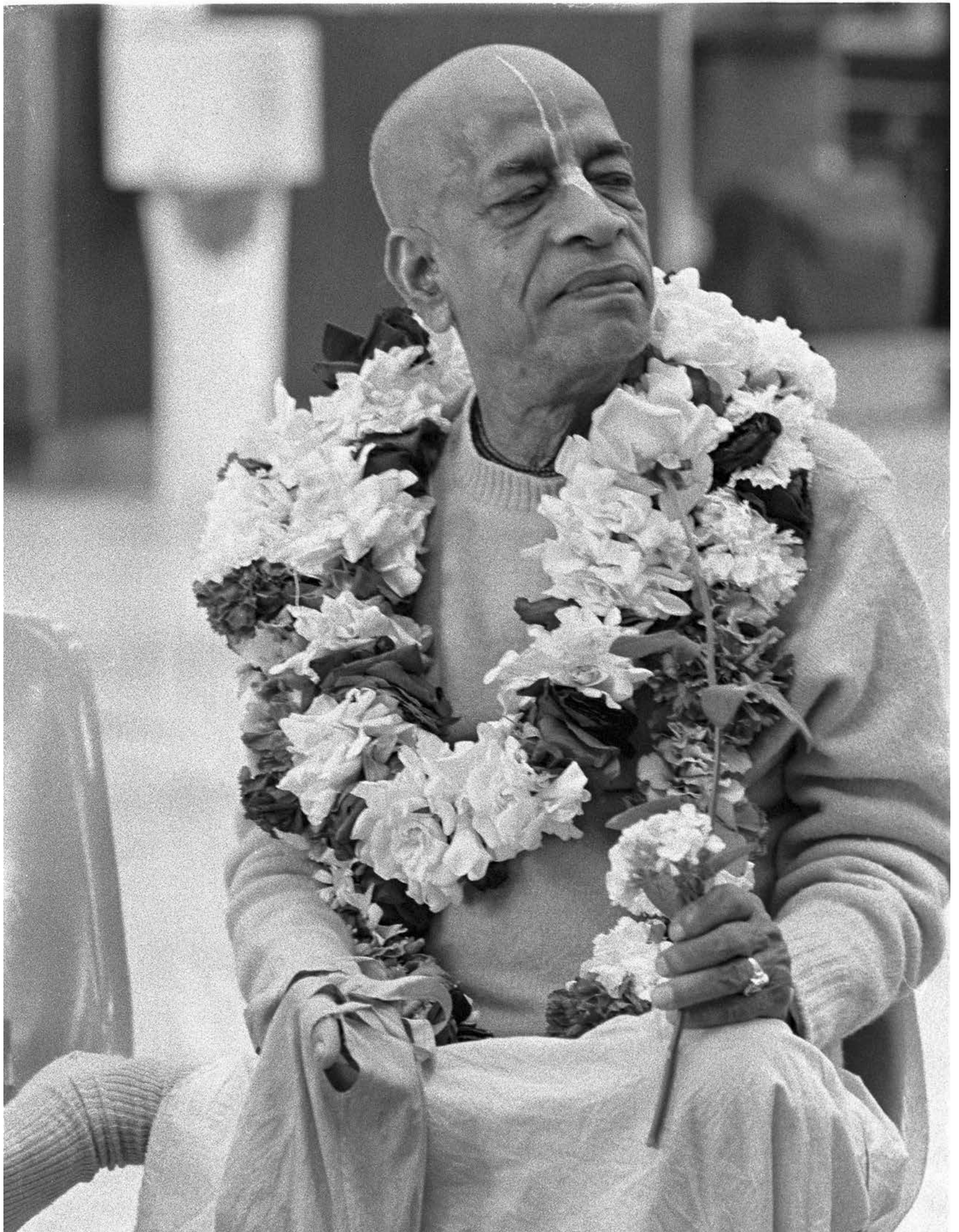
Living beings who are entangled in the complicated meshes of birth and death can be freed immediately by even unconsciously chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, which is feared by fear personified.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.14 —

Āpani ācari' bhakti śikhāimu sabāre. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu teaches us that those whom preachers meet are almost all offenders who are opposed to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but it is a preacher's duty to convince them of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and then induce them to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. Our propagation of the *saṅkīrtana* movement is continuing, despite many opponents, and people are taking up this chanting process even in remote parts of the world like Africa. By inducing the offenders to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu exemplified the success of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. We should follow very respectfully in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya, and there is no doubt that we shall be successful in our attempts.

— *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 7.150* —





*kaler doṣa-nidhe rājan
asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya
mukta-saṅgaḥ param 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.

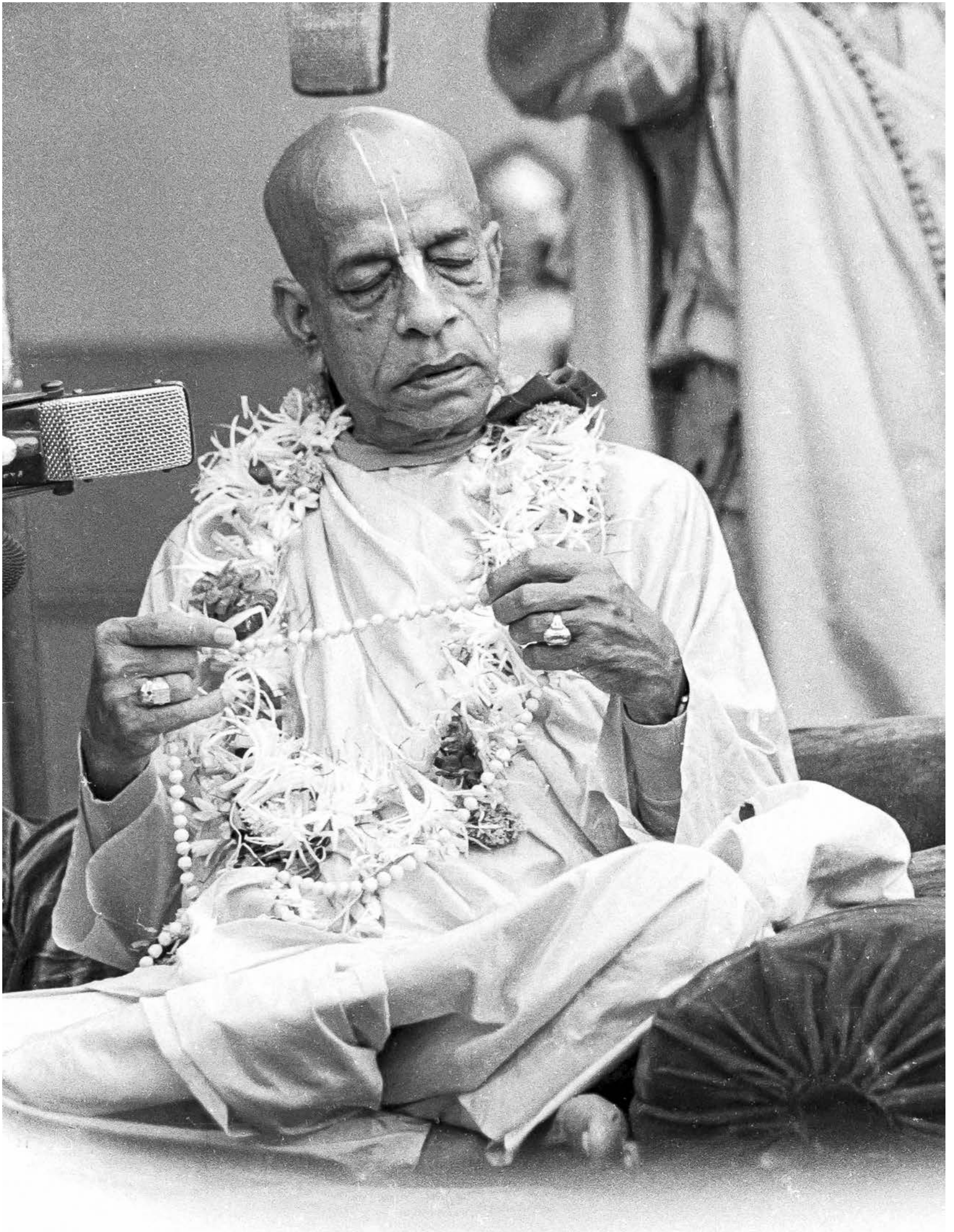
— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.3.51 —

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

In this Age of Kali there is no other means, no other means,
no other means for self-realization than chanting the holy
name, chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name of
Lord Hari.

— *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 17.21 —

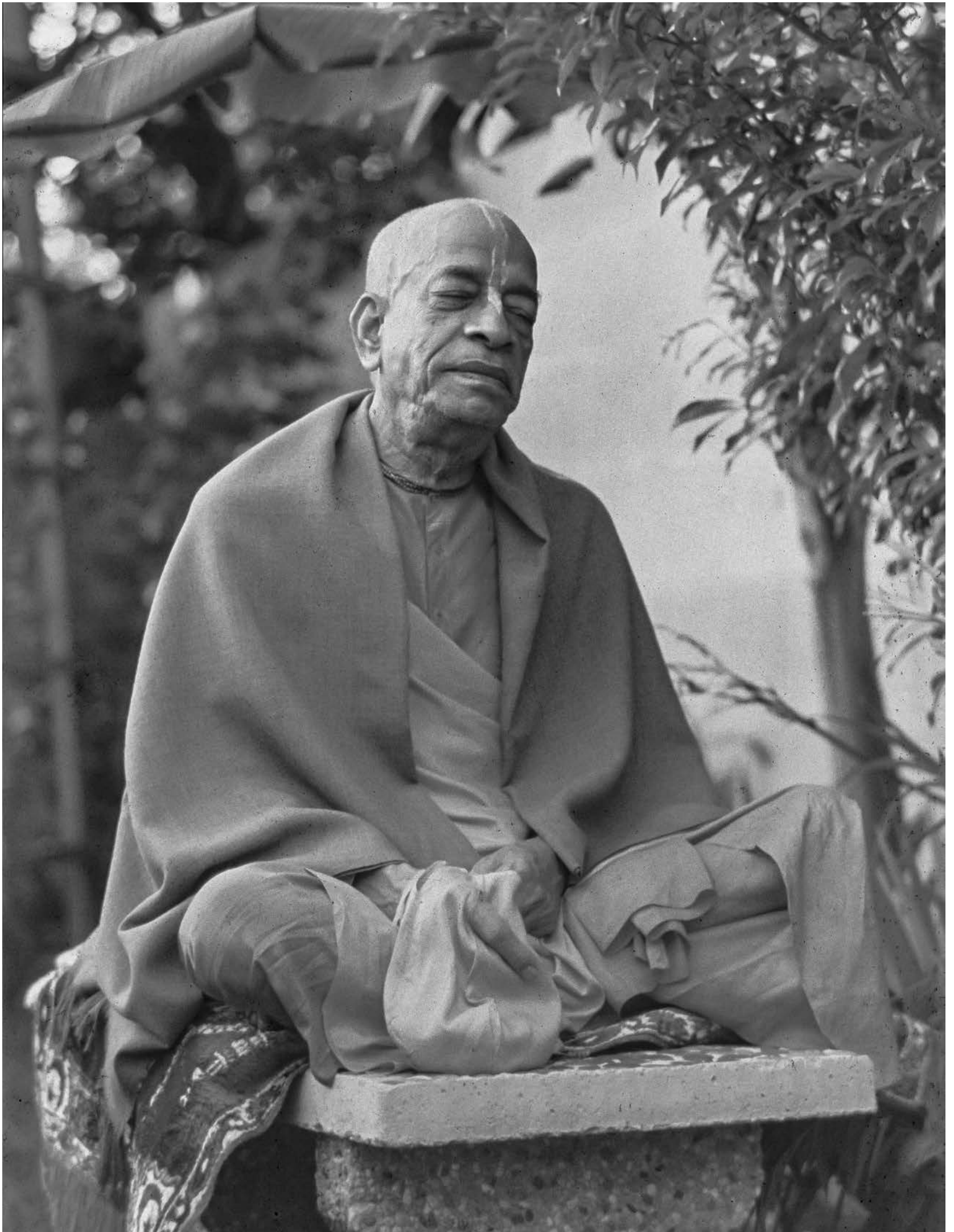




*kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa-avatāra
nāma haite haya sarva-jagat-nistāra*

In this Age of Kali, the holy name of the Lord, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, is the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Simply by chanting the holy name, one associates with the Lord directly. Anyone who does this is certainly delivered.

— *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 17.22* —



*evam-vrataḥ sva-priya-nāma-kīrtiā
jātānurāgo druta-citta uccaiḥ
hasaty atho roditi rauti gāyaty
unmāda-van nṛtyati loka-bāhyaḥ*

By chanting the holy name of the Supreme Lord, one comes to the stage of love of Godhead. Then the devotee is fixed in his vow as an eternal servant of the Lord, and he gradually becomes very much attached to a particular name and form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As his heart melts with ecstatic love, he laughs very loudly or cries or shouts. Sometimes he sings and dances like a madman, for he is indifferent to public opinion.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.40 —

