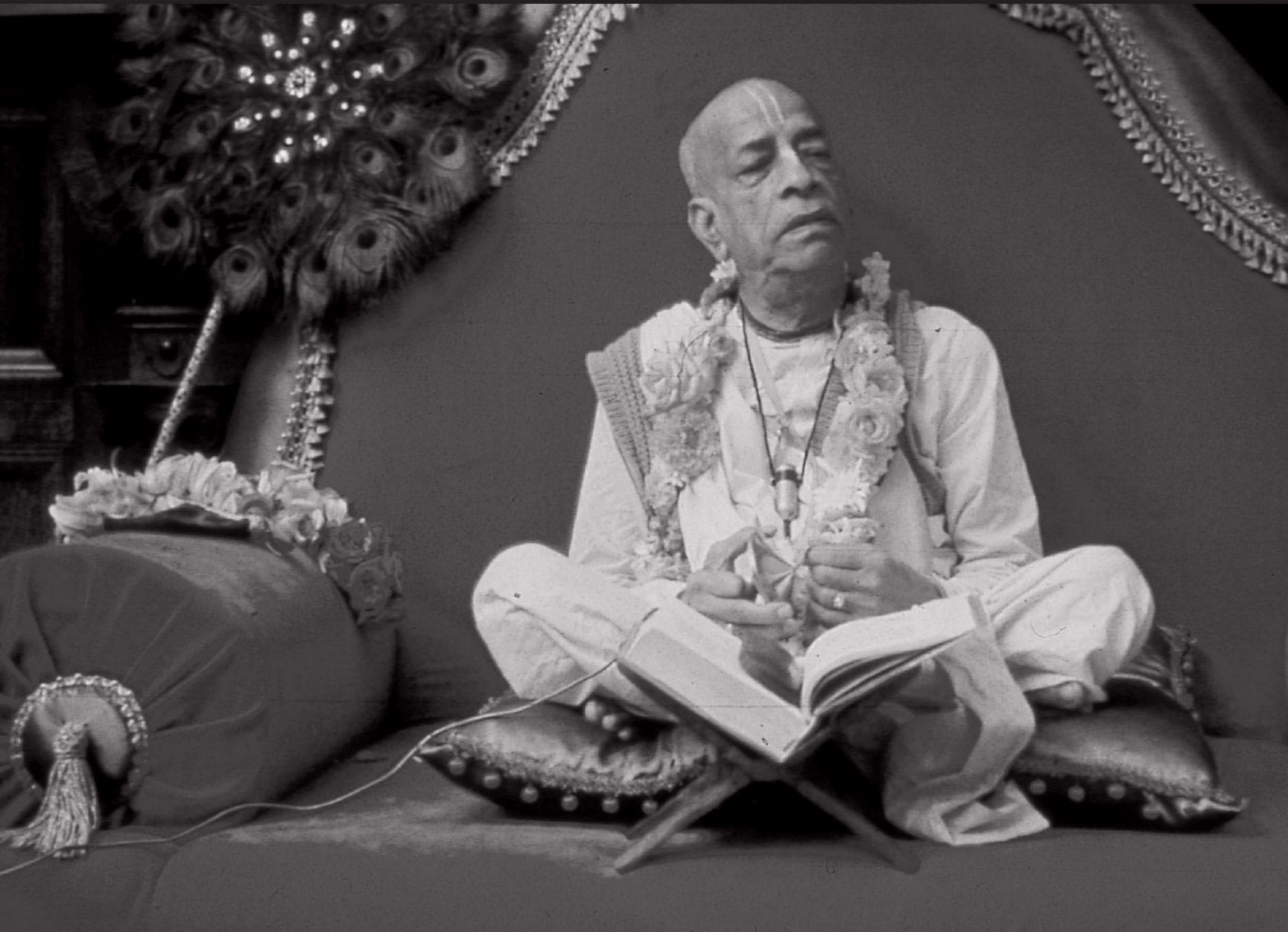


ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

TRIBUTES 16AUG 2017 Celebrating the
appearance day of our
beloved spiritual master



OM VIṢṆUPĀDA
PARAMAHANSA
PARIVRĀJAKĀCĀRYA
AṢṬOTTARA-ŚATA

ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD
A. C.
BHAKTIVEDANTA
SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

FOUNDER-ĀCĀRYA OF
THE INTERNATIONAL
SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA
CONSCIOUSNESS

ŚRĪLA
PRABHUPĀDA
TRIBUTES

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16AUG
2017

Celebrating the
appearance day of our
beloved spiritual master

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	5
TRIBUTES BY SANNYASI DISCIPLES *	7
Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami	9
Jayādvaita Swami	10
Bhakti Mādhurya Govinda Goswami	12
Jayapatāka Swami	17
Prahādānanda Swami	18
Trivikrama Swami	20
Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami	21
Girirāj Swami	23
Hridayānanda dāsa Goswami	30
Śacīnandana Swami	32
Kavicandra Swami	34
B. V. Bhāgavat Swami	39
Mahāviṣṇu Swami	40
Subhāg Swami	42
Bhakti Vigna Vinasha Narasimha	47
Bhaktivaibhava Swami	49
Dānavīr Goswami	52
Guṇagrāhi Dās Goswami	53
Nava Yogendra Swami	55
Kṛṣṇakṣetra Swami	56
Anand Kishore dās Bābāji	60

Bhakti Gauravāṇī Goswami	61
Lokanāth Swami	65
Bīr Kṛṣṇa dās Goswami	68
Gaṇapati dāsa Swami	72
Janānanda Goswami	75
Rādhānāth Swami	79
Keśava Bhāratī Dāsa Goswami	81
Pārtha Sārathi dāsa Goswami	85
Śivarāma Swami	86
Bhakti Caitanya Swami	87
Bhaktimārga Swami	89
Candramauli Swami	91
Varṣāṇā Swami	95
Nirañjana Swami	98
Bhakti Viśrambha Mādhava Swami	103
Bhakti Rāghava Swami	104
Dhanurdhara Swami	107
Hanumatpresaka Swami	108
Devāmrita Swami	109
Rāmāi Swami	111
Bhakti Vikāśa Swami	113
Bhakti Sundar Goswami	115
Giridhārī Swami	117
Amala-bhakta Swami	121
Candraśekhara Swami	121
Guruprasād Swami	124
Vedavyāsapriya Swami	125
Bhakti Chāru Swami	126
Bhakti Prabhupāda-vrata Dāmodara Swami	128

TRIBUTES BY INITIATED DISCIPLES * 131

Jadurāṇī Devī Dāsī	133
Dayānanda Dāsa	137
Mālatī Devī Dāsī	139
Dāmodara Dāsa	141
Kanchanbala Devī Dāsī and Madhusudan Dāsa	141
Hrikeśānanda Dāsa	143
Ranadhira Dāsa	144
Vāmanadeva Dāsa	145

Bhūrijana Dāsa	146
Rukmiṇī Devī Dāsī	149
Patita Pāvana Dāsa Adhikary	151
Arundhatī Devī Dāsī	152
Labangalatika Devī Dāsī	153
Balabhadra Dāsa	154
Cathurbhuj Dāsa	158
Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu Dāsa Adhikārī & Krishna Priyā Devī Dāsī, & Caturbhujā Dāsa	159
Swarup Dāsa	162
Bhakta Dāsa	163
Narottamānanda Dāsa	165
Locanānanda Dāsa	165
Kusha Devī Dāsī	168
Nāgapatnī Devī Dāsī	169
Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa Dāsa	171
Śatadhanya Dāsa	172
Jaḡattāriṇī Devī Dāsī	175
Vishnu Dāsa	177
Nārāyaṇī Devī Dāsī	179
Mahāśinī Devī Dāsī	180
Somadās Dāsa	181
Maṇḍaleśvara Dāsa	181
Naradevī Devī Dāsī	183
Pañcharatna Dāsa	183
Sureśvara Dāsa	184
Kṛṣṇa Kamala Devī Dāsī	187
Saṅkarshan Dāsa	190
Yadubara Dāsa and Viśākhā Devī Dāsī	190
Ātmānanda Dāsa	191
Padmanābha Dāsa and Līlāmañjarī Devī Dāsī	195
Chiranjib Dāsa	196
Anuttama Dāsa	196
Ajāmila Dāsa	199
Mahāshakti Dāsa	199
Nṛsimhānanda Dāsa	200
Prithu Dāsa Adhikary	202
Vrindabaneshvari Devī Dāsī	205
Bhavatāriṇī Devī Dāsī	206
Nandanandana Dāsa	208

Vaiṣṇavānanda Dāsa	209
Ali Krishna Devī Dāsī	211
Gauragopāla Dāsa	214
Gokulānanda Dāsa	216
Janmanālaya Dāsa	217
MadanMohanMohiṇī Devī Dāsī	218
Madan Mohan Dāsa	219
Kṛṣṇānandiṇī Devī Dāsī	220
Mahāmān Dāsa	221
Vāṇinātha Dāsa Brahmachārī	223
Kāla Dāsa	224
Rāma Dāsa	226
Bhojadeva Dāsa	226
Vaidyanāth Dāsa	228
Govardhana Devī Dāsī	229
Badarayan Dāsa	230
Hṛṣīkeśa Dāsa	233
Mṛgākṣī Devī Dāsī	234
Rukmiṇī Priyā Devī Dāsī	235
Jaḡaddhātrī Devī Dāsī	236
Bhubaneswar Dāsa	237
Anavadyāṅgī Devī Dāsī	238
Mohanāśinī Dāsī	239
Praghoṣa Dāsa	240
Pṛthuśravā Dāsa	241
Sarvani Devī Dāsī	243
Sarva-drik Dāsa	244
Citraka Dāsa	245
Arjuna Dāsa	248
Kadamba Devī Dāsī	252
Ramanya Dāsa	254
Dhaneśvara Dāsa	255
Rājendrānandana Dāsa	257
Kalpavṛkṣa Dāsa	259
Mathurā Dāsa	260
Sarvamaṅgalā Devī Dāsī	260
Madhusevita Dāsa	262
Ariṣṭahā Dāsa	263
Rāmanātha sukha Dāsa	265
Avyaya Dāsa	266

Yādavendra Dāsa	267
Tattvavit Dāsa	271
Rāsalīlādevī Devī Dāsī	273
Damaghoṣa Dāsa	274
Aja Dāsa	278
Prapujaka Dāsa	279
Mahākartā Dāsa	281
Phalinī Devī Dāsī	281
Jaḡadvīra Dāsa	285
Mṛtyuhara Dāsa	288
Lalitā Devī Dāsī	289
Maṇidhara Dāsa	290
Māyeśa Dāsa	294
Pārvatī Devī Dāsī	294
Raṅgavatī Devī Dāsī	297
Tamohara Dāsa	298
Mahā Puṅyā Devī Dāsī	299
Haripāda Dāsa	301
Nartaka Gopāla Devī Dāsī	302
Rathayātrā Dāsa	304
Caitanya Swarūp Dāsa	306
Lelihana Devī Dāsī	306
Medhāvī Dāsa	307
Sukhavāhā Devī Dāsī	310
Ādikartā Dāsa	312
Sandāminī Devī Dāsī	314
Ambarīṣa Dāsa	315
Rāga Bhūmi Devī Dāsī	317
Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita Dāsa	319
Caitanya-chandra Dāsa	320
Nandagopa Dāsa	323
Samapriya Devī Dāsī	323
Sarvopama Dāsa	324
Dayānidhi Dāsa	325
Śrī Padāmbuja Dāsa	326
Śubhāṅgī Devī Dāsī	327
Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Dāsa	330
Śrīniketana Dāsa	336
Narakāntaka Dāsa	338
Ānandamaya Dāsa	342

Laṅgagaṇeśa Dāsa	344
Śrutirūpā Devī Dāsī	347
Ātmātma Dāsa	350
Ātmā Tattva Dāsa	351
Ashalata Devī Dāsī	354
Śubhaviḷāsa Dāsa	355
Haridāsa Dāsa	357
Arjuna Dāsa	358
Abhilāṣa Dāsa	362
Atitaḡuṇa Devī Dāsī	362
Baḡa Haridās	364
Damayantī Devī Dāsī	365
Jagannātheśvarī Devī Dāsī	366
Garuḡa Vāhana Dāsa	367
Jitendriya Dāsa	367
Subuddhi Devī Dāsī	367
Cakrī Dāsa	368
Drumila Dāsa	369
Gaura Dāsa	370
Rāmānanda Dāsa	372
Vegavatī Devī Dāsī	374
Karuṇāmaya Dāsa	375
Vaibhava Dāsa	378
Jayagurudeva Dāsa	379
Jaya Gaurī Devī Dāsī	382
Yogīndra Dāsa	383
Jaya Mādhava Dāsa	385
Mādhavī Devī Dāsī	387
Puṇyatama Dāsa	388
Nidrā Devī Dāsī	389
Pauruṣa Dāsa	389
Aṅkottha Dāsa	393
Jīva Pāvana Dāsa	394
Manohāriṇī Devī Dāsī	394
Pañcagaḡa Dāsa	395
Vaikuṇṡha Mūrti Devī Dāsī	395
Tattva Darśinī Devī Dāsī	396
Matsya Avatāra Dāsa	397
Gopīmātā Devī Dāsī	399
Mallikā Devī Dāsī	400

Rohiṇī Devī Dāsī	400
Uttarā Devī Dāsī	401
Nanda Kumār Dāsa	403
Prahlāda Bhakta Dāsa	404
Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana Devī Dāsī	404
Mahāpurāṇa Dāsa	405
Advaita Ācārya and Archya Devī Dāsī	406
Haridās Ṭhākur Dāsa	407
Jīvānanda Dāsa Vanacārī	409
Kośarūpa Devī Dāsī	410
Hari Chakra Dāsa	411
Hiraṇmayī Devī Devī Dāsī	413
Īśa Dāsa	415
Jitāmitra Devī Dāsī	415
Ravīndra Svarūpa Dāsa	417
Satyarāja Dāsa	421
Vedavatī Devī Dāsī	424
Vishvadevī Dāsī	425
Viṭṭhaleśvara Dāsa Brahmācārī	426

ALPHABETICAL INDEX	429
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INTRODUCTION

Hare Kṛṣṇa! This Vyāsa-pūjā book is a compilation of offerings by the initiated disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda, Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness – ISKCON. Coming from far and wide, our godbrothers and godsisters have written their heartfelt glorifications, realizations and appreciations to honour Śrīla Prabhupāda on the occasion of His Appearance day, which falls, significantly, the day after Janmāṣṭamī – the celebration of the birth of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Vyāsa refers to Śrīla Vyāsadeva, celebrated as the compiler of the Vedas, who in his maturity gave us the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, known as the essence of all Vedic literature. Śrīla Prabhupāda has made this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (and other literature) widely available throughout the world through his translation of the text and his expert and devotional “Bhaktivedanta Purports” where he has made this mature fruit of Vedic wisdom accessible for anyone who cares to seek the truth. He has presented this wisdom by diligently following in the footsteps of previous *ācāryas* or teachers through the chain of disciplic succession, the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*.

Pūjā means to worship and this book seeks to offer devotees an opportunity to reflect and comment on the influence that Śrīla Prabhupāda has made on their own lives and the world around them, through the medium of essays, poems, recollections, stories, and so on.

In the Vedic tradition, worship of the spiritual master is of

utmost importance – he is the one who has “opened our eyes with the torchlight of knowledge” awakening us to the understanding that we are more than this fleeting mortal body, that comes into being, grows, exists for some time, then begins to dwindle and die. He teaches us that our eternal soul is part and parcel of the Supreme and how we can awaken our dormant love for that Supreme in our unique loving relationship.

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

In the “Gurv-aṣṭaka” by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, text number 7, it is said:

“The spiritual master is to be honoured as much as the Supreme Lord, because he is the most confidential servitor of the Lord. This is acknowledged in all revealed scriptures and followed by all authorities. Therefore I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master, who is a bona fide representative of Śrī Hari (Lord Kṛṣṇa).”

Then in text number 8:

*yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo
yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi
dhyāyan stuvāms tasya yaśas tri-sandhyam
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

“By the mercy of the spiritual master one receives the benediction of Kṛṣṇa. Without the grace of the spiritual master, one cannot make any advancement. Therefore, I should always remember and praise the spiritual master. At least three times a day I should offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda is worthy of our praise and glorification. He holds a special place and significance in the hearts of all his followers. In just 12 short years he successfully planted the seeds

of Krishna consciousness around the globe. Now it is his followers' duty to please him by tending the tiny shoots and blossoming oases of Krishna consciousness throughout the world. Through these "Vyāsa-pūjā" offerings to one who is truly the representative of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, we seek to rededicate our lives to His Divine Grace, who is certainly worthy of our praise and worship.

Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda *ki jai!*

Your servants,

Jānakī Devī Dāsī and Mohan Dāsa
Leicester, UK

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The Tributes Team

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Thank you to Draviḍa Dāsa for sharing and editing many of the sannyasi and some of the initiated disciples offerings which also appear in the BBT Vyāsa-pūjā book.

TRIBUTES
BY
SANNYASI
DISCIPLES

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

When I receive notification that the annual *Prabhupāda Tributes* book is accepting homages to you for the new year, I become excited, and I consider it urgent to respond as soon as possible. (The deadline seems so soon.)

The *Prabhupāda Tributes* publication is wonderful and important, and I feel happy and privileged to be allowed to join my godbrothers and godsisters in writing something to glorify you. Unfortunately, my inspiration fails me, and I cannot think of something suitable to say.

I remember a few years ago Jayādvaīta Swami wrote lamenting that so many years had passed since your disappearance, and his memory was failing to supply him with dear and intimate stories. But then he found hope! He turned to your *vāṇī*, your teaching. (The *vapu*, the physical presence, may diminish as time passes and we grow older, but your teachings – your books and recorded lectures – are ever-fresh and ever-new.) This year I remembered that joyful tribute to you by Jayādvaīta Swami in which he rediscovered your *vāṇī* (and I became joyful too). Didn't you always emphasize the *vāṇī*? It is there in your many, many Bhaktivedanta Book Trust volumes. You are calling to us, and we only have to turn to you.

Vaiśeṣika Prabhu, an avid and profound reader of your books, has calculated that if we read only 40 pages a day, we can read all of your books in a year. Keśava Bhāratī Mahārāja has responded that he is doing this, and he is opening new untold wonders for himself. I have started to do it too and have found a wonderful new intimacy with you, the Founder-*Ācārya* of ISKCON, our dearest friend.

Your servant,

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhūtale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta svāmīnīti nāmīne*

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracārīṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tārīṇe*

Like his own spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda “lives forever by his divine instructions.”

Sometimes we hear instructions from him directly, face to face, sometimes we hear his instructions from others, sometimes from his books, and sometimes perhaps in other ways. And when we remember his instructions and follow them, we can live with him forever.

One instruction of his that I remember came to me from a German godbrother named Uttamaśloka Dāsa. Sometime in the early days when our New York temple was at 61 Second Avenue, Uttamaśloka came from Europe and stayed at the temple for some days. And he repeated an instruction he had heard from His Divine Grace about how to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa: “Just try to hear yourself chant sincerely.”

For all the years since, that instruction has stuck with me.

It is not that while chanting we are meant to focus on some particular picture or pastime. We simply have to chant and hear.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote to Jagadīśa Dāsa (February 27, 1970), “When we chant, we must concentrate our mind on the sound vibration and in that way everything will be revealed one after another; the form, qualities, pastimes, etc. of the Lord. And this is the way of cultivating spiritual realization.”

Just concentrate on the sound, and everything else will follow.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote to Rādhāvallabha Dāsa (January 6, 1972), “Concentrate fully on the sound vibration of the mantra, pronouncing each name distinctly. . .”

That is our practice.

Someone recently asked me in a class, “Is it offensive to think of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes while chanting?”

Of course not, I said. It’s not that we should worry, “Oh no! I’ve become distracted and thought of Kṛṣṇa!”

A week ago, I saw that answer confirmed – and amplified – by Śrīla Prabhupāda himself. Every Ekādaśī, Mādhavananda Dāsa,

a disciple of Śrīla Gaura Govinda Mahārāja, publishes a valuable newsletter, *Śrī Krishna Kathamrita Bindu*. In the issue for May 6 of this year, he published excerpts from letters by Śrīla Prabhupāda that spoke to this topic. I was grateful to see them because they provided for me balance and further insight for the instruction “Just try to hear yourself chant sincerely.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote:

“While chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa you should always feel the presence of Kṛṣṇa in Person and as soon as you remember Kṛṣṇa in Person you can remember also about His talks with Arjuna. If you cannot remember Kṛṣṇa in Person you should try to hear attentively the word Kṛṣṇa, Hare as you go on chanting.”— letter to Ballabhi Dāsī, May 5, 1967.

And, more directly about “offensiveness”:

“Regarding your first question, is it offensive to think of Kṛṣṇa’s Pastimes while chanting, I think you should know that it is not offensive, but rather it is required. One must try for the point when he simply hears Kṛṣṇa and immediately all of Kṛṣṇa, His Pastimes, His Form, His Quality, are in his thoughts. So to always be immersed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa this is our process. When we are full in Kṛṣṇa then where there can be any chance for *māyā* in us? So this is our duty to remember Kṛṣṇa’s Pastimes. One who cannot remember Kṛṣṇa, let him always hear Hare Kṛṣṇa and then when he has perfected this art, then always he will remember Kṛṣṇa, His Activities, His Qualities, etc.”— Letter to Śivānanda Dāsa, December 4, 1968.

The chanting is not simply mechanical, nor does it involve any sort of artificial imagination. We chant, we hear, and we feel the presence of Kṛṣṇa, all at once, as we make progress more and more.

Though not mentioned in the newsletter, another letter (to Satsvarūpa, April 10, 1969) makes the same point again: “Regarding Jadurāṇī’s question, hearing the vibration of Hare Kṛṣṇa automatically reminds one of Kṛṣṇa’s Pastimes. So both of them arise simultaneously in the mind when one is sincerely chanting. So you cannot make any distinction between listening to the

sound and thinking of the Pastimes. But the process is to hear, and then Kṛṣṇa's Pastimes, Form, Qualities, etc. will automatically come to mind: That is very nice."

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda, who has given us the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and taught us how to chant it: sincerely, attentively, and with feeling, following in the footsteps of His Divine Grace.

Your servant,

Jayādvaita Swami

Bhakti Mādhurya Govinda Goswami

My dear-most father, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated *daṇḍavat praṇāms* at you lotus feet. Taking your feet upon my head, I eternally worship you as my all-in-all, my everything, for indeed, without your loving mercy I am simply brain dead in every respect, devoid of all good qualities, and completely bankrupt. I was a hopelessly sinful person before coming in contact with your divinely empowered representatives, who always carry your loving *śakti*. In this way, I consider your beloved servant, Upendra Prabhu, to have been my *vartma-pradarśaka-guru*, for he used to repeatedly invite me to the temple, and exhorted me to come to your programs in San Francisco in 1967. However, do to my mountains of sins, I was delayed by destiny to see you for the first time until you arrived at the airport in September 1968. So many times Upendra invited me to the temple, but I was too covered over. Besides, I was too contemptuous, for I falsely thought "The swami is always here, so I can always go see him later." This contemptuousness was a disaster for me because I could have had some of wonderful, intimate association with you on your walks at Stowe Lake in San Francisco's beautiful Golden Gate Park. At that time there were only perhaps six or utmost eight devotees with you on the walks—Shyamasundar Prabhu, Mālatī, Upendra, Gurudas, Yamunā and her sister, Jānakī, Govinda Dāśī, and a few others. It is my greatest lamentation that I carelessly blew the most precious opportunity for your most intimate association in those golden days. Oh, what a fool I was, paying dearly for my sins.

In 1967, I began to associate with devotees by coming to the later

famous “Love Feast.” However, by the time I came to the temple, you were travelling. This came as a rude awakening for me since I arrogantly thought the swami was always in San Francisco and I could always go meet him when I felt like it. When I found out that you were travelling, I was deeply disappointed, as I finally realized that I had “blown it.” Such is the high cost of false ego; but at least I had begun my association with devotees, hooked by the super delightful *prasāda* that your beloved disciples were cooking for Sunday feast. The cooks were Yamunā, Mālatī, and their extended families, and the *prasāda* was literally out of this world! Even though they had trouble paying the rent for the small store front, they only cooked in pure ghee because they were personally trained by you. You also had very little money in New York, but I have never heard that you cooked in vegetable oil. Although very poor, it never crossed the mind of even one of your disciples in those early days to cook in vegetable oil, because they were all personally trained how to cook by you only.

In 1967, I had become friends with Gurudas, who at that time was married to Yamunā. They had a small apartment not far from the temple, and I visited them over there. Photography was his hobby, so the walls were literally wallpapered with black and white photos of you only. Since I was a bankrupt person, having never met you, I couldn’t understand why Gurudas had only one subject for all his photos—the Swami. My attitude bordered on being offensive. Being mundane, I was thinking “there are so many beautiful things in this world—why he only takes pictures of the Swami?” I could not understand that it was because of his deep love for you that he had only one subject for his photos. On top of that, there was only one picture of you in the temple room—a black and white photo in which you were very grave—not smiling at all. In my bankrupt condition, this did not help me build faith and love for you. In contrast, in the painting of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura by Jadurāṅī, he was smiling munificently; thus, I was more attracted by him than the almost stern black and white photo of you. This was my profound lack of understanding, a gross poor fund of knowledge. All of these misconceptions changed within a second, however, when I finally saw you for the first time at the airport in San Francisco.

As a “little devotee” the “little” things in your pastimes where I was personally present certainly appeared to be “big,” not insignificant. Here are some examples:

I was on morning walk with you in Los Angeles, perhaps 1971, in the Cheviot Hills Park. Not long before I had witnessed a hippy offer a stick to a devotee, but the devotee rather rudely just threw the stick on the ground. Certainly, the stick had no value, but I thought the devotee should at least have politely accepted it and thrown it away later. I had heard a rumor that once someone had offered a Vaiṣṇava saint some ashes and he accepted them just to engage that soul. Based on this, my mind was disturbed, because I felt that the devotee should at least have faked appreciating rather than being rather obnoxious in the way he forcefully threw the stick to the ground. My mind being disturbed over this incidence, I wanted you to clarify, but I certainly was not going to disclose that the “gift” to the devotee was only a stick; so I inquired from you, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, if someone offers us something, shouldn’t we accept it” (on behalf of Kṛṣṇa just to engage them in service)? You replied “Yes, but it should be something useful.” I certainly would never have mentioned the stick—that would have been too embarrassing, so I only brought up the principle. Your answer was significant because it elucidated multiple points. First, this small incident proves that you were clairvoyant in your manifest pastimes. You were aware that the hippie had offered the devotee something useless, thus you replied accordingly. Secondly, you wanted to cure me of my sentimental false conception, which it did.

Next, there was an incident in which you did accept something unofferable to a saint. Soon after the opening of the then new Valencia Street temple, about 1971, (the devotees had closed the old Frederick Street temple because we needed something much larger) the Prabhus rented a medium-sized lobby of a hotel (or maybe a Hindu owner donated it for the occasion). It was a special program organized for hosting you, giving you the opportunity to speak before a group and offer your *darśana*. By this time (probably 1971) a few Indians were coming when you were in town. On Frederick Street, almost exclusively hippies came to the temple because it was in the heart of the then famous hippie haven known as the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. At this program, one Indian man offered you a slice of whole wheat bread. You gracefully accepted it and took a bite! You then handed the bread back to the most fortunate Indian man, but it was now “*mahā mahā prasāda*,” the remnants left by the *mahā-bhāgavata* spiritual master, having potency far above even “normal” *mahā-prasāda*. Of course this was a *deśa kāla*

pātra special mercy exhibition by a *paramahansa*, thus it should not whimsically be imitated; yet this incident was an exhibition of your infinite love, compassion, and tolerance.

The next “minor” but hugely significant instructive pastime was in Portland, Oregon, later in 1971 or perhaps in 1972. By then I was the president of the Seattle, Washington temple, and I had come down to Portland with a van full of devotees from Seattle and Vancouver, Canada. You went on a morning walk in a very nice Portland park, and I accompanied you along with a few devotees. The walk was at least an hour long, but you weren’t speaking anything. Because of your silence, except for your soft chanting, I was feeling a profound separation from your instructions and sacred words. I realized that although the *vapu*, or physical association with the Ācārya, was very nice, the real wealth was when you spoke something—anything whatsoever, even if it was only light, informal chatting. Every word you said was glorious, regardless of the subject. Sometimes you discussed something that to fools appeared, at face value, to be mundane, but it didn’t matter, because of coming from your lips, it was transcendental. During the walk, you did say only one thing. There was a bird up in a tree that was singing very prettily. You pointed at the bird and said, “That (the singing) is Kṛṣṇa.” Obviously you did not mean that the bird was an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, but rather that the beautifully singing was part of Kṛṣṇa’s opulence in material nature, as described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, seventh chapter, where Kṛṣṇa says “I am the fragrance of the earth...the heat of the fire...I am the strength of the strong,” etc.

Another instance of a minor but wonderful pastime took place on a morning walk in the park in Chicago, 1975. I was standing close to you. You stopped for a moment, pointing at a tree. There were other devotees present, but you asked me to pluck a twig and inspect it. It seemed like the most important instruction in the universe. Naturally, I immediately broke a twig on your order. You asked me, “Is it hollow?” I replied, “No, Śrīla Prabhupāda.” I was disappointed that the twig didn’t meet your criteria. So were you. You were looking for a tooth brush. I don’t know if you ever used a plastic tooth brush, but you certainly preferred a hollow twig with strands in the middle, like in India.

Going back to earlier days, I had already moved into the temple just after Rathayātrā in 1968. Naturally, when I heard that you were coming to San Francisco again, I was very excited. At last, I would

meet my guru. I had accepted you, even though my faith was not super strong. September arrived, and I jumped into a van along with a group of devotees, to greet you at the airport. There was no security in those days, so our small band, including a few colorful hippies, pressed forward to reach the waiting room adjacent to where your plane would arrive. The ladies had baskets of flower petals ready to make a path for you. We watched the windows with great anticipation. After your plane arrived, we waited anxiously as passengers walked down the stairs from the door to the plane. Suddenly some devotees appeared. Anticipation and enthusiasm ran high, for we knew that the sight of devotees meant that the Swami was coming soon! Then you appeared in full splendor on the platform at the top of the stairs. You were glowing like millions of suns! You were smiling so broadly that it reached every living entity in the universe. You were covered by about five large gardenia garlands. You were very fond of gardenias, and in those days, they were highly scented. With both arms raised in the air out of love and appreciation for the small band of devotees and their *kīrtana*, you were like a massive broadcasting dish that was spreading Kṛṣṇa *prema* all over the universe. You were so exuberant that all present became drowned in an ocean of your divine love. I felt as if I were being struck by a tsunami of love never experienced before. All doubts, all fears, all hesitations evaporated instantly. I was enveloped, overpowered by your divine presence. Although I remained standing, internally I was knocked over. Though uncharacteristic of me, I burst into tears. I had never ever had an experience like this before! Instantly I understood, “Oh, he is not an ordinary living being! He is not from this world!” Although raised as an atheist, I could see with my own eyes that you were from a divine realm, an avatar of the highest order. I thought and felt by realization within my heart that you had descended to deliver the whole world. Although not raised in a Judaic culture, I had heard about the concept of “The Messiah”—the great divine personality empowered to deliver the whole world. Within moments of seeing you, I exclaimed to myself, “Oh, he is the Messiah! He is the Messiah! Of this there is no doubt!” At that moment, you entered my heart with your blazing effulgence and unconditional love, and you have stayed ever since. In fact, you will stay eternally. I take shelter of your lotus feet forever.

Years later, in 1974–75, a little old man in the old temple room in the Lotus Building in Māyāpur used to ecstatically shout “Whole

world sunshine Prabhupāda!"

May I ever dwell in that everlasting sunshine as your eternal servant.

Bhakti Mādhurya Govinda Goswami

Jayapatāka Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my respectful obeisances.

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

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

Previously I wrote some songs glorifying Your Divine Grace. These highlighted some of your glories and achievements. I would like to write a song detailing some of your wonderful qualities, but there is not time now and I don't know if it's possible, since your good qualities are unlimited.

I remember when you told me and others how you were always guided by your spiritual master and how he was with you at all times. I saw you praying with tears in your eyes. Who can understand your great mercy and quality of devotion?

I still remember how when my *purvāśrama* mother asked you questions you preached to her that we are not the body but are the unique living force inside the body. You are so kind and so patient; you took pains to explain Krishna consciousness for everyone.

On this day of your appearance, I remember your unlimited good qualities and pray that I can fulfill your many instructions to me. I offer you my homage on this glorious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā celebration. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Your servant and spiritual son,

Jayapatāka Swami

Secret of Advancement in Spiritual Life

What is the secret of spiritual advancement?

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* (4.34, purport):

“Satisfaction of the self-realized spiritual master is the secret of advancement in spiritual life.”

Who is a self-realized soul?

One who has strictly followed another self-realized spiritual master in accordance with *śāstra*.

“This first-class devotee is one who has strictly followed the rules and regulations under the training of a bona fide spiritual master and has sincerely obeyed him in accord with revealed scriptures. Thus, being fully trained to preach and become a spiritual master himself, he is considered first class.” (*Nectar of Devotion*, Chapter 3, “Eligibility of the Candidate for Accepting Devotional Service”)

What does giving initiation have to do with self-realization?

“An actual *guru* is *śrotriyā*, one who has heard or received perfect knowledge through *paramparā*, the disciplic succession.” (*Bhāgavatam* 7.5.31, purport)

Should I follow my initiating *guru* blindly?

Blind following and absurd inquiries are condemned, one should not only hear submissively, but one should get a clear understanding through submission, service, and inquiries. (*Gītā* 4.34, purport)

How strictly does one have to follow the *ācārya* in disciplic succession?

“Besides that, any path you follow, you have to follow the regulative principles as they are enacted by authorities. So in our disciplic succession, previous *ācāryas*, they have advised that you should have your dress like this, you should have your head like this, you... So we have to follow

that. *Mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ* [*Mahābhārata, Vana-parva* 313.117]. Our principle is to follow the footprints of authorities. So these things are not unauthorized. These are being followed from time immemorial. This dress, this *tilaka*, this chanting. Everything. Just like you see the picture of Lord Caitanya, we are following the same principles. This was being enacted five hundred years ago. The same principle we are following. We are not introducing anything new. We are simply following the footprints of our predecessors. That's all." (Lecture on *Gītā* 4.39–42, January 14, 1969, Los Angeles)

Can one be a spiritual master if one is not a self-realized soul?

"A neophyte Vaisnava or a Vaisnava situated on the intermediate platform can also accept disciples, but such disciples must be on the same platform, and it should be understood that they cannot advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life under his insufficient guidance." (*Nectar of Instruction*, verse 5)

What if there are no *maha-bhagavatas*?

"A person who is [a] liberated *acharya* and *guru* cannot commit any mistake, but there are persons who are less qualified or not liberated, but still can act as *guru* and *acharya* by strictly following the disciplic succession." (Letter to Janardana Dāsa, New York, 26 April, 1968)

What if the available guidance is insufficient?

One's effectiveness as a spiritual practitioner and guide for others will depend on one's sincerely trying to understand and follow the teachings of the founder-*ācārya*. Transcendental discrimination and expertise in one's devotional service is a gift of intelligence and realization given by the Supreme Lord to those who serve His perfect servants with love and devotion.

Your aspiring servant,
Prahādānanda Swami

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

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

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

“Our respectful obeisances 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.”

My dearest, most wonderful Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your holy lotus feet.

Recently you have kindly encouraged me in my service here in Orlando, and I feel very grateful that you are taking personal interest in such an unqualified disciple. I promise to try my best to implement your most valuable advice to me, although I am so stubborn and attached to my own ideas that it will be difficult for me.

That was your greatest quality—that you were always open to the ongoing inspiration and revelation coming from your spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa. Praying at your lotus feet, I beg you to help me curb my false ego so I can also develop this quality of full surrender to you and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Then I may be of some small value to you in carrying out your grand mission.

Kindly also help me to do what you called “little thing . . . strictly follow.” Without our being ideal in character, how will our preaching be accepted? Therefore I pray for the strength to resist the temptation of foolishly trying to enjoy the material energy. This futile desire has kept me here in the material world since time immemorial, but by some great good fortune I have met you, who are kindly offering me an easy way out of this suffering condition. Please by all means force me to take advantage of this most valuable opportunity.

Falling at your lotus feet,

Your insignificant servant,

Trivikrama Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On your most auspicious appearance day I beg to offer my most fallen obeisances at your lotus feet. This year we are celebrating the 121st anniversary of your appearance in this world. Your lotus feet offer all benediction and complete shelter to all who follow your instructions.

In 2015 we celebrated the golden jubilee of your departure from India on the *Jaladuta*. You traveled in a cargo ship with forty rupees in your pocket. You suffered two heart attacks, but they did not weaken your determination to fulfill your guru's instruction.

In 2016 we celebrated the golden jubilee of your incorporating ISKCON. You opened the first ISKCON temple in July 1966 in New York. Now there are over 600 branches all over the world. Some friends suggested that you call your society the International Society for God Consciousness, but you insisted that your society would be called the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. In your seven purposes of ISKCON, you clearly stated your goals and how these goals can be realized.

In 2017 we are celebrating the golden jubilee of ISKCON's first Rathayātrā, which was held in San Francisco in 1967. Today Jagannātha Ratha-yātrās are held in almost every corner of the globe. In a brief span of eleven years you translated over seventy books into English. These books are available today in almost every language of the world. Our godbrother Satyanārāyaṇa Prabhu is concentrating on getting your books published in the Arabic language. By presenting word-by-word meanings, translations, and elaborate purports, you have established that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. All of humanity is eternally indebted to you for giving us the pure message of Godhead.

The material world is becoming more and more difficult day by day. Terrorism and violence are increasing very fast. The only remedy is pure devotional service as presented in your books. You have presented the true peace formula in your instructions. We need to enthusiastically distribute your books and present your teachings to save suffering humanity.

On the occasion of our 50th Anniversary celebration, the President of India wrote:

ISKCON has over the years played an important role in popularizing the noble and eternal message of the Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā and promoting spiritual harmony. If today the Bhagavad-gītā is printed in millions of copies in scores of Indian languages and distributed all over the world, the credit for this great sacred service goes chiefly to ISKCON. I congratulate ISKCON for its efforts to highlight and propagate the timeless teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa across the world. I also pay humble tribute to the contributions of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who incorporated ISKCON in 1966 and whose teachings continue to resonate in the hearts of Kṛṣṇa devotees all over the world even today.

On the same occasion the Prime Minister's message stated:

ISKCON's story has been the story of the determination and devotion of lakhs of devotees spread across the world. Inspired by the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they spread His message far and wide. The efforts of the ISKCON family in sectors like education, publishing, and disaster relief are commendable.

Your movement is being appreciated more and more by the leaders of society.

Preaching Krishna consciousness, maintaining big temples, and constructing temples is a very difficult task. I pray for your causeless mercy so that an insignificant fool like myself can continue to render a little service unto you, birth after birth.

Your fallen servant,
Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble, prostrated obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace, to your powerful love, mercy, and Krishna consciousness.

Last month your spiritual granddaughter Smriti “Baby” Warriar (now Śravaṇa Dāsī) lost her son in a tragic accident at the railroad. When I wrote to offer my condolences, I was wonderstruck by her reply:

Thank you for your kind blessings and prayers for our son Nṛsimha Guru. Due to the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are all blessed with our journey in Krishna consciousness. In such a situation all we can see is Kṛṣṇa’s hand and how He orchestrated the whole incident. Though it is the most horrific thing I have experienced, I am at peace, as I see the Lord in it.

Twenty-two years ago Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī put two beautiful Vaisnavas in my lap, and now She has asked for one back. I can only be thankful for those twenty-two years with him. I am proud that he was strong on his devotional path. He had just finished his Disciples Course and gotten his recommendation letter and was daily chanting a chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The morning of the accident he had been chanting his *japa*, so by Śrīla Prabhupāda’s grace he was in good consciousness. I am proud of all his accomplishments, and now that his karma here is over, he has progressed to serving Śrīla Prabhupāda elsewhere.

I was touched and moved by her beautiful letter—by her Krishna consciousness and her sublime realizations of your glorious, powerful mercy. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*Madhya* 19.132) states, “When the personal associates of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would hear of the activities of Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs, they would say, ‘What is wonderful for a person who has been granted the Lord’s mercy?’” And that is how I feel about her: What is beyond a person who has received so much mercy from you?

Smriti was born on December 28, 1965, and thus she experienced

your personal presence from around the age of six to the age of twelve. What happened during those years? How did you enter so deeply into her heart that even now, forty years later, she is totally absorbed in you—in your love and mercy and Krishna consciousness?

Smriti's parents, Shankar and Jayalakshmi Warriar, were tenants on Hare Krishna Land. "I grew up on Hare Krishna Land," she recalls. "I was there before Śrīla Prabhupāda and the devotees came. I was one of the fortunate ones who got a lot of mercy from Prabhupāda and the devotees, because my mother and father did a lot of service. For some time the devotees had only a hut to live in, or were living on the rooftops, and many came to our house for *prasāda* or for our fan. On school days they would come in and lie down and have the whole house to themselves. And when the devotees came when there was no school, it was like a big festival in our house.

"My mother was a good cook, and Prabhupāda would have her make South Indian dishes; he liked *idlis*, *dosas*, *vadas*, and *sambar*. So every morning I would get a message to take the *prasāda* over to him. And rascal as I am, I used to wait for something in return. I had given *idlis*, but I wanted a sweet back. And he would tease me. He would give me back *idlis*, and I would say, 'No, I get lots of that at home; I want a sweet.' So very early in life I started grabbing all the mercy I could. He would tease me and offer me a piece of *idli* or *vada*, and I would say, 'No, I want the sweet on your plate,' and wait there until he gave it to me. Still, he would pick up the *idli* and offer it to me with an amused look in his eye, like 'Are you going to take it?' But I was stubborn; I wanted that sweet, and that was it. Sometimes he would tease me to the extent that he would eat all his *prasāda* while I was still waiting for my sweet—I would wait twenty minutes or more and never leave without it—and begin to put the last sweet in his mouth, and only then would he would hand it to me and let me go. And he would laugh.

"Every evening my mother would make a garland for him for the lecture, and I used to feel embarrassed because the devotees would come with beautiful thick garlands. They would buy flowers and make these beautiful garlands, and I would offer him this thin little thing that my mom had made with fragrant champak or mogra flowers from the garden. But eventually I saw that Prabhupāda would take the big, heavy ones off and leave the thin ones on, and he'd smell them from time to time.

"There were times when his servants weren't around and I

would get to pick up his shoes and help him slip his feet into them.

“In the temporary temple, Prabhupāda would distribute *prasāda* after his lectures, but after he gave me some, I would remain standing there. He would say, ‘Go away,’ but I would still stand there with my hands out, wanting more. My dad would go for *maṅgala-ārati* and evening *ārati* and definitely for Prabhupāda’s evening lecture. I used to tag along, but only for the sweet. Sometimes I would have to sit through the whole program to get my sweet. But sometimes Prabhupāda would tell a devotee, ‘Give her the sweet so she can go home and play.’

“Mālatī Devī’s daughter Sarasvatī and I used to play all day, and we would give Prabhupāda a lot of trouble. Because Mālatī was cooking, she would basically dump Sarasvatī at our house and we were supposed to babysit her. But she and I would take off and do all kinds of nonsense and get into trouble. We used to play upstairs. Prabhupāda might have been resting, writing, or talking, but we were always up there doing something, and Prabhupāda never took offense. He would always say, ‘Come sit down.’ And Sarasvatī would sit on one side of his lap and I would sit on the other side.

“One time we were up in Prabhupāda’s quarters running around and playing tag or somehow just making a lot of noise. He called both of us and said, ‘Sit down.’ And he kind of hit us lightly on our heads, to chastise us a bit, and then he told us to go downstairs and stop disturbing him. Sarasvatī was much bolder than I was, because she was traveling with him, and she was allowed to get away with all kinds of things.

“Sometimes when I took his breakfast up to his room, there were no servants around—everybody would be gone. I would look at his plate, and he would give me my sweet. But I would linger, just in case something would be left over—maybe some more sweets—and so I would be there. Then if Prabhupāda called for his servants and no one came, he’d say, ‘Get me my shoes.’ So I would get the opportunity to help him with his shoes, and he would pat me with his cane. I was six or seven years old—a little rascal.

“Whenever Prabhupāda came in Bombay, his arrival at the airport was a most beautiful time. Well before his arrival, the devotees would go to the airport and have a fantastic *kīrtana*. It would be very loud and ecstatic, and we would be jumping and dancing, waiting for Prabhupāda to come. I was so small I couldn’t see Prabhupāda when he walked into the terminal. I only knew he was there because

all the devotees went down on the floor to offer obeisances, and I went down too.

“One Diwali, Mother Kāntā was in the women’s ashram above our flat and we were outside setting off fireworks. It was around 9:00 pm, and I guess she wanted to take rest, but we weren’t finished playing. So she started throwing buckets of water down on us. My brothers and I marched up to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s room. Caitya-guru caught us and said, ‘You can’t go in there—he’s resting.’ We must have made a lot of noise, because Prabhupāda called, ‘Let them in.’ My brothers went in and pleaded that we wanted to do fireworks, but Prabhupāda said, ‘No, it’s too noisy.’ So my brothers gave up and walked out. But I, the youngest, stood there and said, ‘But it’s Diwali—we’ve got to break some firecrackers.’ Then Prabhupāda said, ‘All right, until 10:00—but after that, no more.’ So we got permission and broke firecrackers. The next day, Mother Kāntā came with a plate of *mahā-prasāda* and apologized for throwing water on us.

“Being so close to Śrīla Prabhupāda at Hare Krishna Land, we got to associate with him in a different light.

“Sometimes in the afternoon we children would go up to the terrace when Śrīla Prabhupāda was giving *darśana* and give him garlands we had made and perform for him, doing some devotional dance. Our parents would dress us up, and my mom would put together some dance for us to perform. It was like a festival, and we were all very excited, but we were anxious too, because we wanted to please Śrīla Prabhupāda.

“My father did a lot of service, and seeing him do all that also inspired me to be a devotee and take shelter of Prabhupāda’s lotus feet. In 1975, he passed away from cancer. Six months before, the doctor said that he didn’t have much time to live. So he gave up going to work. He said, ‘There’s no use working for another six months.’ He just stayed home and chanted. During the last four months of his life he chanted sixty-four rounds a day.

“He would wait every evening for Girirāj Prabhu to return from preaching. No matter how late it was, Girirāj never missed coming to see him. He would bring a garland from the Deities and a plate of *mahā-prasāda* (which the devotees must have kept for him, knowing he would be out late). Girirāj’s generosity and inspiration made Daddy chant more rounds, so he could tell Girirāj how many he had chanted that day, and when Girirāj expressed his pleasure, Daddy’s enthusiasm to chant more increased. In his last month he sometimes

chanted eighty rounds or more.

“When he passed away, the devotees came and did *kīrtana*. I think it was all Prabhupāda’s mercy that my father took the essence of what Prabhupāda had come for, to take us back to Godhead. He took that essence and realized that material things were not worth living for, so he just gave up everything and changed.

“Before he got sick, Daddy was at the temple like clockwork. He used to go to *maṅgala-ārati* and *guru-pūjā*, and then he’d go to work. And he would go for the evening *ārati* too. First we had pictures on our altar, and then Navayogendra Prabhu gave us Chaturbhuj Kṛṣṇa. So we used to have *āratis*, and every day the evening *ārati* was my job. I was the *pūjārī* at home. That was one thing Daddy had started at home, to have the evening *ārati*. By six o’clock I had to be home and take a shower, and at seven I had to do the *ārati*.

“The night before my father passed away, he was really sick and had to go to the hospital. But he said, ‘No, until Baby finishes the *ārati* I’m not going.’ So I came and did the *ārati*, and he was breathing heavily; he was really sick. After the *ārati*, he left for the hospital, and the next morning, at ten o’clock, he passed away. That was the last time I saw my dad. After I did the *ārati*, he gave me a big hug, and then he went, and that was it. If it weren’t for Prabhupāda, we wouldn’t have been doing that *ārati*. He taught us everything we knew.

“After my father passed away, Śrīla Prabhupāda told my mother to surrender everything and join the temple, but she didn’t do it. She said, ‘No, let my children decide what they want to do, what their careers will be, and if they grow up and carry on, then I’ll come.’ But she never did.

“That year the devotees booked a whole train car to Vṛndāvana for the grand opening, and we were invited to come. The trip was wonderful, and when we got there Prabhupāda personally took my mom and our family around the whole temple, which was so beautiful. It was wonderful walking with him as he told us what was in there and what was going on. He was so merciful towards my mom and all of us; I can only be thankful for all the time and all the wonderful mercy he gave us. At that time I didn’t know it was mercy—I was just having a good time—but now I can realize I must have done something in my past life to have been so close to Prabhupāda and to receive the nectar of his mercy.

“When I looked at Prabhupāda, I didn’t see him as a guru or *sannyāsī* or swami. I didn’t understand that aspect of Prabhupāda.

All I knew was that he was very kind. I looked at him as a father, and so I wasn't afraid of him—I wasn't afraid to go ask him something or ask him to do something. Because I would take him his breakfast every morning, I'd see him every day. Sometimes he would take a stick and tap me on the head with it, blessing me. If I helped him with his shoes, he would pat me on the head or do something like that.

“He was always very kind, especially with the children, and he always had a smile, no matter whom he was talking to. If he'd see you coming, he would smile and acknowledge you. Although you were a child, you were also a person. He would see you as a person, even though you were tiny—not that you didn't exist. At the airport, everyone was there, but he would notice you. He might not say anything, but he would be with you. He would look at you and smile at you.

“When Prabhupāda came to Juhu, I would always spend time in his quarters. Sometimes he would tell me to go and get Tamāl, or he'd tell me, ‘Okay, go and do this,’ or ‘Go do that.’ So many times he made me run here and there to do things. I would hang out there, because when Prabhupāda came, that was the place to be, that's where all the action was. So I would always be there. Something or other was going on at all times. His cooks or other devotees would always be around. And all the devotees were also very kind and merciful. ‘Go do this for Prabhupāda,’ they would tell me. ‘Go to this place,’ ‘Go give this to Prabhupāda.’ A lady devotee would give me a rose to run up to him, so I would run up, and so I'd be there. And then the *prasāda* distribution would come. Prabhupāda would give out a big plate of *prasāda*. Often it was fruit. I would get in line to get my fruit. The devotees would let me be at the front of the line, but I'd go back and back and back.

“I never really got chastised or reprimanded for anything—Prabhupāda was always very kind to me. I think that's what helped me love him more and do more.

“When Prabhupāda was sick and came back to Bombay in 1977, the devotees would hardly let anyone into his quarters; he was really ill. But I was not used to that; I was used to walking in at any time. So, I came one evening, and they would not let me in. I had been bringing Prabhupāda his breakfast, and he had been there for many days, but I still hadn't been allowed in to see him. So I just stood there, crying. When Tamāl Krishna came in and saw me, he understood the situation and said, ‘Okay, go ahead.’ He let me in and said, ‘Be

very quiet; he's taking rest. Just go in and come out.' So I went in, and Prabhupāda was sleeping, and I stood there for a few moments. I was just standing there and looking at him. He was just lying there, and I didn't see him feeling the pain. He had been saying that he was very sick and his stomach hurt, but I didn't see that. I saw him very calm and peaceful. So, I grasped his feet and then ran. I don't know if I woke him up or not, but I just grasped his feet and ran out; I just grabbed the mercy. And that was the last time I saw Prabhupāda."

* * *

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you entered a child's heart, took up residence there, and never left. Even today you sit there, causing her to think, feel, act, and speak in many wonderful ways.

"What is wonderful for a person who has been granted the Lord's mercy?" And what is beyond a person who has received so much mercy from you?

Your wonderstruck aspiring servant,

Girirāj Swami

I bow at the feet of my eternal spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who intensely desired that in each country we convince local people to join and lead our movement. He repeatedly declared that ISKCON was not an Indian movement outside of India. We hear this clearly in his own words.

In an interview cited in *The Journey of Self-Discovery*, Prabhupāda told an American journalist, “My disciples that you see here are all Americans. They are not imported from India.”

Similarly, he told another reporter (in an interview dated 30 December 1968, in Los Angeles), “[T]hese boys and girls, they are all Americans. They are not imported from India.”

At a Sunday lecture in Los Angeles (19 January 1969), he said, “So many American boys and girls, they are chanting. They are not imported from India, but they have taken it very seriously.”

There are more: “Just see these boys, these girls—I have not imported from India.” (Lecture, Hawaii, 23 March 1969)

In Melbourne (11 February 1973) he said, “These boys and girls whom you see, they are engaged in the service of the Lord. . . . They are coming from your community; they are not imported from India.”

He spoke the same message in Africa—in Kenya and, as we see in the following quote, in South Africa: “Join this, our center. You come here, you’ll become Kṛṣṇa devotee. Just like these boys. They are not imported from India. They are European, American, and South African.” (Lecture, Johannesburg, 16 October 1975)

Śrīla Prabhupāda insisted that ISKCON’s ability to attract local people was the proof of its authenticity and potency. “That is the proof. . . . These boys and girls and men, they are not imported from India.” (Morning walk, Los Angeles, 5 June 1976)

Śrīla Prabhupāda stated that attracting local people was the proof that ISKCON’s presentation in a particular place had “substance,” as we see here:

This was a church, and nobody was coming here, and therefore it was sold to us. Now, you are all belonging to America, Los Angeles, and the church also was there. Now why it is crowded? It is not that you are imported from India to hear about Kṛṣṇa. [laughter] So if there is substance, they will hear.

If there is no substance, who will hear? That is the difference. (Lecture, Los Angeles, 9 June 1976)

There are endless quotes, with Śrīla Prabhupāda always emphasizing that ISKCON is not an Indian movement outside of India. “So, it is imported from India, but that does not mean it is Indian. My students are all Americans. They are taking part in the chanting very nicely, chanting and dancing.” (*Back to Godhead* #25, “A Study in Mysticism,” 1969)

And this: “These boys and girls I have not imported from India, recruited. They are recruited here. I came alone.” (Talk with a clergyman, Detroit, 15 June 1976)

On the 121st anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s divine birth, we beg him to empower us to sustain his movement as a real international society for Krishna consciousness. We beg him to empower us to fulfill the words of the *praṇāma-mantra* he composed for us, in which he describes himself as “the savior of the Western countries.”

Let all those faithful devotees who understand these words pray in their own way to Śrīla Prabhupāda to empower us all to powerfully expand his all-important Western mission.

His servant,

Hridayānanda dāsa Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

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

As the years go by, my appreciation for you increases and increases. I foresee that this will go on as long as I live in this body.

A few years ago, I committed myself to daily – in the morning hours – read your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. From being regularly in contact with your *vāṇī* it is more than obvious that you are impelled by the intense desire to remove the sufferings of the conditioned souls – who are experiencing the miseries of material life, due to the absence of devotional service to the Lord.

Your inner motivation for publishing your books is revealed in many passages in your writings. Here is one: “In the grim clutches of *māyā*, the first-class prisoners of this material world wrongly think themselves happy because they are rich, powerful, resourceful and so on. These foolish creatures do not know that they are nothing but play dolls in the hands of material nature and that at any moment material nature’s pitiless intrigues can crush to dust all their plans for godless activities. Such foolish prisoners cannot see that however they improve their position by artificial means, the calamities of repeated birth, death, disease and old-age are always beyond the jurisdiction of their control...The third-class prisoners, being less materially opulent than the first-class prisoners, endeavor to imitate them, for they also have no information of the real nature of their imprisonment. Thus they also are misled by the illusory material nature. *The function of the ācārya, however, is to change the activities of both the first-class and third-class prisoners for their real benefit. This endeavor makes him a very dear devotee of the Lord, who says clearly in the Bhagavad-gītā that no one in human society is dearer to Him than a devotee who constantly engages in His service by finding ways to preach the message of Godhead for the real benefit of the world.*” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 3.98)

You are that *ācārya* who has appeared in modern times to open the tightly shut prison doors of material life.

I am hundred percent sure that Kṛṣṇa will come to my rescue and show His favour onto me, due to your kindness to me. And the same is true for all conditioned souls who come in contact with you.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* – there is a precedence of how an empowered *ācārya* can move Kṛṣṇa’s heart and induce Him to save conditioned souls from their material imprisonment.

Because of their connection with Nārada Muni the two fallen brothers Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva were pitied by Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

When Lord Dāmodara saw the two standing as the cursed twin Arjuna trees before His father’s residence, He thought to Himself:

“Although these two young men are the sons of the very rich Kuvera and I have nothing to do with them, Devarṣi Nārada is My very dear and affectionate devotee, and therefore because he wanted Me to come face to face with them, I must do so for their deliverance.” – (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.10.25)

Because Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva had not performed any *bhakti*, Kṛṣṇa here says categorically He “had nothing to with them”.

BUT because Nārada Muni, His pure devotee, wanted the two sinners to get His mercy, Kṛṣṇa felt obliged. Kṛṣṇa’s mercy always follows the devotees’ mercy.

It is very clear that on our own we conditioned souls who are devoid of *bhakti* are powerless to approach Kṛṣṇa, but when a pure devotee like you asks Kṛṣṇa on our behalf to save us, there is every hope.

Śukadeva Goswami extols the tremendous benefit in meeting a pure devotee in these words:

*sādhūnām sama-cittānām
sutarām mat-kṛtātmanām
darśanām no bhaved bandhaḥ
puṁso 'kṣṇoḥ savitur yathā*

“When one is face to face with the sun, there is no longer darkness for one’s eyes. Similarly, when one is face to face with a sadhu, a devotee, who is fully determined and surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one will no longer be subject to material bondage.” – (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.10.41)

My favourite picture of you that has accompanied me everywhere on my travels shows you with a smile like that of the rising sun. Like the sun, you have come to me, to destroy the darkness of ignorance. Not only me but for all others who have come and will come in

contact with you.

Therefore the more I understand these good tidings with the passage of time, I am more than enthusiastic to spread your message far and wide.

*Always begging for your mercy,
Your humble servant,*

Śacīnandana Swami

Kavicandra Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

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

We know there is no way that we can repay our debt to you, but we pray that we can keep trying. We know that your mercy is unlimited and that you appreciate even our clumsy efforts to serve you. So whatever we do to try to repay you simply increases our debt.

You have given us Lord Kṛṣṇa, and also the opportunity to give Kṛṣṇa to others. You have done this by designing and creating ISKCON, the International Society for Krishna consciousness. You were fearless when you started small, and even before starting you envisioned a worldwide movement. We have passed the “golden” fiftieth anniversary, and your movement is growing daily.

We have the guidelines you gave us—“The Seven Purposes of ISKCON”—and we pray to focus on these basics, which you first wrote down in ISKCON’s certificate of incorporation, drawn up in July of 1966:

1. To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.
2. To propagate a consciousness of Kṛṣṇa, as it is revealed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

3. To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Kṛṣṇa, the prime entity, and thus to develop the idea within the members and humanity at large that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Kṛṣṇa).
4. To teach and encourage the *saṅkīrtana* movement, congregational chanting of the holy name of God as revealed in the teachings of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
5. To erect for the members and for society at large a holy place of transcendental pastimes dedicated to the Personality of Kṛṣṇa.
6. To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler and more natural way of life.
7. With a view towards achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, magazines, books, and other writings.

The last point has always stood out for me, since it seems to stress our internal conviction and practice, guiding us how to achieve the outreach.

We are trying to emphasize and facilitate the reading and discussion of your books. From that seed everything will bloom and flourish.

You attracted special attention from your Guru Mahārāja with the poem you offered him on the occasion of his Vyāsa-pūjā in 1935:

1.

Adore, adore ye all
 The happy day,
 Blessed than heaven,
 Sweeter than May,
 When He appeared at Puri,
 The holy place,
 My lord and master,
 His Divine Grace.

2.

Oh my Master,
The evangelic angel,
Give us thy light,
Light up thy candle.
Struggle for existence
A human race.
The only hope,
Your Divine Grace.

3.

Misled we are,
All going astray.
Save us, lord,
Our fervent pray.
Wonder thy ways
To turn our face.
Adore thy feet,
Your Divine Grace.

4.

Forgotten Krishna,
We fallen souls
Paying most heavy
The illusion's toll.
Darkness around,
All distress.
The only hope,
Your Divine Grace.

5.

Message of service
Thou hast brought,
A meaningful life
As Caitanya wrought.
Unknown to all,
It's full of brace.
That's your gift,
Your Divine Grace.

6.

Absolute is sentient
Thou hast proved.
Impersonal calamity
Thou hast removed.
This gives a life
Anew and fresh.
Worship thy feet,
Your Divine Grace.

7.

Had you not come,
who had told
The message of Krishna,
Forceful and bold?
That's your right,
You have the mace.
Save me, a fallen,
Your Divine Grace.

8.

The line of service
As drawn by you
Is pleasing and healthy
Like morning dew.
The oldest of all,
But in new dress.
Miracle done,
Your Divine Grace.

Upon reading this poem, your Guru Mahārāja ordered that whatever you write should be published. So much spiritual genius is in every line! I pray that I can keep this poem in my mind and somehow develop more appreciation and attachment to your lotus feet and instructions. Everything you said and did was and is a perfect example for everyone.

Your humility inspires us, and we can only try to repeat your words and pray to be your proper representative, just as you so perfectly represented your Guru Mahārāja.

In the following verses from "Mārkinē Bhāgavata-dharma," written just after landing in America in September 1965, you

perfectly express your utter humility:

*ki ko're bujhābo kathā baro sei cāhi
khudra āmi dīna hīna kono śakti nāhi*

How will I make them understand this message of Krishna consciousness? I am very unfortunate, unqualified and the most fallen. Therefore I am seeking Your benediction so that I can convince them, for I am powerless to do so on my own.

*athaca enecho prabhu kathā bolibāre
je tomār icchā prabhu koro ei bāre*

Somehow or other, O Lord, You have brought me here to speak about You. Now, my Lord, it is up to You to make me a success or failure as You like.

*akhila jagat-guru! bacana se āmār
alañkṛta koribār khamatā tomār*

O spiritual master of all the worlds! I can simply repeat Your message, so if You like You can make my power of speaking suitable for their understanding.

*taba kṛpā ha'le mor kathā śuddha habe
śuniyā sabāra śoka duḥkha je ghucibe*

Only by Your causeless mercy will my words become pure. I am sure that when this transcendental message penetrates their hearts they will certainly feel engaddened and thus become liberated from all unhappy conditions of life.

*āniyācho jadi prabhu āmāre nācāte
nācāo nācāo prabhu nācāo se-mate
kāṣṭhera puttali jathā nācāo se-mate*

O Lord, I am just like a puppet in Your hands. So if You have brought me here to dance, then make me dance, make me dance, O Lord, make me dance as You like.

*bhakti nāi beda nāi nāme khub daro
"bhaktivedānta" nām ebe sārthak kor*

I have no devotion, nor do I have any knowledge, but I have strong faith in the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. I have been designated as Bhaktivedanta, and now, if You like, You can fulfill the real purport of Bhaktivedanta.

Signed—the most unfortunate, insignificant beggar A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami.

Now my body is the age that yours was when you arrived in the USA. You grew stronger and more active, while I seem to be getting weaker. Please make me dance.

Your aspiring servant,

Kavicandra Swami

B. V. Bhāgavat Swami

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your holy lotus feet. This year I will be 67. This was about the age were when you started the mission of Mahāprabhu on the order of your guru mahārāja in the USA. As a young disciple of yours in the 1970s the magnitude of the sacrifice you made was not clear to me. Having achieved the same age as you were then, I now have some small appreciation for the sacrifice that you made for us.

Of course you are a transcendental *nitya siddha, shaktyavesh avatar*, of Lord Nityānanda. So your energy and strength is unlimited at any age. Yet being 67, I now look upon your achievements with a new sense of awe and wonder. Especially when I factor in the 15 years I spent living in India as early as 1974. Knowing to some degree – from my personal experience – what your life was like in India before you came to the West, and knowing what it is like to have lived in the Bowery, I cannot imagine the culture shock you experienced when arriving in NYC.

We have some glimpse of your thoughts in the poem you wrote when you first arrived. You asked Kṛṣṇa why He had sent you to this place where everyone was so deeply sunk in the modes of passion and ignorance. Yet you accepted that He must have some plan for you and for us on that day. You then asked Kṛṣṇa to please make the meaning of your name a reality by becoming a puppet in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's hands and asking him to make you dance as He so desired.

Personally, after trying to practice Krishna consciousness for 47 years in this present birth, I can say that I am nowhere near the level of surrender that you displayed. I am so fallen I do not even know how to pray for such a mood. Yet I submit myself before you. A fallen

and unqualified disciple, and beg you to please inspire me to have the same enthusiasm and spirit of surrender that you displayed in embarking on this preaching mission for your Guru Mahārāja.

Please forgive me for my offenses to you, my offenses to my godbrothers and godsisters, and my offenses to any and every person who I did not treat with the same love and affection that you treated all your disciples and everyone you met. I submit myself at your lotus feet and beg forgiveness for my fallen condition and pray that you may show me some mercy and lift me up from the materially contaminated condition that I am presently immersed in.

Your fallen and unworthy disciple,

B. V. Bhagavat Swami

Mahāvishnu Swami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

You are glorified as the lone Vaiṣṇava who, despite only a little hope of spreading Krishna consciousness in the USA, wrote the wonderful song “Prayer unto the Lotus Feet of Kṛṣṇa” while still onboard the ship *Jaladuta* in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean on September 13, 1965.

The haunting refrain of your song is:

*kṛṣṇa taba puṇya habe bhāi
e-puṇya koribe jabe rādhārāñī khuṣī habe
dhruva ati bali tomā tāi*

“I emphatically say to you, O brothers, that you will obtain your good fortune from the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa only when Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī becomes pleased with you.”

To show us how to please Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, even at sixty-nine years of age you made the *Jaladuta* voyage to the USA to fulfill the order of your Guru Mahārāja to establish the *saṅkīrtana* mission in the West, impelled by the desire of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the other previous *ācāryas*, and Lord Caitanya Himself.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am now your seventy-two-year-old very fallen servant. I have very little to offer you except the strong desire to be accepted as a good member of ISKCON’s Harināma Ruci Party. The core devotees of that party are Viṣṇujana Dāsa, Harināmānanda Dāsa, Gaura Karuṇā Dāsa, Śyāmarasa Dāsa, Maṅgalāvati Devī Dāsī, and Bhakta Sandy. They are now about to complete their sixth annual circumambulation of the world! Other glorious devotees join the Harināma Ruci Party for short periods, as their circumstances permit.

We are not quite your original “long-cherished idea” of a World Saṅkīrtana Party, doing prestigious musical stage programs. But somehow or other, rain or shine, our group of multinational ISKCON devotees of all ages and *āśramas* keeps traveling and going out daily on the streets of national capitals and important cities, wearing *dhotīs* and saris and *tilaka*, the men with shaved heads, and with *karatālas*, *dholaks*, accordions, and a sound system. The encouraged devotees from the local ISKCON centers join us on these *harināmas*, and we distribute your transcendental books in many languages. We especially love to engage the public onlookers in chanting, dancing, and clapping with us. When we see their bright faces, we know we are getting special mercy from you and the previous *ācāryas*.

During last year’s circumambulation, we passed through various European nations, Canada, the US, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, New Zealand, Australia, India, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. And now, after chanting in Israel, we will return to Europe. This is possible only because everywhere we go we find your loving family of devotees in all your ISKCON centers and temples. By their kindness and support we are able to continue on this mission of planting the transcendental seeds of the *mahā-mantra* in countless hearts.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are so grateful to you for giving us this exciting *saṅkīrtana* life to live. Please excuse us for any offenses we may have unintentionally committed, and give us your merciful

glance to inspire us in our daily chanting of the holy names and the distribution of your transcendental books.

Foremost in our minds is to try to humbly follow in your footsteps and, by doing so, to somehow or other please Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, thereby fulfilling the desire of the Vaiṣṇavas:

*tāhale ānanda hoy tabe hoy digvijay
caitanyer kṛpā atīśay*

*māyā duṣṭa jata duḥkhī jagate sabāi sukhī
vaiṣṇaver icchā pūrṇa hoy*

“As the vast mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu conquers all directions, a flood of transcendental ecstasy will certainly cover the land. When all the sinful, miserable living entities become happy, the Vaiṣṇavas’ desire is then fulfilled.”

Your humble servant,

Mahāvishnu Swami

Subhāg Swami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīnī*

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

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Last year we celebrated the glorious 50th Anniversary of ISKCON worldwide. In the beginning of the year, some devotees in Netrokona, Bangladesh, asked me what my special offering to you would be for this Golden Jubilee celebration. It was then that I remembered one of your instructions to me: you wanted me to go around the world and assist you in your mission to preach in ISKCON and propagate Krishna consciousness. So I prayed to you, requesting your mercy to carry out your order this year and preach in at least fifty ISKCON centers worldwide.

My mission started from Śrīdhama Māyāpur. I stopped

at Singapore, Medan, Bali, and Sydney for a few days before reaching Hawaii. There I met your old servant Śrutakīrti Prabhu, our godbrother Narahari Prabhu, and few other godbrothers and godsisters. I visited ISKCON centers on several Hawaiian islands before leaving for Canada, specifically Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto. In Montreal there was a nice Rathayātrā festival, where Bhakti-rāghava Swami and many others joined in the celebrations. An old Bengali devotee, Mr. Samir Chowdhury, who was blessed with your physical association, had designed the temple there very beautifully. He took me to some of the places where you had stayed and took me to various programs in Montreal.

I then headed south and visited ISKCON temples in Alachua, Orlando, Puerto Rico, Boston, Washington, Baltimore, New Orleans, Mississippi (New Tālavan), New Jersey (two temples), and New York City (three temples). In New Jersey there was a very wonderful three-day grand opening festival for the new temple in Plainfield.

It is a miracle how in 1966 you created ISKCON in a tiny storefront on Second Avenue in New York City and how it has now grown into a worldwide confederation of more than 650 temples, 65 farming communities, 110 vegetarian restaurants, and a wide variety of community projects. Following your orders, the young devotees in the New York Harināma Ashram go out every day for hours of *kīrtana* and book distribution at Union Square Park in Manhattan.

I then spent a few days in the Middle East, where there were big gatherings of devotees in Dubai (Damodardesh), Sharjah (Shyamdesh), and Abu Dhabi (Avataridesh). Together with Bhakti Chāru Swami, I attended a nice Friday-afternoon program at Damodardesh. A few years ago, who could have imagined such big gatherings of ISKCON devotees in these regions? It is only by your mercy that we can do what would otherwise be unimaginable. With your blessings, your followers are giving shape to your vision. In 1966 you envisioned temples all around the world and thousands of devotees everywhere. You said that only time was separating you from them. You gave your followers the idea, and they, empowered by you, are giving shape to your vision.

Everywhere I go I see the manifestation of your mercy. You are doing everything, and your followers are the limbs of your spiritual body, acting per your instructions. When I visited Johannesburg, I saw my godbrother Nanda-kumāra Prabhu opening a new temple in Sandton. I walked on a *padayātrā* in Lenasia to commemorate your

visit to that city, where you had given a lecture at a hall. I also gave Sunday lectures in the Pretoria and Lenasia temples. I also visited a very nice temple and restaurant in Midrand, Johannesburg. Next I flew to Cape Town to attend a special ISKCON 50th Anniversary dinner at City Hall. It was a highly successful event, with many government officials in attendance. The program glorified the ISKCON's contribution to their community.

As you dedicated yourself to following your Guru Mahārāja's instructions, your disciples are following yours. Your followers are trying to fulfill your desires and those of our previous *ācāryas*. *Tāndera caraṇa sevi bhakta-sane vāsa/ janame janame haya, ei abhilāṣa*. If we devote our lives to fulfilling the *ācāryas'* desires, everything will be provided to us. We should aspire to become the dust of our *ācāryas'* lotus feet, and especially especially yours.

Next I went to the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha Temple in Durban to celebrate Śrī Balarāma's appearance day, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, and the most blessed Vyāsa-pūjā of Your Divine Grace, commemorating the 120th anniversary of your appearance. I also visited the New Jagannātha Purī Temple and the Petermaritzburg temple. Pārtha Sārathi Mahārāja was very kind to give us his blessed association in Durban.

The European part of my preaching tour started at Villaggio Hare Kṛṣṇa, near Milan, Italy. I next went to the farm project you started in France—New Māyāpur—and then to a new preaching center in Lorraine, in northeastern France. Finally I arrived at the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Parisīśvara.

My first visit to the Lithuanian *yātrā* reminded me of the early days of our ISKCON movement: the *brahmacārīs* at the *saṅkīrtana āśrama* were very joyful, happy to embrace the simple-living-and-high-thinking lifestyle you gave us. The Sunday programs at the temples in Kaunas and Vilnius were filled with enthusiastic devotees. This *saṅkīrtana* movement is the prime benediction of Lord Caitanya, and your ISKCON movement is at the forefront of that.

*bhārata-bhūmite haila manuṣya janma yāra
janma sārthaka kari' kara para-upakāra*

(*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 9.41)

You took up the mission of Lord Caitanya with full faith in your Guru Mahārāja, you taught us what your *gurudeva* taught you, and now your followers are trying to follow your footsteps.

Several times in the past I heard that thousands of devotees gather in Ukraine every year at big festivals and become very blissful. This year I personally experienced this during the Rādhāṣṭamī festival at the Kiev temple. The other temples I visited in this area were in Moscow (four temples), St. Petersburg, Stockholm (three temples), Berlin, Sofia (two temples), London (two temples), Riga, Zurich, Langenthal, and Istanbul. I also attended a festival held on the Black Sea, in Russia.

You know our past, present, and future. I remember when you went to Russia in 1971, in June, which was the mango season in India. You had told us that mango is the king of all fruits, and that during June in India thousands of varieties of mango are available. Even the poorest man can afford mangoes during that time. But when one devotee said as you prepared for your trip to Moscow, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, you will miss the mango season,” you replied, “Preaching in the snows of Russia is sweeter than any mango.” Such was your sacrifice and dedication to save the fallen souls.

When I attended the Black Sea festival, I saw how you and your disciples have transformed the lives of more than six thousand devotees. This reminded me of a statement Lord Kṛṣṇa’s in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.69):

*na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu kaścīn me priya-kṛttamaḥ
bhavitā na ca me tasmād anyahḥ priyataro bhuvī*

“There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he [who preaches My message], nor will there ever be one more dear.” You are that preacher who is so dear to the Lord. You said that ISKCON is a preaching movement. You sowed a seed in Russia in 1971, and today, like a banyan tree, there are thousands of devotees in the CIS countries. You are the one who can be called *kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha*—most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa. As Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says, *sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstrair/ uktas tathā bhāvyata eva sadbhīḥ*: “The spiritual master is to be honored as much as the Supreme Lord. This is acknowledged in all revealed scriptures and followed by all authorities.” And then, most important: *kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya*: The reason *why* the spiritual master is so honored is “because he is the most confidential servitor of the Lord.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, when you incorporated ISKCON in 1966 you had several things in mind. You wanted to educate the society at large about Krishna consciousness, so that the world would become

a better place. You wanted people to understand that each soul is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. You wanted them to read *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, so that they would understand that in all that they do they should keep Kṛṣṇa in the center. You encouraged everyone to perform *saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, to unite all souls in the real “spiritual United Nations.” You taught that when people will ultimately surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa, everything will become wonderful and there will be real peace in the world. You blessed the fallen people of the world by teaching them real knowledge about Krishna consciousness and by helping them receive the mercy of Lord Caitanya. Your wish was to publish books and magazines that would educate more and more people all over the world, and your desire is gradually being fulfilled. ISKCON devotees worldwide have distributed more than half a billion of your literatures. Today ISKCON has temples, schools, restaurants, and farms all over the world. Food for Life programs feed thousands with *prasādam*. ISKCON is growing globally, and it is all because of your blessings, your encouragement, that the ISKCON devotees can do so much. You are the perfect leader, and I believe that soon the day will come when the whole world will be inundated by your mercy and by the compassion of Lord Caitanya. You sacrificed a lot to create ISKCON, and your followers are trying to fulfill your mission. If all of us follow your orders and chant the holy names as taught by you, everything will become wonderful and all of us will be able to lead a simple and happy life.

*Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!
Aspiring for more service,
Your insignificant servant,*

Subhāg Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Once again I have the opportunity to thank you for your causeless mercy on this fallen soul.

Your mercy is unlimited and by some good fortune I have been able to take advantage of a small portion enabling me to continue as a member of your Kṛṣṇa conscious movement.

In the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, we hear how He sometimes arranges for the glorification of His devotees. For example when Bhīṣma was leaving the world he was able to pacify the mind of Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja who was lamenting over the deaths of the countless *kṣatriyas* killed on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Lord Kṛṣṇa had been present at that time but He wanted Bhīṣma to get the credit. Another example in the battle of Kurukshetra showed His desire that Arjuna be the hero, although He could have won the battle Himself.

I am reminded how you also liked to see your disciples honoured. Although you could have done everything yourself, you arranged for your disciples to take the credit. When your disciple cultivated *tulasī* plants you praised her in your Bhaktivedanta purport of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.8.55 saying, “We are very much obliged, therefore, to our disciple Śrīmatī Govinda Dāsī because she has taken much care to grow *tulasī* plants from seeds and she has been successful by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. Now *tulasī* plants are growing in almost every center of our movement.”

Then again in a lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.49, at New Orleans on August 1, 1975 you said, “We must be very much thankful to our Govinda Dāsī. She first of all cultivated the *tulasī* plant in Hawaii and now the *tulasī* plants are distributed so she has done a great service. I think I gave her the seeds and she has very nicely done it. Now everywhere we see *tulasī* plants. It is very pleasing.”

When a devotee was successful in book distribution and inspired many devotees to take this service seriously, you wrote to him, who at that time was known as Tripurāri Dāsa, from Bombay on 12th Nov. 1974, saying “you are the incarnation of book distribution”. Another disciple, Madhudviṣa Prabhu led ecstatic *kīrtanas* and you showed your appreciation of his service by describing him as the emperor of *saṅkīrtana*. You gave the credit for introducing the singing of *bhajan*s

to Acyutānanda Swami and said that you introduced the chanting of the *mahā-mantra* and he has introduced the singing of *bhajanās*. You also loved to sing the Vaiṣṇava songs but you gave him the credit.

In temples around the world every morning the Deities are greeted by the singing of the Govinda prayers sung by your disciple Yamunā Devī Dāsī. You could have had your own recording played but you like to give credit to your devotees.

Although you are the Founder-*Ācārya* of ISKCON and the ultimate authority on all issues, you handed over the management of the society to the GBC and described yourself as a member of ISKCON.

It is the nature of a great leader that he brings others up along with him. He does not take all the credit for himself but he is willing and eager to appreciate those around him. You have given us a great treasure of wisdom and culture in the message of Krishna consciousness.

One quality that I most appreciate is your ability to recognise the service and efforts of others. By your example, we can see the meaning of *amāninā māna dena*, offering all respects to others and not being anxious to be respected ourselves. I can only hope that one day in the coming crores of births I may take, that I can come to understand the true meaning of this.

I have been fortunate to witness your transcendental exchanges with your disciples. I hope that one day I may be worthy to call myself your disciple.

Praying to remain forever in the dust of your lotus feet,

I remain an insignificant beggar,

Tridaṇḍi bhikṣu Bhakti Vigna Vinasha Narasimha

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Preaching Mood

A mood is a pervading tone, spirit, feeling, etc. A mood also depends on time, place, circumstances, realization, audience, and emphasis. Śrīla Prabhupāda displayed different moods when he was preaching to journalists, scientists, religionists, parents, or his own disciples. He was expert in dealing with different people in different ways. And he had a great sense of humor.

Initially it was not easy for Śrīla Prabhupāda to present Krishna consciousness in a country which was so far away from the Vedic culture. He had to deal with revolutionaries, challenging and drug-addicted youngsters, who did not easily accept anything unless it was genuine.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was empowered like nobody else to spread the message of Godhead to the world in such a way that people could understand it, accept it, and start to practice it in their own lives. In challenging situations his rhetorical Aikido was so sudden, swift, and final that usually the questioning ended after his answer.

Śrīla Prabhupāda displayed a unique and attractive way of dealing with different types of people. Still, he had an overall mood in his preaching of Krishna consciousness to any audience—he preached without compromise. He did not allow the message of Godhead, handed over to him by the previous *ācāryas*, to be undermined, weakened, damaged, harmed, jeopardized, discredited, dishonored, or embarrassed.

But we sincerely serve Kṛṣṇa, we are sincere servants of His Lordship, and we present things as presented by Kṛṣṇa, and that is the test of our bona fide position and our bona fide presentation. [Letter to Mukunda, 1968]

He had no interest in flattering his audience by compromising the philosophy and practice of Krishna consciousness. He could have

attracted millions of followers right away. But because he preached so boldly and forcefully, without compromise, many in the audience did not like it, because it was a challenge to their comfort zone of sense gratification, and to their sentiment.

Character building is the groundwork for seating Krishna consciousness, and the Vedic injunction is that one can advance in spiritual life by following the rules of austerity and celibacy. We do not bluff our students that he has liberty to do all sorts of nonsense and at the same time advance in spiritual understanding. And because we are a little bit strict in this matter, we have not a very large number of followers, neither do we want any large number of nonsense followers. We want only one moon at night, and we do not care for millions of stars. [Letter to Jaya Mazo, 1968]

He never catered his preaching to the mundane expectations of his audience. He rather uncompromisingly displayed loyalty to his spiritual master and the previous *ācāryas*. Because he preached without compromise, he exposed so-called leaders of society, phony gurus and yogis, and bogus scientists and religionists. He delivered Krishna consciousness as it is, for the maximum benefit of everyone. This is his true compassion. A doctor administers the medicine as it is prescribed. He does not dilute the medicine in any way and thus preserves its full curative potency.

You have to deal tactfully in your preaching. Do not compromise the truth, but speak palatably so he does not reject it but accepts it. That is preaching. [Letter to Badrinārāyaṇ, 1975]

Some people feel attracted to slogans like “One who knows does not speak, and one who speaks does not know.” It might sound very interesting and esoteric. However, one who knows *does* speak, glorifying the Supreme Lord with all his intelligence twenty-four hours a day. Śrīla Prabhupāda knew the Absolute Truth, and he spoke about it tirelessly. And he still speaks to humanity in the form of his books, lectures, and his International Society for Krishna consciousness, without compromise.

My Guru Mahārāja never compromised in his preaching, nor will I, nor should any of my students. We are

firmly convinced that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and all others are His part and parcel servants. This we must declare boldly to the whole world, that they should not foolishly dream of world peace unless they are prepared to surrender fully to Kṛṣṇa as Supreme Lord. [Letter to Girirāj, 1972]

Another feature of Śrīla Prabhupāda's uncompromising preaching was that he always stressed the point that the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, and no other process, is the most effective process to attain liberation.

Our Krishna consciousness movement stresses the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra only, whereas those who do not know the secret of success for this Age of Kali unnecessarily indulge in the cultivation of knowledge, the practice of mystic yoga, or the performance of fruitive activities or useless austerities. They are simply wasting their time and misleading their followers. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 17.24, purport]

When Śrīla Prabhupāda preached, he made it very clear what his position was and hence what his relationship was with those who were lost in this dark Age of Kali. Everyone felt not only comfortable but in fact sheltered in Śrīla Prabhupāda's association, because he himself took complete shelter of Kṛṣṇa and certainly felt comfortable in that position.

Once a journalist mentioned to Śrīla Prabhupāda that he must encounter a lot of problems when traveling all over the world. Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "I don't have any problems. You have problems." The relationship was clear. Everyone knew what Śrīla Prabhupāda expected from others, and others knew what they could expect from him—he made it very clear and unmistakable.

The entire world is eternally indebted to Śrīla Prabhupāda for the mercy and compassion he has shown the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's eternal servant,

Bhaktivaibhava Swami

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

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

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

My dearest Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most respectful obeisances at your lotus feet.

By the mercy of your worshipful *ācāryas*, Your Divine Grace has been empowered to transform countless suffering living beings into pure devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The world is indebted to Your Divine Grace for implanting the seed of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. It seems as if you are a personification of *bhakti*. Wherever you go—either directly or through your words, representatives, or desires—*bhakti* flourishes.

Before meeting you I was lost in the vicious cycle of *samsāra*. Although I am feeble in more ways than one, Your Divine Grace accepts me as a spiritual son. It is my sacred duty and pleasure to assist you in your mission. Kindly engage me as you wish.

Burning in the material blaze, I beg for your mercy again and again to save me with your torrential rain. Without your shelter, I am useless and there is no hope for me.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your eternal servant,

Dānavīr Goswami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

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

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

When I was a little boy, I knew nothing about the soul. All I thought was that when you die you don't exist anymore. That frightened me. Some nights I would lie awake crying after my mother had tucked me in. I would call out for her, and she would run up the stairs, hold me in her arms, and ask me what was wrong. "I don't want to die!" I repeatedly sobbed. She would rock me back and forth, patting me on the head, saying, "Everything will be all right. Don't worry. Everything will be all right." I would finally lie back down, emotionally spent, and go to sleep. But that anxiety in the depths of my heart still remained.

As I grew older, I became so absorbed in sense gratification that I stopped thinking about death. Nor was the subject ever dealt with in high school or college. When we all started experimenting with mind-altering drugs at the university, we would stay awake at night speculating about what was reality, and again the subject of death came up. But this time I somehow got the idea that we were all eternal, and that, hey, maybe we were even God Himself, or Itself. The idea of being God sounded pretty darn good! Somehow, though, it never seemed to work in my practical life. Quite the contrary: my suffering and confusion only mounted.

Then that day of days finally came! *Guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bija*. You lit up my life with the magic of the holy name. I had never seen or felt anything like it! Nevertheless, it was still so hard to let go of my desire to enjoy. Māyā had to beat me to the ground to get me to finally crawl helplessly through the doors of your temple. Home at last! And finally I came to understand the real meaning of death, of the self, and of God. After many lifetimes, that deep-rooted fear of nonexistence had come to an end.

Nowadays death once again is very much in the forefront of my mind. My health is declining, and the doctors say the disease is terminal. But even if it is, the purification it has put me through has

been saving my life—my real life—more than any bodily cure I ever could have found. For along with my illness you have come to purify me, forcing me to learn very hard and painful lessons I had always so stubbornly avoided. You are also so mercifully flooding me with the most wonderful support of your loving devotees. On account of the above, being faced with death has thus become one of the best things that has ever happened to me, rather than the unthinkable misery I did not know how to confront when I was young.

I am reminded of how the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* so graphically explains that it is becoming the general rule in Kali-yuga that relatives and friends of so-called loved ones who are dying are often able to think only of how they themselves will benefit from their dear ones' demise. They have neither the knowledge nor the desire to comfort and uplift their lifelong companions when they are about to leave this world. Thus multitudes are dying in loneliness, bewilderment, and despair.

There is no doubt that had I remained embedded in the culture I was brought up in, I would now be suffering the same fate. I would have had the same fears as always, not knowing where to turn for the answers and not feeling the genuine affection I would have so desperately needed. But you intervened and picked up this lost, sobbing spiritual child and held him in your arms, and you have been rocking him back and forth ever since. You have instilled within me that tranquility and faith I had always been looking for. I am at last convinced that, yes, just as my mother always said, "Everything will be all right."

Your most grateful servant,

Guṇagrāhi Dās Goswami

My dearest Gurudeva, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most fallen obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace, who are the savior of the whole world because you are spreading *sanātana-dharma* (*harināma-saṅkīrtana*) throughout the whole world.

Today is your divine appearance day, and yesterday was the appearance day of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who since time immemorial has regularly appeared on this planet to give pleasure to His pure devotees and do away with the demonic people who disturb the Lord's creation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, one cannot imagine what energy Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa bestowed upon you to make you instrumental in his mission of establishing the *yuga-dharma*, *harināma-saṅkīrtana*. You established a bona fide movement at the age of seventy, in a land where you had almost no support. But you were carrying your deep commitment to fulfilling the order of your spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Swami Prabhupāda, to go to the English-speaking world and preach this bona fide Vedic process to civilize society and help its members attain perfection.

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, established ISKCON after a long struggle and several ups and downs. Now it has completed fifty years and is still expanding day by day, as you had predicted. You said that for ten thousand years people will have a golden opportunity to join us on the way back home, to Godhead. Your hard labor has made this path easy for the weak people of Kali-yuga, who are full of *anarthas*. According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, the basis of this movement, is the best way to worship Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is the *yuga-avatāra* and has appeared in order to deliver the most fallen souls of this age.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have given us this royal path of devotional service. You have given us so many programs to keep our rascal minds engaged in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's service, programs such as *maṅgala-ārati*, book distribution, *prasādam* distribution, temple construction, and preaching Krishna consciousness to the whole world. But all this is possible only by your causeless mercy. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have saved us. Now we, by serving your mission, can help save other souls from the clutches of *māyā*.

Your movement is purely scientific. In this age, people generally

talk of science, although they are ignorant of real science. Because you are the real scientist, you have given us a scientific movement by which we can understand God scientifically. You presented Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa so scientifically. Consequently, so many scientists around the world surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa once they read your transcendental literature, including *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and other books. So, you are the real savior of this world.

I bow at your lotus feet and pray to you to please make me instrumental in your mission of saving the bewildered souls lost in this material world because of sense gratification.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and your divine mission!

Your insignificant servant,

Nava Yogendra Swami

Kṛṣṇakṣetra Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, with all affectionate reverence and a hope to please you on this day of your glorious appearance, I offer you this short meditation on what could be a “trailer”-in-progress for a film introducing the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:¹

Off-camera Narrator (extreme close-up, looking straight into the camera, eyes only, then pan down to just the mouth): They tried everything—every in-your-face thinkable and unthinkable so-called pleasure. Trying just once—then a thousand times. It is called **sense gratification**. A thousand times not enough, a million times they try and try and never ever ask why. They failed yet again to become **the greatest personality**, almost there, but where? Didn't get a **minister's post**² though they think they *should* have, could have, if only....

Director (always in silhouette, pacing back and forth): CUT! That's okay, but look, you need to get to the point, or you will lose your audience...

Set Manager (always in silhouette, seated): Yes. No worries. This is where the Greek-style chorus comes in: First, one off-stage cold, official voice: “The defendants shall

1 Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes within the text are indicated with bold-face type.

2 Śrīla Prabhupāda lecture, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.1–2, May 20, 1972, Los Angeles.

rise to hear the verdict. The wise shall now pronounce the verdict.” Then the chorus (several voices in unison) speaks: “We find the defendants guilty as charged—**they are rascals.** (silence). (louder:) Rascals.... RASCALS. (A single voice..) to the full extent, through and through, having tried and tried again and a million times to enjoy sense gra-ti-fi-ca-tion. And now, even though they are fed up, what do they want? (chorus, singing...then laughing) *brahmā-varcasa-kāmas tu*³—(single voice) to MERGE (laughter; sound of cymbol sizzle) into the effulgence of the (chorus, loudly) Absolute, (single voice) the grand blur of *luz incognito!* Hence we announce, we pronounce.... (more softly with a soft drum-roll, repeated whispers of ‘rascals, rascals, rascals’ and the sound of moaning).

Director: Okay, okay, but where does this film trailer go from here? There has to be a clear sense of direction, not that you keep your audience guessing... It has to be fast-moving, give atmosphere and...

Set Manager: No, no guessing. Now we quote Śrīla Prabhupāda. (Śrīla Prabhupāda’s voice, speaking in a stadium to tens of thousands): **“The more human society engages in the exploitation of undeveloped material resources for sense gratification, the more it will become entrapped by the illusory material energy of the Lord, and thus the distress of the world will be intensified instead of diminished.”**⁴

Off-camera Narrator (in the tone of a friendly, helpful teacher): This is the world guru speaking, addressing all of us. You see, he’s explaining a kind of mathematical linear function: as “x” increases—as exploitation increases, so also “y”—distress—increases, exponentially. The “y”, **the distress of the world**, appears as the disinterest in each other, (including rapid succession of fitting images..., sound of explosions, sirens...) the fear behind the eyes, the vomit-laced bombs planted within the skyscraping tower of *cakra*-vortices, the blind and blinding criminality going by any and every other name, thinking to get away with finely tuned anonymity. Hence the judgment: “rascals”—posing as righteousness, but way short of the base-line of being

3 Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.3.2.

4 Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.2.37, purport.

human: a proto-human, really...

Director: Fine, so then what? You quote the Swami. What more does he do or say? There's gotta be some drama, not just judgments and pronouncements.

Set Manager: Of course. The Swami will appear; actually he is always present, was always present.... This is the point: The drama begins and ends and begins again, with you and me and all of us always **on the threshold of death.**⁵ This is what the Swami calls us to grasp. But now the scene shifts to ancient India. A young brahmin boy shouts to the wind (camera from behind, boy faces out from atop a cliff into a vast gorge): "I hereby curse this so-called king to die in seven days!" Abrupt silence. Then: (Narrator...) Parīkṣit, the king cursed to die, is now on the bank of the Ganges, questioning seasoned savants, "My end approaches. Kindly guide me how to prepare." (Sound of upper Ganges flowing).

Off-camera Narrator: (Close-ups of the books, the Sanskrit text, illustrations...) It is a stirring story, a great, moving story, a story of love, loss, world upheaval, social and class conflict, of inner searching, of worlds beyond worlds. It is called the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—"The beautiful story of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." The king meets one special sage, Śuka, who answers the king's question so well that when his appointed time arrives, after seven days and nights of listening intently to him, listening with every fiber of his being, seven days and nights of questioning the sage for deeper understanding, he becomes fully prepared, completely fearless—an enlightened soul.

Set Manager: Next, we see Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the world guru, the modern translator and commentator on the *Bhāgavatam*, in a dimly lit room sitting cross-legged at a low desk, reading a large Sanskrit *Bhāgavatam* and speaking into a dictation machine: "**On the other hand, that literature which is full with descriptions of the transcendental glories of the name, fame, form and pastimes of the unlimited Supreme Lord is a transcendental creation meant to bring about a revolution in the impious life of a misdirected civilization. Such transcendental literatures, even though irregularly composed, are heard,**

⁵ *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.1.

sung and accepted by purified men who are thoroughly honest.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.11]

Chorus, now in an upbeat tone, recites: “...a revolution in the impious life of a misdirected civilization.” (repetition, as echoes, of the key words “revolution,” “impious life,” and “misdirected civilization”). Visuals—scenes in rapid succession—of people reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—individuals, pairs, study groups, classrooms, lecturers in large lecture halls, judges on court benches, workers on construction site lunch breaks, projected on screens in hospital waiting rooms, etc. And then: scenes of slaughterhouses deserted and boarded up, of military installations being dismantled, prisons being emptied, car factories closing down; of people walking, riding horses and ox-carts, farming with hand implements, cows galloping in slow-motion down a hill (as in the original Hare Kṛṣṇa film), oxen pulling carts and plows; people smiling and laughing.

First softly, then with increasing volume, the sound of *kīrtana*, and fading in over the previous scenes, masses of people joyously chanting the *mahā-mantra*... As this sound fades, fading in we hear Śrīla Prabhupāda saying, “**Then I started this *Back to Godhead* magazine in 1944, on this very birthday of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and I was looking forward for the opportunity how to implement this order of my Guru Mahārāja. Then in 1965—before that I was translating *Bhāgavatam*—and when three books were published, then I prepared myself to go to America, singlehanded...**” [SP lecture, Feb. 11, 1974, Vṛndāvana].

Director: Cut. This is a take. With this footage, make the trailer. Now let’s get working on the *Bhāgavatam* film proper.... The time is long overdue to popularize the *Bhāgavatam*. Long overdue.

Having begun this documentary film project recently, with your blessings and for your pleasure, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we—myself and some of your granddisciples—may complete a film on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to assist in your mission of giving your monumental work and message to the world.

Always aspiring to be your servant,

Kṛṣṇakṣetra Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace. You are the perfect channel to guide us to the highest goal of life, pure love of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and all Their creation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, my first Vyāsa-pūjā offering for this volume was rejected. I was charged with contravening the editorial policy that “offerings be used for directly glorifying Śrīla Prabhupāda” and not for “taking stands on internal philosophical controversies” – but I had taken a stand on “the women’s issue” and was informed that “‘philosophical’ includes ‘social.’” I was asked to send a new offering.

Although that initial offering I wrote did take a stand on a controversial social issue in ISKCON, it was in fact directly glorifying Your Divine Grace and indeed was inspired by you, so I feel it is not impertinent for me to ask you to kindly tell me what to do now.

My dear son, please do not be discouraged. Certainly the editors may reserve the right to refuse to print the offering you had written. There is no harm in that. Rather, you may take it as an opportunity to point out that I am still living, and that you may utilize my books to gain my direct, personal guidance.

Read (Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 8.20):

“Yet there is another unmanifest nature, which is eternal and is transcendental to this manifested and unmanifested nature. It is supreme and is never annihilated. When all in this world is annihilated, that part remains as it is.”

Purport: “Kṛṣṇa’s superior, spiritual energy is transcendental and eternal. It is beyond all the changes of material nature, which is manifest and annihilated during the days and nights of Brahma. Kṛṣṇa’s superior energy is completely opposite in quality to material nature. Superior and inferior nature are explained in the Seventh Chapter.”

Read (Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 7.5, purport): “The Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, is the only controller, and all living entities are controlled by Him. These living entities are His superior energy because the quality of their existence is one and the same with the Supreme, but they are never equal to the Lord in quantity of power. While exploiting the gross and subtle inferior energy (matter), the superior energy (the living entity) forgets his real spiritual mind and intelligence.

This forgetfulness is due to the influence of matter upon the living entity. But when the living entity becomes free from the influence of the illusory material energy, he attains the stage called *mukti*, or liberation. The false ego, under the influence of material illusion, thinks, "I am matter, and material acquisitions are mine." His actual position is realized when he is liberated from all material ideas, including the conception of his becoming one in all respects with God. Therefore one may conclude that the *Gītā* confirms the living entity to be only one of the multi-energies of Kṛṣṇa; and when this energy is freed from material contamination, it becomes fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, or liberated."

So, do not be disturbed by the changes of the material energy including controversies within ISKCON. Just fix your mind at every moment on the holy names of the Lord, the epitome of transcendence, and give your life to spreading the glories of those divine names. That is all you need.

Bhakti Gauravāṇī Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Books change lives.

Your books have changed so many lives over the past 50 years, including mine.

Your books are changing hundreds and thousands, maybe millions, of lives at this very moment.

And your books will continue to change countless lives during the next 10,000 years and beyond.

Lava-mātra sādhu-saṅga sarva-siddhi haya: "By even a moment's association with a pure devotee, one can attain all success." In reference to this statement by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, one of your disciples asked you whether *sādhu-saṅga* also applied to *reading* the words of a pure devotee. You said, "Yes", but then qualified your answer, "Effect, of course, it requires both the things. One must be very eager to take it. Just like Mahārāja Parīkṣit heard *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and there are so many others, they are also reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. So Mahārāja Parīkṣit was very serious. So both should be serious. Just like the example: the husband and wife must be potent; then there is pregnancy. Otherwise there is no pregnancy.

So, sowing the seed, the field also must be fertile or receptive, then the seed will fructify. It is reciprocal.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we want to be fertile, we want to receive the seed of the creeper of devotional service, plant it, nurture it and see it fructify. We want to be receptive and let your words enter our hearts to cause a revolution in our lives.

You have written your books for all human beings, but especially for us, your disciples and followers. You want us to understand the philosophy of Krishna consciousness from all angles of vision so that we may become firmly convinced, put the teachings into practice and be able to convince others.

Again and again you wrote about the importance of studying your books:

“You should always read my books daily and all your questions will be answered and you will have a firm basis of Krishna consciousness. In this way your life will be perfect.”

“To get knowledge is the first item for anyone who is hoping to find the perfection of his life. Therefore I advise you to read our books daily as far as possible and try to understand the subject matter from different angles of vision by discussing it frequently with the devotees. In this way you will gradually become convinced, and by your sincere attitude and devotional service you will make progress.”

“Now we want some men who understand all the purports of the *śāstras* so that they will be able to face any questions put to them. This is a very important business, and I want all of my disciples to be thoroughly versed in this way. Our first business to every initiated devotee is to chant daily sixteen round of beads without fail, and to follow the regulative principles rigidly, and our literatures must be studied with great attention. We have presented the complete philosophy of Krishna consciousness in our books. *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, *Kṛṣṇa*, and others are being printed, so the classes and personal study should be undertaken penetratingly. Please see that all the devotees are following these principles; this program is the essential basis of our spiritual advancement. If chanting and following of the

regulation is done sincerely, without offense, all questions and doubtful points of philosophy will be cleared up by realization of Kṛṣṇa from within the heart of the devotee.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you dedicated your body, mind and words without reservation to the propagation of Krishna consciousness through transcendental literature, evidenced by your tireless effort to dictate your Bhaktivedanta purports even until your very last breath. Lying on your bed in Vṛndāvana, hardly being able to move your lips, you expounded the most lucid and penetrating *Bhāgavatam* purports for the benefit of one and all. You did this, because you knew that these words of yours, dictated by the original spiritual master Himself, had the power to change the life of anyone who would hear with eagerness and sincerity.

Consequently, you showed great concern when you detected a lack of interest in reading your books, knowing what the result would be: “All the devotees connected with the Krishna consciousness movement must read all the books that have been translated (the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā* and others); otherwise, after some time, they will simply eat, sleep and fall down from their position. Thus they will miss the opportunity to attain an eternal, blissful life of transcendental pleasure.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 25.278, purport)

Reading your books means associating with you. You spoke and recorded your words. Your words were transcribed and printed. Whenever they are read – either internally or out loud – your words become alive again. You are speaking and we are listening. Of the two types of association – *vāñī* (through sound) and *vapu* (physical) – association through sound is superior because it does not depend on time and space. *Vapu* presence of a *sādhu* is there for some time and then disappears, whereas *vāñī* presence can be had at any time, at any place. *Sādhu-saṅga*, the most important item for progressing in spiritual life, will naturally lead to *kīrtanam*, *smaraṇam*, *pāda-sevanam* and all the other processes of devotional service. Your books are the perfect way to facilitate *sādhu-saṅga* 24/7 anywhere, to anyone who is fortunate enough to give attentive and submissive aural reception.

While lecturing in Hawaii, you quoted a verse from *Bhagavad-gītā* and then asked: “Do you remember, any one of you, this verse?” When the response was an embarrassing silence, you admonished your disciples: “But you don’t read? So I am writing all these books simply for selling, not for reading? This is not good! And if somebody

asks you, ‘You are so much eager to sell your books. Do you read your books?’ Then what you will say? ‘No, sir, we don’t read. We sell only. Our Guru Mahārāja writes, and we sell.’ That is not good business. You must read! Why I am writing so many books? Not a single moment wasted. If you want to become successful in Krishna consciousness, don’t lose even a single moment. That should be the first determination. *Avyartha-kālatvam*, Rūpa Gosvāmī says. Forget sleeping, eating, mating. These are all material necessities. If you increase these things, then you cannot make any progress in spiritual life. Read *Bhagavad-gītā* thoroughly and be sincere and make your life successful. Don’t be cheater. Read, and follow, and Kṛṣṇa will help you – in this life. Don’t expect another life to prepare. Finish this business within this life. Take help from Kṛṣṇa, take help from books, take help from your spiritual master. Finish this business of birth, death, old-age and disease in this life.”

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I want to finish this business. And I want to help others to finish this business. What better way than by making your books available. This was the first service you gave to me. Even though I was not even initiated, you allowed me to translate your books into German. There I was, a 21-year-old newcomer, only recently graduated from high school, without any professional training or experience in linguistics, without much knowledge of even the basics of Krishna consciousness, sitting in front of the Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: The First Step in God Realization.

How appropriate, taking my first steps, baby steps, in devotional service with this beginning chapter of the Second Canto. Nevertheless, it seemed an impossible task, but as you wrote: “By the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, even an inexperienced boy with no educational culture can be saved from the ocean of nescience, which is full of various types of philosophical doctrines that are like dangerous aquatic animals...By the grace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu one can have real understanding of the essence of knowledge by avoiding these sectarian views and accepting the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa as the ultimate goal of life. Let us all worship Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu for His gracious mercy to the conditioned souls.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 2.1)

During those pioneering years, we tried our best to translate your words into our own language, despite our obvious lack of qualification. The message comes across, no doubt, but, reading the

text after 45 years, the deficiencies are obvious. Your Bhaktivedanta purports deserve a more mature and transparent rendering. As it appears, the time has come now, and by your inconceivable kindness, I am given a second chance. Here I am again, sitting in front of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, with a clear goal: to leave future generations with a legacy of all of your books in German that are faithful to the original and at the same time highly readable. The task is daunting, and time is of the essence, but I am confident that it can be done. It can be done with your blessings, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the blessings of the Vaiṣṇavas and the blessings of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

On this auspicious occasion of your appearance day, I fall at your feet and beg for your grace, so that I may be able to transmit your words in the most appropriate way, lucidly and purely, without adulteration, so that all those fortunate souls who read your books in German will obtain your divine *saṅga* and experience a change of heart and change their lives.

Begging to remain under the shelter of your lotus feet,

Bhakti Gauravāṇī Goswami

Lokanāth Swami

My most beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at the dust of your divine lotus feet on this most auspicious occasion of your 121st Vyāsa-pūjā celebration! All glories to Your Divine Grace!

This humble homage is an offering of an entire book dedicated to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. This book entitled *Bombay Is My Office: Memorable Days with Śrīla Prabhupāda in Bombay*, will be launched on the grand occasion of the 40th anniversary of the opening of the Rādhā-Rāsabihāri Temple in Juhu, Bombay, on 14 January 2018. My book title is inspired by Your Divine Grace repeatedly saying, “Bombay is my office.” In this book I describe how your business was pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, and in Bombay you pursued your mission to establish Krishna consciousness in India. In the sixteen chapters which comprise the book, I attempt to portray you Śrīla Prabhupāda, as a spiritual ambassador, and detail how you made your office a spiritual embassy for your mission. From this

sacred office, you exclusively devoted yourself to the direction and coordination of various activities relating not just to Bombay and India, but to the rest of your centres worldwide. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you mercifully employed me as one of your office boys in this mission to spread Krishna consciousness. It is for this reason that Bombay has special significance for me. It was my spiritual birthplace. I was conceived at your first Bombay festival at Cross Maidan in 1971 and I was born in 1972 at Hare Kṛṣṇa Land.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you always said, “If you want to remember something, write it down.” In the introduction to *A Transcendental Diary*, Hari-sauri Dāsa recalls that within two days of his assigned association with you, he purchased a blank notebook to keep a diary. He had the foresight to update his diary daily, “thinking that ten or twenty years hence I would be able to read the notes and relish the brief time spent with Prabhupāda.” Sadly, I did not have his wisdom, and deeply regret not recording every encounter, because then there would be volumes to write about you.

Naturally I am also inclined to reminisce about my relationship and encounters with Your Divine Grace and the priceless instructions you gave me during my founding years in Bombay. As the years passed, some memories have disappeared. Such is the effect of time, especially in the Age of Kali. Please forgive my incomplete recollections. I write this book fully aware that my ability to share is compromised.

In spite of this limitation, it did not dampen my enthusiasm and enjoyment in recalling my memories of you. In my early years, I used to take pleasure in reading biographies of great people the world has seen. Imagine my delight when I arrived in Bombay and came into contact with the greatest luminary amongst all the people I had studied – *My Prabhupāda!* Initially my admiration for such personalities was confined to reading about them. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you made it possible for me to become a part of your exemplary life and esteemed biography. Now even I myself get to write a biography by being a quintessential part of your exalted life – chronicled in this humble endeavour entitled *Bombay Is My Office*.

This project was undertaken in tandem with my godbrother Girirāj Swami, who is also writing about your days in Bombay. It occurred to me that I could surrender all my material to him, given the anticipated overlap, but he suggested that both books be written, with me providing a memoir, and his book, historical

coverage. That inspired me to make this endeavor, which I had put off for several years.

As I seriously got down to the business of reviving my memories of my encounters with you in the various chapters of the book, I sifted through various events, visions, instructions, suggestions, experiences, and interactions in those initial days when it all began in the lap of Hare Krishna Land. In writing these memories, they became more meaningful and conveyed a deeper, different meaning to me than they ever had before. Śrīla Prabhupāda, as a result, the bonds of my relationship with you and others further solidified, and I felt more deeply situated in my relationship with you.

There are many disciples' remembrances of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that wonderfully complement my narratives. Their voices add texture and authenticity to the text. Several amazing disciples are no longer with us, and my book is in part a tribute to them as well — a permanent inscription of their reflections: in particular, the voices of Tamāl Krishna Goswami, through his prolific writings and interviews; Madhudviṣa Swami, the first temple president of the Juhu temple, whom you referred to as “the emperor of *kīrtana*”; Śrīdhara Swami, affectionately called “the jolly swami,” for whom you sparked a thirty-five-year spiritual journey; Surabhi Prabhu, described as the Viśvakarma of ISKCON because he was the chief architect of the Vṛndāvana temple, the Juhu temple, and your Puṣpa Samādhi in Māyāpur. You taught Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Mahārāja the scientific basis of Krishna consciousness and that life comes from life and not matter. This gave birth to the Bhaktivedanta Institute for organising scientific presentations of Krishna consciousness; and last but not least Yamunā Devī Dāsi, whose melodic singing of the *Govindam* prayers plays every morning at every ISKCON temple worldwide — in this book, I recall the moment when you Śrīla Prabhupāda, selected the melody that was sung by Yamunā Devī Dāsi.

In this book, I endeavored my best to recall and reflect in order to provide the most complete picture, and I know that the devotees interviewed, undertook the same process. In so doing, the reader is thus allowed a real-life experience with their spiritual father — striking encounters after which everyone hankers. By recalling these collective memories, I have tried to make these exceptional memories of you immortal.

Writing this book has increased my understanding of you and

your position, and enlivened my dedication and perseverance to wholeheartedly carry out your orders and serve you unreservedly. Śrīla Prabhupāda, your life and the principles you emulated have been the example by which I govern my life. Reliving your life through this book has generated within me an inspired renewal of your teachings, which I always hope to live by, through your mercy and love.

May *Bombay Is My Office* open readers to your influence and by your mercy rekindle their Krishna consciousness. This is the one book I always wanted to write – and read again and again.

I remain,

Your humble servant,

Lokanāth Swami

Bīr Kṛṣṇa dās Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Serving your mission is my goal of life. In my service to you as GBC and preacher, I am endeavoring to please you by remembering your instruction that our love for you will be demonstrated by our cooperation and love for each other.

Cooperation is not simply an external affair, just as devotional service is not simply an external affair. According to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, pure devotional service is defined as serving Kṛṣṇa by actively doing what He wants and doing it with the intention of giving Him happiness. So, cooperation means acting cooperatively, and simultaneously with one's heart loving those with whom one is cooperating.

This is quite a challenge. Everyone has a different point of view, different needs, and different strategies for carrying out your mission. The devotees who are dedicated to your mission are individuals with sometimes radically different ways of approaching your service. Still, their love for you is unquestionable.

These different approaches to serving your mission may sometimes cause confusion and stimulate dissension and faultfinding. In this way Kali tries to enter. Kali is the personality of

this age, the age of quarrel and disagreement. Without agreement, your mission will not achieve success.

You state this in a letter written in 1973:

Following in the footprints of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu:

*ṭṛṇād api su-nīcena taror iva sahiṣṇunā
amāninā māna-dena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

“One should chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street; one should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige and should be ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.”

We must always remember this verse and be as tolerant as the tree, as we execute the Krishna consciousness movement. Without this mentality, we cannot be successful.

Material nature means dissension and disagreement, especially in this Kali-yuga. But, for this Krishna consciousness movement its success will depend on agreement, even though there are varieties of engagements. In the material world there are varieties, but there is no agreement. In the spiritual world there are varieties, but there is agreement. That is the difference. The materialist without being able to adjust the varieties and the disagreements makes everything zero. They cannot come into agreement with varieties, but if we keep Kṛṣṇa in the center, then there will be agreement in varieties. This is called unity in diversity. I am therefore suggesting that all our men meet in Māyāpur every year during the birth anniversary of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. With all GBC and senior men present we should discuss how to make unity in diversity. But, if we fight on account of diversity, then it is simply the material platform. Please try to maintain the philosophy of unity in diversity. That will make our movement successful. One section of men have already gone out, therefore we must be very careful to maintain unity in

diversity, and remember the story in Aesop's Fables of the father of many children with the bundle of sticks. When the father asked his children to break the bundle of sticks wrapped in a bag, none of them could do it. But, when they removed the sticks from the bag, and tried one by one, the sticks were easily broken. So, this is the strength in unity. If we are bunched up, we can never be broken, but when divided, then we can become broken very easily. [Letter to Kirtanānanda, 18 October 1973]

In other letters you write:

Of course, disagreements may be there, but there should not be dissension. [Letter to Umāpati, 30 May 1968]

As individuals there may be disagreement sometimes, but that is quite natural. Even in ordinary family affairs there is sometimes disagreement, but that does not mean immediately the disagreeing members shall leave the family. [Letter to Uttamaśloka, 7 June 1969]

In the spiritual world there is also competition, but the center is always Kṛṣṇa. In the material world there is competition, but the center is sense gratification. That is the difference. So, competition, disagreement, or even dissension, if they are there and the center is Kṛṣṇa, such disagreement is not material. Even in Kṛṣṇa Loka, there are rival parties of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī whose name is Candrāvalī, and there is competition between the two parties how to serve Kṛṣṇa the best. [Letter to Kṛṣṇa dāsa, 3 April 1969]

In other words, we should always remain loyal to your mission and to your followers.

So, don't think the party means some opposite party. No. Everyone has got for the advanced devotee to serve the Lord in a particular way so that the Lord may be more satisfied. That is their intention. Sometimes we also have some parties in the temple: someone wants to dress the Deity in a way, another wants to . . . Of course, they are not transgressing the rules and regulation, but still, everyone wants that "I shall serve the Lord in this

particular way.” We cannot change the original rules and regulation, but there is variety. We are not impersonalist. Every person has got to serve the Lord in a particular way, and that is allowed. The central point is Kṛṣṇa. So although there are parties, if the central point is Kṛṣṇa, so there is no dissension. It is a competition, that “My godbrother, my godsister, is serving such a way. She is so well versed in this art. Why not try myself to do something?” This is variety. That is not this ordinary party strife if we make Kṛṣṇa the center. [lecture on Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 1.15, Dallas, 4 March 1975]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we can see that you expected and even encouraged diversity and sometimes competition in serving Kṛṣṇa. You recognized that we are all individuals and encouraged that individuality in Kṛṣṇa’s service. Of course, diversity should not come to the point of deviating from the practices, principles, philosophy, and instructions you have given us.

To allow diversity without dissension is a challenging task. If we learn to love each other, appreciate one another’s sincerity, without condemnation, your movement’s progress will be unhindered.

In the purport to *Upadeśāmṛta* 4 you state:

The life of the Kṛṣṇa conscious society is nourished by these six types of loving exchange [giving gifts, accepting gifts, revealing one’s mind in confidence, inquiring confidentially, accepting *prasādam*, and offering *prasādam*].

This is the method Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has given us to always remain loving towards one another, regardless of differences of opinion. I pray at your lotus feet, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that we may always engage in these loving exchanges with one another, appreciating one another’s sincerity and devotion even when there are differences of opinion.

Your servant,

Bīr Kṛṣṇa dās Goswami

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

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

*nānā-śāstra-vicāraṇaika-nipuṇau sad-dharma-samsthāpakau
lokānām hita-kāriṇau tri-bhuvane mānyau śaraṇyākarau*

This prayer from the *Ṣaḍ-gosvāmy-aṣṭaka* of Śrī Śrīnivāsa Ācārya glorifies the compassion and genius of his *dīkṣā-guru*, Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, along with those of his immediate associates: “They are very expert in scrutinizingly studying all the revealed scriptures, with the aim of establishing eternal religious principles for the benefit of all human beings. Thus they are honored all over the three worlds and are worth taking shelter of.” Śrīla Prabhupāda chose this stanza as the dedication to his *Nectar of Devotion*, “A Summary Study of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.” Of course, this description is applicable to Śrīla Prabhupāda himself.

For starters, just as the Six Gosvāmīs left their homes and families to live lives of frugality and devotion, so Śrīla Prabhupāda endured demanding physical hardships at an advanced age to compose his Bhaktivedānta purports by night and organize his ISKCON mission by day. What the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmīs presented in the respected but largely inaccessible medium of Sanskrit, and what was subsequently presented by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja and his successors in simpler Bengali, Śrīla Prabhupāda eventually translated and commented upon in English for the common man of the modern world. By delivering the subtleties of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *siddhāntas* in such an accessible manner, Śrīla Prabhupāda showed how thorough his grasp of it was, for “If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough.” Indeed, I am tempted to dub his exposition “Gauḍīya Siddhānta for Dummies,” but not without some elaboration.

Śrīla Prabhupāda made everything look and sound simple. But simple does not mean that it is in anyway deficient. By “simple” I mean “easy to understand, deal with, use.” Who can argue with this denotation? Śrīla Prabhupāda presented the eternal Vedic

knowledge in a form that was intelligible for practically any human being of average intellect. Yet, his presentation was simultaneously appealing to those of philosophic or scholastic nature. He did so with unlimited patience, free from the *pratiṣṭhā* of trying to make an impression by divulging “higher topics” to those not fit to assimilate them. However, as we become fit through *sādhana* and careful study, we find those higher topics as well in his books, albeit in a nutshell.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s is a complete and self-sufficient package, taking advantage of which, anyone, according to their individual capacity, can pursue the ultimate goal of *kṛṣṇa-prema*:

And the process is very simple. You haven’t got to take difficult processes like yoga system or philosophical, speculative system. . . . Chant this Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. It is given to you free. But if you want to know what is this Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra through philosophy, through knowledge, through logic, we have got volumes of books. [Lecture at Ohio State University, Columbus, 12 May 1969]

Many of us, upon first reading Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, experienced flashes of intuitive insight—intense and crystal clear—emanating from his *vaidūrya*-gem-like statements. We concluded, “Here are the truths I’ve been seeking. Surely, all others reading them will have the same realizations as me.” But as time went on we learned that the jewels that attracted others were different from those that shone brightest for us. What’s more, sometimes others saw different colors than we did in the very same jewels. Even more perplexing, when we revisited the same passages ourselves, we saw newer and different colors! Gradually, the innocence of simplicity evolved into a disquieting complexity. When we began to compare one passage to others, we perceived a panorama of brilliant colors, but many seemed to clash with one another. Finally, we discovered a consoling harmony in the gem rays, as if they were the fundamental elements fused by an inverse prism to emit a simple, one-pointed, beaconlike beam. Śrīla Prabhupāda had pored over the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *granthas* and injected their essence into his own commentaries, producing an unadulterated, uncompromised, and undiffused spiritual light which illuminated our path out of Māyā’s bewildering phantasmagoria.

Proper conceptual orientation (*sambandha-jñāna*) is a necessity for fruitful achievement, so Śrīla Prabhupāda laid out the basics in

a straightforward manner by repetition of his so-called *mahā-vākya*, “Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead,” coupled with Mahāprabhu’s aphorism *jīvera ‘svarūpa’ haya – kṛṣṇera ‘nitya-dāsa’*. Yet, at least for those who wish to properly represent the tradition as preachers, a thorough comprehension of the śāstric *pramāṇa* of Prabhupāda’s “simple” presentation is in order. Although it’s a fact that his books are sufficient for the aspiring *prema-bhakta*, in those books he has recommended that “the serious student would do well to attempt to go through [our *pūrva-ācāryas’ Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* commentaries] to better relish the transcendental messages.” Prabhupāda similarly directed the sincere and inquisitive disciple to other specified writings of our foundational *ācāryas*: “[T]he *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* is very famous; anyone who wants to know about the subject matter of devotees, devotional service, and Kṛṣṇa must read this book.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 5.203, purport)

In this way, within his writings Śrīla Prabhupāda has supplied numerous transcendental “links” to his source materials so that we may achieve a deeper understanding of, and appreciation for, just how loyal his purports are to the tradition, as well as how merciful he was to hand down to us the essence of *śāstra* in such a practical and satisfactory format. That his followers were so easily satisfied with his transmission was vital, for without feeling that we had a handle on the basics, how could we have abandoned our prior engagements to enthusiastically engage in *bhakti-sādhana* and the preaching mission? At the same time, by differentiating “studying” from merely “reading” his books, Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged his disciples to dive deep into Gauḍīya theology (*śābde pare ca niṣṇātam*).

In summary, that Śrīla Prabhupāda kept it simple for us while simultaneously inviting us to go deeper into his sources was the sign of a person who had not only understood the *siddhānta* but had mastered the art of delivering it according to *kāla, deśa, pātra*:

An *ācārya* is an ideal teacher who knows the purport of the revealed scriptures, behaves exactly according to their injunctions, and teaches his students to adopt these principles also. . . . An *ācārya* should devise a means by which people may somehow or other come to Krishna consciousness. First they should become Kṛṣṇa conscious, and all the prescribed rules and regulations may later gradually be introduced. In our Krishna consciousness movement we follow this

policy of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. . . . The
ācārya must devise a means to bring them to devotional
service. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 7.37, purport]

Ebe yaśa ghuśuk tribhuvana: May Śrīla Prabhupāda's glories
be proclaimed throughout the three worlds!

Gaṇapati dāsa Swami

Janānanda Goswami

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

*namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracārīṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyaavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet.

It was forty years ago today that you sat on your *vyāsāsana* at Bhaktivedanta Manor in London. As His Holiness Tamāl Krishna Goswami spoke of your glorious achievements, tears came to your eyes. You expressed your love for your sons and daughters. It was your eighty-second appearance day. Yes, eighty-second. (Very logically, you always counted the day you were born as your first appearance day.) You asked for an extra candle on the cake with 81. It was to be the last Vyāsa-pūjā in your physical presence. A few months later you wound up your manifest pastimes. How little advantage I took of the rarest of rare gifts—the opportunity to associate with a pure devotee—a regret I sorely carry with me.

As I make this offering to you, I am sitting in your room at New Māyāpur, France, the only remaining ISKCON property in mainland Europe that you graced with your presence. It is early morning. I am pondering what to do. Śrīla Prabhupāda, as I look at your transcendental *mūrti* I feel helpless, lonely.

Is the New Māyāpur palace maintained nicely? I like to live there. Especially my wonderful room. I like to live there. I like that New Māyāpur facility. Nice vegetables, flowers, grains. This is very encouraging to have such a farm, where

all problems are solved. You say that there is so much rain. That is very good. There is enough rain and people will be happy due to the sankirtana yajna. Repair all the old buildings and give all the new people who come ample accommodations. Yes, you can change to a suitable new place in Paris. We have got our real place at New Māyāpur. So you can move to wherever you can find a suitable place in Paris. [Śrīla Prabhupāda, as quoted in a letter from Tamāl Krishna Goswami to Bhagavān Dāsa, 4 August 1977]

A chill goes through me as tears roll down my cheeks.

Climbing the chateau's staircase alone, musing on decades past, I recall hundreds of young enlivened devotees running up and down these same stairs that you so gracefully and victoriously walked. They were busily going about their mission of spreading the glories you brought to the world.

Now old bodies totter with the effort of simply ascending the stairs, what to speak of bursting out into the wilderness and into the blazing fire of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* and book distribution.

More than forty years ago you stayed in these same rooms, walked up these same stairs into this same temple room. You walked around the same grounds. O Śrīla Prabhupāda, I wish you were here now in your *vapu* form. Despite your unlimited presence in your *vāṇī* form, I honestly feel I am failing you. When you were here, you gave so many deep and succinct statements of direction; you saw New Māyāpur as a beacon of the preaching mission to fulfill your constitutional plans.

Certainly physical age is creeping up on me. You urge me on from within: "Please give your life":

So France is very important country. [Room conversation about GBC resolutions, Māyāpur, 1 March 1977]

Paris is a very nice city, better than London.
[Letter to Madhudviṣa, 29 June 1971]

So Paris is a most important city of the world. Work with great enthusiasm and make Kṛṣṇa more prominent than Napoleon and Eiffel tower. [Letter to Guru Gaurāṅga and the Paris devotees, 24 August 1973]

There is so much service to do for you here, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

and so few active devotees. You have given us the opportunity to worship the most beautiful Deities—Rādhā-Parisīśvara, Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, Rādhā-Govinda Mādhava, Nitāi-Śacīsuta, Gaura-Nitāi, and Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā. It is not an easy task with so few *pūjārīs*.

The people of France are as ready for Krishna consciousness as those anywhere else. The time when we were scorned by the public has passed. Whenever we go out on the streets on *harināma*, it is wonderful. They love *prasādam*. We have thousands of books in French waiting to be distributed. If only we had more devotees to take advantage of this unbelievable opportunity to dedicate their lives to serving your mission. You have given us a most beautiful farm and temple—we just need sincere devotees to farm and serve here. We have a building in the nearby city of Tours that is used as a preaching center and restaurant, and in Paris there is a small but enthusiastic crew of young devotees eager to push your movement forward there.

France is one of the greatest challenges in our Western preaching world. You are certainly one for a challenge. Although you have brought me here, I feel devoid of qualification. This task, for a mouse like me, is daunting and beyond my petty intelligence. Why me? Surely you have no end of more eligible limbs to work through. I wish that some of them would come here and make the change that is required.

There are many devotees scattered around France and beyond. As if by a great storm, they have been separated from their spiritual family. This distraught situation has resulted in unending differences, disparity, loss of drive and direction, offenses, faithlessness, fear, and hurt. I only wish I could assist you in reuniting your children in your great mission. But I am a number-one rogue, and here I am, supposedly doing some service for you. I am perplexed. I am afraid I am offending many of the devotees here in the guise of helping you. I hope they forgive me. It has not been my intention to offend them.

I sometimes feel a drop of the pain you feel for the many children you have here who, for whatever reason, have either fallen by the wayside or found themselves separated from your movement and, in many cases, opposed to one another. I know this is not pleasing to you. What can I do, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to relieve you of this pain? I saw you cry for the loss of your sons and daughters. As Advaita Ācārya said,

Although the sufferings of My fellow men deeply pain

My heart, I, too, being a sinner, am incapable of helping them. Therefore, O Lord, You must descend Yourself and teach them how to attain You. Only by this means will they learn to love You and thereby end their misery.

I have no real love for you; otherwise I would not maintain the desire for name and fame and selfish satisfaction. How can I possibly be of any use with this mentality? Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, if you think I am of no use here, please kick me away so I will not impede the genuine devotees in their service to you. If you want me to stay, then I beg you with whatever little sincerity I have, if I have any, to please somehow make me your instrument to do your will and kindly extirpate my insistent false ego, remove my fears and doubts, and awaken some genuine compassion in my heart. Please cleanse my heart of the cyclone of material desires and hypocrisy raging there, and of the hatred of your genuine devotees.

I pray as Prahlāda Mahārāja prayed to Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva:

O my Lord, best of the givers of benediction, if You at all want to bestow a desirable benediction upon me, then I pray from Your Lordship that within the core of my heart there be no material desires. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.10.7]

I marvel at your unending compassion toward me. You have allowed me the chance to serve despite my duplicitous motives and have somehow tolerated me. Perhaps I am merely awaiting the punishment I deserve for my wicked, deceitful demeanor. Whatever is in store for me, a glimmer of faith nourishes my strong conviction that by your mercy nothing is impossible. I implore you to please help the devotees here in France and the people of this God-forsaken country by showering your mercy upon them.

I am back in your rooms in New Māyāpur, praying for guidance. I would like to think I can be of some use to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I would like to offer you my very self, if you would kindly accept me. I really have nothing to offer other than that. May this body perish in your service. Your mercy is the only hope I have. Maybe one day I can offer you something pleasing instead of the annual desperate appeal for your mercy—mercy that is already there. Unfortunately, this rascal needs the mercy to take your mercy. May I be of some service to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, here in France.

Here in this New Māyāpur, if you simply carry on this

man-manā bhava mad-bhakto, then all your necessities will come automatically; don't bother. [Outdoor conversation, New Māyāpur, 3 August 1976]

Your very lowly servant devoid of genuine bhakti,

Janānanda Goswami

Rādhānāth Swami

*nama om iṣṭu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Each morning, during the sacred hours prior to sunrise, before hearing anything else, I listen to you sing the immortal prayers *vande 'ham śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pada-kamalaṁ . . .*

I first heard you singing these prayers in the forest of Vṛndāvana. In a small gathering you chimed your small hand cymbals with your eyes closed tightly. Those moments changed my life forever.

The next time I can remember hearing you chanting these prayers was as I listened to a vinyl record played by a phonograph. I was staying at one of your storefront temples in an alleyway of Amsterdam's red-light district. I was in a painful and disoriented state, so far away from Vṛndāvana. Yet as the needle glided on the record's grooves, your voice gave me shelter. It brought me home again.

After some time, I met you at your temple on Henry Street, in New York City. There, after hearing your class, I sat upstairs on the *āśrama* floor reading for the first time your newly published unabridged *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. In the Introduction I discovered these same prayers, *vande 'ham*. In the silence of reading, I could hear your voice resonating from each page, even in my fallen condition. Truly, you live forever in your books.

A little later, I resided in a crumbling farmhouse on a lonely mountaintop in West Virginia. You had called it a jungle. There, hours before dawn, our little *āśrama* awakened to your voice singing these same prayers, *vande 'ham*, this time from a cassette tape playing

on a donated, handed down Panasonic portable tape recorder. The crackling sound of your voice from the damaged little four-inch speaker thrilled our hearts.

Nowadays, wherever I travel, my day begins with hearing your voice singing these prayers, *vande 'ham*, from a smartphone someone gave me.

Every day, with this prayer you take us on a pilgrimage to the lotuslike feet of our gurus, then through time to the generations of our *paramparā ācāryas*. Then you take us with you to your eternal home, to be with the Six Gosvāmīs in Vṛndāvana. In this soulful prayer we follow you into the presence of the Pañca-tattva in holy Navadvīpa *dhāma*, and ultimately into the abode of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Their intimate associates in the spiritual world of Goloka.

Times and places change. Yet in whatever situation we find ourselves, you are inviting us to awaken to the shelter of the spiritual world through transcendental sound vibration.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura tells us that Lord Caitanya traveled by foot through the towns and villages of India with a simple message: “*Jīva jāgo*, wake up, sleeping souls! You are sleeping in the lap of Māyā. Wake up to your eternal happiness by chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on behalf of Lord Caitanya and your Guru Mahārāja, you have traveled through villages, towns, and cities, countries and continents. All to awaken the sleeping souls with Lord Caitanya’s timeless message.

This year marks fifty years since you first traveled on an airplane. For seventy years you had ridden on horse-drawn *toṅgas*, pedal-driven rickshaws, rickety cable trams, clunky Indian taxis, third-class trains, and a cargo ship. But now, gazing through your window as the plane flew higher, you saw the massive buildings of New York shrink down to the size of insignificant dots, soon to disappear. Through your vision you taught us that as we awaken to higher stages of Krishna consciousness the apparently insurmountable effects of pleasure and pain, honor and dishonor, success and failure—even birth and death—become insignificant and eventually disappear.

This year also marks the fiftieth anniversary of your establishing the second Hare Kṛṣṇa temple, in a storefront in Haight-Ashbury, San Francisco. For many devotees around the world, this year is being celebrated as the golden anniversary of the Mantra Rock Dance. Your heart was flooding with Lord Nityānanda’s mercy when you

entered the very heart of the counterculture. Rock bands blared their music at deafening volume, and hippies stoned on intoxicants were crowded in darkness lit by a wild psychedelic light show.

Yet you were calm and filled with grace as you sat on the stage. Like a loving father speaking to his own children, with no prejudice, you pleaded with each person to experience the limitless joy of awakening to the eternal love within us all through chanting the *mahā-mantra* and living a devotional life. From these events the flood of love pouring from your heart would reach all of America, and soon after, the whole world.

This auspicious prayer, *vande 'ham*, is an offering of gratitude and worship to one's guru, the saints, and the Lord. Śrīla Prabhupāda, your life is the infinite personification of this prayer, forever.

Praying to be the servant of your servants,

Rādhānāth Swami

Keśava Bhāratī 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*

Letting Śrīla Prabhupāda Speak for Himself

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances and my deepest gratitude to you for giving us your brilliant translations of and purports to the most elevated of Vedic literatures. You have munificently given humanity access to confidential knowledge of the Absolute Truth, the intimate personal desires of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and His loving dealings with His eternal associates. You have made possible the awakening of love for Kṛṣṇa and pure devotional service to His lotus feet, the goal of human life, in the heart of anyone in any part of the world who simply agrees to hear submissively with faith your transcendental ecstasies as you glorify the Lord and the process of pure devotional service in your Bhaktivedanta Purports.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, my offering to you on this auspicious day of your appearance is a kind of sequel to my previous two annual offerings, in which I glorified the daily reading of your books, especially out loud, and shared the happiness I've been feeling in doing so with devotees, many of whom have written or visited me since I wrote those offerings to say that their lives have changed permanently by reading your books out loud every day.

Last year I mentioned the survey taken at the ILS, the *saṅga* of ISKCON's second-tier leaders held every two years in Māyāpur. The survey showed that in general the leaders are not reading your books as you wanted them to, a fact that prompted the theme of my offering in 2016.

This year I attended the third biannual *saṅga* of ISKCON's top-tier leaders—the *sannyāsīs*, gurus, and members of the GBC (SGGS). The facilitators of this three-day event—Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Dāsa, Vraja Vihārī Dāsa, and Kaunteya Dāsa—were able to distill the thoughts of the more than eighty attendees into what the attendees felt were the three most important issues to get right if your movement is to be passed on to the next generation intact, according to your desire. The three issues were:

Reading your books.

Substance before form.

The quality of our leadership.

I was very happy to hear these conclusions and couldn't help but see a connection between the second two and the proper and sufficient reading of your books. Interestingly, I recently learned from Draviḍa Prabhu, concerning your use of "sufficient" and "sufficiently," that you sometimes intend a little-used meaning—roughly "abundant, lavish" and "abundantly, lavishly." So when you say, "My disciples should read my books sufficiently," you may very well mean we should read them a lot!

My question is, then, Without the ongoing support of your association by the careful reading of your books, how can we give the devotees spiritual substance or quality leadership as we work to improve ISKCON together?

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this auspicious anniversary of your appearance in this world, please allow me to beg your mercy. I'm convinced that you are personally present in your books. You yourself made statements indicating this: "I will never die. I will live forever in my books;" and "If you want to know me, read my

books.” The more I read your books, the closer I feel to you. Your presence is palpable.

For example, as I write this I’m convalescing from a two-week savage fever that put me in the hospital. I got out of the hospital just a week ago. I was taking a short break from writing due to weakness, and as I wondered about my condition, I came upon this purport in my daily reading:

Sometimes if one is liberated from the material world but has no shelter at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, one falls down to the material world again. Liberation is like a state of convalescence, in which one is free from a fever but is still not healthy. Even in the stage of convalescence, if one is not very careful, one may have a relapse. Similarly, liberation does not offer as much security as the shelter of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya* 3.257, purport]

How’s that for personal reciprocation! Unlimited thanks to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for protecting me so nicely!

I propose that if we leaders read your books properly ourselves, not only with the intention of learning more, to make our classes and seminars more substantial, informative, and so on, but also with the intention of spending quality time with you and learning from you how to be devotees as you would want us to be—how to follow in the footsteps of the great personalities manifest in the sound of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*—and if we then teach the devotees under our care to do the same by reading your words out loud with them, letting you speak for yourself, letting you personally direct those under our care how to think, feel, will, and interact on the spiritual plane, as you want us to, regardless of our position in the social structure, then the spiritual purity of your movement will be secure.

The prototypes, the exemplars, of all types of great souls, pure Vaiṣṇavas—from the original kings and great sages, to aristocratic *brāhmaṇas* and wealthy *vaiśyas* and landholders, to simple voluntary paupers, in ancient times and in more recent times—all live within the pages of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, waiting to give us their *saṅga* and teach us how to deal with one another in true loving exchanges under all types of circumstances.

You’ve given us everything, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in the ocean of your nectarean translations and commentaries. It’s up to us to mine the

jewels of wisdom and proper behavior and attitudes, reform our own characters accordingly, and become exemplars of your mood and worthy members of your line of authority.

[Translation:] Haridāsa Ṭhākura replied, “My dear Lord, do not be in anxiety. Do not be unhappy to see the condition of the *yavanas* in material existence.

[Purport:] These words of Haridāsa Ṭhākura are just befitting a devotee who has dedicated his life and soul to the service of the Lord. When the Lord is unhappy because of the condition of the fallen souls, the devotee consoles Him, saying, “My dear Lord, do not be in anxiety.” This is service. Everyone should adopt the cause of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to try to relieve Him from the anxiety He feels. This is actually service to the Lord. One who tries to relieve Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s anxiety for the fallen souls is certainly a most dear and confidential devotee of the Lord. To blaspheme such a devotee who is trying his best to spread the cult of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the greatest offense. One who does so is simply awaiting punishment for his envy. [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 3.52]

In this age of seminars and various ways of communicating through varieties of media, there is also a crying need for all of us to directly hear your divine instructions, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Please bless me so that I can be an instrument for spreading this understanding, which is vital for the spiritual maintenance of your ISKCON.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your humble servant,

Keśava Bhāratī Dāsa Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you and your sincere followers.

Tomorrow is Gaura Pūrṇimā, the divine appearance day of the Kali-yuga avatar, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Throughout your mission this will be celebrated with great transcendental enthusiasm.

Your personal contribution to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community and your guru *varga* is the establishment of a bona fide *sampradāya* in the Western countries.

You write, “We now have a *sampradāya*, a party of Lord Caitanya in the Western countries...that is my success, that is my joy, that is my life. I have no value, insignificant, but somehow you have co-operated and now still co-operating as Lord Caitanya’s *sampradāya*. Thank you very much”. — Lecture, San Fransico 2 April 1970

Your personal preaching mission has all the potency to reclaim conditioned souls and prepare them for entering into the Lord’s pastimes. When members of ISKCON leave their bodies we often remark that they have taken birth in the Lord’s pastimes. But actually speaking, serving in this present Krishna consciousness movement means we are already in the Lord’s pastimes.

You write, “This present Krishna consciousness movement is non-different from the pastimes performed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu when He was personally present for the same principles are being followed and the same action performed without fail”. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā*, Chapter 5, Text 88, purport)

There is a difference in that if we had taken birth five hundred years ago in Navadvīpa or Jagannātha Purī, we could have had “*sākṣād darśana*” of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His *nitya-parikas*. Instead, we have appeared, mostly outside India, some five centuries later. But if we associate with this Krishna consciousness movement, we are still to be included in Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s pastimes.

And your disciples are blessed to have association of the *nitya-parikas* of Lord Caitanya because of your presence.

It is my belief that your sincere followers in male and female forms are your eternal associates. Such exalted personalities will have the conviction and realisation that this present Krishna consciousness movement is non-different from the pastimes performed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. And all of this is being made possible by his

divine grace. Just as we have in this material world your personal preaching mission ISKCON, so in the spiritual world, Goloka Vṛndāvana, there will be a personal *yukta* or group, that assist you in serving the divine couple.

Thank you for allowing me to participate in this latter day pastime of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Please always keep me under the shelter and guidance of your devoted followers.

With great humility and respect, I bow down a million times to this mission and all of your disciples, grand-disciples, great-grand-disciples and sincere followers.

Your worthless insignificant fallen servant of a servant,

Pārtha Sārathi dāsa Goswami

Śivarāma Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Almost forty-five years ago I decided to become a full-time devotee and become serious about Krishna consciousness. The full-time part was relatively easy, but what I thought would be the fruit of my service and surrender remained, and continues to remain, elusive.

I am fixed on the goal of my devotions: rendering service in a spiritual body to The Divine Couple in Vṛndāvana. However, the more I hear of the qualification for such perfection, the greater the chasm becomes between where I am and where I aspire to be. It seems almost hopeless. To buoy my spirits I regularly repeat a prayer by Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, a prayer that sends a ray of hope shining through clouds of despair:

*ki mora manera sādha vāmana haye cāṇḍa hāta
vidhi ki sādha pūrābe āmāra*

“What desires I have! Although I am a dwarf, still I want to touch the moon. Will the creator ever fulfill my desire?” (*Prārthanā* 57)

I do not know the creator. And even if I did, he would not be able to fulfill this desire: it is not within his power. But for me, Śrīla

Prabhupāda, you are the creator, the one creator I know. You created the universe in which I live: Vaiṣṇava *saṅga*, temples, *saṅkīrtana*, ISKCON, *prasādam*, Deities, *Bhāgavatam*, *dhāmas*. The list of your creations is endless. So you are Vidhi, the creator. And I know that you can bridge this chasm that lies between where I am and where I aspire to be. It is within your power. Therefore, on this day, the day in commemoration of when you agreed to take birth in this world to introduce everyone to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, will you kindly fulfill my desire?

Your servant,

Śivarāma Swami

Bhakti Caitanya Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you, the savior of the fallen.

Recently I had a fairly major health situation, during which I was very uncomfortable and in some difficulty. It gave me clear insights into the nature of my material body and my entanglement in this material world. The insights were clear, but not very nice. I have been caught up in this world for a long time, and I still have a long way to go to get out. I need your mercy. That is clearer than ever before.

What you offer us is a great step into another dimension. I have had so many experiences of that, and yesterday was another one. We had the first day of our four-day Rathayātrā festival in Durban, South Africa, and it was truly amazing. Among other things it was an unseasonably cold day for Durban at that time of the year, around 10 or 12 degrees Celsius, but the thousands of devotees and members of the public who participated in it or witnessed it were transported into another world, a wonderful world of transcendental joy and inspiration. Even though I was practically freezing, sitting on Lord Balarāma's chariot, at the head of the procession, still it was so heartwarming to see the happiness that was spilling out in all directions.

This is typical of the gifts you have given us, Śrīla Prabhupāda. What would my life have been yesterday, if I had not received a drop of your mercy many years ago? Simply a development of the pain and discomfort I was feeling in the hospital a few weeks ago, as I

struggled with my damaged body. But by your grace everything has changed so much, and even though yesterday was windy and cold, the feelings of transcendence overcame that, and everyone was in ecstasy, including many of the spectators.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you often expressed appreciation of the Rathayātrā festival. One time at a Rathayātrā festival in London you said, "...even if you do not understand the philosophy, even you do not read the books, simply if you take part in these three things, chanting, dancing, and taking part in eating the *prasāda*, your life will gradually progress in spiritual advancement of life. And if you continue this, then some day will come, even in this life it may come, that you will understand what is Kṛṣṇa. And as soon as you understand Kṛṣṇa, then after leaving this body you go back to home, back to Godhead, directly. This is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Those who have read *Bhagavad-gītā*... Lord Kṛṣṇa says,

*janma karma me divyam
yo jānāti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma
naiti mām eti kaunteya*

(Bg. 4.9)

Simply by understanding Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa's appearance, Kṛṣṇa's disappearance, Kṛṣṇa's activities. This Rathayātrā is one of the activities of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore to take part in the Rathayātrā festival means to associate with Kṛṣṇa directly. So in this way, if we associate with Kṛṣṇa's name, Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, Kṛṣṇa's qualities, Kṛṣṇa's form, then, gradually, we transcend this material existence."

As time goes on I continually become more amazed by you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. What you have given us defies material description. It is simply your mercy, descending from the transcendental platform to us here in this world. Please continue to give me this mercy. There is nothing else of value in my life.

Your humble servant,
Bhakti Caitanya Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Another year has passed,
A time that leapt so fast,
When services were covered,
When masters were smothered
With love and affection
For delivery of direction.
This thread of guidance
Holds and binds us
To the feet of the Lord,
Something no one can afford,
For it is priceless,
Being the ultimate kindness
For lifting the soul
From a deep dark hole.

Leaving the *dhāma* behind,
A new comfort to find—
It was in 1965—
The ocean you did survive
On ship, with beads ‘n’ books.
There were stares and looks
When you landed on the shore
And made that big score
In the city of fashion,
Of darkness and passion.

There was snow and cold,
But you were so bold.
There was noise and heat;
You said “no” to defeat.
The place was confused,

People being used.
You offered them freedom,
A new kind of kingdom,
Where Prime Entity rules—
Not taught in the schools.

You went from there
To destinations everywhere,
Touching a morbid heart,
Giving a boost and a start
To anyone and everyone.
Some stay, some run.
Then going beyond borders,
You intro'ed the four orders.
You pulled in the shakers,
You drew in the makers,
And those on merchandise,
Plus those simply wise.

You tell of two Lords
Who sing out Their chords,
Who dance with such grace,
Bringing awe to one's face.
Draped in fine folds,
In blues and in golds,
They extend Their arms—
A part of Their charms.
Unknown by and large,
The Lords make Their charge,
Dispensing the Name,
Telling us the game,
To conquer the hate,
Which makes Them so great.

There's you and the two,
On the chain of but few.
You shine in an age
When rare there's a sage.
In a world that's so bleak,
You stand out unique.
Keep me in the crowd

Though my faults are so loud.
I beg for the chance
To make it in your dance.
“Make me dance, make me dance,
O my Lord, make me dance.”
Giving out so much,
It’s the heart that you touch.

Your servant,
Bhaktimārga Swami

Candramauli Swami

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-guruve 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.

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

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

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master, 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 Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanya and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Canto 1, Chapter 12 describes the birth ceremony of Emperor Parīkṣit as the sages glorify his spotless character and prophesize and herald the emperor’s life deeds comparing them with the great souls of yore.

In the same mood we are able to see how you dear Śrīla Prabhupāda pattern the character and life deeds of many great

sages and kings.

At your birth ceremony an astrologer calculates the child's horoscope and predicts that "he will one day be a great *sādhu* who will cross the ocean at the age of seventy and open 108 temples." Such a prediction is truly phenomenal in all respects. In the year 1965 you told that Iranian train conductor whom you meet on a New York park bench, yes I have 108 temples only separated by time. It is interesting to note that I received a letter from a person who would visit our Seattle, WA, temple. He described how this same train conductor, now very elderly, once came to the temple and upon seeing your *mūrti* on the *vyāsāsana* began speaking very emotionally recalling his meeting with you. By your kind mercy his initial skepticism turned into a joyful experience.

As a small lad you wanted to visit Jagannāth Purī, and so with the help of your father Gour Mohan a miniature cart with Jagannāth Deities was modeled exactly after the giant carts in Purī. For many days the pastime was re-enacted attracting the participation of friends and family and other children of the neighborhood. This childhood pastime is anticipating the day when you will initiate Rathayātrā festivals in numerous cities worldwide.

Lord Nityānanda on the order of Lord Caitanya approached the most fallen sinful persons Jagāi and Mādhāi, and even though they tried to injure Him, still gave them the highest blessing, love of Kṛṣṇa. You Śrīla Prabhupāda went to an area of the world, New York City slums, and distributed the message of love of Kṛṣṇa despite that fact that you were often misunderstood, chased by a drugged crazed hippy, your possessions stolen and practically living day to day without any fixed residence.

Veda Vyāsadeva translated the vast knowledge of Vedic literature making it more accessible to the mentality of the people of Kali-yuga through the Purāṇas and Itihāsas and heralded his work by presenting the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. How is it possible to begin to understand this great literature without your Bhaktivedanta purports. You are rightly known as the Veda Vyāsa of the 20th century by translating more than 80 books of knowledge along with detailed explanations on the text.

Lord Rāmacandra in order to regain His kidnapped wife, Mother Sītā the supreme goddess of fortune, crossed a vast ocean with an army of monkey soldiers. You Śrīla Prabhupāda crossed the ocean and on the shores of America created an army of devotees of Kṛṣṇa

from us monkey-like inhabitants. We dutifully followed you around the world assisting you in recapturing the fortune stolen by the materialist non-devotees and converting them in dedicated soldiers in Lord Caitanya mission.

Your avowed obedience and firm determination to carry out the order your spiritual master can only be compared to Śrī Hanumān's bhakti to Lord Rāmacandra as he displayed superhuman feats to save Lakṣmaṇa when wounded by the weapon of Indrajit and crossing the ocean to Laṅkā to find Mother Sītā.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is glorified for his outstanding tolerance in life threatening circumstances, having undergone beatings in 22 market places with the intent to kill him yet showing compassion to his torturers by praying for their deliverance. When crossing the great ocean you suffered two heart attacks and much physical discomfort for more than a month yet you tolerated such severe disturbance just to show compassion to the conditioned souls of Kali-yuga by bringing them to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Śiva is renowned as very munificent as he gives shelter to all even the Daityas. Śrīla Prabhupāda you gave shelter to whomever came to you, both the gentle and the ruffians. Working diligently, tirelessly training and engaging anyone who showed just a mustard seed of desire to learn or to serve.

Pāṇḍava Arjuna, the great bowmen, is praised as being as irresistible as fire and as unsurpassable as the ocean. And so when speaking about Māyāvāda philosophy you Śrīla Prabhupāda were like a blazing fire completely defeating all opposing arguments and unsurpassable in śāstrically establishing the Absolute Truth as Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

As Bharata Mahārāja, the son of Rṣabhadeva, expanded the name and fame of his family, the earth planet was formerly named Bhārata varṣa, so traveling worldwide more than 14 times you have made known in ever country the fame of the spotless Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His eternal teaching of Sanātana Dharma.

Grandfather Bhīṣmadeva lying on the battlefield his body pierced with many arrows spoke to Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja as many great persons listened on about how to rule the kingdom and serve the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In the same vein in your last days on this planet although greatly physically challenged you kept on boldly speaking the message of Krishna consciousness along

with instructing your disciples on how to preach and expand the movement more and more. This is recorded in many conversations all the way up till the time of your glorious departure.

Your qualities and spiritual achievements are as innumerable as the rays of the sun. You are non-different from the benevolent sunshine that purifies and gives health and happiness to all. Your glories are relished by all who were fortunate enough to come into your association.

We have found the perfect guide, kind friend, master and pure lover of Kṛṣṇa, Your Divine Grace.

We your disciples look forward to that day when the whole world will read your books and sing your glories.

Praying to live and serve more and more according to your eternal teachings.

With great happiness and a lifetime of gratitude in service,

Candramauli Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Since childhood we have heard stories of long ago times in faraway lands where God spoke through prophets in order to uplift fallen souls so as to include and engage them in His grand story of redemption. How we longed to have been present in such times, places, and cultures where God's eternal agents of grace walked and talked, testifying in word and deed to the love of God and his reciprocation with mankind.

Born into a world where the distinctive religious theories and practices of generations are often inherited from ancestors, in the rural Northeast of 1950s America, my family, like many others, based their beliefs on a book the community considered to be holy. Despite geographic and philosophical distinctions between the various contemporary religions, there is generally one crucial commonality. The vast majority believe in a series of revelations throughout the ages which point to and culminate in the appearance of a last prophet who, in delivering the final message, concludes the series forever.

Vaiṣṇava traditions, however, offer a profoundly dynamic face to the living Word of God by honoring the on-going commentaries, purports, and illuminations of the *ācāryas* with a respect equal to that offered to the original scripture, the Veda herself. This culture recognizes the contribution of the literary agency of Godhead, Śrī Vyāsadeva, who intervenes at critical stages of world history to rearrange, edit, and present the eternal message of Godhead, as you succinctly described, "in new dress". In this way the message is made comprehensible and applicable to the current generation. Vyāsadeva remains independent of historical limitations, forever compiling and editing Kṛṣṇa's message, either directly or vicariously through his perfectly conscious spiritual successors.

The cream of the Vedas is the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* whose message is embodied in the person Bhāgavata, who brings the scriptures to life, both literally and figuratively. He makes the *śāstras* accessible, personal, attractive, and comprehensible through his gracious devotional dealings. Your Bhāgavata Dharma discourse made this Truth self-evident.

Reading scripture alone, without the intercession of the person

Bhāgavata, will not afford one entry into the mysteries, glories, or beauty of the holy name, who is the confidential essence and goal of all the Vedas. A lifetime spent in empiric study of *śāstra* only finds perfection when it culminates in understanding the dire need to surrender unconditionally to the spiritual guidance and discipleship of a bona fide spiritual master. A personal connection with the living guru is essential to developing communion with the holy name. We come to this world with so many misconceptions. The appearance of Śrīla Vyāsadeva in the form of Śrī Guru shatters all idols of mental fabrication and dispels all shadows of speculation with the dawning rays of the Absolute Truth.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as the agent of Vyāsa, you came to us as if a stranger from afar, and yet, you spoke in a voice most near and dear to our hearts. Personifying both the grace and potency of Godhead, you presented in pastime, as well as in precept, the perfect integration and harmonious adjustment of all ritualistic differences and superficial contradictions in scripture which bewilder the minds of neophytes. As the person Bhāgavata, you sensed our inner longings as well as our deepest fears. You touched, healed, and blessed them as only a most-loving mother could. With the gentle authority of a perfect father you evoked from a generation of prodigal children the respect we longed to offer, but for whom we had found no worthy recipient to offer it to. With that pairing of divine influence and grace, you granted us the holy name and initiated us with new names, confirming our adoption into your loving family of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

As the fulfilment of our deepest yearnings, spiritual affinity drew the Lord, yourself, and devotees to a truly holy place that was complimentary to our spiritual sentiments. It was here in New Vṛndāvana, 1972, hearing your Vyāsa-pūjā day lecture, in the midst of your Bhāgavat Dharma discourse, where we witnessed firsthand a demonstration, as well as explanation, of the meaning of Divine Grace. The night before the celebration, while sitting at your feet, hearing *Kṛṣṇa* book on Janmāṣṭamī, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was brought to life by your presence. It rose like the sun to dispel the darkness and the mist of a secular world, restoring meaning and purpose to our lives. The setting of the holy *dhāma*, invoked by your prayers, enhanced the experience like a *cintāmaṇī* gem, reflecting, echoing and amplifying your message. To sit at the feet of God's beloved agent, to hear of God's love from one who personifies and distributes

His Divine Grace, far surpassed the stories that had charmed us in childhood. Our eyes were opened to the presence of God in the sound of His name who inconceivably appeared in our country, during our very lifetime, due only to your unlimited compassion.

On your last physical visit to your Palace of Gold, you assured your children, "I am already living here and always will be." With that statement, we felt that all our desires had found perfect fulfillment and reciprocation. Your words of gratitude for the gift of love we offered endeared you to our hearts all the more.

In the early days, unaware of the significance, tradition, and potency of Vaiṣṇava *samādhis*, we thought that as the representative of Vyāsa, your primary contribution would be your translations and commentaries on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. We built the Palace as a residence for you to facilitate your literary *sevā*. The palace has come to serve Vyāsa and glorify you in ways that would have been impossible for us to imagine at the time of its construction.

How could we have known that the structure we envisioned in our youthful innocence would become your *smṛti samādhi*? Your Palace of Gold is truly a Yoga-pīṭha, a place where the physical and spiritual worlds overlap, a place where our prayers and services find reciprocation with exceptional transcendental potency.

The sacramental nature of your words has become increasingly evident over the decades. It is a profound experience to discover how the inconceivable and paradoxical truths of love in separation find practical application and increasing expression in our daily *sādhana*.

This most sacred aspect of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā, the celebration of the deepest communion in the intimacy of separation, responds to the deeper voices within our hearts. In your final lesson on how to die, the seed was planted which, in time, is bearing fruit in a living relationship beyond anything we could have otherwise known. This is a testament to the joy found within the sadness of your final lesson. This mood, which is also infused in your *smṛti samādhi mandir*, bears witness to the on-going and expanding spirit of Vyāsa in revealing the subtler truths and sentiments of *śāstra* according to our capacity to receive and practice them.

The distillation of the jewel of service in separation is found in the pastimes and precepts of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Beyond narrating His life and teachings as they had already been recorded, you revealed new chapters unfolding even today. These chapters were left for you to fulfill by Mahāprabhu Himself, out of His

love for seeing his pure devotees glorified. You, in turn, engaged us in His ever-expanding *līlā* by establishing a mission that would continue to distribute the only means of deliverance in this Age, the treasure of Goloka, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. In the *mahā-mantra*, we are entrusted with service to the sound form of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa overflowing with mercy, grace, and love. Śrīla Prabhupāda, we know little of the love of Vṛndāvana and realize even less. Our shelter is found only in your lotus feet. Following in your footsteps leads us further into the realm where the sweetness of loving service and the grace of Kṛṣṇa abound.

Through your causeless mercy, you uplifted our own fragmented little stories of loneliness and pain and placed them in the larger story of Lord Caitanya's great and ongoing redemptive *līlā* – an eternal, dynamic story with no beginning or end. This narrative expands as you lead, inspire, and empower others to continue the function of Vyāsa.

May the spirit of Vyāsa, as invested in you, always resonate through the words of your successors to draw their worldwide listeners into more and more profound experiences of the vast gospel of love, grace, and hope inherent to your appearance in this world and celebrated in this most blessed event of Śrī Vyāsa Pūjā.

The servant of your servants,

Varṣāṇā Swami

Nirañjana Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Another year has already passed since the last time I read my offering before you on this most auspicious anniversary of your divine appearance in this world. Each year brings new opportunities to glorify you throughout the year, and with that, new realizations of your infinite glories.

Last week in Ticino, Switzerland, I watched a video of your disciple Guru-Gaurāṅga Dāsa delivering an audiovisual presentation in Boston at the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of your arrival in that city. His captivating and well-researched presentation was

entitled “A Most Improbable Journey.” Although I was present when he first delivered his detailed account of your journey from Calcutta to Boston, and then on to New York, it wasn’t until Ticino that I looked more deeply at your diary entry of September 10, 1965:

Today the ship is plying very smoothly. I feel today better. But I am feeling separation from Śrī Vrindaban and my Lords Śrī Govinda, Gopinath, Rādhā Damodar. The only solace is Śrī Caitanya Charitamrita in which I am tasting the nectarine of Lord Caitanya’s Leela. I have left Bharat Bhumi just to execute the order of Śrī Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati in pursuance of Lord Caitanya’s order. I have no qualification, but I have taken up the risk just to carry out the order of His Divine Grace. I depend fully on Their mercy so far away from Vrindaban.

I’ve read this before—in fact, so many times. But this time these words struck me with yet another one of the numerous confirmations I’ve discovered in service to you of how you were thinking then and throughout your divine *līlā* of rescuing conditioned souls. Soon thereafter you would attempt to teach each and every one of your future disciples, through your books, your lectures, and your perfect example, this very same principle of full submission to the Lord and his pure representative.

Of course, the depth of your teachings can never be limited to only one method for realizing pure devotional service. Since you are our founder-*ācārya*, your pure example teaches all facets of Krishna consciousness to the highest degree. However, it is this particular quality in you which deeply captivates me, so much so that I find myself reflecting on it wherever I see it throughout all of your teachings.

I know only too well how unqualified I am. In order to teach us everything by your example, therefore, for our sake you consistently took the position of one who was not qualified, even though you were the most qualified. This principle, demonstrated by your perfect example, gives me hope that fully serving you, and some day even satisfying you, remains possible despite living in physical separation from you.

I remember the first time I read the Concluding Words you wrote upon completing your translation of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. You expressed that same solace you wrote about in your journal while

crossing the Atlantic Ocean. I clearly remember feeling overwhelmed by the devotion, humility, faith, submission, and transparency that you perfectly conveyed to your followers:

I think that His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is always seeing my activities and guiding me within my heart by his words. As it is said in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, *tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye*. Spiritual inspiration comes from within the heart, wherein the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in His Paramātmā feature, is always sitting with all His devotees and associates. It is to be admitted that whatever translation work I have done is through the inspiration of my spiritual master, because personally I am most insignificant and incompetent to do this materially impossible work. I do not think myself a very learned scholar, but I have full faith in the service of my spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. If there is any credit to my activities of translating, it is all due to His Divine Grace.

I can no longer count the number of times I have read these Concluding Words. They are a constant reminder to me of the need to more deeply realize my own lack of qualification and thus develop an increasingly helpless dependence on everything you attempted to teach us when you were with us.

More than thirty years ago, not long after first reading those Concluding Words, when I was faced with the then daunting responsibilities I had as temple president, I discovered another very similar clue that you had given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for carrying out the heavy duties you entrusted to me. While reading Brahmā's prayers for creative potency in chapter 9 of the Third Canto, I read the following in your purport to text 29:

Any person authorized by either the Lord or by His bona fide representative is already blessed, as is the work entrusted to him. Of course, the person entrusted with such a responsibility should always be aware of his incapability and must always look for the mercy of the Lord for the successful execution of his duty. One should not be puffed up because he is entrusted with certain executive work. Fortunate is he who is so entrusted, and if he is always fixed in the sense of

being subordinate to the will of the Supreme, he is sure to come out successful in the discharge of his work.

That one purport has always saved me in times of deep desperation. Countless times I have read this purport, and I continue to share it with devotees as a divine *sūtra* for success in all one's spiritual endeavors.

When I visited the Bhaktivedanta Archives many years ago, your disciple Rañjit Dāsa showed me the original journal you kept in 1966 in New York. He had recently acquired it from one of your early disciples. I asked him if I could take it into the other room and read it for awhile. He kindly agreed, and I disappeared into the next room to scour through all of your entries. It was then that I took note of another diary entry, dated February 3, 1966:

Today there was a very nice demonstration of tape-record Sankirtana by me.

It is all Grace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Haridas Thakur said that the transcendental sound of Hari Nama would even purify the heart of birds and beasts. Today this statement of Thakur Haridas is corroborated. These American[s] can not understand even a word's meaning of the Sankirtan and yet they were so much attracted? It is all Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's power; there is no credit for me.

I sat there captivated, tears coming from my eyes, appreciating these words so much, as testimony to your compassion, humility, and exclusive dependence on the mercy bestowed upon you from your worshipable Lord and divine masters. I immediately returned to Rañjit Prabhu to share my discovery and then asked him for a pen and paper to write your words down for my own personal safekeeping and as a constant reminder of how to render devotional service.

Actually, this mood, example, and instruction are revealed unlimitedly by you, as well as in the thousands of testimonies your disciples have given based on what they personally heard from you and how they also saw these qualities in you. Every moment you were present with us there was an instruction and example of surrender in full Krishna consciousness. You fully embodied the mood of humility in submission to the divine order coming both from within and without.

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself declared to Arjuna:

In all activities just depend upon Me and work always under My protection. In such devotional service, be fully conscious of Me. If you become conscious of Me, you will pass over all the obstacles of conditioned life by My grace. If, however, you do not work in such consciousness but act through false ego, not hearing Me, you will be lost. [*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.57–58]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this most auspicious day of your divine appearance, I humbly fall at your lotus feet and beg you to continue to help me always be fully conscious of you. One may ask, “Why ‘you’ and not Kṛṣṇa?” Again, because you revealed another clue that I constantly remember in the most difficult of times:

[I]f a disciple is very serious to execute the mission of the spiritual master, he immediately associates with the Supreme Personality of Godhead by *vāṅī* or *vapuh*. This is the only secret of success in seeing the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Instead of being eager to see the Lord in some bush of Vṛndāvana while at the same time engaging in sense gratification, if one instead sticks to the principle of following the words of the spiritual master, he will see the Supreme Lord without difficulty. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.51, purport]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are my only hope. It is my realization now, more than ever, that without remembering you I will surely be lost. In the dust of your lotus feet,

Your eternal servant,

Nirañjana Swami

*vṛndāvane ramaṇa-reti prasiddha-bhūmau
tatṛāpi kṛṣṇa-balarāma-supāda-mūle*

*jñānam param parama-kṛṣṇa-sudharmīty uktam
daṅṭas tu deva prabhupāda namo namas te*

“I repeatedly offer my respectful obeisances unto that divine personality Śrīla Prabhupāda, who sits at the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma in Vṛndāvana’s Ramaṇa Reti, giving supreme knowledge of Kṛṣṇa to one and all.”

*vande śrī-gurudevam tam karuṇā-varuṇālayam
yat-kṛpā-lava-leśena pāmaro ’py amarāyate*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto the bona fide spiritual master, an ocean of compassion. Even a fraction of his mercy is enough to liberate even the most fallen person.”

It’s interesting to note that many old people continue to leave their bodies by the order of the Lord.

If one takes shelter of Tulasīrāṇī surely she’ll help liberate and guide those who take shelter of her lotus feet.

The generations to come should never forget...

*niḥśvāse na hi viśvāsaḥ kadā ruddho bhaviśyati
kīrtanīya mato bālyād harer nāmaiva kevalam*

“Remember that our final breath may come at any time. No matter if we’re old and sick or in our youthful prime. So young and old alike should chant the name incessantly. The holy name of Śrī Hari is surely all that be.”

Yes! *Harināma* is the only thing left that will still work and give full effect. But only when chanted without offenses!

In our creeping old age, when your disciples are increasingly leaving this world in front of our very eyes to run back to your lotus feet, we beg to chant more rounds and remember the Lord and His Tulasīrāṇī at the time of death. All else will be stripped away from us.

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

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

om śrī surabhyai namaḥ! om śrī gurave namāḥ!

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace on this, the 121st anniversary of your sacred appearance day.

Your Complete Mission

Lord Caitanya, He has come,
Avatāra for this Age of Kali.
His *senāpati* He has shown,
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami.

The waves, they are coming,
Your mission is spreading,
The tale will be telling,
Māyā you’re dispelling.

To spread the *yuga-dharma*
Of *harināma-saṅkīrtana*,
You’ve taught Lord Caitanya’s
Sambandha, abhidheya, prayojana.

To now make your mission complete,
Let us awake from our deep sleep
To relieve your lamentation.
Four waves to your urgent mission.

You, our savior and master,
Our captain of the ship.
Your deep inspiration,
Simha-guru Sarasvatī.

Your *Back to Godhead* magazine
In 1944 did you begin.
Your essay “Conception of Gītā-nāgarī,”
Four movements did you see.

The Saṅkīrtana Movement

Holy name and holy books,
Navadvīpa in the streets.
New York City in the park,
ISKCON’s Book Distribution Ministry.

The Deity Worship Movement

Deities and temples did you envision—
Vṛndāvana and the Gosvāmīs.
New York, San Francisco, and the Swami.
ISKCON’s Deity Worship Ministry.

The Spiritual Initiation Movement

Through training and education,
First initiation *harināma-dīkṣā*,
Second initiation *brāhmaṇa-dīkṣā*.
ISKCON’s Congregational Ministry.

The Classless Society Movement

In devotional service to Lord Hari,
All four *varṇas* and four *āśramas*.
50 percent of your mission yet to fulfill,
ISKCON’s mission is incomplete.

Global vision, the Lord’s mission,
Spiritual *sva-dharma*—*sañkīrtana*,
Deity worship, and congregational preaching.
Material *sva-dharma*—*daiva-varṇāśrama*.

The call of *sañkīrtana*
Weekly *harināma*
Kīrtana-mela
Sañkīrtana newsletters

Showcase for Deity worship
MI/VIHE *Bhakti-śāstrī*
Bhakti-vaibhava
Temple of the Vedic Planetarium

Ṭhākura’s *Godruma-kalpatavi*,
Nāma-haṭṭa bhakti-ṛkṣa
Global outreach
Yearly *sammelanas*.

Simple living and high thinking,
Farm conferences, agrarian culture,
Gurukulas and *varṇāśrama* colleges,
Cows, land, and Kṛṣṇa.

Cities our “preaching basis,”
Villages our “living basis.”
Chant, chant, chant, and plant, plant, plant.
No more can’t, can’t, can’t.

Without your mercy
The world remains crazy.
Your Divine Grace’s vision
Your complete mission.

Your insignificant beggar,
Bhakti Rāghava Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

My most humble obeisances. All glories to you!

I stopped by Gītā Nāgarī recently to take *darśana* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodar. Suddenly a thought came into my mind regarding how you were empowered in so many ways: Śrīla Prabhupāda was a visionary. And then an interesting phrase came to my mind that exemplified what I was thinking – *cutting edge*. I liked very much the sound of that: Śrīla Prabhupāda was cutting edge. I included that phrase in a description of you in another article that I wrote. I would like to offer that to your lotus feet in glorification.

“Śrīla Prabhupāda was on the cutting edge of so many things. Cutting edge means the latest or most advanced stage in the development of something. So, fifty years ago Śrīla Prabhupāda was on the cutting edge of vegetarianism, the cutting edge of *kīrtana*, the cutting edge of Indian philosophy and culture, and the cutting edge of sustainable living. We have succeeded in carrying your legacy in so many ways, but sometimes we have fallen short, and in too many cases have allowed others to take his mantle, especially with sustainable living. We all need to take that legacy back.”

I pray that I can be an instrument in helping to carry your legacy. I pray that I may also be cutting edge in carrying the traditions and truths you revealed to us into the future.

Your humble servant,

Dhanurdhara Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my humble obeisances unto you, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna consciousness, and will try to offer a few words in your glorification on this, your Vyāsa-pūjā day.

What comes to mind is my very recent trip to Mexico and India in an effort to promote the reading and distribution of Your Divine Grace's transcendental literature.

The trip was supposed to take twenty-four hours, from Mexico City to Delhi. I had not been to Mexico for one year, so the visit at Christmastime was very, very intense, right up to my entering the departure gate. I flew to Houston, Texas, and after some struggle made it to the far end of the airport to check in for the flight to India on Delta Airlines. They told me the flight was canceled and I had been written over to KLM. I went back to the other end of the airport, stood in line again, and when I reached the head of the queue the KLM lady gave me a boarding pass to Amsterdam instead of Paris and told me to go to the transfer desk in Amsterdam to get a boarding pass for the Delhi flight.

The KLM flight took off two hours late. Then I had to stand for two hours in a line in Amsterdam with other suffering passengers to get to the agent, who told us we had missed our flight and were "booked on a Jet Airways flight tomorrow, but we cannot give you a hotel accommodation."

After that, I had to fight with three more transfer desks, spend two nights in airports with only potato chips to eat, rebooking a total of four times. In the end the flight took sixty-eight hours instead of twenty-four. On the final flight, from Mumbai to Delhi, I started having heart arrhythmias, chest pains, and then they spread to my pectoral muscles, a sure sign of a heart attack. My body is seventy years old now.

I filled out the next-of-kin information in my passport and put it in my pocket, and with clarity I wrote down what I thought certainly might be my last words on earth.

Looking at everything, I estimated that, by dint of the constant mercy you showed me, like that of a father holding up a child trying to walk, I had done about seventy percent of the perfect service I felt I might have done. It was not anything great, but it was some

contribution to your *sañkīrtana* movement, made according to my nature and ability. There are certainly much greater devotees in this movement.

The visit to India was just as intense, and the *sañkīrtana* results are there. Thank you for helping me grow. I will try to be less of a burden.

Your humble servant,

Hanumatpresaka Swami

Devāmrita Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Among your innumerable *cintāmaṇi* characteristics, your transcendental facet of “reverse thinking” delights me, educating my soul.

Instead of following the “normal, logical” direction of an assertion, a reverse thinker turns the direction around (or turns around an important element in that assertion), consequently revealing an unexpected outcome.

For several months I have been meditating on the following divine paradox, for both purification and exultation.

Yes, truly society is most degraded today. But instead of merely lamenting its fallen state, or even hiding away from it, your devotees should see the immense silver lining glittering within the dark cloud. The *bhakti* reality is that the more polluted humanity is, the greater the opportunity is for serving and pleasing Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This you prove brilliantly in the following example of “reverse thinking,” from a lecture you gave in August of 1974 on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.23, in Vṛndāvana:

So Kali-yuga, people are suffering. They’re all fallens, all meat-eaters, all drunkards, all fifth-grade, sixth-grade men. They are puffed-up, but actually they are fifth-, sixth- and tenth-grade men, not even gentlemen. Therefore my Guru Mahārāja used to say that “No gentleman can live here. The society is so polluted.”

And now for the contrarian hook, the unexpected divine reversal:

“But there is opportunity of serving Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Because the society is so fallen, therefore there is good opportunity to serve Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Because Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s incarnation is to reclaim these fallen souls. So you have got the opportunity to serve Śrī Caitanya, to please Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, because He wanted the fallen souls to be delivered.

“Kṛṣṇa also wanted. *Yadā yadā hi glānir bhavati bhārata, dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata.* Kṛṣṇa comes . . . This is . . . God’s business is going on like that. He’s very anxious to reclaim all these rascals rotting in this material world. Kṛṣṇa is always anxious. He comes Himself, He comes as devotee, He comes . . . sends His bona fide servant, bona fide son.

“So this is Kṛṣṇa’s concern, to reclaim all these fallen souls. Therefore these are the opportunity.”

O eternal father and master, you once described that a Vaiṣṇava is the greatest opportunist. Now, as an aspiring servitor of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa combined, I can more fully grasp the precious rare reach of that *bhakti* opportunism. I beg for the spiritual strength and acumen to change my vision, so that it aligns with yours.

Seeking your unconditional service,

Devāmrita Swami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

*namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāñī-pracārīṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tārīṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, in a lecture at a World Health Organization function held in Geneva in 1974, you said:

“So people do not come to us, but we are going, canvassing. This is the position. Solution is there, but they do not come to us for solution. We are going door-to-door all over the world, that ‘Here is the solution, sir. Here is the solution.’”

O Prabhupāda, I wish to declare
How grateful I am for all thy care.
Thou hast, by mercy and grace,
Taken me to a higher place.

Right from your birth you were divine.
Virtues which none could match were thine.
Later in life, on your guru’s command,
You traveled far to a distant land.

Facing the West, O glorious saint,
Pure from all spot of earthly taint,
You sailed abroad to answer the call,
Carrying a message for one and all.

“Forsake, forsake your mortal lot
And gain a life that withers not.
A fickle thing is youth’s brief span,
And more than all in mortal man.

Revive your eternal life and be
Pure immortal souls with me.
This temporary body does not last
It’s duration, by karma, surely cast.

What is the use of working so hard,
Like a person in a prison yard
Controlled by a watchful guard,
Thinking you'll never be harmed?

Wake up and take the knowledge.
This much you need to acknowledge.
For thy future and your true self's sake,
For thine own good my counsel take.

Conditioned soul, when will you learn
It is futile to continue and yearn?
You hanker for sense gratification,
But will it give you complete satisfaction?

The material nature is a mighty force,
Hard to assail or check in course,
Powerful like a wind-tossed sea.
By thyself you will never be free.

Lord Caitanya is kind indeed.
He gave us all the spiritual seed,
Wandering all over, here and there,
Possessed of love beyond compare.

Chanting and dancing in ecstasy,
Flowing with love of God was He.
No incarnation had come before
Who freely gave what none could ignore.

Such compassion had never been seen
In someone so beautiful and serene.
Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, day and night—
Everyone's heart filled with delight.

Follow Him and our future's bright,
Just like the sun's powerful light.
What more is there I need to say?
Let us go forward without delay."

This was the message Prabhupāda spread:
Humbly to take upon our head
A guru's service, must ever count
The people's welfare paramount.

Many years of hardship endured,
His success was always assured,
Skilled to observe due time and place—
Such was the power of His Divine Grace

If not for him, where would we be?
Left to flounder in the *māyā* sea.
Prabhupāda, I am fallen and low.
Everything to you I eternally owe.

Your insignificant disciple,

Rāmāi Swami

Bhakti Vikāśa Swami

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

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

Most worshipable Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Life after life I have struggled to attain sense gratification, prestige, and the attention of women – but all I got was more struggle. Only by your mercy could I understand that the desire to enjoy this world binds one to its miseries.

Life after life I have struggled to maintain useless bodies, one after another. And I now struggle to keep my present body healthy, fit, and active – which for most people, including myself, is not perceived as a struggle until reaching the threshold of old age, when it becomes an increasing struggle to do so.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura cried out in helplessness: “I had so many hopes, but all were dashed. Now in old age, my only hope

is you, Kṛṣṇa.”⁶ As old age approaches, I pray to call out like Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, taking Kṛṣṇa as my only hope. Or to accept old age as did you, Śrīla Prabhupāda: as an impetus to preach more vigorously for fulfilling the mandate received from *śrī-guru*.

“I have wasted my life without sense gratification.” I could think like that, but now it is too late. My body is shriveled and clearly in decline. Still I must beware. Śrīla Prabhupāda, please save me from the *māyā* of thinking, “Enjoy now; better late than never.”

You wrenched me from the struggle of trying to be happy within the world of misery. You gave me a new life of striving for pure consciousness, but even now I struggle to keep the mind free from lower thoughts. Please bless me, Śrīla Prabhupāda, when *māyā* is pushing so hard that she seems impossible to resist, to remember that I am your property and have no right to attempt to indulge in sense gratification of any kind.

We glorify you principally because you gave us the truth, Krishna consciousness. You enjoined us to preach, which means to struggle against atheists, demons, *karmīs*, *Māyāvādīs*, and all other purveyors of untruth. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for forcing me into this struggle. I used to think only of my own welfare, but you insisted that we must try to help others, as you have helped us. You struggled to give Krishna consciousness to a world that was not asking for it. You are the greatest benefactor of human society. You are the ideal sadhu.

*śāntā mahānto nivasanti santo
vasantaval loka-hitam carantaḥ
tīrṇāḥ svayaṁ bhīma-bhavārṇavaṁ janān
ahetun’ānyān api tārayantaḥ*

“Being naturally good and peaceful, great men live for the welfare of all. Having themselves crossed the terrible ocean of material existence, they, with no ulterior motive, also help others to cross.” (*Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi* 37)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, people talk of “being themselves” but I don’t want to be the person I was before meeting you. I want to be like you, a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Being like you would actually be “being myself,” for you have taught me what I really should be: a pure swan-like devotee like you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as you well know, there are also struggles

6 In his song that begins *yauvane jakhana*, from *Śaraṇāgati*.

within ISKCON. Although you have mercifully blessed me to not struggle for prestige and position, there remains the struggle to maintain integrity and direction. I humbly request you to help me always remember that you are non-different from the actual ISKCON that is your creation, and thus to remain sane in a society that now in many ways differs from the ISKCON you gave us. I also struggle with certain disciples who don't really want to be disciples or who struggle to remain in Krishna consciousness.

Save me, Śrīla Prabhupāda! from the *māyā* of thinking that you are to be remembered only twice a year, on your appearance and disappearance days. You are the life of my life. Without you I am dead. You taught us how to be alive, in constant touch with you, by adhering to your orders in every moment of life. I always crave your mercy, without which I am doomed to unending useless struggle.

Struggling always to catch your glorious feet,

Your eternal servant,

Bhakti Vikāśa Swami

Bhakti Sundar Goswami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīnī*

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

My very dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this most joyful and blessed day of your transcendental appearance, I am remembering your transcendental words and activities and in this way becoming purified. Attaining attachment to the sacred dust of your lotus feet is the goal of my life, for those lotus feet are a secure shelter for all fallen souls like myself.

It is not possible to repay the debt of love we owe you. But we can try to please you with a humble service attitude, without any personal consideration or ambition. You once said that personal ambition can destroy everything. Then what should be our ambition? You gave us a very nice instruction in this regard in a conversation:

Our only ambition is we live among devotees
and execute the mission of our predecessors,
Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Kṛṣṇa. This is our ambition.
(Conversation, Vṛndāvana, 27 May 1977)

Your appearance in our lives is like the appearance of the sun, making everything very clear to see. You are opening our soul's eyes by engaging us in devotional service. Your instructions are removing the fear of ignorance that covers our real identity as eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa.

Although you departed to Kṛṣṇa's eternal abode almost forty years ago, we can always be in the sunlight of your divine *vāṇī*. I remember an example you once gave: "If you want to always see the sun, you have to follow the sun by traveling along its course. In this way you will never experience darkness." In the same way, by always following your brilliant instructions, we can always keep ourselves in the blissful light of your loving and divine presence.

Once Govinda Dāsa, a disciple of Śrī Rāmānujācārya, was being glorified by his godbrothers as a pure devotee full of wonderful qualities, and to their dismay and shock Govinda said, "Yes, you're right, I have all these good qualities." Rāmānujācārya was informed and called for Govinda. "It's not proper for a Vaiṣṇava to be proud," he said. "Why did you speak like that?"

"My dear Gurudeva," Govinda replied, "I certainly don't have any good qualities, but if I have attained any it is due to your mercy only, and how can I deny your mercy on me? By accepting that I have good qualities, I'm accepting that I received your causeless mercy." We should always remember this instructive incident and try to avoid being falsely proud or falsely humble. We are all made of your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and we should always keep your mood of feeling ourselves humble servants of the servants of Kṛṣṇa a thousand times removed.

Your foolish disciple,

Bhakti Sundar Goswami

The Greatest Devotee of Lord Hari

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

In late February I had the great privilege of residing in Vraja, near Govardhana, for just under two weeks. Govardhana's powerful and sweet spiritual atmosphere supported deeper hearing and chanting, association with dear godbrothers, and deeper meditation on you and my service to you.

One morning while on Govardhana *parikramā*, I recalled a verse very dear to your heart:

*hantāyam adrir abalā hari-dāsa-varyo
yad rāma-kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-sparaśa-pramodaḥ
mānaṁ tanoti saha-go-gaṇayos tayor yat
pānīya-sūyavasa-kandara-kandamūlaiḥ*

“Of all the devotees, this Govardhana Hill is the best! O my friends, this hill supplies Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, along with Their calves, cows, and cowherd friends, with all kinds of necessities—water for drinking, very soft grass, caves, fruits, flowers, and vegetables. In this way, the hill offers respects to the Lord. Being touched by the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Govardhana Hill appears very jubilant.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.21.18)

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī reveals that this verse was spoken by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī Herself—a very significant fact, considering that She is Kṛṣṇa's feminine counterpart, His own pleasure potency (*hlādinī-śakti*). Indeed, Her love for Kṛṣṇa is so great that even Kṛṣṇa Himself cannot fully comprehend it. Therefore He comes as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu just to understand the depth of Rādhārāṇī's love for Him. Still, She says that Govardhana is *hari-dāsa-varya*, the greatest devotee of Lord Hari.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains in detail what makes Govardhana the greatest of all servants. He says that Govardhana's hard rocks become as soft as warm putty to cushion Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet and to preserve their auspicious impressions. Feeling the touch of the Lord's lotus feet, Govardhana displays symptoms of ecstasy. He perspires in the form of melting stones, his

hairs stand on end as erect grass and creepers, and tears flow from His eyes as gushing waterfalls. Govardhana's waterfalls offer cool, fragrant water for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to drink and use for washing Their feet and mouths. The Hill provides liquid refreshments such as honey, mango juice, and *pīlu* juice to quench Their thirst; abundant *dūrovā* grass for making ritualistic hand wash (*arghya*); soft and delicious grasses to nourish the cows and enable them to produce abundant sweet milk; many caves to provide ideal places for Kṛṣṇa and His associates to stay, no matter how hot, cold, or wet the weather may be; soft edible roots; jewels to decorate the body; flat rocks for sitting; and mirrors in the form of highly polished stones. Thus Govardhana is a completely selfless servant, one who only gives and never takes. He has only Kṛṣṇa's interest in mind—never His own.

As my *parikramā* and meditation on this verse continued, a very strong realization came to me. Like Śrī Govardhana, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you too were a completely selfless servant. That's what made you extraordinary. You accepted all challenges and austerities to fulfill the instructions of your spiritual master. From beginning to end, your journey was never easy. But you overcame obstacle after obstacle to establish your spiritual master's mission.

Your teachings, whether in the form of your books, letters, recorded words, or actions, melted your followers' stonelike hearts, which were filled with impersonalism and voidism, and made their softened hearts into a cushioned place upon which Kṛṣṇa could rest His tender lotus feet, just as Śrī Govardhana did with His puttylike stones.

It is absolutely essential that we, your faithful followers, study your books daily so that the purification process continues uninterrupted. If we fail to do this, the dust of impure desires will accumulate and again encase our hearts in stone.

As Kṛṣṇa did with Śrī Govardhana, He also touched you with His lotus feet—and you savored that ecstasy. As a true Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*, you generally kept that ecstasy to yourself. But sometimes it just could not be contained. On numerous occasions, as you called out the name of your Lord, your external senses became inert, your hairs stood on end, and tears filled your eyes. Kṛṣṇa answered your call. Saturated with such love for Kṛṣṇa, you were able to uplift the most fallen and also give them a small taste of that love.

It is absolutely essential as well that we, your faithful followers, connect others with you and your teachings so that they too can

experience the sweet taste of pure devotional service.

Like Śrī Govardhana, you offered Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma cool fragrant water from the waterfall of your devotion. And you continue to do so as you worship Their Lordships in the form of the many Deities you established around the world. Daily They receive not only honey, mango juice, and *pīlu* juice to quench Their thirst but also six offerings of opulent foods cooked with loving devotion, all for Their Lordships pleasure and satisfaction. Beyond delicious food offerings, you also arranged for Them to be massaged with fragrant oils and pastes just prior to Their morning bath, dressing, and *ārati*. Finally, you had Them serenaded with the sweet chanting of the holy name throughout the day.

It is absolutely essential that we, your faithful followers, maintain the standard of Deity worship you established, for our own purification and to attract the hearts and minds of the conditioned souls burning in the desert of material existence.

Like Śrī Govardhana, you offered sweet, succulent grasses to nourish the cows and enable them to produce abundant milk. This you did by establishing sustainable rural communities as part of your *varṇāśrama* blueprint to re-spiritualize materialistic society.

Again, it is absolutely essential that we, your faithful followers, follow your instructions to establish *varṇāśrama* through these rural communities. The world needs to see working models of a sane, sustainable way of life, with cow protection and livelihoods that work in harmony with nature rather than against her.

Like Śrī Govardhana, you offered the caves of your many temples to shelter the Lord and His devotees. These temples are like oases in the midst of Kali's desert that provide opulent halls for holding public *kīrtanas*, discourses, and honoring succulent *prasādam*. Neither the fire of passion nor the frigid cold of ignorance can penetrate these sanctuaries, provided we remain sincere *sādhakas* and preachers.

It is also absolutely essential that we, your faithful followers, maintain your temples for the exact purpose for which you established them—to practice, taste, and distribute Krishna consciousness. If we follow your instructions to practice serious *sādhana*, we will certainly relish the taste of devotional service, and that taste will create a burning desire within us to distribute Krishna consciousness to others.

Like Śrī Govardhana, who offers abundant *dūrvā* grass used for making religious offerings of *arghya*, you offered your books as the

main instruments for pushing forward Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *saṅkīrtana* movement. Today, throughout the world, many dedicated *saṅkīrtana* men and women are dancing to the beat of your *bṛhat-mṛdaṅga*; and by their tireless efforts millions are being introduced to Krishna consciousness through your books.

It is absolutely essential that we, your faithful followers, continue flooding the world with the books you labored so hard to write and publish, for only the brilliant light of your books will dissipate the thick darkness of Kali-yuga's ignorance.

Like Śrī Govardhana, who sheltered the *vraja-vāsīs* from the torrential rains and thunderbolts of Lord Indra's wrath, you established ISKCON to shelter the world's devotees from the horrors of Kali. And much like Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who proclaimed that He and Govardhana are one, you declared that ISKCON is your transcendental body and thus nondifferent from you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, it is absolutely essential that we, your faithful followers, at least maintain but better expand your glorious ISKCON. If we don't expand your Society around the world, what hope is there for mankind? You once told us, "The Krishna consciousness movement will go down in history as having saved mankind in its darkest hour." (Conversation, London, 1973)

On this auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, we fervently pray to you for guidance, purity, protection, and empowerment so that we may assist you in making this prophecy of yours come true. We beg that just as Śrī Govardhana offered His full blessings and mercy to the inhabitants of Vraja, you will bestow your full blessings and mercy upon us, your faithful followers.

Begging to remain your humble servant,

Giridhārī Swami

Amala-bhakta Swami

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

I offer my respectful obeisances to Your Divine Grace.
You are very, very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa,
having taken shelter of His lotus feet.
You are kindly preaching the message
of Lord Caitanyadeva
and liberating countless souls
from the deadly diseases
of impersonalism and voidism.
Thank you for showering your
infinite, incomparable, unrepayable love on me—
a love that continuously floods my heart
with the joyful desire to serve
Your Divine Grace and Lord Kṛṣṇa eternally.

Your unworthy servant,

Amala-bhakta Swami

Candraśekhara Swami

*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*

Dealing with differences of opinion gracefully is and will more and more become a key issue in determining ISKCON's future. There will always be those who do not have a respectful way of communicating, but whether they will be in the majority or the minority is the real question. Whether we can sculpt a path that avoids the tendency of noxious repartee is the real question.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's books bring us a wealth of information about all subjects of activity in the world, and especially about how our activity in the world will make us and the world around us more aware of the foundation of all existence, Lord Kṛṣṇa. We hear that

the philosophical principles called *sat* are eternal and can never be changed, because that is the Vedic definition of *sat*. Prabhupāda also called this category of items “absolute truth.” *Sat* is true for all people, at all times, and in all places.

On the other hand we have relative truth, which is not necessarily *māyā* but those things that change. Change must also be directed toward the service of the Supreme, or else it will be identical to what is meant by the word *māyā*. Change we cannot stop, and in many cases we cannot even understand the full direction of the change, what to speak of fully directing the change toward a specific outcome. Rather, what is appropriate is to adapt to the change and, where possible, redirect it. Change occurs everywhere in the universe and at all times.

To keep doing things in exactly the same way when the environment has changed is to become outmoded, hackneyed, inappropriate, ineffective, stagnant, and predictably calcified. Śrīla Prabhupāda himself was an innovator and did not accept every Vedic tradition being demonstrated somewhere in India. We find that Lord Caitanya ignored some traditions, certainly Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī ignored some traditions, and Prabhupāda also ignored some traditions, because traditions are the outgrowth of *sat* but are not themselves *sat*.

Cultural traditions are inescapable facts of life; they are an important feature of relative truth, and every country in the world has them. They define the world around us and provide the furniture of social interaction. If we look around, we see that traditions are different in different places on the earth, and we see that they change over time. *Sat*, or absolute truth, is not the same as culture, but neither is it completely disconnected from culture. Culture is the raiment of philosophy.

It can also be seen that there is a degree of randomness to the ad hoc daily addition of daily occurrences into the library of culture. Proper cultural forms help us apply philosophy to social interaction. To many people, philosophy is invisible or impalpable, while culture is accessible to almost everyone. Tailoring culture to philosophy is a necessary activity. Culture shapes action and serves philosophy.

Over time, even with Vedic culture, accretions to the library of cultural forms appear. My observation is that these seem to come in at least four flavors. Some are beneficial and appropriate and deserve a place next to their venerable elders. Others are beneficial, but only

in certain settings or locations. Others are neither here nor there but seem to make the chores of ritual a bit easier to enjoy, or they may add color and spice. And finally, some accretions are actually pernicious and become, if unchecked, the undoing of the very philosophy they profess to facilitate. These must be removed. Culture often shapes management policy. Both culture and management are about priorities, so some traditions and policies must sometimes give way to other, more important ones—sometimes temporarily, sometimes forever.

Every generation doing cultural modification must also examine those cultural forms that are not new but have been in use for some time by their predecessors. This bush of cultural hand-me-downs must be trimmed. It is being trimmed anyway, intentionally or unintentionally.

We know that *sat* cannot be changed, and we know that the relative truth must be adapted to time, place, and circumstance. The difficult part is knowing which is which. For that, we need to really scrutinize Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. There seems to be wide agreement on this, at least within the circle of senior devotees.

What has been written so far is an outline of a key project for the future, and it was spoken about this February at the SGG in Māyāpur. I mention all this because I pray that our founder-*ācārya*, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, will look down on us and bestow on us his mercy to make this project successful. Our future as an organization surely rests on the success of this project.

But I also pray for Śrīla Prabhupāda's mercy for the other half of this important picture. It is by Prabhupāda's mercy that these discussions about relative truth will occur without floods of acrimony.

Unfortunately, in our mainstream world, people always discuss subjects of value, ethics, policy, and culture in tones of condescension, frivolity, name-calling, and crude language. Because these types of subjects are very important, everyone feels the need to have an opinion, and this draws throngs into the fray. We must understand that mirroring the outside world in this behavior is ruinous. But that does not go far enough. We must culture a tradition that minimizes this tendency and presents an alternative to it.

It will never be possible to adjust everyone to any cultural form or system of discussion, but if the core of ISKCON and its leadership can implement such a cultural form of respectful debate, then it will be possible to move into the future and have real dialogues about

relevant adjustments to cultural details, as well as about management details in general.

Today I also pray that Śrīla Prabhupāda will look down and bless us to accomplish respectful debate.

I have written about these two points because I wish to invoke the blessings of our founder-*ācārya*, and I personally feel the weight of these two evolutions in our growth as a movement. All glories to the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord.

Your servant,

Candraśekhara Swami

Guruprasād Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you didn't have the benefits of personal computers, cell phones, the internet and related facilities, which are considered necessary in the daily life of even students and homemakers these days. However, what you have accomplished in twelve years, without the benefit of modern gadgets is truly amazing. I understand that no one in the history of mankind comes close to you in the spiritual rejuvenation of people all over the world, the way you have done. I often reflect on it but cannot comprehend how it all happened. Your strong faith in the holy names of the Lord, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, your intense and consistent efforts to fulfill the desire of your dear guru mahārāja and your compassion for suffering mankind had a lot of relevance in this regard.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your guru mahārāja understood the desire of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura very well. Accordingly, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, spent a lot of effort in publishing magazines and printing books to spread the mission of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You imbibed the same spirit from your dear guru mahārāja. Now members of ISKCON are following in your footsteps, and they utilize all the modern gadgets in your service to spread the mission of Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this auspicious occasion, I offer my sincere gratitude to you for having given me the connection with our *paramparā* and the association of the devotees. Kindly allow me to

make a humble request. Please bless me so that I may also acquire at least a small fraction of the faith, the resolve to serve the Guru and the compassion necessary for a preacher. Let me serve you by serving in your mission.

Your insignificant servant,

Guruprasād Swami

Vedavyāsapriya Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisance hundreds of times at your lotus feet. On this occasion of your auspicious appearance, I offer my humble and prayerful heart at your lotus feet.

*śrī guru-carāṇe rati, ei se uttama-gati
je prasāde pūre sarva āśā*

Long ago I harbored lots of material desires in my heart. But after taking shelter at your lotus feet, I agreed to follow your instructions. Only then did you agree to deliver me. Since then I have to constantly remain attentive to your lotus feet to receive your mercy. Reminding myself of your shelter in good times and bad has given me a sense of total security as I make steady progress in rendering selfless service to please you. And, meanwhile, what has happened to those deep-seated material desires? Amazingly, they disappeared, as if they had been fulfilled!

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, your connection with Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa through the unbroken chain of pure disciplic succession is the only key for me to succeed in going back home to Godhead. One does not have to fulfill one's material desires before going back to Godhead. Rather, one requires only your shelter, and then right away, without delay, these desires will stop interfering with one's progress, without one knowing how it is being done.

Thus, taking shelter of a bona fide guru in the unbroken chain of the pure disciplic succession is the key for success in this golden age of the *saṅkīrtana* movement inaugurated by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You carefully invested all your spiritual and material potencies in your organization. So many of your sincere disciples and granddisciples who have been entrusted with your Society are

systematically guiding all of humanity on the path back to Godhead. This is my little realization of your mercy. It is enough for me, no doubt, yet it is required that I learn more about your magnanimity from the Vyāsa-pūjā offerings of my senior godbrothers.

Please forgive my offenses, knowingly or unknowingly committed at your lotus feet.

Your prostrated fallen servant,

Vedavyāsapriya Swami

Bhakti Chāru Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet. On this most auspicious day marking your divine appearance, I beg you to kindly allow me to become a speck of dust at your lotus feet.

Although I am totally unqualified, this year your followers have assigned me the responsibility of providing leadership for your glorious movement in the role of GBC Chairman. I am overwhelmed with this important task, and out of sheer helplessness I feel the need to take shelter of your lotus feet and seek your blessings and guidance.

You taught us that to properly represent Kṛṣṇa we have to become pure. Only then will Kṛṣṇa's mercy flow through us and enable us to accomplish anything on His behalf. In the course of time I have become aware that actual purity is synonymous with our surrender to you. Therefore, to properly represent Kṛṣṇa I have to first become your representative and try to execute your mission without any personal ambition or agenda.

As the perfect representative of your spiritual master, you showed us how to make the mission of the spiritual master one's life and soul. From the day you met your guru mahārāja, you dedicated yourself completely to following his instructions and fulfilling his desires. You always carried him in your heart, and as a result you became the recipient of his mercy and helped fulfill Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's prediction that the Krishna consciousness movement would spread to every town and village.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's prediction can never be in vain, and He sent you to fulfill it. You performed the greatest miracle by spreading Krishna consciousness throughout the world in just ten

years' time. But the ultimate goal has not yet been accomplished: the movement has spread worldwide, but it has not yet reached every town and village. You left the rest of the work to be carried on by your loyal followers, functioning as your representatives. You knew that it would take generations to achieve the ultimate fulfillment of Lord Caitanya's prediction, and therefore you made the most wonderful arrangement to continue your mission after your disappearance from this planet, through the institution of ISKCON.

This magnificent work of spreading Krishna consciousness could have stopped after your disappearance, just as it did in many other spiritual organizations—even your spiritual master's—after the disappearance of their charismatic founders. But your creation of ISKCON and your emphatic instruction to your followers to work collectively within its structure saved your movement from falling apart and assured its expansion throughout the world.

Your ISKCON is your greatest benediction and our only hope to save the planet from disaster. It will establish the golden age in the middle of this most degraded age of hypocrisy and quarrel, vanquishing the darkness of Kali-yuga with the brilliant light of your transcendental teachings. Dharma will be reinstated in its full glory, and humankind will achieve its ultimate perfection, reviving our loving relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And so we must realize that our only strength lies in our unity as an expression of our love for Your Divine Grace and of our determination to function within your Society.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please bless us so that we can create this spirit of unity, forgetting our superficial differences and casting aside our petty personal ambitions. Let us commit ourselves cent percent to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *saṅkīrtana* movement, recognizing the great need for it in the precarious condition of this world. Let us demonstrate real benevolence by offering the love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to the world's suffering multitude.

Please bless me so that I can become your genuine servant by becoming the servant of those who are serving you so sincerely.

Aspiring to remain forever at your lotus feet,

Bhakti Chāru Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Please allow me to reflect on some aspects of the ultimate paradigm, the revelation you have mercifully and freely bestowed upon us.

Your matchless gifts open the heavy door of illusion, thus exposing us to reality.

Back in those first days, the door to that magical storefront functioned both as an escape hatch from the chaotic NYC illusion as well as the entranceway admitting us into *Vaikuṅṭha*, the transcendence, ground reality. I still recall how the door to your Second Avenue apartment sometimes had a note stuck on it that read “The door is open. Come in.” This was a true enactment of the Biblical instruction, “Knock and the door shall open.”

You saw how thickly we had been covered over by the veil of illusion, or as some thoughtful modern *munis* put it, the “veil of [material] perception.” Unlike Aldous Huxley’s idea of hallucinogenic drugs as “door(s) of perception,” Queen Kuntī’s single phrase, *māyā-javanikā*, “the curtain of deluding energy,” by which we are densely *ācchannam*, “covered,” properly sums up how you encountered us, how you, with the vision of eternity, correctly diagnosed our pitiable plight. (Even from the conventional point of view we were pitiable. Confronted by my own tragic, bewildered state, you made the sound *tsk, tsk, tsk* and would soon tell my father, “There is something wrong with that boy.” But to my great good fortune, you added, “*But we can fix him up!*”)

So, it’s amazing! Our very *senses* figure as the *bars* of this prison house, this “dungeon” or “fort” of *Durgā*, so difficult to escape.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in this regard your special genius disciple Sadāpūta Prabhu wrote a book called *Maya: The World as Virtual Reality*. A radical proposal, but so true!

But how to fulfill the threefold Vedic injunction to “Get out of illusion and go to the eternal reality! Get out of darkness and go to the light! Stop accepting temporary material bodies and become eternal!?” First, what or who is our authority for illuminating our path? The answer is clearly given in the *Mahābhārata*: “Not by dry argument, which has no foundation, not by erudite philosophical

deliberations, which inevitably conflict with one another, and not by haphazardly following diverse scriptures, but rather by acknowledging that the secret of religion, the ultimately true religious principle, is hidden in the heart of the great devotees. Therefore *mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ*—one should traverse the path followed by great personalities.”

By your unfathomable mercy we can access the only secure means of self-realization and God (Kṛṣṇa) consciousness, especially vital for this dark Age of Kali. You represent not only all the demigods (*sarva-devamayo guruḥ*) but also those universal authorities known as the twelve *mahājanas*. You have thereby so very kindly revealed the path taking us to that fundamental paradigm shift, that purifying “change of heart,” thus facilitating our release from the bondage of fruitive activities (*karma-bandhami prahāsyasi*). You not only teach us how to row our most worthy human “ship” (*nṛ-deham ādyam... plavaṇi su-kalpam*) toward the far shore of the ocean of nescience, but you also alert us to the importance of diligently pulling up our anchors from the muck of maudlin material attachments. Moreover, you factually engage us in the same activities to be performed beyond the ocean of birth and death, to be carried out in *hari-dhāma*, in the spiritual realm, the world sans material anxiety (*Vaikuṅṭha*)—not to speak of introducing us to that abode known only to a very few rare souls in this world, the place called Goloka Vṛndāvana!

The four Kumāras, despite their most exalted status, had some difficulty passing through the innermost doors to the spiritual realm. However, Your Divine Grace is opening all doors, breaking all barriers, kicking away all obstacles, and ushering us in to take shelter in the sanctuary of the Lord’s lotus feet (*aṅghri-saroja-pīṭham*).

No one has done this as effectively as Your Divine Grace. Not even close. Besides you, no one has *ever* done this worldwide. Of course, being richly endowed with all the wonderful devotional qualities, you humbly assign all credit to your own guru mahārāja, to the previous *ācāryas*, and, of course, to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You see yourself in the same way that Kṛṣṇa instructed Arjuna to see himself: as simply an instrument of the Lord’s plan (*nimitta-mātram*). Your deeply humble attitude opened all doors, for both you and your sincere followers.

On this earth planet, there is still potential. But by Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, let Your Divine Grace quickly become quantum-leaps more celebrated all over this world. (One great instrument for accelerating

this process is the new documentary depicting Your Divine Grace's most exalted character and activities, filmed and put together by your dear disciples Yadubara Dāsa and his highly competent wife Viśākhā Devī Dāsī, along with a team of assistants.

In the greater scheme of things, your fame is already spread all over the three worlds. Thou so great!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, this disciple of yours is still affected by so many vestigial sins and *anarthas*. I brashly admit to being humble, because I remain convinced that I have so much to be humble about. Now I am over seventy years old. And the nuclear war you warned us about is ever more threatening. It is beyond words—the dramatic situation in this world of death, in this *māyā-jagat*. So I'll meekly end here.

Your eternal servant and lowly disciple,

Bhakti Prabhupāda-vrata Dāmodara Swami

TRIBUTES
BY
INITIATED
DISCIPLES

An Atom of Homage to Śrīla Prabhupāda

At The Airport

One day, in the beginning of November, 1977, I was performing one of my favorite services – my once a week book distribution day at the Los Angeles International Airport. Along with some godsisters, I stood in any one of the domestic or international departure terminals.

By now we all heard that Prabhupāda might leave this world at any moment. Still, I was convinced that because he is transcendental to the onslaughts of material nature, he wouldn't leave.

I remembered his letter to me nine years earlier; "Wait for those days when I shall accompany you in all the important places of Vṛndāvana." I would wait.

Stationed at the top of the escalators, I took a few moments break from walking up to people. I told Prabhupāda: "Thank you for your sixty volumes of large books, and so many small books, which, as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states, is 'reality distinguished from the illusion for the welfare of all.' Thank you for your *prasāda*. Thank you for your Deities, and for your *pūjāris*, who take care of Them. Thank you for introducing me to all the Gauḍīya *ācāryas*, like Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Rūpa Gosvāmī, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and your guru mahārāja. Thank you for the *mahā-mantra*, the most precious gift. Thank you for the *gāyatrī* mantra. Thank you for putting on me my first sari, and for personally feeding me *gulabjamuns* as I painted in your quarters in New York.

"Thank you for engaging me in painting, even though you knew it was painful for me to face plain white canvases year after year. Thank you for insisting that I keep that service, even though you knew I preferred preaching and book distribution. I'm glad, because I regularly read all your unpublished manuscripts, looking for details to paint. Moreover, because painting is a service that lends itself to multi-tasking, I listened to your cassette tape recordings sometimes ten hours a day for many years.

Convinced He Would Not Leave

In conflict with myself regarding whether or not Śrīla Prabhupāda would be soon leaving us, for the most part I thought it was

impossible. I considered, “After all, he is transcendental. Like Bhīṣmadeva lying on the bed of arrows, our worshipful master can leave or stay as he likes. Why would he want to leave? There is still so much work for him to do.”

I wanted to share with my god-siblings the quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books I had been collecting. Whenever I gave class, or spoke with others individually, I shared those excerpts.

“He can never be diseased,” I insisted. “It says here in a Second Canto purport (2.3.17), ‘Thus the sun fails to rob the pure devotee of his duration of life, inasmuch as he is constantly busy in the devotional service of the Lord, purifying his existence. Death is a symptom of the material infection of the eternal living being; only due to material infection is the eternal living entity subjected to the law of birth, death, old age and disease.’

“And then in a Third Canto purport (3.25.18), ‘As the contamination of the germs of a particular disease can influence a weaker person, similarly the influence of material nature, or illusory energy, can act on the weaker, or conditioned, soul but not on the liberated soul.’

“He is unaffected by matter,” I asserted, and gave the śāstric reference: “The Lord comes to this material world through the agency of His internal potency, and similarly, when a devotee or associate of the Lord descends to this material world, he does so through the action of the spiritual energy (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.1.35, purport).’ ‘Such a person is an eternally liberated associate of the Lord, and his body is completely spiritualized. Although he is visible to material eyes, he is spiritually situated, and all his activities are spiritual. (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā*, 5.49–50).’ ‘Foolish people consider Kṛṣṇa a human being, and they consider Lord Kṛṣṇa’s pure devotee an ordinary human being also (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 22.51, purport).’

“After all,” I continued, “the self-realized spiritual master is a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa Himself.” I gave lots of śāstric evidence: “Thus the spiritual master is not different from the Supersoul sitting within the heart (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.52, purport).’

Meanwhile, in Vṛndāvana

Meanwhile, in Vṛndāvana, in Prabhupāda’s quarters at the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandira, he laid in his bed, surrounded by several disciples including Pradyumna, my old associate from the days in the Boston

temple in the sixties, who had now become proficient in Sanskrit. As Jayādvaita leaned over his large bed and held a microphone close to his mouth, Pradyumna read Tenth Canto, Chapter Thirteen verses, with commentaries by our Gauḍīya *ācāryas*. Prabhupāda then spoke the English translations, followed by his world-famous Bhaktivedanta purports.

Daily, he dictated the chapter of Brahmā stealing Kṛṣṇa’s cowherd boys and calves, which, a year later, would become the published *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Tenth Canto, Part Three, chapter 13, text 53:

Translation

Then Lord Brahmā saw that *kāla* (the time factor), *svabhāva* (one’s own nature by association), *saṁskāra* (reformation), *kāma* (desire), *karma* (fruitive activity) and the *guṇas* (the three modes of material nature), their own independence being completely subordinate to the potency of the Lord, had all taken forms and were also worshipping those *viṣṇu-mūrtis*.

Purport

No one but Viṣṇu has any independence. If we develop consciousness of this fact, then we are in actual Krishna consciousness. We should always remember that Kṛṣṇa is the only supreme master and that everyone else is His servant (*ekale īśvara kṛṣṇa, āra saba bhṛtya*). Be one even Nārāyaṇa or Lord Śiva, everyone is subordinate to Kṛṣṇa (*śiva-viriñci-nutam*). Even Baladeva is subordinate to Kṛṣṇa. This is a fact...

One should understand that no one is independent, for everything is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa and is acting and moving by the supreme desire of Kṛṣṇa. This understanding, this consciousness, is Krishna consciousness.

Along with the other artists I was waiting to decorate his brilliant texts with paintings for him to see. Meanwhile, hundreds of devotees were crowding into his room daily, performing *kīrtanas*, *bhajanas*, and *ārati*. Several devotees softly massaged him. Garlands decorated his head and chest, pictures of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and his Guru

Mahārāja decorated his pillow, and his followers were in tears.

The Announcement after Maṅgala-Ārati

On November 14th, just after *maṅgala-ārati*, Rāmeśvara and Jayatīrtha entered the temple room and announced to the over three hundred disciples and aspiring disciples that Prabhupāda had just disappeared from the vision of the mortal world.

I was on the balcony, leaning way forward with my head sticking out through the balustrade. I wept in anguish. The universe turned black, and then vacant. I looked around me at my brothers and sisters. As the hours passed, questions entered my mind: “Should my feet walk this way, or that?” “How will my feet take the next step?” “Should I put this *prasāda* to my mouth, or not?”

I turned to the last volume of the recently printed *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, to Prabhupāda’s concluding words:

Although according to material vision His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda passed away from this material world on the last day of December, 1936, I still consider His Divine Grace to be always present with me by his *vāñī*, his words. There are two ways of association – by *vāñī* and by *vapu*. *Vāñī* means words, and *vapu* means physical presence. Physical presence is sometimes appreciable and sometimes not, but *vāñī* continues to exist eternally. Therefore, we must take advantage of the *vāñī*, not the physical presence. The *Bhagavad-gītā*, for example, is the *vāñī* of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Although Kṛṣṇa was personally present five thousand years ago and is no longer physically present from the materialistic point of view, the *Bhagavad-gītā* continues.

I also remembered his various lectures: the appearance and disappearance of the pure devotees are the same.

Time Bombs

Although he desired that all instructions be applied immediately, he knew that because of our conditioning they could not be. He presented certain things when he did because he knew he would be physically present in the world for only a certain number of years. He knew that his words – the words of Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya Mahāprabhu and those in Their disciplic succession – were like

time bombs, meant to go off, again and again, at certain times in the future.

His recorded and printed instructions are also like wish-fulfilling trees. It has also been said that his books are like a treasure chest. A person may find a treasure chest, and inside there are many valuables that he can enjoy. Within that treasure chest, there may be another treasure chest, which is locked. To access that treasure, a person needs a key.

Similarly, Prabhupāda's teachings are the greatest treasure, and within those teachings, he has hidden even more wondrous treasures. Prabhupāda had said in his *Bhāgavatam* dictations just a few days earlier, "Therefore we should always seek good association, devotee association. Then our life will be successful."

Dayānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavo
yasmin prati-ślokaṁ abaddhavaty api
nāmāny anantasya yaśo 'nkitāni yat
śṛṇvanti gāyanti grṇanti sādhaḥ*

For revolution, make mystical sound

To o'erthrow evil, poetry profound:

Verse to illumine the beauty of the Name

Though without rune, endless powers contain.

The way to accomplish a revolution in materialistic society

is to create mystical sound, song in which each verse

detonates the splendid names of the Infinite, and which

the sages hear, sing, and extol. Such songs are effective even

without the powers of the incantations of

the ancient *Vedas*. [*Bhāgavatam* 1.5.11]

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and the disciplic succession.

It's been some time since I wrote you. Pardon me. I've never been very good at communicating with you. I wish I had done so when I was reporting to you directly about temple affairs so long ago.

Last year I continued to write a commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* that I started ten years ago. It should be completed later this year. Of

course, it's based on your teachings. I think it will be controversial among many devotees. You told me in 1970 that I didn't always need to listen to my godbrothers and that I could make up my own mind about things. So I've taken that as license to put forward ideas that are different from the norm.

At the same time, as I believe you instructed Siddha-svarūpa, I don't write anything against ISKCON. I try to emphasize strategies that were dear to you; however, I must admit that I've added some things that I believe will more broadly spread Mahāprabhu's *saṅkīrtana* movement. In general, it's a liberal approach, but with some principles that are even stricter than ISKCON applies. And my greatest hope is that it will start a *saṅkīrtana* revolution in the broader society.

In 1971 you asked me to write, so I've finally done it. For 40 years I faithfully served your organization, and now I'm striking out on my own. Although I have my hopes, even if nobody reads my books, I won't mind. The process of translating and commenting on the *Gītā* has enhanced my meditation on you, Mahāprabhu, and Kṛṣṇa immensely.

So, I'm asking for your blessing. I see from the commentaries of the *ācāryas*, for example Madhvacharya, that some could be very strict, but others give more liberal and inclusive perspectives. That's what I aim to do. My goal is to communicate the teachings of Śrī Caitanya and you, but to provide broader access to and seek greater support from the citizens of the powerful and affluent countries of the world.

So again, kindly give me your blessings. I've genuinely done this to serve you. I don't need anything in return. I have plenty of money to maintain myself, which in my view I've received because of my past service, although I never accepted any money from ISKCON or devotees.

Your servant,

Dayānanda Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my eternally offered obeisances at your lotus feet. Please let me serve you day after day after day, birth after birth.

I came upon the following quotations after watching a video clip of your postdeparture *samādhi* ceremony for the first time. It was the first I viewed it, and probably the last. Afterward I needed the solace of your living words, and that is what I felt after reading these quotations:

My Guru Mahārāja, when he was selecting articles to be published in *The Harmonist*, if he sees simply that there is, several times the writer has written “Kṛṣṇa,” “Lord Caitanya,” like that, he passes immediately: “All right. It’s all right. It is all right.” That so many times he has uttered “Kṛṣṇa” and “Caitanya,” so it is all right.

So similarly, even if we present our *Back to Godhead* or any other literature in broken languages, it does not matter because the glorification of the Lord is there. That is recommended by Nārada. *Tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavaḥ. Janatā agha. Agha* means sinful activities. If one reads one line of this literature, although it is presented in broken language, but if he simply hears there is Kṛṣṇa, then his sinful activities immediately vanish. [Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.9–11, New Vrindaban, 6 June 1969]

And you, dearest Prabhupāda, appeared among us, a sinless soul. One who never forgot Kṛṣṇa. You said once that you were given opportunities to sample material sense enjoyment but that Kṛṣṇa was always there with you and thus it never happened.

Sometimes I become surprised how I have written this. 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, Vṛndāvana, 28 June 1977]

Kṛṣṇa is perfect, and thus every line is perfect, as you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are also perfect.

Guru Dāsa watched Śrīla Prabhupāda laughing while reading his *Kṛṣṇa* book.

Guru Dāsa: Prabhupāda, you're laughing at your own books.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: I did not write these books, Kṛṣṇa wrote them! Kṛṣṇa sat here. [Prabhupāda pointed to his shoulder]. He wrote them.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your dearest friend Kṛṣṇa sat on your shoulder and spoke to you, just as Arjuna's dearest friend Kṛṣṇa stood before Him and spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā*!

Do you know that I read my books every day. I learn something new every time I read. Do you know why? Because I did not write these books. Every time I sat down to write, Kṛṣṇa appeared and dictated to me what to write. So I am not writing; Kṛṣṇa is writing. [Conversation with Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī and another devotee.]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you learned something new every day by reading your own books because spiritual life is not stagnant but is every-expanding and ever-increasing. Thus when the Supreme Lord speaks, the pure devotee hears with rapt attention, imbibing the nectar with great joy and devotion.

When Dhaniṣṭhā asked how she could know you better, you replied in three words: "Read *Kṛṣṇa* book."

Yes! We want to know you better, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You've divulged a great secret, indicating where we can find you—cavorting with Kṛṣṇa and His cowherd friends, the *gopas*.

All glories to you evermore, Śrīla Prabhupāda! All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! All glories to you forevermore, our most beloved *patita-pāvana*, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

It perplexes my mind to consider that the purports you wrote came to you, the perfect transparent medium, directly from the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa! Your purports are beyond the value of all the so-called precious gems found in this temporary world. They are the purest of all touchstones, which you offered to us out of your fully cognizant compassionate mercy. I can never fathom this mercy in a billion trillion lifetimes. Even if by chance I make it back to Godhead, I'll never understand this incredibly sublime pastime of yours.

You are not an ordinary spiritual master. You saved us, a fact confirmed in 1967 in our little San Francisco storefront temple. Kṛṣṇa dictated your purports to you, and you faithfully wrote them down or recorded them on your dictating machine, thus passing them on to us and the entire world. Many so-called gurus and yogīs come and take their followers' money, but they cannot save anyone from birth, death, disease, and old age. You alone offered that miracle.

May my head remain bowed at your lotus feet, may my heart beat only for you, and may all people throughout the entire universe receive your compassionate message, thus pacifying their burning minds and hearts and checking the reign of Kali.

Always your dāsī,

Mālatī Devī Dāsī

Dāmodara Dāsa

Abhay Charan Bhaktivedanta
Swami, one who is self possessed,
you are my master here and hereafter,
Prabhupāda, uniquely blessed.

Kanchanbala Devī Dāsī and Madhusudan Dāsa

To Our Beloved Spiritual Master on this most Auspicious Day,

Please accept our most humble obeisances at the dust of your transcendental lotus feet. It is only by your causeless mercy that we are allowed to have that precious opportunity in this life to take shelter at your lotus feet in loving service and for always.

All along we have experienced, seen and heard that you continually cared about everyone equally, time and time again. How grateful we are! And that is what has embraced one and all of us, coming from every sphere of life.

Two individual examples come to mind that we heard: one was in the latest Śrīla Prabhupāda Memories DVD #63. A godsister shared that while she was in the midst of sewing for their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā Mādhava, Hari Sauri came in and said Śrīla Prabhupāda needed a silk handkerchief. She was in the middle of

a sewing marathon for the Deities so she quickly sewed an orange silk handkerchief, and gave it to Hari Sauri for it to be given to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Afterwards, she was concerned that the handkerchief was hurriedly done and was lamenting, thinking about it. She had never heard Śrīla Prabhupāda’s reaction to the handkerchief she sewed. One day, 43 years later, she saw Hari Sauri and asked if he remembered that incident and if Śrīla Prabhupāda ever said anything about it. He said Śrīla Prabhupāda really liked it and used it a lot!

Then, Hari Sauri added, that there was more to the story. One day, there were sannyāsīs in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s room. One prominent sannyāsī was saying, “I don’t look at women, I don’t talk to women, I stay away from women.” Śrīla Prabhupāda was quiet and looked down. Then he picked up his orange silk handkerchief, smiled, and said, “I will always accept service from my daughters.” Just that one instance out of so many others shows Śrīla Prabhupāda being so unlimitedly kind to everyone—without discrimination.

In another instance, Śrīla Prabhupāda displayed his strict discipline to protect his young sannyāsī disciple like a caring father. In Bhakti Chāru Mahārāja’s book, *Ocean of Mercy*, he writes, “After giving me *sannyāsa*, Śrīla Prabhupāda became quite strict about his kitchen and who could enter – no women.” (Whereas before it wasn’t the case.)

One afternoon when Bhakti Chāru Mahārāja realized there were no women allowed in the kitchen, he asked why Śrīla Prabhupāda had taken this action. He was told Śrīla Prabhupāda was taking precautions for his protection. Such is Śrīla Prabhupāda’s constant mercy like a caring father for his new sannyāsī disciple in nurturing his spiritual life.

These are only two stories out of so many that reveal Śrīla Prabhupāda’s munificent kindness. He was also expert at mediating any puzzling situation or controversy. Like when, in the very early days, Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged the devotees to eat and honor Kṛṣṇa *prasāda* to their full satisfaction, Kirtanānanda who was in charge of the temple on 26 2nd Ave., had made a rule that the devotees could only have one *gulab jamun* each per day. The devotees were not happy at all and approached Śrīla Prabhupāda about the controversy. When the situation was presented to him, he replied, “Everyone can have as many *gulab jamuns* as they want but Kirtanānanda can only have one.” In such a jovial but meaningful way, Śrīla Prabhupāda

demonstrated such finesse.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are our perfect role model of Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee through your consistent actions and dealings. Your most exalted self is that priceless golden thread interweaving all of the individual devotee fibers together to create a woven spiritual tapestry. It is only by your endless compassion that you have constantly taught and keep teaching us the proper consciousness.

The *Ādi Purāṇa* contains the following statement by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, addressed to Arjuna:

*ye me bhakta-janāḥ pārtha
na me bhaktās ca te janāḥ
mad-bhaktānām ca ye bhaktās
te me bhakta-tamā matāḥ*

“My dear Pārtha, one who claims to be My devotee is not so. Only a person who claims to be the devotee of My devotee is actually My devotee.” No one can approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead directly. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Madhya-līlā 13.80)

*Please accept this humble offering along with so much gratitude, and
begging to always remain your humble servants,*

Kanchanbala Devī Dāsī and Madhusudan Dāsa

Hrikeśānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, *koti daṇḍavat!* Jaya Gurudev! On this auspicious occasion of your 2017 birthday, I have been asked to say a few words.

I recall the liberated souls, Jaya and Vijaya, who were actual Vaikuṅṭha *vāsīs* – which you taught is even higher than Brahmā *jnana sāyujya mukti*. There was no way they could fall, as Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa promised in *Bhagavad-gītā* that his liberated devotee would not return to the material existence. Yet, simply by offending Vaiṣṇavas they were forced to fall back into Maya Chakra and became demons. They were already in Vaikuṅṭha. And what was the offense? They refused entry to the four Kumāras, who had the deceptive appearance of little naked boys. It was quite amazing, because if one is able to reach the door to Vaikuṅṭha, then they must be qualified. Still they were forbidden, and this resulted in them cursing Jaya and Vijaya to

fall into *samsāra chakra* for three births as demons, to be killed three times by Bhagavān, in order to return to Vaikuṅṭha soonest.

I mention this because so many of your original disciples, myself included, were at the door to Vaikuṅṭha, especially when in your direct association in the Śrīdhāma. Still, for the same offense against devotees, *hātī mātā*, we have fallen back into *māyā*, and some are so far off course. But if it can happen to Jaya and Vijaya, then what chance do we mere mortals have to recover? I only pray that whatever it takes to redirect my life to your selfless service will be well worth it, just as long as it doesn't require becoming a demon who is opposed to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

On a positive note – as you already know – I chant my rounds, do Śrī Śālagrām *pūjā* (as you directed me when in Nepal), I read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, chant *ślokas* and mantras, as well as associate with my dear wife Champakatala, who is good Vaiṣṇava *saṅga*. But the days when I was at the door to Vaikuṅṭha seem long ago, and in the interim I have offended many devotees without even trying, and lost so much simple purity. What seemed essentially easy to understand about the material existence, has now become so complex and confusing, especially because the material world is such an illusion within an illusion.

But at heart I know you will never forsake me. And that is why I am writing this little offering. Happy Birthday, Gurudev! Hare Kṛṣṇa!!! May your memory and teachings live forever...

Your fallen servant,

Hrsikeśānanda Dāsa, ACBSP 1967 (San Francisco)

Ranadhir Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet. Thank you once again for this opportunity to inadequately express my gratitude to you for saving my life, and for illuminating the pathetic darkness of my existence with your brilliant, effulgent presence.

Of course I cannot begin to understand why I became a recipient of your causeless mercy. There are so many living entities, so many spirit souls on this planet, yet only a few had the magnificent fortune to bask in your presence. Talk about winning the lottery!

And yet I have so little appreciation for you and your teachings. How on earth can I be so ungrateful for the incredible abundance you have given me?

The enormity of your gift embarrasses me, and places me so deeply in your debt that even over countless lifetimes, I can never begin to repay it. In one sense, I find great relief by acknowledging that fact. On the other hand, there is no way for me to escape the obligation. And so I must try, on a daily basis, to continue to pay some small (actually infinitesimal) token of my gratitude, to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, my eternal spiritual master.

As my memory begins to fail in this latter stage of my life, I can only pray for the great good fortune of somehow not forgetting you and what you have given to me. To this end, I beg to somehow remain in the association of your many wonderful devotees, who are constant reminders of your beneficence. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your worthless servant,

Ranadhir Dāsa

Vāmanadev Dāsa

My dear beloved Spiritual Master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, Please accept my most humble obeisances.

It will be 50 years this fall since I first heard of your center in Montreal, Canada. It was by Your Divine Grace that the center I visited changed the trajectory of my life from that moment on. The first instructions that you gave me were to the chant holy names of Kṛṣṇa and to read *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. You also stressed the value of association with devotees. How it is that all this time has passed and by the mercy of Your Divine Grace I am still endeavoring to follow such perfect instructions is proof of the love and mercy that you show to us fallen souls here in the West. The prism through which I view the world and my part in this world has forever been altered by your divine instructions.

On this day I pray for strength that only comes from your mercy, that I might continue to pursue the path of devotional service and also continue to follow your divine instructions and the instructions of so many pure Vaiṣṇavas.

With all the humility at my command, I beg to remain your servant.

Vāmanadev Dāsa
Krishna House of St. Augustine, St. Augustine, Florida

Bhūrijana Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-śvāmīnīti nāmīne*

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 of His lotus feet.

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Western culture reveres as a hero one who has risen from poverty to wealth, but the ancient culture spoken of in the *Bhāgavatam* reveres the opposite: one who renounces kingly wealth for a life of poverty and spiritual pursuits.

But West, East, and in-between—members of all cultures—revere those who selflessly sacrifice their lives for the benefit of others. According to their capacity and their own depth, such souls attempt to heal the world’s miseries and thus are universally appreciated. That appreciation is natural, for in a world filled with people bent on selfish pursuits, generous-hearted souls are rare.

Can we claim that those whose capacity and depth are greatest are indeed the greatest amongst these great souls? The *vraja-gopīs* make that claim, and by so doing they point directly to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, as the greatest of the selfless benefactors of humanity:

*tava kathāmr̥taṁ tapta-jīvanam
kavibhir̥ īḍitam kalmaṣāpaham
śravaṇa-maṅgalam śrīmad ātataṁ
bhūvi gṛṇanti ye bhūri-dā janāḥ*

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

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself confirms the greatness of the selfless service that the *vraja-gopīs* have described (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 14.10–15). And it is also clear, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that these words of the *gopīs* describe your life and glorify you as the “most munificent.”

The generosity of spirit and self-sacrifice it took for you to spread Krishna consciousness throughout the world is remarkable: You fully lived for others; you tolerated unlimited personal inconveniences; and you managed an institution so late in your life.

And you personally guided so many sincere, strong-minded, rebellious individuals. You captured them with your love, and they in turned loved you and sacrificed their youth for your pleasure, in your movement. Your affection-soaked association encouraged them to co-operate as they assisted you in your service of fulfilling the mission of your Guru Mahārāja.

All this you did as you carried and distributed a gift of unequalled weight—the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I would like to express my personal gratitude to you, because your gifts to the world, with insignificant me being a part of that world, are the most precious, cherished aspects of my life. Please accept the short list below as a gesture of my appreciation, since your gifts are unlimited and thus far beyond the capacity of dwarflike me to enumerate:

You have made known to the world Vaiṣṇava *sadācāra*, guidelines for behavior of the highest ethical standards, which simultaneously is compassionate, considerate, and pleasing to all, from ants to humans, and is meant to fully support a soul’s highest spiritual aspirations.

In the form of *japa*, *kīrtana*, and *saṅkīrtana*, you have spread Kṛṣṇa’s all-potent holy names throughout the world. Where would any of us be without your gift of having spread Kṛṣṇa’s holy names?

Your books, headed by *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, point out and nourish the greatest of goals for a soul—intimate service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. And

those same books systematically guide us to that most wondrous of places, Goloka Vṛndāvana. What would I do without your books?

The way of life you have given us—beginning with early to bed and early to rise, and including *sādhana*, *prasādam-etarianism*, Deity *sevā* and other *sevās*, study, and meaningful friendships—all satisfy and spiritually uplift one while forming a congenial and complete, non-dual, Kṛṣṇa-centered way of life.

What can I say of Śrīdhāma Māyāpur and Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma? Māyāpur is ever-expanding, forgiving, and generous. Vṛndāvana is an expansion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Vṛndāvana is life-giving, sweet, and unfathomably deep. To live there or to even visit Vraja leaves upon the heart an indelible impression that forces one to return. And sweet is Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandira, which hosts Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, and Rādhā-Śyāmasundara, your *samādhimandira*, and your house, which simultaneously is sobering and the deepest of welcoming shelters. Thank you for bringing us all to Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana.

But, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I consider the greatest of your gifts to be you yourself. You offered us your association, and that association—association with an exalted soul, a servant of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, a servant of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and a servant of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara—was the actual magic that spread Krishna consciousness throughout the world. It was your association that turned material night into spiritual day, and crows into swans, and that awarded the lame with the strength to cross mountains.

Your presence surcharged all your other gifts, and in that rarefied, holy presence, your other gifts were also present—the holy names, your books, the association of devotees, Vaiṣṇava *sadācāra*, and the service of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara. Indeed, you also were a walking Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma.

Your gifts clearly are sufficient; my sincerity is the only lack. Staying in the soothing moonlight of your presence is my only hope.

Your humbled servant,

Bhūrījāna Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

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

Paternal Gift

This has been a difficult year for us. Not difficult compared to what the people in Syria are going through right now. Not difficult compared to what you willingly took on when you came here to deliver us in 1965, the coldest winter in New York’s history. How cold it must have been for you! In your white rubber shoes. And waking up at night with hunger pains...your Kṛṣṇa was with you always, but beyond the two of you, your *saṅga* was only rats, bums, and bewildered hippies. Your faith and compassion overwhelmed all the difficulties and obstacles you faced.

Our suffering is so small compared to what you’ve undertaken for us. Compared even to what your greatest disciples have undertaken for you. Compared to how the early devotees in the Soviet era suffered and risked their lives for you.

This year, after over twenty years of owning a business that supported ISKCON Communications and other outreach projects, that business – our business, is now closed. All of it is finished. Gone, like a mirage.

My elderly mother, also suffered crushing financial losses in her life and business with my father. She recently said to me, “I’m so sorry this has ruined your lives.” I was so struck at that moment by the difference between their lives and our lives. Struck by the difference your gifts have made in our lives.

You have given us such a strong foundation of knowledge in devotion; of exchange of love in community; of the joy of calling out and receiving the holy name in *kīrtana*; of the interconnectedness of the earth and all living beings as beloved sparks of Kṛṣṇa, the summum bonum; of how to live life fully while keeping the internal *darśana* of the temporal nature of all things of this world. You have shown us Who is God, what is His name, His address, His father’s

name, His mother's name. How can God have a father and a mother? You told us that as well.

Here, where we live in Maryland, there is a residential development on a country road that has an elegant sign on its gatepost. It says, "Paternal Gift." Some grateful son or daughter must have received that tract of land from their generous father, and then developed it building homes and community.

So today I am thinking of the Paternal Gifts we've received from you. You have delivered us from the most fearful cycle of repeated birth and death. By the grace of your gifts, we know what to do at the time of death. You have given us gifts which create "imperceptible auspiciousness" in the world, all over the world. You have shown us how to exemplify, and articulate your message with humility and realization. And, how to make that auspiciousness perceivable to all who hear your message.

Now it's our task to develop this Paternal Gift. Please bless us with gratefulness, to take it deep – into our own hearts and the hearts of all those we encounter. And wide – out into a world that's limited only by our own limitations. To take this Paternal Gift – this strong foundation of sacred community – and to gift others' lives in the ways you've gifted ours.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your daughter, and aspiring servant,

Rukmiṇī Devī Dāsī

TO FORGET THEE NEVER!

Thou are Kṛṣṇa's own devotee,
Thou represent the Lord,
Thy very words are Kṛṣṇa's words,
By Him thou art empower'd.

Where e'er thy holy foot hath touched,
A *tīrtha* has arisen,
And where e'er thou uttered Kṛṣṇa's name,
Condemned escaped their prison.

And the Māyāvādīs trembled,
Each ran away in fear,
They shuttered down their dens of lies,
When thy lion's roar did hear!

O! One hundred thousand *śloka*s,
From mem'ry rolled from thy tongue.
By hearing thee the world drew near,
In millions old or young.

Thou hath suffered greatly for our sins,
Thy life thou gave to all,
That each may see a new day dawn,
Reborn to heed your call.

Around the world thy tune is sung,
Thy song held close to heart;
Thy dance of love is everywhere,
For bhakti is the art!

Across the islands of the earth,
The world's a better place,
Comes now Gaurāṅga's Golden Age,
For in thy hand His mace.

Now many of us have bade farewell,
To this world of birth and death,
By thy blessings have achieved the *dhāma*,
And at Kṛṣṇa's feet now rest.

So let us honour thee today,
Now, always and fore'er.
Unto thy lotus feet to pray,
And to forget thee never!

For my Śrī Guru Mahārāja, His Divine Grace Śrīla Śrī (108)
Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,
Who so kindly gave me his holy *dīkṣā* on 28 October 1968 at Santa
Fe, New Mexico;
On the occasion of this sacred day of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2017;
Corresponding to *Bhādra kṛṣṇa navami*, Śrī Nandotsava, or the
ninth day of the dark moon of Hṛṣīkeśa of the Gauḍīya calendar.

Arundhatī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your glorious and most merciful lotus feet.

Another year, and I wish to honor you, on this your Appearance Day, as the most beneficent person in my life, for you have given me the greatest gift possible – the holy names of the Lord. What life would I have without this?

Life here in this world is not easy. There are so many desires we have, but by your grace, I realize more and more the temporary appeal for enjoyment in its many forms. As you said many times, it is chewing the chewed. If not for you, I wouldn't understand. Because of your great mercy, I come to realize little by little how fleeting it all is. And these very strong attachments to family and close friends – they too can change at any moment – one minute there, the next minute gone. Though difficult due to attachment, by your mercy it is easier. I come to realize the one great thing that is there through thick and thin – the holy names of the Lord – my true shelter.

How fortunate for me...I met you, had your *darśana*, heard you chant and explain the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra back in 1966 at Tompkins Square Park, the beginning of my rebirth in this lifetime. By your

miraculous power and love you brought to me the higher taste, and gave me the answers to my deepest questions.

Dear Gurudeva, you gave me my husband, my son, my opportunity to serve you by typing your books, to hear you directly on the dictaphone speaking your great wisdom coming from Kṛṣṇa... *Bhāgavatam*, *Gītā*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*...transcribing your tapes, I feel greatly fortunate to have had this service. And to cook for you! I, who couldn't do much more than boil water, your love gave me the ability to learn how to cook wonderful *prasāda* offerings – *sukta*, *bhāti chuchuri*, and endless incredible amazing vegetarian preparations. I thank you again and again. And you sent me to Vṛndāvana and told me I could chant all day in front of the Deities – you made no distinction between male and female in that regard!

Your movement grows, though factions there are many...but all chant Hare Kṛṣṇa – the one common factor that brings us in union on that higher level, in spite of the mental disagreements that cause separation. The holy names are most powerful. You have some very strong leaders and tens of thousands are being attracted to Krishna consciousness. I pray I can make a few good and serious devotees too and be of some service as older age comes. Death is coming to us all. But we know now that death is just the body, not who we truly are – the eternal soul. How fortunate to have this knowledge!

All glories to your infinite mercy. Please forgive my offenses of which there are many. Someday I hope to be more serious and sincere. For now, I have your greatest gift, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, and your books. Your lotus feet are my ongoing protection. I love you Śrīla Prabhupāda. And I know, in spite of everything, you love me too.

Your loving daughter,

Arundhatī Devī Dāsī

Labangalatika Devī Dāsī

Śrīla Prabhupāda says in a conversation 1975, Ookala Hawaii, “I will always be the spiritual master for the entire Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement for anyone in this age willing to follow the principles I have given for the benefit of everyone.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda is the only one who has saved us from repeated birth and death. He has opened our eyes with the light of

transcendental knowledge by giving us the books of Absolute Truth in our language, the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which also show us our real history about which we knew nothing, which was concealed from us by a society which wanted to make sure we knew nothing. The original books of His Divine Grace are the basis of our preaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. All glories to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Mahārāja Śrīla Prabhupāda, who left us untimely but who is always with us, guiding us all the way Back Home to Godhead, to Kṛṣṇa.

*My humble obeisances to all the devotees at the feet of our beloved
spiritual master,*

Labangalatika Devī Dāsī

Balabhadra Dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīnī*

*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.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for the mercy and strength to complete yet another year protecting cows: this is the 27th year we have been protecting cows through ISCOWP (International Society for Cow Protection). We are reporting to you some of our activities for this year, which you have made possible.

This last year has been a joyous one with the addition of four new members to the herd.

Dhruva Laddhu and Kalyan Tamal were the first to come home to ISCOWP. As Keshava and Madhava, two oxen weighing in at 2000 pounds, are 13 years old now and in retirement, we thought it was time to save another two oxen from slaughter. In December, to replace Keshava and Madhava as a trained oxen team, we went to a dairy to look for two male calves.

Reality struck hard as we approached where the calves lived.

Each calf was in a little hutch not much bigger than the calf himself. There, the male calves existed until sold for the price of meat at the horrific auction barn. Instead of drinking milk from their mothers, they drank milk through an automated drip. Taken from their mothers a few days after being born, they lived out their days far from motherly love.

You have written in your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.17.3 purport:

“But in the Kali-yuga, the calves are separated from the cows as early as possible for purposes which may not be mentioned in these pages of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The cow stands with tears in her eyes, the *śūdra* milkman draws milk from the cow artificially, and when there is no milk the cow is sent to be slaughtered. These greatly sinful acts are responsible for all the troubles in present society.”

There were rows and rows of hutches, each containing a calf. A sad, little concentration camp.

What we found sadder was the owners of these calves were not outright horrible people. They helped load Dhruva Laddhu and Kalyan Tamal into our van in a kind and gentle way. Yet they were responsible for their living conditions and the eventual horrific deaths of all the calves in all those hutches.

Ignorance. But for your grace we could be these people. Liking animals but making a living from the animals, treating them like products and not recognizing them as living beings because that is what the “norm” is in their world. The norm of ignorance.

In the same purport you write:

“People do not know what they are doing in the name of economic development. The influence of Kali will keep them in the darkness of ignorance. Despite all endeavors for peace and prosperity, they must try to see the cows and the bulls happy in all respects. Foolish people do not know how one earns happiness by making the cows and bulls happy, but it is a fact by the law of nature. Let us take it from the authority of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and adopt the principles for the total happiness of humanity.”

To think we were once part of this torture of Mother Cow and her children; we took milk from cows who watched their babies taken away from them so we could have their mother’s milk, ate the meat

of those baby calves, therefore facilitating the ongoing torture and killing of Mother Cow and her children. To think that once we were murderers.

You have told us in your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.37, purport:

“He says that in the act of killing an animal, there is a regular conspiracy by the party of sinners, and all of them are liable to be punished as murderers exactly like a party of conspirators who kill a human being combinedly. He who gives permission, he who kills the animal, he who sells the slaughtered animal, he who cooks the animal, he who administers distribution of the foodstuff, and at last he who eats such cooked animal food are all murderers, and all of them are liable to be punished by the laws of nature.”

Then came RS/390 (now known as Śrī Vasanti). Beauty and grace personified. A Gir cow with long, pendulous ears. She was about to be branded with a hot iron and dehorned. Both very painful processes. Instead, she is home at ISCOWP happily associating with Dhruva Laddhu and Kalyan Tamal.

The last yet to come is RS/394 (named Draupadi Amba by ISCOWP members). As of this writing, she will come this Monday. A beautiful red and white speckled Gir girl with the same adorable ears. She too was about to be branded and her horns cut off.

Again, the owner was affectionate to his animals but yet was branding them and dehorning them. Therefore, he was responsible for the suffering of every cow that he ever had under his care.

On our YouTube channel, we discuss with people, like this owner of the Gir cows, about their life on a dairy farm. Many of them say they have mixed feelings. Affection for the cows and then branding, dehorning, cutting their tails and eventually killing the cows. Yet they are so trapped in their culture where this is the ignorant norm they do not investigate why they are experiencing the mixed feelings.

The other day we let Dhruva Laddhu, Kalyan Tamal and their friend Śrī Vasanti out of the barn after safely passing through their transition period. Dhruva Laddhu and Kalyan Tamal were bottle fed for a month and half and they both were not so healthy when they first came. Śrī Vasanti was quite shy and frightened at first.

They ran onto their private pasture jumping in glee. Dhruva fell, rolled over and immediately got up running. Again and again they were running and running and jumping and bumping into each

other and us. Such joy! For Dhruva Laddhu and Kalyan Tamal it was their first time on pasture. That same day the rest of the herd met them for the first time. Curiosity prevailed and there was much sniffing and licking.

This is how a cow's life should be. This is how you describe the life of cows in your *Kṛṣṇa* book.

No life in this material world is perfectly happy. Every soul is destined to have a certain quota of suffering. However, the suffering of Lord Kṛṣṇa's most beloved animal – the cow – in both the dairy and meat industry is unacceptable to those who read your books.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for saving our souls. Thank you for taking us out of ignorance so we can see reality. Thank you for giving us a solution to that reality. Thank you for teaching us about cow protection. Thank you for changing us from meat-eaters to cow lovers and protectors.

Certainly, you are the most exalted, transcendental magician. Changing a meat-eater to a cow protector in less than one lifetime. Now it is our duty to emulate you and help others see the cow as a sacred, sentient being, and stop eating her, stop consuming her milk as she watches her babies taken away and sold to the meat industry. Please give us the strength and intelligence to bring them your message of compassionate cow protection, which provides *ahiṃsā* milk and utilizes the males (bulls) in their natural, *dharmic* propensities.

You have explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.17.18:

“The bull is the emblem of the moral principle, and the cow is the representative of the earth. When the bull and the cow are in a joyful mood, it is to be understood that the people of the world are also in a joyful mood. The reason is that the bull helps production of grains in the agricultural field, and the cow delivers milk, the miracle of aggregate food values. The human society, therefore, maintains these two important animals very carefully so that they can wander everywhere in cheerfulness.”

Balabhadra Dāsa
International Society for Cow Protection (ISCOWP), Florida. USA

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

“I was born in the darkness of ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes by the torchlight of knowledge. I offer him my most humble obeisances.”

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

This year, on your 121th Appearance Day, also coinciding with the 51st anniversary year of your movement in America, I think it is especially poignant to recall some of the precious gifts that you have given to us all through which we can perform devotional service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa.

As devotees and disciples all over the world gather in celebration to remember their spiritual master it is fitting and glorious to be able to engage with you and remember the wonderful, phenomenal achievements and marvel at the Krishna consciousness movement you created.

In a previous Vyāsa-pūjā offering (see *Śrīla Prabhupāda Tributes* 2015, pages 162–163) I spoke of many of us taking up the Sanskrit language as a vehicle and an educational tool for communicating to the future leaders of society.

To further Kṛṣṇa’s desire and to save the fallen souls, you took great trouble and went through great toil to sail on the Jaladuta, departing from the land of India to come to the West in 1965.

Since then – through your inspiration – devotees all over the world have been doing their bit to sail with you and serve in your epic journey to capture Lord Caitanya’s mercy.

This year, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am minded to recall your devotion and love for Kṛṣṇa. Everyone knows you worship Govinda, the Primeval Lord, who is adept in playing on His flute, with blooming eyes like lotus petals, with head bedecked with peacock’s feather, with the figure of beauty tinged with the hue of blue clouds, and His unique loveliness charming millions of cupids.

In a line of *ācāryas* from Lord Brahmā himself, we know that the form of Kṛṣṇa is not a fanciful creation of imagination formed after visualizing the beautiful things of the world. All devotees all over the world know you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You are so pure in your

desire to take us all back home, back to Godhead, that you have not held anything back from us. Everyone knows that the substance of your ecstatic love for your spiritual master is not private. You have revealed it for us all to benefit eternally.

With more than 100,000 devotees in Russia, is it not time for every country to have a million devotees in every country? We now need Kṛṣṇa conscious jurisdictions! Let the leaders come to their senses with your blessings let them bathe their intellects (if they have any) in your books. This will reinvigorate them and their cheated flock. We need to go forward with some humbleness.

It is estimated that there are now between six to seven million people practising Krishna consciousness in the Western world in one form or another. Can this not be a multiple of 100 or 200 or more?

It seems to us that we should all strive to inculcate principles which are actually directed at making ourselves purer and purer and thus, forwarding the movement in a way that is compatible with your personal instructions to us.

So I finally return to my point which is love of Godhead. By example and by your books, you have provided us a method and a tremendous insight into developing our role and attitude in devotional service. By highly practical advice and guidance you have steered devotees along the path loving Kṛṣṇa, and imbibing the science of Kṛṣṇa with adulation.

Today, of all days, we seek your causeless mercy.

Your humble servant,

Cathurbhuj Dāsa,
London.

Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu Dāsa Adhikārī & Krishna
Priyā Devī Dāsī, & Caturbhujā Dāsa

Śrī Vyāsa Pūjā Offering to my beloved Spiritual Master, His Divine Grace Om Viṣṇupada Paramahansa Parivrājakācārya 108 Śrī Śrīmad Abhaya Caraṇārvinḍa Bhaktivedanta Swami Mahārāja Śrīla Prabhupāda.

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my *sāṣṭāṅga daṇḍavat praṇāmas* in the dust of your divine lotus feet time and time again.

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-salākayā
cakṣur unmlītaṁ 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.

As a family, we have been submitting our Vyāsa-pūjā offerings to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, since the very beginning in 1973 at your Bhaktivedānta Manor, when my mother, Śrīmatī Kīrti Mā Devī Dāsī, and my father, His Holiness Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu Mahārāja, and my two brothers, Caturbhujā Prabhu and Sāndīpani Muni Prabhu and my humble self, prepared 77 preparations of foodstuffs for your great satisfaction and delight on your 77th Appearance day at your inaugural Vyāsa-pūjā for the pleasure of Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā Gokulānanda and all Their devotees. We relish with great joy that wonderful day when you allowed us to serve you, personally, and so, usher in another phase of your transcendental pastimes. You cajoled, chastised and criticized us, with a smile, until we finally fell in line and the darkness of ignorance of our lives was completely removed and the mighty sun of your divine presence shone forth in our hearts and minds. We became completely absorbed in the ecstasy of serving your every wish for the pleasure of the Lord and the world at large. Since those early days, today, you boast over 650 global oases' and the transcendental show goes on.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have guided and counselled countless number of souls to the Lord's lotus feet, during that time, and as you yourself said, you will never die, but live forever in your mighty transcendental books. In this regard there is a Chinese proverb which says that the faintest writing is far superior than the most powerful memory. Your eternal writings will remain with us forever.

Your personal instruction to me to 'continue your education and become Kṛṣṇa conscious' holds true today more than ever before, just as it did in 1973, some 44 years ago. The words of the spiritual master are eternal and so also is the follower that follows them.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, in the last three years, in pursuance of your transcendental order, I have taken up the study of *saiṁskṛta*, which, as you quite rightly said, 'it is not difficult', and on June 5th, 6th and 8th, 2017, I am sitting for further exams in 'A' Level *saiṁskṛta*. Further, by your divine mercy, this year, you have endowed me with a wife, Kṛṣṇa Priyā Devī Dāsī, BCS, who is also taking her

first *saṁskṛta* exams in May 2017 in London. Also, we plan to uplift and unite the much downtrodden Dutch *yātrā* here in Amsterdam, first on King's Day 27th April 2017, then celebrate Lord Jagannātha's Boat Rathayātrā on Sunday 25th June 2017 and then have Europe's first Varṇāśrama College inauguration in the form of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Amsterdam Candra Varṇāśrama College-Temple-City Farm shortly afterwards. All this could not have taken place without your divine mercy and blessings.

Our recent trip to India and meeting our godbrothers and godsisters, including, Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja, His Grace Saṅkarṣaṇa Prabhu, Bhakti Chāru Swami, Indradyumna Swami, Daiva-śakti Mātājī, Yaśomatī Mātājī and Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Swami has encouraged us to move forward and establish a Varṇāśrama College with every ISKCON center, just as you ordered us to do on your morning walks of March 12th and 14th, 1974 in Māyāpur.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please look upon us favourably, so that we may be successful in your mission to engage the whole planet in Krishna consciousness and so re-create the Vaikuṅṭha atmosphere here once again.

In parting, I would just like to re-state what you have written as the essence of *Bhagavad-gītā* in the purport of Chapter Eleven, Text 55:

*mat-karma-kṛṇ mat-paramo
mad-bhaktah saṅga-varjitah
nirvairah sarva-bhūteṣu
yaḥ sa mām eti pāṇḍava*

“My dear Arjuna, one who is engaged in My pure devotional service, free from the contaminations of previous activities and from mental speculation, who is friendly to every living entity, certainly comes to Me.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 11.55.)

“Therefore, this verse is considered to be the essence of *Bhagavad-gītā*.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 11.55, purport)

Thanking you, eternally, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Yours faithfully,

Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu Dāsa Adhikārī & Krishna
Priya Devī Dāsī, & Caturbhujā Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

In a few months it will be 48 years since the day I left my home and left high school to become your disciple. I moved into the ashram at 61 Second Avenue in New York City and a few months later, in December of 1969, you initiated me as Swarup Dāsa. I returned to New York, but moved to Boston with Brahmānanda a few weeks later. You asked him to take charge of ISKCON Press and because he had made me his secretary the day after I joined, I went along with him.

When we got to Boston, the first order of business was finishing your summary study of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* called *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*. The hold-up was in the typesetting, and because I was a good typist I immediately began spending many hours a day at the composing machine. Sometimes I would work through the night when all the devotees in the temple were asleep. As I typed page after page, chapter after chapter, I would marvel at the descriptions and narrations of the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

When I first heard that you wanted to publish *The Kṛṣṇa Book* as we began calling it, I wondered why because I had read in your Preface to the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (the volumes you brought from India), "*The Tenth Canto is distinct from the first nine cantos because it deals directly with the transcendental activities of the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa. One will be unable to capture the effects of the Tenth Canto without going through the first nine cantos.*" But as I continued on with my work I realized your transcendently brilliant strategy. It dawned on me that you felt the pressing need to break through the fog of impersonalism and voidism that was so prevalent in the West and to do so people needed to be introduced to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In addition, you wrote it in such a way that it was impossible for one to mistake these pastimes for those of an ordinary person.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you once wrote that your desire was that the Krishna consciousness movement would go down in history for saving the world. The fact that in my lifetime I have observed this happening and have been fortunate enough to render some little service to you gives me the greatest satisfaction above all else. So I

have to thank you again and again and yet again for allowing me to be a part of this great spiritual revolution from the early days when you began your preaching mission in America.

I remain your most unworthy servant,

Swarup Dāsa

Bhakta Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-śvāmīnīti nāmīne*

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

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

He reasons ill who tells that Vaiṣṇavas die
when thou art living still in sound.
The Vaiṣṇavas die to live, and living try
To spread the holy name around.

—His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

In the summer of 1969, by the will of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, I was fortunate to meet your disciple. I had been praying to Lord Jesus to bring me to a genuine perfect person, and clearly my prayers were heard and answered. The moment your disciple showed me your photograph, my life made perfect sense, I knew I was here for you and within a moment I asked your disciple, “What should I do?” He directed me to meet him the following day at 14:00 and he would take me to the Sunday Feast at the nearest temple which was in Los Angeles.

Since that memorable day in August 1969, I have been chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa under your direction happily. By your grace my faith in you and in the Supreme Lord has grown with each passing year.

In 1969, your family of disciples was only a couple of hundred young boys and girls, yet in my heart I could understand that in the decades and centuries to come, all Godly souls will bow down and offer their respect and love to Your Divine Grace.

These days, wherever I go in the world, people see the beads on my neck and the *tilaka* on my head and at once they spontaneously say, "HARE KRISHNA".

You are the agent of Lord Caitanya who has brought the divine name of Lord Kṛṣṇa to every town and village, in every language and culture.

In 1969, when I'd say I don't eat meat, fish and eggs, I was looked upon like a person gone mad? Today, we see that worldwide people have become conscious of the rights of the animals to enjoy their life. This too is your mercy.

In 1969, Śrīdhāma Māyāpur was a very sleepy little village, where a few of the Gauḍīya Maṭha "rang the bells"; today tens of millions come to Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, and soon when the temple you envisioned is open, many millions more will come every month.

It is my view that you are the greatest preacher and teacher to ever set foot on this earth. Some may disagree with me, but to me, the vastness of your dedication and service, the vastness of your accomplishments mean you are truly the Greatest of All Time. (G.O.A.T.)

I am falling flat at your feet again and again and again. I am imploring you to never forget me and bless me to remain forever, birth after birth as a humble servant of your servants.

All glory to Your Divine Grace Jagad Guru Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Vaiṣṇava dāsa anu dāsa,

Bhakta Dāsa
Bangkok, Thailand

Narottamānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You came to teach what we had forgotten, but first our hearts needed to be won.

Your humility, kindness, intelligence, and strength introduced us to Vaiṣṇava qualities, though personally what awakened my heart was the purity of your voice, your *bhajana*.

You introduced us to sacred literature and song, recipes and prayer, mantra and faith. You, the saffron wrapped jewel of Vṛndāvana, we, your rag-tag followers chanting, swaying to your *bhakti* beat.

You attracted us to your whirlpool of love: chanting in the streets, cooking feasts, sharing *prasāda* with all we'd meet.

Kṛṣṇa seemed far away, but not you; you were within reach, within sight, and within communication. You were our example, our inspiration, and pleasing you was our goal and very purpose.

Book distribution, temple service, cooking, taking *prasāda*, reading, cleaning, and study, as well as communal chanting brought us together: *Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare / Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*.

I originally heard the *mahā-mantra* from Allen Ginsberg prior to a poetry recital of his. A year later I chanted with Rūpānuga, Bhūrijana, Jagadīśa, and others at my university. Shortly afterwards I heard *kīrtana* from you and something special happened. My heart softened just a hint revealing *bhakti* as a possibility, which is an incredible gift that I thank you for eternally.

Your insignificant servant,

Narottamānanda Dāsa

Locanānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to the eternal spiritual master and topmost swan-like devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

There is so much we have to be grateful for, and I can hardly find

words sufficient to describe the degree of gratitude we feel towards you. We were all lost in the dense darkness of material life, wandering aimlessly through lifetimes of repeated birth and death. Somewhere along the way, by the will of providence, we came into contact with the divine representative and leader of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission in the current Age. Inspired from within by the Supreme Lord Who is seated in the region of the heart as Supersoul, we knew enough to fall at your feet and take shelter of your teachings as the permanent solution to our misery.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I was drawn to the association of your humble servants who had been sent by you to Paris, France, in 1969 to spread Krishna consciousness and the chanting of the holy name.

They were living under a bridge and holding meetings at the American Center on the Boulevard Raspail. Near this center of intellectual activity, they found a small room on Rue Boulard where they were able to prepare meals and meet together daily for *prasāda*. They announced at one Sunday meeting that they had received an eviction notice because their neighbors had complained to the landlord about choking on the vapors produced by the spicy chauce they prepared daily. They asked,

“Does anyone know of a place where we can do our cooking and offer our midday meal to Kṛṣṇa?” I raised my hand and replied, “I know a place... MY place!” And so my relationship with the devotees of Kṛṣṇa began to fructify.

A few weeks later, Umāpati prabhu received a letter from your Divine Grace in which you asked him to thank that American boy Lew for inviting devotees to use his apartment as a base of operations. It was from that moment forward that I felt firmly connected to your mission. Since then, I have always tried to remain steadfast in following your instructions. On August 18th of that year, 1970, you wrote that you were accepting me as your duly initiated disciple, and you mentioned that you appreciated how humbly I had approached my spiritual master. In that letter, sent from Tokyo, Japan, you clarified that the purpose of my life would be to assist you in spreading the Krishna consciousness movement throughout the world.

The following year, I received the sacred thread from your hand at the Bury Place temple in London on that most auspicious occasion of the appearance day of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Shortly thereafter I volunteered to open a center in Geneva, Switzerland, accompanied

by Guru Gaurāṅga prabhu who I had the honor of recommending for first initiation. I later relocated to serve as temple president in Amsterdam, but Guru Gaurāṅga prabhu remained dedicated to developing Switzerland as his preaching field and *prabhu-datta-deśa* over the past forty-five years.

Amsterdam was an amazing opportunity for us to serve you and push forward the *saṅkīrtana* movement through outdoor *harināma saṅkīrtana*, traveling book distribution, *prasāda* distribution in Vondel Park, Sunday feast programs attended by 400 guests with classes given in six languages at the same time in separate rooms in the temple building, the installation of Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi, the publishing of the Dutch *Back to Godhead* magazine, *On the Way to Kṛṣṇa* and *Kṛṣṇa Book*, the opening of the first Govinda's restaurant in Europe, and two crowning achievements – the translation and publishing of the *Bhagavad-gītā As It is* in the Dutch language and the installation of Their Lordships, Śrī Śrī Rādhā Gopinātha. It was like a Golden Age of Krishna consciousness. There were too many great devotees in Amsterdam to name who had dedicated themselves to serving you in full surrender, but I have to mention Hayeśvara prabhu, who was translating your books, Hari Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, Mālātī Devī Dāsī, Tīrthasādaka prabhu, Parividha prabhu (our head *pūjāri*), Mṛgapatī and Mahāvidyā prabhus (*saṅkīrtana* leaders). Then there were other first class devotees like Vimuktasaṅga and Mathurā prabhus, Ātmānanda and Jñānarāja prabhus, Jaya Gopāla prabhu, Vasūttama prabhu, Raṇadurmada prabhu, Ramaṇiya Devī Dāsī, Ādrā Mātājī, Guru Bhakta, Marutvatī, Ramā Devī Dāsī, Aṣṭa Sakhī, Śailendriya, Ugrasena, and many, many others.

From Amsterdam, it was on to Tel Aviv, Israel, but I will save that adventure for my next Vyāsa-pūjā offering. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I once asked you on a morning walk, “What is the last covering of the spirit soul?” to which you replied, “False ego... THINKING I AM AN AMERICAN,” as you looked me straight in the eye. After thirteen years of preaching on the European front, I returned to New York City, the site of your first temple in the Western world and the place of my birth in this lifetime, where I have been performing devotional service for the past 35 years. Except for the dust of your lotus feet having purified this place, I do not think of my birthplace as worshipable. But New York has been saved by the presence of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda and by all of the *harinām saṅkīrtana* and books that have been distributed here over five decades. In fact, our chanting

party just returned this weekend for the first time since 9-11-2001 to what became known as Ground Zero at the World Trade Center after the infamous terrorist attack perpetrated on that day. I know you will be very pleased to learn that your devotees are performing the *yuga-dharma* at this very significant location which has become a major thoroughfare for many thousands of people who pass through every hour of every day.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, it is with all the humility at my command that I bow down at your lotus feet and ask that you continue to engage me in the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the service of the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, for all the days of my life. I beg to remain,

Your eternal servant,

Locanānanda Dāsa

Kusha Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

My heartfelt obeisances to Your Holy Divine Grace that fills our hearts throughout time and space. Your impact on the history of mankind never ceases to amaze me. I am in awe of the wake of love of God that surrounds Mother Earth ever since you have graced us with your physical presence.

To date you have swayed the dietary trends of generations as vegetarianism gains worldwide popularity thus lifting the Earth's collective karmic burden. Of course you said we are *prasādamterians*, but still the modes of nature are becoming purified.

USA News, The Savannah Weekly, and the UK based *Guardian* all admit that vegetarianism is gaining immense popularity. Twelve percent of all Brits are vegetarians and 20% of all young people between 16 and 24 years old. According the Gallup Poll 5% of the US population consider themselves vegetarians. The life you have afforded us is full of joy. Kṛṣṇa's pleasure is gradually becoming our target. Following closely in your footsteps is imperative to stay on the path.

We are blessed by the best of your love! We are blessed by the life you have gifted us. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

We miss you, especially when we have questions that seem to

evade conclusion. Still you have given all the knowledge we need to return to Kṛṣṇaloka, certainly by following carefully in your footsteps.

Sometimes the road is treacherous – crumbling and tumbling down a cliff, it seems like we are plunging through space without a safety net. But having taken your shelter gives us light at the end of the tunnel, illuminating the darkness of illusion, calling us Back to Home Back to Godhead! Birth after birth we take shelter of your holy lotus feet!

Your devoted śiṣya,

Kusha Devī Dāsī

ISKCON Vṛndāvana

Director of Community Service

Nāgapatnī Devī Dāsī

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

Please accept my humble obeisances to your sweet lotus feet.

This material world is full of so many options for sense enjoyment but the results are void of pleasure – instead there is only frustration and pain. Somehow or other you attracted me to this process of *bhakti* many years ago and you’ve continued to save me from all my nonsense. You have instilled some mystical attachment. So in spite of my wild horse like senses and flickering mind, I’m still here. I may be useless, but you allow me to falter along increasing my attachment to Kṛṣṇa. What kind of mercy is this? How is it you are so magnanimous?

Your kindness is so incredible. You want to save every conditioned soul in this world. You dedicated your life wholly to this cause. Subsequently, Kṛṣṇa gave you all facilities to accomplish your desires. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have set transcendental traps all over the world on so many levels for the lost souls. In the prayers of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī your glories are summarized.

You are delivering the material affected world by extinguishing the blazing fire of material existence through your books and this movement. This world is in such a precarious condition. Wars and disaster spontaneously erupt everywhere. Yet, we have seen how

by the distribution of your books great numbers of people have felt some relief. Within their pages, your books offer everything one needs to know to reach the highest perfection of life and shelter from this burning world. And so I offer my loving obeisances to you.

As the foremost leader of this great movement of Lord Caitanya, you understood how best to spread it. All your temples, centers and home programs all over the world are places that truly offer shelter from the demands of the material energy. These places give spiritual food, knowledge, and *sādhu saṅga*. Unlike Kṛṣṇa, you don't demand total surrender but rather, in the mood of Lord Caitanya, you simply engage everyone in chanting the holy names. This process is so amazing, regardless of where the persons came from, or their material destination. In spite of all this, the holy name takes root in the heart and a whole transformation takes place. Previous sadness is replaced with happiness, fear is replaced with boldness, ignorance with knowledge, rejection with enthusiasm, confusion with conviction, and lust with true love. And so, I offer my loving obeisances to you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, this whole movement is unlimitedly grateful for the service you introduced through Deity worship. We pray you are pleased with our service to Their Lordships. We strive to purify our hearts so our service is acceptable. We continue to dress Them in beautiful clothes and ornaments. We offer tasty dishes throughout the day with various other services. Our hearts are overjoyed with these opportunities. And so I offer my loving obeisances to you.

The distribution of our secret weapon – *prasāda* – is one of the most joyous activities a devotee can have. This too must be having a positive effect on the misguided world. It is definitely having positive effects on all the devotees. And so I offer my loving obeisances to you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, one of your greatest accomplishments was giving us the proper attitude of understanding the pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You teach us how not to think of His activities to be like ordinary mundane relationships. We still need to be cautious who we associate with. Our association must be devotees who are following your instructions diligently. You have given us so many nice souls. And so I offer my loving obeisances to you.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, many of our devotees are leaving this planet. Are they joining you to continue their service? Our relationship is eternal, and the service we can offer you is unlimited.

I pray, please give me the ability to serve in your mission. There have been so many mistakes made. Please help me to rectify mine. Give me the ability to see through your compassionate eyes, speak this transcendental knowledge with your purity, and touch every soul in the same way you touched mine. Please give me the ability to serve and glorify you life after life. And so I offer my loving obeisances to you.

The spiritual master is to be honored as much as the Supreme Lord because he is the most confidential servitor of the Lord. The best way to honor you is to follow your instructions. I pray that those instructions are as clear as when you were present. That they are not covered by vile self-motivation or desire for profit. Rather, with the love and compassion you gave everywhere, at every time. And so I offer my loving obeisances to you.

By your mercy, we receive the benediction of Kṛṣṇa. Without your grace there is no advancement. I pray to be able to serve you with love and remember you constantly.

You are the reason for my life, the life within my heart, and the center of my existence. So I offer my loving obeisances to you.

Your eternally grateful servant and daughter,

Nāgapatnī Devī Dāsī

Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda and respected Vaiṣṇavas,

The service relationship one has with Śrīla Prabhupāda extends beyond the limitations of physical presence. Indeed, the realization of the vital necessity of service relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda is not only stressed by Kṛṣṇa Himself (Bg. 4.34) but is personally realized by progressive revelation of both transcendental knowledge and devotion.

It is by the submissive attentive hearing of the holy names and Kṛṣṇa's wisdom that we can enter into the transcendental mind of Kṛṣṇa. Our consciousness is a minute expansion of Kṛṣṇa Himself. The joyous adventure of Krishna consciousness has made life worthwhile. The hope of success is certain because of Kṛṣṇa's promise. You gave us His promise through your own divine message.

As the years slip by, we are inspired by the future in the spiritual

home of Kṛṣṇa, where there is no influence of Time, where every word is a song, where every step is a dance. The generosity of Kṛṣṇa is noted in His *līlā*, where He advises His *gopīs* that He cannot repay their love, that their love is itself its own reward. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavīrāja relates that the ecstasy of the *jīva* soul seeing Kṛṣṇa is 30,000 times greater than when Kṛṣṇa sees the *jīva* soul! The mystery is revealed! Kṛṣṇa is Hṛṣīkeśa, the Lord and owner of the senses, our senses being expansions of His senses to expand His pleasure. But, Kṛṣṇa is so generous, so merciful, that He is completely fulfilled when His devotees experience the love and joy that comes from their association with Him, with His beauty and love. Such a generous and merciful spirit is characteristic of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

I, we, long for the future when we can be with you in your and our home in the land of Kṛṣṇa. When you may take us by the hand and lead us to your dearest Friend and Lover. To that new beginning, we place our faith and our hopes...

Your eternal servant,

Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa Dāsa

Śatadhanya Dāsa

Small is beautiful. Each of us, the spirit soul, is extremely small, one ten-thousandth the tip of a hair to be exact. Understanding this fact theoretically is one thing, but a little bit of realization on that score can stretch quite far. Our material surroundings and material gross body, composed of material elements, are much bigger—way, way larger and expanded in size compared to the minute spiritual spark situated in your heart and that is why it is said that we have been *covered*. We may just imagine if we were the size of an ant how the people, rooms of your house, the furniture, the buildings, cars, etc., would appear proportionately gigantic. Our particular material body — and indeed all matter — has certainly diffused from spirit in an inflated, bloated manner, perhaps more aptly described as ‘*puffed-up*’! We naturally think that we are very big and important, and this holds true for both non-devotees and devotees as well. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said: “*There is nothing so easy as for the small to think they have become big.*”

Having established our *smallness* and concentrating or meditating

upon our diminutive, spiritual nature, there are several very important, meaningful and palpable consequences and realizations which arise from such understanding and knowledge. At the very outset, acknowledging our smallness diminishes our over-estimated idea of our own prowess and false ego. Suddenly, we're not the center of the universe and everything and everyone doesn't revolve around us and we are not the big movers and shakers we assumed ourselves to be. Seeing ourselves as small like a grain of sand in the desert allows us to grasp the concept of our constitutional limitations and minimal capacity to escape the powerful illusive energy and control our circumstances. Naturally then, we are more apt to cooperate with others, the other grains of sand like our godbrothers and sisters chanting along next to us at *maṅgala āraṭi*, glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead in unison and performing devotional service in our temples, greater ISKCON and the public-at-large as an aggregate of miniscule parts and parcels. Our strength is in numbers like the proverbial bundle of sticks united to become Kṛṣṇa conscious and spread it to others. This is called realizing our minute spiritual identity and developing HUMILITY!

Another concomitant factor in cultivating our newfound smallness is the now inceptively discernable and directly perceivable fact that the tiny *jīvoātmā* situated within the heart is indeed distinct from and of a superior, spiritual nature than the material, perishable, fraught with suffering body. It is here and now that our heretofore faithless and doubtful nature is put paid to and we accept the reality of God, Kṛṣṇa, recognizing His hand in all worldly manifestations. *Another itsy-bitsy part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa is welcomed to the realm of ETERNALITY—REAL DEVOTIONAL SERVICE HAS ITS ROOTS PLANTED HERE!*

Anartha-nivṛtti means the disappearance of unwanted things from our contaminated, abominable, material existence and is enabled by a perceptible manifestation of the lightening of the great load of sinful activities carried by us since time immemorial. This becomes possible because the infinitesimal spiritual soul no longer entirely identifies with the gross and subtle bodies, the storehouse of all depravity, and we commence to embrace our spiritual identity beyond the urgings of the body for unlimited sense pleasure. It is on this platform that the aspiring devotee gets a higher taste and musters the determination to no longer fall prey to the infatuation of the material body and mind—*don't mistakenly think that this is so easy!*

This higher taste gradually leads us to PURITY and NIṢṬHĀ .

Small also testifies to our insignificance, and being small and insignificant is tantamount to being powerless and helpless. Like a small speck of dust can at any moment be blown away, we come to comprehend our abject incapacity to control the forces of nature around us and even the malice and aspersions of others. *Thus, we set about taking shelter of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrī Śrī Rādhā Mādhava and this gives birth to our small beginning of COMPLETE DEPENDANCE UPON AND SURRENDER (ŚARAṆĀGATI) TO THE SUPREME LORD.*

Having thus acknowledged our utter inability, as such a microscopic particle, to be the DOER or ACCOMPLISHER of practically anything, what path of action is left open to us? What is it that we can and are supposed to execute or achieve?

VERITABLY NOTHING!

EXCEPT ONE THING— WITH OUR MINUTE INDEPENDENCE WE CAN APPROACH, BOW DOWN, BESEECH, BEG, PRAY AND ARTICULATE OUR DESIRE TO BE ENGAGED IN THE PURE DEVOTIONAL SERVICE OF THE LORD AND HIS PURE DEVOTEE REPRESENTATIVE, ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA.

HOWEVER, THIS CAN ONLY BE BROUGHT ABOUT IN ONE WAY— BY CHANTING THE HARE KRISHNA MAHĀ-MANTRA GRADUALLY INOFFENSIVELY TO PURIFY OUR EXISTENCE AND ENDOW US TO BECOME CONSCIOUS OF AND FOLLOW THE LORD'S INSTRUCTIONS WITHIN AS SUPERSOUL AND WITHOUT AS ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA.

BUT FIRST OF ALL WE MUST RECOLLECT AND TAKE STOCK OF OUR SMALLNESS!

Your humble servant,

Śatadhanya Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you.

This year I have been trying to write an offering to you, yet each time I sit to compose my words I become frustrated due to the situation that I find myself in within.

There is a battle raging, between the part of me that struggles to remain faithful and obedient and intends to continue to do so, and the part that is still solidly entrenched in a vision of reality that has myself and my desires at the centre. After so many years I am still divided and that is the problem.

One part of me is committed. It listens to your lectures, chants *japa* and performs daily *pūjā*. That part wants to help others and serve sincerely. It recognizes the importance of chanting Kṛṣṇa's names daily, honouring *prasāda*, Deity worship, *kīrtana*, and knowledge of the spiritual realm that is our natural home. These priceless gifts and more have been received directly and indirectly from you, and I can never repay the debt I owe you for accepting me as your disciple.

So this part is working on improvement...but then often during the main part of the day I become inclined towards other topics and activities and the early morning realization seems to be replaced by a naturally selfish way of dealing with the world around [and within] whose opinions I fear, or whose attractions seem so vivid? That "part" of me clearly cannot write you a suitable offering.

So I find myself in an embarrassing situation: somewhere in the middle. Thus when I sit to write an honest homage, both parts sit down and because they desire differently it is difficult to write with fully sincerity.

But you dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, were not divided – you were whole, wholly fixed in spiritual reality. This remains your glory. And history shows that you could wake up anyone who was fortunate enough to follow you sincerely.

But what about someone like me who has made significant progress but realizes that they are totally incomplete in their sincerity? What about such a partial surrenderer who still has a conflict within?

I turn to you.

On one hand you encourage me with Kṛṣṇa's word of assurances and full protection, as well and a good birth next life. But you also

must tell that selfish part, that suffering naturally awaits also. What if I were born into an atheistic family or born on the eve of a catastrophic World War 3?

And sometime in the future I will recognize the insignificance of the bad choices I may make in lieu of deepening my understanding of spiritual life and reconsider the need for progress, so why wait? Why not get the work over with now while there is time?

You compassionately enlighten me, telling me that Kṛṣṇa is my friend and travel guide within and can be approached even with material inclinations, yet you also explain how asking Kṛṣṇa to satisfy me is unnatural. I should be trying to satisfy Him. That is real *bhakti*, real religion.

Your lectures reduce doubt and insist on thinking deeply and understanding clearly my position and the art of surrender to He who is already my master.

So yes, you talk to both parts of me and ask them to cooperate – to move forward spiritually – before the end of this present life, wherein I had the inconceivable good fortune of meeting you.

So dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept this super less-intelligent person, and allow them to proceed with the process of surrender and take seriously the challenge of living with a friend and enemy within.

Your wise words and example bend me back and forth, up and down, like the up and down movement of bending of wire to weaken and finally break it.

May your wise words and my eternal friend Śrī Kṛṣṇa from within continue to work on my heart until the purification is complete, and I beg to somehow remain your student and servant despite these difficulties.

Jagattāriṇī Devī Dāsī

GOT THIS FAR!!!

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

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-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.

The compassion, the knowledge, and the blessings Śrīla Prabhupāda has given to the world is too unfathomable to express.

The way he himself describes the Personality of Godhead in some ways reflect how I would describe Śrīla Prabhupāda. Their magnificent qualities are similar just as we find the qualities of the son take after the father.

When I read Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports to the verses in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* where he is praising the wonderful qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, I can't help but find my mind switching back and forth between Kṛṣṇa and Śrīla Prabhupāda amazed by their mutual transcendental traits.

Śrīla Prabhupāda compares Kṛṣṇa to the sun and we can easily compare Śrīla Prabhupāda to the sun in this way also as in this verse:

Śrī Uddhava said: My dear Vidura, the sun of the world, Lord Kṛṣṇa, has set, and our house has now been swallowed by the great snake of time. What can I say to you about our welfare? (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.7)

The following excerpts from Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport for this verse are how I feel about Śrīla Prabhupāda, as he is speaking about Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

"The comparison of Kṛṣṇa to the sun is very appropriate. As soon as the sun sets, darkness automatically appears."

"Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance and disappearance are exactly like that of the sun."

“as long as He is present in a particular universe there is all transcendental light in that universe, but the universe from which He passes away is put into darkness.”

“As at sunset the snakes become powerful, thieves are encouraged, ghosts become active, the lotus becomes disfigured and the cakravākī laments, so with the disappearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the atheists feel enlivened, and the devotees become sorry.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the sun of our lives, and despite the darkness all around us, how fortunate we are to have you with us still in the form of your *vāṇī*, your books, and by having you with us in this way we can have access to the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

It is stated that one should not accept the spiritual master as an ordinary human being. The Lord says, “*ācāryaṁ māṁ vijānīyān nāva-manyeta karhicit*”: one should not treat the spiritual master as an ordinary human being, for he is the substitute for the Supreme Personality of Godhead (*Bhāgavatam* 11.17.27).

One should treat the spiritual master as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and never be envious of him or consider him to be an ordinary human being. (*Bhāgavatam* 4.20.13, purport)

Vaiṣṇava *śāstras* state that all success in life comes to one who understands this important truth.

All glories to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda!

In humble surrender, your servant,

Vishnu Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Thank you for shining the light on the path back to Godhead, for giving the holy name so we can be happy in this world. Thank you for giving us *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and all your books to make us convinced and to free us from lamentation, fear and illusion. Thank you for saving us from the hands of the Yamadūtas. Thank you for giving us intelligence to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, do devotional service, to develop love for Kṛṣṇa and love for your service. Please give us the courage, strength and determination to follow your instructions and to help others also become inspired to serve your lotus feet.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.18.19 it is said:

And what to speak of those who are under the direction of the great devotees, chanting the holy name of the Unlimited, who has unlimited potency? The Personality of Godhead, unlimited in potency and transcendental by attributes, is called the Ananta [Unlimited].

Purport: A pure devotee of the Lord does not commit any offense while chanting the holy name of the Lord. There are ten different offenses in the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. To chant the holy name under the direction of a pure devotee is offenseless chanting... Since the devotee is surcharged with the potency of the Lord, even fractionally, the disqualification due to lower birth cannot stand in the way.'

Thank you for accepting us despite our disqualification and engaging us in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. By your mercy we can also hope to one day go back to Godhead to serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in our eternal position.

Your servant,

Nārāyaṇī Devī Dāsī

**On the blessed event of the birth of the exalted soul
who came to the Western world and saved those
who were swimming in the ocean of nescience**

Would you find a welcome; would you find open doors?
Or would you be rebuffed when you reached America's shores?

You headed West with firm resolve but little in resources,
Still, with Kṛṣṇa on your side, you took on Māyā's forces.

Your resolve was tested on the ship as you sailed for foreign lands,
But you did not give up; you put yourself in Kṛṣṇa's hands.

Your guru had instructed you to spread Caitanya's cult,
And you followed his instructions without regard for your result.

And we, the blessed heirs of your awesome sacrifice,
Must carry on the mission and never mind the price.

You have blessed us with your footprints to follow and to fill.
Impersonalism must be fought – the goal of life should not be nil.

We must explain Lord Kṛṣṇa's form and chant His holy name.
We must distribute His *prasāda* and loosen Māyā's claim

Upon the souls here in this world who remain so tightly bound,
Who've yet to hear the drums, the *kartāls*, the transcendental sound.

And Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana* must ring out in every town on Earth,
So we repay our debt to you, but a fraction what it's worth...

No other means; no other means – no alternative in this Age,
Your books, your words, your gift to us – impossible to gauge.

All glories to your exalted appearance on this planet, Śrīla
Prabhupāda. *Eternally grateful, humbled and indebted,*

Mahāśinī Devī Dāsī

Somadās Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you.

Thank you for giving me a wonderful life! You are truly my spiritual father. You have so many disciples, grand-disciples, and even great-grand-disciples, and they are all wonderful devotees. They are serving and pleasing you very much, preaching all over the world. It is to your credit that ISKCON is so successful. Somehow or other you accepted me as one of your disciples. Please help me to also please you in some way.

Your grateful servant,

Somadās Dāsa

Maṇḍaleśvara Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I bow down at your lotus feet with great awe and reverence.

Please forgive my offences, and please purify me that I may sincerely and properly praise Your Divine Grace. I pray that you will be pleased by my feeble attempts at honoring Your Divine Grace on your sacred Vyāsa-pūjā day.

We regularly sing, “The spiritual master is to be honored as much as the Supreme Lord, because he is the most confidential servitor of the Lord.” Once a disciple of yours suggested that actually the guru was “better than Kṛṣṇa”. Your Divine Grace replied: “No, guru is Kṛṣṇa directly”.

In 1936, you spoke at the Vyāsa-pūjā ceremony of your own spiritual master, Oṃ Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda. At that time, you cited *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.17.27, wherein Lord Kṛṣṇa instructs Uddhava: “One should understand the spiritual master to be as good as I am.” You further explained that, “If the Absolute Truth is one, about which we think there is no difference of opinion, the guru also cannot be two”.

The one pure absolute message was originally delivered by the One Absolute Personality of Godhead to Lord Brahmā. It then descended through the chain of disciplic succession to Nārada,

to Vyāsa, to Madhva, and so on. Thus it descended through the transparent medium of disciplic succession, at last flowing through Īśvara Purī, back to the Supreme Lord Himself, who had descended to the material world as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, stand as the eleventh transcendental link in that pure disciplic line from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. I beg to be purified by the dust of your lotus feet.

My senses are impure and imperfect. All I know for sure is what I have heard through disciplic succession—from Your Divine Grace, from the previous *ācāryas*, from the scriptures, and from the sincere followers of Your Divine Grace, who are the members of the International Society for Krishna consciousness. Fool that I am, I nevertheless know without a doubt that, through your life's example, through your books, through your ISKCON movement, and through your followers—in all these manifestations, Your Divine Grace is providing the only hope in this dark Age of Quarrel, illusion, and hypocrisy.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I also beg to enthusiastically proclaim with great admiration that, despite the darkness of Kali-yuga, Your Divine Grace has gloriously succeeded in establishing and maintaining a healthy, vibrant, international movement of disciples, grand-disciples, temples, book publishing, and numerous special projects. All of this spiritual potency is flowering from seeds you have planted and that you continue to cultivate.

I am eternally indebted to all these manifestations of your mercy. I pray at your lotus feet that, despite my flaws and mistakes, I can be of some use to Your Divine Grace, to your ISKCON, and to your followers. There is no other hope for me, nor do I need anything beyond this.

Please help me, Dear Gurudeva, to put you and your followers first, making no demands for myself, even though that perfection will take me many lifetimes of incremental surrender.

Your servant and the servant of your servants,

Maṇḍaleśvara Dāsa

I just can't do it. I just can't write down, for everyone to see, my feelings, for Śrīla Prabhupāda. Whatever I've written before still stands for me. All I can say at this stage in my life, if it weren't for Śrīla Prabhupāda, I'd be a walking dead person, and/or hopelessly insane, or just plain dead from suicide. Aside from his causeless mercy, I can hope that I am always taking birth near the true devotees of Govinda, in any capacity possible.

Pañcharatna Dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīnī*

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

Drowning in the rising chatter
Of billions tagging and posting
They vainly seek happiness
From their glowing screens.

Vast rivers of words and images
Dulling and distorting thought
In echo chamber bubbles
Of consciousness caught.

In virtual worlds unbound
By country or place
A new public square is born
For the *maha-mantra* to grace.

Inspired by your boldness
To chant beneath a tree
Amidst waves of disillusion
Washing across the country.

We venture with chantnow.com
To reach these souls asleep
Using everything for Kṛṣṇa,
Even marketing technique.

“Chant and be happy.”
Your slogan is now online.
May your mission flow through server banks,
And make this world sublime.
Please bless us in our efforts to serve you.

Your servant,

Pañcharatna Dāsa
ISKCON Online

Sureśvara Dāsa

“THEY WANT TO HEAR”

Captivating as Śrīla Prabhupāda’s spoken words are, still more inspiring was his personal example, the way he spontaneously applied those words in life. An endearing moment comes to mind during Prabhupāda’s visit to Philadelphia in the summer of 1975.

It was Rathayātrā season. Śrīla Prabhupāda had just come from Chicago, where he had ridden Subhadrā Mahārāṇī’s chariot down State Street, met the mayor of Evanston, held a press conference, granted radio, TV, and newspaper interviews, and caused quite a stir.

Then as now, Chicago was forever astir with crime, and on the way there Prabhupāda had noticed a *Time* magazine cover story: *Crime: Why, and How to Solve it*. “Crime bled from unclean hearts,” Prabhupāda told the mayor and a police lieutenant. “Give us facility to cleanse the public’s heart—through mass chanting of God’s holy names and mass distribution of sanctified food offered to the Lord—and you will see a dramatic drop in the crime rate.”

Impractical or bizarre as Prabhupāda’s solution may have sounded to those officials, it was Prabhupāda’s remedy for another social ill – the exploitation of women – that sent the media spinning.

The Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion in America

was just two-years-old, and “women’s liberation” was in full swing. Because the reporters were pursuing freedom and equality through bodily identification, Prabhupāda’s spiritual solutions inevitably confounded them.

What should be the role of women in society? a reporter would ask.

“A woman should marry and faithfully serve a qualified husband,” Prabhupāda would respond, “and share his advancement in spiritual life.”

“In America we say everyone is created equal. So why should a woman subordinate herself to a man?”

“For her protection. Otherwise, she may be exploited by unscrupulous men, then abortion, or have child without husband, and go begging support from government. Is that freedom?”

And...

“Why do you say men and women aren’t equal?”

“I do not say. Inequality, difference is already there in nature. A woman can bear a child, a man cannot. Where is the equality? A man’s duty is to protect and support the woman and help her train the children to serve God.”

“So if they are partners, why do you say women are less intelligent than men?”

“As husband and wife approach the spiritual platform, Kṛṣṇa gives both intelligence how to serve Him. *Dadāmi buddhi-yogam*. But materially, as one psychologist has shown, a man’s brain is larger and heavier than a woman’s—64 ounces man, 36 ounces woman.”

And so the conversations went, spiritual solutions to material problems, and ne’er the twains did meet. Sometimes an exasperated reporter would leave, but most stuck it out to take their full measure of the swami: a male chauvinist! This was the press that followed Prabhupāda to Philadelphia.

As soon as Prabhupāda’s plane landed, the fireworks started when a woman reporter asked: “It’s been reported that the Krishna consciousness movement has been what some people would consider sexist or racist...by defining inferior roles for [women and blacks] by their natural traits.”

“We give equal roles spiritually,” Prabhupāda replied. “Materially there is distinction...Just like...there are so many men and women; they are differently dressed...But within the dress, the living entities...they are all the same. We make this distinction materially, not spiritually.”

And later, from another woman reporter: “How do you feel about women’s lib?”

Prabhupāda: “In your country, they have given you liberty. Liberty means equal rights, is it not?”

Reporter: “They’re trying in this country.”

Prabhupāda: “All right, trying. But you women cannot see that this so-called equal right means cheating the woman. Now I say more clearly that a woman and man meet. Now they become lover. Then they have sex, and the woman becomes pregnant, and the man goes away. The simple woman, she has to take charge of the child and beg from government alms, ‘Please give me money.’ This is your independence. Do you [think] this is independence, that the man makes the woman pregnant and he goes away without any responsibility, and the woman cannot give up the child; she maintains, begging from the government or she tries to kill the child? Do you think it is very good independence?”

Prabhupāda’s repartee with the press often evoked cheers from the devotees. But in the clash of world views, he would expose not only the folly of materialism but his own disciples’ attachment to it. Did I, for example, deeply understand the material differences and spiritual equality I shared with my own godsisters? Back at the temple, I would soon find out.

After Prabhupāda arrived, it quickly became apparent the temple was much too small to seat all the devotees who had come to hear his arrival address. As the GBCs, *sannyāsīs*, and we *brahmacārīs* followed Prabhupāda inside, the women lingered outside, running to windows to get a glimpse of His Divine Grace. Inside, Prabhupāda sat on the *vyāsāsana*, surveying the scene. As the leaders snuggled close to his lotus feet, Prabhupāda’s gaze fell upon the windows, where his women disciples were pressing their noses, like bees desperately trying to get to the honey inside.

Prabhupāda looked concerned, even alarmed. Hadn’t he just told the press how we give everyone—men and women, young and old, black and white—equal opportunity to pursue Krishna consciousness? With fatherly compassion, Prabhupāda’s voice came over the mike: “Let them inside. They want to hear!”

One by one his spiritual daughters walked in, beaming with gratitude at Prabhupāda, who kept pushing his men closer together to make room for these eager hearers. And later, after a sky-high *kīrtana*, said: “You can see practically. The woman is dancing. A

man is dancing. So dancing everyone...It is automatic, automatic, realizing God, in relationship with God. 'We are all servant of Kṛṣṇa.' That is wanted."

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for inviting us all to the dance, where true freedom and equality rejoice, serving Kṛṣṇa. We love to hear your words. And sweet and strong as those words are, your example is simply the best.

Your aspiring servant,

Sureśvara Dāsa

Kṛṣṇa Kamala Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Please accept our repeated humblest obeisances unto your lotus feet.

I am writing this on behalf of my mother, Kṛṣṇa Kamala Devī Dāsī, your disciple since 1971, as she is unable to do so herself due to bad health and disability and unable to use the internet.

We want to share these precious memories as they are not in any of the many biographies written, and feel it selfish to not share widely because memories of you are part of ISKCON's future, providing teachings for all of us. Additionally, they are full of nectar!

My mother wants to thank you again and again for the memories of your personal association. These are the gems of our lives. They truly and perfectly exemplify your omniscience and how you showed the kindness of a caring father and guide to your disciples. Who else would leave Vṛndāvana at an advanced age selflessly to save us fallen souls and bring Krishna consciousness to the whole world? Your compassion is unparalleled.

When my mother, Kṛṣṇa Kamala Devī Dāsī, met you in 1970, she was already initiated by an impersonal guru since when she was a child. She herself was impersonal back then and used to meditate on the impersonal feature of God for many hours a day, and indeed

overnight. My father, Manu Dāsa, wanted to take initiation from and you but my parents believed that as a married couple they should take initiation together and have the same guru. You were so merciful that you initiated her again – in London in 1971. Only by your association and mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, she embraced personalism and Deity worship. She feels she can never repay you for bestowing such mercy to an impersonalist – to enable her to relish devotional service. Thank you for accepting her as your disciple.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you always had an open door and was so welcoming. My parents would mostly visit every evening and even though you were so busy – running an international organisation and with thousands of disciples – you always had time to speak to them and welcome them to your room – any time and any day!

Your always appreciated even the smallest services. My mother used to cook Indian vegetables (*sabji*) for you almost every day in the early 1970s when you were in London and deliver these in the morning to yourself or to your personal servant. Indian vegetables were not easily available in London back then. Additionally, not many devotees knew how to cook *sabjis* in the early days. My mother recalls that you especially liked karela (bitter lemon), *bhindi* (okra) and *baingan* (baby aubergines). Oh Prabhupāda, you were so appreciative of this small service – you said to the congregation in your room that: “Indian women can make very nice *sabjis* with ghee”.

On the occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā in London in 1973, you blessed us with your personal presence. No one was there knew how to make eggless cakes back then, so my mother made a ‘*boondhi*’ cake (*boondhi* are the little sweet orange balls pressed together to make *laddu*). She made lots of these and pressed them into the shape of a big round cake. She remembers that the devotees appreciated and enjoyed your Vyāsa-pūjā ‘cake’ when it was later distributed.

In 1974 when my parents returned from London to India for a couple of years, the Vṛndāvana Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma temple was due to be opened (although it actually opened a year later due to delays).

They were living quite far in the state of Haryana, and made a trip to Vṛndāvana for when they thought the temple may be opening (as it had been advertised back when they were in London). They had not seen Your Divine Grace since they left London, so it had been many months. Given how much ISKCON had grown over the early 1970s and how busy you were, they were not expecting to get

an audience with you, and were not sure if they would even be there at the same time. There was no internet communication back then!

However, as they were approaching the courtyard of the temple area, as soon as they arrived – you are so merciful that you came walking out – straight in front of them and they were overjoyed to see you again. You were practically the first person they saw!

My mother says it really felt like you were waiting for them – and came out to see them – just like a father would do after his children return home from being away for a while.

You were so kind that you immediately spoke to them in Hindi, “it is nice you have come”, and asked my mother why she had lost so much weight. Again this demonstrates your care and concern for the well-being of your disciples – just like a father. Even with so many disciples and being so busy trying to get the flagship Vṛndāvana Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma temple ready for opening, only you could have the compassion to inquire on the well-being of your spiritual children, even noticing weight loss that would be indicative of health problems.

In 1976, when my parents returned to London, very soon after arriving you appeared in my mother’s dream to give instructions. You told her that her neck beads are broken and she should replace them as soon as possible. You also told her in the dream that she must always wear neck beads – whether loose or tight – she should always wear them.

When she woke up, she saw her neck beads were indeed broken! She hadn’t even realised they had broken being so busy moving country, house, settling down again with three children, etc. But you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, knew and even came to tell her in a dream! This shows your omniscience – even not physically there – you knew what was happening and able to guide through a dream.

We simply cannot repay you Śrīla Prabhupāda. You are truly the moon amongst the stars, the crest jewel amongst the great saints.

Your contribution to the world in unparalleled, unique and invaluable.

All glories to Your Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda! All glories to you! All glories to you!

Written by your granddaughter Meera Khurana and told to her by her mother, your disciple,

Kṛṣṇa Kamala Devī Dāsī.

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to your most glorious and magnanimous self.

In Los Angeles on 17 December 1983 you ordered us, your disciples, "...just become perfect in the understanding of this science and become guru and deliver the whole world."

Since it is the duty of the disciple to successfully carry out the instructions given to him by his spiritual master and since we have not yet been successful in delivering the world, all we can do is fall down in the dust of your lotus feet and beg your causeless mercy upon us that we can be successful in convincing the entire human population to as soon as possible take up this most sublime process of Krishna consciousness, which is so beautifully and perfectly presented in your most sublime Bhaktivedanta purports.

Please bless us, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that we can in fact deliver the world in the near future. We know that such an inconceivably herculean feat can only be accomplished by your divine potency. Therefore, just as Lord Rāma engaged the monkeys in helping Him to capture Rāvana's kingdom, please use us as your monkey instruments for bringing about soon the greatest paradigm shift in the history of the universe, the complete inundation of the global society with pure Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*.

Your grateful monkey servant begging for your causeless mercy,
Saṅkarshan Dāsa Adhikārī

Yadubara Dāsa and Viśākhā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

The small group of us at Inner Voice Productions have been working hard to produce a film for the public about your life. For the past three years, it's been our constant and daily meditation to create a film that would do justice your amazing achievements and transcendental qualities.

Our prayer is that this film, *Hare Krishna! The Mantra*, the

Movement, and the Swami who started it all, which is due for release in June, 2017, will not only introduce the public to you, but will also inspire people to read your books, visit your temples, and chant the holy names of Kṛṣṇa.

But most of all, Śrīla Prabhupāda, our prayer is that this small, 90-minute offering pleases you in every way.

Your servants,
Yadubara Dāsa and Viśākhā Devī Dāśī

Ātmānanda Dāsa

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.

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Due to your constant presence in your sound vibration, and as much as I endeavor to follow and embody that – your all-inclusive guiding light – I am feeling enlivened, enlightened and liberated of my mundane selfishness!

I am praying to you that I can always remain in the meditation of showing you and our dear Lord Kṛṣṇa that I want to deserve your presence. By always learning how to become more pure, and by sharing my realizations of your countless brilliant gifts with others, I am hopeful and confident of always having your association.

At our initiation ceremony at Bury Place in London, in the summer of 1970, you told us: “If you simply chant 16 rounds a day, and follow the four regulative principles, there is nothing in this world that can keep you from going back to Godhead in this lifetime.” And then, you raised your index finger for emphasis, and said “And that is a fact!” My lifetime’s commitment is to become absolutely convinced of that *fact* as soon as possible (without inserting my own version of what’s possible).

On the way, I experience your presence when I struggle to follow your instructions; to give my ears’ and mind’s full attention

to your dear Lord's names. You are present and effective in those instructions to do so; you are not different from your 'vāñī'.

There is no difference between your words and your full presence: they are one. They are always available to anyone, and they are everlasting. In fact you said that your vibration in sound is more important; and that 'vapu' – physical association – is secondary, less important, and, in fact, not essential. When I choose to do what you desire, instead of what the false ego of my mind dictates – knowing that you are then in front of me – then you are!

One of your 'forms' is *Iṣṭagoṣṭhī*, and I feel greatly attracted to learning and sharing how to apply that form with other like-minded devotees. From your explanation and emphasis on this form of association, I am inspired to see how it can be a vehicle to moving your Hare Kṛṣṇa movement ahead dynamically.

In a lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.13, in New Vrindaban on June 13th, 1969, you explained: "... Simply receive the message from the right source and contemplate and meditate upon that instruction. You are liberated. Chanting and hearing. Hearing and... *śravaṇam kīrtanam* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.5.23). First hearing, then chanting. Hear from the right source and discuss amongst yourselves. *Iṣṭagoṣṭhī*. Then the perfection."

And on April 8, 1968, you wrote, "My dear _____, Accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter of 4/1/68, and I am glad that you have solved the hospital bill of Pradyumna. I am so glad to learn that he is taking part in the *Iṣṭagoṣṭhī*. His answers are very intelligent... You should therefore discuss the *Iṣṭagoṣṭhī* from current reading matters from *Bhagavad-gītā* or *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. We should only try to understand everything from the standard of devotional service... My blessings for you all. Your ever well-wisher, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami"

In "With Śrīla Prabhupāda 1966–69", H.H. Satsvarupa dāsa Gosvāmī writes, about that letter, "This is a handwritten letter. Prabhupāda is writing in reference to our *iṣṭa-goṣṭhīs*. Usually *iṣṭa-goṣṭhīs* were divided into discussions of business and philosophy. It was usually the kind of meeting guests are excluded from and candid exchanges are allowed.

Not only would the president present his items, but others were also allowed to speak. *Iṣṭa-goṣṭhī* would be a chance for the cook to remind the devotees not to leave food out to spoil; it would be an opportunity for the *pūjāri* to make a Kṛṣṇa conscious speech about

the importance of attending the *āratis* or how to develop a special relationship with the Deity by doing individual services; it would even be an opportunity for different *anarthas* or temple politics to be exposed...”

In the purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.9.17, you write, “A devotee shows compassion to those poor souls who are wanting in spiritual knowledge by enlightening them in order to elevate them to Krishna consciousness. That is one of the duties of a devotee. He should also make friendship with persons who are on an equal level with himself or who have the same understanding that he does. For a devotee, there is no point in making friendships with ordinary persons; he should make friendship with other devotees so that by discussing among themselves, they may elevate one another on the path of spiritual understanding. This is called ‘*iṣṭa-goṣṭhī*.’”

Here in Auckland, New Zealand, we are eagerly applying and relishing these instructions, and feeling empowered and happy because of your presence in that form. I often remember your directive to discuss your words ‘threadbare’.

I find many, many such instructions from you about this, and am becoming deeply convinced of how – not just important this is – but completely essential, if we want to please the *paramaparā* and become advanced in Krishna consciousness. In 1973, you called it a regulative principle!

If I remember and share such foundational guidance – your presence in these practical guidelines – then I more easily transform my many disqualifications, and become again more enthusiastic to spread your inconceivably life-changing association. A few more of these instructions:

“We are making the association to take lessons from these Vedic literatures.” (Lecture, 1976)

“Be engaged always in reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, discussing amongst yourself. Then you’ll make progress. Otherwise, if you take it as an official routine work... You should take as routine work, but with consciousness that “We have to learn something,” not simply attending the class, but to learn something. In this way make your life successful.” (Lecture, 1975)

“*Śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi*... “Devotional service of the Lord that

ignores the authorized Vedic literatures like the *Upaniṣads*, *Purāṇas* and *Nārada-pañcarātra* is simply an unnecessary disturbance in society." (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.101)

"Generally, people cannot understand. But if one understands, he becomes liberated. If some way or other...it is not very difficult; simply we have to associate with devotees and discuss this literature. Then we'll understand Kṛṣṇa very easily." (Lecture, 1976)

"Such pure devotees, always merged in knowledge of Kṛṣṇa and absorbed in Krishna consciousness, exchange thoughts and realizations as great scientists exchange their views and discuss the results of their research in scientific academies. Such exchanges of thoughts in regard to Kṛṣṇa give pleasure to the Lord, who therefore favors such devotees with all enlightenment." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 1.49, purport)

"...unless and until one is trained in the culture of good association, one cannot become good." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.3.6)

"Try to always study our books and see our philosophy from different lights of directions, **become convinced yourself of this knowledge and without a doubt all of your difficulties of mind will disappear forever and you will see Kṛṣṇa face-to-face.**" (Letter, 1972)

"...Simple hearing is not all; one must realize the text with proper attention. The word *niviṣṭa* means that Sūta Gosvāmī drank the juice of *Bhāgavatam* through his ears. That is the real process of receiving *Bhāgavatam*. One should hear with rapt attention from the real person, and then he can at once realize the presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa in every page..." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.44, purport)

"What is the value of this association? *Sat-saṅga*. *Sat-saṅga* means assembly, discussion. *Bodhayantaḥ parasparam, tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca*. If you are not interested in association, discussion, then you are finished. So... *karmīs*, they are fools

and rascals. When you have got this center, it is not that you should be engaged from morning till you go to bed for sense gratification. That is not life. That is *karmī's* life. You have no time for *sat-saṅga*, for association. You cannot make any progress by this sort of *karmī's* life. We have to work for organization, but not that whole day and night engaged and no *sat-saṅga*. That is a misguided policy, and it will spoil the whole structure. In Los Angeles, they regularly assemble during *ārati* and class. If this regulative principle is lost, then you are *karmīs*." (Room conversation, 1973)

"... This science should be understood, what is God and what is trust. That you discuss thoroughly, threadbare. Otherwise how you will be able to preach?" (Morning Walk, 12.18.73)

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for yet another extraordinary opportunity to share and expand your glories and the wonders of the *saṅkīrtana* movement, the benediction moon.

I beg you that you continue to tolerate and encourage me, so that I may become serious to use this one short life fully, only for you.

Your struggling, but doggedly hopeful beggar servant,
Ātmānanda Dāsa

Padmanābha Dāsa and Līlāmañjarī Devī Dāsī

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, who has opened my eyes, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance, with the torchlight of knowledge"

As I and my wife, Līlāmañjarī Dāsī, enter our 70s, we once again realize how fortunate we are to have your association and teachings to guide us. We look around at aging non-devotees and see their blindness and confusion about the final stages of life. I pray that you continue to guide us and allow us to continue our service to you, no matter the circumstances, in this life and the next. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda – Jagat guru!

Respectfully, your humble and most appreciative disciples,
Padmanābha Dāsa and Līlāmañjarī Devī Dāsī

Chiranjib Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

In 1970 you came to Honolulu Temple on your way to India. That's where I first beheld your divine form. I was following another guru at the time but when I saw you I could tell you were *jagad guru*. You brought Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *saṅkīrtana* movement to the West and I had already joined it before seeing you.

*kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann 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 verse and purport) “....It is impossible to overestimate the importance of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare / Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare, especially in this fallen age.”

This is my ultimate inspiration coming from Your Divine Grace. May I eternally be engaged in Mahāprabhu's *saṅkīrtana* movement under the shelter of your lotus feet.

Your insignificant, eternal servant,

Chiranjib Dāsa

Anuttama Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Throughout time, many great devotees and *ācāryas* have traversed the earthly realms to awaken, educate, and uplift society. They point out the fearsome dangers of materialistic life and guide the world in attaining the ultimate goal of life: rekindling our eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Due to the disqualifications we suffer in this Age of Kali, it is especially difficult now to overcome forgetfulness of God. And so Lord Caitanya descended to teach *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, the chanting of God's names, to save the unqualified people of this age.

On this day of your Vyāsa-pūjā celebration, we rejoice in knowing that Lord Caitanya chose and empowered you, His dearest servant and representative, to spread that chanting all over the world. Today ISKCON members and friends gather around the world in temples and homes to glorify and remember you. We stand in awe of your achievements and your unparalleled love. We fall at your feet in gratitude for your presence in our lives.

Yet the question remains: If we feel genuine gratitude and appreciation for your wondrous gifts, what actions, thoughts, or life changes should such emotions evoke? What are we supposed to do now, and what are we to do later?

Words of praise on this one-day-a-year event are easy to recite. Trying to reciprocate with you on a deeper level, trying to somehow begin to repay you for your immeasurable kindness and mercy, is an entirely different matter.

Within the ISKCON society we have many exalted devotees who bless us with their association. We wish to serve, love, and appreciate all of them. But we must never forget that it was you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who carried Lord Caitanya's message around the world. You are the founder-*ācārya* and pre-eminent *śikṣā-guru* for all of ISKCON, for all time to come.

You brought the holy name to each and every one of us. You gave us Lord Kṛṣṇa, the divine cowherd boy. You gave us Deity worship. You gave us ISKCON. You gave us our temples. You gave us *bhakti*. You gave us *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*. You gave us the Bhaktivedanta purports and the *Bhāgavatam*, the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, and the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. You gave us *japa*, sixteen rounds every day. You gave us the ISKCON morning program. You gave us book distribution and the BBT. You gave us the Sunday Feast. You gave us the Māyāpur Festival. You gave us sweet rice and *halavā!* You gave us so much. You gave us life.

Remembering all these things, how can we not be grateful? How can we not want to praise you? How can we not try to repay our debt to you? But to do so, we must first get serious.

Far beyond a simple offering of words on this auspicious day, we need to consider what really pleases you. What can we do to satisfy you? Each of us, small or big, old or young, rich or poor, initiated or not, needs to think, "What can I do for Śrīla Prabhupāda?" We need to understand your desires for us and to assist you in your mission: to awaken love for Lord Kṛṣṇa in every heart.

Due to our immaturity we tend to forget that helping you by teaching or preaching on your behalf is different and more difficult than parroting your words or expressing our own sometimes self-centered advice and realizations.

To take Lord Kṛṣṇa's message to others, you taught, is an art. It's not easy to attract forgetful souls back to Kṛṣṇa's *sevā* and Vaiṣṇava *saṅga*. It requires humility, wisdom, and a willingness to communicate to others in such a way that their hearts and minds open, in a way that inspires them to receive the transcendental message. Broadcasting a message is simple. Evoking an audience's openness and eagerness to hear is more difficult. As you ordered us, we must preach according to "time, place, and circumstances," all the while praying to the Lord that we become His puppet.

We also hope to remember, as St. Francis taught, to "Preach all day, and when necessary speak a few words." We do not serve you well if we talk high philosophy yet fail to offer practical examples for others to follow. Down-to-earth examples of God consciousness are required: To be exemplary Kṛṣṇa conscious spouses, dedicated to our families *and* your mission; to be exemplary in our work, in our communities, and in our friendships. Otherwise, how are people to learn? Following your example, we need to sacrifice our lives to become humble examples for others.

You also stressed that we cannot become Kṛṣṇa conscious alone. To try do so is "a hallucination," you taught. We need to practice *saṅkīrtana*, not just *kīrtana*. We need to love Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, not just Kṛṣṇa.

Thus, we need ISKCON—one of your greatest gifts. To serve your society requires us to invest deeply in building and expanding ISKCON's worldwide communities and structure today and in the future. To commit to building an ISKCON powerful enough and pure enough to help bring about a "re-spiritualization of the entire human society." Such an exalted mission you have called us to.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, let our words today not be hollow praise. Instead, please let the desire to teach, to set an example, and to serve your mission awaken deeply in my heart, and in the hearts of all your followers.

Your servant,

Anuttama Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your divine lotus feet billions of times. All glories to you.

You directly gave me real birth in Māyāpur in 1975 with 2nd initiation and now I am back here again in Māyāpur 32 years later attempting to serve you until my departure from this world.

I'm begging that you please kindly bestow upon this most unworthy servant of yours the power and intelligence to complete all my services to you.

Unless you bestow your favour upon me I'll always be useless, unworthy, and wretched.

Please bless me that I may become your worthy servant.

Your most unworthy servant,

Ajāmila Dāsa

Mahāshakti Dāsa

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

*namas te sārasoate deve gaura-vāṅī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūmyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Most exalted Gurudeva,

Your mercy is all that I am made of. Out of compassion, following the order of your spiritual master, you came to America at a ripe old age, suffering great discomfort by leaving Vṛndāvana, to preach and create the Krishna consciousness movement. You were not sure how the West was going to receive the message of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, but Kṛṣṇa made certain that all of your efforts would succeed.

As soon as I saw your transcendental form and heard from your transcendental lips, in my heart I became your follower. Other gurus were also coming to the West but no one was representing the personal aspect of the Absolute Truth like you were.

It is inconceivable that I had the association of such an exalted

devotee of the Lord. It is even more inconceivable that I took initiation from you. My whole life has become a success because of you.

The Lord is calling me Home through you. I am indebted to you forever and ever and ever. How can I serve you? When will I see you again? Will I recognize you?

Please give me the transcendental intelligence to serve you and Lord Kṛṣṇa. I am begging you. I no longer want to stay in this material world. I want to serve the Lord and the Vaiṣṇavas. Please give me blessings to increase my devotional service up to the acceptable level of pure devotion.

Thank you again and again for initiating me into the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and allowing my tongue to chant such blissful names of the Lord.

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your fallen servant,

Mahāshakti Dāsa

Nṛsimhānanda Dāsa

I offer my respectful, most humble and fallen obeisances at your divine lotus feet. By your causeless mercy, you are delivering the whole world from impersonalism and voidism. You are forever the nectar in the poison of this material world.

O Prabhupāda, you are freely distributing the pure love which is bountiful as the fruits of the kalpa vṛkṣa tree, fresh as the newly offered Tulasī leaf, clean as the taste of His water. You are the flood of His Grace which flows from the streams of Goloka. You are the glow of the light that is His transcendental body.

O Prabhupāda, when all was darkness, and life had not begun; when my back was turned and I blindly followed my own elusive shadow; when I sat on the stool of forgetfulness and denounced the One beloved; when I plundered down Maya's steps to the outstretched arms of her embrace; when I reached the bottom of the uncountable fathoms of nescience....you, Prabhupāda, picked up this most fallen soul from the ocean of death to breathe, to sniff, to taste, to touch, to perceive for a moment what is so close in heart and so far in desire. Through layers upon layers of coated dust, you came singing and dancing, calling and prancing upon the sublime

chanting of the holy names, holy names, holy names, holy names:

*HARE KṚṢṂA, HARE KṚṢṂA, KṚṢṂA KṚṢṂA, HARE HARE /
HARE RĀMĀ, HARE RĀMĀ, RĀMĀ RĀMĀ, HARE HARE.*

They are the perfection of music as you are just perfection. *HARER NĀMA HARER NĀMA HARER NĀMAIVA KEVALAM.* They are God's glory as you are the glory of God. *KALAU NĀSTY EVA NĀSTY EVA NĀSTY EVA.* They are life's deliverance as you are the deliverer of life. *GATIR ANYATHĀ.* They are the means and the end as you are the end of all meaning.

O Prabhupāda, you are personified truth; you are the most pure of sadhus – for where can there be illusion, where can there be mistake, where can there be cheating and where can there be imperfection where there is you, the dispeller of fear, the fructified plant of He

Who is Most Dear.

Prabhupāda, somehow let me fix my mind on your lotus feet; let me watch your eyes glisten in delight and your toes wiggle in spiritual trance. Like the soft flutter of the *pūjāri's* handkerchief, like the soothing breeze of the peacock fan – that is you, Prabhupāda. You are in the tinkle of the bell. You are in the fragrance of the rose. You are in the sprinkle of the water. You are in the light of the fire. In the sound of the holy conch, I hear your sacred name, Prabhupāda. It speaks your fame.

O Prabhupāda, your lotus eyes glance over the spectacle that is stumbling humanity dancing to the wrong music. And you chant the holy names into waxed ears. And you stretch your graceful arms in ecstasy as they tumble dumbly down the steps of illusion. And all you ask is that we make the unfortunate fortunate, we make the not-hearing hear, we make our selves sincere by being sincere.

O Prabhupāda, you are the sweetness of a simply wonderful; you are the spice of the *dāhl*; you are the richness of the ghee; you are the cream of the milk. The taste of your mercy has no limit, the radiance of your jeweled heart has no bounds.

*catur-vidha-śrī-bhagavat-prasāda-
svādo-anna-tṛptān hari-bhakta-saṅghān
kṛtvāiva tṛptim bhajataḥ sadaiva
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

AHAM BRAHMĀSMI SAC-CID-ĀNANDA-VIGRAHA
JANMĀDYASYA YATAḤ
CETO DARPANA MARJAṆAM
SANATANA DHARMA

O Prabhupāda, may I someday be able to offer you one leaf of sincerity, one flower of devotion, one fruit of pure goodness, one tear of love.

O Prabhupāda, O Spiritual Master, may I inquire from you submissively? May I render service unto you? May I approach you with bowed head and folded palms and ask that you, by your infinite mercy, by your unlimited kindness, by your endless compassion, by your most sanctified grace, accept me as your watched, most fallen, unworthy disciple who reluctantly begs – with less than a particle of sincerity – to become your eternal, undying, ever-existing servant of the servant of the servant of the servant, ad infinitum.

*By your causeless mercy, may I forever, always,
unceasingly be in your service...*

Nṛsimhānanda Dāsa

Prithu Dāsa Adhikary

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories unto you.

What credential do I have to glorify you? How can somebody so insignificant find words appropriate to glorify a perfect being such as yourself? However, since it is the custom that at the Vyāsa-pūjā day, the disciple glorifies his spiritual master, let me try:

In one of your purports in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, you described, how in the beginning of creation Lord Brahmā heard two syllables joined together - 'ta pa' - *tapasya*, the "wealth of the renounced order of life." Brahmā accepted the transcendental vibration as divine order and thus underwent penances for one thousand years by the calculations of the demigods. And it was due to *tapasya* alone that he became empowered to create the universal structure.

Similarly – ISKCON – your society, would have never come into being without you performing unlimited *tapasya* – austerities, of which we know only a fraction of.

Here are a few examples:

Once, Narottama Gupta, your ayurvedic doctor in Vṛndāvana told me that when you came to Vṛndāvana, you stayed initially in one of these cave-like rooms that are to the right when one passes the Keśī ghāṭ Palace. Dr. Gupta told me that you were so poor that you could not even afford a room. In fact, he told me that he treated you as you caught malaria a few times within one year living there, in the heat of summer and the cold of winter, and that he was telling you: “You will not survive if you don’t get a proper room to stay.” So he said he finally organized a room to give you shelter. Doctor Gupta also told me that often, when he took a tonga down Chatikara Road to catch a bus on the Agra-Delhi Road to Delhi, he saw you sitting alone under a tree in the same property that later was to become the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple, playing *kartāls* and singing the holy name. He believed that that tree was actually the very tree that later became incorporated into the courtyard of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir.

Another example a godbrother of mine recently related: Keśava Mahārāja and another *sannyāsī* came to visit you at Rādhā-Dāmodara temple. You had a severe cold but would sleep on the cold floor on a thin grass mat. “Why don’t you buy a bed?” they asked you. You replied, “I want to spend every paisa on books”...just imagine.

Only God really knows how much you suffered for Kṛṣṇa to create this enormous movement so that thousands could find their way back to Kṛṣṇa. On your knees, sweeping the floor of a temple, all by yourself, going dozens of times to Delhi in the heat of summer or cold of winter to print your newspaper, always working on your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Finally managing to get a passage on the Jaladuta, you suffered two heart attacks on the ship, and suffered more abuse when staying on skid row in New York. While I was chanting my rounds one day in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, sitting on a bench, facing hippy hill, one poor old black man passed by, pushing a shopping cart with his belongings. He stopped when he saw me and looked at me for a while. Then he said: “That man who pulled this, this Kṛṣṇa thing – he was a cool cat. I was living in the Bowery and he was living in a house that was a complete mess... But then again”, he pondered, “Jesus was born in a barn”...

It could not have been better said.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam describes personalities like yourself:

*tapyante loka-tāpena
sādhavaḥ prāyaśo janāḥ
paramārādhanaṁ tad dhi
puruṣasyākhlātmanaḥ*

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

Indeed, this verse perfectly encapsulates your life. You indeed performed “the highest method of worship”, glorifying Kṛṣṇa on an unprecedented scale to save the world, and us fallen souls, to express your love for Kṛṣṇa. Indeed you are one of these rare souls, described by Kṛṣṇa”:

*na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu
kaścin me priya-kṛttamaḥ
bhavitā na ca me tasmād
anyaḥ priyatara bhuvi*

“There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.” (*Gītā* 18.69)

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda for picking me up. Where would I be if I would not received your *Śrī Īśopaniṣad* one day back in 1972? Reading it inspired me so much that I could not sleep all night. I finished the book at 4 a.m. in the morning. It was right then and there that I made a decision – the best I ever made in my life: Two days later I knocked at the door of the Hamburg Bartelstrasse temple to join your movement. It was January 1st, 1972.

You saved my life – what more can I say, but: thank you so much Śrīla Prabhupāda, my spiritual father. Please help me to continue on this path.

Your servant,

Prithu Dāsa Adhikary

Dear Prabhupāda,

Please accept this heartfelt offering with obeisances at your feet.

O Prabhupāda, O Gurudeva
My heart and soul you've surely saved
I came to you looking for truth
In return you gave eternal youth
Your loving glance so sweet and pure
Lifted me up feeling safe and secure
Encouraging us to chant and dance
Giving us hope to spiritually advance
I hope and pray to please you someday
Miracles happen when you show the way
Your blessings give such peace of mind
A refreshing change from a 9 to 5 grind
I feel your presence thinking of you
Your warmth and love all thru and thru
Please help me Prabhupāda you are my guide
You have opened my eyes now I can't hide
Prabhupāda please help me chant with sincerity
You have blessed us with blissful eternity
Knowing the Truth you have bestowed
A blessing truly I will always owe
I hope one day to see you again
Playing the gong with mallet in hand
I pray for ever increasing faith
Let me remember Your Divine Grace

Your disciple,

Vrindabaneshvari Devī Dāsī

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

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

I offer my humble unlimited obeisances unto Śrīmate Bhaktivedānta Swami who is very dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and beg his causeless mercy

O servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī, my respectful obeisances unto you. You preach the message of Śrī Gaurāṅga and deliver the entire world from impersonalism and voidism.

I offer the same unlimited obeisances to my *param guru* and the entire *guru varga* and beg their causeless mercy.

I offer unlimited obeisances to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga and to Rādhā/Kṛṣṇa Yugal and beg Their causeless mercy.

Once again I have been given this great opportunity to glorify my spiritual master by the kindness of the devotees hosting this site and publishing the *Tributes* book. Although unqualified I will try to say something of value.

Narahari Sarakāra has written one *bhajana*:

*(yadi) gaura nā hoito, tabe ki hoito, kemone dharitām de?
rādhār mahimā, prema-rasa-sīmā, jagate jānāto ke?*

If Gaurāṅga had not come what would have we become how could we possibly live?

Śrī Rādhā's love in the highest who else could possibly give.

(paraphrased from our godsister Maṅgala Dāsī's translation into English song)

This can also be said of Śrīla Prabhupāda especially for us in the Western countries.

In my present state I don't know Lord Gaurāṅga, but I do know Śrīla Prabhupāda and so I think of him.

The other day I was discussing with an older Vaiṣṇavī from Bengal who travels and preaches. Although she is 84, that I am almost 70, I am not a good preacher, and I don't know many verses. I should retire to Vṛndāvana and do my *bhajana* as instructed by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1974. She replied that we must preach; that I should simply repeat what I heard from my guru and my experiences.

That is preaching.

Two days ago I went to visit my dear godsister Gāyatrī devī dāsī, who departed from her body the next morning Friday, March 17, 2017. She was surrounded by the so many sweet devotees including her family and although she was now internal, we chanted to her and discussed topics dear, or related to her. I told of an interview that the devotees had with Pisimā, (Bhavatāriṇī Dāsī) Śrīla Prabhupāda’s sister, shortly after he entered *samādhi*. I was requested to share this by them.

She was asked several questions.

Question: “Do you consider Śrīla Prabhupāda to be your guru in any way?”

Answer: “No, Sarasvatī Thākura only.”

Question: “Tell us about the time you and Prabhupāda were flying kites and he beat you.”

Answer: “He beat me many times.”

Question: “If you could pick one quality that best describes your brother but you can pick only one, what will it be?”

(I could see everyone’s mind working trying to pick what she would say. I thought maybe “pure” “humble” or “*bhakti*”. I didn’t have long to think though because she answered immediately with no hesitation.)

Answer: “He was an expert musician. Any instrument he picked up he could play.”

So today I am sharing this with all of you who read this with the hope that it enriches your knowledge of Śrīla Prabhupāda, who is an ocean of mercy and qualities.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your very fallen daughter aspiring for your divine darśana and service,

Bhavatāriṇī Devī Dāsī

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, and unto all the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord.

Everything about you is simply wonderful, Śrīla Prabhupāda. From utter despair when I was searching for the meaning of life, to literally, dancing and jumping in ecstasy after hearing the first *Bhagavad-gītā* class, it is just amazing. It was Ekādaśī, so they distributed watermelon *prasāda* to the guests. It tasted like no other one – so simple yet so nice – it was just amazing, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

I have never before talked about this, the first time I saw you Śrīla Prabhupāda there was shivering through the body and tears in my eyes, so I had to hide on the roof. And why not? Śrīla Bhaktivinoda explains that in the presence of such pure devotee *paramahansa*, all sins fly away like birds after clapping. Then, such shadow ecstatic symptoms are possible. It is just amazing, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

You brought the meaning of the *Vedas*, the meaning of life. You revealed such great *paramahansas* – pure devotees of the Lord like the Six Gosvāmīs and all pure devotees in the *paramparā*. Their intellect is just unfathomable, it is just amazing, because it is based on self-realization, and not just on intellectual prowess.

Your causeless mercy is simply wonderful, your devotees are simply wonderful, your movement is simply wonderful, you are simply wonderful, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

I offer my humble obeisances unto your lotus feet, again and again! All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your servant,

Nandanandana Dāsa

WE MISS YOU ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories unto you! I have no true understanding of your exalted position, as the very dear (*preṣṭhā*) servant of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, please forgive my frail attempt to adequately praise you on this most auspicious day of your divine appearance, Vyāsa-pūjā.

We miss you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! It is now nearly 40 years since you have left our mortal vision. We miss you tremendously, Śrīla Prabhupāda, words cannot express the anguish caused by your physical absence. But it is only our impurities which obfuscate the vision to clearly perceive you; for you are always present with us in your instructions. To accept and follow your divine instructions is the elixir prescribed by you that will cure our ignorance born of illusion:

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

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

We miss you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! When you were physically present, all your sincere disciples relentlessly followed your every instruction. You empowered us to enthusiastically assist you in spreading the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and fulfil the order given to you by your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

We miss you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Oh, how we yearn to be with you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and personally serve you as we did before. Of course our service to you is not impeded by time and space and it is beyond the purview of our limited material senses.

We miss you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! You inculcated the camaraderie and collective energy in your disciples which catapulted “The Hare Krishna Explosion” all over the world, and made the phrase Hare Kṛṣṇa a household word in America. You stated that the ideal and most favorable venue to disseminate and establish Krishna

consciousness is in America, for the entire world will follow in her footsteps:

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

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

We miss you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! I recall your notable visit in February of 1975 to the Atlanta temple, which you dotingly christened New Pānihāṭi Dhāma. Upon your arrival, you went into transcendental ecstasy while glorifying Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi. You said:

“So Caitanya Mahāprabhu is very kind. *Parama karuṇa, pahū dui jana*. Two Lords, Nitāi-Gauracandra, Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, They are very kind, you see? They have appeared just to reclaim the fallen souls of this age. So They are more kind than Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa, He is also very kind. He comes to deliver. But Kṛṣṇa demands that first of all surrender. Caitanya Mahāprabhu even does not demand surrender. He is so kind. [voice choking] So take shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and be happy. Thank you very much.” [choked voice]

We miss you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Most of your disciples are presently in their 60’s and 70’s years of age, many have passed and the rest are facing imminent death. The time is here for us to become fully absorbed in Krishna consciousness and render our final service to you on this earth prior to our demise. Only by your mercy and benediction can we return back home, back to Godhead.

We miss you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Our fervent desire is to emulate you, and preach vigorously till our last dying breath, just as you have done. We are studying your books profusely and scrutinizingly, in order to become fully conversant with your writings. We wish to hear ALL of your lectures, watch ALL of your videos, listen to ALL of your *bhajan*s, view ALL of your photos, and partake of any bona fide biographical information which concerns you even remotely.

So today, we observe this most sacred event, Vyāsa-pūjā. It is a blessed opportunity to glorify you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. To glorify you is the perfection of yoga that can successfully unite all of your disciples, grand-disciples, and sincere followers to carry on your mission. We offer our ardent prayers to please forgive our

shortcomings and accept our meager endeavors to serve you. We are your spiritual children, completely dependent upon your mercy, and we are lost in this material world without you, our spiritual father. Please bestow upon us the shelter of your lotus feet and allow us to blissfully live with you eternally. “We miss you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!”

Your aspiring disciple,

Vaiṣṇavānanda Dāsa

Ali Krishna Devī Dāsī

Beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Knowing that I was one of the pioneers of ISKCON Italy, often the devotees ask me to relate the story of the beginning of our movement in this country and the visit of Your Divine Grace in Rome.

The story begins when Dhanañjaya Dāsa and his wife, Bāla Gopāla Devī Dāsī, came to see you in your room at Bhaktivedanta Manor, and asked permission to start a center in Rome. You opened your eyes wide and your face lit up with a big smile: “Yes,” you said enthusiastically, “go to Rome, find a house and write to me. I will come and stay with you.”

Not long after that conversation, you honored your promise: we started the center in Rome in October ‘73 and in May ‘74. A few months later, you came to stay with us.

The house was small: the temple room was in the basement with a simple altar and small Gaura-Nitāi Deities, installed on Nṛsiṁhadeva’s appearance day, a couple of weeks before your arrival.

The house was in a busy part of Rome and your bed/office room was in the direction of a crossroad from where the sound of the traffic and the horns of the cars was very intense. Dhanañjaya apologized for the noise and said that he was hoping it didn’t disturb you too much.

“Not at all,” you replied, “that means that the house is located in a very central section of the town. Thank you for establishing a center in this very important city. Mahāprabhu will take you by the hand and bring you back home, back to Godhead.” Your words left us astonished and speechless.

We had prepared your room on the mezzanine floor. Just opposite

was the kitchen; next to your room, the *brahmacāriṇī* ashram became your secretary and servant's room, and in front, your bathroom. Everything was extremely simple: the furniture consisted of a low table with a lamp, a basic iron bookcase and a modest bed. The door of the room was not even closing well!

You didn't mind the inconveniences, the noise coming from the streets and the kitchen. You stayed undisturbed for a whole week, enthusing your disciples, preaching to the guests, going out for conferences, and keeping up with your usual translation work.

After a full preaching day and a little rest, around midnight, when everything around was silent and the air cooler, you used to switch on the light of your room. I knew that you were absorbed in the timeless wisdom of Vedic knowledge.

In fact, we *brahmacāriṇīs* were sleeping on the terrace-roof of the house and from up there we could see the reflection of the light coming from your window on the garden. I would then envision Your Divine Grace at the desk translating from old Sanskrit books and passing down to us your beautiful purports that since then have enlightened my life. With that vision in mind, I would then fall asleep under the clear and warm night sky.

You looked very happy, you liked the town and the weather, and each morning you went out for a stroll in the beautiful parks of the capital, like Villa Borghese and others. One day the devotees brought you to see the Colosseum, and in front of that huge ancient amphitheater, you commented: "Where is now the big, big Roman empire? Only some ruins and few stones are left!"

As soon as we got the news of your arrival, we rushed here and there to organize a nice public preaching program for you. With the help of some friends we booked the hall of the prestigious Hotel "Parco dei Principi" (Princes' Park), with more than 600 seats, in the center of Rome. To advertise the event, we printed a large number of black and white posters with your picture and name, and pasted them all over the city inviting the people to your conference, free of charge, on the 25th of May.

We were afraid that being hardly interested in Indian gurus and philosophy, only a few people would attend, and that the program would result in a flop. That evening, however, when we entered the hall to accompany you on the stage, we were amazed to see people sitting on the floor and standing in the corridors and at the back, since no more sitting places were available. It was packed! More than

800 people were present that evening, and while you were lecturing on one of the verses of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, they all listened silently and respectfully. At the end you answered many questions, and thereafter expressed to us your appreciation by saying that Italian people took very seriously the knowledge of Krishna consciousness.

It was a great success. Some of the boys and girls who were present became full-time devotees, and lots of people came to visit our center. By visiting Rome, Your Divine Grace inaugurated a new era in those people's consciousness, and from that moment the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement spread like wild fire all over the country.

Once, when somebody asked if you were able to manifest some mystic power, you answered that you had the power to transform material consciousness into spiritual consciousness. That power is actually the greatest, and you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, fully displayed it during that public conference.

When time came to leave Rome for other destinations, you turned to us, neophyte as we were, with all our defects and shortcomings (you even had to go to the kitchen to show us how to cook), and with folded hands you thanked everyone, apologizing for the inconveniences you have caused!

By hearing such humble words, our eyes became full of tears, and we were unable to speak. Once more you astonished us with your grateful attitude and great compassion.

May I always remember those incredible moments with you, and the miracles you performed in front of my eyes. May I always acknowledge your presence in whatever has been accomplished here in Italy, and anywhere else in the world.

Without your mercy and constant help and guidance, I wouldn't be able to even pronounce a few words of glorification in your honor! May the desire to please you expand more and more in my heart, because to be an instrument in your hand is the key to overcome all obstacles and at the end be reunited with you.

Your aspiring servant,

Ali Krishna Devī Dāśī

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 Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Śrī Advaita,
Gadādhara, Śrīvāsādi Gaura Bhakta Vṛinda.*

*Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*

All glories to His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda, my eternal spiritual master. Thank you for coming and lifting me out of this mundane dream, material bodily identity that I am now finally understanding.

The struggle has not been easy as you know, but it is your personal association and guidance that I now always relish and hold tightly onto in old age.

In 1976, I was your bodyguard during the day and sleeping at your door at night. I was always very alert based on this old saying “Pray to Kṛṣṇa that protecting Śrīla Prabhupāda is only up to Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva and Kṛṣṇa, but do your duty of protecting him as if it is up to you”.

One night you came to the door and asked how I was after previously sending me a strong-worded letter some seven months earlier. I said, “It’s often very difficult Prabhupāda – this youthful body is nothing but trouble for me”. You then thought for a moment and said, “NEVER leave me no matter what happens”. I started crying...it was very moving, this is why I am still here, because of your wonderful love, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Now is the time to prepare for the death of this troublesome embarrassing material bodily vessel I am in – that many others – some very knowledgeable, still identify as me. However, I am not this material body, I am the *jīva tattva* within and have had millions of these bodies, now it’s time – once and for all – to put an end to this terrible cycle of birth and death.

ISKCON is still a very young organization – only 51 years old this year; it will take some time to further mature into a strong spiritual movement. That will only happen as long as the basic teachings of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu get stronger and stronger. And that basis is constant *saṅkīrtana* which is chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa on the streets of every town, village and city of the world and distributing magazines and Prabhupāda’s books. This is where the real and only strength of ISKCON lies...this is how we were trained in the beginning as teenagers.

*harer nāma harer nāma harer namaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatiḥ 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 17.21)

When chanted, the mahā-mantra is a petition to God: “O Kṛṣṇa, O energy of Kṛṣṇa, please engage me in Your service.

In Kali-yuga, *varṇa* and *āśrama* will only work under the heading of Lord Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* movement, the central point is *saṅkīrtana*, mass *saṅkīrtana*, and it is for EVERYONE.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you taught me this important lesson that applies to both, the very young and very old:

“If you take to Krishna consciousness, there will be so many disturbances by māyā. Māyā will test you how far you are fixed up. She will test you. She is also agent of Kṛṣṇa. She does not allow anyone to disturb Kṛṣṇa. Therefore she tests very rigidly whether you have taken to Krishna consciousness to disturb Kṛṣṇa, or you are actually serious.” (Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.20, New York, April 12, 1973)

All glorious to Śrīla Prabhupāda from your fallen servant,

Gauragopāla Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda:

Although I am incapable of realizing the depth of your inconceivable compassion, I can still honestly say that my own life, otherwise pointless, has been immensely significant only because I have been allowed to be one of so many witnesses to your miraculous love's effect on countless fortunate souls. By your relentless desire to bring all wayward souls back into the loving service of our Eternal Father, you have swept us all up into this glorious torrent of Gaura Kṛpā which is surely changing this hell-bound planet towards the new dawn of Śrī Caitanya's Golden Age of divine love. By our own service connection to you, everything auspicious has appeared in our lives: the growing realization of material life's utter futility and the urgency of becoming truly fixed in our loving service to our dearest Friend. We can only hope to finally achieve this seemingly impossible goal by your constant mercy, which alone is the real substance of our lives. Because you are always with God, from Whom we have removed ourselves by our illusory desires, in your sheltering association we can become reformed and reconnected to our eternal service to God. How all that is made possible remains the great mystery of divine mercy.

For whatever years I am allowed to continue on this path of meager service to your mission of mercy, my only hope is to continue witnessing the awesome downpour of divine love which you forever channel from Mahāprabhu's magnanimous heart.

Your unworthy aspiring servant,

Gokulānanda Dāsa
ISKCON Montreal

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances.

To make an offering to Mother Gaṅgā, one takes *gaṅgājala* and offers it back to the Gaṅgā. To make an offering and glorify you, I take from what you gave to me and offer it back. But even here I recognize *pratiṣṭhā* in me. Actually, I should be quiet until I can utter pure, uncontaminated words of love.

You, the *bhāgavata*, grace the world, give mercy. You point to the real problems and questions in life – and you answer, provoke, inspire and illuminate our lives. Like ghee lamps offered to the Deity in a dark room reveal the beauty of the Deity, you illuminate our lives, revealing the meaning of life and the beauty of service to Kṛṣṇa, revealing our *svarūpa*.

Your mercy comes in different ways; sometimes as a sweet ball given in the hand after class, another time in real strong words. What extinguishes a forest fire? Something devastating. What can make me aware of my misconceptions? Here I beg for the sweet ball in the hand – and the club another time. Somehow or other your mercy forces its way into my heart, and flying with the wings of faith, you call to me: “Look at the world and your situation from this angle of view – what do you see?” I really want to always keep that vision, that point of view. From here I see that everything is composed of the ultimate substance, Kṛṣṇa. From here, the ocean of all sufferings shrinks to a drop in a cow’s, no, in a calf’s hoof print. You take me by the hand, and we step over it without any endeavour. “What’s the difficulty?” The problem is clear...we conditioned souls want to reign in hell. But the *svarūpa* is of another nature. And by the most magnanimous Mahāprabhu, we are drawn into the ocean of love to Kṛṣṇa. We, the prisoners of our own ignorant misconceptions, we, the real sick patients in this hospital, are graced to receive the medicine composed of the ultimate substance, Kṛṣṇa, from the hand of Your Grace, whose only unhappiness is the sufferings of others. I aspire for being your servant and being close to you so that I can hear you when you call for me.

Janmanālaya Dāsa

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

As your ISKCON movement has passed its 50th year – and this year it will have been 40 years since you departed from this world – I am again reflecting on how I’ve been able to carry on in my Krishna consciousness without your *vapu*, your physical presence. I am noting that one of my major inspirations comes from studying your purports, which have given me constant and deeper realizations and also bring me closer to you. I feel your presence in your words and know you are carefully and lovingly guiding me towards the goal of life – love for Kṛṣṇa. It is hard to express the depth of my gratitude for all you have done for me – and the whole world.

Nowadays so many people take self-help courses, attend seminars on how to be mindful, as well as yoga classes, all hoping to find their way out of life’s maze. And even though they may learn how to relax or even accept that they are different from their bodies, their results are temporary and without true understanding. If only they would read your books, Śrīla Prabhupāda, they would actually be able to solve all of their problems, for your books are the real teachers, the source of all happiness and realization of the true self. This is the beauty of your books: you have written these literatures – these timeless treasures – in such a way that everyone can not only come to the proper understanding of what they should be doing, but they can actually follow a simple and sublime process to attain that goal!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your precious purports, your personal ecstasies are so beautifully and intricately woven with the fine, golden threads of the commentaries of the previous *ācāryas*. You spent your every night deep in meditation on writing these purports, meticulously creating the masterpieces and giving us all that we need to know. You are the true poet and master of literatures, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Your books are the sound of the *brhad mṛdaṅga*, the answer to Lord Caitanya’s prediction, “*pr̥thivīte āche yata nagarādi*

grāma / sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma". No one can compare to you.

Thank you forever for your *vāñī*, your guidance through these timeless literatures. May I serve you eternally. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you always held your head high, but with utmost humility. My heartfelt prayer is that you please bless me so that I can always hold my head on top of your lotus feet. Please purify my desires so that they can fulfill your desires.

Your servant,

MadanMohanMohiñī Devī Dāsī

Madan Mohan Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

The years keep going by, and by your mercy, I am blessed to be able to follow the basic *sādhana* of chanting a minimum of 16 rounds and some days more, and a full morning program. I realize how wonderfully powerful this process is. The realization of a "knowing" deeply transforming my perception of every aspect of my life. How is this possible, I have no pious credits to my name, therefore, it is all only your mercy. The words that you gave us in your books and lectures, letters, morning walks and room conversation are not from the material potency. And now, as my faith is developing by that association, my vision is also becoming steady.

When Lord Caitanya came back from Gayā and was teaching how every word meant Kṛṣṇa because He was in ecstasy, and just as Lord Caitanya did you are also doing: "Gaurasundara explained to His students that one can derive the real meaning of a book by discussing and studying through *vidvad-rūḍhi*" (*Caitanya Bhāgavata*, Madhya-khaṇḍa 1.147). And in the *Caitanya Bhāgavata* commentary Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta called that *vidvad-rūḍhi* because He was absorbed in trace of love for Kṛṣṇa. I also remembered you had said that the purports are your devotional ecstasy, and in fact all of Krishna consciousness is all made up of that same imported internal potency that you are delivering the material existence with. Therefore we say, "Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda," the victory of the internal potency over the external potency, and giving everyone that taste which is the real glorious feeling.

Every word inherently establishes Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Truth,

so there is no wonder that the Lord should explain in this way.

Any word manifested from the pure spiritual sky and received by the eternally pure sense of hearing smeared with the ointment of love is certainly non-different from the eternal primeval Absolute Truth, Kṛṣṇa. Therefore it is not very wonderful or astonishing that the Supreme Lord Śrī Viśvambhara, who is devoid of the four defects of mistakes, illusion, cheating, and imperfection that are found in living entities, will explain the meaning of every word through the eternal, pure, complete, eternally liberated, spiritual, and most important *vidvad-rūḍhi* (*Caitanya Bhāgavata*, Madhya-khaṇḍa 1.171).

“You explained every word simply in relationship with Kṛṣṇa, so who is the proper candidate for understanding Your explanations?” (*Caitanya Bhāgavata*, Madhya-khaṇḍa 1.174)

Knowing this you created ISKCON only so we could fulfill that vacancy for proper candidacy and you are training us to hear those special words.

“When the Lord of the three worlds began to teach, nothing other than Kṛṣṇa came from His mouth” (*Caitanya Bhāgavata*, Madhya-khaṇḍa 1.251)

One can only see how truly you are the personification of this mantra preaching the message of Lord Caitanya:

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

Your aspiring servant,

Madan Mohan Dāsa

Kṛṣṇānandinī Devī Dāsī

Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

With all my heart, I offer my respectful obeisances at your lotus feet and pray to our sweet Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Lord Nityānanda to allow me to appreciate you more and more and assist with great joy your very special mission. And what is that mission?

Your mission, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is to help us to understand what is God, what is our relationship with God and what we should do about that relationship. You have opened the portal to the spiritual world and with great patience, you are cleaning us up, educating, encouraging us and nurturing us, drenching us with Kṛṣṇa *prema*. You are the ever well-wisher for the entire world!

We were dying Śrīla Prabhupāda, re-entering the vicious cycle of *janma* (birth), *mṛtyu* (death) *jarā* (old age) and *vyādhi* (disease). Over and over and over again, we were caught up in that cycle. Kṛṣṇa is God, the Original, all-attractive, unlimited, eternal Person and every single living being is His eternal servant. All life is sacred. You didn't just tell us this Prabhupāda. You made us realize it! You showed it! You caused us to understand that we have a permanent home free of sadness, depression, fear, birth, death, old age, disease, craziness. A home full of love and joy and variety. You urged us to "Go Back Home, Back to Godhead!"

"Don't violate the laws of nature," you instructed, it will lead to more and more painful life and your favorite song, *Hari Hari Biphale*, penned by Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, speaks to our heart because before you pulled us with your loving mercy, we had uselessly wasted our life. Though taking a rare human birth, I had not worshiped Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. So, knowingly, I was drinking poison. But you saved me!

May my life appreciate you; may my words convey your message, may I carry out your instructions with faithfulness, wisdom, grace, beauty and compassion, may my family adore you eternally and may all your sincere followers cooperate together to exemplify the loving, devotional life you gave to the world.

With love, your daughter,

Kṛṣṇānandīnī Devī Dāsī

Mahāmān Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept the obeisances of this insignificant servant of yours at your lotus feet.

It is indeed very difficult to fathom your glories. Indeed, Lord Kṛṣṇa cannot fathom the limit of His devotees' glories! Yet, as your

fortunate followers we have the duty to make our (even though feeble) offerings.

Remembrance of my first *darśana* of Your Divine Grace and your mercifully glancing and smiling at me whilst touching my head with your lotus hands is the very sustenance of my life. I shall never forget that oceanic smile, as if you had known this soul always. At that moment, I experienced that your beloved Kṛṣṇa was present in the same room with you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya which you have spread is the best thing that is going on at present on this planet; it is the best thing that ever happened here or anywhere, and it is the best thing that will ever happen.

Unqualified though I am, I remember our debt to you, although it is not possible to liquidate the debt we owe you, individually, and collectively as a movement, yet we can please you by strict adherence to your instructions and always remaining enthusiastic in devotional service.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you always conveyed that there is no limit or monopoly how one can serve Kṛṣṇa. Our loving Kṛṣṇa unconditionally is what pleases you the most.

In a letter by Your Divine Grace from the US to your godbrothers, you had mentioned that the people of Western countries were very fallen but they had one good qualification: that they had strong faith and attachment to you. I pray that I may also remain attached to Your Divine Grace. Even lacking any special abilities or proclivities, if one is sincere, one can be elevated to the highest platform. I pray that you overlook my deficiencies and help me to become sincere.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I thank you from the core of my heart for saving me and having performed the greatest miracle in history by progressively Kṛṣṇazing this world – a miracle that astounds devotees and non-devotees alike. Whilst monumental and phenomenal external physical developments such as temples, farms, gurukulas, etc., have taken place on this planet, your causeless mercy has also enshrined Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa in the Temples of the hearts of millions.

Begging to be allowed the good fortune to remain your servant for ever and ever.

Your loving servant,

Mahāmān Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Please accept my *danḍavats* at your holy lotus feet. I just want to go on record that every year, this Krishna consciousness movement gets better and better. I thank you very much for building this house in which the whole world can live (ISKCON). This is almost my 47th year since taking up residence full time in your storefront temple in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco, on June 9th, 1970. It is a fact that Vaikuṅṭha and Goloka are the only places we can go and find our birth right of eternal knowledge and bliss. This is not to be found in any remote galaxy of this world, or on Mars or the moon, or even in Brahmaloḳa. The only place we can go where we don't have to come back from is the spiritual world, composed of Vaikuṅṭha and Goloka. So it stands to reason that the price of this ticket is high. Even if we are able to penetrate the eight layers of gross and subtle elements and pass through the covering of the material world, what we will find outside this covering will still be confusing without the timeless wisdom you have so mercifully given us in your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, etc. Will we merge into the Brahman effulgence and dare to declare we are God, or will we continue the journey until we have set foot on a concrete Viṣṇuloka or the *summum bonum* Goloka Vṛndāvana planet? If we take your erudite translations and lavish commentary seriously, we will certainly not stop until we see Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma dancing with Their *gopīs* in Goloka. Then we will also see who we are eternally in relation to Their Lordship's divine *līlā*.

Thank you so much. I am just a speck of dust at your holy lotus feet, and I beg to remain so eternally. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your humble servant of your servant,

Vāṇinātha Dāsa Brahmachārī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet. All glories to you and your very compassionate shower of mercy on this wretch lying prostrated before you.

From the very first time our eyes met I felt awkward and guilty for my deviations from instructions, which you most probably gave me in some previous life. I felt as if you were thinking “Oh, it’s you again. Will you do any better this time ‘round?’”

Since that encounter, I swim in the bliss of serving you infrequently. Yes, I must admit I am not always vigilant to continuously serve you, but when I do, the bliss is sufficient to keep hope that I may again serve you life after life. It’s a kind of limbo I’m in, which will most likely keep me from attaining full freedom from material entanglement. Service to you is so relishable that I have very little inclination to advance further.

I’m not going to pray for calamities like queen Kuntī does, to help remind her of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I’ve had more than my fair share of trying challenges. Why I don’t pray like Queen Kuntī is because when difficulties come my way or I feel cheated, I incorporate my past solutions of sense gratification to try and balance out the misery.

So I’m sitting on a kind of plateau of spiritual complacency – happy with life as it has been, as it is, not too involved with total immersion in your service for fear that I may encounter challenges brought about mainly because of my ego. I most often think I am right and therefore I challenge authorities wherever and whenever we meet. This is a big, regular problem for me.

Then there have been times when I’ve chanted the holy names of the *mahā-mantra* – more than 64 rounds of *japa* ‘on beads’ in a single day. Then after patting myself on the back for that accomplishment, I realize how easy it is to chant so many rounds but not really communicate with Hare, Kṛṣṇa or Rāma the whole time. Instead of thinking humbly, praying for service or thinking of Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes in Vṛndāvana, Dvārakā or Māyāpur as Lord Caitanya, only thoughts of food, sex, sleep or defence have been prominent. I must be suffering from a type of amnesia because while in the presence of the holy name, I fail to recognize *nāma* at all. “How have these calamities come upon me?”

Every once in a while, a tear comes to my dry desert-like eyes

when I hear a Vaiṣṇava chant Kṛṣṇa's name so lovingly – but only if he/ she has a very melodious voice. I then realize my attachment is to the musical tones rather than the pure *nāma*.

A few nights ago I had a very rare encounter with you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in a dream. You chastised me for not being a very good servant. As you continued your talk I was feeling proud of myself for sitting nicely cross-legged before you. Consequently I didn't hear anything you were saying, but then when you were done talking and I tried to get up, I couldn't, by myself....you had to help me.

I blamed my inability on being 70 years old, but you didn't want to hear any excuses at all.

I guess you could understand that I have a history of blaming this or that or somebody for my shortcomings to interfere with serving you nicely.

When you accepted me as your student and named me and asked me to follow the regulative principles, it was easy to say yes, but did I?no!....can I?.... Maybe someday.

Despite knowing my shortcomings you engaged me in your service. Because of the service you have engaged me in I can loudly declare to the world you are the most 'tolerant', 'compassionate', 'loving', 'forgiving' person I have ever known.

If anyone wants to know how compassionate you are then they need only look at me. Despite being a wretched fool you have saved me from the greatest calamity in the material world by giving me some service to you.

Your mercy is truly all that I am made of, of this there is no doubt. You remain my guide and tolerate everything.

If there is anything at all that I have done which pleases you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, then please let that be sufficient to grant me further future service to you, even if it isn't that great. I'm pretty good at cleaning so if you need someone then please keep me in mind and consider me for the job.

Your compassionate mercy is my only solace, my only hope, my only real source of satisfaction.

Yes I still need satisfaction, my service attitude is very conditional I admit. So please be forgiving of my very neophyte mentality, I pray.

Will I ever grow up and out of this juvenile mood? I don't know, maybe in many more lifetimes.

Please remain patient with me dear Śrīla Prabhupāda. Please overlook my familiarity in the same way a father overlooks the son's

foolishness. Think of me more like a son, after all you named me, and brought me into your family. I'm much less of a disciple than your son. I have no discipline, but I will always have you because I know you love me and I love you.

Your loving compassionate fatherly mercy means everything to me. I know you will always be there to help me up.

Your eternal son,

Kāla Dāsa

Rāma Dāsa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

As usual I am still struggling, but, with your help, I am maintaining, not slipping back. You are the backbone of my life, and I find it almost impossible to thank you enough for going out of your way to guide me on this path. Once again, my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. The way you held my hand as we read the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* together is forever in my memory.

Your most fallen but devoted servant and devotee,

Rāma Dāsa

Bhojadeva Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble *daṇḍavat praṇāms* at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

At about age 17, before being blessed your divine association, I would sometimes pray to Lord Jesus for spiritual guidance. Somehow I had a little faith that both that both God and Jesus were real, but had not yet met anyone who could grow my mostly sentimental and fragile faith. Nor had I met anyone who had intimate personal knowledge of God, or found someone who represented God as being transcendental to limited sectarian dogma.

I had wished at that age, that I could have been alive at the time of Jesus, so I could witness everything first-hand and thus solidify

my faith. I also wondered why so many things had gone wrong in the name of religion over time.

If it was to be believed that God had “only one begotten son” it seemed that God was now content not to reach out to humanity again and remain basically silent for the next 2,000 years, at least as far as most of the Western world was concerned.

We now understand by your mercy, how the Supreme Lord appears personally or sends His representative – from time to time throughout eternity – to re-establish the principles of religion as needed, and to protect and enliven His devotees.

Your Divine Grace also revealed how the guru is one. The original guru is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself and He continually expands Himself in that role, in different capacities, and also empowers different personalities throughout time for the same purpose.

After living in your temple for a few years, one day I realized that my earlier wish had been granted – I found myself in the personal presence of a revolutionary, pure loving servant of the Supreme Lord.

Who knew that pure loving devotional service unto the Supreme Lord was each soul’s eternal occupation and the source of ever-increasing spiritual joy? You did. You effulgently lived it and breathed it, and shared it freely.

By your love, kindness and causeless mercy, so many bewildered and misguided souls, such as this foolish boy, have been blessed and propelled towards the perfection of life. For this I am eternally and personally, extremely grateful.

I pray to forever use any minute independence properly under your guidance and thereby come under the direct order of Kṛṣṇa, as described in the last lines of your purport to the final verse in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. “Thus he attains his normal condition in the pleasure giving potency.”

Your loving son, student and aspiring servant,

Bhojadeva Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Congratulations on your 121st Appearance Day, 40 years after your disappearance.

The more years that pass after your disappearance, the more I am meditating on my relationship with you as my eternal spiritual master. You instructed us that we – your disciples – show our love to you by cooperating amongst ourselves. Just now I am experiencing that our love for you manifests so much more in the *saṅga* of our godbrothers and godsisters, your disciples. As more and more of us attain the age when you set sail for America to fulfill your spiritual master’s vision, our *saṅga* is also becoming more rare because by nature’s law, our number is decreasing due to the influence of old age, disease and death. After only a few more years from now, one of your disciples will be the last one on Planet Earth.

ISKCON is preparing the seamless transferal of your mood and mission to the next generations of devotees. But what about your direct disciples? How will we keep you in our hearts by a strong *saṅga*? How are we going to please you for the few more decades to come in this life?

We are preaching that all devotees in your movement cultivate a direct relationship to you as much as to their present *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā* gurus. All devotees in ISKCON, young or old, direct disciples or disciples of your disciples, are in fact your *śikṣā* disciples. This fact already clarifies our task for the decades to come: We older devotees teach the younger ones, and in this way cultivate our common relationship to you. “Love for Kṛṣṇa has this one unique effect: it imbues superiors, equals and inferiors with the spirit of service to Lord Kṛṣṇa” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 6.53)

By studying your books and delivering the contents to the world as well as by implementing your instructions we hope to be able to please you. Simultaneously, I pray for the association of my godbrothers and godsisters because in this way you – Śrīla Prabhupāda – will remain in our hearts.

Your servant,

Vaidyanāth Dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Over the year
Many wonderful things happening.
Each time I thought: 'I'll offer them to Prabhupāda.'
But examining my heart today
I find nothing of value.
Nothing to offer to you, who are so dear.

Who but you could have done what you did?
The answer to that is: 'no one'.
Wonderful Prabhupāda.

Glories to those devotees whose faces glowed
When they remembered you,
Shining out from a million screens across the planet.
The pollen that falls from their mouths
Is my five kinds of food.

A million eyes – that's what we need.
Two eyes are not enough.
Prabhupāda has shown us the Lord
And we've only these two measly eyes
Which keep shutting and turning away.

We were asleep, but your light was on.
Writing your books while we were asleep.
Those books are still talking: the Lord's a person.
He has His own life – so enchanting.
But it's not 'book knowledge'. You can't just walk in.
You need an invitation and that's what

our Śrīla Prabhupāda has given.

The supreme ambassador of goodwill.
The ultimate solution, so simple.
Kṛṣṇa has His own life; He's not our order-supplier.
It's the other way round – we must offer to Him.

How could we have known?
If I'd the life of Brahmā
I still wouldn't get it right
Or have enough time to thank you.

Time to close,
But just one more thing, Prabhupāda.
The poets of the world have missed the plot
If they haven't glorified you.

I built a house to enjoy life
But it's burned down!
Right now it gives me a laugh.
Let me sing *harināma*
And show people your books in the street,
Show them your picture.
This much I beg, life after life.
Jai, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your fallen servant,
Govardhana Devī Dāsī

Badarayan Dāsa

My dear eternal Gurudeva, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

In all humility I prostrate myself before you on this most glorious day that we celebrate your appearance in this troubled world.

I contemplate the occasion, the 50th anniversary of your ISKCON, which you birthed from a lifetime of profound devotion and immense sacrifice solely for the benefit of others.

What comes to me in this contemplation, is the metaphor of

childhood. From the perspective of world religions, ISKCON is still in its infancy.

Little children have temper tantrums, fall-downs, accidents, they catch colds, are even subject to abduction if left unattended. They need constant care and nurturing, loving acceptance, patience and guidance.

You created ISKCON to give shelter to the world. It has, through the consistent dedication and surrender of your followers, opened over 600 centers including farms, schools and restaurants spanning the seven continents, distributed millions of your books in over 62 languages, exposed countless millions to the sacred sound of Hare Kṛṣṇa! This is just the tip of the transcendental iceberg. Incredible that this has transpired after your departure, when the tendency is towards chaos after the passing of the *ācārya*.

You ordered your disciples on no less than five occasions before you departed this world, “your love will be tested by how you work together cooperatively to keep this institution going”. Prophetic words most worthy of our contemplation.

As any parent knows, it is not easy raising a child. There is a requisite amount of self-sacrifice and attitude adjustment needed to foster healthy growth in the new born. If a child does something wrong, that is natural. It must be guided by a loving voice and hand.

Your ISKCON has had its share of anomalies over the course of its inception and infancy. We know then all too well – philosophical deviation, fall downs, neglect of devotee care, misappropriation of money and power, lack of transparency and checks and balances, fanaticism on both ends of the spectrum, lack of keeping Your Divine Grace in the center, failure to properly follow through on your directives and initiatives, etc.

Many devotees express grief and anger over these, understandably so to a degree. And yet, isn't it the natural trajectory of infancy? Growing pains.

While we as a society must address these issues with full transparency and attention, it is so crucial that we also attend to ISKCON as a child with the unconditional acceptance and patience of a parent.

If a child falls, we don't scream at it. When a child breaks something, we don't freak out. There are times when chastisement is obviously in order and absolutely necessary. However, I am referencing an overall attitude to foster healthy growth.

Thus, while we attend to those things which need focus or redirection, our attitude need be more like a watchful yet understanding parent towards baby ISKCON. Less reactive and anger driven finger pointing – more acceptance, understanding and pro-active problem solving. It’s like when the child enters puberty – becoming a friend is the more effective tactic.

We are a family. We have diverse points of view as a collective whole. That is unity in diversity. Everyone has his own unique genius, Śrīla Prabhupāda once said. That should be encouraged, not stifled. Everyone has their vision of spreading the mission of Lord Caitanya according to their own internal inspiration. That should be celebrated, not denigrated. Even in this city, NYC, we see variegated styles of preaching and approaches. Everyone is trying to please you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and to please your dedicated devotees. That is in itself such a thing of transcendental beauty.

Individually, we may not resonate with this or that approach in the spreading of your mission, but like a parenting adult, we can genuinely and lovingly appreciate and encourage the efforts of the fledgling children. We can appreciate the efforts and genius of many diverse approaches within the community of devotees. That will bring great empowerment to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mission. Applied unity in diversity. Applied right here in New York City. This would bring a massive radiant smile to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s face – to see the family he created becoming so bound together in acceptance, love and appreciation. Let that vision guide us over the next years.

Speaking of love and appreciation, I want to give special mention to Yogeśvara prabhu, for his magnificent accomplishment in the form of the powerfully poignant, insightful and transcendently comprehensive biography of Your Divine Grace – *Swami in a Strange Land – How Kṛṣṇa Came to the West*. I emphatically recommend that every ISKCON guru and temple president make this mandatory reading for all their students and disciples. As Ambarisa prabhu, aka. Alfred Ford, so succinctly states:

“A beautifully written, enthralling and scrupulously researched book about an extraordinary personality. Full of detail and spiritual resonance. A must-read for those who know nothing about the founder and preceptor of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, and all those who think they already know”.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda is in the center, then his ISKCON MISSION thrives. To bring him into center, we need to cultivate

a deep and consistent appreciation for his stature, mission and sacrifice. Thus, it is so vitally important that all new men and women be encouraged in this way. Without that foundation, we run the risk of slipping into sentimental understandings of what it means to be part of this great spiritual society. Yogeśvara's biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda, gives us such an foundation – it truly is a masterpiece that will be treasured for untold generations.

With Śrīla Prabhupāda in the center, and genuine appreciation for all the wonderful activities of the manifold Vaiṣṇavas ensconced deeply in our mind and hearts, we have a real shot at saving the world.

*I beg to remain,
Your eternally aspiring insignificant seroant,*

Badarayan Dāsa

Hrṣīkeśa Dāsa

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu knew who to send, and so Śrīla Prabhupāda descended to the lowest of the low.

Only the best of the best could do, that which no one else could.

No less than a messiah would do. To clear the field, to plant the seeds,

For lifetimes to come the impossible was done. And so we have lived to witness this glorious event in the history of the world.

How this lone man, who was sweeter than the sweetest, and stronger than the strongest,

Injected the highest ideal into the hearts of the meanest of the mean, poorest of the poor.

The mystical effect of absolute sound did effect the darkest regions of our hearts,

Creating a dew-drop of hope, in the life of the living dead.

You taught us how to sing and dance, showed us the best way to live and die.

You gave it all to us in your very special and beautiful style, as only you could do.

Now many years have passed since we first met. I did not know you back then, nor did I know myself.

But unknown to me you entered my heart, like the best of best friends.

You knew the song in my heart, and sang it back to me in the form of your personal life.

And so by your infinite mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, my heart covered by the darkness of offence,

And wicked desires are slowly but surely shifting in the sands of time,

Now I am anxiously awaiting its home coming.

All that is left is sweet surrender, full acceptance of my glorious loving relationship with you,

And my need to always pray to you, humbled by a life lived wrongly.

Praying that I may be allowed to continue to serve your mission and take shelter always in the holy name,

Hṛṣīkeśa Dāsa

Mṛgākṣī Devī Dāsī

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīnī*

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

At least three times a day I should offer my respectful obeisances to the lotus feet of my spiritual master.... Why only three....at every moment.

I offer my humble obeisances to A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda who is the well-wisher of all living things. He has offered his mind, body, heart and soul to deliver the message of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to the fallen conditioned souls who are suffering in this Kali-yuga, Age of Darkness.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for lifting me from my ignorance and engaging me in the eternal devotional service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Murlidhara. You have given me the taste for which we are always anxious. I am trying to the best of my ability to spread your teachings to those I meet. Each one teach one, every town and village. Love begets love.

One should not become mother, father, teacher, ruler, or guru,

unless you can save your charge from repeated birth and death.

I know nothing myself of the deep surrender of the pure devotee, but I have full faith that by giving out your transcendental books AS IT IS, the recipient has a chance with knowledge to make the choice to follow in your footsteps.

As you have so selflessly reached out to us with your mercy, love and protection, let us always be in that missionary mood and let us offer our mercy, love and protection to all such children, students, citizens and disciples as we joyfully sing the *mahā-mantra*, *yuga dharma*, for this age and for always. The Lord's sweet holy names, Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare / Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare, are like the air we breathe, the beating of our hearts and the purpose of our lives.

I pray to help care for and protect your ISKCON home and your sincere devotees so that your legacy is never forgotten. I take shelter at your lotus feet.

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your aspiring servant,

Mrgākṣī Devī Dāsī

Rukmiṇī Priyā Devī Dāsī

Daṇḍavat praṇām and all glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You left the holy *dhāma* —Vaikuṅṭha on Earth—to freely distribute love of God. The Supreme Lord

resides wherever His devotees chant His holy names and recount His pastimes. Many selfish living

entities desire to reside in the holy *dhāma* for their own purification, but you – a selfless eternal servant

of the Supreme Lord – left the holy *dhāma* for our purification. You possess the unique qualifications

required to lead the Supreme Lord's *saṅkīrtana* party all the way from the lowest depths of the material

world and straight to the center of the whorl of the flower like planetary systems of Vaikuṅṭha.

Thank you for allowing me to take shelter at your lotus feet, which provide shade and relief to all the

conditioned souls suffering in the hot and unforgiving flames of

material sense gratification. As a

resident living in the Age of Kali, I had no qualifications for receiving your mercy. Nevertheless, you –

– the eternal embodiment of the Supreme Lord’s causeless mercy – tirelessly engaged yourself in your

spiritual master’s service and distributed the Lord’s mercy to anyone who was willing to receive it.

Willingness to follow in your footsteps was the only qualification you asked for, and I am willing to

follow you birth after birth, life after life, all the way back to the abode of the Supreme Lord...because

you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are the life and soul that resides in my heart eternally.

Jagaddhātṛī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

I am writing this at a musical presentation by your beloved disciple Maṅgalānanda Prabhu who is offering his service for the Rādhārāṇī Club, which raises *lakṣmī* to adorn the exquisite Deities here at the Alachua temple.

I ponder the miracle of your unlimited mercy, that all over this world the holy name is being joyfully sung and heard...

Our debt can neither be fully understood nor repaid, especially considering how inadequate this soul is in pleasing you.

I do know that by this causeless mercy, I can catch fleeting glimpses of the pleasure of serving Lord Caitanya’s dearest desire to give this priceless gift.

Please accept my heartfelt gratitude and prayers for never leaving your shelter.

Your fallen servant,

Jagaddhātṛī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. Glories to your lotus feet.

As a work of respect we make this offering.

Kṛṣṇa told the *gopīs* that there was no way he could repay them for their service. In the same way there is no way to repay you for your priceless contribution to all your disciples, grand disciples, and all humanity. You fearlessly left Vṛndāvana at 70 to fulfill the order of your guru mahārāja. Out of compassion, you wanted the conditioned souls to be awakened to their real life – Krishna consciousness. Otherwise, society is no more than a decoration for a dead body. In the case of Paraśurāma, he killed all the *kṣatriyas* 21 times because they were sinful. So you are also boldly trying to kill the mentality of our present demoniac society. The people of Kali-yuga have become no better than cats and dogs, thinking that eating, sleeping, mating and defending is their only business.

It is predicted that the Krishna consciousness movement will flourish for the next 10,000 years. Books are the basis – and you have created the good fortune of so many by your books. Here in Vṛndāvana 40,000 *Bhagavad-gītās* were distributed in one month. You said Kṛṣṇa Balarāma temple was for lazy intelligence because so many people are coming here, we do not need to go anywhere. We can distribute so many books right here.

You were the only who one could see the bluffing of the scientists. You said, “they never went to the moon, life does not come from chemicals and Darwin’s theory is simply speculation...” A reporter asked if you could show some magic. You pointed to your disciples saying, “This is my magic”.

Kindly give us the mercy of your lotus feet so we may continue to follow your instructions, chanting 16 attentive rounds, following the four principles and develop love for Kṛṣṇa – *prema bhakti*. May Lord Caitanya’s mission increase more and more to every town and village.

Jai Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your humble servant,

Bhubaneswar Dāsa
ISKCON Vrindavana

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to you who are *jagat guru* and our father and savior.

Nearly 40 years ago you appeared to have left this world. Your disappearance is and has been very painful for me. I still feel like an orphan, too weak to stand on my own. Fortunately you have given us everything thing we need. So many books, recordings, and for me, best of all is my godbrothers and godsisters and also grandchildren following what you have given all of us.

When my three children and I left India in 1979 we had no idea where to go. My mother paid for our flight, and I felt obliged to visit her in Sacramento. Her home was a haven to help us find our bearings and adjust to being back in the States.

When we left for India, everyone told us we would suffer culture shock. We immediately loved Mother India, but it took us months to face being back in the USA! My children who were all initiated by you were 12, 14 and 16 when we returned. I found out only a few years ago that it was equally hard for them.

We had no temple to go to. We had to find our way in this foreign land of 1980's America. The children had to attend public school for the first time, and I had to find work to support us. We couldn't remain a burden on my mother.

It's a long story from then to today, but by Kṛṣṇa's mercy we are all surviving in this material world though our *sādhana* has taken a beating. My two sons – now 50 and 54 – are married with beautiful children and successful lives though they both claim to be atheistic. My daughter has raised four wonderful children and suffers autoimmune disease and had breast cancer. She still has faith in Kṛṣṇa.

You are so deeply imbedded in my heart, I could never let you go. You are my only sustenance. Life has not been easy, but I look forward to spending the last of it in the holy *dhāma* and absorbing myself again in chanting and dancing and worshipping Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Jaya Rādhe, Jaya Mādhava.

Your lowly servant,

Anavadyāṅgī Devī Dāsī

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. Thank you so much for giving me shelter. Without your mercy, my life would be useless, as were my countless lives before I met Your Divine Grace.

Serving you is all I want to do. My favorite service is book distribution. One thing I find so blissful about it is that it is so obvious I'm not the controller, and Kṛṣṇa regularly surprises me with really sweet souls. It's an adventure! Who's around the next corner? And book distribution can be done anywhere, anytime. It's always fresh and joyful! Thank you so much for allowing me to be a part of this amazing mission of spreading Krishna consciousness all over the world. Where I do *saṅkīrtana* we have a very unique situation. People from all over the world visit New Orleans, so from this one point, I can disseminate your transcendental life-changing books all over the world! And since I make an album of fortunate souls who like your books every week, I'm able to offer myself to them for further progress on the spiritual path. We become friends on Facebook, or by email and many of them correspond with me regularly, asking questions and/or just "liking" Kṛṣṇa conscious information that I post. It is really thrilling to plant the seed and then watch it grow! And I'm so grateful to be a part of that!

Although there are many examples of people who are thrilled to receive your books, I just want to share with you the comments of a lady who got your *Bhagavad-gītā* last month, "I met you today on a street in New Orleans and you gave me a book that is verifying so many of my beliefs that no one around me understands. I just felt the need to tell you to keep up your work. God speaks through your actions and you are so needed for the work that you are doing. Thank you for reaching out to me today, I am already marking pages in the book while I am at the airport to fly home." It is follow up like this that makes me know this service is so worthwhile!

Every year at this time, I take the opportunity to report my previous year's book totals, so for your pleasure, for 2016 I distributed 589 *Perfection of Yoga*, 766 *Chant and Be Happy*, 3201 *Higher Taste* cookbooks, 147 *Science of Self-Realization*, 4394 soft-bound *Bhagavad-gītās*, 254 hard-bound *Bhagavad-gītās*, and 241 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1 for a total of 9592 books.

Thank you, Kṛṣṇa, for allowing me enough mental and physical health to continue doing this incredible service even as I approach 70 years of age. It is the only thing in my life that gives me such satisfaction! I always pray to go Back Home, Back to Godhead when this body is finished, but honestly, I will be so happy to somehow just engage life-after-life in your *saṅkīrtana* mission. Therefore my real prayer is to be relieved of this material consciousness!

Currently we are trying to relocate in Māyāpur. A Temple for you and Nimāi and Nitāi is being constructed in Gour Nagar. We have to get the Jai Nimāi Nitāi Floating Temple there somehow. We are praying for your mercy. Please give us the patience and determination to accomplish this goal if you so desire. Please help us to happily accept whatever Kṛṣṇa has planned for us.

I've been associated with ISKCON since August 1971, and somehow I'm still aspiring to be your devotee. Thank you for tolerating me despite my unlimited offenses. Please bless me that I may always serve your lotus feet!

Your grateful, but undeserving servant,

Mohanāśinī Dāsī

Praghoṣa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

While offering a ghee lamp at your lotus feet, I feel that its light is disappearing in the aura of your majesty. In an abode situated far, far beyond the reach of our comprehension, you are engaged in the intimacy of your loving relationship with the Supreme Person, Lord Kṛṣṇa. If I know anything of this truth it is because you taught it to us in your *vāṇī*. Without you, covered by the ignorance that we were born in, where would we be right now?

You told us that Krishna consciousness is not an artificial imposition on the mind, rather it is our natural state of being. The reason why we are blind to this fact is because we have been acting under the spell of the material energy for too long. We are just like an extinct spark of fire. Fortunately, you said that if we bring ourselves back in the fire of *bhakti* under proper guidance, we can revive our natural identity. You are a flaming pyre of *bhakti* who can revive billions of such sparks, and I pray that you will continue to allow me

to be near you, in the association of my godbrothers, so that the Lord may eventually become interested in my deficient devotion.

Although you have left the visible world, you nevertheless have remained in the form of your books and the recordings of your conferences and conversations. I take shelter of your spoken words because they are a solid refuge against the onslaught of *māyā*. With them, I don't feel the physical absence. With a humble stance, I pray that you will forgive my shortcomings in the course of serving your mission.

I take great pride in delivering your *vāṇī* to the world because this is the directive given by Lord Caitanya to His followers. I have utter confidence that you will transform the world into *Vaikuṅṭha*. All glories unto you.

Your insignificant servant,

Praghoṣa Dāsa
Montreal

Prthuśravā Dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīnī*

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

I offer my obeisances at the lotus feet of my eternal master, a most rare Gaura *bhakta*—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swamī Prabhupāda.

In *Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta*, verse 24, the author glorifies the divine qualities of the devotees of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu.

“The ardent followers of Śrī Gaurāṅga are the only devotees whose immaculate character is ornamented with the following excellences: humility more than a blade of grass (freedom from false prestige); their innate nature suffused with innocent simplicity; their peaceful appearance enhanced by an inner grace; their tempered speech nectarean. They are contemptuous of anything that has even a scent of worldly or sensual connotation. Inebriated with Kṛṣṇa

Prema, they are oblivious to the mundane world.”

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.13–14), Lord Kṛṣṇa defines the great soul (His devotee) as one who is under the protection of the divine nature, fully engaged in devotional service, always chanting His glories, endeavoring with great determination, bowing down before Him, and perpetually worshipping Him with devotion. Due to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s being under the protection of the divine nature, and thus free of the control of the material nature, he could live anywhere in this world free from fear (*abhaya*) and absorbed in thoughts of the Lord’s glories and activities. But, like Prahlāda Mahārāja, he was imbued with deep concern, empathy and love for the “fools and rascals who are chasing after illusory happiness.”

Śukadeva Gosvāmī in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.7.44 glorifies Lord Śiva thus:

“It is said that great personalities almost always accept voluntary suffering because of the suffering of people in general. This is considered the highest method of worshipping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is present in everyone’s heart.”

Similarly, with single-minded determination to satisfy his spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted a great struggle and personal suffering to implement a great plan to relieve suffering humanity from its ignorance and to deliver to them the mercy of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Therefore, in reciprocation, the supremely merciful Lords Gaurāṅga and Nityānanda, as the uplifters of the residents of Kali-yuga and givers of Kṛṣṇa-*prema*, empowered Śrīla Prabhupāda as Their very confidential servant to spread Their holy names, present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and create faith in the hearts of fortunate souls all around the world.

What great fortune it is to have come in touch with such an exalted, empowered devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya! Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī says it is only Kṛṣṇa’s mercy (His Divine Grace) that one meets, hears from, and takes faith in the instructions of such a qualified personality whose only aim is to teach Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* to the conditioned souls. Therefore, with deep gratitude and happiness, we observe this festive occasion of the divine (not ordinary) appearance of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who has created our good fortune.

My dear Divine Master, I pray that I may have one drop of your ocean of empathy for others so that I may have the ability to

serve your mission with real love for Kṛṣṇa, for you, and for the living entities.

Bowing at your lotus feet, always begging for your mercy, I remain your grateful servant.

Prṥthuvā Dāsa

Sarvani Devī Dāsī

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

I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, who has opened my eyes, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance, with the torchlight of knowledge.

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

*namas te sāravate deve gaura-vāñī-pracāriṇe
nirviṣeṣa-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.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, a friend once asked what it was like to meet you, to be in your presence. As I tried to describe your divine glowing, golden effulgence and what it felt like when you entered the room, it was hard for me to adequately describe – without weeping – your saintly stature and how you transformed my heart and transmitted your grace immediately.

I recall with reverence attending your classes and *kīrtanas*, your singing “Jaya Rādhā Mādhava,” the ecstatic airport arrivals, and walking around New Dwaraka, while following your entourage of devotees, trying to carefully hear every word you spoke. I remember the joy and delight I felt when you so kindly accepted the flower

my young child gave to you on the steps before you entered your quarters, and when you gave her, and the other small children, *prasāda* cookies while sitting upon your *vyāsāsana*.

So memorable was the day you wept as you spoke of your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and told us all how grateful you were for helping you to fulfill his desire to spread Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* mission to the Western world. We were all deeply moved by your deep love, stunned by your transcendental mood, and found ourselves shedding tears of gratitude along with you.

You have amazingly and inconceivably blessed so many souls by your magical presence and efforts to spread Krishna consciousness throughout the world. To this very day your divine potency has not diminished. Your transcendental teachings and guidance live on in your books, in the hearts of your devotees, and all aspiring Vaiṣṇavas. Your *vāṇī* presence continues to change the lives and hearts of those souls who receive and sincerely read your books and chant Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy names.

My fellow godbrothers and godsisters and I can never repay you for the mercy you have bestowed upon us and the world. I can only hope to be able to continue to be eligible to offer my heartfelt gratitude and obeisances lifetime after lifetime and pray to be given the chance to better serve your lotus feet.

All glories to Your Divine Grace and to all of your assembled devotees!

Sarvani Devī Dāsī

Sarva-drik Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. Hare Kṛṣṇa!

A sober disciple knows that he is only an instrument in the hands of his guru. And what a blessing to actually be so! But this is no easy thing, to be so intimately connected to such a great personality as you Śrīla Prabhupāda. And although I desire to be so, I am feeling that it is presumptuous to even ask, knowing that I am truly unfit for the task. Yet I know that you require many selfless, transparent instruments through whom your will manifests, to

spread the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. So what am I to do, a fallen soul?

My conclusion is to simply continue trying to be the disciple you wish me to be, following your instructions and hoping that a sidelong glance of your mercy will one day fall my way so I will take up the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu with greater sincerity and enthusiasm. In the mean time I will continue to live my life in such a way that one day I may be a fit candidate for your blessing.

So, no matter how many lifetimes it takes, I am forever at your service, with hands folded, and head bowed in obeisance. I am only waiting for that blessed day when I become your instrument, free from personal motivation, and transparent to your will and instruction. That is my resolve, that is all that gives my life meaning, and this is my prayer on the most blessed day of your holy appearance.

Your eternal servant,

Sarva-drik Dāsa

Citraka Dāsa

Divine Master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances unto your lotus-like feet.

A distinguished astrologer, after studying your personality declared that you were a person capable of building a home in which the whole world could live peacefully. And as a matter of fact, in due course of time, you did create such a house which now exists, open for all. It is like an extension of the original abode of the Lord, Goloka Vṛndāvana. It is not a physical building, ashram or farm community. It is a reality existing in sound. It is the sound which originally emanated from Lord Caitanya and His associates, like the Six Gosvāmīs, and was further expanded by your translations of Śrīla Vyāsadeva's *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhāgavad-gītā* and the rest of the cream of the Vedas into Western languages.

Yes, the sound of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and the teachings of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are our real and eternal home. The Lord has chosen this way to be present in this Age of Kali, in the form of the transcendental sound

of His holy names. The whole world can reside there and the key you gave to enter and live in it is the *saṅkīrtana* method of being constantly in contact with this sound. Simply by hearing it, vibrating it – individually or collectively – reading it or writing it, as long as all these are performed with rapt attention.

And now, thanks to your sublime service, millions of fortunate souls who come in contact with your blessed influence, are meeting like this the Lord Himself and experience again their relationship with Him. Each one according to the humility, faith, sincerity and devotion mastered by his practice of your sacred instructions.

When I think of you crossing the ocean in a small cabin of Jaladuta, suffering repeated heart attacks at such an old age, I become overwhelmed by strong emotions of gratitude and love. It is thanks to this heroism and sacrifice of yours that now I am saved.

And then, later, when you had a year of struggle in the cold of New York, with no money or friends, or even warm clothes, I am crying for your sacrifice and for the lack of mine.

You wrote: “Vaiṣṇava is never alone. When I first came to the United States I was seemingly alone for one year. But I never felt alone. I always felt the presence of my guru mahārāja. Myself, I was cooking, I was printing books, I was selling books, everything seemingly alone. But I did not lose my determination. Actually, you should know this, you are never alone.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda letter, December 27, 1974) With such example, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you taught me how to take shelter of the Lord even in the midst of the greatest difficulties.

Although your body was in such a painful condition, you never manifested any symptom of suffering because you were absorbed in a state of transcendental consciousness. You were engaged intensely in your preaching mission while keeping your body’s maintenance to the absolute minimum. Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda, if you hadn’t done so where would I be now?

It is beyond description the benefit that your movement has generated and still does, every single day!

Your disciples and grand-disciples have developed an attachment for the transcendental sound and are ever engaged in relishing it themselves as well as distributing it to others in the form of books, street *harināmas*, Rathayātrā festivals, seminars, lectures and many other ways.

This attachment to the holy name and everything else in relation to the Lord is the real success of your mission. You ultimately wanted

to create lovers of Kṛṣṇa, and it happened. Beyond organizational and institutional achievements, you were hoping for them to attain the higher stages of *bhakti*.

In one conversation you said: “By following any guru or any principle, if you actually develop your love of God, then it is nice. Otherwise it is a useless waste of time. That is the test.”

And when you were confronted with the question, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, how can we please you most,” you didn’t offer a list of service or preaching engagements, but made the simple statement, “If you love Kṛṣṇa.” (“I have noted in your letter that you want to serve me. I only want that all you my disciples always think of Kṛṣṇa and never forget Him for a moment. In this way you can conquer Kṛṣṇa. He becomes so attracted by pure devotion that He gives Himself to His devotee. And if you get Kṛṣṇa, then what you want more?”)

Following your desire, ISKCON is endeavoring for such a goal. To direct the attention of the forgetful souls toward the Lord and expose them to His all-attractive Personality.

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, your mercy is being made available in an amplified way, allowing each and every individual to engage his mind, body and words in Lord Caitanya’s movement and make his life perfect. Thanks to your dedicated disciples, who are acting on your behalf as your personified energies, each performing miracles in his area of responsibility, your beneficial influence is spreading far and wide all over the globe.

Which other movement is endeavoring so intensely, year after year, in distributing this King of Knowledge and connecting the unfortunate conditioned souls with Lord Caitanya, right in the middle of Kali-yuga! All glories to Your Divine Grace!

You said: “The preacher must love the people. Otherwise why he is taking? He can do it for himself at home. Why he is taking so much trouble? Why in eighty-years-old I have come here if I do not love? So who can love better than a preacher?” (Morning Walk, May 17, 1975, Perth)

And you did demonstrate your love for us all by giving us the exact same thing that you were relishing: *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* and *nāma-rasa*. What could be higher act of love than this?

With your living example of a highly devoted Bhāgavata that I had the fortune to personally witness, you taught exactly and practically how a saintly personality behaves and how he prepares to leave his body: like another Mahārāja Parīkṣit, always absorbed in

the transcendental sound, talking about Kṛṣṇa, hearing about Kṛṣṇa, reading about Kṛṣṇa and preaching about Kṛṣṇa.

I bow down to you and offer again and again my heartfelt obeisances and gratitude. And now let me use your matchless gifts that I have received and make my life successful, demonstrating by example the proof of how your teachings actually work!

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you!

Your aspiring servant,

Citraka Dāsa

Arjuna Dāsa

Divine Master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

All glories to your mighty radiant infinitely merciful lotus feet!

Wondering what I can say, what I can do what I can write to glorify you.

As I'm attempting to compose this humble offering, as usual it's difficult to find fitting words to describe your sublime mercy and divine kindness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the depth of your sacrifice was inconceivable, incomprehensible, unimaginable, improbable and absolutely incalculable and miraculous. No one can ever surpass your achievements in ending bereavement.

As I sit here within the Bhakti Center at 25 First Avenue, around the corner from Matchless Gifts on 26 Second Avenue, my heart overflows with great joy and ecstatic meditations, remembrances and reflections on Your Divine Grace. Such profoundly touching memories enter my heart right from the start.

At this sacred moment in this place may I commence to glorify Your Divine Grace. I pray within my worthlessness and nothingness that I can someday and in some way be a witness to all of your astounding unfathomable greatness.

You are a mine of real love and compassion for all living entities suffering and roaming this material prison house, a Ferris wheel of birth, death, old-age and disease.

A world where religions are lying, people crying, all are dying without even trying to understand why.

Then you appeared, decreasing our fear, giving a chance to see

truth clear! We had no depth, shallow and in debt. Now your light is shining and brightly kept.

Your mercy flowed like a volcanic eruption ending our suffering, finished all the sensual corruption!

Until that moment when I first saw you, I used to think that love was just a fairy tale. Life was pale. But then your glance awakened me, made the walls come tumbling down from all around, then love was found within my saddened heart, a sensation so profound.

I smiled all around, no more was I bound. Stopped acting like a clown, by hearing that holy sound!

You are more affectionate than so many mothers. I remember how your smile just captured me, I was filled with glee. That first *darśana*, that magic moment, I was ready for atonement. That first smile lasted a while. That first gaze, beyond the haze. Dragged me outta the maze. I could taste what real love was, no more fuzz.

My eyes adored you. Tears of joy came over me like never before. Seems your love just opened that door. Life had new meaning, no longer a bore. Someone in my life finally to worship and adore. What more can I ask for!

Couldn't look away, just couldn't look away on that day. It was true love at first sight I really must say. I lost all external awareness except for your effulgent presence. Seemed I'd known you from a time long ago. A psychic intuition, was time for an act of contrition!

What a thrice double ass, always coming up short and full of lies, going down fast. Was a dreadful past. But you lit up my life ending all strife, and showed me the meaning of love in this life.

With your inconceivable might you have shown your light which is ending the worlds plight from a dark ghastly night!

All glories to thee, who set our souls free, I thank you again with all humility for allowing me to hear and dance to your *kīrtana* melody, which still always astounds me, setting my soul free, giving vision of what we can be.

And the taste of *prasāda* which gives our tongues glee and which tastes so divine and heavenly, karma-free, glory be!

I felt invincible under the principle of staying in the shade of your lotus feet. Was in LA feeling the heat, but felt no defeat, with no need to sleep, embracing your lotus feet. *Harināma saṅkīrtana*, book distribution's marathons, with enthusiasm and no confusion, was outta illusion and oh so amusing! No more pride criticizing and accusing!!

Humbled by your majesty, your presence ceased all tragedy. All the drama and the trauma. Started chanting *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma*.

All of the day and all through the night giving Māyā one heck of a fight!!! Deity worship, They were a gorgeous sight! And my heart was open and light, was a breeze, feeling delight, kept my *kaupīnas* tight. Realized wrong from right!

I played spiritually hard, sweetest Prabhupāda, and with all my might. Then when you left, oh so sorry, gave up the fight! Went outta sight, jumped outta the spiritual flight. Was so crushed in losing your light, weeping a bit throughout the night.

Now once again I'm gaining my sight, getting back on my feet, once again in the fight. Yes once again in the day and outta the night.

For Your Vyāsa-pūjā offering in 1936, Your Divine Grace wrote such a wonderful offering which profoundly found a place within and speaks to my heart. May I begin:

“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 someday 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 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.”

May I wear these words as a *mālā* round my heart, that's my appeal! Begging to feel. May your divine words be forever etched within this wretched heart. Please Gurudeva never depart. Your *kīrtana* played a sweet 'rag' in my heart!

You revealed such humility, was not my proclivity. But has its appeal I'm starting to feel, its making me heal, now feeling real, feeling whole down to my soul.

Mercy You give, I'm starting to live and begging please, hear my pleas, cure this disease, I'm down on my knees.

Rāmānanda Raya concluded and declared to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu that there is nothing as profitable as the association of pure devotees. The essence of all auspicious events.

How inconceivably fortunate I must be to have received all that mercy! Your association, your kindness, your smiles, your tears, your instructions, your glance, your recognition, your walks, your talks,

your charm, your tenderness, your sternness, your compassion. Your grace was all over the place! Got me out from the rat race.

The real love you brought from way above! Your words are soothing, oozing with love.

Reflecting on the younger generation: They are so inspired with pure desire, and taking part in so many aspects within ISKCON. *Gurukuli melas* and gatherings! So much youthful energy. Who could have fathomed? They are blessed with so many talents, deep faith and balance. Serving in so many ways and in so many capacities, cooperating with sincere pure tenacity.

Kirtaneers galore all over the place, purifying all of the space! What enthusiasm and spiritual toil, a source of ISKCON's growth all over the world. Is it possible I can have even a fraction of their enthusiasm, Śrīla Prabhupāda? Can I feel what they are feeling? Need a spiritual recharge, another healing. When will that day come about? Please let my *bhakti* sprout! Praying I may be able to serve them. Hoping against hope for that day. Just gotta pray if I may.

The following words you spoke in 1973: "The Spiritual Master is present wherever his sincere disciple is trying to serve his instructions. This is possible by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. In your attempts to serve me and in all your sincere devotional sentiments I am with you as my Guru Mahārāja is with me. Remember this always."

Recently I read in *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* that instruction alone cannot make one see. Unless one is blessed by guru, such teachings cannot become fully manifest. Therefore one should seek the mercy of the spiritual master so that the instructions can develop more faster.

I am worthless and unworthy but still beg for your mercy. Will remain always vigilant and longing in this way. Just a drop of your mercy I pray, hoping to serve you in every way, each and every day. Then it will be sweeter than May.

Persons burning in the flames of material existence may receive the rains of mercy of the Lord if no resistance through the transparent medium of the self-realized soul even from a distance.

The knowledge which we receive from the spiritual master cannot be taken away but will go with us if we quit this body today! Your instructions are an eternal asset in all ways. May my vision of you always stay.

What a journey you undertook Śrīla Prabhupāda, to reach out and save us souls. Made us whole. This story will never grow old. It will eventually be appreciated by the mass of humanity down

through eternity. This is a guarantee. Everyone will listen closely.

These ecstatic words were shouted out as one of your godbrothers from Jagannātha Purī jumped up and down in praise of your successful overseas journey: “Abhaya Babu finally did it! Abhaya Babu finally did it! Abhaya Babu finally did it!!!!”

Yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you did it magnificently amazingly and very gracefully! Your sacrifice is setting us free. The whole world will one day see! I’m grateful for your accomplishments and sacrifices setting us free.

I’m hoping that I may get out from the clutches of Māyā, out of her fire, develop pure desire, and not keep violating this great boon you have bestowed upon this buffoon!

Only by your mercy can I be allowed to serve in your mission without condition.

I live to be corrected and inspected.

Your aspiring disciple,

Arjuna Dāsa

Kadamba Devī Dāsī

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I bow down to you. You are my connection to Kṛṣṇa. Every living entity is eternally connected as part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, but I had no idea of that, maybe only something vague from Christian theology of Kṛṣṇa being my father.

You gave us the details of our actual relationship with Kṛṣṇa, who we are as living entities, and that Kṛṣṇa is as the Supreme Person (and father)! Everything I know about Kṛṣṇa is from you. That has been both my joy and my solace in life. When I look out into the world, I see it in terms of what you taught me.

I only wish I had the appreciation I should have for what you have given me. I ask that you forgive me. In one of your examples, you explained that a mother overlooks her young child’s transgressions against her – out of love. A mother’s love is that profound. Not to excuse my inadequacies of discipleship, but I believe your mercy is that great, as is also your forgiveness, understanding, and compassion.

In a quote from your *Kṛṣṇa* book, the demigods prayed to the Lord, “*O self-illuminated one, the great saintly persons who have crossed*

over the ocean of nescience, by the help of the transcendental boat of Your lotus feet, have not taken away that boat. It is still lying on this side.” Prabhupāda says the demigods are using a nice simile and continues on to write: “If one takes a boat to cross over a river, the boat goes with one to the other side of the river. And so when one reaches the destination, how can the same boat be available to those who are still on the other side? To answer this difficulty, the demigods say in their prayer that the boat is not taken away. The devotees still remaining on the other side are able to pass over the ocean of material nature because the pure devotees do not take the boat with them when they cross over. When one simply approaches the boat, the whole ocean of material nescience is reduced to the size of water in a calf’s hoof print.” And, “Because great saintly persons are compassionate toward all conditioned souls, the boat is still lying at the lotus feet of the Lord. One can meditate upon His feet at any time, and by so doing one can cross over the great ocean of material existence.”

I try in my meager way to share Kṛṣṇa with others in my life. I think the only reason the world remains even somewhat sane is because of your ISKCON movement and the devotees who continue to carry on your message and work. ISKCON and your writing is the boat you left behind. Thank you.

Your ever-grateful disciple,

Kadamba Devī Dāsī

To His Divine Grace. A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda, ISKCON Founder-*ācārya*, on the 121st advent day celebration, August 16, 2017

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

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

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

On this most auspicious day we are observing the Vyāsa-pūjā ceremony, the birth anniversary of our guru mahārāja.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, only you are our very dear “ever well-wisher”. You even teach us how to celebrate the Vyāsa-pūjā of the spiritual master. You teach us everything—a-z, of Vedic culture; real knowledge; real science.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, your transcendental personality and activities is beyond any description of words because you are empowered by your divine spiritual master, and by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. *prthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*

All over the world, as many towns and villages there are, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally predicted five hundred years ago that His mission will spread. And you – by the mercy of your guru mahārāja – made this possible all over the world when you founded your ISKCON in 1966 in New York and by travelling all over the world 15 times;

It was 1896, the year that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wrote one small book “*Teachings and Precepts of Lord Caitanya*”. He presented that book to the McGill University in Canada and very much desired that the foreigners – especially Americans – would join the same year. Your transcendental appearance day, the day after Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī is very significant.

Your guru mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura started this mission with the institution known as Gauḍīya Maṭha. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you mention in a lecture that upon first meeting

him, he ordered you to preach the cult of Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the English language. This is very much essential.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the captain of the ship. You mention, “So when I first came, I had no money, so I got a free passage through some Indian steam navigation company... by the grace of Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya Mahāprabhu and in the presence of my guru mahārāja. You are so nice boys and girls, so in front of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, you are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and you are taking very seriously. So my guru mahārāja will be very much pleased upon you and bless you with all benefits.”

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for giving us the eternal life of Krishna consciousness. You mention in your offering to your divine guru mahārāja: “So he wanted this and it is not that he is dead and gone—that is not spiritual understanding. Even an ordinary living being does not die, “*Na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*” and what to speak of such an exalted, authorized personality like Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta”

You mentioned about coming to the West: “Of course, I came to your country without any friend, without any means, just like a vagabond. But I had full faith that my guru mahārāja is with me. I never lost this faith and that is a fact.”

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you very much for coming to the West, and for all of the great, unlimited, priceless gifts you freely gave to us.

Your most insignificant servant at dust of your beautiful lotus feet,

Ramanya Dāsa

Dhaneśvara Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your feet.

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

Having returned to America after extensive time abroad and preaching to people that I can speak directly to, I am finding out how deep spiritual ignorance of this world actually is. I have made a survey to find out what people actually know about spirituality, and what we find is that indeed, *everyone* is born in the darkness of

ignorance. "Spiritual" is probably the most subjectively defined word in the English dictionary. People have almost unlimited conceptions of the word based on nothing more than their sentiments and mental speculation. I have even met atheists who think that they are spiritual, such is the devolution of that concept.

Many of their concepts of spirituality are simply those things that make them feel good, for example: walks in the woods, candlelight, sunsets and sunrises, and of course, sex.

I have followed some of the prominent so-called spiritual leaders in America on Twitter, and have learned from what they post that their spiritual understanding is abysmal. Mere platitudes. That is to say, they haven't any understanding at all according to the Vedic standard. And these are the leaders! What to speak of the innocent followers who gobble up whatever nonsense they dish out and accept it as "spiritual teachings." So very sad.

Without even understanding the concept of spirituality how is it possible for them to make any actual progress in their spiritual development?

The fact is that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, have explained to the entire world what the words spiritual and spirituality actually mean. Save for you, that understanding would still be locked up in India and the world would be in total darkness. You have opened our eyes with the torchlight of knowledge that allows us to understand who we are, what the purpose of life is, who God is and how to develop our relationship with Him, and how to make genuine progress in that direction. The fact is that you *alone* have given the world the understanding of what it means to be spiritual and how to act as a spiritual being. And without your mercy we would all be struggling in the darkness of ignorance.

As my realizations of the fallen nature of this world develop I begin to appreciate, beyond what it has meant for myself, the treasure that you have bestowed upon this world, and I am overwhelmed and humbled. This treasure is so great that most, unfortunately, cannot understand, estimate or appreciate it, and thus sadly, have little interest in it.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, it is my desire to serve your mission by helping people to factually understand what it means to be spiritual and how to make spiritual progress. I pray that you will bless my efforts to extend your mercy and your teachings to as many as possible so that they may actually become free from their material

conditioning and act as the spiritual beings they are, serving the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa with love and joy.

Please bless us to bring the light of your teachings to as many as possible and put out the darkness of spiritual ignorance on this planet for many, many generations to come.

Begging that you will allow me to serve you in this way,

Dhaneśvara Dāsa

Rājendrānandana Dāsa

My dear spiritual master, Your Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances. All glories to you and your fully empowered service to your spiritual master His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda.

By his order you came to the sinful land of the United States of America and preached the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Only because of your causeless mercy in delivering the process of devotional service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa through the chanting of *Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare / Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare* was I caught up in the shelter of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Being the anniversary of your Appearance Day in this world it is my duty to express the gratitude and loyalty I have for you. With heartfelt joy I ask you for the ability to say some small token of glorification of you, who are one of the dearest assistants of Lord Nityānanda and Lord Caitanya. Anything I realize and say will be what you have taught me through your life and teachings. Your service and glorification of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura are ideal and the cause of his blessings upon you. It is the aspiration of all your disciples to follow in your footsteps and become a servant worth noticing, one you are pleased with, and give your blessings to.

Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī offered his obeisances and gratitude to his guru for all the gifts he received in his life.

*nāma-śreṣṭham manum api śacī-putram atra svarūpaṁ
rūpaṁ tasyāgrajam uru-purīm māthurīm goṣṭhavātīm
rādhā-kuṇḍaṁ giri-varam aho rādhikā-mādhavāśāṁ
prāpto yasya prathita-kṛpayā śrī-guruṁ taṁ nato 'smi*

“I offer my obeisances to Śrī Guru, by whose mercy I have obtained the topmost holy name, the divine mantra, personalities like Lord Caitanya, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, and his elder brother Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, I have also obtained residence in the holy places Śrī Mathurā, Śrī Vṛndāvana, Śrī Rādhā Kuṇḍa, Śrī Govardhana and of course, most importantly, I have obtained the desire and hope to render confidential service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā Mādhava.” — *Mukta Carita*

Anything and everything I have of value in this life are the gifts you have given me. Your mercy truly is all I am made of. For many years I have tried my best to measure up to pleasing you by hearing, sharing, and practicing your teachings. I am so unqualified in my attempts to serve you and share your message. My conditioned nature consisting of the lower modes makes me a very inept disciple and devotee, but somehow or other by your overwhelming grace combined with a small desire and efforts on my part, miracles continue to increasingly happen in my life.

It is only by your mercy that I sit here in Śrīdhāma Māyāpur writing this offering. Here in Lord Caitanya’s spiritual abode the holy names easily roll off the tongue and enter the ears. More and more a sense of the presence of Kṛṣṇa is manifesting in His names. Everything desirable in devotional service is obtained through chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa – beginning, middle, and the goal are all ever-increasingly sweet and life giving to the devotee.

Getting to associate with the “two brothers,” His Holiness Jayapatāka Swāmī, and so many other elevated Vaiṣṇavas has its purifying effect. Going on Navadvīpa Dhāma Parikramā and Gaura Maṇḍala Parikramā has allowed me to associate with so many members of our *guru varga* and first and second generation associates of Lord Caitanya. Their *vāṇī*, their *mūrtis*, their places of *bhajana*, and their worshipable Deities have made Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His *līlā* so real and has allowed my mind to embrace the incredible history and culture of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. The practical result being that I realize more and more how insignificant I am and how my true identity and purpose in life is to become the servant of the servant of the servant of the Lord.

I daily meditate and try my best to cultivate and practice humility, tolerance, and respect for all, especially the devotees. Taking as many opportunities to serve the devotees as I can, hoping to please them and thus you, is giving my life purpose and fulfillment.

In this service mood of insignificance and worthlessness, when you give me more and more opportunities to share Krishna consciousness with others, your words I speak have deeper effect. I know that my life is yours and I want to increasingly use it to share through words and example the priceless gift you're offering to me and the world, pure *bhakti*.

You know me through and through, and despite my many shortcomings you've stayed with me, giving me your shelter and instructions, helping me to slowly, but surely realize my hope, my only desire is your service and the service of the mission of Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi.

Where it will lead is certain – back to home, back to Godhead Vṛndāvana Dhāma. When, is up to you and the degree of my surrender, but I have full faith that if I can just stay the course you will gladly take me back after this one lifetime and hopefully use me to encourage many others to take advantage of this rare and priceless opportunity.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, again and again. May my service be louder than my words and worthy of your pleasure.

Your insignificant servant,

Rājendrānandana Dāsa

Kalpavṛkṣa Dāsa

My Dear Guru Mahārāja,

Daṇḍavats.

A gloomy mood pervaded me as I went to the Palace for your *darśana* on your Disappearance Day last year, remembering how I felt in November 1977 when I went to your palace for solace.

However, upon opening the doors to your temple room, I felt a smile on my face from ear to ear. I realized that every day you see the light shining through the stained glass sky light that Nanda Kumāra and I cut, and you can directly see the marble lotus flowers I cut.

Standing there I felt so fortunate. I get to see YOU every morning!

As Guru Kṛpā Mahārāja once said “Dem sweet, sweet lotus feet, they can’t be beat.”

See you tomorrow morning.

Begging to remain your disciple,

Kalpavṛkṣa Dāsa

Mathurā Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I’m not sure what to say on this most auspicious day
To you I daily pray that I won’t go far astray

In my darkest hours you make your presence known

The shelter of your lotus feet always feels like home

I’m constantly amazed by the miracle you’ve achieved
Unleashing Kṛṣṇa’s divine love to hearts that were aggrieved

So many souls throughout the world you’ve blessed
Showering Nitāi’s mercy for the weary and distressed

You offered yourself completely as a channel for the divine
So the love you have within you could be for all and even mine
What gifts of immeasurable wealth you’ve shared, your
graceful magnanimity

May I serve you always for all perpetuity, with humbled head
bowed down to you, this is my entreaty.

Your servant,

Mathurā Dāsa

Sarvamaṅgalā Devī Dāsī

Somehow we never thought that you would never leave
Śrīla Prabhupāda, it was something we just could not conceive
Those twilight mornings, *saṁsāra* prayers – bereft
In between realities, living on, despite the fact you’d left
And now, when I look back, I don’t think we had time to grieve

Nobody knew what to do, without you
We did try to co-operate, but we didn't have a clue
The concept of you being always present
Forced itself upon the mind but not the heart
Blurring double vision gave suggestion you were absent
Yet simultaneously, we could never be apart
On your Disappearance and Vyāsa-pūjā we'd pledge our lives again
To our beloved spiritual master, with gratitude and praise
Over the years we found you in our individual ways
Personally engaged by you, enriched as we were then
Til gradually we realised that those days are these days.

Not only for disciples, but followers henceforth
A myriad of creative means to please you and push forth
The Golden Avatar's desire
Indeed this movement lit a fire
That no one can put out

All under loving care of Śrīla Prabhupāda
Most elegant renunciate who at 70 sails the ocean
captivates the searching youth and fans the spark
seated beneath a tree, in a New York park
singing, playing *karatālas*, sheer poetry in motion

The *Gītā's* song of love describes the nature of a saint
How he walks and talks, with no material taint
You lit the world with knowledge, planting *bhakti* in our hearts
A spiritual revolution and we, your monkeys, got to play a part
Giving others what you gave us – only this has been our drive
In sharing Krishna consciousness once more we feel alive
Our inner vision shows us your memory is not blurred
Within our hearts resounding is everything we've heard
Hearing is seeing and serving bring us close
At last we know our every move is only what you chose
Oh let us live your bidding, as menial servants do
United in your orders, transcending time and spatial borders
Entering the transcendental realm eternally with you.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to your divine appearance day.

In the *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* it is stated:

*akṣṇoḥ phalaṁ tvādṛśa-darśanam hi
tanoḥ phalaṁ tvādṛśa-gātra-saṅgaḥ
jihvā-phalaṁ tvādṛśa-kīrtanam hi
su-durlabhā bhāgavatā hi loke*

“O devotee of the Lord, to see you is the perfection of the eyes, to touch your body is the perfection of bodily activities, and to glorify your qualities is the perfection of the tongue, for it is very rare to find a pure devotee like you.”

I am so fortunate and unfortunate at the same time! After I’d spent a childhood and youth full of misery and loneliness, tossed here and there by the waves of anguish, you picked me up and gave me the chance to see you, filling my eyes with the grace of your movements and smiles, to touch you while offering menial service, making me feel purified and cleansed of my internal filth, and to offer you affectionate words of praise, giving meaning to my whole existence: a matchless fortune.

Rati nā janmila kena tāya: I do not know why I do not get any attachment for such a nice thing. Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura laments that although the holy name has come from Goloka Vṛndāvana, he has no attraction for the chanting.

I lament that although you came from Goloka Vṛndāvana, giving me the sweetest love, compassion, and forbearance, I still don’t fully belong to you, being absorbed in the blazing fire of the poison of material consciousness: a matchless misfortune.

How can I become so fortunate that the transcendental family of the *ācāryas* will take me back because of my having developed real attachment for you?

I don’t see much hope, but I am not going to give up: I’ll dare to hope against hope and stubbornly remain attached to serving you by chanting the holy name, following your instructions, living in your ISKCON family, and doing my duty, because I have no one but you in life.

I hope one day I’ll fully realize it.

Your worthless servant,

Madhusevita Dāsa

Ariṣṭahā Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my most humble obeisances in the most holy dust of your divine lotus feet now and forever.

It is clear to me, now the most fortunate, before most unfortunate soul, that you came to us in the form of your merciful manifestation as Śrī Guru.

What would have happened to me otherwise? I don't dare to think about the future of such a wretched person like me in a world like this we experience, now merged as it is in sin beyond comprehension. What was the cause behind such good fortune, such grace? The only thing I can hope to do is to bow down before you in humility and gratitude, *daṇḍavat praṇāma*, heart rising, mind falling. Again and again. In this life or in the next, as you desire, but please do not forget me or reject me.

I depend on your compassion.

You are mercy personified
The dust from your lotus feet
Decorate the surface of the holiest of *tīrthas*
Indeed you are yourself the topmost *tīrtha*

Your blessed words enter like sweet purifying rivers
Into the ears and hearts of those devotees
Who are truly disgusted with sense gratification
Which burn like fire their soul and finer sentiments

Your glance is like the rising sun
Which drives away all darkness
Please engage me in menial service
Because my heart is proud

False pride is like a poison weed it entered deep in my heart
And caused me to surrender to illusion
I embraced suffering
And like a complete fool I thought I was this material body

Your instructions are like the merciful stroke
Of a sharp knife cutting the heads of our material desires
I am hesitating to come in front of you
To offer myself

I must repent again and again
For sins and offenses
So many I cannot even count them
Please forgive me

My initiation was like entering
The sacred lake of immortality
But I wanted to leave that nectar
Bitten by the flies of lust, greed and anger

I am no better than a tiny insect
Please protect me with your golden hand
Please close your hand around me
And transform me to a butterfly pleasing to Kṛṣṇa

O Prabhupāda please give this sentimental fool shelter under
your lotus feet

Dear godbrothers and godsisters, by your grace allow me to
assist you in your service to Śrīla Prabhupāda and ISKCON, the
manifestation of his love and compassion.

Your servant,
Ariṣṭahā Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I am duty bound to write something in glorification of you on your Vyāsa-pūjā day. So much can be said since you are an ocean of auspicious qualities, but I want to keep this offering short and simple. In September 1965 in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, alone and in a deep mood of pure Vraja *bhakti*, you wrote one prayer to the Supreme Lord. The refrain in English is: “I emphatically say to you, O brothers, you will obtain your good fortune from the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa only when Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī becomes pleased with you.”

This has been my mediation for many years now, ever since Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī came into my life and I have become Her caretaker. Tulasī *pūjā* is part of the standard *sādhana* practice I learned as a new *bhakta*. And now, four decades later, as a *vānaprastha* I am beginning to understand the meaning of “going to the forest”. I must leave this mundane world every day in the morning after *maṅgala āraṭi* and go to the forest of Vṛndāvana and worship Tulasī Devī. I experience your presence, Śrīla Prabhupāda, when I do this. It is an electrifying experience as you are a Śaktyāveśa avatar and Tulasī Mahārāṇī is an expansion of the Supreme Śakti....Hlādinī Śakti. I understand that She specifically empowered you to come to the West and preach to the lowest of the low and turn them into Brahmins. I am one of those lowly creatures who can claim that I had the good fortune to have been initiated by you as a *brāhmaṇa* and taught to chant *gāyatrī* mantra. I cannot say I have always lived up to the standards of brahminical life and culture that you taught, but I can say I aspire to become one of your brahmin disciples who to the best of their ability performs the duties of a *brāhmaṇa* by studying and teaching *sāstra*, by engaging in and teaching deity worship, and by receiving and giving in charity to others. If I can just practice these six simple duties of a *brāhmaṇa*, then I hope and pray that I may someday get the favorable glance of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the good fortune from the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa that you reveal in your intimate prayer becomes a reality in my life.

Praying to always be a devotee of your devotee,

Your insignificant servant,

Rāmanātha sukha Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

I had this dream about you a few years ago.

You were in your room sitting on a rocking chair. I was sitting at your feet and you were using my chest to rock your chair pushing with your foot. Each time your chair would rock forward you would press my chest with your foot and keeping it rocking, like that.

It was great fun for us two. You would smile at me once in a while and I felt I was most perfectly situated, though the sight was rather strange for the guests.

Indeed, there were many Indian guests who were arguing with you about the fact that they "...very knew Kṛṣṇa and all the Gods very well."

I just sat there sitting straight, my chest offered to your lotus feet for your rocking chair pastime.

At one point, a life member pointed at me and said: "Who is this boy? Why is he here?"

And you answered :

"This is my disciple. He has done some service for me and now he is very tired. So I have decided to let him sleep..."

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, by your endless mercy , I feel that I am gradually awaking from this slumber.

All glories to your infinite patience.

Your fallen servant,

Avyaya Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your holy lotus feet on this occasion of Your 2017 anniversary.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and you are the Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead.

This is confirmed in *śāstra*:

“He (the *ācārya*) is the Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 1.46, purport)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the “the basis of the impersonal Brahman,” (*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 14.27). Śrī Kṛṣṇa is indeed the basis and origin of everything that is and you are not only the foundation stone of ISKCON but also the very basis of our lives and existences. We are willingly and ecstatically led by Your Divine Grace, just as bulls are directed by the ropes and rings attached to their noses.

Your version of “*Ṣaḍ Goswāmy-aṣṭakam*,” glorifying the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana was recorded at The Schloss Rettershof, near Frankfurt, Germany, in June 1974. It is so mystically attractive and fascinating (CD01-1). I did not directly participate in the recordings, but along with other godbrothers, Schloss Rettershof was my *saṅkīrtana* book distribution base at the time. It should be noted that in the German language, Rettershof, means the place (literally “the court”) of the savior, in other words, Your place, the place of Your Divine Saving Grace. I also remember how Hamsadūta Prabhu used those grey cardboard egg holders as sound proofing material, as can be seen on the cover of the album.

During your visit in June 1974, You kindly gave me *harināma* initiation. The magazine *Stern* sent a reporter to infiltrate and spy on the devotee community, and they published a full page picture of my dancing at the fire sacrifice. It should be noted that the reporter managed the ISKCON devotee lifestyle for one or two days nights before Kṛṣṇa forcibly ejected him. Sinful persons are definitely excluded from Kṛṣṇa’s and His devotees’ association, just as water and fire cannot mix and are mutually exclusive.

With the repetitive triple ding of the *kartāls*, its rhythmic and sweet presentation eternally resounds in my heart. If my memory serves me well, Cakravarty Prabhu plays the *kartāls*, Hamsadūta Prabhu the *mṛdaṅga*, and You play harmonium. You have a very

special and characteristic way to play the *kartāls* as well – the sound of you playing *kartāls* alone can attract one to Krishna consciousness. Just as the four Kumāras were attracted by the smell of the flowers and Tulasī leaves offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, anything you ever do, even the most insignificant thing, can attract one to Krishna consciousness.

Just as you said about your own guru mahārāja, you are such a great, transcendental Vaikuṅṭha person, well beyond our furthest conceptions and imaginations. You are the greatest well-wisher, benefactor and lover of mankind.

How can one fail to be attracted to Krishna consciousness when one studies Your Divine Grace? *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.1.4 answers this question emphatically, *vinā paśughnāt*, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 1.3.24, purport states:

“Mahārāja Parīkṣit said that only the animal-killer cannot relish the transcendental message of the Supreme Lord.”

When you speak, you are always “fired up”. It is your doubtlessness, clarity of vision and persuasion that convinces the hearer. On one occasion, at question time, one man openly confirmed just that – your no-nonsense, to the point, strong presentation. You humbly thanked him for his compliment.

Because you are the world teacher, many of your classes are in a declamatory tone, thus defying and challenging anyone to put forward a better philosophy. We know this is not possible! Whereas other classes are in a calm and conciliatory mood.

You do this out of love for mankind – this is your only motivation. Therefore, you are as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Father, Who, out of love only, tries to bring to reason the fallen and Maya-witch possessed conditioned souls.

Above all, your message subscribes to the rigors of scientific analysis. “Religion without philosophy is sentiment, or sometimes fanaticism, while philosophy without religion is mental speculation.” (*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 3.3, purport)

Your message is intelligent, reasonable, structured, consistent, unchanging, strong, stern, sometimes forceful, but always respectful of our freedom to choose, just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, after speaking *Bhagavad-gītā*, gives Arjuna his freedom of choice.

...*yatheccasi tathā kuru*: “Thus I have explained to you knowledge still more confidential.

Deliberate on this fully, and then do what you wish to do." (*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 18.63)

Your message is liberal, enjoyable, benevolent, sustained, thoughtful, well thought out and prepared, well observed, humorous, the product of a genial, super top-most and God-surrendered brain...and your message is free of charge!

You are both the wisest and nicest, but we are such fools and rascals that we are not always able to take full advantage of your message and association, as we would like to do.

Through your own elaborate plan and actions, the joyful Kṛṣṇa conscious revolution is already in progress. A perfect example is the yearly Sacred Sound Festival by H.H. Indradyumna Mahārāja and associates both here at ISKCON New Govardhana, New South Wales, Australia and North Carolina, USA.

You are the greatest *sāṅkhya-yogi*, because if You hadn't analyzed the phenomenal world so carefully, how could you explain the Supreme Brahman along with His diverse energies so well? "Only the ignorant speak of devotional service [karma-yoga] as being different from the analytical study of the material world [Sāṅkhya]. Those who are actually learned say that he who applies himself well to one of these paths achieves the results of both." (*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 5.4)

Your expertise and maturity of realization in presenting the Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy is astounding! So is your thorough grasp of the philosophy and knowledge of the Sanskrit *śloka*s. If I could only possess an atom of your spiritual mastership, I would become a useful tool in your hands.

In the early days, the saying was "Work now, *samādhi* later." We absolutely love the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead under your personal direction, still we may at times ask the question: "Where is *samādhi*?"

Dreams of achievement in Krishna consciousness may not be instantly realized. Sometimes we find there is a twenty years gap between the preaching dream and its practical realization. In your own life, we see that it took several decades to achieve your ultimate and grand success. The main thing is to keep our hopes always very high, and that should not be very difficult, as our hopes are pinned on Kṛṣṇa, the highest and most elevated personality. In other words, the greatest and infallible positivity and win-win arrangement is Krishna consciousness.

I did not receive many personal instructions from you. Nor was I ever part of your direct entourage, as a personal servant, like His Grace Hari Śauri Prabhu, His Grace Śrutakīrti Prabhu and so many others. Nor was I ever a personal assistant manager such as Your GBC deputies.

These days, as a personal service, I often fit Your bead bag into Your hands at the beginning of a *japa* session. Thank you very much for this service opportunity.

However, the most important and most inspiring instruction, you have ever given to me came in a letter dated May 2nd, 1977 and addressed to “Śrīman Yādavendra Dāsa Brahmācārī”. It reads as follows:

“There is no difference between study and management in Krishna consciousness. I am studying books and writing also, and at the same time attending to your letter. And there is so much management to look to. So I am doing both because there is no difference.”

Your secretary at the time, His Holiness Tamāl Krishna Gosvāmī added: “Śrīla Prabhupāda is the *ācārya* and showing us the example by doing both management and study. You should follow in His footsteps and do the same. There are nine types of devotional service and of the nine ‘*arcanam*’ includes management. If one takes part in any one of these nine types of devotional service he can make his life perfect. So do not see any duality in any service, which you have to render to Kṛṣṇa. Besides this, it is advised:

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

(*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 4.34)

...Rendering of service is essential in Krishna consciousness. Therefore you should perform your daily routine activities with as much enthusiasm as you study Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books...”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, if the *śakti* to carry out the orders of the spiritual master comes with the instructions of the spiritual master, then I may petition You herewith:

Please give me Your special blessings NOW! After some 45 years of trying, I think I might be ready for it NOW. I think I might be

able to handle it NOW. I always wished to practice and live by your instructions 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It has already transformed my mind. It has set it right. It has already transformed my life.

“Bhakti means devotional service; Every service has some attractive feature, which drives the servitor progressively on and on. Every one of us within this world is perpetually engaged in some sort of service, and the impetus for such service is the pleasure we derive from it.” (*Nectar of Devotion*, Preface)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am yours without reservation and for eternity and I enjoy the Prabhupāda-*sambandha*, also called Prabhupāda-*rasa* relationship very much. So be it.

Thank you very much!

Always remaining a beggar at your holy lotus feet as well as a grateful servant,

Yādavendra Dāsa
Brisbane, Australia
www.krishnaculture.org

Tattvavit Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I submit *sarvāṅga daṇḍavat praṇāmas* in the dust of your lotus feet.

Recently, I took the initiative to encourage the BBT trustees to correct the translation of the refrain in your Bengali poem written on the *Jaladuta* as you arrived in America. On September 13, 1965, you wrote: “Today I have disclosed my mind to my companion, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. There is a Bengali poem made by me in this connection.”

Coincidentally—precisely fifty-one years later—on September 13, 2016, the BBT trustees discussed the proposed correction. During a Skype meeting, they decided to get the revision’s accuracy endorsed by three qualified Bengali speakers. By early December, three endorsements were obtained. So the trustees accepted the correction and passed this correspondence resolution (CP16-01):

The BBT will switch to the following translation of the refrain of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s poem “Prayer to the Lotus Feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa”:

O brother, Kṛṣṇa, I emphatically say to You that when You perform this pious act Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī will surely be pleased with You and You will achieve great piety.*

When publishing this updated translation, we will include an asterisk with the following note:

*The previous translation of the refrain was: “I emphatically say to you, O brothers, you will obtain your good fortune from the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa only when Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī becomes pleased with you.” The main problem with this translation, produced not by Śrīla Prabhupāda but by one of his disciples, is that it missed the point that Śrīla Prabhupāda is addressing Kṛṣṇa, not “brothers.” *Kṛṣṇa tava puṇya habe bhāi* means “O brother, Kṛṣṇa, You will achieve piety.” This mistake resulted in a flawed translation, which the BBT felt important to fix.

“O brother, Kṛṣṇa, I emphatically say to You that when You perform this pious act . . .”

Which pious act? It is mentioned in a few verses of your poem:

You write in the fourth verse that Kṛṣṇa’s mercy will make you worthy of the task given to you by your guru. In the fifth verse (which refers back to the third) you say that Kṛṣṇa’s empowerment will give you the strength to render the service desired by your guru: making Gaurāṅga’s name known throughout the countries of the world.

* * *

In late 2014, Bhakti Chāru Swami wrote the new translation of the refrain, at my request, for the second printing of the BBT’s volume of your collected poems, *A Shower of Divine Compassion* (which I edited, around 2010). The mistake in the refrain came to my attention soon after this book was printed, and Daśaratha-suta Prabhu, the book’s compiler, agreed that a new, accurate translation should go in the second printing.

I became aware of the inaccurately translated refrain when reading the e-book at cowdust.com—written by my godbrother Babhru Prabhu (who later accepted *sannyāsa* and the name Swami

Bhakti Abhaya Āśrama).

During 2015–16, several BBT editors and Bhakti Chāru Swami discussed the new and the old translations. We saw the evidence for or against the revision, and we discussed the import of the revised translation. Using the Vedabase, we traced out the history of the publication of the old translation, done in Los Angeles, by Jaya-śacīnandana Prabhu, an American who studied Bengali while serving at the BBT.

After reading his translation of your poem, you wrote to him: “The prayer can be called ‘Prayer to the Lotus Feet of Kṛṣṇa,’ and I will be sending comments on that shortly” (8 Feb 1976). Perhaps you would have corrected the refrain, but apparently you never wrote that future letter with comments. It is not in the Bhaktivedanta Archives.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving me, along with your other disciples involved, the inspiration and enthusiasm to provide the accurate translation of the refrain in *Bhagavān Kṛṣṇera Pāda-Padme Prārthanā*: “Prayer to the Lotus Feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa.” I liked doing this service during the fiftieth anniversaries of your arrival in America and the founding of ISKCON.

Your servant,
Tattvavit Dāsa

Rāsalīlādevī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

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

You have showered your mercy upon us, your wayward children, in countless and unfathomable ways. I am still trying to fully understand the depth and breadth of this most precious gift. Still trying to become worthy to receive it.

Your unflinching faith and spiritual genius are my inspiration and give me hope that Krishna consciousness is attainable and that it is only thing, in this entire creation, worth striving for.

I pray that I can forever remain in a state of constant gratitude for the matchless gifts which you have so lovingly and compassionately bestowed upon me.

Thank you for having more faith in me than I had in myself.

Thank you for allowing me to serve and assist you in your mission.
Thank you for showing me the clear path of *bhakti* and giving me the means to perfect my life! Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Aspiring to become the humble and loving servant of your servants,

Rāsālīlādevī Devī Dāsī

Damaghoṣa Dāsa

Eight proofs Śrīla Prabhupāda is a pure devotee:

“Unless one of under the shelter of a realized spiritual master, his understanding of the Supreme is simply foolishness.” (*Teachings of Lord Caitanya*)

“When a devotee is perfectly qualified in chanting the transcendental vibration of the holy names, he is quite fit to become spiritual master and deliver all the people of the world.” (*Teachings of Lord Caitanya*)

“Thus one who is not well versed in the authorized scriptures and not able to answer all such relevant inquiries should not pose as a spiritual master for the matter of material gain. It is illegal to become a spiritual master if one is unable to deliver the disciple.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.8.7, purport)

1)

Guest (3): So, Śrīla Prabhupāda, have you realized God?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: What do you think? What is your opinion?

Guest (3): I can't say.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Then if I say, “yes,” then what you will understand? If you are not yourself expert, then even if I say, “Yes, I am God realized,” how you will take

it as truth? If you do not know what is God realization, then how you can ask this question and how you will be satisfied by the answer? You do not know.

Guest (3): Well, what is God realization?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Then...then you were asking, "Are you God realized?" If I say, "Yes," then how you'll believe it? You do not know what is God realization. Then why do you put this question? You do not know yourself. If I say, "Yes," how you'll understand that I am right? Therefore you should not put all these questions. It has no value. You do not know yourself what is God realization. Now, just like a medical man, if he asks another man, medical man, so if he says, "Yes," then medical man will understand him by technical terms whether he is medical man. So unless one is medical man, what is the use of asking another man, "Are you medical man?" Unless you are prepared to take the answer whatever I give. Are you prepared?

Guest (3): Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Then it is all right. I am. **I am seeing God every moment.** So unless we are prepared to take the answer, we should not put ourself...

2)

In the *Caitanya Maṅgala* by Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura, Lord Gaurāṅga states: "Even if the sinners reject religion or flee to foreign countries, still they will get the mercy. I will send *mora senāpati bhakta* to go there and deliver them. [*Mora* means "My", *senāpati* means "a military field commander", and *bhakta* means "a devotee". So Lord Caitanya will empower His own devotee to spread Krishna consciousness around the world.] This was a prediction of the appearance of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his worldwide preaching activities where he would travel the world over, open 108 temples, and initiate millions into the chanting of the holy names of the Lord. How could this person be anything less than a *mahā-bhāgavata*, empowered pure devotee of Lord Gaurāṅga?

3)

“Yes, whoever you tell the chant to, it is effective. You have heard it from me and my disciples, similarly I have heard it from my guru mahārāja, and so on, and on. **Because you have heard it from a pure devotee of the Lord**, therefore it is transmitted from you to another. Just as an aerial message, is transmitted from one place to another, similarly, this Guru *paramparā* system is working. My disciples are my agents, my representatives, so by hearing it from them, you are receiving it from me. And because you are a sincere soul, those who are hearing the mantra from you are receiving it in disciplic succession, from Lord Caitanya and from Lord Kṛṣṇa.” (Letter to Andrea Temple, Los Angeles, March 6, 1968)

4)

“When I left your country on the 22nd of July, I had very little hope to come back again. **But Kṛṣṇa informed me that I’m not going to die immediately**; therefore, I have come back again to get inspiration of Krishna consciousness from you all good souls.” (Letter to Jadurānī, December 16, 1967, San Francisco, California)

5)

“**Yes the spiritual master is also present in his picture**, though more importantly he is present in his teachings. This is explained in one letter that has already been distributed.” (Letter to Śukadeva, Calcutta, 29 January 1973)

6)

“Tamāla Kṛṣṇa..So far I am concerned, I cannot say what I was in my previous life, but one great astrologer calculated that I was previously a physician and my life was sinless. Besides that, to corroborate the statement of *Bhagavad-gītā* “*śucīnām śrīmatām gehe yoga-bhraṣṭo ‘bhijāyate*” which means an unfinished yogī takes birth in rich family or born of a *sūcī* or pious father. By the grace of Kṛṣṇa I got these two

opportunities in the present life to be born of a pious father and brought up in one of the richest, aristocratic families of Calcutta (Kasinath Mullick). The Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Deity in this family **called me to meet Him**, and therefore last time when I was in Calcutta, I stayed in that temple along with my American disciples. Although I had immense opportunities to indulge in the four principles of sinful life because I was connected with a very aristocratic family, Kṛṣṇa always saved me, and throughout my whole life I do not know what is illicit sex, intoxication, meat-eating or gambling. **So far my present life is concerned, I do not remember any part of my life when I was forgetful of Kṛṣṇa.**" (Letter to Tamāl Krishna, Los Angeles, 21 June 1970)

7)

"... The Pāṇḍavas, all being devotees of the Lord, certainly venerated family Deities in the royal palace for worship. Children who appear in such families fortunately generally imitate such worship of the Deities, even in the way of childhood play. By the grace of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, we had the chance of being born in a Vaiṣṇava family, and in our childhood we imitated the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa by imitating our father. Our father encouraged us in all respects to observe all functions such as the Rathayātrā and Dola-yātrā ceremonies, and he used to spend money liberally for distributing *prasāda* to us children and our friends. Our spiritual master, who also took his birth in a Vaiṣṇava family got all inspirations from his great Vaiṣṇava father, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda. That is the way of all lucky Vaiṣṇava families... The life history of many such devotees is almost the same because there is always symmetry between the early lives of all great devotees of the Lord. Such *mahā-bhāgavatas* are called *nitya-siddhas*, or **souls liberated from birth.**" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.15, purport)

8)

"This Krishna consciousness movement directly receives instructions from the Supreme Personality of Godhead via persons [Śrīla Prabhupāda] who are strictly

following His instructions....Materialistic men are not interested in taking directions from a liberated person, but they are very much interested in their own concocted ideas, which make them repeatedly fail in their attempts. Because the entire world is now following the imperfect directions of conditioned souls, humanity is completely bewildered." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.18.5, purport)

Aja Dāsa

Dearly beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Nearly 40 years has now passed since you left us, and I begin to get some sense of eternity, as it seems like forever since you were here with us. Each day seems infinite in your absence, and I somehow wonder how I can go on. I yearn to see you so badly – to gaze on your beautiful face and transcendental smile. I know, however, that you are in your books, and they are my only solace in your physical absence. Even a few words and I know that you are with me.

Although I am far from perfect, I feel confident that you are always guiding me, and that I will see you again. Every few days now, it seems, another of your beloved disciples, my wonderful godbrothers and godsisters, is leaving this planet, hopefully to return to Your Grace. I am both saddened at being left behind, and gladdened that they have left this world, hopefully to find themselves with you.

You have taught us that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and that He is ever calling us back to Him, back home. And, while I believe you, I find that my only real attraction is for you. You are immediate and available, and I know my only real hope is to find shelter with you. Lord Kṛṣṇa may be in my heart, but what I feel there is love for you. You are my Father, Mother, Master and everything. I have no other shelter but your lotus feet. I pray with all my heart that one day or another I will be able to please you.

Begging to ever remain your disciple,

Aja Dāsa

LOOKING FOR MY LIFE

Walking along a rocky path
I passed my youthful days
Simply wasting my time
Absorbed in “childish plays.”

Who am I really?
From where do I come?
Are we just flesh and blood
In a universe blank and dumb?

And what will happen
When I finally die.
Is a lifeless corpse
All that is left of “I”?

Is our whole existence
But an empty dream
A figment of imagination
Devoid of a will supreme?

I was living a life
Full of sorrow and grief.
I had lost my faith
And could find no relief.

But why do I walk
Upon this earth?
Is there no purpose at all
Of my human birth?

I read many books and scriptures
To make this ache inside me cease
When one day a soothing voice spoke
Giving me hope of finding peace.

“Arise, a new day is dawning
Oh, wanderer in Māyā’s world,
Open up your heart and your soul
And see the hidden truth unfurled.

“You are not of this transient nature
Where we are born, live and die
But an eternal, unborn soul
Coming from the spiritual sky

“Your home is in Kṛṣṇa’s land,
A heaven of sweet romance,
Where every word is a song
And every step is a dance.

“Continually you should chant
Lord Kṛṣṇa’s holy name.
It will take you to Vṛndāvana
And fan your ‘spark’ into a ‘flame’.

I was blinded by darkness
Standing at the crossroads of life
When Prabhupāda kindly blessed me
Ending my painful strife.

Oh, spiritual master and guide,
With a touch so divinely sweet
You brought me to Kṛṣṇa
And made my life complete.

Mahākartā Dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa.

So many years have passed, and I have been in your service for over 40 years. I am very thankful to you for accepting me who am an insignificant, fallen soul, as your disciple and engaging me in Krishna consciousness. After coming to Śrī Laṅkā to carry out your mission in 1976, I was able to see all your vision coming true. Your mercy and blessings are boundless. That is the force that keeps us in your service regardless of all difficulties that arise. Even though I am faulty, please give me the mercy and strength so I will always be at your service to fulfill your desire.

Your humble servant,

Mahākartā Dāsa
Temple President, ISKCON Śrī Laṅkā

Phalinī Devī Dāsī

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my unworthy head at your lotus feet. I bow down before you and beg for your permission and the ability to make a small offering of glorification on this holy anniversary of Your Divine Appearance in this world.

Every year I look forward to the sweet challenge of praying

to be empowered to glorify Your Divine Grace. Though it is presumptuous on my part to even attempt to do so, since I am unable and unqualified to glorify you properly, I nonetheless appreciate the heart-purifying process of praying, writing, submitting my offering, and then relishing the offerings of my godbrothers and godsisters after the Vyāsa-pūjā book is completed and published in honor of Your Divine Appearance Day.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, my husband often points out to other devotees that Your Divine Grace spent forty-three years preparing yourself for preaching in the West. From the time you met Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in 1922 until the Jaladuta pulled into Boston Harbor in 1965, you studied, wrote, published, preached, memorized *ślokas*, and prayed to become empowered to preach in the West. All glories to Your Divine Grace for spending forty-three years preparing to carry out your Guru Mahārāja's order! You stepped off the gangplank at Boston, then moved on to New York, then over to San Francisco, then Los Angeles, then to every town and village you could manage to travel to, anywhere and everywhere all over the world, in order to bring the message of *Bhāgavad-gītā As It Is* to the walking dead.

You found us, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the walking dead. We were the walking, talking, eating, sleeping, mating, defending dead. Sometimes people make joking remarks about someone who is dull or stupid. They say things like "There's a light on in there, but nobody's home." There was a light on inside our hearts, there was a soul inside there, and there was the Supersoul in the hearts of all of us hippies, but our brains were dull. We were dead. Brain-dead. Nobody was home. We were walking around in a dream state just like everyone else in the material world. We were asleep to our true identity. We were unclean. Our faces were dark. Our eyes had lost their sparkle. We had no purpose. We had no idea who we were or what we were supposed to be doing. All we knew was that we didn't want to be the "Nowhere Man" in the Beatles' song. We did not want to work in a nowhere job, earning money to support our nowhere relations, growing old in a nowhere world and then dying, destined for some nowhere place. We knew we didn't want that. But we did not know what we wanted. We did not know that human life was a special opportunity to awaken our love for God and gain release from the cycle of *samsāra*. We saw people all around us living frustrated, dissatisfied lives, without a real purpose, growing

up, getting married, working until they were old, retiring if they were lucky, then dying. We didn't want that same kind of aimless, pointless life, but we didn't know where to turn. So we turned to sense gratification. We thought we *were* these bodies, so we tried to become happy by satisfying the urges of our bodies. We thought that these bodies, the senses of these bodies, were meant to be indulged. So that's what we thought we were all about. We didn't want the humdrum life of our parents and grandparents, but we had no information how to lead a more purposeful life. So we turned to intoxication and illicit sex.

Then you came along, like a bright angel from the spiritual sky, bringing us tidings of hope and a spiritual purpose, a goal that gave us the will to live. You gave us life. We were dead, and you woke us up. An angel from Vaikuṅṭha, you came to give us the good news that there is a purpose to our life, that we are the eternal soul, the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. With your golden voice you called us to come back home, back to Godhead. We had never heard of such a place as Goloka Vṛndāvana. But you taught us. You taught us about our real home, the spiritual world, which is eternal and full of varieties of trees, flowers, animals, birds, buildings and people. You explained that the spiritual sky is filled with happiness and that everything there is eternal, whereas this material world is full of suffering and death and all the forms here are temporary. Your golden hands beckoned to us to come home. We saw you. Your bright, effulgent form captured our eyes. Your deep, moist eyes captured our vision. Your graceful gestures captured our attention. Your deep voice captured our ears and hearts. You taught us how to sing Kṛṣṇa's names and how to dance. You taught us how to cook pure vegetarian foods and offer them to Kṛṣṇa. You taught us how to chant Sanskrit *ślokas*, and how to *sit properly* and listen. And hear.

You always differentiated between listening and hearing. It took me a while to understand the difference. Listening means to pay attention and catch the words, to be attentive. Hearing means you've received the mercy of the spiritual master and the Lord, and the words are starting to make sense, to become realizations. They are entering the heart.

When words of truth enter the heart, there is realization. When your words, which were always truthful—the Highest Truth—entered our ears and went into our hearts, they woke us up. They gave us life. You told us, "Once you enter the spiritual world, you

will never come back to this miserable material world again.” This promise alone gave us hope and a reason to go forward, to continue on the path back home, back to Kṛṣṇa.

After forty-four years, by your mercy, my husband and I are still endeavoring to chant our rounds, follow the four regulative principles, study your books, serve our Deities, sing the Lord’s holy names in *kīrtana*, and preach *Bhāgavad-gītā As It Is* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to whomever we meet, wherever we go. And, by your mercy, we are constantly traveling from town to town, temple to temple, all over India and Śrī Laṅkā, to do our little part to carry on your mission (with special emphasis on “boiling the milk” by encouraging younger devotees).

Sometimes devotees ask me what I remember about you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I share with them my memories of the times Your Divine Grace came to Los Angeles and San Francisco and how you touched my life, opened my eyes and melted my heart. But I explain to them that each and every one of them has the same opportunity that I had, that you are still with us and very much present where your teachings are being studied and followed.

Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, continue to guide us and be here for us. Protect us from the lures, tricks and temptations of Māyādevī. Kindly somehow or other allow us to remain in the association of devotees. Kindly allow us to continue chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa with Kṛṣṇa’s devotees. And please, please remain the guiding light for the devotees who will continue to carry on your mission after we depart.

While we’re still hobbling around in these dwindling, white-haired bodies, while we still have a little physical strength, please empower us, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to follow your instructions and to infuse and encourage others with your divine purpose—to spread the chanting of the holy names of the Lord to every town and village and to preach *Bhāgavad-gītā As It Is* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* everywhere we go.

Your unworthy daughter,

Phalini Devī Dāsī

Udupi, Karnataka, India

www.riding-indias-trains.com

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

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

It's now the time to write the Vyāsa-pūjā offering – another year has passed so quickly and very soon I will have to quit this temporary body and move into another material body. At least I have understood a little of what you are teaching and pray for more understanding. So this offering is simply to say thank you.

Thank you for leaving Vṛndāvana at the age of 69 and coming to the West (in 1965). THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1965:

“Till 4 o'clock afternoon we have crossed over the Atlantic Ocean for twenty-four hours. The whole day was clear and almost smooth. I am taking my food regularly and got some strength to struggle. There is slight lurching of the ship and I am feeling slight headache also. But I am struggling and the nectarine of life is Śrī Caitanya Charitāmrita the source of my all vitality.”

Thank you for coming to New York City and patiently introducing the philosophy and teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa together with the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.

“So it was that in 1966, thousands of young people were walking the streets of the Lower East Side, not simply intoxicated or crazy (though they often were), but in search of life's ultimate answers, in complete disregard of “the establishment” and the day-to-day life pursued by millions of “straight” Americans.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta, Vol. 1)

Thank you for showing the devotees how to cook and honour Kṛṣṇa prasāda.

“Rūpānuga: So we had a big feast, and a lot of people came, although it wasn't as crowded as the Sunday feasts. We were all taking prasādam, and Swamiji was sitting up on his dais, and he was also taking prasādam. He was demanding that we eat lots of prasādam. And then he was saying, ‘Chant! Chant!’ So we were eating, and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa between bites, and he was insisting on more and more prasādam. I was amazed. He stayed with us and kept insisting that we eat so much. He stayed until around eleven o'clock, and then he became drowsy. And the party was over.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta, Vol. 1)

Thank you for taking your first plane trip (United Airlines) and going to San Francisco.

“Mukunda had told of a ‘Gathering of the Tribes’ in San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury. Thousands of hippies were migrating from all over the country to the very neighborhood where Mukunda had rented the storefront. It was a youth renaissance much bigger than what was going on in New York City.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta, Vol. 1)

Thank you for translating so many Vaiṣṇava books and adding your Bhaktivedanta purports. December 5th, 1975:

“Śrīla Prabhupāda had a daily routine that his young disciples could barely keep up with! He would translate his books most of the night, then sleep just a few hours and do his whole morning program, chanting japa, taking a morning walk, greeting the Deities and giving classes most every day.” (Gauridāsa Paṇḍita Dāsa)

Thank you for introducing us to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*.

“A spiritual master must be in an authorized disciplic succession to be bona fide. It is not possible for someone to be a bona fide spiritual master in a line of spiritual authority that does not come from Kṛṣṇa.” (Bhakta Handbook, Chapter 12 – Brahmā-Madhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya)

Thank you for coming to Australia in 1972 where I first met you at the Sydney Temple. You were giving initiations in the back garden of the Glebe temple. One of the candidates had long hair, and I remember you made a comment about it. I wish I could remember more details, but unfortunately that’s all I can recall.

Thank you for Gaura-Pūrṇimā festival in Māyāpur which has become a joyous celebration with devotees coming from many countries as forecast by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura made three predictions concerning a person and a phenomena: “A personality will soon appear,” wrote Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, “and he will travel all over the world to spread the teachings of Lord Caitanya.”

His second prediction: “Very soon the chanting of Harināma saṅkīrtana will be spread all over the world. Oh, when will that day come when people from America, England, France, Germany, Russia will take up karatāls and mṛdaṅgas and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa in their towns?”

The third prediction: “When will that day come when the fair-skinned foreigners will come to Śrī Māyāpur-dhāma and join with the Bengali Vaiṣṇavas to chant, ‘Jaya Śacīnandana, Jaya Śacīnandana.’ When will that day be?” (ISKCON Desire Tree)

Thank you for establishing Deity worship: “I have introduced this system of Deity worship among the non-believers, the atheists. Kṛṣṇa cannot be understood with our present senses. But by His kindness He agrees to personally appear as the Deity to accept our service. When we are attracted to the beautiful form of the Deity we will forget our attraction for material things. And as we serve the Deity we will develop pure love of God. Then our lives will be successful.”

Thank you for demonstrating how to leave this material world by being fully absorbed in thinking of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

“Prabhupāda spent his last three days with his disciples at the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir, and the last day he didn’t speak. His only words were in the morning, when the *kavirāja* asked him to drink some juice and he replied, “*Meri kuch iccha nahin*”: I have no desire. After that, Prabhupāda didn’t speak. He was in a completely internal state of consciousness, and the devotees surrounded him with *kīrtana*. And for the last few hours, in the afternoon, the leaders opened up the doors to everyone. Young, old, children, men, women – all were allowed to be in the room with Śrīla Prabhupāda and reciprocate love with him. Then, at about 7:26 pm., his tongue and mouth moved – Hare Kṛṣṇa and he left.”
(Talk by Girirāj Swami, November 14, 2007, Māyāpur)

There are many more thoughts coming into my mind as I type this offering, but I only pray that I will forever continue to say ‘thank, you, Prabhupāda.’

Your aspiring servant,

Jaḡadvīra Dāsa
Okinawa, Japan

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

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

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my respectful obeisances at your lotus feet.

All glories to you, the representative of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in this world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the one who left a comfortable situation to undertake a journey full of unknowns.

For you to live in Vṛndāvana was a nectarine taste, but now, that we know you, we understand why you chose such a difficult mission – the Western world.

You are the representative of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in this material world, for you there is no difference of place, time and circumstances. Because you act independently from the three *guṇas*, you are never under the influence of the material energy.

If someone thinks that you are under the influence of material nature they commit a big *aparādha*, as the spiritual master is never under the bondage of this material nature.

You are unique, and you have all the qualifications of the spiritual master, and when the spiritual master manifests pure devotion, Śrī Kṛṣṇa works through Him. In this way, we can surely affirm that everything you did and that you are still doing is Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s will.

You belong to disciplic succession that comes down from the original guru *paramparā*, authorized by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. In this way, we are very fortunate to participate in your ‘Western-yuga-līlā’. Even Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself did not come to the Western countries, and we know why...because this task was reserved for you.

In a well-organized company – the administrator – when needed to perform a difficult task, sends his best representative. Therefore, we know very well that the Western world is not like India, and to preach in the Western countries was a very, very difficult mission for everyone, and for this reason Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu chose you.

Why you? Because you are the pure devotee of the Lord, and you didn’t come here to cheat us but to change our hearts.

I remember the story by Girirāj Swami, when a man in Mumbai

asked you to make a kind of business with your disciples to make money to build the temple in Juhu. You told him that these American boys came to you to advance in spiritual life, so you can't cheat them and make business with them – this was not their expectation.

For this reason, Śrī Kṛṣṇa already had faith in you before sending you here. Like Śrī Kṛṣṇa had faith in you, you have faith in us. So your disciples are continuing what you started. In this way the mission is going on very well, and Krishna consciousness is spreading very fast all over the world.

In my previous Vyāsa-pūjā letter, I promised you that I had planned to go and preach in Naples and South Italy. It is taking a little time, but now we have started. We had five conferences in Naples, and I am sure that if I follow your example, my preaching will be successful, because you give us the strength, the desire, and the patience to continue the mission.

I am sure that you will be very happy if South Italy will have a preaching center, especially in Sicily. In your diary you saw the Sicily island from the Jaladuta. Because you saw this place, we must have a temple there.

Your servant,

Mṛtyuhara Dāsa

Lalitā Devī Dāsī

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

I am so thankful that Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu granted me such mercy as to have taken shelter and surrendered to such a glorious spiritual father. I am exceedingly grateful that you introduced Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu to all, thus reawakening our hearts to devotional service. I continue to pray to you for help to reach pure devotional service and become free from anger, lust and greed.

You created a society of extraordinary souls all over the world. I am so indebted to have devotees living all around me at my home and have access to hear from those traveling *sādhus* whose realized words are accessible from places far away. Please forgive all my shortcomings and help me to see myself as your servant every moment. May my desire to help others by glorifying you

and distributing your unlimited forms of mercy continue to increase. I beg to remain as your aspiring servant through my last breath and forward.

Your most grateful daughter,

Lalitā Devī Dāsī

Mañidhara Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Please accept my *danḍavats* at the Your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

This is my 45th offering I wrote to you. I feel it was just yesterday I was saved by your mercy and the mercy of your preaching disciples. In Spring 1972, finally walking through the temple door, leaving all my dreams behind.

Time passed so quickly. Some things are the same, some are not. I was asked to write the story of my life as it so wonderfully demonstrates the amazing mercy you can bestow upon a fallen servant, but there are already so many autobiographies.

But indeed, what a wonderful life you gave me Śrīla Prabhupāda! How amazing life can be once one comes to the shore of the ocean of your mercy! There were moments I felt lost, there were moments I felt ostracized by those who came to believe your movement is their property. There were moments when whatever I believed in and held sacred was threatened and finally destroyed. But again and again you appeared in form of your instructions, your voice strongly resounding in my ears and in my mind and finally in my heart. You were always there, establishing reality and exposing the illusion.

You tolerated and waited for me realize and to overcome my attachments, however noble they seemed to be to me. You waited until I was able to give up my paths and focused on the essential. You were always there, sometimes forcefully entering, sometimes patiently waiting. The agents of your mercy, suddenly appearing well-wishers of the most surprising kind, arrived on the scene precisely timed and precisely inspired by Your Divine Grace to save me in times of need. You sent them and inspired them, being the external manifestation of the Lord in the heart.

The way You inspired those who came to my aid is simply

amazing. Actually I gradually learned to welcome distress and social ostracation, the presence of those who administer pain, as this pain always provoked your mercy to manifest even more strongly. Sometimes at the impact of such pain, I could hardly restrain myself, overpowered by the feelings of gratitude, as you appeared in my heart with the expression of a loving father, looking at me with a “I told you!” witty smile.

And yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were always in front of me, telling me where to go and when the time arrived to leave a particular place. But it sometimes took me a long time to understand. When the pain again arrived and another of my mysterious well wishers appeared on the scene, I proceeded to another location, to another place in order to learn more lessons administered to me by the Supreme Lord manifesting through you.

This learning process never stops. Another location, another lesson to be learned with you as the final guide, always pointing in the same direction, Back Home, Back to Godhead. How long it may take before I can reach this place which is free of external designations, the place where one can be as one really is and not as others imagine one to be. A place where nobody is troubled by ‘wishful thinking’, trying to mold his destiny to his liking. A place where there is no enemy but only friends, a place where only those who don’t want to possess and steal what you gave but only serve your desires selflessly are admitted.

Whenever I thought things are getting worse, I saw You, walking ahead of me, ignoring the most difficult moments of your life, again and again surrendering to the lotus feet of the Lord with dignity and deep devotion. Seeing you walking alone out of the ruins of your *grhastha āśrama*, fainting in the heat of Calcutta city while trying to distribute at least few of *Back to Godhead* magazines, meditating about you boarding the Jaladuta ship, embarking on a seemingly suicidal mission, the beatings of German police, hunting us and threatening us like animals was like nectar once we did hold your books in our hands, eager to give them to any obstinate conditioned soul we met down the road.

What does it matter my body got damaged on the way. It is a tool to break down anyway. The abuse of the public we experienced, followed by ostracization by those who came to believe they are the owners of whatever you gave, were like nectar once we remember how your amazing preaching efforts got “evaluated” by those who

became immovable and petrified in their own mentally fabricated pseudo-divinity.

In times like these I could hear your thundering voice, delivering another lecture, often just to the point I was exactly standing at. Reading your letters to my godbrothers and godsisters, filled with personal concern and detailed instructions, there was no moment I couldn't see that you were already there where others first have to walk. You were ahead of us all the way, spared of nothing that we may have to face. How encouraging it is to remember what you had to endure! How smooth my path was in comparison to the thorny path You had to walk!

How did I come to deserve so much of your mercy? How is it possible when seeing my incompetence to understand, you never left me behind? How amazing is your never-ending personal love and care! Was it just these few books I distributed which attracted your mercy? These 15 years on *sañkīrtana* followed by years of management? How rewarding is your book distribution! The books are still out there, preaching. Whatever I managed in ISKCON another twenty years to follow was destroyed. But once distributed, the books remain, with you living in them, preaching eternally.

Without book distribution my life would be not what it is today. *Sañkīrtana* gave me life, and *sañkīrtana* showed me what life is. Prior to being engaged by you in book distribution, I lived a life of an introverted renegade, a silent observer of things around me I couldn't understand. Yes, I suspected this is a world of names only. I suspected that I am part of an entirely illusory scenery. But I had no means to escape and live differently. You gave the illusion a name, and you gave me a hope to disentangle myself from the karmic network I was and am still trapped in. Now there is so much to do, so much to see and so much to hope for. You showed me where life really is and where bliss can be found.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I will never understand the depth of your love and the dimension of your mercy. Sometimes, in midst of awkward circumstances, I could only go on realizing how you are still holding your hand over me, picking me up again and again. What is the reason to be so kindly treated? What is the cause of your mercy? It is causeless, and it is never ending.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am known to be a man of many words, but on this day my words seem to be so limited and so inappropriate to glorify your love and your tolerance towards such a fallen soul like

myself. I am the living testimony of what your mercy can achieve. I am the living testimony of your never-ending mercy. I can only fall at your lotus feet on this day, and I can only cry, remembering what you have done for me.

I can see the end of my days in this body. Even not being threatened by some terminal disease, I can already see the limits of my being here in this bodily frame. With you as my eternal guide, there is no fear to go on, there is no fear to go anywhere and there is no worry for the sustenance of this body. In your presence there is no danger and no diminution of one's endeavors. As you once wrote to one of my godbrothers: "With my left foot, I can kick all your problems away".

And so I pray to you Śrīla Prabhupāda on this day, please kick me, please bless me, please push me so I can finally reach the place reserved for me eternally by the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I have no chance to see the Lord, but I have hope for your merciful glance on my head as I bow down and clench desperately to Your lotus feet. I never spoke to you directly, but I can hear your voice again and again. I never wrote you a letter, but you wrote a letter to me. I never had the chance to serve you in your *vapu* form, but you served me so many times once I was engaged in your *vāṇī*. You are giving so much, and I could give only so little. I will never be able to repay the debt accumulated, but you always give me the hope that I can try.

How many more Vyāsa-pūjā offerings can I write while living in this body? I don't know. But serving you lifetime after lifetime makes this question irrelevant. To make my life and the lives to follow as one offering to you is a goal to strive for. To become an instrument in your hands is the perfection of life. Though I may be a dull tool now, please keep on sharpening it until it reaches a usable form for the purpose of the mission you established so clearly.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the gifts you bestowed upon me. Thank you for saving me again and again.

Your unworthy servant,

Mañidhara Dāsa

Māyeśa Dāsa

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

The disciple's duty

A disciple has two duties
Though he can never repay his debt

He sees the world lose its hope
When guru departs bitter tears are wept

But weeping tears is only half
There is a duty to be done

And by Your Grace may we try like you
To save conditioned souls one by one

Māyeśa Dāsa

Pārvatī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīnī*

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

Or in the words of that 1960's American poet, Alan Ginsberg:

‘What intelligence; what compassion – to transplant
an entire Vedic civilization onto foreign soil’.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, under the shade of the lotus feet of Rūpa Gosvāmī in Vṛndāvana, you planned out your strategy to relieve Lord Caitanya's anxiety of how to find enough people to distribute love of Godhead. Lord Caitanya transplanted that storehouse of love of Godhead within your heart, and you personally distributed those fruits of love of Godhead globally to most towns and villages. And whoever came into contact with those fortunate recipients,

contagiously were likewise impelled to distribute the fruits to other towns and villages. And infected with the same, the contagion goes further on and on.

How it was done is inconceivable. One devotee expressed his amazement to you, “We were just loitering in the street.” “Oh,” you said, “but when I called, you all came running.” And, oh, did we run, and still run, like a never-ending Olympic game send-off medley, passing the flaming torch to the next runner, and the next runner, and the next runner.

You single-handedly conquered the whole world, Śrīla Prabhupāda, which was once completely ruled by a single great emperor, King Bharata, for which the whole planet was known as Bhārata-varṣa. So, in one sense, you didn’t actually transplant, but rather you re-awakened a very, very deeply hidden and long forgotten inner reality, closed down for thousands of years of material conditioning. Didn’t you say once that eventually, people will understand that this Krishna consciousness movement will have changed the face of the earth?

And, the job at hand set perpetually in motion, you returned home to Vṛndāvana to take up residence in your eternal resting place. And now, you are the Emperor of the World, managing still from Vṛndāvana, ruling from your capital city, your Hastinapur – you sit in command in an especially gorgeous Rajasthani hand-carved white marble palatial twin-bridged duplex that challenges the beauty and wonder of the “Eight Wonders of the World”, fashioned with intense love, by your servants Saurabhipālayantam Swami, Hamsarūpa Dāsa and Acyuta Dāsa, under the guidance of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī, the GBC, funded by hundreds of book distributors and donors worldwide.

You rule the world from this sublime bastion of your Samādhi with newer and newer sentries everywhere and anywhere who find pieces of the world to distribute those unlimitedly increasing fruits of love of Godhead. Through music, by book distribution, going to the media, colleges and libraries, dramas, dioramas, light shows, Sunday Love Feasts, Deity worship, grand Festivals like Rathayātrā and Janmāṣṭamī, writing for adults, writing for children, opening *gurukulas*, farm communities, preaching centers of all varieties, by chanting in the streets, in the temples, by Kārtikka pilgrimages and *parikramās*, by meeting people in offices to become life members, by keeping chaste to your program of *maṅgala āratī*, *tulasī pūjā*, 16

rounds of *japa*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* classes, *Bhagavad-gītā* classes, evening *ārati*, *guru-pūjā*, VIHE intensive study groups and off-shoots which have caught on everywhere to produce Bhakti Śāstris, Bhakti Vaibhavas, and hopefully Bhaktivedantas. Above all, preaching is the essence.

It's a miracle. You allowed and still allow us to participate in the great takeover of the universe. You have graciously taken Samādhi in Vṛndāvana, the cornerstone of the whole 14 worlds. Our devotees and busloads of pilgrims come to see you all day, every day. No one comes here to your Samādhi without feeling your presence in a very practical sense. In Vṛndāvana, we are so fortunate to be able to sit with you, sing for you, pray to you, take refuge under the very comforting shade of your lotus feet, design presentations to remind people of your mood and mission in your Samādhi and Samādhi Museum, and recently replacing the huge streets signs to remind people that the road from the highway is called BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI MARG.

We run to your Samādhi *maṅgala ārati* every morning; and we broadcast it all over the world daily. Devotees gather together from everywhere, once a year or even once in 30 years, because the strength of your presence is available so palpably in your Vṛndāvana Samādhi. You are the *raison d'être* for everything in our lives.

By sitting here in Samādhi, you have given us the stunning opportunity to serve your *vāñī* and your *vapu* simultaneously. You told us that your disease is that you could only think big. This is too big. We didn't fall in love with Kṛṣṇa; we fell in love with you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and there are so many things we want to do, you want us to do, to serve you. The list is endless. We're hoping for your mercy that we live long enough to complete our service to you as you communicate it with us while sitting before you in your divine resting place. If it is your pleasure, then it is our pleasure.

So many instructions, so little time; so many obstacles; so many opportunities. You have offered us inconceivable mercy. I pray that I have inconceivable sincerity to take that mercy and give it to unlimited numbers of others while I serve you in your Samādhi Mandir and Museum.

Your servant, your daughter,

Pārvatī Devī Dāśī

My Only Hope

All obeisances and respects to you my dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, the only hope I have in this temporary world.

You are the greatest fortune that the world has come to know, your ability to reach out to so many people and animals around this world we live in is a mere spark of your mercy. Your total compassion and mercy have touched many and as the days, months and years go by, so many more will come to know you and your kindness.

In countless ways, your wisdom has conquered the minds and hearts of both scholars and drunkards alike. You have thrown the life rope and many have grabbed your rope of hope looking towards a very bright and brilliant future in the loving shade of the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa.

May your glories be spread far and wide, allowing new ways of thinking, eating, talking and singing become well known and accepted as common place. May your great purports be spoken under trees at picnics and in large groups of people who have gathered for raising their consciousness, in school rooms and lecture halls and eco seminars, yoga studios and children's story hours. May the stories of Kṛṣṇa be chosen for movies and dramas and large scale theaters around the world, giving hungry story-lovers a place to rest their hopes and dreams. May the lives of all your followers be filled with endless ways to spread your well wishes and concerns for the souls who have lost their way and are drifting without a compass to guide them.

Begging for a connection with you which will spark more and more energy to ride the great wave of hope...

Your most grateful daughter,

Raṅgavatī Devī Dāsī

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

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

Will We Follow in Your Footsteps?

You rushed against time to plant the seed
Through temples and books—our hearts were caught.
A clear path carved by your lotus feet:
We simply served as you had taught.

Your movement should last ten thousand years;
My faith is strong, but doubts have begun:
Will we all follow in your footsteps,
Or will we undo what you have done?

Generations pass, memories fade,
Instructions may be lost—one by one.
Will we strive to understand your words,
Or will we undo what you have done?

Our hearts and minds were won by your truths;
We found the wisdom we had sought.
Will we now think there is something more,
Or will we accept what you have brought?

You gave the mantra—and sang so pure.
It has opened hearts since Tompkins Square.
But new words, new tunes, excite us now—
Will we chant as you did? Will we care?

You built one movement—ISKCON in name:
“If not to increase, at least maintain.”
Will we serve you with full surrender,
Or will we seek some personal gain?

Diverse views make preaching alive,
But with unity our faith combines.
Will we divide to show our way is right,
Or work together to harmonize?

But deep reflection relieves the doubt;
You are still with us, your words glow bright.
Answers are found on every page;
Your books can set the ship aright.

We may become lost in worlds complex;
Nothing seems easy, all out of place.
But we waver not, moving ahead,
Holding the feet of Your Divine Grace.

This movement *will* last ten thousand years.
We must stay loyal, and serve as one,
Always following in your footsteps,
To save and finish what you have done.

Your lowly servant,

Tamohara Dāsa

Mahā Puṇyā Devī Dāsī

**GLORY, ALL GLORY TO HIS DIVINE GRACE A. C.
BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA KĪ JAY!!!**

*śrī-guru-caraṇa-padma, kevala-bhakati-sadma,
bando mui sāvadhāna mate
jāhāra prasāde bhāi, e bhava toriyā jāi,
kṛṣṇa-prāpti hoy jāhā haite*

“The lotus feet of the Spiritual Master are the only means by which we can attain pure devotional service. I prostrate myself before his lotus feet with great respect and veneration. By his grace one can cross the ocean of material suffering and thus attain the mercy of Kṛṣṇa”.

This year we add one more of your blessed, glorious and auspicious advent celebrations in this earthly world, where the whole universe vibrates in unison, and for this reason, I dare to address His most holy person with the sole intention of raising a most humble prayer to the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, to beg Him and beg Him always and for all eternity to have you by his side, in the company of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the *gopīs*, the *gopas*, and all the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, enjoying His wonderful and transcendental pastimes.

Not only I consider you as my excellent Spiritual Master, but I also have feelings toward you as my father, my friend, my confidant, with whom I hold talks every day of my life in the center of which Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa reigns; I am fully sure that you always accompany me everywhere and in all episodes of my life, and for the same reason, I never feel alone.

I have no doubt of your great goodness and infinite mercy for this fallen and ignorant soul, that all I can do is clinging desperately to the dust of your divine lotus feet and be guided by your divine gaze full of love and compassion for all of us.

Each year before this important date approaches, I make a small evaluation of my service attempts for you, and I think that what I have done is never enough to try to serve and satisfy you, but I think if I did not do any of this, I would feel like the most vile of all the people, for not trying to reward even a little, all that you have given me with full hands, since I knew of your existence on this planet.

Blessed be forever you, our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda!!!

Praised be forever you, our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda!!!

Eternally be glorified you, our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda!!!

Forever be remembered you, our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda!!!

An immaculate example forever you, our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda!!!

Adored forever be you, our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda!!!

Thank you very much for allowing me to meet you, one of the many sheep of your immense flock.

Your humble and eternal servant,

Mahā Puṇyā Devī Dāsī
Celaya, Guanajuato, México.

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

Your mission was clear
Knew what you wanted
Your eyes fixed on the goal
Pushing forward, undaunted

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

Your purpose was giving
The Lord's holy name
To all fallen souls
Your merciful aim

Over forty-four years
It's become clear to me
Somehow or other
I'm beginning to see

You travelled widely
Fearless and strong
Spreading *mahā-mantra*
The topmost divine song

Determined, committed
No turning back
You forged ever forward
Ahead of the pack

Because of your efforts
So humble and pure
Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name
Has now spread door-to-door

Nothing could stop you
No risk was too much
A herculean effort
You had the touch

Kindly allow me
To also spread the Lord's name
Following in your footsteps
Giving you the much-deserved fame

Your unworthy servant,

Haripāda Dāsa
Udupi, Karnataka, India
www.riding-indias-trains.com

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

In August of 1966, you had just founded the International Society for Krishna consciousness. You were in New York, and at that time there was a lot of opposition to the United States' increased involvement in the Vietnam war. All over the US at universities and in cities there were peace marches and rallies held in protest of the war. In New York, United Nations Secretary General U Thant openly criticized America's involvement in Vietnam. There was to be a two week long peace vigil held in front of the United Nations General Assembly building starting August 31.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you had met and become friends with Larry Bogart, who worked at the United Nations headquarters. He invited you and the devotees to the UN peace vigil. You accepted the invitation, and told your followers that instead of the usual morning class Monday, August 31, at 6:30, everyone should meet at the United Nations for a special *kīrtana*.

That morning, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you and a few followers took a taxi to the UN & met other devotees who had taken the bus. When you began chanting, the peace vigil organizers informed you that this was a silent vigil, so you halted the *kīrtana*. You must have been disappointed that the crowd gathered would not hear the holy names. The devotees with you were upset, as well; you began chanting on your *japa* beads.

After some time, a dignitary spoke to the crowd, mentioning something about Mahatma Gandhi, and invited you to speak about peace. As the story is told in the *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, with the huge UN building behind you, you explained to the crowd that the world must accept God as the proprietor of everything and the friend of everyone. Only then can we have real peace.

The devotees had been scheduled for a two-hour period, so you stayed that long and left. On the way back home you told the devotees: "We have nothing to do with peace vigils. We simply want to spread this chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, that's all. If people take to this chanting, peace will automatically come. Then they won't have to artificially try for peace." The *New York Post* ran a photo of you with the devotees at the UN.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you had participated in the peace vigil to oblige your contact, Mr. Bogart. He called to thank you, and you invited him for lunch at your storefront. He wanted to discuss how you may be able to work with the UN, and how he could solicit help from important people for your movement. You regarded his visit as important and wanted to cook a delicious *prasāda* meal for him.

When the day arrived, you spent several hours in your small kitchen preparing a wonderful meal. You had posted Stanley downstairs and told him not to allow anyone up while you were cooking. Unfortunately, Stanley was a little foolish, and when Mr. Bogart arrived, Stanley would not allow him to go up. After waiting some time he left. Naturally, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you must have felt very discouraged.

When I read this story in the *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, it also made me feel upset that you did not get to properly pursue your preaching to the United Nations worker. I thought you would be happy to know that now there are devotees working at the United Nations; the seed of Krishna consciousness that you planted has nicely grown and is flourishing as seen below:

Fast forward 48 years to 2017. There is a car with diplomat license plates parked behind the big kitchen at ISKCON Alachua, in Florida. Inside the big kitchen, the United Nations diplomat is helping to roll chapattis for the Lord's Rāja Bhoga offering, and cutting vegetables for lunch for all the devotees. The diplomat's name is Govinda Ānanda dās Rodriguez Silva. He was born in Venezuela to devotee parents, Śyāma Gaurī Devī Dāsī & Kulakṣetra Dāsa. He is a United Nations delegate; his job title is First Secretary of the Venezuelan Mission to the United Nations.

Govinda Ānanda Dāsa has worked in the diplomatic field for 18 years, first 6 years in London as Cultural Attache to the Ambassador of Venezuela, and the rest of the time at the United Nations in New York. Out of the 190 countries in the United Nations, 120 of them are in what is called NAM, the Non-Aligned Movement. Govinda Ānanda is assigned to this area of the UN, mainly dealing with Middle-East issues of Palestine, Syria and Afghanistan. He works with drafting proposals and negotiations.

He is on vacation from his job at the United Nations in New York and is visiting his brother, Rāmacandra Dāsa and family, who live in Alachua. Rāmacandra's daily service is to prepare lunch for the Alachua devotee community, and when Govinda Ānanda is in town,

he is happy to help him every day.

In fact, he appreciates the devotee community in Alachua so much, that he is considering moving with his wife and three children to Alachua so the kids can learn at a devotee school. This is all due to the groundwork you laid, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please bless me with one drop of the determination you had to spread Krishna consciousness. I get lazy in my comfort zone, but thanks to the association of the devotees, opportunities always arise to engage in your loving service. My heartfelt thanks for all you have given me,

Your servant,

Nartaka Gopāla Devī Dāsī

Rathayātrā Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this holy occasion of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Vyāsa-pūjā, I humbly request everyone who claims to be a follower, do not leave ISKCON and don't be distracted by profit, adulation and distinction while serving ISKCON; if we really want to become empowered representatives of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, we must follow his instructions.

United we stand, divided we fall.

Our Śrīla Prabhupāda is a topmost Vrajavāsī, very very very dear to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. By Her mercy, we can also become similarly dear to Her if we deeply understand our Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission, taking shelter of the *yuga-dharma nāma-saṅkīrtana* and try our best to follow in his footsteps without personal motivation.

“As soon as personal motivation comes in it is not possible for one to understand our Krishna consciousness philosophy.”

(Śrīla Prabhupāda Letter, 2/19/1970)

Our dear *ācārya*, A *nitya-siddha* avatar,

you have attained perfection in a previous life,

you were reborn for us all by the will of the Lord,

to act as *ācārya* in the service of the *sampradāya*

exemplifying the principles of *vraja-prema-dharma* for the

benefit of others.

“I want to see that one disciple has understood Kṛṣṇa’s philosophy. That is success. That’s all.” (Room Conversation 12/4/75)

“One party strictly followed the instructions of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, but another group created their own concoction about executing his desires. {...} But just after his passing away, his leading secretaries made plans, without authority, to occupy the post of *ācārya*, and they split into two factions over who the next *ācārya* would be. {...} Therefore, we do not belong to any faction. But because the two parties, busy dividing the material assets of the Gauḍīya Māṭhā institution, stopped the preaching work, we took up the mission of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to preach the cult of Caitanya Mahāprabhu all over the world, under the protection of all the predecessor *ācāryas*, and we find that our humble attempt has been successful.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 12.8)

“Therefore we may not commit the same mistake in our ISKCON camp.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Letter, 28/4/74)

By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa one gets guru, by the mercy of a genuinely elevated Vaiṣṇava guru one gets Kṛṣṇa.

*Harer nāmaiva kevalam,
Om tat sat.*

Always your servant,

Rathayātrā Dāsa

March, 2017, Vṛndāvana, India.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s book distributor (since ‘74)

Thank you a thousand times for the gift of the holy name and the sweetness of Krishna consciousness. Thank you for teaching me the ABCs of life. Gurudeva, you are inside my heart and present in every manifestation.

Thank you for not leaving me both in the good and the not-so-good moments of my life. Thank you for being always present in the most unconceivable ways and forms, rescuing me from most difficult situations.

Jai Gurudeva!

Lelihana Devī Dāsī

To my beautiful Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your glorious lotus feet that never touch this material world.

Because of the intense desire in your heart to save as many lost conditioned souls as possible, you embarked on a journey across the ocean, taking so much trouble to come to the Western worlds to save us, to bring Kṛṣṇa to us and wake us up to our true eternal nature that is forever blissful.

Thank you for saving me and accepting me as one of your disciples. Thank you for telling me who I really am, and giving my real life back to me. I am a *dāsa dāsa anudāsa*, an eternal servant of a servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is absolutely wonderful to know.

How amazing. Never could anyone guess that Kṛṣṇa is God: Kṛṣṇa, the bluish boy with such a beautiful name. And we know He is the Absolute Truth because we have no doubts that you are a *nitya siddha* devotee directly from Goloka Vṛndāvana. From the very beginning, we knew this in our hearts immediately.

I only know anything about the Absolute Truth because of what you have told me in your beautiful transcendental books full of amazing and astonishing knowledge. And the words I hear you speak in your audio classes are encouraging and enlightening words of wisdom.

Thank you millions and billions of times, from the core of

my heart, for all your mercy and compassion upon this most fallen degraded fool.

Thank you for saving me from this prison house of the material world. Thank you for saving us all.

Your eternal servant,

Lelihana Devī Dāsī

Medhāvī Dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Throughout the year, your disciples endeavour to prepare themselves as an offering for your pleasure, and to try to express their appreciation for what you have done in spreading the Krishna consciousness movement throughout the world. By your activities, you have set the benchmark for what it means to be a bona fide disciple and simultaneously have given us many lifetimes of service to continue and spread your mission.

Because of my lowly state, I find it always necessary to look to my godbrothers and godsisters for their sterling efforts to please you and to describe your glories. Sometimes it is many, many years later that I become aware of their wonderful contributions. Such was the case when I was gifted with the *Following Śrīla Prabhupāda* DVD set by your devoted Yadubara and Viśākhā Prabhus some years back. The discs have practically become worn-out for being played so often. They are windows into your transcendental pastimes of spreading the holy names to many cities and towns on this planet.

This year, my 'catching-up' came in the form of *Our Śrīla Prabhupāda – a friend to all* by your dear daughter, Mūlaprakṛti Dāsī, where many of your contemporaries – godbrothers and associates, great souls in their own right, describe your devotion

and determination before you undertook that courageous journey to ultimately save us, and everyone. It was published in 2004 and evidently has only a few thousand copies in print.

There are many wonderful statements and descriptions by elevated Vaiṣṇavas of your intense prayers to the previous *ācāryas* for their mercy to fulfil the order of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Mahārāja; as well as many instances of loving association with your seniors, peers and younger godbrothers.

More importantly when you returned to India with your American and European disciples, you often beseeched those who appreciated your unparalleled preaching work in fulfilling the prediction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, to overlook our many faults and assist you by training us in the Vaiṣṇava culture.

The following is an excerpt from the interview with Śrīla B. P. Purī Mahārāja, who began by saying “what a wonderful and bona fide guru you are, for you had pleased Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda beyond what anyone could have dreamed.”

“As everyone knows, Śrīla Prabhupāda was always protective of his Western disciples. He very much wanted the Vaiṣṇavas of India to accept his followers as Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇas*, qualified by their sincerity to perform all aspects of Deity-*seva*, including cooking, offering and serving *prasādam*. He regularly alluded to this in letters and other exchanges with them.”

In his final days, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked his godbrothers in a heartfelt way for forgiveness for any offenses he may have made in the process of his preaching work. Śrīla Purī Mahārāja responded that Śrīla Prabhupāda hadn't committed any offense; if anything, it was they who had done so, and he should not worry for this.“... Śrīla Prabhupāda then asked, knowing that Śrīla Purī Mahārāja had wanted to sing for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta in his last days, ‘Will you sing for me now? Will you sing “Jaya Rādhe, Jaya Kṛṣṇa, Jaya Vṛndāvana”?’ In this way, you can help me perform *parikramā*.’ Śrīla Purī Mahārāja then sang very sweetly while Śrīla Prabhupāda closed his eyes and listened. Tears were falling from both their eyes...Śrīla Prabhupāda opened his eyes and asked if he could offer from his heart a gift to Śrīla Purī Mahārāja in reciprocation. Śrīla Purī Mahārāja replied that of course, he would be honoured to accept anything from him. Śrīla Prabhupāda whispered to a disciple who returned after a few minutes with a plate of *mahā-prasādam* of Śrī-Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma and Rādha-Śyāmasundara. With love, Śrīla

Prabhupāda had his Western disciple offer Śrīla Purī Mahārāja this gift. Śrīla Purī Mahārāj accepted Śrīla Prabhupāda's gift and honoured the *prasāda*, respecting that it had been cooked, offered and served by Śrīla Prabhupāda's Western followers.

Śrīla Purī Mahārāja concluded the interview by describing how our Śrīla Prabhupāda was so kind upon him: how he encouraged that all *jīvas* are qualified to take to *bhakti* with no distinction of caste or creed and that Mahāprabhu's *sankīrtana* movement is based on this. He spoke of our Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraging him by these special exchanges and that now he had also been blessed to preach in this way, to accept sincere souls from all places of the world and to please their gurudeva by participating in this international preaching mission. He wanted everyone to know how Śrīla Prabhupāda had inspired him in this way. He finished by saying, "Doyala! Doyala! (So kind! So kind)".

The book is full of many wonderful exchanges between yourself and other exalted Vaiṣṇavas. Another devotee explained, " We saw many of the disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Ṭhākura fighting amongst themselves with litigation, but this is like Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna fighting with Bhīṣmadeva. Both are fighting, but they are both devotees and both are pleasing Kṛṣṇa in their own ways... Again two advocates engage in hot debate in the courtroom, and ultimately one of them wins the case. After it is over the other one says, "You have given a very good argument today. You have won, so now you will have to treat me for *prasāda*."... a foolish person may judge by outward actions and think that advanced Vaiṣṇavas are acting like enemies."

Prior to this, I had some unpleasant feelings about the lack of appreciation and apparent criticism of your preaching in the West by some of your godbrothers, but now understand that it is not my position to be critical of them.

When you returned to India to regain your health in 1967, you attended the Vyāsa-pūjā celebrations of your godbrothers, B. P. Keśava Mahārāja and B. R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja. Replying to Acyutānanda's question about your discussions with Śrīdhara Mahārāja, you replied, "O many, many things, but if I were to tell you now, you would faint... Anyway this all beyond you. Do not have any ill-feelings toward any of my godbrothers. They are all great souls. There are just some differences on preaching and spreading. Even in your mind do not feel any ill will towards them. At the same

time, do not mix very thickly with them.”(Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta, Vol. 3, p. 205)

Your perfect instruction to us.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda. Please bless me that I can understand, appreciate and follow your perfect instructions and pass them carefully on to others.

Your far-distant servant,

Medhāvī Dāsa

Sukhavāhā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I prostrate myself at your lotus feet.
Remembering your life, my heart melts in defeat.

This year I found you at Chipawada,
Your room in Old Delhi, a place so far.

Here, I felt your presence extremely near.
A vision of your heart emerged quite clear.

I could sense your patience and simplicity,
Along with your firm intentionality.

The mission your guru did impart
Was implanted and grew within your heart.

To carry that out, you had no clue
How much Lord Kṛṣṇa would ask of you.

You did whatever needed to be done,
Though support and money were virtually none.

Translating, typing, and editing too,
Printing and selling...there was only you.

Meditating on how to come to the West,
You explored possibilities, doing your best.

“Don’t go to the U.S.” your sponsor did cry.
“If you travel this way, you’ll surely die.”

Who knows the distresses you may have felt.
As trials and tribulations Lord Kṛṣṇa dealt.

He certainly didn’t give you a path of ease.
Instead He brought you down to your knees.

On the Jaladuta you did pray:
Do You want me to leave? Do You want me to stay?

Your endeavors were constant for years and years.
On the streets of Manhattan, He brought you to tears.

“Why have You brought me to this dreadful place?
People here are in ignorance, living in disgrace.”

Alone and struggling, where to turn?
Removing all hope, your heart Kṛṣṇa churned.

In your room at Chipawada, I felt your pain,
As well as your strength that never complained.

Your quest to America didn’t compare
To your journey within through all despair.

Kṛṣṇa primed you for His mission impossible,
Which meant giving up all of the plausible.

With each setback He took you deeper inside,
Enhancing your resolve to allow Him to guide.

With no preconceptions, your vision was clear
With Kṛṣṇa by your side, there was naught to fear.

So you came to us with nothing in hand
Just a heart full of faith in what Kṛṣṇa planned.

Thank you, dear Father, for showing the way
Revealing how important it is to pray.

Modeling what a devotee actually goes through
To realize Kṛṣṇa . . . Ever Fresh, Ever New.

How can I thank you for all your austerity?
Except to live life in full integrity.

To follow you without a doubt
I need to practice from the inside out.

So, I pray for the courage to journey inside
To the place where you and Kṛṣṇa reside.

Your grateful servant of your servants,

Sukhavāhā Devī Dāsī

Ādikartā Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my obeisances at your lotus feet. Please forgive my offenses and shortcomings, which are numerous.

I am constantly amazed at the wonder of Krishna consciousness. Thank you so much for the nectar that you have given us. It is truly the greatest gift anyone could possibly give. What an unlimited treasure of transcendental gems you have bestowed upon us.

One of your greatest gifts for me, asides from the mind-enchanting books that you, and the great devotees have poured upon us, [which seem to be almost unlimited], is the creation of your ISKCON society. That was a real masterstroke of genius, that has ensured that we fortunate souls, who understand the paramount importance of working together, under your divine tutelage, have a ship to cross over this dangerous ocean of Kali. Of course, some people may criticize me for being misled, or blind, but my mind does not budge an inch, from seeing the utmost importance of this, [dare I say it, institution] as a formidable vehicle upon which Lord Caitanya is a sacred wave of love that is inundating the entire universe. Yes, universe, because you have said that, and because logically it must be true. Love has no limits, and Krishna consciousness is for everyone, including the demigods. After all, didn't you say that Nārada Muni,

and Lord Brahmā were at one of your programs in London, and that we should have an extra *vyāsāsana* for them. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, said that for sure, in the “Gaura Ārati” song.

All the wonderful devotees who are cooperating – sometimes – even when there may be a reason not to – out of love for you, is truly a miracle. But you are a magician, as you yourself stated, that you can take low class people like me, addicted to sinful activities, and bestow upon them a taste of love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and all Their associates, including the great leaders in your divine mission. In ISKCON, we are so fortunate to have such wonderful facilities available, practically anywhere in the world, unfortunately, not everywhere yet, where we can take shelter, revive, refresh, and escape the insane babble of materialistic culture.

There are many unique and powerful features that are constituting this wave of love, one of them being *harināma saṅkīrtana*. In London, when the *harināma* goes out, some of the most fascinated people are our friends from the Middle East. They take out their cameras, and literally gawk at the ecstatic devotees; so there really is so much potential for Lord Caitanya’s wave of love to even inundate *mleccha deśa*. In fact, on my travels, some of the nicest people I meet are from those parts of the world.

One other special feature is tasting the nectar for which we are always anxious. I think that’s one reason I still like to do book distribution. Giving gifts of love in the form of your books is definitely allowing us to taste that nectar, as is speaking about Kṛṣṇa.

My one major cause of frustration in life is accepting my limitations. Oh how I would love to achieve so much more for you, but even though I have tried, I am not empowered enough I guess, to do more. I would love to see an ideal *varṇāśrama* community here in America, but I just don’t have the potency to make it happen. I would love to achieve so much more, but I am crippled. Since leopards don’t change their spots, it seems unlikely that I will be able to do anything exceptional in this life, but if my lot is to take birth again, please pray to your Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa that I will have the ability to achieve something wonderful for you. But for now, please accept whatever paltry service I can offer, knowing that actually I’m embarrassed to offer so little, and my greatest desire is to offer you something more significant.

Since being satisfied is such an important mind set for devotees, I am trying to be satisfied with what I can accomplish, but I am sure

I will never be completely so, until you embrace me and say thank you very much. Then I can fall at your feet and beg you to accept me as your eternal menial servant.

Thank you again Śrīla Prabhupāda, for all your love and austerities, they are truly the only reason, we can lay claim to any happiness or sanity.

Your aspiring disciple,

Ādikartā Dāsa

Sandāminī Devī Dāsī

Divine Glances

Prabhupāda, my whole life is yours,
Since '74 when I came through the doors,
To see if I was blessed by chance,
To receive your all-merciful glance.

New and raw and so much in need,
I heard the principles and readily agreed,
Surrendering fully, no thought of finance,
All to witness your beneficial glance.

I was soon trained up and out in the lots,
Approaching souls, my stomach in knots,
By performing such sacrifice, I'd advance,
Just to get your sympathetic glance.

You were the focus, where we put our attention,
Carrying out your instructions, our only intention,
Simplicity and surrender our only stance,
Mercy received by your powerful glance.

Your leaving so soon caught me unprepared,
And left me alone, and somewhat scared,
Would I still be inspired to chant and dance,
Without your personal radiant glance?

Persevering despite the great loss,
Knowing that progress comes at a cost,
Not following purely is taking a chance,
Of missing out on your magnanimous glance.

But recalling your words I held to my heart,
Your divine instructions that you did impart,
The preaching field, our service to enhance,
I knew I'd still have your encouraging glance.

Let me take shelter in all you have given,
Inspiration through example, keeps us quite driven,
To love Lord Kṛṣṇa in full divine trance,
Just by receiving your sweet loving glance.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.9.7, you observe that, "Persons destined to live in deserts are understood to be sharing the reactions for the sin of *brahma-hatya*, the killing of a *brāhmaṇa*." How is it, then, that our Tucson temple, deep in Arizona's badlands, has been such an oasis for the guests and residents of this region for the past thirty years?

There is only one answer, Śrīla Prabhupāda: Your ever-fresh glance – inspiring us to distribute your books, Govinda's *prasāda*, and the Lord's holy names – is what allows us to survive and thrive.

Your mercy is what we live for,

Sandāminī Devī Dāsī

Ambarīṣa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my sincere obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet.
All glories to your worldwide mission to save the fallen souls.

I was listening to a lecture of yours, given in Honolulu, June 1975. In it you were talking about the Fifth Canto, and the description of the hellish planets. I know that I was there as it was just before my initiation.

At the time, I only had a vague inkling of the importance of what you were saying. I was young and rather foolish, and hell seemed

very far away at that point. You were saying that Parīkṣit Mahārāja was not happy to hear of the suffering of the living entities in hell. You said: “So Parīkṣit Mahārāja is a Vaiṣṇava. Vaiṣṇava means devotee. So he did not appreciate the suffering of the human being in such a way. That is a Vaiṣṇava’s nature. Vaiṣṇava himself is very happy because he is in direct connection with Kṛṣṇa. He personally has no complaint, because a Vaiṣṇava is satisfied simply by serving Kṛṣṇa. That’s all. He doesn’t want anything.”

This is your position Śrīla Prabhupāda. You came to America in 1965, not because you were in need of something, but out of compassion for the living entities who were suffering endlessly in this material world of darkness. This same compassion was shared by your own spiritual master and previous *ācāryas*.

This is a most difficult mission, when most do not believe there is any hell. This is a special feature of Kali-yuga. You have said in this lecture: “So we may declare very foolishly that we are independent. That is the foolishness of the modern civilization. They are not independent, nobody. Everyone is dependent. But because they are dependent and there are so many sufferings awaiting them for their so-called independent life, they do not believe in the next life. This is the, I mean to say, special feature of the modern civilization.”

Please forgive me for my defiant attempt at independence. I was young, I had money, and not much of a sense of my good fortune. Still, I knew without doubt that you were special, and you were offering me a rare opportunity whether I was ready or not. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī says about himself, “My path is very difficult. I am blind, and my feet are slipping again and again.” This is also my condition. Nonetheless, I am grateful and fortunate not to have missed the chance to grab hold of your mercy. It has made all the difference.

I am happy to report that the work on the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium is progressing nicely in Śrīdhāma Māyāpur. We are aiming at 2022 for an initial opening. That is the 50th anniversary of the Māyāpur and first Māyāpur Festival. Please continue to bless our feeble efforts to do something for you in Māyāpur. There are always so many obstacles, but we know if we stick closely to your instructions, victory is assured.

Fundraising is going on unabated. The fundraising team of Jananivāsa Prabhu, Braja Vilāsa Prabhu accompany Lord Nityānanda’s *pādukā* and Śrī Nṛsimha’s *sitari* to places around the

world. Svāhā and I accompany when possible. Devotees from many different places are so enthusiastic to help and become involved. Their love for you is carrying the project forward. I think that this temple as well as the 50th anniversary of ISKCON, increased chanting and book distribution are uniting all of us in a way that has been missing to some degree since you left us.

All of us have become ambassadors for a transcendental country you founded over 50 years ago. The need is extreme; the accepted levels of sin in the world is unfathomable. There is only one reason that complete destruction has been avoided. That reason is the holy name and the movement you brought to America in 1965. It has saved so many of us and is the one relief in this torrential flood of ignorance.

I remarked one time on a morning walk with you, that materialists were always looking for the bright side. You said gravely that “there is no bright side in the material world”. You are that bright side Śrīla Prabhupāda. You are the sun which is bringing light to this place of darkness. We only beg for your continued mercy. We are in so much need of the compassion you brought so many years ago. Please engage us in your eternal *sevā*.

Thank you for not allowing us to languish here in this world of death, and for saving us from going to one of the innumerable hellish planets described in the *Bhāgavatam*. Also, thank you for having so much patience with those of us who have been struggling to keep up with you. There is no place I would rather be, than straining for the shelter of your lotus feet.

Your servant,

Ambarīṣa Dāsa

Rāga Bhūmi Devī Dāsī

Dear Prabhupāda

Every year we are kindly requested to write about you by your great servants. I would like to say so many nice things not only about you, but also about our Society, because by glorifying you we are glorifying the whole society as well as devotees who follow your valuable teachings in every aspect by following the footsteps of previous *ācāryas* as you do.

There are so many projects, ideas and preachings that are being put forward. However there are so many important aspects that should be looked at carefully, with love and affection.

“... One of the symptoms of a devotee is that he is so kind, so if our godbrother becomes ill it is our duty to help him get the proper medicine and treatment so that he can recover.” (Letter to Śukadeva, April 5, 1974)

Thus we need to be together to understand that every member of our Society is important for its progress. All your teachings are perfect and only by applying them intelligently we will be able to get to a magnificent and result. We are all Kṛṣṇa’s instruments to serve your mission faithfully.

“Of course, I can only suggest, and wherever possible that can be applied, but I do not force anyone. After all, you are only working so hard to please Kṛṣṇa only out of love for me, so there can be no question of force if love is there. We should not ever try to force anyone or reduce our Society to an impersonal business exchange, this will kill everything. Our only purpose in every endeavour is simply to make advancement in spiritual life or pleasing Kṛṣṇa.” (Letter to Bhakta Dāsa, April 9, 1971)

Most devotees have the potential to serve your mission throughout the world and many were personally trained by you. And many of them, great Vaiṣṇavas, are so kind, humble and faithful to you. Above all, they – including women – are capable to push on this mission around the world and develop a very high Krishna consciousness according to your established standard. All they need is to understand the vital importance of your instructions and apply it seriously and generously.

“Our Indian boys and girls are not very much interested to become devotees, but I am seeing that these fair-skinned Americans and European are like angels by coming to Krishna consciousness increasingly more and more, and that very soon the whole world will become filled with such angels, and so I am very optimistic...” (Śrīla Prabhupāda, Letter 1972)

I am so fortunate to have been accepted by you as your disciple, which was well above my expectations. Only by your causeless mercy we adopted this process of Krishna consciousness and it is impossible to be attracted to external influence except to serve you,

Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and sincere servants, forever.

“I am aware that you are feeling my absence just as I am feeling the absence from you. But in the meantime this must be so and Kṛṣṇa will provide for you as long as you keep chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.....If you chant always Hare Kṛṣṇa, read my books, and preach this philosophy sincerely, then Kṛṣṇa will provide you with all facility, and you will not fall down into material entanglement.” (Letter to devotees, March 30, 1967)

Prabhupāda, even though I am not so elevated, I cannot stop meditating upon your lotus feet and about the beautiful *līlā* of your life. Your importance in my life is immense; without your teachings, without Kṛṣṇa and without *sādhū-saṅga*, life has no meaning.

Your eternal servant,

Rāga Bhūmi Devī Dāsī

Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful obeisances.

It’s time again to honor you the best we can. Although we try we can never really glorify you enough. You are the most important person to come into our lives and the lives of devotees for 10,000 years to come.

Your divine appearance in this world ushered in the Golden Age of Lord Caitanya for us who were lost and confused about the goal of life. You stayed up most of the nights writing your books which show us how to attain the goal of life, love of God. Your books are the law books of spiritual life and will continue to save souls at least throughout this Golden Age of Lord Caitanya.

Your books are everything to you and everything to us. They are the truth, the way, the light and the love. You were Kṛṣṇa’s instrument, writing every chance you got, day and night in your busy schedule. You were always either writing about Kṛṣṇa or speaking about Kṛṣṇa to your devotees and guests. You gave us purpose. You gave us your ‘Matchless Gifts.’

All we can do to pay you back for your ‘Matchless Gifts’ is to become pure devotees ourselves. You told us in Atlanta that if

we develop our love of God, that would please you the most. Our perfection in life is to please you.

One day in Vṛndāvana you found me reading in my spare time. You asked me what I was reading. I answered that it was your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 4th Canto, Part 4. You smiled so big and bright and were most pleased. I was surprised and pleased at how pleased you were. Everyone who reads your books pleases you and those who follow you and your books are the most fortunate souls in the world.

The first day I joined your movement I got to meet you along with the other Rādhā Dāmodara devotees. You were so serene and self-effulgent. You told us, “You are all very bright-faced and fortunate to come to Lord Caitanya’s movement. Now that you are fortunate, make others fortunate. Preach this message of Lord Caitanya’s all over the world.” (RC SF Ca. 7/7/74)

Now we are without your physical presence, but you always said associating with you spiritually is most important. Physical presence is nice but temporary whereas your spiritual presence is eternal. Please bestow your causeless mercy upon me and keep me as your eternal servant. Without you life would be intolerable. With you life is the best it can be. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Thank you for the love of God, your ‘Matchless Gifts’ for the fortunate souls.

Your servant,

Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita Dāsa

Caitanya-chandra Dāsa

*śrī-guru kṛpābdhayeta-siddhāntam-
mahāprabho-tanūja-mukha-śikṣām
gurucāraṇa-renu-mahā-vākyam
ācāryam vande śrīla prabhupādām*

Our dear *ācārya*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are offering our obeisances to you, the embodiment of the mercy of the spiritual master and the reservoir of the *siddhānta*, that is coming from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s own mouth in the form of instructions, the dust of these instructions from your lotus feet will always remain the essence of all.

*sarasvatī mano-'bhīṣṭam tadiyam
pracāra śakti adhikāra-netraim
śrutim vadan sad-vipadam-vimuktam
acāryam vande śrīla prabhupādam*

Our dear *ācārya*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are offering our obeisances to you, for you have understood the inner mood and mind of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and everyone can see how you embody the qualification for the propagation of his teachings, these instructions of the revealed scriptures are eternal and ever liberated.

*śrī-vārṣabhānavī dayitādāsam
dāsānu-dāsa bhṛṅgarāja rāsam
dāsa-bhāva sarvatra camatkāram
acāryam vande śrīla prabhupādam*

Our dear *ācārya*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are offering our obeisances to you, the servant of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (Vārṣabhānavī-devī-dayita dāsa). You are full of taste for the service to the servants, just like a humble bee, yet you are able to spread this attitude of service everywhere in this world.

*ananya-nija-bhakti hūṇā-deśam-
āropayāmi-vṛkṣa-suddha-bhajan
akiñcanā-dhanānvita vaiśiṣṭya
acāryam vande śrīla prabhupādam*

Our dear *ācārya*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are offering our obeisances to you, who spread the unalloyed eternal bhakti to the Western countries, planting trees of pure devotional service there. You were a poor mendicant, yet you were able to engage all wealth in the service, establishing this essential quality in your example.

*paramparā-karuṇā-śakti-rūpa
ānanda-kīrtana-rasāyanādi
kṛṣṇa-bhāveti-muktipāda-dhanam
acāryam vande śrīla prabhupādam*

Our dear *ācārya*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are offering our obeisances to you, for you are an embodiment of compassion of our disciplic succession, giving your followers everything beginning with the taste of the blissful *kīrtana* of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa, who is the giver of liberation, the best of gifts.

*yo labdha-vṛndāvana-nyasa-vāsaḥ-
pāścātya-deśa-naum paryatati
sannyāsa-saṅkīrtana-santānakam
acāryam vande śrīla prabhupādam*

Our dear *ācārya*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are offering our obeisances to you, who has received the desired residence in Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma upon entering the renounced order of life, yet who embarked on a boat to travel everywhere in the Western countries, spreading the *saṅkīrtana* by your own *sannyāsa* (renunciation).

*śvā iṣṭa-devam sevnamandiram-
aṣṭotta-raśata bhū-saṁsthāpakam
apasiddhānta-vāda samāpnoti
acāryam vande śrīla prabhupādam*

Our dear *ācārya*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are offering our obeisances to you, who has established 108 temples with the worship of your worshipable Lord, and who destroyed the devious conclusions of those who do not follow the *siddhānta* of the Vedas.

*vṛndāvanādhiśa-padābja-sevā-
svāde balakṛṣṇa na hanta ke vā
śyāmah tribhaṅga rādhayāya-līlah
acāryam vande śrīla prabhupādam*

Our dear *ācārya*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are offering our obeisances to you, who wonderfully established the Vṛndāvana worship of your Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma – what a wonderful act? You are always with Śrī Śyāmasundara, Who is bent in three places and are always absorbed in His pastimes with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

My most dear Gurudeva and master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Here I am again offering some words of great gratitude towards you who has saved me from going down to the lower species of life.

Firstly, I had the great fortune to see a *harināma* party in San Fransisco around '73. Then your merciful devotees gave me books at the airport of Chicago, and at the bus station of New York. And, when I was frustrated enough – looking for a guru and planning to go to India to find one – the devotees at New Dvārka, LA, told me “guru is coming don't go to India, wait here”.

I did stay...shaved up and then after a few days, Your Divine Grace came to the temple. It was then that I saw your lotus feet and heard your amazing talks. Right there I decided to stay and become your devotee. Forty years have passed, Gurudeva, and I am growing older but much more strong spiritually. I am praying to your merciful nature, begging please don't allow *māyā* to take me away from your shelter and your sincere Vaiṣṇavas. Please don't become frustrated and tired of my very slow progress in spiritual life, please tolerate me. You are the only hope I have in this very dangerous world. Your mercy is all I am made of.

Millions of daṇḍavats at your lotus feet,

Nandagopa Dāsa

Samapriya Devī Dāsī

A Jewel for Śrīla Prabhupāda

There is a jewel we all possess no matter what our means, sometimes we give it uselessly, sometimes alone in dreams. Where we choose to keep this jewel calculates our fate, everyone will have this choice, for some it comes too late.

With certainty one may find a shrine in which to store it, but in this world of faded hopes, who's deserving to adore it? Directed by our wishful dreams and desperate for a place, bestowed upon unworthiness will see it soon erase.

Great fortune given to a fool can lead one to descent,
like pearls to swine the value lost for whom it's justly meant.
To waste the sacred right we have, which suddenly is lost,
and like a seed blown in the wind, roots where it
has been tossed.

Carried in a thousand hearts we lay this precious treasure
at your feet, it's all we have and pray it gives you pleasure.
This jewel we bore for so long to seek its rightful place
we offer you our loyalty, meant only for your grace.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.
You are the worthy person to receive this jewel.

I am always your daughter and servant,
Samapriya Devī Dāsī

Sarvopama Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I'm a scoundrel and a ne'er do well, but by your mercy I'm chanting the holy name and going out every day and begging others to do likewise. As a result, I'm getting a teeny tiny glimpse of ecstasy and bliss. Your kindness is multilevel. Sometimes I meet up with people who have grudgingly said Hare Kṛṣṇa and discovered that they now agree it brings happiness. This allows me to become drunk on love of God. I can never repay my debt to you. When I first saw you in '68 I was a hippie. I was so dull headed that it took a few years, but you turned me into a happy.

We are all blessed by you.

Your servant,
Sarvopama Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

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

With my most and deepest concentration I bow down flat at your lotus feet knowing very well that from there – your lotus feet – all the spiritual perfections are fulfilled, and the most elevated goal of life is achieved!

Outside of this holy protection – your lotus feet – everything is difficult and ultimately useless! *Na gatiḥ kuto pi!* Somebody, a so called elevated devotee, recently told me that it's enough to strongly desire love for Kṛṣṇa and that we shouldn't be afraid of approaching intimate relationships with Kṛṣṇa or his associates, but rather we are supposed to go forward spontaneously without being afraid of anything. But Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is telling us in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta sindhu* that *bhakti* without the mercy of the spiritual master and the principles of the *śāstra* is only a disturbance to all society! I very happily pray to Kṛṣṇa that I may remain at your lotus feet birth after birth! Generally, we pray to the spiritual master to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but I pray to Śrī Kṛṣṇa to enable me to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda!

So Śrīla Prabhupāda you are my goal of life, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is my helper to reach you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the real goal of life! By the will of Kṛṣṇa, His devotees become more important than Kṛṣṇa Himself! At your lotus feet, I find everything spiritually and materially! Here in Genova, Italy, Śrī Prabhupāda Dhāma, we humbly and strongly remain tight at your divine lotus feet! *Jai Śrīla Prabhupāda!*

Your servant,

Dayānidhi Dāsa and all the residents of our *yātrā*, especially your direct disciples Bhūtika Prabhu and Mahācandra Prabhu.

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

I offer my respectful obeisances to my spiritual master, who opened my eyes blinded by the darkness of ignorance, with the torch of knowledge.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept this humble offering on the day of your glorious transcendental appearance. Every day I remember you, every year I write to you, and every time I do it seems more real that you see me, that you know what I think and that you watch what I do. Writing to you on the one hand is gratifying, and on the other quite difficult for me. With great emotion I will tell you something about my life as a son would tell his father.

I am yours. I live for you. Through the ears I drink daily the mercy that you pour through your classes. I understand that sensory enjoyment weakens, and that the spiritual life is a science in which there is no room for fickleness, or whims. I understand that negligence pushes back, and inaccuracies affect soul consciousness. I check daily that spiritual knowledge opens the doors of perception, that mental austerity keeps them open, that total surrender to your person makes unconditional love flourish in my heart, and that there is no greater force than true love. All this I understand thanks to you.

As far as I can, I try to convey your wise and effective teachings to all that I can, beginning with my mind. I tell people that just as we do not neglect to feed the body, we must not neglect to feed the soul with the innumerable means fully available in the movement for Krishna consciousness that you organized worldwide, and that expands more and more, year after year.

Analyzing the story of my life, you could say that I was born to meet you and be a better person. However, when I analyze my service, I find it overshadowed by improprieties and defects, and I feel that I do not have enough merit to obtain your approval. I feel that time is running out, that I have to bid farewell to life in this world, and perhaps that is why I hold to write with a youthful spirit that contrasts with my age. I've been so fond of writing that I've made it my way of living.

I try to understand what Kṛṣṇa wants from me these days, and I

cannot detect signs. Being a good devotee of Kṛṣṇa requires strength of will, and such strength comes from purity in action. By meditating on your generous mercy I can be successful in the spiritual life. I walk alone for the world, but thanks to you I feel more than ever the presence of the Lord in my heart. In my daily walk, I leave behind neurosis, apprehensions and memories with an expired date that does not agree with my present reality.

Shielded by Krishna consciousness, no incidence of the outside world affects me. My daily personal experiences – increasingly more in tune with your transcendental teachings lessen my anxiety, soften my character, and speed up my spiritual understanding.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are my father, friend, teacher, master and savior. Even though I may be the most degraded and incompetent of your children, I trust that through your inconceivable mercy I may join you in your glorious mission to expand Krishna consciousness throughout the universe.

With immense gratitude and affection,

Śrī Padāmbuja Dāsa

Śubhāṅgī Devī Dāsī

Dearest *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda!

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

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

Here is my tiny attempt to glorify you with the help of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, serving as a proof of your authenticity as a great *ācārya* and guru:

In the second verse of our *saṁsāra* prayer it says:

Chanting the holy name, dancing in ecstasy, singing, and playing musical instruments, the spiritual master is always gladdened by the saṅkīrtana movement of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Because he is relishing the mellows of pure devotion within his mind, sometimes his hair stands on end, he feels quivering in his body, and tears flow from his eyes like waves. Unto the

lotus feet of such a spiritual master I offer my obeisances.

You are such a guru – a real guru. Here and there we got a glimpse of your real spiritual identity as proof.

I believe having heard you say, that even if we could not develop *Kṛṣṇa-prema* in this lifetime, but tried our best to follow the rules of *vaidhī bhakti*, while spreading your *saṅkīrtana* mission, that ‘you had a key for the back door for us (somewhat sincere devotees) to let us still go Back Home to Godhead! You are a personality of such causeless mercy.

There is one example where almost all of us devotees must have – and still do – disappointed and hurt you deep in your heart: By our insincerity in our *japa!*

1)

First of all it’s so disheartening for you that we considered it secondary to chant, but render other services.

2)

Secondly, we are not on this level of chanting, being c o n-
s t a n t l y immersed in deep love of Godhead like the *gopīs*. That is why we have to try at least to chant according to rules and regulations, which means to pronounce the *mahā-mantra* very properly. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you wished so much that not only we should sit properly, but you also wanted us to pronounce the *mahā-mantra* perfectly, as it is, the best we can. “That is our philosophy: Everything perfect for Kṛṣṇa!” (Letter, 20.1.1972)

But as our dearest ever well-wisher, you said: “Chanting is very simple, but one must practice it very seriously. Chanting involves the upper and lower lips as well as the tongue. All three must be engaged in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. The words Hare Kṛṣṇa should be very distinctly pronounced and heard...” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 17.32, purport)

3)

Thirdly, why don’t we feel any compassion for your divine ‘third generation’ to help them also to attain Kṛṣṇa *prema*? Don’t we have the responsibility to hand down the proper *mahā-mantra* in script (Kṛṣṇa, not Krishna), as well as orally to the next generation? Most of the times I catch myself ‘chanting’ like, “*Hai Gishna, Hai Gishna, Gishnaa, Gishnaa, Hai Hai, Hai Dam, Hai Lam, Damaa Yam, Hae Hae*” That is a big insult and complete waste of time! If we members of

the *paramparā* do not hear attentively, the message will continue to be successively altered as it is passed down from one generation to the next. This mishap can be avoided by attentive hearing and clear pronunciation. Had we, this generation now not have received the special mercy of Lord Caitanya by the very special mercy of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, then our chanting of the *mahā-mantra* would be quite futile, is it not! Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jai!*

4)

Why are we lazy and not following your good example, Śrīla Prabhupāda, out of gratitude and love for you and respect for Kṛṣṇa, Who is in His name, to perfectly pronounce all the 16 words, 32 syllables, as a gift for Guru and Gaurāṅga's pleasure at least? Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, help us all to remember the value of this human form of life. Let us take our time for *japa* and not waste our life!

5)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are so fortunate, that your dear servant, H.H. Lokanātha Swami, has published the book *A Comprehensive Guide to Sanskrit Pronunciation*.

There, he teaches us,

1) That all 16 words of the *mahā-mantra* have to be pronounced with all the endings, *Har-e*, *Kṛṣṇ-a*, *Rām-a*, in short duration as all 16 are in the vocative case. In this way only we get the chance to be able to call out for our Lordships.

2) And the 'r' in each of the 16 words must be articulated with a retroflex tongue, curbed to the back, to the roof of the mouth or palate called *mūrdhanya*. This *mūrdhanya* spot which we tap on while articulating with the tongue arched backwards, is in line with the *brahma-randhra*, the very soft spot on the top of our head, from which elevated yogis leave their bodies to travel to higher planets. Thus by repeatedly striking with the retroflex tongue against the *mūrdhanya*, while chanting very properly focused on the names with humility and love, we devotees can start our upward path back to Godhead! *Bhakti-yoga* is so

sublime and supreme, because it includes all other yogas!

And the *mahā-mantra* includes all the mantras.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are so dear and loving, and never forsake us. You always thought how to help us materially by ‘hatching a plot’ for all the devotees to survive nicely even financially by book distribution. Another ‘plot you hatched’, by asking us humbly to follow the rules and regulations and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa properly to become happy. By us following these few things in all obedience, you quietly reassured us ‘that you had the key for the back door to let us go Home to Godhead’. What a surprise!

Thank you so much deeply from my heart, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for that sweet surprise! I am eternally indebted to you!

Your aspiring servant,

Śubhāṅgī Devī Dāsī

Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Dāsa

This is a most beautiful quote from you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that I have found recently and never seen before.

“There is a sweet transcendental interrelation between all living entities, irrespective of not only caste, creed, and colour between man and man, but between man and beast, man and birds, man and reptiles, man and plants, etc., and so also between man and God, and between God and others, and so on....as such the [farm] shall be the centre for such supreme culture of knowledge. [It] shall set the example that neither God nor the living being nor Nature is in any way antagonistic toward one another, but that all of them exist in harmony as a complete whole unit.”
(Śrīla Prabhupāda, “Conception of Gītā-nāgarī, Part 2”)

This is the modern day meaning of the word holistic.

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale śrīmate
bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine namas te sārasvate deve gaura-
vāñī-pracāriṇe nirviśeṣa śūṅyavādi 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 Caitanya and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.”

In 1952 you wrote to Nehru, and I feel a constant chord exactly in line with this paragraph you have written:

As an humble disciple of Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī, I wish to remain always true to you and everyone. And sincerely be true to your forefather, I mean the Brahminical culture, You have the strength and capacity to save the world by presenting the Brahminical culture once again for consummation of the distressed world. In such acts of your broadness of mind, I am always at your service.

We will not reach the world until we have *varṇāśrama*. This is your desire.

We will not be successful until we have some semblance of *varṇāśrama* – *daivi varṇāśrama*.

This is your desire for the second half of your movement. The Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement.

You wanted that we introduce *varṇāśrama* so that we might have an educational influence and example for the human race. *Varṇāśrama* is always present in some form, only *we*, the current ISKCON, in most places have not yet taken it upon ourselves to instigate this as a vital part of your movement and take advantage of the divine arrangement of the *daivī-varṇāśrama* system.

It is said in the *paramparā* system of passing down knowledge from guru to disciple that nothing should be changed. This we know. So why should we change anything. We could change the chronology of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, because as it is stated in the preface that this literature is irregularly composed. It is stated that this transcendental literature, “even though irregularly composed is heard sung and accepted by men who are thoroughly honest.” We simply have to accept. Like so many other things we simply have to accept the standard authority and not speculate ourselves on how best to run things without having taken any knowledge of the

relevant accepted authoritative material sciences.

Each and every one of our memories and experiences of our time with you is of the greatest importance for the posterity of mankind, as indeed does your movement have the greatest relevance to mankind. The Bible has the four gospels.

These are some of my memories from when I first saw you arriving at Heathrow airport

And how as you turned the corner and appeared with a great entourage of dedicated followers that here is someone not of this world, someone from from a completely different place... Where that place was I did not know for I had only just joined this great great movement, and I knew in my heart that this was surely the leader I had been looking for, what I had been looking for all my life and that I should follow you.

My subsequent initiation the next year going to India and then greeting you in New York at the newly acquired ISKCON building at W55th Street, lower Manhattan. These extraordinary occurrences demonstrate the vital importance of loving you and following you with the greatest enthusiasm that we can muster which will take us successfully through this world and into the next. I want to relate some of these, in writing, before they are washed away by the sands of time for the benefit of those who see the benefit of such narrations. All narrations of my godbrothers and sisters should be written down and indeed cast in stone lest they be forgotten forever.

Having been taken under the wing of our most dear and beloved Mukunda (Mahārāja) at Bhaktivedanta Manor I entered into the world of the BBT as a young 21-year-old fledgling.

I felt most fortunate to be engaged in something so wonderful as dealing with your books that were arriving in huge quantities from Japan and into the book room for distribution across the UK and later joining Satsvarūpa Mahārāja for BBT training in India and later travelling with him and the BBT library party in America.

...Bhaja Hari prabhu was the temple president and organised the Christmas marathon in London with the help of Vicitravīrya where only by his ingenuity and determination were we able to distribute 1,000 BTGs in a day.

This was possible by the continued back up from devotees delivering full boxes of BTGs to the platforms of the tube trains which we were working. Also too *prasādam* in the form of stuffed *chapati* rolls, which he had thought of, to keep us going all day

long. It was Amita and myself neck and neck in this transcendental competition to distribute the highest number of books on the different underground networks that we had chosen.

...As the *kīrtana* rose and rose from the New York *maṅgala āraṭi* lead by Sudama Mahārāja, with the most unusual tune that I still, have a recording of. To the lobby *kīrtana* of all the devotees waiting to greet the Param Guru of this universe, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

I had been placed on the front desk, maybe for my English accent, I'm not sure, to make the announcements over the Tannoy that went all around the large skyscraper building.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda finally arrived there was the sea of bodies covering every inch of floor in homage to our beloved spiritual master. I had been tipped to go with Śrīla Prabhupāda from the lobby to the temple room door, where I had been instructed to take Prabhupāda's shoes off for him so that he could enter the temple. I had forgotten this little bit of fortune; and it only occurred to me when a devotee was discussing (recently) how Prabhupāda didn't like everyone touching his lotus feet all the time and in every place. It was not the done thing. And I remember the senior devotees in India would be pulling back crowds of people surging forward all reaching out trying to touch his lotus feet. As far as I remember that is why the cast was made of Prabhupāda's lotus feet at the Manor, so that this could be touched by devotees at *guru-pūjā*.

Prabhupāda greeted Rādhā Govinda to the "Govindam" prayers and then on the *vyāsāsana* he accepted the feet washing ceremony with the most gorgeous of ingredients.

He then handed out cookies to everyone, and he would touch your hand with great purpose as he pressed the cookie into your palm.

The incredible love that surrounded us all on this occasion was not comparable to anything I had ever seen or will ever see again in this world.

A little later, somehow or other there was Harikeśa, another devotee and myself in the basement restaurant area below the temple room passing around between us the whole bowl of Prabhupāda's foot washing water. We took long deep gulps again and again of all this *caranāmṛta* until every last drop was gone.

...The restaurant was open and full of devotees. Many *sannyāsīs* had also arrived with Śrīla Prabhupāda. Pusta Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja gave a group of us second initiation on his behalf, and I was on the front desk again when there was a phone call from China. I could hardly

hear what was being said, but it was an important call, and I knew Tamāl Krishna Gosvami was down in the basement restaurant. So I announced over the Tannoy that there was 'a call from China for Tamāl Krishna Mahārāja.' Then a few moments later I announced again. A pause...Then Tamāl Krishna Mahārāja arrived at the front desk, in a swirl of saffron, "You don't say where it's from.....it's just...it's just a phone call for me!" This is how I first met His Holiness Tamāl Krishna Mahārāja.

I was on the team of poster slapping devotees, as it was called, all over the central part of New York City advertising the great Rathayātrā festival that Śrīla Prabhupāda had arrived for. This went on all night, and when we returned just before dawn there was no place to sleep as the temple was alive and bustling on every level. I discovered that the quietest place was up on the eleventh floor out on the fire escape with all the beepers below and the sirens blaring. This was still quieter than anywhere inside the building. This fire escape was made up of hollow pressed steel gratings and was like sleeping on a bed of nails. But this did not matter in the face of getting a little rest so that we could serve Śrīla Prabhupāda in a few hours time on the Rathayātrā.

After realising there was no real sleep to be had, we were all up again and helping prepare the Rath car with Jayānanda prabhu who was directing the finishing touches to all three carts. One, I remember had a canopy that went up and down so to pass under telephone wires along the route of the procession. I was one of the wheel guards on Lady Subhadrā's cart, to prevent the ladies in front from being crushed by the wheels. Śrīla Prabhupāda was seated up high above. He never flinched once from the near panic that would occur every time the front of the procession slowed down and pressure from the crowd behind nearly forced people under the wheels. His forward gaze into the horizon and over the enormous crowd that had formed around the Rathayātrā, and that was being swept along, with the three carts was magnanimous.

Suddenly we all looked up to a roaring sound and there in the bright blue sky above New York were two by planes dancing this way and that in the sky, it seemed as if to the chanting. They were painting Hare Krishna in giant letters in the sky! We were flabbergasted...had no idea this had been planned.

Then came *prasādam* distribution held on one of the big intersections that had been closed to traffic. Four of us each had a

megaphone to line up streams of people from the four directions to come and take *prasādam*. Such was the New York Rathayātrā festival of 1976, the pastime of Lord Jagannātha.

...My first encounter with devotees was with Bhakti Caitanya Swami, in 1973, handing out the India album in Oxford along with Gokulānanda Prabhu. I took the album and the BTG and danced behind them in the *kīrtana* singing I am free, I am free too! I think a case of *nāma kṛṣṇa mahā mantra sei upajaya bhāva!* (One who hears this mantra immediately develops his loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa.)

Now this brings me to the super successful pastime of Lord Caitanya's Nāma Saṅkīrtana in the streets of London.

This programme is so successful that people of all colour, race and religion are as if waiting for us to bring out the light of their lives for all to see with the biggest of smiles. This is every Saturday night in Chinatown. Everyone who passes by has a very big smile as they join in the chanting, many join in the wild dancing too, seemingly losing all their cares in the world for a those few precious moments when we stop and distribute books to them also. Then we move on and more people come and take shelter of the nectar of the Holy Name and the Harināma party grows and grows. We have found ourselves dancing with Muslims and even atheists, the greatest offenders at the feet of the Universe.

I remember when I first saw a picture of Kṛṣṇa in 1971, when I was a student at The Royal Berkshire College of Agriculture. It was inside the album cover of Rainbow Bridge where there was a banner that had been taken from a church and was being held up at a pop festival. This had been made into one of Govinda seated on a rock playing the flute with a calf at his lotus feet. This had replaced the image of Holy lamb of God.

I had no idea of course that I would later become involved with agriculture again, after my college days, and with cow protection for ISKCON. For this and all the other countless gifts you have given me I am eternally grateful and feel hopelessly able to repay you in any way, but I know the way to continue, if I may be permitted, is to keep serving you. This is my wish although you may wish to kick me aside,

Your fallen servant,

Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Dāsa
UK

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to your divine appearance day on this planet, the most blessed event in a disciple's life.

In 2016, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary, we got many opportunities to glorify you and your ISKCON. It was with great relish that we explained to the audiences about the miracles that happened after you incorporated ISKCON.

From a fledgling gathering of some curious "students" the movement grew from strength to strength. We would narrate how you came to New York in 1965 practically penniless, no real place to stay and no support or followers. How you preached about principles that nobody could accept and what to speak of following. How you would regularly visit the shipping corporation office to find out about the next ship back to India. And how you continued – with complete trust – in guru and Kṛṣṇa, against mighty odds that would have any ordinary devotee throw in the towel.

Your struggle eventually paid off! Ten years later you had Rathayātrā in the same city – the most important one of the world – in the most important country of the world, down 5th Avenue – the most important street in the world. Six hundred disciples were chanting and dancing and pulling three huge *rathas* with Their Lordships Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā, watched in astonishment by thousands of curious bystanders. You were seated on lady Subhadrā's *ratha* glancing blissfully over the assembled devotees.

Not only this. Your Rādhā Govinda Deities were proprietors of a 11 storey skyscraper in Manhattan. Who could have imagined? You had not only translated innumerable transcendental literatures, but also distributed them throughout the world, including in all the prestigious universities – to scholars, scientists and religionists. Your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* had become by far the best selling version worldwide, selling by the millions.

Wow, what a miracle. From zero to all of this and more. Our audiences were stunned when they heard of all this. To most it was unbelievable. But for you this was only the beginning. You had the vision of the movement spreading ALL around the world, to every town and village, as Mahāprabhu predicted.

By now the Krishna consciousness movement has spread further.

We still have long way to go to achieve the Lord's prediction. By your blessings it will happen one day.

Looking back and reflecting deeply on the impact of you coming to the West had on the society at large, we can only conclude that this your *śakti*. Kṛṣṇa empowered you – His pure devotee – to spread *harināma saṅkīrtana*. You in return have empowered your sincere disciples to carry on from where you left off.

We must consider ourselves most fortunate to be able to help you in your mission. Although we are not very competent and fully saturated with all of Kali-yuga's defects, still you engage us mercifully in your service.

As we sing every morning for your glorification:

*śrī-guru-caraṇa-padma, kevala-bhakati-sadma,
bando mui sāvadhāna mate
jāhāra prasāde bhāi, e bhava toriyā jāi,
kṛṣṇa-prāpti hoy jāhā haite*

"The lotus feet of our spiritual master are the only way by which we can attain pure devotional service. I bow down to his lotus feet with great care and attention. By his grace one can cross the ocean of material suffering and obtain the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa."

This prayer says it all. The whole secret of *sadhana bhakti* is contained in it. There is really nothing else to be known apart from that. The weight of responsibility is heavy on us – your disciples and grand-disciples. You want us to save the fallen civilization from going to hell:

"... So their extra intelligence is being used like that – very, very abominable condition of human society. You are the only way to save them. Otherwise it is doomed" (Lecture on *Bhāgavatam* 6.1.37, San Francisco, 19.7.1975)

Please give the strength to execute this tall order. Please inspire us to desire in such a way. Without your mercy we won't be able to accomplish it.

Thank you for everything you did for us.

Your unqualified servant,

Śrīniketana Dāsa

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

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

Most beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

You are our adored Spiritual Master, our eternal well-wisher, the munificent visible manifestation of the Lord in the heart, the perfect representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Our one and only longing is to grow to become somewhat useful disciples – obedient, sincere, respectful, fully surrendered servants of your transcendental will and, even with our foolishness and inadequacy, be able to bring some pleasure and satisfaction to Your Divine Grace.

Please, despite our unworthiness, do not turn away your sunshine-like merciful glance from us.

Your mercy it's truly all we are made of. Without it we would perish and cease to exist.

You, as manifestation of Śrī Nityānanda Rāma, are the one purely injecting an unending stream of genuine spiritual strength within this transcendental movement and only by perfectly tuning our own desires with yours can we embed and reverberate part of such spiritual strength, thus becoming instrumental in keeping ISKCON strong and effective in spreading pure Krishna consciousness so to please the Lord and consequently bring to an end the dreadful suffering of the fallen conditioned souls.

We, as your disciples, may rest assured that any so-called individual strength we may be able to show, if that strength is not infused by you, in the long run (more often short) it will just strike back as disturbingly troublesome, and the materially polluted resulting work, no matter how impressive, will be exposed as a farce.

You are no different from the Supreme Lord residing in everyone's heart as *caitya-guru*.

He gives knowledge from within, and you are guiding us from without.

Unlike advanced pure devotees, we cannot expect to hear the Lord talking to us directly; nonetheless He sent Your Divine Grace, an expression of His causeless mercy, to reclaim us through your flawless instructions.

By our good fortune we have been able to surrender to you with ‘no ifs or buts’ and by your kindness, you have in turn accepted us as your disciples.

Please keep sustaining us with your strength so that we may forever feel our enthusiasm to serve Your Divine Grace, with ‘no ifs or buts’, intensify ad infinitum.

A real spiritual enthusiasm, steadily rising from humbly doing our best to serve you under any condition, is what we are aspiring for; not the so-called gushing out only when we are the main acclaimed character at the center of the action or, at any rate, coming from an easy-going life in Krishna consciousness.

As you said, easy-going life and Krishna consciousness go ill together.

Although we are very wretched and fallen, we are really ready to go to any extent to please you.

“If we become fixed up in this resolution, that ‘Whatever we have heard from my guru, the representative of Kṛṣṇa, I must execute. I do not care for my personal convenience or inconvenience. This is my life and soul,’ then your life is perfect.”

(Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.48,
Māyāpur, October 28, 1974)

Beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the center of our life, our whole existence revolves around you, just like miniscule particles of light wrapped around the golden sun. We are aware that you are here, making your active presence vividly felt, always maintaining our Krishna consciousness with your everlasting instructions, so that we will never feel alone, bereft of your transcendental life-giving personal association.

“The Spiritual Master is present wherever his sincere disciple is trying to serve his instructions.”

(Letter to Bhakta Don, Los Angeles, December 1, 1973)

You have established this wonderful embassy of the spiritual world where even the fallen spiritual souls, originally Vaikuṅṭha citizens, can find refuge.

In a sane, fully Kṛṣṇa conscious environment, the materialistic mentality cannot resist; it will either quickly be burned to ashes by the blazing fire of pure devotional service or, in no time, force an insincere person to spontaneously leave the place. By the intensity of unadulterated Krishna consciousness, the habitat will retain its *āśraya* (shelter) property, automatically leading to the sorrowful 'bowdlerization' of the unfortunate element and preventing the *āśrama* and all its residents from getting infected.

***But when somewhere within the ISKCON body, in the name of 'progressive innovation', 'liberalization', 'time place and circumstances adaptation' or some kind of so-called 'better alignment with the tradition', the cancer-like pollution of material atmosphere starts to become predominant, even the balancing native self healing capacity of an authentic spiritual movement begins to weaken.

And if, in order to restore the intensity of pure Krishna consciousness, proper action is delayed, then the whole place may see its all-attractive feature dwindle, followed by an increased risk to lose the association of many sincere souls whose very presence contributes to strengthen this movement by encouraging the mutual uplift of pure Krishna Consciousness and that, finding themselves scattered, will be strained in the struggle to maintain their own purity.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please grant your Governing Body Commission (GBC) the required intelligence to see where real deviations are taking roots and to take proper action, thus making sure that no alien, external or extravagant idea, with all its intrinsic contaminations, find its way into this ISKCON society. For the benefit of all, in spite of all the complexities arising from managing an ever growing international movement, please inspire it with the capacity to keep the ISKCON structure as simple as possible, solidly based on your clear vision, so to avoid being stigmatized by the well known "Prabhupāda said: 'resolutions, dissolutions, revolutions and then no solutions.'"

It could perhaps be an appreciable effort that of wanting to create a variegated environment in which offer everyone the chance to gradually get closer to Krishna consciousness and little by little find their way to devotional service, but it has to be done accordingly to

Your Divine Grace's specific directives, not following some creative whims, and certainly not at the expense of those who wish to put an immediate end to their state of materialistic unconsciousness, seeking refuge at the lotus feet of the pure devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, depriving them of the possibility to identify with a purely devotional context, along with other like-minded devotees. A context free from any kind of gross or subtle contamination, no matter how much such contaminations may be regarded as insignificant or of no consequences from the materialistic point of view.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, let us be properly inspired by your instructions on how to avoid mistakes and correctly maintain in the right order this wonderful association of pure devotees where, whoever in truth desires to get cured from this material disease and in this very life time return to his full original Krishna consciousness as a pure servant of the servant of the servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, can find a secure shelter under the wholesome protection of your divine lotus feet.

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are the perfect Spiritual Master, the particular kind of powerful *ācārya* able to deliver the whole universe from the clutches of *māyā* and bring everyone back to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

“Guru also does not think himself that he is Kṛṣṇa, but he collects the devotional services of the disciples to offer to Kṛṣṇa. This is the process. We cannot approach Kṛṣṇa directly.”

“That is the injunction of the *śāstra*, that one should approach the guru who can transfer the service from the disciple to the Supreme Person. So... Therefore the first offering is guru.”

(Lecture on *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 1.1, Māyāpur, March 25, 1975)

Beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is all-attractive, nonetheless He is Attracted by pure love manifested in the form of His Pure Devotee. Therefore as an embodiment of pure love for the Lord, you are most attractive and so is your transcendental movement if we continue to keep Your Divine Grace at the center of all our activities, not just as a slogan but as a fact. Nothing else is needed.

Most magnanimous Lords Śrī-Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, You are the source of unlimited causeless mercy. With all the humility I'm capable of, as fallen worthless conditioned soul, I beg Your Lordship to grant me this sole request: please let me remain forever attracted by my Divine Spiritual Master Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda, do not ever let me fall under forgetfulness of His Divine Grace even if I have to remain in this dangerous place life after life. Please grant me His eternal association fully absorbed in the service of His lotus feet, so that wherever the tossing waves of this fierce ocean of material existence will throw me, I will always realize His Divine Grace's personal presence and never feel lost and alone.

Śrīla Prabhupāda *ki jaya!*

Your humble and respectful servant,

Narakāntaka Dāsa (former Tridaṇḍī Dāsa)
Italy

Ānandamaya Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You are very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, having taken shelter at His lotus feet. I am eternally and especially indebted to you for saving me from impersonalism. *Nirviśeṣa* I did not have too much problem with because nothing was to be found there! But I must confess that before I discovered your amazing *Kṛṣṇa Book* in the public library, I was prone to investigate the Māyāvādīs. Kirpal Singh stated that if we knew how much God loved us, we'd be singing and dancing. But he himself wasn't singing and dancing. I found that odd. Meher Baba was reputed to be a God-man, but somehow it didn't seem right that God would be a middle-aged man with a receding hairline and a mustache. In *Be Here Now*, Ram Dass expressed some genuine devotional sentiment, but then diluted it with impersonal conceptions. So I was quite relieved to discover your lovely *Kṛṣṇa* books. At first I thought that the stories were fables. I was fascinated during childhood by Aesop's fables and was also impressed by a picture book depicting incidents from the Old Testament. The supernatural powers of Moses were especially impressive, and I remember that my mom took me as a child to see the 50s movie *The*

Ten Commandments, which left a lasting impression on my mind. Yet in the Hebrew tradition I grew up with, the final verdict of Godhead was that of an impersonal, unseen Absolute. But being already a bit open to supernatural themes, I began reading *Kṛṣṇa Book*. You very cleverly interspersed the philosophy of Krishna consciousness into the story line, and by reading *Kṛṣṇa Book*, I became convinced of the viability of *Bhāgavata* philosophy. Later, I began reading *Bhagavad-gītā*, and although initially I didn't agree with every verse I read and found it especially difficult to accept the ontology of the three modes of material nature to be a conclusive explanation (it seemed too simple) of the mechanics of material nature. After continually reading it for several years, I became convinced, and now I love to preach using *Gītā* verses as substantiation.

Forty-two years after first initiation, I still struggle with the great leap it takes to go from *nitya baddha*, a conditioned soul, to *nitya siddha*, a liberated soul. I am taking it in small, gradual steps using the tortoise technique, as told in Aesop's fables I read long ago. After all, the tortoise eventually won the race! I am now somewhere between *jñāna* and *vijñāna*, theoretical knowledge and realized knowledge. I am attempting to walk the walk and not just talk the talk. I still have a few remnants of the old neophyte patterns left to eradicate, but I am working towards the more inviting and advanced viewpoints held by *madhyama adhikārīs*. I see a long struggle ahead, likely lasting many more lifetimes, how many I cannot say. But if even a highly conditioned soul such as myself can hold fast to the ultimate goal of uninterrupted and unmotivated devotional service, there is hope.

With love and admiration, your disciple,

Ānandamaya Dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnī itī nāmīne*

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

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swamī 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 Caitanya and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

During the course of the past nine and a half years, I have cared for my aged mother as her life slowly ebbed from her body. Accepting the 24/7 service of ‘live-in aide’ and companion, I have directly witnessed the sufferings of a person whose full life is coming to a close; something that *everyone must* experience! As I initially took the reins of responsibility, I mentally referenced your example (following Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s in the *Bhagavad-gītā*), and continuously offered spiritual guidance to her as a supplement to my daily servicing of her physical needs. Gradually her interest increased and her questions became significantly more direct and appropriate for one who is preparing to leave this world.

The Song of God (*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*) made more sense to me than ever before; and, your methodology (the responsibility of “Guru”) also increasingly took on a completely new perspective! Preparing ‘mankind’ for separating from their body is no “simple” task, it is a lifetime of 24/7 live-in-aide to souls who are departing from their bodies... Giving them, at every moment, the respect and fortitude to see that their gradual transition is inevitable!

My mom passed from this life at 7 a.m. on 3-14-2017 at home while hearing you, my dear Prabhupāda, quietly chanting *bhajanās* by her bed. She had come to appreciate hearing you, and despite being in a coma-like, non-responsive condition, she would move her extremities responsively when I would put on a new CD; she would respond similarly when one of her six children would come into her room and speak to her.

So, I have been ‘re-assigned’ after so many years serving my mother’s humble wishes. I have committed my Permaculture Design services to New Talavana by the grace of HG Yogindravandana Prabhu, starting the second week of May. I am anxious to get “boots on the ground” as the saying goes, to actively focus my attention on doing what I can to develop the long-delayed rural farming community portion of your mission to the best of my personal ability; and, to encourage others to do the same. In this capacity, I feel that my energy is being used appropriately in yours and the Lord’s service!

I have happily recently discovered that Abhirāma Prabhu is also taking up the responsibility for further developing Gītā Nāgarī, and this has also inspired me more! I am especially happy to note that there are increasing numbers of other devotees who are also recognizing the importance of developing this ‘other 50% of your mission’.

The importance of a rural “Vṛndāvana-like” atmosphere for raising our children in. The Veda-infused educational system greatly insulates them from the demoniac materialistic entrapment. To be able to protect them properly should be their parents’ first concern in each household; above ALL else! Such *care* should envelope them throughout their delicate childhood and well into their youthful years.

In youth, many can be provided with apprenticeships in occupations that resonate well with their spiritual impetus, and material interests. Those whose interests lie in public outreach should be facilitated at the city temple of their choice, and enter into full time *saṅkīrtana yajña* when their basic schooling is completed.

As more attention turns to securing a global support network of Vṛndāvana-like village communities to carry on, and expand our movement through the next 10,000 years of *saṅkīrtana* outreach efforts, we need to have a ‘Permanent-culture design’ foundation laid, to protect the cows and the *brāhmaṇas* (*go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca...*); and to build upon generation after generation! This ‘Permaculture ideal’ is perfectly expressed in the form of Goloka Vṛndāvana, and cannot be duplicated! However, it can (and must be) replicated to ‘the best of our capacities to emulate’ the vivid descriptions that you have shared with us in *Kṛṣṇa Book!*

H. G. Guru Dāsa, along with his close associates Ārādhāna Devī Dāsī and Rāma Nṛsimha Dāsa have been progressing very nicely

in developing the Vedic Care Charitable Trust organization, as well as some nice local projects designed specifically to provide care for those who are having to deal with health challenges which exceed their capacity to endure independently. As such, it also provides hospice-care services in terminally-ill cases.

Our (your direct disciples) numbers continue to decrease in increasing rapidity. As they do, too many of the remainder, whose old age defies the logic of rural farming community development – continue to defer that responsibility to the next generation; an unfortunate ongoing dilemma.

I ceaselessly pray that they, in their old age, **realize *fully*** your final statements to us – in *your* last days:

“Book distribution and farms: these are our solid programs. They can change the whole world. The whole foundation of animal civilization can be destroyed. If I have hope, for still living, I want to organize the farms, make it perfect. Simple living and high thinking”. – Tamāl Krishna Gosvāmī’s Diary, August 9, 1977.

*“I have only done fifty percent of what I want to do. The farms have to be done. If they are established, *varṇāśrama* will be established.”* (Tamāl Krishna Gosvāmī’s Diary, August 10, 1977)

*“This is the next aspect of Krishna consciousness which I wish to push forward. If I am able to travel again, then I shall visit the farms and make them perfect. On these farms we can demonstrate the full *varṇāśrama* system. If these farms become successful then the whole world will be enveloped by Krishna consciousness”* (Letter to Hari-śauri from Tamāl Krishna Gosvāmī, August 10, 1977)

The support of permanent communities was encouraged by Śrī Caitanya Himself throughout His pastimes in India, repeatedly instructing His followers to go to their home-village and institute the *saṅkīrtana yajña* in their own rural community! It remains incumbent upon us to do the same; as you have kindly repeated in his stead... Thank you for engaging me in this service!

Your servant in separation,

Laṅgagaṇeśa Dāsa

Forty Years of Separation

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

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Forty long years have gone by since I was in your personal service. I am still here, but I do not know how I have gone on. I have been going through the motions, but have felt lost without your presence.

Others go on and follow your instructions with great care and devotion, and they accept what is favorable for your service and reject what is not. I, on the other hand, feel as though I am a black sheep among your disciples, for I feel so alone and without enthusiasm or service, simply making a show of attachment without taking seriously to the process you have given.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, when you left, I felt as though I had lost everything I cherished, and all purpose and direction. It was so confusing that I became absorbed in insignificant personal goals, which only brought me pain and betrayed me. If I had stayed true to the promises I made you, perhaps I would be free of this lamentation.

But now after so much heartache and loss, I have no taste left for this world. Yet I am so unfortunate that I have no strength or determination to move forward. Punish me if you must, but teach me, show me, correct me, and allow me your mercy to serve you once again. I have seen that no one can give me shelter, protect me, or offer me such happiness and kindness as you have given me – given all of us. What will be the outcome for such an ignorant fool as myself? Will I ever find the dust of your lotus feet again? Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pledge you this life and every life thereafter until I am fortunate enough to find your mercy once again.

I am hopeful that you will not forget about me, despite my unworthiness. You showed me so much kindness over the years and once, while attending the Kumbha Mela in 1977, as I was helping you into your shoes, I foolishly changed the positioning rather quickly, and as a result you stepped on my hand and arm and remained there while I reorganized your shoes. At that moment you removed all inauspiciousness from my life. Why did I not understand that at that time?

In your final months in Vṛndāvana, when you no longer required my services, I felt as though I could not breathe and that I no longer wanted to live. I was so brokenhearted that all I could do was cry and plead with you from within my heart to be allowed to continue serving you. I could not imagine being separated from you. When my begging and crying did not prove worthy enough, I then began to call out to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Queen of Vṛndāvana, and begged Her to allow me to serve you, Her dearest servant. I pleaded from the depths of my soul.

Then, as though a miracle had spoken, a *brahmacārī* appeared at my door and said that Tamāl Krishna Mahārāja was asking to see me. When I came in to see him, he said you had just told him you wanted to test me. And test me you did – but only by first showing me great love and kindness.

You told Tamāl Krishna Mahārāja to tell me to prepare *kachori* and *singara* for you within forty-five minutes. He preached to me that this was the most important service in the movement at that time, for we all needed you to eat if you were to remain with us.

After I completed the test in the time you had requested, Bhakti Chāru Mahārāja entered the kitchen and told me you were asking for me, so I came into your room and offered my obeisances. Seeing you so thin, shirtless, with the bones jutting from your shoulders and your voice so weak, my eyes filled with tears, and I inched my way forward until I was inches from you in order to hear your voice. With *singara* in your hand, you looked right into my eyes and with barely a voice you said, “I have not eaten anything solid in two weeks – and you saw the tears in my eyes, so with your big, beautiful smile you said “*but, I am eating your singara.*” Then you said to me so lovingly, “So, you can cook,” and the room, filled with your dear disciples, roared, “*Jaya, Haribol!*” The joy was overflowing in each of us, for our prayer was that if you would eat, then you would remain with us. So this pastime gave us a feeling of hope and more time with you.

Then you said in a firm voice, again looking straight into my eyes, “But you must shop, you must cook, and you must clean. And you must have no assistance.” Then you looked at the men gathered in the room and said, “No one is to be in the kitchen when she is there.” In a very loving voice you turned to me and said, “Is that all right?” My eyes once again filled with tears, and I said, “Yes, of course, Śrīla Prabhupāda.”

I then told you that I had been praying to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to

be allowed to serve you. You immediately replied, “Yes, I know,” as if confirming that She had spoken to you of my prayers. So you allowed me to continue to serve you and you showed me your mercy, even though you did not require my service for you did not have an appetite and were not eating.

This was the nature of your causeless mercy – to encourage us even if it meant you served us. How fortunate we were to receive such kindness from you! This memory remains as vivid today as if the events had happened only yesterday. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pray that the mercy you showed me then will find me again.

I pray that I will once again find that mood, that intensity of purpose, that urgency to be near you and to serve you with that same intensity of feeling. I now understand and pray that the practice and the will, the patience and the determination required for success find me. Your mercy is all that I am made of. Please give me the strength to remain steady and able to please you. I see no other purpose in life.

Although you have disappeared from before my eyes, you are eternally present in your words and in my heart. Your mercy transcends this world and is active and alive for all of us. Śrīla Prabhupāda, please guide me and show me how to hear you perfectly so that I can receive your mercy once more. I can see nothing else worthwhile or appealing in this world.

When I flew with you to London on your last trip in 1977, during our time at the Manor, it became apparent that you would be leaving us. That was more than one could comprehend; we were all still so young. I knew you knew my prayer to serve you closely, and I began to understand that I was forcing myself on you. By your kindness you allowed this unworthy soul to remain near. So one day I stopped praying to be with you and began to pray that you would please bless me that if I could not be with you personally, that I would always feel your presence near me. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, by your kindness and mercy I do feel your presence near me, and it sustains me and allows me to understand all that you have given.

The years are passing. The difference between then and now is that you were always present for each of us and you are still here for each of us today – I did not understand that then, but I understand it now. So I need to find that great intensity again, that desire where I know nothing else but you, that urgency, that sincere one-pointedness, because with these ingredients you are present.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pray to perfect this life as you wished for us. And in this connection, I promise what you have given me, that I will share it with others, for you are very much alive and accessible to everyone and here with us now, and are continuing to guide and inspire us as we try to move forward. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I will work to bring you pleasure in serving your words and fulfilling your hopes for us.

*Begging for your mercy,
Your unworthy servant,*

Śrutirūpā Devī Dāsī
Prabhupāda Bhavan, Key West, Florida

Ātmātma Dāsa

My dear eternal Spiritual Master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances to your glorious lotus feet.

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.

Fifty-one years ago you boarded the Jaladuta, thus starting the journey to the West that had long been held in your heart. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda was guiding you and always present, His instruction your life and soul.

What would have happened had you never come to the West, how would the world look now, where would we be now, where would I be?

That moment in time when you stepped on the ship the Jaladuta, was the most important moment for the world.

When they made the show of landing on the moon and took the step into the dust, this did not change anything in this world. But your landing in Boston Harbor brought the dust of the holy *dhāma* and a trunk full with unlimited treasure.

You founded this ISKCON movement and based your books as the guideline. Gradually the nectar of that trunk expanded and

expanded, now millions of books have flowed around the world filling the void of material life and bestowing life to those who were the walking dead. Yes, had you not stepped off the Jaladuta at Boston Harbor we would be lost, destined to continue this endless saga of birth and death, old-age and disease.

Your glories are being spread; your picture is on stamps in India and Malaysia. The simple, selfless compassionate love you brought has caught the hearts of so many. Your timeless purports give a clear, concise understanding. The names of Hari and Kṛṣṇa ring out around the world, every town and village, we can now see it will happen. For 10,000 years your books will guide us.

Here I am your servant. Please continue to guide me, please forgive me for my shortcomings and please continue to engage me in your service.

Your servant,

Ātmātma Dāsa

Ātmā Tattva Dāsa

My most revered spiritual master Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Your Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Śrī Śrīmad Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvāmī Mahārāja writes in *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*:

“Śrīla Prabhupāda was not only an *ācārya*, but he was the Founder-*Acārya* of the Krishna consciousness movement, which is a dynamic spiritual reality. That reality is nothing less than the *yuga-dharma*, or the form of spiritual life recommended for all humanity in the present Age of Kali, the most dangerous of ages, in which humanity eventually abandons all religious principles.”

Inspired by the above realization of Mahārāja, I searched for and found a scriptural evidence from the biography of Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*, which is as follows:

Definition and Activities of a Great Founder-Acārya

The Founder-*ācārya* is distinguished from all other *ācāryas* and his qualities and activities are outlined in the *śāstras*:

*tebhyassarva-jana-trātāsarva-śreṣṭha-tamodhruvam
dīnābhaya-pradānārthanviśadī-kṛtyabhū-tale*

“Among all *ācāryas*, certainly he who is the deliverer of all people, who appears in this world for the purpose of removing the fears of the fallen souls (*dīna-abhaya*) is the most perfect.”

*gītācāryokta-tattvārtha-caramārtha-prakāśanam
ṛṣi-prokta-pramāṇānāinkṛtvāvyaḥkhyānamuttamam*

“He sheds light on the ultimate meaning of the philosophical conclusions spoken by Kṛṣṇa, Who is the speaker of *Bhagavad-gītā*. He also gives perfect purports to the evidences given by the *ṛṣis*.”

*divya-prabandhānlokebhyaśaṭhakopādibhiḥkṛtān
arthopadeśa-paryantānīvardhayitvā ca sarvataḥ*

“He propagates everywhere the meanings and purports of the songs of the previous *ācāryas*.”

*nāthāryādi-gurūṇān ca śaṭhakopādi-yoginām
āhṛtyavyāsa-sūtrāṇāmarthānloka-hitāya ca
śrī-bhāṣyādi-mahā-granthānvidhāyakarūṇārṇavaḥ
nirjityasarva-samayānvādenaśataśo 'śubhān*

“He, the ocean of mercy, contributes great books for the welfare of the people that explain the meaning of Vedānta strictly in line with the previous Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* and devotees. In this way he conquers all, defeating hundreds of different kinds of inauspicious philosophies by his arguments.”

*ity-ādibhiryati-śreṣṭhaḥkāryeloka-hiterataḥ
nāthādi-deśikendrebhyaḥpradhānobhavatidhruvam*

“Because of engaging in the welfare of the people of the world, that perfect and topmost mendicant is certainly the most important Founder-*ācārya* (*pradhāna*).”

(*Prapaṇnāmṛta* 62.48-52, 54)

Since I joined the movement very late in early 1975 all the training I was fortunate enough to get was through your beloved disciples to mention a few: His Holiness Lokanāth Swami, Śrī Hamsadūta

Prabhu, His Holiness Tamāl Krishna Gosvāmī, His Holiness Jayapatāka Swami, His Holiness Hridayānanda dāsa Gosvāmī, His Holiness Bhakti Chāru Swami, His Holiness Bhakti Vidyā Pūrṇa Swami Mahārājas.

When my elder spiritual brothers said anything encouraging to fan the dormant spiritual spark of Krishna consciousness in me, and when my younger spiritual brothers and spiritual nephews praised me saying, “because of your classes I became devotee, etc.,” I always thought that I must be somebody very special. Thus without digesting the fact that it was all your causeless mercy, I took all the credit for myself and thus,

Due to the covering of the modes of passion and ignorance
Being not at all free from lust and greed,
I neglected your instructions.

“So if there are any defects within our Society it is only symptom that the instructions of the Spiritual Master are being neglected.” (*Letter to Karandara, 10 February 1973*)

Thus I became a victim more than once (*asaṅg*) of the covering and throwing potency of māyā. In your (only one) letter to me in early 1977 you instructed:

“Bhadrak is a holy place, because Lord Caitanya has visited. There is no cause for anxiety in Bhadrak, go on preaching enthusiastically, Kṛṣṇa will provide everything. Teach children, distribute prasāda, and protect cows this will be your service.”

Your instructions above, have finally become manifested in the past few years. I am teaching children, we have every day *prasāda* distribution in our congregation temple, we have one cow and a calf and two bulls that we are taking care of; calling distance from our house temple there is the Bhadrak ISKCON center for all of us to take part in your service and association.

O most merciful Founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna consciousness, Please bestow your blessings to strengthen me to follow all your instructions strictly so that you will be pleased.

Struggling hard to become a sincere servant of your dear servant,

Ātmā Tattva Dāsa Adhikāri

*nama omi viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnī itī nāmīne*

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances on to your lotus feet again and again.

Today is the most auspicious day, your Vyāsa-pūjā.

I want to glorify you not only today, but every day of my life. Because you are the most special, extraordinary, greatest personality but my words are not enough to glorify you.

The rays of your purity and power are still shining on ISKCON. That is why your movement is still growing with more temples, devotees, book distribution, *prasāda* distribution, huge festivals, outreach, and worship to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa all over the globe.

We are fortunate to be part of your movement, part of your ISKCON tree. We caught your boat to cross over this material world.

Your austerity and hard work has paid off. ISKCON is flourishing. Your childhood pastime, Rathayātrā, has become a global event.

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu said Kṛṣṇa's name would be sung in every town and village and it is happening, and the credit goes to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

No one could do what you did!

Thank you for accepting me at your lotus feet. I remember all the pastimes with you, and I want to share two pastimes with the devotees about your lotus feet – one in Chicago and one in Detroit.

When I saw your picture, I had a strong desire to touch your lotus feet because you changed the Western people into sādhus, and that is a miracle.

Kṛṣṇa made that arrangement when you came to Chicago during Rathayātrā. We were told that you would be in Chicago, so Śubhaviḷāsa took two weeks' holiday and with Minakshi and Indresh, we went to Chicago to see you.

Every morning, Śubhaviḷāsa would go on the morning walk with you and the rest of the devotees went to the evening classes. One day everyone was gone, and we were still sitting there.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you asked, “Why are you still here?” Śubhavlāsa told you that “...my wife has come all the way from Toronto to touch your lotus feet.” You were so kind that you lifted your dhoti from your lotus feet. I touched your lotus feet...my desire was fulfilled.

Another time we went to see you in Detroit. I requested, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, please keep us at your lotus feet.” You replied, “You are already.”

Your sweet memories keep us inspired and still serving in ISKCON. Please keep us always at your lotus feet so that we keep serving you and Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa, always.

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!
Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!
Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your worthless servant,

Ashalata Devī Dāsī

Śubhavlāsa Dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

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

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

The most of most merciful day for us is your appearance, Śrīla Prabhupāda. It is the most blessed event for our family.

Please accept my most humble *danḍavats* at your lotus feet.

The most wonderful day was September 1, 1896 when you appeared the day after Janmāṣṭamī in Calcutta, India, to give causeless mercy and love for Lord Caitanya’s *harināma* to the entire world. Your appearance and accomplishments were already predicted.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as the body is useless without the soul, similarly my life is useless without your shelter.

Even though I was born in a Vaiṣṇava family in India, my real fortune began when I met some of your disciples in Toronto in the late sixties. They would lead me to you and from that moment my

life was complete.

My great fortune began when you showed your causeless mercy to me and my family in Chicago by giving us your personal association and instructions. It continued with association in Vṛndāvana and Detroit. Before meeting you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, there was no meaning to my life. I thought I was doing important things but with your causeless mercy I realized I was neglecting the most important person of them all...Kṛṣṇa.

My fortune was evident when you visited Toronto. Little did I know that the fateful event of meeting your devotees would lead me to initiation. You accepted me and my wife, Ashalata, as your disciples, gave us *dīkṣā* and even personally gave the Gāyatrī mantra to us.

Śrīla Prabhupāda you are our savior! We can never repay you for what you have done. Even a trillion thanks would not be enough gratitude.

Your mercy to us is a mere drop of the ocean of mercy you gave the whole world by spreading the holy name and instructions of life and soul, of Kṛṣṇa and the way back to godhead. Your books are all over this world with over half a billion pieces of your literature distributed. There are ISKCON temples in almost all parts of this world. This is only because of your spiritual power, Śrīla Prabhupāda. In this way, you brought the meaning of life to millions of people.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I do not have knowledge or power to describe your qualities or mercy. I know one thing for sure – that you are very close to Lord Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and you are the most merciful person I have ever seen. As your eternal servant, I am begging to remain in your merciful rays of grace.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as always my humble request to you is to keep me at your lotus feet forever and never let me leave your shelter. Let your mission of ISKCON become my life and soul.

Your insignificant servant,

Śubhaviḷāsa Dāsa

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

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

Where is East and where West?
The Swāmī changed that forever.
Finally, as if consummating
a monumental historic marriage
The Twain had met.
Now the wedding party was celebrating
Dancing and chanting in the streets
Dancing and chanting day and night
As he played the tune
As he guided us
As he loved us
As he gave himself to us.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

As always, gratitude springs to the forefront when writing to, or about, you. As the Founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and greatest exponent of Krishna consciousness in the Western world, you kindly, fearlessly, and generously bestowed the treasures of your heart, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and pure devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, to one and all. And when even a little bit of your heart's treasures had been established in your devotees' hearts, you asked them to "do as I am doing." And they did . . . making this world a much better place. Thank you.

Your unprecedented munificence in spreading the *saṅkīrtana* movement has touched, and will continue to touch, the lives of countless people who seek genuine spiritual shelter and truth. With hope to please you by participating in the *saṅkīrtana* movement as you desire and direct, despite my shortcomings, I offer myself to you with gratitude and beg to remain . . .

*Your servant always,
Haridāsa Dāsa*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

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

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 7th Canto, Chapter 1, Verses 23 and 24, you have wonderfully translated:

“Blasphemy and praise, chastisement and respect, are experienced because of ignorance. The body of the conditioned soul is planned by the Lord for suffering in the material world through the agency of the external energy. The conditioned soul, being in the bodily conception of life, considers his body to be his self and considers everything in relationship with the body to be his. Because he has this wrong conception of life, he is subjected to dualities like praise and chastisement.”

Thus you always emphasized the essential truth that we are not this body. You also gave us the infallible method of transcending our false ego, conditioned by countless rebirths into this miserable realm of praise and criticism, namely to loudly chant the holy names of the Lord.

In your *Bhagavad-gītā*, 16.2, you have revealed to us that *apaiśunam*, aversion to faultfinding, is a quality of a godly man. On a morning walk in Māyāpur on March 12, 1976, Satsvarupa commented, “One time you said you were happier then, (in the days of staying with and cooking for Dr. Misra), maintaining yourself, than having thousands of disciples.” You replied, “Yes. There was no chance of finding fault. (laughter) Now I have to find fault.”

We find ourselves in this unfortunate position of having to find fault while managing the devotees on your ISKCON Vedic Farm in Mauritius, yet by diligently studying your books we have found, and by your mercy are practicing, the panacea to the resulting misery which management entails – loudly chanting the *mahā-mantra* while dancing before Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma.

Your Revatīnandana reveals in Siddhānta’s *Śrīla Prabhupāda*

Memories, “Śrīla Prabhupāda gave a Sunday feast lecture about *kīrtana*, and he said things that I never heard him say at other times, particularly not during a lecture. He remarked that melodic instruments, including the harmonium, are not meant for *kīrtana*, and he explained why. He said that the ear will automatically follow musical strains, and then our attention will be diverted from the mantra. He said that rhythm instruments are good for *kīrtana* because they make one more inclined to dance, and dancing, in turn, unlocks devotion. He liked graceful dancing. He used to mention that Jayatīrtha was a graceful dancer. He said, “See how he dances. This is very good. This will help one feel more devotion.” Another time he told Viṣṇujana that he did not like melodies that had long, extended notes in them. He liked the melody to be filled with the mantra.

During the lecture he gave that day he also said, “Don’t harmonize during the response.” The leader may sing little variations, but the group should sing a steady response. One person shouldn’t be singing one melody and another doing another melody during the response. “These things,” he said, “will help one pay more attention to the mantra as one is chanting and dancing. That way one will get the maximum benefit, and the *kīrtana* will also become more ecstatic.” He also said that the dancing should be graceful and gentlemanly. Then, during the second *kīrtana*, he got off the Vyāsāsana and danced in the middle of the *kīrtana* party. He danced back and forth very gracefully in what we called the “Swami step.” After a while he put his hands up and started leaping up in the air straight up and down. He wasn’t shaking his body around. His hands were up, and he was leaping in the air. He kept leaping and leaping and leaping for a long time, and we were doing it with him.”

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for giving us these most important instructions. Thank you for teaching us the Swami Step, and how to leap in the air during ecstatic *kīrtanas*.

Here are some of your instructions on loudly chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa that I would like to share with your ISKCON family:

“So these Gosvāmīs were engaged, *kṛṣṇotkīrtana-gāna-nartana*, chanting and dancing. *Kīrtana* means chanting, and *nartana* means dancing. *Kṛṣṇotkīrtana*, *utkīrtana*. *Utkīrtana* means very loudly, not softly. So this loud *kīrtana* was inaugurated by Lord Caitanya.” (Six Gosvamis Lecture, “Śrī Śrī Ṣaḍ-gosvāmy-aṣṭaka,” Los Angeles, November 18, 1968)

“Even they do not understand what is Hare Kṛṣṇa, if you chant loudly Hare Kṛṣṇa, even the ants and insect who is hearing, he’ll be delivered, because it is spiritual vibration. It will act for everyone. Just like fire. The fire will act, either you are human being or insect. If you touch fire, it will do its work. Similarly, Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is transcendental vibration. When we chant loudly, anyone who hears—it doesn’t matter whether he’s man, animal, tree, insect—anyone who will hear, he’ll get profit. This is transcendental vibration.” (*The Nectar of Devotion* lecture, Bombay, January 4, 1973)

“It is understood that everyone has some nasty habits but by sticking to Krishna consciousness, chanting our required rounds loudly, and tending the Deities, these items will surely save you.” (Letter to Upendra, Los Angeles, December 9, 1968)

“When we chant, when we utter the *bīja* mantra that we utter loudly. That is required. That is *japa*. So this mantra is *mahā-mantra* and it should be chanted loudly, or as you like. There is no such restriction. *Niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālaḥ. Nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālaḥ.* And we have to follow the great personalities. Haridāsa Ṭhākura, he was chanting very loudly; Caitanya Mahāprabhu chanted very loudly. So what more evidence you want? My Guru Mahārāja chanted loudly, we are chanting loudly. Whole business finished. (chuckles) Is that all right? Eh?” — (Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.14, Bombay, November 10, 1970)

“You mention ghosts. So far I have experience, the best way to remove them is to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa very loudly and have jubilant *kīrtana* until they leave.” (Letter to Damodara, Delhi, December 3, 1971)

“Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī instructs that chanting of the holy name of the Lord should be loudly done.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.1.11, purport)

“Therefore this is the only method. That you chant

loudly and hear. Hare Kṛṣṇa. If your mind is in other things it will be forced to concentrate on the sound vibration “Kṛṣṇa.” You haven’t got to withdraw your mind from other, automatically it will be withdrawn because the sound is there.” (Lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 6.25–29, Los Angeles, February 18, 1969)

“We do not calculate the so-called success or failure we are simply to discharge our duties in Krishna consciousness and chant HARE KRISHNA loudly.” (Letter to Puruṣottama, Los Angeles, November 3, 1968)

“When you may feel morose, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra loudly and hear it. That will re-establish you on the platform of transcendental bliss.” (Letter to Viṣṇujana, Allahabad, January 8, 1971)

“While the body is fit therefore, why should we not chant the holy name of the Lord loudly and distinctly? If one does so, it is quite possible that even at the time of death he will be properly able to chant the holy name of the Lord with love and faith.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.2.49, translation and purport)

“Even Śrī Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī was fond of chanting loudly in both *japa* and *kīrtana*. During *kīrtana* he would sing: *Nitai ki nama enechi re! Ki nama enechi rei! Ki nama diteche re!* “Oh Lord Nityānanda, what a wonderful name You have brought. Oh Nitāi, what a wonderful name You have given.” After chanting almost the whole night, the next morning he would offer 1,108 *daṇḍavats* to the Deities. He was always enthusiastic to serve the Vaiṣṇavas.”

I beg to remain eternally engaged in loud, ecstatic chanting and in the service of all your servants,

Arjuna Dāsa

My beloved Master, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I bow down at your lotus feet with awe and reverence and ask that you kindly accept this attempt of mine to properly glorify you. I am not so intelligent that I can do so properly with genuine devotional sentiments. I ask that you please forgive me for my misgivings and not always strictly following the devotional path of *bhakti* as I had heard explained from your very lips.

Dearest Master, nowadays I am trying to do so with greater enthusiasm. I pray to you for guidance within my heart to speak and do what is right for the glorification of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda, Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement and the community of Vaiṣṇava devotees.

All glories to Your Divine Grace.

Hare Kṛṣṇa

Abhilāṣa Dāsa

Atitaguṇa Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you, the savior of the fallen souls.

At the time of this writing, I look around me. It is springtime. Buds are starting to pop out of barren looking trees and bushes. Soon there will be a multitude of colorful flowers blessing the countryside. Before meeting you, I was a young and unproductive person. If not for you, my life would have been a waste of time – utterly futile. But with your divinely inspired words of knowledge and pure attitude of love for Kṛṣṇa and all living beings, you are the supreme example of unselfishness and loving kindness.

O' Śrīla Prabhupāda, when I pronounce your name, I feel like flowers are tumbling out of my mouth. My heart explodes as I repeatedly chant your name in *kīrtana*. Time stands still, and when I think of you it will always be springtime.

Thank you for dispelling disillusionment for me and those humans who have caught your sweet smelling flower garland. You

are the lotus-like person who has made so many inauspicious places holy by your presence. You have also made so many of us who had wasted lives flourish with productive meaning and happiness.

One day I hope to again touch your lotus feet and go and be with you again. You were always a rose amongst this thorny world. Thank you for helping us all.

Your unworthy servant,

Atitaḡuᅇa Devī Dāsī

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Thank you for allowing me to complete another year of devotional service.

Your books and lectures are an ever fresh source of strength and inspiration. I can only pray to realize a drop of the wisdom contained in them. Spiritual knowledge is dynamic. I pray to be immersed in your words and have the strength, humility and compassion to share them.

I have been fortunate to travel to many places these last few years, and I'm always inspired to see how your movement is expanding. Problems there are, for certain, but the spiritual potency of your movement, Lord Caitanya's movement, continues to grow. Devotees are maturing and many great souls are appearing and coming forward. The universal realizations that come from genuine, sincere practice of *bhakti* are clearly visible in the lives of devotees from all different cultural backgrounds. Lord Caitanya's movement is not something material or sectarian, but is truly awaking souls to their original consciousness. Thank you for allowing me to see this first hand.

As I age, I appreciate more and more the sacrifice you made and the deep compassion you have. Only a truly loving person with unflinching faith in Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master could even attempt the things you did and could be empowered as you are.

Again, I want to thank you for giving me a place in the *saṅkīrtana* movement, in spite of my many disqualifications. Again, I'm praying to be an instrument of your compassion and to develop a drop of it within myself. Please let your words enter my heart and transform my desires.

Praying to become and remain your humble servant eternally,

Baḍa Haridās Dāsa

Dearest Gurudeva Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

Upon seeing you first in Montreal, Canada, in the summer of 1968, even from afar, your merciful glance gave me a most valuable gift – the *matih* – or inclination to turn to Lord Kṛṣṇa. This gift continues to hold fast in my heart and mind each day, as we journey on this most sacred devotional path together.

The past year Śrīla Prabhupāda, has once again been filled with many loving exchanges, boundless successes and inspiring ideas in service with the Vedic Care Team – only by your mercy, with a few important challenges. The challenges in India this year were only overcome by the loving selfless service and care of those near and dear to you. My heart overflows with loving gratitude.

As you are keenly aware Śrīla Prabhupāda, your global Krishna consciousness movement has been growing in leaps and bounds and the Society is now becoming more able to facilitate the ever increasing demands of all our communities.

My only goal now is to come to you and stay with you in the Kingdom of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Your loving daughter/disciple in vānaprastha,

Damayantī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

I prostate myself to your lotus feet, my eternal spiritual father, my constant shelter, my guide, my intelligence, and the source of all my good fortune. When you were physically present on this earth, I took every available opportunity to be near you and to hear from you, and you kindly accepted me as your disciple when I was young and naive. Too soon you left us, and our world turned upside-down, and sometimes I would wonder if you still remembered me. You proceeded to put my doubts to rest by personally appearing in my dreams from time to time and showering me with your mercy and kindness. You are celebrated as the Founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON, the one and only person who could successfully introduce Krishna consciousness to the West, and you are worshipped by hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world. And yet... you also care about each and every one of us, and you prove this by answering our prayers, and even sometimes entering into our dreams and talking with us face to face in a totally relaxed and informal mood. As you have taught us, Kṛṣṇa Himself is like this. Although He is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, worshipped by all the sages and demigods, still He likes to associate with his loving devotees in Vṛndāvana in an intimate way, without formalities. You are so merciful, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that as an intimate associate of Kṛṣṇa and on His behalf, you sometimes give us your personal association in this way, to keep us under your protection and to bind us with your love.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, may I always remember you in this mood in which you have shown yourself to me, and have blessed me and encouraged me as your fledgling disciple. Thus may I always keep you closely in my heart and try to become deserving of your mercy. I have a long way to go to become fit to represent you, but I am depending on your unlimited compassion, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that you will never reject me. Please engage me in some service that will please you and put a beaming smile on your face. This is all that I wish for.

Your fortunate aspiring daughter,

Jagannātheśvarī Devī Dāsī

Garuḍa Vāhana Dāsa

Thank you Prabhupāda for giving me your mercy.

I am your servant,

Garuḍa Vāhana Dāsa

Jitendriya Dāsa

Todas las glorias a Śrīla Prabhupāda, ofrezco mis más humildes reverencias a mi eterno jagat guru.

Subuddhi Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisance at your divine lotus feet and allow me to remain there forever and serve you as long as this body is in this world.

This is the opportunity to express my heart felt gratitude, love and compassion. As the scripture says, according to our karma we are wandering throughout this universe. Out of many wandering souls only some are fortunate enough to have the opportunity to find an authentic spiritual master.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, with your mercy, I realize how fortunate I was to have just a few moments of your direct association. You gave me my real identity when you uttered my name with your lotus mouth. I met you twice in the Toronto temple and on both occasions you gave me very valuable instructions. You said “Just keep serving”. I remember these words always. They give me spiritual strength to carry on my service to you and their Lordships. This is the most valuable gift I got from you. I feel your personal presence here in this temple. Meeting a guru is not an ordinary occurrence and never accidental. Life’s journey leads to the junction where Kṛṣṇa arranges someone to hold your hand and direct you to your real home.

My inner self was searching, and you sent one *bhakta* who presented me with a *Kṛṣṇa Book*. It was as though Rādhā Gopināth sent a messenger, inviting me to His home at the Gerrard Street

temple. That was both the beginning and the end of my search. Śrīla Prabhupāda, this is all your inexhaustible mercy on all living souls that you showed us the ladder and you put us on the first step by giving us this amazing and valuable gift of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa and chanting the holy name. With these two drops of spiritual strength and with your guidance, we will climb each step.

Dear Guru Mahārāja, you showed us how to be compassionate and caring to whoever comes to your door at 243 Avenue Road. They are also searching and by just having your *darśana* and seeing Rādhā Gopinātha, they become instantly connected to their Lordships.

My only request, Śrīla Prabhupāda is that wherever you send me in my next life, allow me to serve you in any capacity.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for your unconditional kindness and for making my life worth living.

Your servant,

Subuddhi Devī Dāsī

Cakrī Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

By regularly hearing from you I am realizing how great you are. The Lord came as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to give what no incarnation had given for a very long time; the sublime mellows of pure love of God. You are the deliverer of that divine message to the whole world. You fulfilled the Lord's prophecy that His name would be heard in every town and village. Kṛṣṇa sent you and empowered you to fulfil His mission. You are not an ordinary person. There is no one like you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Your appearance in this world is very rare. You have all the qualities to deliver Kṛṣṇa in full to us. You presented Krishna consciousness in such a way that people all over the world could understand it and surrender to Kṛṣṇa. You had complete knowledge of all the scriptures, and you were able to quote almost any verse you needed. You can remember all the important verses in our philosophy. This is a great feat at such an advanced age. We knew that you knew Sanskrit, but how could you remember so many verses? You must have practiced and studied a long time in preparation. Also, the examples that you used to

illustrate our philosophy are very powerful. By hearing them people could understand Krishna consciousness and become convinced. You had a divine intellect which enabled you to preach Krishna consciousness to anyone. You were fully empowered to defeat the sins of Kali-yuga. And, your mission has been a great success.

You taught us one simple truth; to love Kṛṣṇa is the central point in Krishna consciousness and the goal of life. You gave us real life and dispelled our impersonalism, voidism, and atheism. You taught us how to attain the highest happiness in life. Thus you have given us the greatest gift.

I am humbled to have had the opportunity to have your association and be your disciple. I am trying to hold on to your lotus feet. I pray to remain under your shelter and assist you in your divine mission.

Begging to remain your servant,

Cakrī Dāsa
Dallas, Tx.

Drumila Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances

While chanting *japa* in the park today, I thought about the movie, *Hare Kṛṣṇa, the Mantra, the Movement, and the Swami Who Started it All*, which is coming out, glorifying your life and achievements. I got a little choked up, thinking of how great you actually are. I pray to Kṛṣṇa that the whole world will know of your glorious contributions to mankind and your selfless sacrifices on our behalf. I hope this movie will break all box office records, for the best independent film ever produced. Then the whole world will be more attracted to want to take part in this great *saṅkīrtana* movement which you have spearheaded.

On a very personal note, I have gone through some pretty dark times recently, where I was bewildered, confused and had practically lost all hope of ever coming out of that fog. But as usual, I prayed to you, and somehow, by your mercy I am still functional to a degree, and hopeful in spite of my circumstances. You are my pillar, and my strength, and without you I am nothing. I owe my whole life to you,

and I hope that I can please you, more and more, and by so doing, hopefully one day attain love of Kṛṣṇa.

Thank you for tolerating me so much, and for not kicking me away. I beg to remain always connected to you through book distribution and preaching.

Your aspiring disciple,

Drumila Dāsa

Gaura Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnī itī nāmīne*

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

In your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* 18.66, you have translated Lord Kṛṣṇa's reassuring words *mā śucaḥ* — "do not worry." We have nothing to fear, if we give up all other conceptions and surrender to Kṛṣṇa's will. Thy will be done, instead of my will be done. You exemplify this quality of fearlessness and your name is appropriately, Abhaya Charan, one who is fearless, situated at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, carrying out His will.

You heard courageous words from your gurudeva who heard it from his gurudeva all the way back to Śrī Gaurasundara whose original command is :

"Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as they are given in the Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land." (Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 7.128)

You have fulfilled Mahāprabhu's desire like no other personality before you. You get the credit. Your disciple Bhavabhūti Dāsa recalls from 1976: "The day after Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in Nellore, we went on a morning walk. I mentioned to Prabhupāda that the local Gauḍīya Maṭha in Madras had said that if Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted to preach Krishna consciousness in the West, why did He

not go there Himself and preach? When Śrīla Prabhupāda heard this, he stopped abruptly and put his cane down and said, “Because Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted to give me the credit.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are always there to show the example of gratitude, and encourage us with your words. When you were in Mexico you said, “Lord Caitanya is God and He can spread this movement all around the world all by Himself. But I am not God. I am totally dependent on you for the help you have given me.”

Now we, as your disciples, are faced with this same task, to mature and take up the order of Caitanya Mahāprabhu that you have handed to us, and by His command, becoming guru and save the land. This is a very grave responsibility you have bestowed upon us. I did not fully know what I was signing up for when I first entered your ISKCON temple in Winnipeg in 1975, and it still has not fully sunk in. I am praying to you for the determination and intelligence to come up to the standard that you expected of all of your disciples

Several of my godbrothers and godsisters have taken up this essential service of becoming spiritual master, continuing on our Brahma Madhva Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*, as *śikṣā* gurus, and some as *dīkṣā* gurus. In order to accomplish this service, you have explained that the *ācārya* is never to be disregarded, and we are to never entertain the idea that the *ācārya* is ever our equal.

As Lord Kṛṣṇa explained to Uddhava, “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.”

You demonstrated to us that the spiritual master is like a parent. Without the attentive service of his parents, a child cannot grow to manhood; similarly, without the care of the spiritual master one cannot rise to the plane of transcendental service. As a loving spiritual parent, you travelled the world fourteen times in just twelve years, at an advanced age, and you would always ask about how your disciples were doing, and if anyone was not present, you would ask where they were. You even sent the entire temple in Switzerland to visit one godsister that was ill.

In this spirit, an internet group on Facebook entitled “Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Disciples, My Godbrothers & Godsisters” has been created as a reunion *saṅga* and international *iṣṭaghoṣṭhī* which currently has located over 800 of your disciples worldwide, and where they can give mutual support in our Krishna consciousness

to one another during these last years of our lives. You initiated approximately 4,780 disciples, and now over 350 have departed. Please bless us that others can become inspired to find and serve the rest of your disciples, in the same way that you would ask about our well-being. Please help us to become as connected to one another as we were when we all slept on the floors of your temples, maintained your Deities, studied and distributed your books and chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra with great joy. When you first left North America for India, you said that if we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, then we are all tightly packed up together

Please give me the seriousness to remove all the *anarthas* from my heart that are preventing me to move forward to develop Kṛṣṇa *prema*. Please bridge the gap, and inspire renewed and communication and unity between your GBC and all of your rank and file disciples and grand-disciples so that we may work together to remove all traumatizing and unwanted elements from your Māyāpur Project so that your grand vision of the TOVP can open by 2022. Please empower all of us to cooperate with your CPO to protect all of your children and students.

Please keep me in the association of Kṛṣṇa's devotees, and engage me eternally in the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa's servants and Lord Caitanya's servants, no matter where this fallen soul travels to within the fourteen worlds. Thank you very much Śrīla Prabhupāda for the privilege of serving you in your mission to save the world. You said the only principle higher than saving others is to save one's self.

Your eternal servant,

Gaura Dāsa

Rāmānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

The first time I had the opportunity to witness Your Divine Grace was in New Dvārakā, July 1974. I was 16 years old and had run away from home only a few weeks earlier having decided to dedicate my life to the Krishna consciousness movement. You had briefly stopped in Los Angeles for a day before continuing to the San Francisco Rathayātrā. As quite a young person without much experience, my

anticipation was that I would get a chance to see a real celebrity; a famous and powerful person: the leader of a worldwide spiritual society, the author of *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, *Kṛṣṇa*, *the Supreme Personality of Godhead*, *Bhagavad-gītā*; books that had literally changed my life. To my amazement, the experience was much greater than I had imaged. The devotees were swept away with enthusiasm. Everyone was bursting with excitement and anticipation to see you. I had never experienced anything that could compare to what I was fortunate enough to witness. Hundreds of devotees were assembled in front of the temple. The *kīrtana* was already tumultuous and as your car pulled up to the temple entrance the atmosphere erupted in a crescendo of shared joy. When I first caught sight of Your Divine Grace I saw your beaming smile through the window of the car as it approached. It was a smile that did not have a hint of vanity, rather genuine joy and unbounded love for all present. As you emerged from the car, the joy of the crowd was like the heavens opening up, busting with happiness. Upon emerging, you folded your hands and walked gracefully amid the crowd of devotees like a swan seemingly walking on clouds. Your head was held high, and you seemed to be observing and acknowledging everyone present. Your smile was genuine and caring, not at all pretentious. In that smile was a personality that was fully knowledgeable but without pride – like a parent for his children, conscientious and fully capable of satisfying the needs of his children. How it was possible simply by a smile was truly amazing. It was as if time had stopped. Nothing was more important than this moment. It was the culmination of my life. This is my feeble attempt to describe my imprecisions of seeing you for the first time. By a moment's association with Your Divine Grace I felt inspired to assist in your mission in whatever way I could. This is your potency, and I am ever indebted to you, happy to have a place eternally in that crowd of ecstatic devotees.

Your humble servant,

Rāmānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to you on your divine appearance day.

Each year it becomes harder for me to know what to say to you. I feel at once so grateful to have been given the shelter of your books – which I read every day, Kṛṣṇa’s holy name – I chant a shadow of it, association of your faithful devotees – some of whom are my dearest friends, *prasāda* – Kṛṣṇa’s mercy in its most accessible form, some service engagement – helping keep track of others’ surrender to helping build your TOVP.

And yet I feel so far from true surrender at your lotus feet.

Please let me increase my attachment for serving the devotees who love you and decrease my tendency to try to be comfortable in this temporary material world.

Several more memoirs have come out this year, and each one serves to bring us closer to you. Each devotee is so unique, and each has his or her special flavor of appreciating and serving you.

I hope to always be among such beautiful Vaiṣṇava ‘flowers’ in the aromatic garden that surrounds you. You planted the seed of *bhakti* in thousands of hearts, and continue to do so through your books, recorded lectures, disciples, grand-disciples and other followers around the world.

In so many ways you are to be glorified.

I hope I can do my part too.

Your very insignificant daughter,

Vegavatī Devī Dāsī

The First Time I Heard Śrīla Prabhupāda

The first time I saw you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, was in Mumbai at the temple on Juhu Beach. I had recently arrived in India after a long journey by land. I had left Madrid, Spain, at the beginning of 1977, from there I went to Greece and from there – the best I could – I made my way to India to meet you. When I arrived at Juhu Beach, ISKCON Mumbai, I felt very happy. The temple atmosphere was very inspiring, there were many programs: life membership, large *pandals* with a multitude of people chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, home programs, and there was always the opportunity for the devotees to participate in any of them.

One day after *maṅgala āraṭi*, it was announced that you were coming from London. The temple commander asked for volunteers to clean and organize your quarters located behind the temple. I joyfully volunteered along with other devotees to clean and organize your apartment impeccably before your long-awaited arrival from London.

Anxiously waiting on the day of your arrival, the devotees engaged in blissful *kīrtanas*. When you arrived, we welcomed you gloriously and instead of going to your quarters, you headed toward the building which was in construction accompanied by Bhavānanda Mahārāja, Girirāj Brahmācārī and my humble self. Today, that building encompasses the temple and the guesthouse. When you reached the ground floor of the building and wanted to go up, you gravely asked Girirāj Dāsa, “Why is the elevator not working?” Those were the very first words I heard you say, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I remember you were walking with your cane and appeared very grave showing us that you were not pleased with the slow pace of progress with the temple construction. Later I realized that you were possibly exhibiting this solemn and serious spirit in order to inspire us to push your important project forward of completing the Juhu Beach Temple. You then requested to have a chair brought for you to sit and have your disciples carry you up to your office on the eighth floor.

There, you found a group of men working all covered with sand, wet, and dirty clay. In spite of the squalor, you expressed your desire to remain there. No one suspected that you would stay, so

we quickly improvised and frantically began to prepare for *guru-pūjā*. All the devotees were running up and down the stairs getting all kinds of paraphernalia, flowers, incense, ghee lamps, *prasāda*, etc. Simultaneously with your *guru-pūjā* and *kīrtana*, your devotees continued to clean up the area as everything went on. After the *guru-pūjā*, you distributed *prasāda* to all those present, especially to the *gurukuli* children. By your potency, and the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, in less than an hour everything was immaculate, decorated with lamps, curtains, desk, etc.

After all the devotees had left, I stayed hanging around, I simply did not want to miss a single detail of anything you did or said. Bhavānanda Mahārāja noticed that I wasn't going away, so he asked me to stay and guard your door so no one would go in to see you without consulting him. It was a great relief to be able to stay around and witness everything that you would do or say. I was in ecstasy and curious to see what you would do next.

After some time you retired to your quarters to rest. The bathroom facilities were not yet completed, so you would urinate into a receptacle, and Bhavānanda Mahārāja would give it to me to dispose. The first time that he gave it to me I didn't know what to do, so as I briskly came down the stairs to the yard I had an epiphany, realizing that everything related to a pure devotee or the spiritual master is mercy or *prasāda*. So I sprinkled your urine on the plants to benedict them and then sprayed some on my own head. I wasn't sure if I had done something wrong, so a few days later I told Bhavānanda Mahārāja about it, who politely said it was not necessary to do that.

In the evening, after taking *prasāda* and resting, I rushed back to my post guarding your front door for fear of losing the service. When I got there you were pacing back and forth with Bhavānanda Mahārāja engaged in a combination of *japa* and conversation. Later that same evening you sat at your desk to translate the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. I kept watching you intently from the door, then you called Bhavānanda Mahārāja and told him that it was not alright for me to keep staring at you. So I moved to the apartment next door fully satisfied and thinking, "I cannot ask for any other boon, all my desires have been fulfilled in this world simply by seeing and hearing you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!"

Your good disciple, Yaśomatīnandana Dāsa Prabhu had requested me to come and help him with the opening of the new temple at Amedhabad in Gujarat. I left Mumbai with him and his

wife, Rādhā Kuṇḍa Devī Dāsī. On the day of the temple opening the Deities of Gaura Nitāi were installed. It was a very auspicious ceremony, and I received my Brahmin, second initiation from you.

One morning after *maṅgala āraṭi*, Yaśomatīnandana Prabhu announced that you were very sick in Vṛndāvana. He said that any devotee who wished to see you can go. Again, Kṛṣṇa provided a second opportunity to be with you, this time in Vṛndāvana!

After arriving in Vṛndāvana, one morning after *prasāda*, your personal servant Upendra Prabhu requested a volunteer to clean your house. Surprisingly nobody raised their hand, only me. Upendra Prabhu instructed me how to clean the armoire, dust the books, and other things. Upon finishing my service for you, Upendra was satisfied with my performance and asked me to return in the afternoon to guard your back door leading to the patio and kitchen.

I guarded your back door for several days, there I met your sister, Pisimā, who always carried Gaṅgā-jala. She had a container in her hand and would address the passersby in Hindi or Bengali since she did not master the English language and say, “Let’s see, stick out your hand” and would put a few drops... She looked so much like you, that I had the impression of seeing you through her.

Upendra would send me to fetch water from a well for your bath. You would step into a large metal tub, and I watched how he would bath you with such tender love and care. He was so intimately connected to you on your final days... Other services that I was given was to seek out devotees to come and chant continuously in your room per your request. Bhavānanda Mahārāja, who was also there in your final days in Vṛndāvana, would ask you, “What do you want Śrīla Prabhupāda, *kīrtana* or *japa*?” and you would reply, “both”. Many devotees came to chant for you, among them was Haṁsādūta Dāsa whom you requested often since you liked the way he chanted. I recall that once he was chanting the *Brahma-saṁhitā* prayers and it seemed like you dozed off, but when he reached chapter 5, 40th verse:

*yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṅḍa-koṭi-
koṭiṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi vibhūti-bhinnam
tad brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtanā
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

He forgot the word *koṭiṣv* then you suddenly shouted out, “*koṭiṣv!*” demonstrating that although you appeared to be asleep, you were fully conscious and completely absorbed in the *bhajana*. I will never

forget that. It has left an indelible impression upon me.

The first days when I was at your house in Vṛndāvana, you continued with the translation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sitting at your desk. Later you were unable to remain sitting, and you continued the translations from your bed. You would speak at intervals while a devotee held the microphone. Sometimes while lying down on your bed you listened to *bhajan*s from the devotees and received massages from them. Once, there were two devotees who were massaging your feet, I was very desirous of someday receiving the great mercy of touching your lotus feet, all of a sudden one of the devotees got up and left. Of the devotees who were present, they all gestured to come forward and take over the service, but by the will of providence, I got there first! The devotees looked at me smilingly as though to say, approvingly: “You got the mercy prabhu”.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for your causeless mercy upon this useless soul. I am eternally indebted to you and pray that I may remain always in your service birth after birth.

Your humble servant,

Karuṇāmaya Dāsa

Vaibhava Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Your international movement for Krishna consciousness is expanding more and more, from the willpower of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Now, according to the foresight of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the holy name is resounding in almost every town and village, deep in the most remote geographic corners of the world. Although some try to deviate the spirit of such a duty, I am confident that Śrī Kṛṣṇa will choose his devotee who will take care to continue on the right path. Everyone who has been initiated by you has the responsibility to transmit your message to the next generation, even if this means that he must undertake an intense endeavour.

It may be that pure Krishna consciousness will be rare, but it must be somewhere, over the earth, somebody who knows how to cultivate it. The result will depend on Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but somebody will have to do as you did, Śrīla Prabhupāda. *Saṅkīrtana* and *varṇāśrama* rules must be coherent each other, our *harināmas* must still become

coherent with the regulations of our *Bhakti-rasāmr̥ta-sindhu*, our agriculture must employ dharma, the ox, and our *gurukulas* must know that in every family the duty of the father cannot be substituted by the mothers. Somebody must take care to transmit this to the world. We must be coherent with you, learning from you how to sing in a *bhajana*, how to cook, how to approach people. A pure devotee is not only an Indian, so you taught us the difference which exists between *prākṛta-sahajiyās* and Vaiṣṇavas in the production of paintings, or by dressing our Deities. Every time we follow your instructions, Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrī Kṛṣṇa lets us feel a good inner confirmation. Your instructions are universal, as Śrī Kṛṣṇa is everything for us. Equality is not among genders: real equality consists in the duty, for every human being, to follow your instruction, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your humble servant,

Vaibhava Dāsa

Jayagurudeva Dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnī itī nāmīne*

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

As a devotee, immersed to the waist in the holy River Ganges worships the Ganges by filling both palms with its holy water and offering it back to the Ganges, like a devotee of the sun god offers a ghee lamp to the Sun, the origin of all light and heat, I humbly offer you, my only source of transcendental knowledge, your own, timeless, transcendental words. I have been listening to this specific lecture over and over again this year. Although spoken 44 years ago, your words are, for your remaining sons and daughters, as relevant as ever. And we can hear them on CD or online. As if you were sitting in front of us...

Thank you for keeping us your sons and daughters

spiritually alive.

Your insignificant servant

Jayagurudeva Dāsa Adhikārī

From a Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā Lecture, delivered by Śrīla Prabhupāda
Recorded in London, August 22, 1973

<http://www.prabhupadaconnect.com/Lecture94.html>

“My dear sons and daughters, I am so much obliged to you that you have become so enthusiastic for offering Vyāsa-pūjā...

...Several times we have explained why this function is called Vyāsa-pūjā. I have already explained in the morning, this offering worshipping, one may think that this man is teaching his disciples man-worshipping, anthropomorphism. But it is not man-worshipping. One should not misunderstand. Vyāsadeva is the original spiritual master. Original spiritual master is Kṛṣṇa...

...To advance in Krishna consciousness we require two kinds of help – one from Kṛṣṇa and another from the spiritual master. It is stated in the Caitanya-caritamṛta... You’ll be glad now that Caitanya-caritamṛta is now published. (devotees: Jaya! Haribol!) Yes. (This) It is the... Our Paṇḍitjī, Pradyumna, he has presented. Actually, he has worked for it, although I have translated. But I am very much indebted to him that he very carefully edits and makes the thing very perfect. So, now we have got translation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Bhagavad-gītā, and Sanskrit portion... Because mostly there is Sanskrit portion, so, so my beloved disciple, Pradyumna, I call him Paṇḍita Mahāśaya, because he is actually doing the paṇḍita’s work. So he edits and he works very hard. And... Not only that, his wife also helps in this connection...

...So everyone has got duty in Krishna consciousness, and this duty is taught by Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master. Guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja [Cc. Madhya 19.151]. Ei rūpe brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva...

... Anyone who is coming to Krishna consciousness, he’s not ordinary living being. Anyone who is connected with our movement, he’s not ordinary living being. Actually, he’s liberated soul. And I am very much hopeful that my disciples who are now participating today, even if I die, my movement will not stop, I am very much hopeful. Yes. All these nice boys

and girls who have taken so seriously...

...So this movement will go on. Nobody can stop. So this Vyāsa-pūjā ceremony means to offer our thanks to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, because He is the original guru. As we receive this message through paramparā system from Kṛṣṇa to Brahmā, Brahmā to Nārada, Nārada to Vyāsadeva, Vyāsadeva to Madhvācārya, in this way, Mādhavendra Purī, then Īśvara Purī, then Caitanya Mahāprabhu, then Six Gosvāmīs, then others, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī, Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Then we have taken. So this, as we come to this Krishna consciousness understanding through this long paramparā, similarly, in the Vyāsa-pūjā ceremony, whatever respect, honor, and presentation you give, that goes to Kṛṣṇa through that paramparā system, from down. As it is received through the paramparā system, so similarly, your offerings also goes through this paramparā system to the Supreme...

...All our books, they are not mental speculation. Whatever I have learned from my Guru Mahārāja, I am presenting. That's all. It is not mental speculation – this philosophy, that philosophy. We kick out all these things. Unless we get the knowledge from the authorized source, we don't accept. Because how we can accept?... a so-called philosopher, scientist's knowledge is always imperfect. The perfect knowledge can be received through this paramparā system. From Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa to Brahmā, Brahmā to Nārada, Nārada to Vyāsa, Vyāsa to Madhvācārya. In this way, from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Six Gosvāmīs, then our Guru Mahārāja, in this way. And our business is just to present whatever we have heard. This is very important point. And because we do not speculate mentally, just like so many swamīs comes from India. They make their own presentation by speculation. So whatever little success I have got, it is due to this process, that I do not present anything which is created by me. That is the secret of success...

...From a bona fide spiritual master you receive knowledge, because he will present as he has received from his spiritual master. He'll not adulterate or manufacture something. That is the bona fide spiritual master. And that is very easy. To become spiritual master is not very difficult thing. You'll have to become spiritual master. You, all my disciples, everyone should become spiritual master. It is not difficult. It is difficult when you manufacture something. But if you simply present whatever you have heard from your spiritual master, it is very easy. If you want to become over-intelligent, to present something, to interpret something, whatever over you have heard from spiritual master you can make some further addition, alteration, then

you'll spoil whole thing. Then you'll spoil whole thing. Don't make addition or alteration. Simply present as it is. Therefore, we have begun Bhagavad-gītā As It Is. Don't try to become over spiritual master. Then you'll spoil. Remain always a servant of your spiritual master and present the thing as you have heard. You'll be spiritual master. This is secret. You should know it. Don't try to become over-intelligent. That will spoil...

... So I hope that all of you, men, women, boys and girls, become spiritual master, and follow this principle. Spiritual master, simply, sincerely, follow the principles and speak to the general public. Then Kṛṣṇa immediately becomes your favorite. Kṛṣṇa does not become your favorite; you become Kṛṣṇa's favorite. Kṛṣṇa says in the Bhagavad-gītā [18.69], na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu kaścin me priya-kṛttamaḥ: "One who is doing this humble service of preaching work, Krishna consciousness, nobody is dearer than him to Me." So if you want to become recognized by Kṛṣṇa very quickly, you take up this process of becoming spiritual master, present the Bhagavad-gītā as it is. Your life is perfect.

Thank you very much."

Jaya Gaurī Devī Dāsī

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Daṇḍavat praṇāms. All glories to your divine lotus feet!

Another year has passed with many opportunities to serve Lord Caitanya's mission.

Life becomes very colorful and purposeful when we have the knowledge that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord and that He is our best friend and well-wisher. My dear Gurudeva, the wealth of the association of your devotees is like a soothing balm. To be in an assembly and hear Śrī Śrī Rādhe Śyāma and Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi being glorified through *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, is an oasis of spiritual bliss. You envisioned and established temples so we have easy access to the spiritual realm. Our existence on Earth has purpose because you showed us mercy.

As we meet newcomers, and they appreciate the sweetness of your legacy in the form of disciples, grand-disciples and on and on, Lord Caitanya is surely pleased. Chanting the holy names of Hare, Kṛṣṇa, and Rāma gives us a simple and effective process to wash away conditioning from millions of lifetimes. Working to add more tolerance, in an intolerant world, more patience in our interactions, and more genuine love for all creatures, we reveal to the world your

legacy of populating the world with Vaiṣṇavas. We are your flags and what a grand responsibility this is!

I pray to you now: Let my yoga students find inspiration to search deeper, to look for self-realization as a result of attending the classes. Let me be an instrument of your mercy!

You are my daily inspiration and please, please, let me be a particle of dust at your lotus feet!

I also pray that my family finds inspiration in your teachings, and enthusiastically shares it with others. May I develop the vision of a self-realized yogī, seeing all creatures with equal vision and learn to love Kṛṣṇa with all my heart!

*In deep gratitude,
Your eternal servant,*

Jaya Gaurī Devī Dāsī

Yogīndra Dāsa

*Dhāma-vāsī
Tīrthī-kurvanti tīrthāni*

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.13.10, Yudhiṣṭhira greets Vidura, “My lord, devotees like your good self are verily holy places personified. Because you carry the Personality of Godhead within your heart, you turn all places into places of pilgrimage.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda made pilgrimage sites all around the world by establishing ISKCON centers with Deities where devotional service became the standard for his disciples and followers. Especially in Māyāpur, ISKCON devotees become *dhāma-vāsīs*, residents of the holy *dhāma*. I recall once after Gaura-pūrṇimā, Jananivāsa prabhu gave the *Bhāgavatam* class to the Māyāpur devotees. He explained that people become purified of all karmic reactions by visiting Māyāpur during Gaura-pūrṇimā, but the residents of the *dhāma* purify the *dhāma* by their devotional service. We are assisting Śrīla Prabhupāda who cleanses the *dhāma* of any residue of sinful reactions left by materialistic visitors, Jananivāsa explained. *Dhāma-vāsīs* remain at the *dhāma*, which is their refuge.

By Śrīla Prabhupāda’s grace, I was initiated as *brāhmaṇa* on Gaura-pūrṇimā in Māyāpur in 1977, as I explained in a previous tribute. Although Sweden was my *prabhu datta deśa*, “the place the Lord has

given me for my residence.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Antya-līlā 4.144), I cherish the identification with Māyāpur that my *dvija* initiation there entails. Although *dhāma-vāsīs* stick to residence in Māyāpur, Śrīla Prabhupāda extended the *dhāma* by spreading Krishna consciousness to all the world’s corners including Stockholm, the northern-most city that Śrīla Prabhupāda visited during his manifested pastimes. As long as I keep Śrīla Prabhupāda’s service foremost in my life, I remain a Māyāpur *dhāma-vāsī* even at this remote ISKCON outpost.

When I left Māyāpur in ’77 after Gaura-pūrṇimā, I stayed at ISKCON’s Rādhā Govinda Mandir in Calcutta for one night on my way to Vṛndāvana. The conditions were austere at the Albert Road temple, and I had a mild case of dysentery. One hardship was that we had to use the park across the street as the toilet. Nonetheless, when we heard that Śrīla Prabhupāda requested that we make a vigil for the recovery of his health, we chanted in the temple room all night in front of his *vyāsāsana*. (Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *vyāsāsana* was located in ’77 where the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* speaker sits today at ISKCON Albert Road, if I recall correctly.) In the morning, I took a little rest on the veranda outside Śrīla Prabhupāda’s room together with other *brahmacārīs* who had been up all night. At that time, Śatadhanya Swami arrived from Māyāpur and woke us up in an authoritarian tone: “Wake up. The festival is over!” The purport was “Get to work, Mr. Brāhmaṇa, now that you are initiated, you have a lifetime of obligations to fulfill in your *prabhu-datta deśa!*” The good news was that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s service equipped us with Kṛṣṇa conscious buoyancy that enabled his disciples to remain jolly under all conditions, provided we kept his service our priority: “*Therefore devotees in the line of Krishna consciousness must go to different parts of the world and preach, as ordered by the spiritual master. That will satisfy Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.*” (*ibid.*, purport)

I offer my humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda (and also my dear godbrother, Śatadhanya prabhu).

May I always remember Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instructions and recite them without difficulty.

Yogīndra Dāsa

To my wonderful spiritual master who saved my life, my tribute to a rare pure devotee, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Praising the unlimited pure qualities of a pure devotee

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are an ocean of mercy and my connection to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I bow down to your lotus feet eternally, and I ask for your forgiveness as I am such an unqualified lowly disciple of your pure wonderful self.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, your causeless mercy is all I'm made of and only my reason to exist. I have no words appropriate to praise you and thank you, but again I will try.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, in this year, there are wars and rumours of wars as we face so many dangers, living in a very sinful, dangerous material world. As we see daily the problems / dangers as they increase in this troubled place, you have warned us to get prepared – in our Krishna consciousness – spiritually and materially.

By your causeless mercy, you gave me (us) the opportunity to move into your temples and get shelter from a dark future, the coming madness of the collapse of civilization.

In the 60s and 70s in ISKCON, we moved into your temples in America. This I did with conviction with all your instruction to go out on *harināmas* and book distribution. I did it, with all my heart and soul, even though it ruined my relationship with my family. I thus realized that Your Divine Grace is my real family...the family of Kṛṣṇa *bhaktas*.

I did that, and I thank you a trillion times over for that rare opportunity of Kṛṣṇa conscious service. You warned us time and time again, "Don't trust materialists. People are suffering".

All hell seems to be breaking loose now, as the past seeds of bad karma are blossoming in America and all over the world. It is you who gave me the *mahā-mantra*...chanting for salvation from māyā's illusions. It's only you who gave a real option – the absolute truth – to a fallen conditioned soul, and you gave me, a mere *śūdra*, a chance to get a 'glimpse into the spiritual world.'

That place I left foolishly to enjoy without Lord Kṛṣṇa. The great fool I am. Everything you said in your lectures and books, morning

walks and room conversations is truth and coming true...without Kṛṣṇa, life is meaningless and a hard struggle for existence among godless, atheist, immoral people in a godless cat and dog civilization you warned us will not survive.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, only by your causeless mercy to a fool like me was I ever given any chance or hope of seeing reality. That reality is Krishna consciousness – love of God and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa with the intention of returning to our eternal home with Lord Kṛṣṇa once and for all and never to come back here to the material world of birth, death, disease and old age...a “fool’s paradise.” Association with Kṛṣṇa’s devotees is a priceless gift...a matchless gift you bestowed to me and many others and still bestow to fallen souls today.

We are the Passengers on your ship of ISKCON, which since you left us has faced many tropical storms. But we won’t let go of your lotus feet and will continue to try to be of some service for your Mission.

I ask you to please guide your ISKCON ship to safe passage to the spiritual world with all its passengers (in and out of ISKCON). I also ask you to bless and protect all your sincere devotees, especially the Russian devotees, who are dedicated and love you.

Those sincere devotees who take your instructions by the letter and do not hesitate to defend you and your *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*...please bestow your mercy and guidance to all of your sincere followers and let them on your ISKCON boat to go Back Home Back to Godhead.

The years come closer to an end for us – your direct disciples, and I ask you, my spiritual father to bless and protect all your beloved 5,000 disciples who also are close to my heart. They are my spiritual family, a gift from you. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Without them as your representatives, I would not have gotten your mercy. Thank you your grand-disciples and the generations to come in ISKCON and outside ISKCON.

Thank you Your Divine Grace for everything in my life and Krishna consciousness.

Your fallen servant,

Jaya Mādhava Dāsa,
Moscow, Russia, 2017

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I offer my most respectful obeisances unto your glorious golden lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you first came to me in your form of book *bhāgavata*. Simply by the power of your transcendental words I was immediately eager to give up all sinful life and chant the holy names 24 hours. Page after page of reading *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, I declared out loud, “this is the information I have been looking for all my life!”, as I turned the pages. You destroyed in my heart the darkness I was in, with the sword of transcendental knowledge, and all I wanted to do was surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

When I saw your picture in a *BTC*, taken in Denver, I thought that maybe, if I put on a sheet (to imitate the clothing of the devotees in the picture, which I had never seen before), and walked all the way there from Illinois, perhaps you would see me as sincere and take me as your disciple. You so kindly fulfilled my desire without such a mindless austerity. Within a few months I found the location of Kiśora Kiśorī Mandir in Chicago, and on my first and last visit, as I stepped through the door the first time, I felt myself stepping out of the material world, and I’ve never looked back. That is the potency of your amazing *bhakti*.

Unfortunately, due to my own lacking of *adhikārī*, I missed some opportunities to receive your divine *darśana*. But you told us that even one moment’s association with a pure devotee can save one. When I did receive my one moment, although I could barely hear your lecture, hanging by the Māyāpur temple door expecting to have to make a run for the latrines at any moment, barely even able to understand your beautiful accent, three words rang out, clear as a bell, “Simply trust Kṛṣṇa.” and I have taken those words as my life and soul, having heard them from your lotus lips. Again and again those words have saved me, and no matter how weak I may have ever been, I never forgot to trust Kṛṣṇa in all circumstances. Such is the power of a pure devotee and the compassionate mercy you so freely gave to all of us. I humbly pray to your lotus feet to be able to serve you in pure devotional service, life after life, wherever I may be.

You devoted spiritual daughter,

Mādhavī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet.

I live in gratitude each day of what you mean to me and all your divine guidance that I'm blessed with in this lifetime. Your Divine Grace, I can only say thank you and celebrate you as the Guru who is there the moment one thinks of him. You are the guru who lives in his books, the guru who is non-different from his global form of ISKCON that has preached for 50 years nonstop. On the 50-year anniversary of ISKCON, we saw your devotees going to the seventh continent, the Antarctic, so many amazing Rathayātrās. There were amazing offerings to celebrate that milestone of your glorious Hare Kṛṣṇa movement all over this planet by all your devotees.

Kali-yuga is raging like I have never seen. Wars are being ignited all over the planet. There is so much suffering as the karmic rain is pouring down. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the only one who has given this fallen soul a purpose. Because of you, I chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* each day – 16 rounds – and celebrate the association of Rādhā Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma manifesting each time I chant and that is your greatest gift to all of us.

Each day I pray for the liberation of this material world and the cancelation of Kali-yuga. The *mahat-tattva* is just a cloud and you have taught us through your preaching that Lord Kṛṣṇa is *aham sarvasya prabhavaḥ* the source of all material and spiritual worlds.

We celebrate your service, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to Lord Caitanya's mission. I'm so grateful, and my humble prayer is that just as you have blessed me and opened my eyes, I pray for all the conditioned souls in the material world to receive your mercy.

Praying to always be in your service until this mission of divine love flowing from Gaura Nitāi has been completed and all the souls residing in this material world have gotten your mercy and gone Back to Home Back to Godhead.

Your very grateful servant,

Puṇyatama Dāsa

Nidrā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Your Divine Grace and your Vyāsa-pūjā.

Your appearance on this planet is our greatest fortune. Only you have given real life. You are our greatest hope because you impart to us faith because you are the most faithful.

You always think big. Now your followers aspire to think big, following your enlivening pastimes. It is special to hear young followers planning to increase spreading Krishna consciousness. So many creative ideas are presented by them. All glories to your influence upon all ages and all generations of devotees. Certainly because you desire it, these increases will get bigger and bigger – more books, more *prasāda* and holy names, for your pleasure and for spreading your compassion upon the souls.

You are the real inspiration for all that we do. All of us in Denver are offering unlimited obeisances and praise. We want to love you with full Krishna consciousness, by your grace and mercy.

Your aspiring servant,

Nidrā Devī Dāsī

Pauruṣa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

When I was a child I had little thought of death. Whenever the topic surfaced, like most people I rejected the thought as foreign, unrelated to me. As a teenager I adopted the mindset of my elders whenever the repugnant topic was raised, warding it off instantly by touching wood, or rubbing the head of someone nearby, or simply discounting its reality entirely, proclaiming I would live forever. Although death was constantly in the news: a sporting hero or movie star, a consequence from the sixty-four different wars and conflicts raging throughout the world, or even involving friends and relatives; death was never a polite subject to be considered touching social sensibilities where ignorance predominated.

Before I joined ISKCON back in 1975, I had been preconditioned

well, young with little thought of death. Like most others I was abundant with confidence believing that although its reality must be faced in the future, it wasn't an issue for the present. My body was young and strong, full of pride, I imagined I could do anything I wanted, and believed I had control over my own destiny.

By your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, as I progressed in practicing Krishna consciousness, realisations about the transitory nature of life became very real and had a sobering effect upon my nature. I became mindful that death's cold hand could tap me on the shoulder at any time. You taught me about the precious nature of the human form of life, and how the time I had remaining was a treasurable commodity, more valuable than all of the priceless objects I could imagine.

By following your instructions I cared less about death as I aged and more about chanting earnestly, listening attentively with care, offering all the results to please Kṛṣṇa. The material world was fast losing its attractiveness and the yearning to enter the transcendental reality possessed my consciousness. Death's actuality no longer possessed a hold over my awareness and simply became a doorway to where I wanted to be. By your causeless guidance you showed me where that door was and how I could enter.

Now in my sixties with old age standing by my side, constantly making its presence known, death is staring me directly in the face. Death has appeared vividly once again, a constant companion ready to take me at any moment. Disease ravages every part of my body, and each breath I take I know could be my last. Arthritis stings me every day in my knee and back; nerve damage causes a disturbance in my arm; my heart required surgery to keep it going; and cancer has gained a strong foothold for the second time, advancing further every day. My eyes require glasses if the print is fine; a couple of teeth have been reconstructed and they appear longer due to receding gum lines; my hearing is waning and my hair is thinning, turning white and growing in places it's not required. Forgetfulness is a regular event. The signals of death are all around, strong and clear. However, fortune blessed me when a lifetime ago You decided to extend your hand and pull me out of the ocean of nescience into the mighty ship ISKCON.

Even though death is unquestionably assured for me now, more than ever before, blocking my path to sense enjoyment and so-called happiness in this world, I don't care a fig about missing out on the illusion created by the temporary engagement of the senses with the

sense objects. Even the act of eating supplies no pleasure anymore and is really just a chore.

Although you introduced me to the wonderful higher taste of Kṛṣṇa *prasāda*, my GP says I need to cut back on sugar to control pre-diabetes, and ingest less salt to inhibit hardening of the arteries; my cardiologist insists that I have a low fat diet to control my cholesterol levels; my pathologist revealed I have coeliac disease and must avoid gluten at all costs; and my radiologist and oncologist command me to stick to a low fibre diet. Even a little *subji* wrapped in a puri is taboo in case I take gluten and too much fibre. Of course, being a bad patient I ignore them all when it comes to *mahā prasādam* for just a morsel purifies the heart and enlivens the exchange of love between the living entity and Kṛṣṇa.

Material existence in itself, and particular in my situation, is not a life that a gentleman should aspire for. So, today I thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for awakening this undeserving insignificant living entity, with the wonderfully bright nectarian torchlight of transcendental knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa. You freely gave me the power to control my destiny and cope with the most disturbing problems of life..., even death itself. What an amazing gift!

I thank you also for the gloriously, wonderful memories I possess of preaching and training others in the science of Bhakti-yoga. Book distribution has been an extraordinarily fabulous boon in my life that linked me intimately with you, my godbrothers, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Book distribution has sustained me for many decades of devotional service, and now in my moment of dire need it still gives me strength to remain determined and focussed.

By Your Grace, Śrīla Prabhupāda, enjoyment does not have a hold over me anymore, and is something I am repulsed by more than attracted to. I never feel the need to travel, or the need to change my circumstances, feeling satisfied where I am with my beads and Your books. If a mundane thought arises, Kṛṣṇa's name quickly jumps to my lips to defend me, warding off the unwanted visitor. Also, I am never alone, not for a moment, for my ever well-wisher (Your Divine Grace), and my best friend (Kṛṣṇa), constantly stand guard, alert to protect and care for me. Although wealth has always been part of my life, economic development and opulence don't entice me, cultivating knowledge has no appeal, and even the many facets of liberation have lost all fascination. You have broken the chains of

bondage, freeing me from this material world.

I pray that I may become more serious. No more delays, as though time were my friend. No more proposing to God just one last time, as if that will bring happiness. No more planning for the future, as if I had any control anyway. No more requesting more time to finish this or that, thinking that will be the end of desire. All ideas and activities massaging the false ego must be abandoned like Sanātana's touchstone. No more do I wish to manipulate and dominate my field of activity. Instead, its time now to discard everything I thought was important. It must all be given back, it was never mine initially. It's time to break all attachment to the source of pain and suffering. It's time to give back to Kṛṣṇa what is His, regretting deeply how much of His energy I wasted throughout my life. It's time to take hold of your lotus feet Śrīla Prabhupāda for they are my only shelter, while letting go of life's fallible soldiers. It's time now to pray that You will kindly find a place for me in loving devotional service to you and Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you captivated my mind and heart and removed the veil of material illusion. You placed into my hands the powerful force of Krishna consciousness. Mundane scientists believe that on a microcosmic scale the attractive forces between positively and negatively charged particles holds atoms together, while on a macrocosmic scale gravitational forces influence the positioning of astronomical objects, however, this pseudo-intelligent class have no idea that the most powerful force in existence is the attractive force of love between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. Krishna consciousness transcends all the rules of physics, making time and space irrelevant. You are a shining example of this truth. You are the most powerful force in existence for you lived here among us, and yet constantly associated with Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana, and now you are physically absent, but are still present within the heart of each of your disciples who sincerely follow your instructions. What more powerful force is there than Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee, who is so powerful that he easily captures the mind and heart of God Himself?

You are the most dominant force in my life, death pales into insignificance in your presence, for no matter whether I am in contact with you or not, you keep me centred and hold me in place. Please permit me to take this opportunity to thank you personally for the extraordinary life you have bestowed upon me. I am yours Śrīla Prabhupāda, and with the little humility I have at my command

I humbly and submissively offer myself at your feet. Please always engage me as you desire, for by your command only do I have worth.

Your eternally aspiring servant,

Pauruṣa Dāsa

Aṅkotha Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnī itī nāmīne*

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

I stand before you and thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me entrance onto the path of *bhagavad-bhakti*. My debt to you is unrepayable, but I will do my best to render service to you in the most favorable way so that you may be pleased.

This year I have been reflecting on the term ‘Unity in Diversity’. Looking around me, I see how varied the types of personalities who have taken shelter of your lotus feet are. Godbrothers and godsisters who come from different cultural backgrounds, have different characters and personality traits, have abilities and talents of various types – all different – but united in the aim to satisfy your Divine Grace. This year, by your mercy, I have come to realize that because you are serving and pleasing Lord Kṛṣṇa in so many varieties of ways, the diversity of your followers is an asset and an opulence that you can pull upon as you ever expansively render various services to Guru and Gaurāṅga. So rather than being “put off” by others who are not like me I see the actual need for others’ diversity because it helps add flavor and variety to your offerings to the Lord. I pray today, that my appreciation, love, respect, and willingness to serve and cooperate with all of my godbrothers and godsisters becomes ingrained in me as my natural way of thinking and being.

*Wishing to be a part of your every expanding circle of loving service, I beg
to remain, your eternal servant,*

Aṅkotha Dāsa

Śrīla Prabhupāda

I cry
I miss you more
As time goes by
Hope to see you
When I die

Dāsānudās,

Jīva Pāvana Dāsa

Manohāriṇī Devī Dāsī

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnī itī nāmīne*

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Another year has flown by, and I have been given the opportunity over and over to see first-hand what you have taught us about this material world being a temporary place as so many of my family members and friends have departed their bodies.

*anta-kāle ca mām eva smaran muktoṁ kalevaram
yaḥ prayāti sa mad-bhāvaṁ yāti nasty atra saṁśayaḥ*

“And whoever, at the time of death, quits his body, remembering Me alone, at once attains My nature. Of this there is no doubt.” (*Gītā* 8.5)

Gurudeva, thank you for giving us, your disciples...as well as the world...a plethora of knowledge within your wonderful books, unforgettable lectures, and beautiful temples available for us to always remember and worship You and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

All glories to Your Divine Grace on this auspicious Vyāsa-pūjā!!!

Your forever servant,

Manohāriṇī Devī Dāsī

Pañcagaṇḍa Dāsa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you and all of your sincere followers. By your grace we are allowed to render some service to you here in the holy Śrī Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma in your most wonderful temple Śrī Śrī Krishna Balaram Mandir.

Daily, your devotees are distributing your books, giving visitors the opportunity to chant the holy names, to see the beautiful forms of Gaura Nitāi, Kṛṣṇa Balarāma, and Rādhā Śyāmasundara, Lalitā and Viśākhā.

Your Krishna consciousness society has grown, there are thousands – tens of thousands – of visitors who are totally enlivened by seeing the preaching mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. We pray that you bless us with the intelligence and strength to carry on glorifying you who are the most incredible servant of Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi.

We feel most fortunate and blessed. I bow down to your lotus feet.

Your servant,

Pañcagaṇḍa Dāsa

Vaikuṅṭha Mūrti Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you.

My second favorite picture of you is when you handed my son a cookie at the LA Temple in 1976. My favorite picture of you is when you have the huge grin on your face, and the hair is pouring out of your ear.

I love you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your aspiring devotee,

Vaikuṅṭha Mūrti Devī Dāsī

All glories to You, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Everything you told us has come to pass or is happening. This material world is a prison house filled with suffering and confusion.

I am very neophyte in spiritual life. My version of Krishna consciousness is very limited, but you expressed extreme mercy towards me.

As a Prabhupāda disciple, I am supposed to speak as you did, but I am a tiny soul, like a small fish in a great ocean, trying to follow in the footsteps of the *ācāryas*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you preached with a hatchet and warned against mental speculation. You showed how to be strong, clear, and firm in *śāstra* and philosophy. We therefore model ourselves after Your Divine Grace, not by imitation but following.

I worship Śrīla Prabhupāda, who never compromised in preaching because his guru mahārāja never compromised in his preaching, nor should the students of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Actually, a preacher of God consciousness should never make any compromise. He must present *śāstra* as it is.

Please shower your grace upon us so that we can save ourselves and then do the work you left us to do, and give us the courage to follow externally in your divine lotus footsteps.

Thank you for coming to save us and being the Vaiṣṇava who is purifying us.

Your most fallen disciple,

Tattva Darśinī

I would like to mention an article I read in Her Grace Yamunā Devī Dāsī's book, and I would like all devotees to acknowledge this.

Her Grace Yamunā Devī Dāsī spoke on one of her, 'Day in the life stories about how Śrīla Prabhupāda interacted with his students in his early San Francisco Days.'

"I feel so terribly grateful to Śrīla Prabhupāda for the process of *bhakti-yoga* he gave us. And my deepest, deepest prayer this year and in coming years is that

somehow we all together try to preserve the purity of Śrīla Prabhupāda's process, that we do not change it, we do not merge it with something else that is convenient or popular, or is close by and looks good, but that we maintain the purity of what he gave us, all together, each one of us, in whatever community, whatever *saṅga* we have, that we try to purify that, relish it as deeply as Śrīla Prabhupāda, his spiritual master and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura did, that they have handed us this most incredible gift, and that we do not change things."

This is my deep, deep prayer. I beg all of you to assist me in doing that myself.

Thank you all,

Hare Kṛṣṇa

Matsya Avatāra Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my respectful obeisances.
All glories to Your Divine Grace.

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

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

From the first *darśana* you have entered my life in a great way, and highly and deeply inspired me. I have gained countless benefits, and for this I am immensely grateful to You.

Since then, you have occupied all of my dimensions, both anthropological and of divine nature, by harmonizing them.

Your teachings, substantiated by the example of your life have filled my space-time, as well as my aspirations of earth and heaven.

The all-encompassing way of life that I have learned from you gave me the stable foundation on which to base my life, and to recognize you as my beloved master!

The divine knowledge learned from you, harmonized my affections and my ideals of perfection, and gave way to my thoughts and past and present memories. Your lifestyle reinforces in me the desire of purification required for sublimation of desires aroused

by dormant worldly passions into pure love for God, for all creatures and creation.

For years now, I have been feeling like I was crossing a swollen river. While in the distance I see the starting side, the other, the destination side, I feel it joyfully close but do not see it at all.

Despite the much I seem to have learned from you, I also feel that I have much more to learn, practice and realize.

Your teachings are clear, your lived life was exemplary, and are a concrete guarantee of spiritual success for those who follow you. However my realization is still insufficient and my remaining earthly journey progressively presents itself fraught with difficulties, the closer it gets to the end of this segment of embodied life.

In the midst of rapid changes of values and social trends and the recurrence of violence and injustice, the quality of life is very corrupt, people are disoriented and even more prudent people don't always find the solution for continuity to keep proper orientation to achieve the final destination. And you are a beacon that lights the path to the ultimate goal, *parāṁ-gatiḥ*, pure love for God.

The time I have left to live in this incarnation is not only statistically short, but it is also the most difficult and fraught with unpredictable psycho-physical complications and therefore, by reflecting on the spiritual journey that I have undertaken, on the fact that I am still in the middle of the river stream, so that the last step becomes a flight that transcends the horizontality of worldly illusions and the lure of heavenly pleasures, more than ever I need your essential inspiring guidance that will intensify in me the desire of purification for better practicing the nine modes of *bhakti* : *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana*, *kṛṣṇa-smaraṇam*, *pāda sevanaṁ*, *dāsyā*, *vandanam*, *sakhya*, *pūjana*, *ātma-nivedana*.

As a necessity, as well as for love, I beg for your divine compassion on this soul on his journey, who happens to be your grateful and affectionate disciple and servant,

Matsya Avatāra Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaram
patitam mām viṣame bhavāmbudhau
kṛpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja-
sthita-dhūlī-saḍṛṣam vicintaya*

This 5th verse of “Śikṣāṣṭakam” says: *O son of Mahārāja Nanda, Kṛṣṇa, I am your eternal servitor, yet somehow or other I have fallen into this horrible ocean of birth and death. Please pick me up from this ocean of death and place me as one of the atoms at your lotus feet.*

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the bona fide representative of the Lord who has come into this horrible ocean of birth and death to pick us up and place us at Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. It is horrible because we have forgotten our purpose – that we are meant to always remain aware of our eternal loving relationship with the Supreme Lord.

Even though I have not yet achieved constant transcendental consciousness beyond the influence of the modes of material nature, I hold on to and treasure the meaning of your mission like a precious diamond in my heart, or like a small portal to reality that I am slowly expanding. The understanding that my ultimate escape from forgetfulness depends on your grace is in fact the only thing of value I possess. There is no personal effort grand enough to elevate myself without the kind hand you extend to lift me up. Entrance into the spiritual realm is by invitation only – by those who have already been there.

It is totally inconceivable that someone as unqualified as myself could have the good fortune of being in the right time at the right place to actually meet you. This is a great mystery. Yet your mercy doesn’t stop with *vapu*, personal association, because of your purity, your *vāñī*, teaching through sound vibration, can save any fortunate soul who is open to hearing from you.

This is the meaning of “miracle”. Thank you for being our special miracle worker, who continues to offer everything we need to come home to the beautiful lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Banamāli.

Śrīla Prabhupāda kī Jai!!!

Mallikā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

Due to your sacrifices I am saved from a most abominable future of repeated birth and death, rotting in this material world, looking for water in a desert. Thank you for saving me, Śrīla Prabhupāda. May I please always serve you and please you whether here, birth after birth, or in the spiritual world. You are the source of life in my body. Without you, where would I be? Thank you for saving the entire world, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your fallen disciple,

Mallikā Devī Dāsī

Rohiṇī Devī Dāsī

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my humble obeisances unto your lotus feet.

*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, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda came to America in 1965 and showed unprecedented mercy by preaching to us, the occidental fallen souls, fulfilling His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Mahārāja's wishes, and showing us the right path to understand Kṛṣṇa and our eternal relationship with Him.

What Śrīla Prabhupāda did was so big, that only pure and perfect souls like Himself could achieve it. His pure devotion touched so

many hearts, saving us from the sea of ignorance in which we were sunken. There is no way to pay back what he has given us, which is why my husband Ānanda Svarūpa Dāsa and I are really thankful. There are no words to describe his greatness.

I can only say thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for touching our lives; thank you for accepting us as your disciples.

My obeisances unto your lotus feet.

Your eternal servant,

Rohiṇī Devī Dāsī

Uttarā Devī Dāsī

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my respectful obeisances unto your divine lotus feet.

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

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.

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Śrīla Prabhupāda came to America in 1965. After experiencing great difficulties, he founded on his own, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in July 1966. Śrīla Prabhupāda gave the world a marvellous mission. His life was so perfect and his preaching so powerful that he shared Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's message without differentiating between colors or breed and taught everyone Krishna consciousness. He travelled far and wide and gave people the opportunity to get to know Kṛṣṇa's beautiful form and made us understand that we are spirit souls and how to become happy.

*Samsāra dāvānala liḍha loka...*The spiritual master is receiving

benediction from the ocean of mercy. Just as a cloud pours water on a forest fire to extinguish it, so the spiritual master delivers the materially afflicted world by extinguishing the blazing fire of material existence. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master, who is an ocean of auspicious qualities.

Śrīla Prabhupāda once said: “I shall never die, I will live forever in my books”. He is so magnanimous that in spite of his departure on November 14, 1977, he continues saving people like no one has done to this day. His mission will continue growing. It will touch the sky and cover the earth and the rest of the planets. That was his goal, and we must understand and value that by his great achievements. His Divine Grace Abhay Caranāravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is the great soul that walked among us, the Jagad Guru, the universal Guru, that came from Kṛṣṇa *loka*. Śrīla Prabhupāda is like the wish fulfilling tree that can fulfil everyone’s desires, being full of compassion for the conditioned souls. We are in debt to Gurudeva, since He has given us so much and the hope that one day we will go back to Godhead, back to Kṛṣṇa.

So, on this day of his glorious appearance, this Vyāsa-pūjā in which we worship the spiritual master is no ordinary celebration, but the verdict of the scriptures that you shall treat and respect the guru as you would God Himself. Just like the Lord established in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.17.27

*ācāryaṁ mām vijāntīyān, 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.”

That’s how we must understand this auspicious celebration and together glorify our beloved Jagad Guru Śrīla Prabhupāda, who is the bona fide representative of Śrīla Vyāsadeva and a great spiritual master of the millennial chain of discipular succession.

Jaya! All glories to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna consciousness.

Your eternal servant,

Uttarā Devī Dāsī

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīnī
namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracārīṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tārīṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

The late Carl Sagan, an astronomer and television presenter stated: “What an astonishing thing a book is, it’s a flat object made from a tree with flexible parts on which are imprinted lots of funny dark squiggles, but one glance at it and you are inside the mind of another person, maybe somebody dead for thousands of years. Across the millennia, an author is speaking clearly and silently inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, bringing together people who never knew each other, citizens of distant epoch. Books break the shackles of time, a book is proof that humans are capable of working magic.”

You are the real magician, Śrīla Prabhupāda, because simply by touching and seeing your books people’s lives are being transformed, what to speak of the effect reading and studying of your books has on the consciousness of those fortunate living entities.

Your books are an expression of your love for Rādhārāṇī whose compassionate heart extolls Kṛṣṇa to make three promises to Her, and one of them is to bring the living entities back to His lotus feet.

Your books are the embodiment of your compassionate heart which is filled with love for the Divine Couple.

Creating good fortune, your books stem the malefic influence of the Age of Kali and usher in the Golden Age. Steeped in antiquity and faithful to your predecessors, you present your Bhaktivedānta purports which are your personal ecstasies and pregnant with meaning.

Deep like a shoreless ocean of nectar, only the *cakora* bird of pure consciousness can taste the nectar of your shower of mercy.

The more we associate with Your Divine Grace, the more we are able to see, and when ignorance is removed, one’s pure consciousness becomes manifest.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving us the gift of love as an offering of love, which is the opulence of your heart.

Your servant,

Nanda Kumār Dāsa

Prahlāda Bhakta Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

I realised today that it is 40 years ago that I came to the Melbourne temple with a broken leg and was allocated the all-nighter portion of the 24 hour *kīrtana*, praying to Kṛṣṇa for your recovery back to health. One night – alone in the temple room – I was overwhelmed with an emotion that had me choking and crying as I chanted your name. And I had never even met you.

How much more it must have been for those devotees, who sat, talked and walked with you on a daily basis; to be in such proximity to you, the living embodiment of Krishna consciousness. My good fortune was to be able to take the association of those devotees who had been set on fire by you. Many of whom are no longer with us, as old age and death take their toll.

But they were such wild, glorious times, and it was a privilege to have been allowed to experience them. Now as I approach my 70th year, I look forward to partaking of another gift you gave us: *Sādhu saṅga*. To be able to spend my final days in the association of your devotees.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for boarding the Jaladuta.

Your grateful servant,

Prahlāda Bhakta Dāsa

Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana Devī Dāsī

Dear Prabhupāda,

On this auspicious day of your appearance anniversary, please accept my humble obeisances beyond the shade of your lotus feet.

I wish to renew my commitment to cooperate in your mission in spite of my weaknesses and shortcomings. I hope to complete my Bhaktivaibhava studies at VIHE this year.

I thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for accepting me and training me these past 40 years in your Society. I'm trying to follow your instructions to the best of my abilities and sharing Krishna consciousness at each opportunity.

I humbly beg your empowerment to spread your teachings, on the internet, for the French speaking aspiring devotees around the world, and organize spiritual retreats for *bhaktins* in the holy *dhāma*.

I pray to serve you sincerely and seriously day after day, to deepen my gratitude and surrender at your lotus feet.

Your humble servant,

Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana Devī Dāsī

Mahāpurāṇa Dāsa

*he guro jñāna-da dīna-bandho
svānanda-dātaḥ karuṇaika sindho
vṛndāvanāsīna hitāvātāra
prasīda rādhā-praṇaya-pracāra*

O spiritual master, O giver of divine wisdom, O friend of the fallen, you are the giver of your own bliss and you are the only ocean of mercy. Although dwelling in Vṛndāvana, you have descended for the welfare of fallen souls like myself and you are preaching the divine love of Rādhā for Kṛṣṇa. Please be kind upon me.

*nāma-śreṣṭham manum api śacī-putram atra svarūpaṁ
rūpaṁ tasyāgrajam uru-purīm māthurīm goṣṭhavātīm
rādhā-kuṇḍaṁ giri-varam aho rādhikā mādhavāśām
prāpto yasya prathita-kṛpayā śrī-gurum tanī nato'smi*

I bow down to the beautiful lotus feet of my spiritual master, by whose causeless mercy I have obtained the supreme holy name, the divine mantra, the service of the son of Śacīmātā, the association of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara, Rūpa Gosvāmī, and his older brother Sanātana Gosvāmī, the supreme abode of Mathurā, the blissful abode of Vṛndāvana, the divine Rādhā-Kuṇḍa and Govardhana Hill

and the desire within my heart for the loving service of Śrī Rādhikā and Mādhava in Vṛndāvana.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda you have descended from the Spiritual Sky bearing the most sublime gifts. Please bless me with the realization of the full import of these gifts and hold me close to you in service.

Your spiritual son,
Mahāpurāṇa Dāsa

Advaita Ācārya and Archya Devī Dāsī

To save my wretched soul

Just a poor lost human being, trying to find my way
Then, by fate, I met you Prabhupāda, my lucky day
Wandering alone, with no purpose, you gave me
the ultimate goal
To serve Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and save my wretched soul
By your grace only I'm beginning to see the light
Just as day always has to follow the night
Anyone who follows your divine instructions can reach the
highest realisations
Never mind one's social status, you offer them salvation
Your mercy is unlimited and divine, and you offer it to the
lowest of mankind
Your only desire is to serve your worshipable Lord
with *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* as your sword

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please, bless us with some of your strength and commitment,
so we may serve you and your mission to save the poor and lost
conditioned souls of Kali-yuga. Hare Kṛṣṇa, *Jai Gurudeva!*

Your grateful servants,
Advaita Ācārya and Archya Devī Dāsī

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to you who has inundated to world with Krishna consciousness through your divine writings.

Your glories are self-effulgent, and for those who have the eyes to see, they will understand exactly how special and significant you are.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, for me you are love of God, you are just like Lord Nityānanda who only thought of delivering the fallen souls who are in complete illusion as to their real identity and are suffering so much in their pursuit of happiness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your books are like magic portals into the spiritual realm. For the materialist they defy logic and reason quite simply because they act on the transcendental platform, which is beyond paper and print, the mind and the intelligence.

One could easily say that these books are the weapons that destroy the societal illusion of the bodily concept of life, and they eradicate the enemies of self-realisation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you would say “Distribute my books, distribute my books, distribute my books”.

There are no qualifications needed to engage in the activity of book distribution, only the desire to do so. Intellectual or simpleton, it does not matter. On the spiritual platform we are all equal and anyone who thinks otherwise, they are in illusion, for they still carry around to greater or lesser degrees the bodily concept of life.

Book distribution is a great leveller, a great purifier, and everyone could and should engage in this activity for their own benefit and for the benefit of society at large.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I’m sure that you’d agree that all leaders within our society should regard these activities of book distribution, *harināma saṅkīrtana* (street chanting) and *prasāda* distribution as the mainstay of this great society, ISKCON. This is what you wanted, not big buildings and fancy programmes for generating income (Income generation can be done by those who are business inclined, generally the householders).

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you said that everyone within the temple should go out, and one person can stay back to ring the bell. We all know what that means, but we are negligent in following this instruction, and we think that making the temple attractive is going

to spread Krishna consciousness? The only people to benefit are a few of those living locally, the devotees who get maintained and the Indian devotees who appreciate our activities and think that we have become 'good Hindus'.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you stated that we are Vaiṣṇavas or Hare Krishnas, not Hindus and as such we need to make that clear and not think by aligning ourselves with Hinduism that we will become accepted within the general society at large. This is an intellectual misnomer that will backfire against us.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have stated that Māyā is Kṛṣṇa's empowered servant and as such she is extremely powerful and we should guard ourselves against her influence.

Śrīla Prabhupāda I have said what I've said here because I love you and loving you means taking risks and following your instructions. I am mindful of my failings and my weaknesses but that doesn't mean that I'm ignorant of what should be done and what should not be done.

Let us all consider the country we live in and all those who have never heard of Kṛṣṇa and all those who never hear of us or see us just because we are comfortably situated in our wonderful temple and our warm homes. What we need is a plan to inundate the country with your books and the chanting of the holy names. We need to become a united spiritual family once again where everyone is focused on our aim of spreading Krishna consciousness. We need to discard this faceless *śūnyavādī* impersonalism and replace it with loving personalism instead. We need to greet devotees as long lost friends and consider their feelings as the most important and our own as insignificant. We have to see through the pages of your books and through your instructions. We have to become *śāstra cakṣus*, to think on every matter and to see through the eyes of scripture.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you know my heart, you know all there is to know about me and therefore you understand my present pain. I am begging you openly, to kindly glance upon me and inject within my heart the desire to become a pure devotee, to become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Please forgive all my offences at your lotus feet.

Your extremely fallen servant,

Haridās Ṭhākura Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances on this most auspicious day, the day you entered this world to save it.

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne*

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṅī-pracārīṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūṅyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tārīṇe*

It is out of pure love for your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura that you have gone to such great trouble and austerities to engage us in your mission of spreading Krishna consciousness throughout this degraded world. It was your intense desire to please your guru that led you to devote all of yourself, all of your thoughts, words and actions to the task of saving the world, starting with us. It is out of love only that you have so kindly allowed us to take part in the glorious birth and spreading of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. So, it is love that we must have if we are to follow in your divine footsteps.

Now the time is rapidly approaching for us – your disciples – to hand the maintenance and future of ISKCON over to our disciples so that they and generations to come may continue your mission of saving the fallen conditioned souls trapped in the illusory energy of this material world. As you have given yourself to us out of love, we must also give ourselves lovingly to them while following the example set by Your Divine Grace. Your only purpose has always been to fulfill the mission that was given to you by your spiritual master and this must also be our only purpose. The future of ISKCON depends of our maintaining your mood and purpose as we pass our society on to the next generation.

I am depending on your transcendental mercy now more than ever before. I pray to you again and again to please empower me to act as your instrument and not in an independent manner. It is your mission that ISKCON serves, not our own independent whims or desires. Therefore I pray for strength to follow only your mission and mood without deviation. Please guide us always, direct us and show us how to control our diversity in such a way that we always maintain unity of purpose; your purpose and no other. Our

diversity can and must always take a back seat to our maintaining unity. Please give us the intelligence to always remain in your mood of simply fulfilling the mission of guru and Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I beg to be always in the shelter of your lotus feet, eternally in your service and always empowered to engage all whom I encounter in the service of your beloved ISKCON and to influence them to make it their life's mission to pass your mission on to their disciples.

Your unworthy disciple,
Jīvananda Dāsa Vanacārī

Kośarūpa Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

In my meditation I come before you to offer my prostrated obeisances and prayers. You sit regally on your *vyāsāsana*, effulgent like the sun. Though feeling shy, my eagerness overtakes me. Falling at your feet, saying your *praṇāma* prayers with feeling, I also pray you'll place your feet upon my head. Then I'll know you have accepted me as your servant. Knowing my mind and heart, I await your loving smile and nod of encouragement. I await your instructions and direction for service.

Being with you I am again in the spiritual realm. Time is absent. This world has faded away.

My meditation breaks, and I look around. Shucks! Back in the material realm! I really don't know what I was thinking way back when I signed up for an excursion to the material world. Countless lifetimes later, riding on the wheel of birth and death, so far from home, so lost—you found me and picked me up—kindly protecting me from all varieties of danger.

"This human form of body is a most valuable boat, and the spiritual master is the captain, guru-karṇadhāram, to guide the boat in plying across the ocean of nescience. The instruction of Kṛṣṇa is a favorable breeze. One must use all these facilities to cross over the ocean of nescience. Since the spiritual master is the captain, one must serve the spiritual master very sincerely so that by his mercy one will be able to get the mercy of the

Supreme Lord.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 7.15.45, purport)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pray to keep company with the devotees who see you everywhere and in everything. Their remembrance (*smaraṇam*) of your *vapu* and *vāṇī* keeps them connected to you day and night. In their association I feel your presence and love.

By your mercy the day will come when we will see Lord Kṛṣṇa everywhere and in everything, too. And once having crossed over this ocean of *saṁsāra*, we'll have the unimaginable good fortune of your eternal association and service, and that of your Lordships, Śrī Śrī Rādhā Śyāmasundara.

“For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost to him, nor is he ever lost to Me.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.30)

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda, for saving us. Thank you for your love.

Your grateful daughter,

Kośarūpa Devī Dāsī

Hari Chakra Dāsa

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

First of all, allow me to offer you, most humbly, my most sincere and noble obeisances, on this anniversary of your transcendental apparition in this world.

Dear Father and Master, from the bottom of my heart, I wish to offer you, a summary of what could be to this day, my simple spiritual life ...nothing special, of course, Śrīla Prabhupāda, but full of many memories.

Of these innumerable memories which flow to my mind, is when you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, made your wonderful visit to Caracas, Venezuela. During your short stay there, you left the city

and the country full of an atmosphere full of spiritual humor of Vaikuntha. Yes, Prabhupāda, even the neophyte devotees like me could perceive this. Thus, both in Caracas and in the country, there was a great auspicious change. The devotees shone and rejoiced, singing in the midst of bliss, the holy names of the Supreme Lord: *Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*.

When we went out to do *saṅkīrtana*, the devotees saw in the faces of ordinary people a happy countenance. It was as if you had bathed them with their books filled with a shower of blessings, which we, faithful servants, delivered to them with the sublime conviction that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, imprinted on our hearts. And people read their books in the streets, on the buses, anywhere. We could see that Krishna consciousness was there in their hearts, because you came personally and gave us Kṛṣṇa in the form of your books and your holy presence.

When devotees returned from *saṅkīrtana*, the temple was filled with a divine atmosphere which could only be compared to the spiritual world; full of the aromas of incense, flowers, and much ecstasy – the result of a mass distribution of his beloved books.

Did you know, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that our simple country, obtained the first place in book distribution in the world, for some consecutive marathons....ah...how much I miss those blessed days, Śrīla Prabhupāda, where everything was a constant river of pure feeling of love towards you, and a spiritual pleasure derived from more and more service.

Humbly, I want to remind you that I am one of your last Latin American disciples whom you, by your immeasurable goodness, revived from the material debris. You gave me shelter and made me useful. But you know, Śrīla Prabhupāda, please forgive me for my poor understanding of your instructions.

I know very well, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that your most important wish is for us to become first-class human beings, *brāhmaṇas* and pure devotees, full of love for Kṛṣṇa. But I confess Śrīla Prabhupāda – without any hint of pretense or false ego – after 42 years of my simple spiritual career, I only managed to define myself as a disqualified disciple. I, who fought, only to aspire to you to allow me eternally, to continue to serve your divine lotus feet. Because I do not know if I could in later births, achieve that divine connection with the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

For now, my dear Gurudeva, please allow me to continue to glorify your divine and pure activities, your fame, your glory, your pastimes, your transcendental books, your love for us, your patience, your infinite tolerance, your great sacrifice for all human beings and your great struggle to establish this sublime and pure movement for the Krishna consciousness.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, allow me to give you my deepest and most sincere recognition, because surely you have been and will always be incomparably valuable, full of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

You yourself demonstrated and continue to do so, your legacy of knowledge, realizations and instructions, which you yourself plant in the hearts of those sincere devotees, who to this day, follow the path you taught us.

There is no one until now, nor will there be in this world for a long time, who demonstrates the divine power and presence of God, as you have done, shattering the false myths and misconceptions of the denial of His existence. You vividly depict the manifestation of God, and present Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, as the One and Absolute Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this occasion of your advent, I can only say that every day I pray, that what I have left of life in this deteriorated body, is to be offered with determination, enthusiasm, conviction and an unconditional and spontaneous loving service to your divine lotus feet.

Your most disheveled servant who longs for your eternal protection,

Hari Chakra Dāsa Brahmācārī
Madrid

Hiraṇmayī Devī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Fifty-two years have already passed since you brought the message of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu to the Western world.

In 1974, I joined the ranks of your disciples as I was quite convinced of the soundness of the *Bhagavad-Gītā As It Is* (The Song of God). I was also lucky enough to meet you, although unfortunately not in private, during your visits to France. I served very seriously

in the temples and ashrams while I was a single woman. Then I served my son and husband as best I could while living near to the Montreal temple.

You said in your translation and purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā, chapter 9, verse 50:

“When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the great gardener, sees that people are chanting, dancing and laughing and then some of them are rolling on the floor and some are making loud humming sounds, He smiles with great pleasure.

“Purport: *This attitude of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is very important for persons engaged in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement of Krishna 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 prasāda, 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 favour, and the movement will be successful.*”

One who sincerely tastes the fruits and flowers of the transcendental gardener Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu — the fruits of love of God — will see his life change for the better and will become happy.

Thanks to you, that’s exactly what has happened to me, Śrīlā Prabhupāda, after different austerities I had to go through. Today, at 66, more than ever, your teachings make a lot of sense to me.

Service is eternal. So, although I didn’t always agree with the way the movement turned out after your disappearance, I have never stopped believing in your International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and serving here in Montreal.

You also state in the ninth chapter of Ādi-līlā that anyone born in India must bring this Vedic culture to the West, where people are living in the chaos of the Age of Kali. Which makes me think that, given the present state of affairs, ISKCON leaders maybe should be more welcoming to other Vaiṣṇavas from India. Caitanya has opened His heart; He distributed love of God to everyone.

By your grace, Śrīlā Prabhupāda, I’d like to become as humble as a blade of grass in the street and as tolerant as a tree to make this human life as perfect as possible.

Your fame, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is spread all over the three worlds!
All glories to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa! All glories to the Pañca-tattva!
However imperfect I may be, please accept my humble obeisances
at your lotus feet.

Your eternally grateful servant and daughter,

Hiraṇmayī Devī Devī Dāsī

Īśa Dāsa

“Sectarianism is a natural by-product of the Absolute Truth. When *ācāryas* first ascertain and instruct the Truth, it is not polluted with sectarianism. But the rules and regulations received through disciplic succession regarding the goal and the method of achieving it are changed in due course of time according to the mentality and locale of the people. A rule that is followed by one society is not necessarily accepted in another society. That is why one community is different from another. As a community gradually develops more respect for its own standards, it develops hatred towards other communities and considers their standards inferior. These sectarian symptoms are seen in all countries since time immemorial. This is prominent amongst neophytes and found to some extent amongst *madhyama-adhikārīs*. Amongst *uttama-adhikārīs*, however, there is no trace of sectarianism.”

[Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā, Introduction, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura]

Jitāmitra Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace. Though I feel very unqualified to be counted amongst your disciples, I am eternally grateful to have been blessed to have you as my beloved spiritual master.

Recently, while reading of all the wonderful qualities of Lord

Kṛṣṇa in the *Nectar of Devotion*, I kept thinking how so many of these qualities can be seen in your person. I wondered if maybe it was wrong to be attributing the Lord's qualities to one other than the Lord Himself, but then I read your comment, which acted in answer to my thoughts. You explained that the living entities – being parts and parcels of the Lord – can also possess these qualities to some degree, provided they become pure devotees of the Lord.

Some of the Lord's qualities that resonated in my meditation on you, were that you were highly learned, highly intelligent and a genius. You displayed these qualities constantly while preaching. You were a reservoir of knowledge, always quoting so many verses to support what you were teaching. By your intelligence you were able to connect with people from all walks of life, and get them to appreciate the wisdom and realization behind your knowledge. And was it not pure genius that allowed you to inspire the confused youth of America to help you start a worldwide spiritual revolution?

Some other qualities you share with the Lord are the fact that you are firmly determined and an expert judge of time and circumstances. Though you were faced with so many obstacles in your endeavors to carry out the wishes of your guru mahārāja, you never gave up. You persevered and expertly adjusted according to time and circumstance, all the while keeping the principals of devotional service safely intact.

You are very pure and self-controlled, steadfast and forgiving. How can one count the many times you must have had to forgive your fledging disciples for committing offenses unknowingly? And even now we must constantly beg your forgiveness as we fumble along to carry on your mission, no longer able to come to you for quick solutions to the problems of running an international spiritual institution.

You are grave, self-satisfied, magnanimous, compassionate and the protector of surrendered souls. When you were with us, we always felt so protected in the many ashrams you established around the world. Most of us, even as householders, remained sheltered in such ashram life right up until after your departure. When you were with us we never thought much about having to grow up and take care of ourselves. We engaged in devotional service and in exchange you made us feel so loved and protected, sheltered in a house big enough for the whole world to live in.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are all-honorable, all-famous,

all-auspicious, popular, and the well-wisher of the devotees. When I first heard of Krishna consciousness I was in the process of rejecting my Catholic upbringing by trying to embrace atheism. But, as fate would have it, after stumbling upon a *harināma* party in Central Park and being invited to a Sunday love feast, I quickly came to feel nothing was more important than having you as my ever well-wisher.

You are respectful, gentle and liberal and so many more qualities can be attributed to you, but I must stop somewhere. Perhaps the quality I most like to attribute to you is that you are heroic. The definition of a hero is someone who has done something very brave. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were so brave to come to America all alone and without any money. As I am getting older I feel less and less inclined to be adventurous or leave the comforts of all that is familiar to me. Near the end of your life you gave up all comforts and all that was safe and familiar, to venture out to strange lands. In so doing, your only desire was to help all the fallen, conditioned souls of Kali-yuga get free from the cycle of birth and death. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are my hero always, and I pray to never be bereft of the opportunity to render some service at your lotus feet. Thank you for all your sacrifices and selfless service that have allowed myself and so many thousands of others to have such a wonderful spiritual life.

Your Servant,

Jitāmitra Devī Dāsī
Gainesville, Florida

Ravīndra Svarūpa Dāsa

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

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

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

“A book is a mirror,” observed Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, the eminent eighteenth-century German scientist and aphorist. “If a

monkey peers into it, an apostle can hardly be expected to look out.”

This aphorism tends to spring to mind whenever I pick up one of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books and open its pages to read. For these books are the exception that proves—i.e., tests—Lichtenberg’s rule. I am not alone in discovering that the books of Śrīla Prabhupāda possess a singular and quite astounding power: they can transfigure monkeys into apostles.

The books themselves convey clear and explicit directions for their own readings. In his purports Śrīla Prabhupāda repeatedly calls our attention to those directions, as he does, for instance, at the outset of his introduction to *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*:

The spirit of *Bhagavad-gītā* is mentioned in the *Bhagavad-gītā* itself. It is just like this: If we want to take a particular medicine, then we have to follow the directions written on the label. We cannot take the medicine according to our own whim or the direction of a friend. It must be taken according to the directions on the label or the directions given by a physician.

The guidance for reading or hearing Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books is presented and re-presented in a simple, clear, and convincing manner. These instructions often appear in reference to exemplary occasions of effective transmission that are recorded in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* itself. Consider, for instance, this purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.44:

Simple hearing is not all; one must realize the text with proper attention. The word *niviṣṭa* means that Sūta Gosvāmī drank the juice of *Bhāgavatam* through his ears. That is the real process of receiving *Bhāgavatam*. One should hear with rapt attention from the real person, and then he can at once realize the presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa in every page. The secret of knowing *Bhāgavatam* is mentioned here. No one can give rapt attention who is not pure in mind. No one can be pure in mind who is not pure in action. No one can be pure in action who is not pure in eating, sleeping, fearing and mating. But somehow or other if someone hears with rapt attention from the right person, at the very beginning one can assuredly see Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa in person in the pages of *Bhāgavatam*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda refers to *bhakti-yoga* as a science—as in expressions like “the science of Krishna consciousness” or “the science of self-realization.” The original Sanskrit word that he translates, felicitously, as “science” is *vijñāna*, formed by prefixing the word for knowledge, *jñāna*, with *vi-*, which functions as a kind of all-purpose intensifier. The word *vijñāna* denotes knowledge that is directly apprehended or experienced; Śrīla Prabhupāda often refers to *vijñāna* as “realized knowledge” and, appropriately, as “scientific knowledge.” Of course, ours is not “material science.” Yet as a proper science, the science of Krishna consciousness is verifiable by anyone who is willing and able to adhere scrupulously to its proper procedures.

A necessary feature of such procedures is the clarification, intensification, and concentration of consciousness: the required “rapt attention.” This itself requires a pure mind, which requires pure action, which requires purity even in the most basic, animal activities of life: “eating, sleep, fearing [i.e., defending], and mating.”

Herein lies the required commitment to follow strictly “the four regulative principles,” namely no meat-eating, no intoxication, no gambling, and no illicit sex.

Most of us are disposed automatically to regard these sorts of strictures as “moral principles,” and, as such, having to do mainly with consequences of rewards or punishments, of enjoying or suffering, of heavens or hells.

But here it becomes clear that these “regulative principles” are more far-reaching than that. They are, in fact, fundamental principles of cognition, of knowledge. For this reason, knowledge, properly so called, depends upon *sattva*—on goodness—and, for its further development, on a more refined and rarified goodness called *viśuddha-sattva*.

A materialistic critic might find fault with such a claim to “knowledge” by deriding it as “mysticism,” which is attractive only to “escapists” and is utterly worthless for shining any practical light on the gross and palpable world that surrounds, contains, and, indeed, composes us.

That might be true of the *jñāna-yogī*, but for the *bhakti-yogī*, the world, as it were, comes back, but now disclosed as it truly is: as it is in its relationship to Kṛṣṇa.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda states in the purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.5, “By *bhakti-yoga* one can know the Lord, and by knowing the

Lord as the Supreme, one is able to know everything else. That is the version of all *Vedas*." When making this important point, Śrīla Prabhupāda frequently quotes a text from the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (1.3) that defines the Absolute Truth as that unique entity "knowing which, all else becomes known." For instance, in this early lecture in Los Angeles (July 5, 1971):

So one who performs this yoga system, how to increase love for Kṛṣṇa, that's all, then you understand everything. The *Vedas*, they confirm it: *yasmin vijñāte sarvaṁ evaṁ vijñātari bhavanti*. If you simply understand Kṛṣṇa, then everything will be understood. Because Kṛṣṇa is everything. God is everything.

Our philosophy is called *sa-viśeṣa*, that is, "with varieties." Once some of us who were members of the newly formed Bhaktivedanta Institute were accompanying Śrīla Prabhupāda on a morning walk in New Vrindaban through the summer woods. Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed out that the arboreal wood around us is really fire in another form. The tree, he explained, takes in sunlight—fire—and it grows wood. If later you harvest some of the wood for heat and ignite the wood, the fire reappears. So wood is just fire in another form. Similarly, he said, matter is really spirit in another form.

What Prabhupāda said left me bewildered, and a little later I had the chance to put my problem before him. I told him I was confused. "Right now," I explained, "I am very involved in trying to understand that 'I am not this body,' that I am spirit but my body and mind are matter. So I am very engaged in discriminating between matter and spirit. But now you are saying that everything is spirit. So I am confused."

It took me some years to fully assimilate Śrīla Prabhupāda's response of two short sentences. He said: "We are not Māyāvādis. There are *different kinds* of spirit." *Māyāvāda* philosophy is called *nir-viśeṣa*—that there are no varieties (*viśeṣas*) in Brahman. Our philosophy is called *sa-viśeṣa*, "with varieties." As Prabhupāda expressed it in the last purport of *Bhāgavad-gītā As It Is*:

Although superficially the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the living entity, material nature and time appear to be different, nothing is different from the Supreme. But the Supreme is always different from everything.

Earlier in the same purport he noted:

Perfect knowledge of the Absolute Truth means perfect knowledge of Kṛṣṇa. If one understands Kṛṣṇa, then all the departments of knowledge are part and parcel of that understanding.

This, then, is the supreme and inclusive science, and we are to learn it, apply it in all areas, and, most importantly, guide and direct a grievously misguided and misdirected human society.

In a New York City airport a reporter began a press conference with this question to Śrīla Prabhupāda: “Why have you come to the West?” Prabhupāda at once replied: “I have come to give you a brain.”

This is our assignment, our mission. Śrīla Prabhupāda went on to explain that a normal society has a head, arms, belly, and legs, but that our modern society is headless. There are no *brāhmaṇas*. (A little later on Prabhupāda remarked, “In your society everyone is a *śūdra*, and there are a few *vaiśyas*.”)

Our special mission is to become the brain, for which Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us all that we need. We have been gifted with potent knowledge in the form of the book *Bhāgavatam*, the message of Kṛṣṇa. And Kṛṣṇa’s own messenger, the person *bhāgavata*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, bore it across the waters aboard a vessel with the portentous name *Jaladuta*, “Water Messenger.”

The aphorism of Lichtenberg holds true. “If a monkey looks in, no apostle will look out.” The word “apostle” means messenger, and from Śrīla Prabhupāda we monkeys have been given all we require to become apostles ourselves: to assimilate the message of Godhead and to deliver that message to a world in critical need of it.

Begging for the blessings of the Vaiṣṇavas, on this auspicious day, to become the servant of Śrīla Prabhupāda and the servant of his servants,

Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa

Satyarāja Dāsa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda — Please accept my most sincere obeisances, though, even at this point, I don’t truly know how to offer them. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

On this day, I remember you as the Sāragrāhī Vaiṣṇava par

excellence, an essence seeker who taught his disciples to embrace the essence as well. You lovingly dissuaded us from superficiality, and instead encouraged us to seek the truth — real truth — in all its forms.

Naturally, you wanted disciples who were substantive, and so today I contemplate the difference between *vidvad-rūḍhi* and *avidvad-rūḍhi* — disciples who are, in fact, really disciples, as opposed to disciples who are such in name only. If there were a photograph accompanying an encyclopedia entry for this latter kind of disciple, I have no doubt it would be a picture of me.

From our Gauḍīya teachings, we learn that there are two kinds of disciples, and, correspondingly, two kinds of *dīkṣā* (initiation)—*anusthaniki* (*avidvad-rūḍhi*) and *vidvad-rūḍhi*. *Anusthaniki* refers to the external formality of a fire *yajña* and the giving of *dīkṣā* mantras. After such rituals, one tends to think they become God’s gift — “I have sacrificed so much; I have imbibed the greatest knowledge; and I have, unlike so many others, given my life to the highest good.” In other words, a “holier than thou” mood often ensues. But why all the fuss? Such an initiation is external. Of course, the ceremony is essential, but it is not complete without *vidvad-rūḍhi*.

To embrace the guru’s mood while serving his mission, with deep love and affection — this is “*vidvad-rūḍhi-dīkṣā*.” *Pañcarātriki-dīkṣā* is no doubt necessary, and it can even inspire one to embrace a higher conception in due course. This is why Rūpa Gosvāmī includes it as being among the first of his 64 items of *bhajana* (*guru padāśrayas tasmāt kṛṣṇa dīkṣādi śikṣaṇam viśrambheṇa guroḥ sevā*, as per *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.74).

But, as you have taught us, formal initiation is not what *dīkṣā* is all about. You called it a “necessary formality.” Real *dīkṣā* is characterized by heartfelt surrender and a service mood that is uncompromising. This is what you showed by your own example, and it is what you expected of us, your disciples.

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

In the purport, after giving much evidence for the importance of initiation, you write, “In other words, the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is so powerful that it does not depend on official

initiation, but if one is initiated and engages in *pañcarātra-vidhi* (Deity worship), his Krishna consciousness will awaken very soon, and his identification with the material world will be vanquished.” This all points in the direction of real initiation: *vidvad-rūḍhi*.

We learn much about the reality of initiation from the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (2.9) and the *Bhakti-sandarbha* (283):

divyaṁ jñānaṁ yato dadyāt kuryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam |
tasmād dikṣeti sā proktā deśikais tattva-kovidaiḥ | |

“Because it bestows divine (*divya*) knowledge and causes the complete destruction (*kṣaya*) of sin, it is called *dikṣā* by the teachers who are expert in spiritual truths.”

Further, Jīva Gosvāmī famously interprets *divyaṁ jñānaṁ* in the following way,

divyaṁ jñānaṁ hy atra śrīmati mantre bhagavat-svarūpa-jñānaṁ,
tena bhagavatā sambandha-viśeṣa-jñānaṁ ca |

“‘Divine knowledge’ here means ‘knowledge of the Lord’s true identity in the sacred mantra’ and through that knowledge of a specific relation with the Lord.”

In other words, the mantra is meant to communicate or define one’s particular relationship with a specific form of Bhagavān. For many, this involves esoteric mantras, usually the product of “higher initiations,” like those involving Siddha Praṇālī and *ekādaśa-bhāva*. But for us, your disciples, we recognize *divya jñānam* in the *mahā-mantra*, *Hare Kṛṣṇa*, *Hare Kṛṣṇa*, *Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa*, *Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma*, *Hare Rāma*, *Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*. THAT is our sacred mantra. And the form of Bhagavān we cherish? It is Vrajendranandana Kṛṣṇa, no doubt — but specifically as he is revealed by Your Divine Grace. THIS is our *divya jñāna*!

If we can simply learn to hear the name properly, to chant it sincerely, and to dedicate our lives to your mission, serving Kṛṣṇa as you have revealed Him to us, we can then fully realize the purport of *divya jñānam* and enact an actual *vidvad-rūḍhi* initiation, becoming actual *vidvad-rūḍhi* disciples.

In other words, the chanting of the *Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra* is so powerful that it does not depend on official initiation, as you mentioned in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, nor does it depend on some esoteric initiation — it simply depends on giving you, or your representatives, our lives, fully, and without reservation.

THAT is real initiation. So, on your Vyāsa-pūjā day in 2017, I pray that you'll accept me as your duly initiated disciple, in the truest sense of the word.

Your aspiring servant,

Satyaṛāja Dāsa

Vedavatī Devī Dāsī

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your very sweet lotus feet!

It is said, "Just one person, only one vote can make a difference". But no one else has made as wonderful a difference in our lifetime as you have.

Some of your disciples are now close in age to when you boarded that huge ship, sailed the ocean blue (not always!), descended on American soil and started a new movement. I doubt some of us could imagine doing such an accomplishment at this time of our lives!

However, you loved and believed in your spiritual master, and he believed in you! So much so that he gave you the daunting devotional service of spreading Krishna consciousness to the West. No matter that it took a lifetime to prepare; when Kṛṣṇa provided the vessel, you were ready.

I am eternally grateful. You gave us our spiritual family, you taught us about love and devotion, about serving a guru, God, and each other. Thank you for translating, lecturing, cooking, instructing, laughing, and in doing so, giving many devotees your personal attention. I am learning so much more about you daily by reading their books and watching their movies, their devotional service to you. You inspired millions. I love you.

Your humble servant,

Vedavatī Devī Dāsī

All glories to Your most Divine Grace,

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Another year has passed, and by your mercy I am still allowed to be at your lotus feet, engaged in your service, and in the glorious service of the Deities. This alone shows the magnitude of your causeless mercy; despite my offences, you are still giving me the chance to be purified and serve.

Many godbrothers and godsisters have left, and may be with you spreading your mission somewhere. In whatever little time I have left, I pray to be in your association again, and continue in devotional service.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have explained to us about the *vapu* and *vāñī*, “My Guru Mahārāja is with me. I never lost this faith, and that is fact. There are two words, *vāñī* and *vapuḥ*. *Vāñī* means words, and *vapuḥ* means this physical body. So *vāñī* is more important than the *vapuḥ*. *Vapuḥ* will be finished. This is material body. It will be finished. That is the nature. But if we keep to the *vāñī*, to the words of spiritual master, then we remain very fixed up. It doesn’t matter.” — His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda’s Appearance Day, Lecture, Atlanta, March 2, 1975.

I was in Your room in Vraja, for *darśana* the afternoon after you returned from Rishikesh, after being taken ill. During Your talk, several times, you said that the disappearance of the body, was not important, that you had said it all in your books, that everything we need to know to enable us at the time of death to remember Kṛṣṇa was in your books.

I, however pray to be in your divine presence again, and feel the elation experienced at the idea of your imminent arrival to a temple. For me, it was more in Vraja and Bombay, when we knew you were coming, and that you were going to be standing before us again, and how every morning at class, we were going to hear you speak the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. At night, we could look over to your terrace from our balcony and hear you speak, translating into the night, with the occasional peacock cry, the faint sound of *karatālas* in the distance.

In the morning walks, after *maṅgala-ārati*, going down the Chatikara Road, [now gloriously named after you], you would ask us about how we were progressing in our individual services, and guide us on how to improve them. Having opened the first big

temple in India, you wanted to set a standard to please Kṛṣṇa, and be beyond reproach, this being Lord Caitanya's mission that you established under the order of your beloved spiritual master.

Thank you again and again Śrīla Prabhupāda, and please forgive me my offences at your lotus feet, and the feet of your devotees, so I may remain forever in that association.

Your unworthy servant and eternal daughter,

Vishvadevī Dāsī

Vīṭhaleśvara Dāsa Brahmācārī

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnī itī nāmīne
namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe
tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet
samit-pāṇiḥ śrotriyam brahma-niṣṭham*

Your Divine Grace put so much emphasis on particularly the first part of this verse from the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.12, that one **must** approach a bona fide guru. It is **not** arbitrary or according to one's whim; no, the *śāstra* enjoins that it is a **must**. So that we have to accept. Lord Kṛṣṇa directs us with this same prescription in His *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.34. And this is reiterated many times throughout revealed scriptures. So, there is no doubt about it. Any sincere soul who hears from you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, can have no objection to the surrendering process of devotional service. One should be serious, not just dabbling; that will not do. Even so, you continue to fan whatever little spark there may be under all the other garbage of one's material conditioning. We are forever indebted to you, our beloved spiritual master and savior, Śrīla Prabhupāda. We are fortunate to have been brought closer to you by *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā*. I pray to Your Divine Grace to come **completely** close without delay; for none other than Kṛṣṇa is always with you. To settle for anything less is madness only. If I just stay connected to you and persevere, then and then only will such madness not be able to touch me. There is shelter in Your Divine Grace. At least I have some conviction in this, therefore things are looking up, so to speak. I spent the first 22 years

of this life as a *karmī* and for 45+ years in devotional service. This is my real life, full and complete with Your Divine Grace at the helm as captain of the ship. Strictly speaking, to be going somewhere or progressing means in the direction of Back to Godhead. Other ways or lifestyles simply serve to keep us rotating in the cycle of *samsāra*, birth after birth. And that's surely not defined as one's real progress of life, rather quite the opposite. One's attention must be turned toward transcendence. *Athāto brahma jijñāsā*. So, you've got my attention, and I pray I never lose it. Of course, I'm still swimming in *māyā*, nevertheless, as I've already remarked, things are looking up entirely due to my eternal spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda! Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Masquerading as a disciple,

Viṭṭhaleśvara Dāsa Brahmācārī

ALPHABETICAL INDEX

TRIBUTES BY SANNYASI DISCIPLES	7
Amala-bhakta Swami	121
Anand Kishore dās Bābājī	60
B. V. Bhāgavat Swami	39
Bhakti Caitanya Swami	87
Bhakti Chāru Swami	126
Bhakti Gauravāṇī Goswami	61
Bhakti Mādhurya Govinda Goswami	12
Bhakti Prabhupāda-vrata Dāmodara Swami	128
Bhakti Rāghava Swami	104
Bhakti Sundar Goswami	115
Bhakti Vigna Vinasha Narasimha	47
Bhakti Vikāśa Swami	113
Bhakti Viśrambha Mādhava Swami	103
Bhaktimārga Swami	89
Bhaktivaibhava Swami	49
Bīr Kṛṣṇa dās Goswami	68
Candramauli Swami	91
Candraśekhara Swami	121
Dānavīr Goswami	52
Devāmrita Swami	109
Dhanurdhara Swami	107

Gaṇapati dāsa Swami	72
Giridhārī Swami	117
Girirāj Swami	23
Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami	21
Guṇagrāhi Dās Goswami	53
Guruprasād Swami	124
Hanumatpresaka Swami	108
Hridayānanda dāsa Goswami	30
Janānanda Goswami	75
Jayādvaita Swami	10
Jayapatāka Swami	17
Kavicandra Swami	34
Keśava Bhārati Dāsa Goswami	81
Kṛṣṇakṣetra Swami	56
Lokanāth Swami	65
Mahāvishnu Swami	40
Nava Yogendra Swami	55
Nirañjana Swami	98
Pārtha Sārathi dāsa Goswami	85
Prahlādānanda Swami	18
Rādhānāth Swami	79
Rāmāi Swami	111
Śacīnandana Swami	32
Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami	9
Śivarāma Swami	86
Subhāg Swami	42
Trivikrama Swami	20
Varṣāṇā Swami	95
Vedavyāsapriya Swami	125

TRIBUTES BY INITIATED DISCIPLES 131

Abhilāṣa Dāsa	362
Ādikartā Dāsa	312
Advaita Ācārya.....	406
Aja Dāsa	278
Ajāmila Dāsa	199
Ali Krishna Devī Dāsī	211
Ambarīṣa Dāsa	315
Ānandamaya Dāsa	342
Anavadyāṅgī Devī Dāsī	238
Aṅkottha Dāsa	393
Anuttama Dāsa	196
Archya Devī Dāsī	406
Ariṣṭahā Dāsa	263
Arjuna Dāsa	248
Arjuna Dāsa	358
Arundhatī Devī Dāsī	152
Ashalata Devī Dāsī	354
Atitaguṇa Devī Dāsī	362
Ātmā Tattva Dāsa	351
Ātmānanda Dāsa	191
Ātmātma Dāsa	350
Avyaya Dāsa	266
Baḍa Haridās	364
Badarayan Dāsa	230
Balabhadra Dāsa	154
Bhakta Dāsa	163
Bhavatāriṇī Devī Dāsī	206
Bhojadeva Dāsa	226
Bhubaneswar Dāsa	237
Bhūrijana Dāsa	146
Caitanya Swarūp Dāsa	306
Caitanya-chandra Dāsa	320
Cakrī Dāsa	368
Cathurbhuj Dāsa	158
Caturbhuj Dāsa.....	159
Chiranjib Dāsa	196

Citraka Dāsa	245
Damaghoṣa Dāsa	274
Damayantī Devī Dāsī	365
Dāmodara Dāsa	141
Dayānanda Dāsa	137
Dayānidhi Dāsa	325
Dhaneśvara Dāsa	255
Drumila Dāsa	369
Garuḍa Vāhana Dāsa	367
Gaura Dāsa	370
Gauragopāla Dāsa	214
Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita Dāsa	319
Gokulānanda Dāsa	216
Gopīmātā Devī Dāsī	399
Govardhana Devī Dāsī	229
Hari Chakra Dāsa	411
Haridās Ṭhākura Dāsa	407
Haridāsa Dāsa	357
Haripāda Dāsa	301
Hiraṇmayī Devī Devī Dāsī	413
Hrikeśānanda Dāsa	143
Hṛṣīkeśa Dāsa	233
Īśa Dāsa	415
Jadurāṇī Devī Dāsī	133
Jagaddhātṛī Devī Dāsī	236
Jagadvīra Dāsa	285
Jagannātheśvarī Devī Dāsī	366
Jagattāriṇī Devī Dāsī	175
Janmanālaya Dāsa	217
Jaya Gaurī Devī Dāsī	382
Jaya Mādhava Dāsa	385
Jayagurudeva Dāsa	379
Jitāmītra Devī Dāsī	415
Jitendriya Dāsa	367
Jīva Pāvana Dāsa	394

Jivānanda Dāsa Vanacārī	409
Kadamba Devī Dāsī	252
Kāla Dāsa	224
Kalpavṛkṣa Dāsa	259
Kanchanbala Devī Dāsī	141
Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu Dāsa Adhikārī.....	159
Karuṇāmaya Dāsa	375
Kośarūpa Devī Dāsī	410
Krishna Priyā Devī Dāsī	159
Kṛṣṇa Kamala Devī Dāsī	187
Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana Devī Dāsī	404
Kṛṣṇānandinī Devī Dāsī	220
Kusha Devī Dāsī	168
Labangalatika Devī Dāsī	153
Lalitā Devī Dāsī	289
Laṅgagaṇeśa Dāsa	344
Lelihana Devī Dāsī	306
Līlāmañjarī Devī Dāsī	195
Locanānanda Dāsa	165
Madan Mohan Dāsa	219
MadanMohanMohiṇī Devī Dāsī	218
Mādhavī Devī Dāsī	387
Madhusevita Dāsa	262
Madhusudan Dāsa	141
Mahā Puṇyā Devī Dāsī	299
Mahākartā Dāsa	281
Mahāmān Dāsa	221
Mahāpurāṇa Dāsa	405
Mahāshakti Dāsa	199
Mahāśinī Devī Dāsī	180
Mālatī Devī Dāsī	139
Mallikā Devī Dāsī	400
Maṅḍaleśvara Dāsa	181
Maṅidhara Dāsa	290
Manohāriṇī Devī Dāsī	394
Mathurā Dāsa	260
Matsya Avatāra Dāsa	397

Māyeśa Dāsa	294
Medhāvī Dāsa	307
Mohanāśinī Dāsī	239
Mṛgākṣī Devī Dāsī	234
Mṛtyuhara Dāsa	288
Nāgapatnī Devī Dāsī	169
Nanda Kumār Dāsa	403
Nandagopa Dāsa	323
Nandanandana Dāsa	208
Naradevī Devī Dāsī	183
Narakāntaka Dāsa	338
Nārāyaṇī Devī Dāsī	179
Narottamānanda Dāsa	165
Nartaka Gopāla Devī Dāsī	302
Nidrā Devī Dāsī	389
Nṛsimhānanda Dāsa	200
Padmanābha Dāsa.....	195
Pañcagaṇḍa Dāsa	395
Pañcharatna Dāsa	183
Pārvatī Devī Dāsī	294
Patita Pāvana Dāsa Adhikary	151
Pauruṣa Dāsa	389
Phalinī Devī Dāsī	281
Praghoṣa Dāsa	240
Prahlāda Bhakta Dāsa	404
Prapujaka Dāsa	279
Prithu Dāsa Adhikary	202
Ṙthuśravā Dāsa	241
Puṇyatama Dāsa	388
Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa Dāsa	171
Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Dāsa	330
Rāga Bhūmi Devī Dāsī	317
Rājendrānandana Dāsa	257
Rāma Dāsa	226
Rāmānanda Dāsa	372
Rāmanātha sukha Dāsa	265
Ramanya Dāsa	254

Ranadhir Dāsa	144
Raṅgavatī Devī Dāsī	297
Rāsalīlādevī Devī Dāsī	273
Rathayātrā Dāsa	304
Ravīndra Svarūpa Dāsa	417
Rohiṇī Devī Dāsī	400
Rukmiṇī Devī Dāsī	149
Rukmiṇī Priyā Devī Dāsī	235
Samapriya Devī Dāsī	323
Sandāminī Devī Dāsī	314
Saṅkarshan Dāsa	190
Sarva-drik Dāsa	244
Sarvamaṅgalā Devī Dāsī	260
Sarvani Devī Dāsī	243
Sarvopama Dāsa	324
Śatadhanya Dāsa	172
Satyarāja Dāsa	421
Somadās Dāsa	181
Śrī Padāmbuja Dāsa	326
Śrīniketana Dāsa	336
Śrutirūpā Devī Dāsī	347
Śubhāṅgī Devī Dāsī	327
Śubhaviḷāsa Dāsa	355
Subuddhi Devī Dāsī	367
Sukhavāhā Devī Dāsī	310
Sureśvara Dāsa	184
Swarup Dāsa	162
Tamohara Dāsa	298
Tattva Darśinī Devī Dāsī	396
Tattvavit Dāsa	271
Uttarā Devī Dāsī	401
Vaibhava Dāsa	378
Vaidyanāth Dāsa	228
Vaikuṅṭha Mūrti Devī Dāsī	395
Vaiṣṇavānanda Dāsa	209
Vāmanadev Dāsa	145

Vāṇīnātha Dāsa Brahmachārī	223
Vedavatī Devī Dāsī	424
Vegavatī Devī Dāsī	374
Viśākhā Devī Dāsī	190
Vishnu Dāsa	177
Vishvadevī Dāsī	425
Viṭṭhaleśvara Dāsa Brahmachārī	426
Vrindabaneshvari Devī Dāsī	205
Yādavendra Dāsa	267
Yadubara Dāsa.....	190
Yogīndra Dāsa	383

