

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA TRIBUTES

24 AUG 2019 Celebrating the
appearance day of our
beloved spiritual master

“

Just like when two friends meet and, if the friend is also with his dog, the gentleman pats his dog first, is it not? So the friend becomes automatically pleased, his dog being patted. I have seen it in your country sometimes when I used to walk in the Regents Park early mornings. So it is like that, the spiritual master is the pet dog of Krishna, and if he is pleased so Krishna is also pleased. That is the process.

”

(Letter to George –
Bombay, 4th January, 1973)

ŚRĪLA
PRABHUPĀDA
TRIBUTES



24 AUG
2019

OṂ VIṢṆUPĀDA
PARAMAHAṂSA
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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Celebrating the
appearance day of our
beloved spiritual master

To find out more about this publication, please visit:
www.sptributes.com

First printing, limited to 275 copies, 2019

Set in 10-point IndUni Palatino

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Quotes from books, lectures, letters and conversations by
His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
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Cover image courtesy of The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International, Inc.
www.krishna.com

Printed in England and the USA in 2019.

Design by Jagannāth Sharaṇ Dāsa (Janak Rajani)
www.behance.net/inajardesign

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The cost of printing and distributing this year's Tributes book has been made possible by a donation from a devotee in Africa, who wishes to remain anonymous.

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Every member of the Tributes team (listed below) has offered their time and service on a voluntary basis.

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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.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 10th edition of Śrīla Prabhupāda Tributes!

What makes this book is the heartfelt worship of Śrīla Prabhupāda captured in the words of the offerings. Each offering is like a window, allowing us a glimpse into the phenomenal life and character of Śrīla Prabhupāda. The offerings increase our appreciation for both Śrīla Prabhupāda and his disciples. The realisations, the glorifications, the impact and mood with which devotees have and continue to receive and serve Śrīla Prabhupāda in their life, is a lesson for all followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda to learn from. In these pages, we will read of Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal connection with each disciple, bringing us, the readers, closer in awe, respect, and in turn, inspiring our surrender unto His Divine Grace.

Today, Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā day is the most blessed day for all followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Here in the UK, devotees are preparing to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival and the subsequent installation of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Londonisvara. In a matter of weeks, on 11th September, we will remember his momentous arrival in London. While reading this pastime, I am especially drawn to the press conference that took place at Heathrow Airport. It reveals the bold vision and mission which Śrīla Prabhupāda entrusted to all his followers:

Reporter: What do you try and teach, sir?

Prabhupāda: I am trying to teach what you have forgotten.

Devotees: Haribol! Hare Kṛṣṇa! (laughter)

Reporter: Which is what?

Prabhupāda: That is God. Some of you are saying there is no God, some of you are saying, God is dead, and some of you are saying God is impersonal or void. These are all nonsense. I want to teach all these nonsense that there is God. That is my mission. Any nonsense can come to me, I shall prove that there is God. That is my Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. It is a challenge to the atheistic people. There is God. As we are sitting here face to face, you can see God face-to-face. If you are sincere and if you are serious, that is possible. Unfortunately, we are trying to forget God; therefore we are embracing so many miseries of life. So I am simply preaching that you have Kṛṣṇa consciousness and be happy. Don't be swayed away by these nonsense waves of *māyā*, or illusion. That is my request.

We could almost use this excerpt to analyse Śrīla Prabhupāda's mood of urgency. He captures the essence of his teaching – there is a God; God is a person; we can see Him face-to-face. He summarises the purpose of human life – revival of our understanding and relationship with God. He defines his movement – to prove there is God; to have Kṛṣṇa consciousness and be happy; to not be swayed by *māyā*. The rest of the interview continues with the same spirit of urgency, and is well worth a read.

While we gather in our respective communities to celebrate this blessed day, let us be drawn to this urgency in Śrīla Prabhupāda's words and continue our dedicated service of sharing Śrīla Prabhupāda with the world and fulfil his desire 'to teach what you have forgotten.'

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Pradyumna Dasa
Production Manager

TRIBUTES
BY
SANNYASI
DISCIPLES

Śrīla Prabhupāda

Prabhupāda is my mentor,
he is my boss.
Prabhupāda is my eternal father,
he personally told me so.
Prabhupāda is my Swamiji,
from 1966–68
until he told us to
call him Prabhupāda
which we accepted joyfully.
In the 21st century he is
with us in his *vāñī*
which is more powerful
and permanent than
his personal presence.
He is my beloved and he
knows me by my name,
“Satsvarūpa dāsa.” I pray
that he will remember me
and recommend me
to Kṛṣṇa—to enter the spiritual world.
I want to meet
him there and take
up his service. Or if he is in the material
world preaching, I want
to join him there
and work in his mission.
Let me remember Prabhupāda
wherever I go. Let
me never forget that I am
his humble *celā*,
and may I never
disobey him.

Prabhupāda, I honor all
your followers and
bow at their feet:
I will associate with
your devotees and not
withdraw or mix
with non-devotees.
“Please accept me as
an atom at your lotus feet.”

Your servant,
Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Like Bombay, like Mayapur, like Los Angeles and London, New York City stands out as a place to which you gave special mercy and attention. Here is where you first set up camp in the West.

For your pleasure, therefore—and for your glorification, because your ongoing movement shows your ongoing glories—I’d like to give you a brief report from New York.

In your last days, in Vṛīndavana in 1977, one day you asked whether anyone had come from New York. No one had, but I’d stopped there on the way from Los Angeles, so you asked, “What’s the report?”

I gave you news I thought might please you: The Deities look beautiful, book distribution is strong. You listened. But then I mentioned *prasādam* distribution. Devotees were going out with food carts selling *prasādam* in the City. And you focused in: What are they serving? How do people like it? How much do they pay? How many customers a day? And so I followed up by mentioning the temple restaurant. And again the same questions: What are they serving? How do people like it? . . .

At that time you were hardly eating at all. Sometimes some juice, some Horlicks. . . But you were pleased to know that people in New York were enjoying Krishna *prasādam*.

Again I’m happy to report that Krishna *prasādam* is still enlivening the people of New York. At Divya’s Kitchen, sophisticated and discerning people can easily spend fifty dollars a head for a beautiful *prasādam* meal. At Tompkins Square Park, people can line up every day for a plate of *prasādam* for free. And in ISKCON Brooklyn, Govinda’s is now back in action, and people give eight or ten dollars or so and enjoy a sumptuous *prasādam* lunch.

And apart from *prasādam*. . . .

The team of *brahmacārīs* at the Yuga Dharma Ashram are going out every day—steadily for years—to chant the holy name for the people of the city and distribute your books. Sometimes people take books in stacks—seven or twenty-one at a time. And the ashram holds a weekly Sunday feast way uptown in Harlem.

At 26 2nd Avenue, programs are steadily going on, including one especially for Russians. The temple has just signed a new twelve-year lease, and plans are afoot for programs on the evenings not yet filled in.

At the Bhakti Center, young and dynamic devotees are attracting and carefully cultivating an expanding crowd of well-grounded Westerners—what Your Divine Grace might sometimes call “respectable people”—who are getting a taste for devotional service and the holy name.

There are efforts elsewhere too—a Rathayātrā festival in the Bronx, Nāma Haṭṭa gatherings in Queens. . . .

And at ISKCON Brooklyn—a work in progress—much has been done, and much is yet to do. Success there is sure. But for all success, we must always depend on your guidance and your blessings. We must go on trying to serve you and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda—with sincerity, with humility, with intelligence—and try our utmost to serve those who serve, or have served, or could serve.

You wrote of your spiritual master:

*tāra icchā balavān pāścātyete ṭhān ṭhān
hoy jāte gaurāṅger nām
pṛthivīte naḡarādi āsamudra nada nadī
sakalei bole kṛṣṇa rāma*

“By his strong desire, the holy name of Lord Gaurāṅga will spread throughout all the countries of the Western world. In all the cities, towns, and villages on the earth, from all the oceans, seas, rivers, and streams, everyone will chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your Guru Maharaja’s desire is also your desire. Of all the countries in the West, you began spreading the holy name in America. And of all cities, New York. And so: From the Hudson, to the East River, to the Atlantic Ocean—and everywhere

else in the world—may everyone chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa!

May your movement in New York City grow ever more strong and healthy and expansive. May those who feel hurt or humiliated recover their full spiritual enthusiasm, clear vision, and strength. May Maya be defeated, may Krishna consciousness shine forth. And may we always be fixed in devotional service to your divine lotus feet.

Your servant,

Jayādvaita Swami

My dear spiritual father Śrīla Abhay Charan Bhaktivedānta Swami
Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful obeisances.

*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*

On your Vyāsa-pūjā I would like to offer you my humble homage.

You have blessed me with your divine association and picked me up from the pool of material, conditioned life—the ocean of birth and death. You have given me the holy *dhāma* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Many other countless blessings, too. You have given me many instructions to fulfill for realizing your mercy on the world. You could have stayed in Vṛndāvana and gotten your spiritual emancipation, but you accepted great risk and austerity to carry out the order of your spiritual master to preach the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to the Western world.

I was blind, thinking that serving my senses was the goal of life. But you showed me how serving Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, Śrī Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadra, and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the actual purpose of life and that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is my only shelter. In this way you gave real meaning to my life and enabled me to taste real happiness for the first time.

Over the last twelve years I have had many health challenges. I was trying to carry out your instructions despite these challenges, but in early 2018 the doctors told me that unless I had a liver and kidney transplant within three to five months I would reach a point of no return and would leave my body. So, wanting to try to fulfill some more of your instructions, in the latter part of last year I got a liver and kidney transplant, and by the time of your Vyāsa-pūjā this year, one year will have passed.

I would like to see Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, the Aṣṭa Sakhīs, Māyāpur-candra, the Pañca-tattva, and Prahlāda-Narasimhadeva established in the new Temple of the Vedic Planetarium. I would like to see the Vedic Planetarium up and running. Also, you instructed me to develop the Navadvīpa-maṇḍala Parikramā and

Gaura-maṇḍala-bhūmi and facilitate the unification, in some form or other, of the Saraswat disciplic succession. You also wanted me to expand the outreach of Kṛṣṇa consciousness unlimitedly by establishing and expanding the congregational preaching in ISKCON while seeing to the mass distribution of your transcendental literatures. You wanted me to guide and care for the disciples you have sent me, so that they can be useful in spreading your message and achieve success in their lives. You said that I shall stay in Māyāpur and work through my assistants, and later you said that I should also travel around the world, since that is the duty of all *sannyāsīs* (but now my traveling days are challenged). And there were many other things you instructed me to do. You once said to me: “I have given you the spiritual world, so now you develop it.” When we just had just five devotees in Māyāpur, you said that eventually we would have a city of 50,000 devotees. Right now we have over five thousand, so gradually your prediction is taking shape.

I have written several memoirs, but the more I write the more I remember. Also, I’m trying to write the pastimes of Lord Caitanya—they are recounted in various books. Of course, there is no limit to His pastimes, but at least I want to give some more extended experience of how wonderful Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda and Their associates are. You have given yourself to all of us and given the *vāñī* of Lord Caitanya. I appreciate how you have engaged me in His service and thus kept me away from the clutches of the illusory energy. So, on this sacred day commemorating your appearance, known as Nanda-mahotsava, the day after Janmāṣṭamī, I beg for your continued mercy and glorify you for the unlimited mercy you have showered upon us all. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

Your insignificant disciple,

Jayapatāka Swami

*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*

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s philosophy of unity in diversity is a practical explanation of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s philosophy called *acintya-bheda-and-abheda-tattva*, simultaneous oneness and difference. In the material world there is much diversity but little unity. In Brahman there is unity but no diversity. In the spiritual world and in Kṛṣṇa consciousness there is the proper balance of unity in diversity.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted ISKCON’s leadership to discuss unity and diversity and implement it in a practical way so that the spiritual revolution envisioned by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the previous *ācāryas* would become a reality. By trying to serve the mission of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu under proper authorization, devotees can invoke the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who will then fulfill their aspirations and plans by using such sincere followers and servants as instruments. However, the success of this arrangement requires that devotees work under the GBC body, accepting the authority of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s strict servants, and not work under independent leaders with their own followers and finances.

The GBC’s specific duty is to help organize the world *saṅkīrtana* movement and systematically engage all kinds of devotees on all different levels in convincing people that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

All bodily systems—digestive, circulatory, respiratory, etc.—are of equal importance. A body is considered healthy when all its systems harmoniously work together and no one system dominates the others. Śrīla Prabhupāda compared ISKCON to the body of Lord Kṛṣṇa. ISKCON also has its “bodily systems”: outreach, worship, devotee association, membership, ministries, leadership, etc. Only when all these systems work together in balance and harmony is it possible to have a healthy ISKCON, in which members naturally grow spiritually. That growth will develop men and women of

character, who are empowered by Lord Kṛṣṇa to organize and expand the *saṅkīrtana* movement simply for His pleasure.

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi-līlā* 12.8, purport) Śrīla Prabhupāda describes the result when this program is not followed:

The words *daivera kārāṇa* indicate that by dint of providence, or by God's will, the followers of Advaita Ācārya divided into two parties. Such disagreement among the disciples of one *ācārya* is also found among the members of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. In the beginning, during the presence of Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, all the disciples worked in agreement; but just after his disappearance, they disagreed. One party strictly followed the instructions of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, but another group created their own concoction about executing his desires. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, at the time of his departure, requested all his disciples to form a governing body and conduct missionary activities cooperatively. He did not instruct a particular man to become the next *ācārya*. 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. Consequently, both factions were *asāra*, or useless, because they had no authority, having disobeyed the order of the spiritual master.

ISKCON should not follow this path. On the contrary, ISKCON should value, understand, and synthesize the words of Śrīla Prabhupāda and the previous *ācāryas* without selfish interest. In this way, Śrīla Prabhupāda and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa will bless ISKCON leaders with the spiritual knowledge that will enable them to cooperate and thus intelligently organize the expansion of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement through unity in diversity.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's aspiring servant,

Prahlādānanda Swami

Trivikrama Swami

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

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

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

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

Your lowly servant,

Trivikrama Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I wish to offer my most fallen obeisances at your lotus feet a thousand times.

You are a bona fide representative of Śrīla Vyāsadeva and hence entitled to receive Vyāsa-pūjā every year. Being a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, your desire is to make everyone Kṛṣṇa conscious. That is why you emphasized the importance of reading and distributing your books. Your books have changed the lives of millions around the planet. Two days ago I met a young Indian man in Kurukshetra. This man owns a shop that repairs almirahs. He recounted how a year ago someone gave him an almirah for repair. When he opened it he found three of your books. He started reading them and was moved by your presentation. He eventually came in touch with devotees, and he is now a good devotee. He, his wife, and his parents are all chanting sixteen rounds. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are continuing to preach through your books.

On February 26, 2019, Prime Minister Modi visited the Delhi temple for unveiling the Astounding Bhagavad Gītā. This astounding *Gītā* was designed and produced under Madhusevita Prabhu's supervision in Italy. This *Gītā* is the largest religious book ever published. It has 670 pages, weighs 800 kilograms, and stands 2.8 meters high! A year ago, Kṛṣṇa gave me the opportunity to get involved in this project. The honorable Prime Minister garlanded your *mūrti* on the stage. In his speech he spoke highly of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and your contribution to spreading Lord Kṛṣṇa's message. The Prime Minister said, "All of you associated with ISKCON have dedicated full energy and creativity to develop this *Gītā*. This *Gītā* is a symbol of the devotion and dedication of the followers of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrīla Prabhupāda." The Prime Minister stated that the *Bhagavad-gītā* is India's most inspiring gift to the whole world. It is the wealth of the whole world. He further stated that you had completely dedicated your life to preaching the *Gītā*. Facing all kinds of challenges, with an indomitable will you started ISKCON in order to present Lord Kṛṣṇa's message to the world. The Prime Minister performed āraṭi to the Astounding Bhagavad Gītā. He was very impressed to see the display of your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* in forty-four different languages. All the major news channels in India broadcast this event live at prime time, allowing millions

of people to witness this historic event. The media reported to our Communication Director, Yudhiṣṭhira Govinda Dāsa, that the event was an outstanding media success. Millions had your *darśana* on television and saw the Astounding Bhagavad Gītā. Many senior ISKCON devotees were present for this auspicious occasion.

With the passage of each day, I have become more and more convinced that your movement is the only hope for humanity. Just as Lord Caitanya converted tigers, snakes, and deer into devotees, you have convinced millions of animallike human beings to take to the path of pure devotional service. I pray for your causeless mercy so that I can follow your instructions and inspire book production and distribution. You also wanted us to build temples to spread the Lord's message. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* you called these temples spiritual hospitals. I pray that with your blessings I may be able to complete the projects we have started.

Your fallen servant,
Gopāl Krishna 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*

Meeting My Perfect Master

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I wish to tell you about my journey to meet you—and how your journey to meet me was effective.

In my youth I aspired to attain perfect happiness, and soon I realized that such happiness could not be achieved materially, but only spiritually. And, through reading spiritual books, I came to understand that to achieve spiritual perfection I needed a guru. In fact, I read that I didn't even have to *choose* the guru. He was already there; all I had to do was find him. So whenever I heard about a guru anywhere, even a thousand miles away, I would go to meet him.

One teacher I met was a Zen master, supposedly enlightened and certified by another enlightened master in Japan. I had read a book he had written, and when I heard he was holding a three-day retreat at his ashram in Rochester, New York, I went. Upon my arrival I found that his students were not very happy. But I thought, "Anyway, they're just students. Let me meet the master."

During the retreat he held meditation sessions in which everyone had to sit up straight and look at the wall, concentrating on some object he had placed there. The master walked around with a stick, and if he thought any of us was falling asleep or that someone's mind was wandering, he would hit the offender. After one such session, some of his students asked him about his recently having become angry. "Yes, it's true," he said. "I lost my temper; I shouldn't have." I started to doubt whether he was my guru. Still, I had read that a Zen master might appear ordinary and that one might not recognize him, so I thought, "Maybe this is part of it." But my doubt remained. Later, he came to Boston, near Brandeis University, where I was studying. After his talk and demonstration, someone in the audience asked about Vedānta. "I have enough trouble keeping up with Zen," he answered. "How do you expect me to know about Vedānta?" My

previous doubt was confirmed: "He is not my perfect master."

Then a *haṭha-yogī* came to Brandeis to give a lecture. He had long hair and a beard and flowing robes. He said that by yoga you could attain complete mastery over your bodily functions, including the movements of the bowels. You could actually command your intestines: "Ascending colon, advance! Transverse colon, advance! Descending colon, advance!" and finally, "Rectum, pass!" I was really looking for a guru, so I thought, "Anyway, maybe."

After the lecture, I tried to meet the swami, but he was leaving for the airport. I wanted to ride with him in his car, but there was no room, so I rode with some of his students. On the way, they discussed the various foods they missed since they had joined the ashram. So I started to have some doubts. But then I thought, "Anyway, they are just the students; the master may be on a much higher level."

When we arrived at the airport, I beheld the swami. There he was: long flowing hair, beard, draping orange robes, a flower in his hair, a twinkle in his eyes—the very picture of Indian spirituality. But then I saw him tightly embracing his women disciples. And I knew: "He is not my perfect master. I have to keep looking."

Next I heard of an "enlightened" psychology professor who was teaching at Antioch College, in Ohio, which was known as a progressive university, and I wanted to meet him immediately. Ready to do anything to find my guru, I got in my car and drove the seven hundred miles. When I arrived, with great anticipation and eagerness I searched out the professor's office and inquired about him from his secretary. "He's playing golf," she informed me. "Playing golf?" I asked incredulously. "I thought he was supposed to be enlightened." "That is his Zen," she replied. "Oh, no!" I thought. "Playing golf? He is not my perfect master."

Although I was disappointed about the professor, the Antioch campus was full of people interested in spiritual life, and while I was there I spoke with some of them. Some students in the Student Union told me about a guru who had recently visited the campus. "The guru is in the heart," he had said, "where he sits on a lotus flower. You can actually see him and speak with him." "Wow!" I thought; "that sounds attractive." That night I tried to really focus on my heart. And indeed, I got a definite impression that there *was* a divine personality there, with whom I could have a sublime, personal relationship. And he seemed just about to speak. I was very excited, and I became eager to meet him.

Back at Brandeis, one of my psychology professors invited J. Krishnamūrti to speak. I attended the lecture, and during a break I told my professor that I wanted to meet Krishnamūrti. “Why?” my professor asked. “I may want him as my guru,” I replied. “Oh, he doesn’t accept disciples,” my professor said. “He doesn’t even touch money.” My professor was impressed. But I wasn’t. I thought, “If he is actually able to help people, why should he refuse to take disciples? Just to be renounced? He is not my perfect master.”

I kept searching. I already had the idea that you don’t have to choose your guru, that he is already there. I even had a mental picture of what he looked like—and he didn’t have hair. All the swamis and yogis I had encountered had long hair and beards, so I was starting to despair: “How am I ever going to meet my guru?”

Then one day I saw a poster on campus: “Lecture—Bhagavad-gītā As It Is—Swami Bhaktivedānta.” My friends and I were supposed to go to the movies that night, but I wanted to attend the lecture instead. When I suggested that, however, one friend in particular got really upset. “Why can’t you be normal like other people?” she complained. “All you want to do is see swamis and yogis.” And the argument became so intense that I decided not to go. I didn’t want to disappoint my friends, so I tried to go along with their idea. But something inside me was impelling me to go to the lecture. Finally I said, “Okay, let’s go to a later show. But first I have to go to the lecture by the swami. I promise, he will be the last one I go see.”

My friends reluctantly came along, but because we’d been arguing, we arrived at the auditorium late and missed the lecture.

Entering the auditorium, I beheld an elderly Indian gentleman—you—sitting on a cushion onstage. To the side, a young devotee (Satsvarūpa dāsa) sang into a microphone, and other devotees were dancing in a circle around you. The sound of Satsvarūpa’s singing was reverberating off the bare brick walls. One by one, students from the audience jumped onto the stage and joined in. I felt like going up, too, but I knew my friends wouldn’t approve; that would have been too much for them. More students were jumping up, climbing on the stage, and joining the circle, dancing. I kept trying to focus my eyes on you, but I couldn’t; your effulgence was too great.

When the *kīrtana* ended, one of the devotees announced that they needed a lift to Harvard Square or to Boston. As my friends and I were still going to the movie and it was at Harvard Square, I invited the devotees to ride with us, and everyone piled into my

station wagon. I was driving, and also in front were two ladies. In the back seat were three or four devotees, and in the rear compartment were my friends and I don't know how many more—I don't think we could have fit anyone else.

Satsvarūpa was squeezed in the rear with my best friend, Gary. Because of our impersonal readings, my friend was saying that ultimately everything was void. And Satsvarūpa was saying, "There is no void in the creation of God." But my friend kept insisting: "Everything is ultimately void." I was overhearing them from the front, and puffed up as I was, I thought, "Oh, how silly that they are arguing over this." I thought I had it all figured out. So I turned to the back and announced something I had read in some Zen book: "It is not void, and it is not not-void, but to give it a name, we call it the void." I thought I had resolved the whole controversy. But still, they kept arguing.

One of the ladies up front with me was Jāhnavā. I had been trying to understand all the different paths and philosophies, so I asked her about Zen. "This world seems real," she said, "but it is illusory, like images on a movie screen. Now, if you withdraw your consciousness from the screen, you will find that there is a beam of light." I thought, "This is the best explanation I've ever heard, even better than the Zen books'." "And if you keep following that beam of light back," she continued, "you come to a point." I thought, "Wow, this is getting to the void." But then she said, "But behind that point there is a projector, and behind the projector there is a person." Then I thought, "This philosophy encompasses everything that Zen does, and more."

Then I asked her about Yogānanda. She dismissed him out of hand: "Oh, he is just a shopkeeper. Whatever you want, he keeps in stock. You want yoga, he will give you that. Whatever you ask for, he pulls off the shelf." Then she said, "At his ashram in California he has a Gandhi peace memorial. But Gandhi wasn't a worker for world peace. He was a politician who wanted to drive the British out of India." She just dismissed him: "He doesn't even know who Gandhi is."

"She is speaking with authority," I thought. But I sensed that it couldn't all be coming from her. How was it possible for a girl of only twenty or so to have so much knowledge and speak with such authority? Then I thought, "This must be coming from her teacher. I want to meet him."

When we got to Harvard Square, I let the devotees out. But as I was driving away, I realized that I didn't know how to get in touch with them. How would I meet the guru? I immediately stopped the car, jumped out, and ran after them. I caught up to one, Patita Pāvana. When he stopped, he turned his head and pointed to the crowd around us. "You see these people?" he said. "They're all sleepwalkers. They don't know what they're doing, or why. They're just conforming." His words were so intriguing and deep; I wanted to hear more.

Suddenly I became aware of the honking of horns all around us. I'd left my car in the middle of the roundabout, and the traffic at Harvard Square was backed up. The honking kept getting louder. "I want to meet the Swami," I said. "Quick, give me the address." He jotted down the address on a slip of paper and handed it to me. "Come at seven," he said, "tomorrow night." I could hardly wait.

The next evening when I arrived, the small storefront temple was packed with young people. You were sitting on a cushion at the far end. The walls were decorated with exotic paintings, and the aroma of incense filled the air. When you began speaking, I had difficulty understanding what you were saying. You had a thick Bengali accent, and the philosophy was new to me. But I did hear you say that out of many thousands of men, one would seek perfection. "That's me!" I thought. "He's talking about me!"

After the lecture, you called for questions. Someone asked, "Since everything comes from God, or Kṛṣṇa, does *māyā* also come from Kṛṣṇa?" You replied that everything comes from Kṛṣṇa, just like everything comes from the sun. The cloud also comes from the sun, although it covers our vision of the sun. But the sun is never covered by the cloud; only our vision is covered.

I was burning to ask my question. "There are so many swamis and yogis," I began, "and each recommends a different process of self-realization, and each says that his is the best. So how do I know which is actually best?"

You responded, "What is your goal? Do you want to serve God, or do you want to become God?" How brilliant—how perfect! I was asking about the means, but to determine the best means, we must first establish the end, the goal.

"When you seek after God, then God, who is situated within your heart, will give you all facility. But if you want to *become* God, you will be cheated; you are cheating yourself. How you can become

God? You are trying to become God, then how you became a dog? God cannot become a dog. God is always God.

“The Māyāvādī philosopher says that ‘I am God, but by *māyā* I am thinking I am not God. So, by meditation I shall become God.’ But that means he is under the punishment of *māyā*. God has come under the influence of *māyā*? How is that? God is great, and if He is under the influence of *māyā*, then *māyā* becomes greater than God.

“So, the idea is that as long as we shall continue this hallucination that ‘I am God,’ there is no question of getting the favor of God. Then you do your own business, and try to find yourself whether you are God or something else. As soon as I think ‘I am God,’ I am cheating myself. Who will help you? That is going on. Everyone is thinking, ‘I am God.’

“So, what you are thinking? You are trying to become God? What is your idea? Or you are thinking there is no God?”

“I am thinking that there is God,” I replied.

“There is God? You are thinking like that?”

But I knew that I couldn’t cheat you, so I replied, “Yes. But I can see that I was trying to become God.”

“So, you are trying to become God—that means you are not God. Is it not? How you became not-God? God is so great that He never becomes not-God. So, your conclusion should be that ‘I am not that God who is great. I am a different God who becomes sometimes not-God.’ Therefore you are a different God from that God who is great. Is it not?”

“That is a fact. Because you are part and parcel of God, you are minute God; therefore you have the potency of becoming not-God. Just like a fire and a spark of the fire: A spark, when it is in the fire, is bright fire, but as soon as it goes out of the fire, it becomes extinguished. But the big fire never becomes extinguished. Similarly, you are not that big fire; you are that small spark. You have fallen down; therefore you are not God. Now you have to raise yourself again to the fire, and you will again be a blazing spark.

“So, that is the difference. That is stated in the Vedic literature. Every living entity is Brahman, but the Supreme Brahman is Kṛṣṇa. He never becomes not-God. We see in Kṛṣṇa’s life, when He was a child on the lap of His mother, He was God. So many demons were killed. He didn’t have to meditate to become God. While He was playing, He was God, and when He was fighting on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, He was God. That is God. Not that sometimes

not-God, sometimes God. That is not God. God is always God, in any circumstance. That is God.”

As you were speaking, I got the clear impression that you knew everything about me, that you were seeing right into me, into Waltham, into my apartment, into my bathroom, right to the wall on which I had pasted a sign I had inscribed in beautiful ornate lettering: YOU ARE GOD.

My search was over. I offered my obeisances. I had found my spiritual master.

The devotees put their heads on the floor and offered obeisances. I also kept my head on the floor in surrender—for a long time. I felt so glad. I had finally found my perfect master and wanted to surrender fully. At the same time, I also felt ashamed and humiliated. My abominable desire to become God had been exposed; everyone there knew I had wanted to become God.

After some time, I heard the sounds of devotees bringing plates of food, *prasādam*, to their guests. Something inside prompted me to look up. I expected everyone would be glaring at me, but no. People were blissfully taking *prasādam*, and when they saw me get up they simply smiled.

Moments earlier, when a devotee had offered you a large plate of *prasādam*, you had responded, “I am not God; I cannot eat so much.”

The *prasādam* I was given looked just like everything else in the temple—colorful, attractive, and variegated. Because of macrobiotics and other speculations, I never expected a feast. Where to begin? I picked up what must have been a cauliflower *pakorā*, put it in my mouth, bit into it . . . and felt an explosion of taste. One by one, I sampled the preparations: *baḍās*, sweet rice—every taste new, incomparable. I thought everything was perfect: the guru, the *prasādam*, the chanting.

I loved the chanting. The devotees had a sign with the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra written in Indian-style lettering. During the *kīrtana*, as I was looking at the letters on the sign, they started to move, dissolve, form, and unform themselves. This was the kind of indication I’d been looking for, and everything told me that you were indeed my spiritual master.

From the time you answered my question and I bowed my head, I surrendered. From that first meeting, my whole life’s purpose became to bring people to meet you. And I was able to do that for many years. But when you passed away, I wondered, *What will be my*

service now? My whole service had been to bring people to you.

Now I understand that you are always present, and that by speaking of you, hearing about you, remembering you, and, most significantly, by studying your books and following your instructions, by practicing and preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness, serving your mission, we can experience your presence. So I can continue doing what I was doing when you were personally present—introducing souls to you—which is what I feel most natural doing. Because I know that somehow or other, if someone comes in touch with you, his life will be successful.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your eternal, humbled servant,

Girirāj Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I bow in reverence at your lotus feet. I come to you with a simple prayer—that you petition your Lord Kṛṣṇa to mercifully empower your servants to restore your Western mission to the glory that you created for it. As we walked with you one morning in Rancho Park, Los Angeles, you stopped and wonderfully recreated Lord Kṛṣṇa’s dialogue with Arjuna, speaking both parts.

Lord Kṛṣṇa: Just be My instrument, Arjuna. I have already slain these soldiers. But you take the credit.

Arjuna: But how can I accomplish such a great task?

Lord Kṛṣṇa: I have already done it Myself. But I want to give you the credit. So just be My instrument.

Prabhupāda, you then spoke in your own voice and said, “Just as Lord Kṛṣṇa defeated the Pāṇḍavas’ enemies at the Battle of Kurukṣetra and thus spread His own glories, so the Lord will spread His *sāṅkīrtana* movement. But He wants to give you the credit. So take the credit and become the Lord’s instrument. Otherwise, He will give the credit to another devotee. But why don’t you take the credit and make your life perfect?”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we humbly volunteer to be your instrument, because you are the Lord’s greatest instrument. Please empower us to restore your Mission to its rightful prominence in a fallen and suffering world.

Your aspiring servant,

Hridayānanda dās Goswami

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

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

As time passes, the importance of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books becomes more prominent.

When I first joined I heard that Śrīla Prabhupāda had said, “My books are better than I am.” Śrīla Prabhupāda put so much energy into writing his books, and then inconceivable efforts into getting them published and distributed. The description of his work in Delhi to get his first three *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* volumes printed is most inspiring. We can never duplicate that. He was alone, with no supporters. His Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, had told him, “If you ever get money, print books.” Śrīla Prabhupāda based his movement on that instruction. He printed books even when he did not have money.

How can the books be better than him? His books can be everywhere at the same time. Anyone who reads them submissively will have Śrīla Prabhupāda’s personal association.

His books will be present for thousands of years after his physical departure.

His books provide the blissful service of distributing them and thereby bringing Śrīla Prabhupāda into the lives of millions and billions of souls all over the world.

His books are connecting us with the previous *ācāryas*, back to Lord Brahmā.

We are sure, therefore, that everyone in human society will welcome *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, even though it is now presented with so many faults, for it is recommended by such an authority as Śrī Nārada, who has very kindly appeared in this chapter. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.11, purport)

Śrīla Prabhupāda has given everything in his books. We learn what is the real goal (purpose) of human life and why and *how* to achieve it. His purports guide us in detail. I get many “how to” questions. The answers are always found in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books.

Śrīla Prabhupāda often read his books. He said, “I want to see what Kṛṣṇa has written.” He translated *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and organized a society that is a continuation of *caitanya-līlā* and *sādhusaiṅga*, i.e., *bhāgavata-kathā*, *saṅkīrtana*, and *vaiṣṇava-sevā*.

Prabhupāda: Some way or other, if they read my books they will be benefited. There is no doubt about it. (Garden Conversation with Dr. Allen Gerson, 22 June 1975, Los Angeles)

If you chant always Hare Krishna, read my books, and preach this philosophy sincerely, then Krishna will provide you with all facility, and you will not fall down into material entanglement. (Letter to Devotees, 30 March 1967)

In conjunction with this 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. (Letter to Hugo Salemon, 22 November 1974)

Please do not fail to chant 16 rounds, rise early, read my books carefully and follow all the regulative principles. (Letter to Gandharva Dāsa — Bombay, 12 January 1975)

Yes, as a Sannyāsī and GBC your first duty is to read my books. Otherwise how will you preach? In order to remain steadily fixed in Krishna consciousness there must be a sound philosophical understanding. Otherwise it will become only sentiment. Whenever you find time please read my books. (Letter to Satsvarūpa Goswami, 5 January 1976)

When we read Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, we are inspired to distribute them. When we distribute them, we get realizations of the potency of the transcendental literature.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is always personally present in his books.

Your servant,

Kavicandra Swami

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

This year you have given me a very big service to perform. To be honest I never thought I would do this service, but when you appeared to me in dream and gave me permission, I was left with no choice.

Over the past year some people had been asking me to initiate them into the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. I gently brushed aside their requests and told them that I would be glad to be their *śikṣā-guru* and give them instructions, but I had decided to not take on the responsibility of *dīkṣā-guru*. However you sent one person to me who would not give up. She was very persistent.

I thought I would dissuade her by giving her many tasks to do to achieve the goal, but she did all of them. Writing essays, increasing her chanting to 16 rounds, stopping her occasional fall downs with cigarettes, she even gave up her boyfriend. No obstacle I put in front of her was too large for her to tackle. She was determined, saying that the first time she saw me she felt I was her spiritual father. Only you could awaken this in her by your mercy.

So I was praying during *Kārtika* in Vṛndāvana, about what I should I do. Should I take on this responsibility? Then you came to me in my dream and told me please chant more rounds and then I can make disciples. I woke up stunned. I realized I am not a pure devotee like you but my words when I preached were having such an effect on people. I realized I was doing what you had always said: repeating what I had heard without changing the message.

On this basis you gave me the opportunity and the order to make disciples. Now things are growing. In a small village in Italy where my disciple lives, I am preaching and new people are being attracted. They are organizing a Sunday feast and *kīrtana* weekly in my disciple's yoga studio. The new people are coming forward to take up the chanting and follow the principles, and it is delightful to see you working your magic through such a fallen soul as me.

I pray that you help me to become helpless in Kṛṣṇa's hands and your hands. That I become your puppet and dance as you tell me to dance...bringing the message of Mahāprabhu all over the world. Please bless me that I may be a useful servant in your mission to

spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness to every town and village.

Your fallen and aspiring servant,

Swami B.V. Bhāgavat

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*naiṣāṁ matis tāvad urukramāṅghriṁ
sprśaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthaḥ
mahīyasāṁ pāda-rajo-'bhīṣekaṁ
niṣkiñcanānāṁ na vṛṇīta yāvāt*

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.5.32)

One cannot become a perfect devotee of the Lord without having touched the lotus feet of a great devotee. One who has nothing to do with this material world is called *niṣkiñcana*. The process of self-realization and the path home, back to Godhead, means surrendering

to the bona fide spiritual master and taking the dust of his lotus feet on one's head. Thus one advances on the path of transcendental realization. Vidura had this relationship with Maitreya, and he attained the results.

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

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

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

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

humbly carries out his instructions, knowledge of the Absolute is revealed in the heart.

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

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

Your insignificant servant,

Subhāg Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

Now we have arrived at the ISKCON center in Kanpur. On the outskirts of the city the devotees of Kanpur have acquired a piece of land, where they have established an impressive marble temple with beautiful Deities of Nītāi-Gaurasundara, Rādhā-Mādhava, and Janakī-Janakī-vallabha. The temple was inaugurated in 2015. There is also a large guesthouse and a Govinda's restaurant. The āśrama has forty *brahmacārīs*, and the congregation numbers about 20,000. Seeing the success of the local centers here in India is very encouraging for the overseas devotees. In our travels around the holy places we see many *āśramas*, but nothing compares to ISKCON's facilities. Others may have temples with Deities, but their standard of worship is not comparable to the Deity worship in Your Divine Grace's ISKCON temples. Similarly, others are publishing books, but your BBT books are the most beautifully illustrated, with the best

quality of printing and binding, and at the same time they present the highest philosophy, expressed in the most erudite and crystal-clear language. The festivals organized by ISKCON are another important feature: they attract the largest crowds and awaken the highest love for the Lord and His devotees.

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

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

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

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

Bhakti-vighna-vināśa Narasimha Mahārāja

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

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

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

The Importance of Studying Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Books

In last year’s Vyāsa-pūjā offering I gave ten reasons why Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books are meant for every person on this planet. This surely includes all the members of ISKCON. How much more *they* should study, understand, and apply the knowledge, wisdom, and instructions contained in all the books Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us. To read these books means to directly associate with him.

A couple of years ago, during the ISKCON Leadership Saṅga, a survey revealed that even after twenty or thirty years most leaders hadn’t completed reading the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and a number of other books by Śrīla Prabhupāda, despite the fact that he emphatically emphasized the importance of studying his books. He once said that all ISKCON leaders should study his books every day for four hours.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books are the spiritual lawbooks for humanity at large, and especially for ISKCON members. These books reveal the essence of all Vedic knowledge. They are the compendium for understanding the philosophy and practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The essential qualification of ISKCON leaders is to simply repeat what Śrīla Prabhupāda has given in his books, lectures, and letters without subtracting anything or adding anything new.

Here I would like to give some quotations from Śrīla Prabhupāda regarding the importance of reading his books:

I am glad to see how nicely you are reading my books. Please continue to do this. We need so many preachers who are soundly versed in the scriptures to convince the world to take to Krishna Consciousness.
(Letter to Vrindaban Candra, 9 November 1970)

You may please me the most by reading my books and following the instructions therein and by becoming fully Krishna Conscious in this lifetime. (Letter to Bahurupa, 22 November 1974)

I have already answered the most important question. “How to please Kṛṣṇa?”—by following all the regulative principles that I have given you, chanting 16 rounds and reading my books scrutinizingly. Everyone must do these things, otherwise they cannot understand Krishna Consciousness. (Letter to Ādi-keśava, 16 January 1975)

Thank you for reading my books and appreciating them. Please continue to do so. That will help you advance nicely in spiritual life. By reading my books and chanting Hare Krishna, your life will become perfect. (Letter to Mr. Lourenco, 14 March 1975)

The great gift to posterity that each generation of ISKCON can give is the gift of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his teachings in the form of his books, lectures, and letters. Thus, generation after generation will be able to receive the special mercy offered by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

By taking full shelter of Śrīla Prabhupāda in his *vāñī* manifestation, all teachers in ISKCON, on various levels of advancement, will be able to authentically convey Śrīla Prabhupāda’s real teachings, thus giving proper guidance, shelter, and protection to all.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s active presence will secure the unity and integrity of ISKCON.

ISKCON’s teachings will remain consistent over space and time. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s realized knowledge—endowing him with the specific potency to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness—will not only be preserved but also developed. His books will remain central to us, for they contain insights and directions that await future development to be realized. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s eyes will always remain the lens through which all future generations see our predecessor *ācāryas*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda continues preaching through his books. I and many other ISKCON preachers have personal experience of this. When Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books were translated into Mongolian, the Mongolian devotees understood the importance of printing and distributing Prabhupāda’s books just by reading them, and later they did print and distribute them. I had difficulties explaining to them

that they needed the permission of the Bhaktivedānta Book Trust. They argued, “What is the problem? Why are we being prevented from publishing and printing these books? They are so important.” They were so enthusiastic! It took quite some time to convince them, but now they are cooperating nicely.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s book publication and distribution *kī jaya!*

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s servant,

Bhaktivaibhava Swami

Dānavīr Goswami

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

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

*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.

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

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

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

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

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

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

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

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

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

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

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

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

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

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

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

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

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

*kiṁ durāpādanam teṣāṁ
puṁsām uddāma-cetasām
yair āśritas tīrtha-padaś
caraṇo vyasanātyayaḥ*

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

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

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

Your Divine Grace has changed the world.

*Begging for your causeless mercy,
Your forever thankful, insignificant servant,*

Dānavīr Goswami

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, Friend of the Poor in Spirit,

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

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

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

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

Your suggestion of *how* to expand the *Bhāgavatam* is also a wonder: “So if Joan of Arc, she was in relationship with God, she is also *Bhāgavatam*.” Here you suggest that reading the *Bhāgavatam* is a dynamic process, in which it is possible and indeed necessary to find and appreciate how persons not explicitly included in the ancient text of Śrīla Vyāsadeva can be seen as participating in what you once called “the beautiful story of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

Thus, for you, the *Bhāgavatam* is not limited to descriptions of the Lord's devotees in ancient India, as it is not a geographically or ethnically circumscribed work. Rather, the *Bhāgavatam*, as you hint in this discussion, challenges us to think broadly, to see it as a dynamic, living text that is to be *inhabited* as we read and realize its transformative import.

I am reminded of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's joyful exclamation, upon hearing King Pratāparudra recite a verse from the Tenth Canto's "Gopī Gītā": *bhūridā, bhūridā!* "You are the most magnanimous!" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.31.9; CC Madhya 14.14). Mahāprabhu saw the king—despite his apparent disqualification due to being engaged in worldly duties—as one to be acknowledged and even celebrated as a participant in the spirit of the *Bhāgavatam*, a spirit epitomized by the *gopīs* in their pure love for Kṛṣṇa.

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

Serving your lotus feet,

Kṛṣṇa Kṣetra Swami

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

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

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

We celebrate your appearance because you are the genuine representative of the supreme physician, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, whose message of hope for suffering humanity is expressed by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in one of his songs: *enechi auṣadhi māyā nāśībāra lāgi' hari-nāma-mahā-mantra lao tumi māgi'*. “I have brought medicine to awaken every living being from perpetual sleep. Please receive the holy name of the Lord, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, and awaken.” A similar allegory is given by Jaḍa Bharata who compares the conditioned soul to a person who has been bitten by the snake of ignorance and has fallen into a coma-like sleep on the lap of the witch Māyā. He tells Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa:

“The conditioned soul in the material forest is sometimes swallowed by a python or crushed. At such a time he is left lying in the forest like a dead person, devoid of consciousness and knowledge. Sometimes other poisonous snakes bite him. Being blind to his consciousness, he falls down into a dark well of hellish life with no hope of being rescued.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.13.9)

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

Since I have accepted your offer and taken this medicine, the disease of *avidyā* is receding and the dark clouds of ignorance are gradually dissipating, letting shine forth the warming light of the Kṛṣṇa-Sun. No doubt that your treatment is effective. To this I can bear witness. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī describes in his *Upadeśāmṛta* how the medicine is taking its effect:

“The holy name, character, pastimes and activities of Kṛṣṇa are all transcendently sweet like sugar candy. Although the tongue of one afflicted by the jaundice of *avidyā* cannot taste anything sweet, it is wonderful that simply by carefully chanting these sweet names every day, a natural relish awakens within his tongue, and his disease is gradually destroyed at the root.” (7)

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

In a lecture back in 1974 you said:

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

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

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

*nivṛtta-tarṣair upaḡṭyamānād
bhavauśadhāc chrotra-mano-’bhirāmāt
ka uttamaśloka-guṇānuvādāt
pumān virajyeta vinā paśughnāt*

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

In the purport to this verse you tell us:

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

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

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

I beg to remain your eternal servant,

Bhakti Gauravāṇī Goswami

My dearest and most beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

A lot has happened in the fifty-three years since the formation of

the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

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

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

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

I have just attended the opening of a magnificent, white-marbled ISKCON temple in Rajkot, Gujarat. This triggered in my mind thoughts of a conversation at the 1977 Kumbha-melā between you and a gentleman who had questioned you about the reason for opening so many temples when there were already numerous temples in existence. You expertly asked the gentleman who the woman and boy sitting close to him were. He replied that they were his wife and son. I still vividly remember your response: “There are so many boys all over the world. Why did you give birth to one more?” The gentleman vehemently stated, “But this is my son.” Prabhupāda, you responded likewise. “There are many temples, but the ones ISKCON is opening will be our temples. These are Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s temples.” Śrīla Prabhupāda, you would be pleased to know that to date there are close to a thousand ISKCON temples or centers worldwide.

ISKCON *padayātrīs* are constant and consistent globetrotters. The *padayātrā* teams have walked more than two hundred and sixty thousand kilometers worldwide, visiting towns and villages in one

hundred and ten countries. They visit not only towns and villages but also the people in between the towns and villages. This has exceeded Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s prediction, as the teams spread the holy name, promote simple living, high thinking, hold cultural programs, make friends, and distribute books.

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

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

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

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

*anya-dharmās tiraskṛtya puraskṛtya mahotsavān
yadi pravartaye na tvāṁ tadā dāso harer na hi
tvad-anvitās ca ye jīvā bhaviṣyanti kalāo iha
pāpino ’pi gamiṣyanti nirbhayā hari-mandiram*

“If I do not preach your message, subdue all other

religions, and make devotional festivals predominant, then I shall not be considered a servant of Lord Hari. In Kali-yuga those who follow you, even if they are sinful, will attain the abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa without fear.” (*Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa* 194.14–15)

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

During the 1972 Māyāpur Festival you saw Bengali children rummaging through the leftovers on the leaf plates left by devotees. Almost instantly you gave your senior disciples the following instruction: “A temple means *prasādam* distribution. No one within ten miles of an ISKCON temple should go hungry.” You termed ISKCON the kitchen religion. This served as an inspiration for ISKCON’s Food for Life program. Food for Life Global has 211 projects worldwide and distributes two million plates of free *prasādam* to the needy and hungry daily. The Annamrita Midday meal scheme in India, which feeds schoolchildren, is distributing over 1.2 million plates of *prasādam* daily.

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

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

Your insignificant servant,

Lokanāth Swami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to your divine grace.

One of the many challenges we face in the expansion of our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is the diversity of viewpoints that manifest in executing and spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Of course, you were well aware of this and advised us:

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 materialists, without being able to adjust the varieties and the disagreements, make everything zero. They cannot come into agreement with varieties, but if we keep Krishna 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 Kīrtanānanda, 18 October 1973)

You used this phrase “unity in diversity” in different contexts: (1) that the Lord has both a personal and an impersonal aspect, (2) that there is unity in the diverse manifestations of the spiritual realm and of the material realm, (3) that everything is simultaneously and inconceivably one with and different from God (*acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*), (4) that our devotees come from different backgrounds but have one purpose, (5) that different varieties of food all have the single purpose of nourishing the body, and (6) that we should strive to keep the movement together in spite of different viewpoints.

There is tension between unity and diversity in many areas of our Kṛṣṇa conscious lives. This may be in reference to different services in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement; e.g., one may consider his or her service to be most important. In relationship to preaching there are also many different approaches; e.g., one may consider his or her approach to be more productive, whereas others may consider that approach to be a deviation. There are diverse opinions concerning management; e.g., whether it should be centralized or decentralized. The subject matter of raising children may also be contentious, etc., etc., etc.

If we try to impose too much uniformity, we lose individual initiative, creativity, inspiration, dynamism, the ability to attract diverse segments of the population, and the very spirit of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If we allow too much diversity, we break apart, become spiritually weak, and deviate from your vision of changing the direction of this materialistic civilization.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you informed us that nothing external can impede the progress of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, but that our internal conflicts, if not handled with the understanding of unity in diversity, can be a major impediment.

Unalterable principles need to be understood and followed. Mature devotees should ascertain and accept details that can be adjusted according to time, place, and circumstance. Doing this is a challenge we face in serving your lotus feet.

We should appreciate one another and have loving relationships with one another, regardless of different opinions concerning adjustable details. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pray that you allow us to have the intelligence to understand these points and apply them.

Your servant,

Bīr Krishna dās Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written in the *saṅga-tyāga* section of his Śrī Bhaktyāloka:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Meditating on Nārada Muni's expertise for engaging varieties of candidates in devotional service helps me to appreciate yours more. Vālmīki lived the life of a plunderer, sometimes even murdering his victims, all for the benefit of his family members. Upon Śrī Nārada's enlightening him as to the dire effects of his profession, Vālmīki surrendered to Nārada's guidance. Nārada, understanding that Vālmīki would be unable to chant the name of Lord Rāma, instructed him to meditate on "Marā" instead, a fitting mantra for

one whose life had been so intertwined with death. As a result, Vālmīki became purified by inadvertently and repeatedly chanting “Rāma”, and eventually recorded the *Rāmāyaṇa* as it was revealed in his meditative trance by the grace of Nārada.

In your commentary to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Madhya-līlā 24.252, you wrote, “This is the effect of associating with a pure devotee. Our preachers who are preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world should follow in the footsteps of Nārada Muni and become purified by following the four principles and chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. This will make them fit to become Vaiṣṇavas. Then, when they speak to sinful people about the teachings of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, people will be affected and take the instructions.” Although you wrote this to instruct your followers, you were, as usual, the perfect emblem of it.

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

Devotee: Therefore the association is most important.

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

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

Lastly, there is the history of Nārada Muni and Dhruva. Nārada did not abandon Dhruva after Dhruva admitted to not being capable of following his directive. Rather, Śrī Nārada compassionately adjusted his instruction in accordance with Dhruva’s capability. Due to Dhruva’s firm faith in his gurus and his own determination, he was successful in his *sādhana*, and being further purified by the Lord’s *darśana*, ultimately achieved the peak of devotional perfection. In a

similar way, (although you were inflexible in regard to your disciples following the four regulative principles) you amended your original mandate of 64 rounds daily to 16 rounds. You prescribed a unique, practical blend of *pāñcarātrika* and *bhagavata-vidhis* by which many have made tangible progress toward the ultimate goal of *prema-prayojana*. Besides your initiates, you encouraged others to practice the Kṛṣṇa conscious process according to their personal limitations, or yet others to practice their preferred brand of Vaisnavism or other bona fide religious path more ardently.

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

Your servant,
Ganapati Swami

Janānanda dās Goswami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet.

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

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

A wooden board is floating in the ocean, and in the middle of the board is a hole. A turtle swimming in the ocean surfaces, and its head goes right through the hole in the board. Just as the chance of this happening is very slim, so the chance of a conditioned soul finding shelter at the lotus feet of a genuine spiritual master is equally slim.

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

*akṣṇoḥ phalaṁ tvādṛśa-darśanam hi
tanoḥ phalaṁ tvādṛśa-gātra-saṅgaḥ
jihvā-phalaṁ tvādṛśa-kīrtanam hi
su-durlabhā bhāgavatā hi loke*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If I truly felt the depth of your mercy and the depth of the spiritual gratefulness I owe you, then I would stop my whining and self-pity, trying to justify my foolishness and looking to externals for my shelter or relief from unsavory experiences. When will that day come? You showed the perfect example in every respect, not only

refusing to take credit but also taking shelter at every moment of the lotus feet of your guru and Gaurāṅga. This is true humility.

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

The instructions of my spiritual master to worship the Personality of Godhead by chanting, remembering, serving His feet, and so on are my only *sādhana*, my only *sādhya*, my only livelihood. I am unable to give up these instructions, either in the stage of practice or in the stage of perfection. They alone are my object of desire and my only responsibility. Besides them I can desire no other responsibility, not even in my dreams. It is all the same to me whether I feel happy or unhappy, or whether my material existence is eradicated or not.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Your eternal servant,
Janānanda dās Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my heartfelt obeisances.

This year we are grateful to present to you a very special offering. For the first time since 1930, devotees have been entrusted with the full care of the rooftop terrace of number 1 Ultadanga Junction Road in Calcutta. The divine pastime that took place here in 1922 is our very life and soul. It was here that you first met your eternal Guru Mahārāja, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda. At the commencement of that first meeting a seed was planted in your heart. Your Guru Mahārāja instructed you to spread the love of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu throughout the world in the English language. The seed of this instruction germinated in your heart for forty-three years. Then in 1965 it sprouted as you left India on a cargo ship, the M.V. *Jaladuta*. You told us that when you arrived in New York City you had nothing except a crate of your translations of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and this instruction of your Guru Mahārāja. Soon, that seed grew into a glorious desire tree with hundreds of branches around the world and millions of flowers in the form of your loving devotees. These flowers have distributed hundreds of millions of the same seeds in the form of your books, *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, *prasādam* distribution, and numerous other outreach activities.

In 1922 the house on Ultadanga was called Bhaktivinoda Asana. It was the place where your Guru Mahārāja began the outreach of his Gauḍīya Maṭha.

In March of this year we acquired this historic but sadly neglected property. Days after, I sat on the rooftop terrace and in my heart's meditation I could almost see, hear, and feel your interaction with your Guru Mahārāja—an exchange that would fulfill the prophecy of Lord Caitanya and would forever change the world. I am praying that devotees from all over the world will come here to have this experience.

On many occasions you spoke about this pastime: "I was very happy to be defeated by my Guru Mahārāja." "At that moment I accepted Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as my eternal master." "I took this order of my Guru Mahārāja as my life and soul." "My only qualification is that I have tried to carry out the instruction of my Guru Mahārāja."

In 1973, in Los Angeles, on the disappearance day of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, you spoke about this event. The words you spoke at that time have awakened in me a profound appreciation for all my godbrothers and godsisters, especially for your beloved Guṇagrāhī Goswami Mahārāja, who recently departed in Vṛndāvana. You revealed your heart to your followers:

What he desired, I am trying little bit, and you are all helping me. So I have to thank you more. You are actually representative of my Guru Mahārāja [crying] . . . because you are helping me to execute the order of my Guru Mahārāja. Thank you very much.

We are hopeful that in 2022, on the hundredth anniversary of the historic first meeting with your Guru Mahārāja in Calcutta, the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium in Śrī Māyāpur Dhām will be inaugurated. It will be an offering of love and gratitude to you by the worldwide community of devotees (with special thanks to Ambarīṣa Prabhu).

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, the oceans you crossed to give us Kṛṣṇa consciousness are like insignificant puddles compared to the limitless oceans of your love for Rādhā-Govinda-deva and your compassion upon all living beings. I pray that it is forever remembered that the only qualification of all your followers, for all generations, is their deep appreciation for you and your shoreless ocean of compassion.

Helplessly praying for your mercy,

A servant of your servants,

Rādhānāth Swami

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

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

Preaching is the best service to the Lord. The Lord will immediately be extremely satisfied with one who engages

in this service of preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is confirmed by the Lord Himself in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.69). *Na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu kaścīn me priya-kṛttamaḥ*: “There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.” If one sincerely tries his best to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness by preaching the glories of the Lord and His supremacy, even if he is imperfectly educated, he becomes the dearest servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is *bhakti*. As one performs this service for humanity, without discrimination between friends and enemies, the Lord becomes satisfied, and the mission of one’s life is fulfilled. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu therefore advised everyone to become a *guru*-devotee and preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness (*yāre dekha, tāre kaha ‘kṛṣṇa’-upadeśa*). That is the easiest way to realize the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By such preaching, the preacher becomes satisfied, and those to whom he preaches are also satisfied. This is the process of bringing peace and tranquillity to the entire world. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.6.24, purport)

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

When we speak of hearing and chanting, it means that not only should one chant and hear the holy name of

the Lord as Rāma Kṛṣṇa (or systematically as the sixteen names Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare), but one should also read and hear the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the association of devotees. This primary practice of *bhakti-yoga* will cause the seed already sowed in the heart to sprout, and by a regular watering process, as mentioned above, the *bhakti-yoga* creeper will begin to grow. By systematic nurturing, the creeper will grow to such an extent that it will penetrate the coverings of the universe, as we have heard in the previous verses, reach the effulgent sky, the *brahma-jyoti*, and go farther and farther and reach the spiritual sky, where there are innumerable spiritual planets called Vaikuṅṭhalokas. Above all of them is Kṛṣṇaloka, or Goloka Vṛndāvana, wherein the growing creeper enters and takes repose at the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the original Personality of Godhead. When one reaches the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa at Goloka Vṛndāvana, the watering process of hearing and reading, as also chanting of the holy name in the pure devotional stage, fructifies, and the fruits grown there in the form of love of God are tangibly tasted by the devotee, even though he is here in this material world. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.2.30, purport)

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

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

publication of the English translation of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, and the first English translation of his auto-commentary, called *Dig-darśinī*.

I remembered reading years before in your Bhaktivedanta purport to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 5.203: "Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu, the teacher of the science of devotional service, wrote several books, of which the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* is very famous; anyone who wants to know about the subject matter of devotees, devotional service and Kṛṣṇa must read this book." At the time the only English translation of that book was a Gauḍīya Maṭha edition, and the English was barely readable; plus, the commentary was not included.

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

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

There is a special significance to this publication over and above its making accessible to readers of English a Sanskrit classic of spiritual literature. This is the first publication by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust of a major Vaiṣṇava theological text which disciples of the late Swami A. C. Bhaktivedānta Prabhupāda have accomplished without his immediate presence. It follows the widely disseminated versions of the *Bhagavad-gītā* in many languages and multi-volume translations of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, each of which is accompanied by an elaborate commentary. These prior publications were substantially the work of Prabhupāda himself, with certain of his Sanskrit-trained devotees, including Gopīparāṇadhana Dāsa, serving as apprentices. The appearance of the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* thus marks a new phase of textual theological scholarship by members of the International

Society for Krishna Consciousness. They have, as it were, come into their maturity as responsible for faithful transmission of the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition of *prema-bhakti*, loving devotion to God Kṛṣṇa. What better way to assure fidelity to the words and spirit of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and his circle of immediate disciples than to enable devotees and attentive seekers to read, hear, and visualize the foundational texts of those very scholar-devotees who had experienced the charismatic presence of Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya himself!

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

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

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

Your eternal servant,

Keśava Bhāratī Dāsa Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

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

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

Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 5.88, purport), “The present Kṛṣṇa 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 actions performed without fail”.

As your followers mature in their devotion, so will their appreciation for each other and the profound realization that ISKCON is an actual pastime of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

We are blessed and fortunate to be part of this *līlā* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and by your grace we can attain *sākṣāt-darśana* (direct darśana) of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His numerous *parikas* as listed in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi-līlā Chapter 10–12).

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

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

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

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

If by good fortune we can obtain one-millionth of a drop of your affection for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa we will drown in the special *prema* that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to give.

Thank you for making this available to the conditioned souls in this dark and ominous Age. By your grace and desire, I came to Africa 45 years ago. In the divine association of your disciples, we tried to establish your mission in a country run by the apartheid policy. Some success is here, and it is due to your ardent desire to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the southern tip of Africa.

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

*I remain,
Your servant,*

Partha Sarathi Dāsa Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at the *cintāmaṇi* dust of your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace, the fearless champion of your disciples and followers.

On January 26th of your last year with us, while in Jagannātha Purī, you attended an evening function to inaugurate the publication of a book on a contemporary of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. In attendance were the most respected *pāṇḍās* and dignitaries of Purī. All *brāhmaṇas*, of course.

The setting was a pandal on the beach. After some problems with the sound system, you disclosed how “in our humble way” ISKCON was “trying to introduce the Jagannātha Svāmī culture” around the world. Ratha-yātrā was the beginning of that cultural introduction. You told how the first ISKCON Ratha-yātrā was held in 1967 in San Francisco, and how by 1975 the San Francisco Ratha-yātrā was recognized by the city council as a holiday and acknowledged by the police as drawing a crowd of people who were not “a window-breaking crowd.” Then you spoke of the London Ratha-yātrā, where the *Guardian* newspaper criticized the Ratha-yātrā as “a rival to Nelson’s column.” New York, Melbourne, Sydney, and Paris followed, you said. “So in the Western countries Ratha-yatra is being introduced one after another. And Jagannātha Svāmī is attracting the attention of the Western people.”

Then you began the thrust of your talk, your purpose for speaking. You argued that Jagannātha’s popularity would bring tourists to Purī, which would obviously benefit the temple, hotels, shops, and government—everyone.

But there was a problem. “Unfortunately, you do not allow these foreigners to enter the temple.” You were not pulling any punches. Your voice was commanding but appealing. “How it can be adjusted?”

It could be. But local customs ran deep. And while the locals appreciated you in their own way, that appreciation wasn’t deep enough to accept that you could transform *yavanas* into *brāhmaṇas*. You understood that. Still, you had come with a purpose and a message. Maybe they would hear.

You do not expand the mercy of Jagannātha! . . .

He is not only this Purīnātha or Oriyānātha. He is Jagannātha. . . . That is the definition of Jagannātha: *sarva-loka-maheśvaram*. . . . So why you should deny the inhabitants of *sarva-loka* the *darśana* of Jagannātha?

You chided your audience: “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu never approved such thing . . . Why you should resent? This is not very good.” You quoted Sanskrit, and to those in the know it was clear that you had called them candidates for hell. Without breaking stride, you then supported your indictment with the strength of your achievements: “We have translated into English the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. And they are being received very nicely. In the Christmas period, in a week from 17th to 24th December, our devotees have sold books—small and big—17 lakhs.” And there was the BBT, massive temple expenses, and the two hundred buses—all to “preach this Jagannātha cult all over the world.”

Again you appealed to your audience. After all, they were all learned. “I do not know what is the cause. Here you are all present, many learned scholars and *paṇḍitas*, so you consider why this restriction should be there.” These words were reminiscent of Kṛṣṇa’s chiding Arjuna by saying “You’re speaking like a *paṇḍita* while mourning for what is not worthy of grief.”

But if they remained adamant, so what! “Of course, if you do not allow, there is no—I have to say—loss on the part of the foreigners because Jagannātha has already gone there and they are worshiping.” We were already getting Jagannātha’s *darśana*. Not only that: Jagannātha had even crossed the ocean to help your mission. Even if his *pāṇḍās* didn’t understand, Jagannātha was for *sarva-loka*.

And then you unleashed your final rebuke: a condemnation!

“But it is an etiquette that, to give someone . . . to the Vaiṣṇava. *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha* has been very much condemned by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You should welcome them, to receive them well.” To restrict pure devotees was an offense. *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. The thundering waves on the beach went quiet.

“Offense?!” many of the *paṇḍitas* would think. “Are these Westerners even Vaiṣṇavas to be offended?”

You answered the Purī *brāhmaṇas* with an invitation to see the ISKCON world for themselves, “You also come there! See how there are so many Jagannātha temples, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temples, how They are being worshiped, how these foreigners they have become pure

Vaiṣṇavas.” Yes, pure Vaiṣṇavas! We strictly followed four regulative principles and diligently chanted the *mahā-mantra*. On the basis of the scripture and precedent that you cited, “why you should not receive them as Vaiṣṇavas and give them proper reception?”

And while offering an olive branch to “combinedly work for Jagannātha,” you shook a stick: “remove this restriction or short-sightedness.”

That was it! You had ended! But after thanking your audience, you had to be reminded why you were there. The book! The inauguration! Without saying the name of the author you added, “This book is now inaugurated! Thank you very much.”

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Although you were repeatedly invited to see Jagannātha in the temple, you refused. You would not go until your disciples could.

Thank you! Only a decade before, your followers had lived in decadence, yet you stood on that podium and praised those same disciples to the most aristocratic representatives of Vaiṣṇava culture. To those of high birth and good fortune you raised us as equals on the basis of what you declared to be our service and surrender to Jagannātha.

But may I humbly submit a perspective of my own!

Our credentials were not our service and surrender to Jagannātha but our service and surrender to you. For us you were, and still are, everything, even while Jagannātha remains the Lord of the *lokas*. You are our everything for reasons too numerous for me to count. But on that evening in January, one reason shone forth like the rising full moon over the Purī ocean: despite our past, despite our lack of Vaiṣṇava culture, you were proud of our *guru-niṣṭhā*, our faith in you.

But how could we not have faith in a person who valued us and stood up for us as you did? Thank you.

Your servant forever,

Śivarāma Swami

My dear lord and master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

I remember you often, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and I wonder how I got the good fortune to get your shelter and association. It is inconceivable. A most foolish person who was wandering aimlessly in this material world, trying but failing to find some satisfaction here, somehow meets the most merciful and capable spiritual leader of our time.

Other than causeless mercy, I can think of no possible explanation for this.

As Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī said to Lord Caitanya when they first met Him in Rāmakeli:

*na mṛṣā paramārtham eva me
śṛṅṅ vijñāpanam ekam agrataḥ
yadi me na dayiṣyase tadā
dayanīyas tava nātha durlabhaḥ*

“Let us submit one piece of information before You, dear Lord. It is not at all false but is full of meaning. It is this: If You are not merciful upon us, then it will be very, very difficult to find more suitable candidates for Your mercy.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 1.203)

We can admire these great *gosvāmīs* for showing such humility even though they were already exalted devotees of the Lord. But for us it is simply the truth. If it were not for your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, our lives, and mine in particular, would have been hopeless. My life was already fully hopeless and pathetic.

Now our eyes have been opened, and under the shelter of your lotus feet we can see something of the way forward. We are standing on the threshold of eternity; all we have to do now is step across it. You have revealed to us the otherwise unimaginable beauty of the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and of Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself.

As Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī says in his *Sankalpa-kalpadruma*: “I offer my respectful obeisances to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is known as Nanda’s son, who is the protector of the cows, who fills the three worlds with bliss, who is the master of the birthless and perfect *gopīs*, who is as dark as a monsoon cloud, and whose eyes are lotus flowers.”

In great humility Jīva Gosvāmī then talks of himself: “A *jīva*

gradually growing old in Vṛndāvana tells his mind: 'Fool, now you are close to death. Drink this nectar I give you. O mind, as you drink this nectar think of yourself as being in Gokula and think of the loving service you wish to offer the Lord.' May the *gopa*-prince Kṛṣṇa, who makes the devotees blossom with happiness and who is the auspiciousness of all the worlds and the *gopīs*' beloved, protect us."

We are struggling through old age ourselves and are praying for the protection our *ācārya* is requesting. By your grace, Śrīla Prabhupāda, it may be possible for us to receive it. We prostrate ourselves at your lotus feet.

Your eternal servant,
Bhakti Caitanya Swami

Bhaktimārga Swami

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

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

It was evening *ārati* time,
Which began at a clock's precise chime,
And from that gorgeous shrine
Was projected softly your voice divine.

From the modest speaker box it came,
A sound that only purity can claim.
It was the subject of ten avatars,
Some declaring peace, others wars.

No vibration could dare match
Your depth and power the ear to catch
The pastimes of courageous heroes
And saints of softer mellows.

The harmonium you played hummed through the song,
Causing the listener to crave and long.
These stories that you brought us,
These songs that you taught us,

Where relationships are foremost,
Leave *prema* as our anchor post.
Each stanza that you have sung
Resonates like a bell well rung.

Your message is of surrender to Him,
Done through mantra and hymn.
And passing through the gate we call "servant,"
Which means one who's never a deviant.

We're moved by the way you'd sing the tune,
Our emotions are stirred, peaked like high noon.
I wish the whole world could hear it, too,
Because it is happiness we all wish to pursue.

I must hear it again and yet again,
When the *pūjārī* presses "play" and then . . .

Jaya jagadīśa hare

Jaya jagadīśa hare

Jaya jagadīśa hare

Your servant,

Bhaktimārga Swami

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

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

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

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

Simply by remembering the spiritual master, the devotees of the Lord, and the Personality of Godhead, one invokes their benedictions, destroys all difficulties and very easily fulfills his own desires.

(Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 1.20–21)

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

Although the mercy is available, it is only fully accessible by Your Divine Grace being the representative of the compassion nature of Lord Nityānanda. I am very fallen, struggling to stay near to your lotus feet, that unlimited ocean of mercy.

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

“Hā hā prabhu koro doyā deho more pada chāyā”

Candramauli Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

You introduced us to a vibrant land
Shaped by the song of Krishna's flute
Where loving relationships endure
Growing sweeter deeper newer eternally

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Let past and present now embrace
In memory of future homecoming

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In this way we catch glimpses
Of the Golden Age's dawn
Painting the sky with good fortune
For ten thousand years as Kali-yuga recedes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Your servant,

Varṣāṇā Swami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances and please forgive all my offenses.

All glories to you!

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

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

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.5.11)

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

“You are restless because you don’t read. I am laboring so hard for you, but you don’t take advantage...”

“Take advantage of these books! Then your life will be successful. My duty – I have given you so valuable things, day and night trying to convince you, each word to word. And if you don’t take advantage of this, then what can I do for you?”

(Lecture on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.9.6–14, Tokyo, May 2, 1972)

You further admonished us:

“All the devotees connected with the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement must read all the books that have been translated (the *Caitanya-caritamṛta*, *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.”

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 25.278, purport)

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

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

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

Your servant,

Mahādyuti Swami

Dear 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*

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

The River Analogy

I once heard an analogy that describes how one can best obtain and benefit from river water.

Simply bring a clay pot and hold it in the right direction.

In the same way, we will best profit from our guru when we bring the pot of faithful dedication and hold it to catch the flow of his instructions. Easy!

And the larger one's pot, the more one will obtain. Without the pot of dedication – the water of the guru's potent teachings will simply pass by.

The Sun Analogy

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

"The mercy of the spiritual master is always there, but we have to take it. The sun is there for everyone, but we must at least stand in a receptive place to get the benefit."

(Letter, Vṛndāvana, December 8, 1975)

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

Always There, More Merciful than the Gaṅgā and the Sun

The accessibility of your personality far surpasses that of the Gaṅgā or the sun, because you are driven by a deep sense of

compassion for the fallen souls – a compassion that made you often go so far out of your way. You left the fixed course of deep, river bed-like traditions and extended yourself to us, even when confronting our Western shadows. And this amazing quality of your unbounded compassion is there in past, present and future. You have shared:

“I shall remain your personal guide, whether I am physically present or not...”

(Letter from Tamal Krishna, July 14, 1977, Vṛndāvana)

“You do not require to worry, as I shall never leave you. You are my disciple, and I am your spiritual master, so there is no question, as long as you follow my instructions, that I shall ever leave you.”

(Letter to Bhaktijana, Los Angeles, September 21, 1972)

Your Gifts to Me

The Supreme Holy Name

The Divine mantra

A place in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s merciful mission

The Holy *dhāma*

The desire in my heart for the service of the Divine Couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā Mādhava in Vṛndāvana.

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

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

“‘What is surrendering?’ Kṛṣṇa, I forgot you for so many births, from time immemorial. Now I surrender unto You. Please accept.... This simple

method. This simple method will make you liberated,
if you do it sincerely without any reservation.”

(Lecture, Gorakhpur, February 18, 1971)

With the deepest of gratitude,

Śacīnandana Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

The time has come once again to express my glorification of you in a written homage on the anniversary of your divine appearance in this world.

Last night I was watching *Hare Krishna: The Mantra, the Movement, and the Swami Who Started it All* for the fourth time. Each time I watch this movie, focused exclusively on you and the devotional achievements you accomplished within such a short period of time, achievements recounted with such deep love and appreciation by those who are following you, I can't help but become emotional.

However, there is one point in the movie when I've burst into tears every time I've watched it.

After we hear your disciples describe how your movement was being attacked and accused of being a "brainwashing cult," and then hearing the details of the legal battle that took place in the New York State Supreme Court, we hear your disciple Amarendra Dāsa triumphantly say, "You know . . . that was a big victory for Śrīla Prabhupāda." At that point my eyes immediately tear up. Amarendra was referring to the Supreme Court judge's opening statement as he pronounced his verdict: "The Hare Krishna religion is a bona fide religion, with roots in India that go back thousands of years."

I was there while all this was happening, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I was intimately connected with those who were fighting for you in the New York State Supreme Court. In Boston, I was closely connected with the devotee whose parents were fighting against you in that very same courtroom. I even went to his home when he was kidnapped, along with many other devotees who were also connected with him, in an attempt to rescue him from those who were known then as "deprogrammers." I remember being influenced by it all, while serving you and the mission you entrusted to us—your disciples—to distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness without compromising the truth. You always demonstrated this to us by your pure and uncompromising example.

I've listened so many times to your 1977 room conversations in Māyāpur. On March 20, 1977, your disciples read you the article from the *New York Times* with the headline "Hare Krishna Brainwash Case

Thrown Out in New York.” You triumphantly responded, “Now we have got a sound position.” Then Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami read you the headline on the front page of the *Times of India*: “Hare Krishna Movement Is a Bona Fide Religion.”

You then said, also triumphantly, “So my mission is now successful. I went there, and this is now recognized after twelve years. Loitering in the street, nobody cared for me. Alone carrying books.”

You orchestrated it all, Śrīla Prabhupāda . . . not only establishing Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the West but even up to the last detail of fighting the court case. Now, more than forty years later, I am thinking deeply of these words you spoke at that time:

“So my mission is now successful.”

What did you mean? I’ve understood that you meant that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement was accepted as genuine. You also meant that you had fulfilled the order of your Guru Mahārāja in an incomparable way. Very shortly thereafter, you were quoted in this connection as saying, “By false propaganda you cannot suppress the truth.”

In November of that same year, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you left us, having fulfilled your mission. Your International Society for Krishna Consciousness was firmly recognized in the United States’ lawbooks as a genuine religion. As all the testimonies given since then have confirmed, it was you, the genuine guru, who came to the West on the order of your spiritual master to establish this genuine process of devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa throughout the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the evidence is clear. You were successful. I must now confess to you that today I am feeling a very heavy weight of responsibility to help ensure that your movement remains the success you recognized it to be, now and for generations to come.

In other words, I know that I must be genuine, too. That weight is bearing very heavily on me as I stand before you today.

On this most auspicious anniversary of your divine appearance in this world, I beg you to please make me your genuine disciple, one who will never leave the lotus feet of my genuine guru. Please let me serve you until my last breath and give me the strength to always speak the truth as you did, with the same conviction you had—that “the truth can never be suppressed by any false propaganda.”

In the dust of your lotus feet, Your eternal servant,

Nirañjana Swami

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

*jñānaṁ paraṁ parama-kṛṣṇa-sudharmīty uktam
daṇḍas 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 taṁ 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 to us 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!

Bhakti Viśrambha Mādhava Swami

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

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

om śrī surabhyai namaḥ! om śrī gurave namaḥ!

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

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

books as well, the world would benefit immensely.

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

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

I pray to remain forever your humble servant.

Begging for your merciful glance,

RP Bhakti Rāghava Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most respectful obeisances at your lotus feet.

Forty-one years have passed since you departed from the ordinary vision of this world. Those four decades without your physical presence have brought your followers both humbling setbacks and exhilarating breakthroughs. The amazing tribute to you is that, with all our variegation and diversity, we still march on, seeking your pleasure.

In your *Gītā* purport to 12.13–14 you state that a devotee “is a completely perfect mystic because he is fixed in the instructions received from the spiritual master.” The aspiration for this pinnacle of *bhakti* mysticism I hold high on my head—the same place where I would love for your lotus feet to rest.

Whatever years or days I have left in this body, I beg that my sensitivity to your words and desires increases daily.

I have been under your shelter for more than twice the number of years I lived without it. Noting that expanse of time in your service, I seek protection from the nemesis of familiarity and casualness in the guru-disciple relationship.

In Kali-yuga the ravages of time spare no one: anything not spiritually tied down—fixed in maturing *bhakti*—will deteriorate.

Therefore I long for a closer walk with you. This is my plea. Grant it, Śrīla Prabhupāda, if you please.

Your insignificant servant,

Devāmrita Swami

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Greatest Glory

I gently bow my head to each tomb and meditate on the qualities of the various devotees that are honored there. I pray for those qualities to come to me. It is one of my favorite places in Vrindavan. I often visit the *samādhi* park at the ISKCON *goṣāla*.

Moving clockwise, I first offer respect to the spot where Guṇagrahī Swami lies. I think of his humility and his attachment to preaching and *kīrtan*. The *samādhi* of Ananta Śānti, the first Russian devotee, is next. Vrindavan is flooded with Russian Vaiṣṇavas. I laud his sacrifice. Then where Vibhu Caitanya Prabhu rests, a self-effulgent Vaiṣṇava, universally recognized in the Vaiṣṇava community as an *uttama bhakta* for his deep devotion in even the simplest of services. The *samādhi* of Narmadā Goswami follows. He was an elderly and respected Indian gentleman who dedicated himself to the heart of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the BBT, for over 25 years. I next bow to Pūrṇacandra Goswami, a learned and Rasika Vaiṣṇava who beautifully sang songs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and was very strict in the line of Śrīla Prabhupāda. The noble *samādhi* of Yamunā devī follows. Her name alone is synonymous in ISKCON with *bhāva bhakti*, the deepest devotion. Need I say more? The final one is the biggest of all the *samādhi* structures. Brahmānanda Prabhu rests there. Perhaps the size of his tomb represents his heart for Śrīla Prabhupāda.

In *Nectar of Devotion* it describes that one of the main inspirations to develop a particular relationship with Krishna is to meditate on the devotees who love Krishna in the same relationship one aspires to attain. Thus, is not remembering the departed souls who have dedicated their lives to Śrīla Prabhupāda one of the main impetuses for developing our relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda? And do not these same devotees represent his greatest glory, what he was able to give others of himself?

Today, in remembrance of Śrīla Prabhupāda's accomplishments, I am inspired to highlight the many Vaiṣṇavas who have unfortunately passed from this world that Śrīla Prabhupāda inspired. My only regret is not being able to mention them all, especially the ones that I have known closely – great souls who have enhanced the appreciation of Śrīla Prabhupāda in the hearts of many. If Śrīla Prabhupāda's mercy is all that we are made of, do not these souls embody his glories? I therefore pray to all of Śrīla Prabhupāda's

followers, those past, present, and even the millions yet to born who will carry his legacy and increase his glories. I stand in awe of Śrīla Prabhupāda's greatest glory, the many he has inspired by the depth of his devotion, and the gift of his devotion that he keeps on giving.

*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,

At the top of the front cover of your *Back to Godhead* magazine, the following motto always appears:

“Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.”

The source of this motto is a verse from the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 22.31):

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

For us, your disciples, you were our light, and before you came, we were in ignorance and darkness. You were the one who showed us the light of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, His most merciful incarnation.

In your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.16 you state:

“Kali-yuga is so saturated with vicious habits that there is a great fight at the slightest misunderstanding.”

We are seeing this more and more. The polluted atmosphere affects even the devotees, and so sometimes they also quarrel among themselves.

At the end of the same purport you state:

If we want actual peace, we must open the road to understanding of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa and glorify Him for His virtuous activities as they are depicted in the pages of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for enlightening us with the true perfection of life. If we always keep your instructions and example in the center, we will attain the ultimate goal of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Dear master, let my prayer prevail,
For much I long to tell your tale.
Moved by your guru's words, you began
A worldwide movement, O saintly man.

Many disciples came, good and true,
To help you spread the mission, too.
They followed your orders, were loyal and bold,
And by your mercy became lofty-souled.

We remember with joy and pride
How you were always by our side.
Everything went on by your grace;
All obstacles we were able to face.

Strong as the tiger or the bull,
With lotus eyes so large and full,
Like sun and moon adorning the sky—
Your high qualities we glorified.

Traveling the world, O mighty sage,
Though your body was marked by age,
Most eloquent of men, a holy guide,
You pushed back Kali-yuga's tide.

All around there was unholy fire;
You extinguished it, by the Lord's desire.
Some looked upon it with dread;
Nevertheless, from the front you led.

It was not easy, but you were blessed,
Solemn and successful in your quest.
To the highest duty you adhered;
In this way, you were always revered.

The world was veiled in blinding night,
And no one knew what was right.
Where were the leaders in any state?
Good from bad they failed to separate.

But in the future, rulers of the land
By Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's side will stand.
Already we see this coming true
By your efforts and because of you.

Lord Caitanya, the mercy incarnation—
His desire will spread to every nation,
Sure to increase more and more,
To far away places and distant shores.

Like Indra pouring down heavenly rain,
Nectar will drench the burning plain.
The Lord made this mighty prediction;
It will be fulfilled without restriction.

Prabhupāda, you came in His holy line,
So brilliant, wonderful, and divine.
You served Kṛṣṇa with mind and soul—
Please help us reach that lofty goal!

Your unworthy disciple,

Rāmāi Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

This reminds me of the following story:

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

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

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

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

After burying the parrot, Kumar returned to India. When he got home, Kumar, armed with courage, told his parrot: "I'm sorry to tell you that after I gave your message to your friends, one of them fell dead instantly." When the parrot heard this bad news, he collapsed, dying in his cage. Kumar could not believe it: "I loved him so much! How could he die on me like that? He has died in such a strange way and so suddenly. I cannot find an explanation." Crying disconsolately over the death of his beloved parrot, Kumar took the dead body out of the cage and went to his garden, and after depositing it with great care on the grass, he turned around to pick up a shovel and dig his grave. After Kumar had walked few steps, the parrot flew away and landed on a tree. Kumar, filled with astonishment and fury, shouted, "You were not dead! You cheated me! Why did you do that?"

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

"A message? What message?" asked Kumar, without understanding anything.

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

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

Your eternally grateful servant,

Bhakti Sundar Goswami

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Today, as I meditate upon you and your many saintly qualities, a vivid memory appears in my mind's eye.

In June of 1976 I was fortunate to be one of several hundred devotees assembled at Los Angeles International Airport to receive you. Spirits ran high as we entered the airport with unstoppable enthusiasm.

You were returning to North America after a year's absence. Naturally, all of us were feeling intense separation. We longed to see you, hear from you, and serve you in whatever ways would please you. You were our everything, our purpose for living in this world. Indeed, your every wish was our command.

As we made our way to your arrival gate, a human passageway formed for you to walk through—and we began a sweet, soul-stirring *kīrtana*. Your plane taxied to the gate, the *kīrtana* intensified, and the devotees' eyes sparkled with great anticipation. Finally you emerged from the gate and we had the first glimpse of your transcendental golden form! We, your devotees, offered obeisances in unison and then came forward to shower you with rose petals and hand you bouquets of flowers, all the while chanting and dancing with total abandon.

Soon the middle of the corridor became a moving walkway, with devotees running along both sides chanting and dancing, totally oblivious to their surroundings. Time seemed to stand still as passengers and airport staff stood frozen in bewilderment.

From my vantage point, I saw a mother and her young daughter sitting in chairs some twenty feet ahead of you and the *saṅkīrtana* party. Perhaps due to the loudness of the *kīrtana* and the tumult created by the large number of devotees, this mother was startled and instinctively sought to protect her child from the perceived danger. She grabbed the hand of her young daughter, and they quickly jumped up onto their seats and stood there, eyes opened wide with astonishment or perhaps even fear.

In the midst of this chaos, you saw this mother and daughter and your eyes met theirs. Understanding the situation, you told one of your servants to hand them two of the flowers from the bouquet

you were carrying. Upon their receiving and smelling those flowers touched by Your Divine Grace's lotus hands, the faces of both mother and child at once transformed. They grinned from ear to ear and radiated happiness and peace. It was truly an amazing sight to witness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave me a glimpse of what it means to receive the causeless mercy of a pure devotee. Of the hundreds, if not thousands, of people who were in the airport that day, somehow you chose to deliver those two souls your mercy in the form of two *mahā* flowers. Why? That only you can say for sure. But I am convinced that their path back to Godhead was paved by your causeless mercy that day.

As I reflect on this sweet pastime of yours, I am reminded of the following passage from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

*mahat-kṛpā vinā kona karme 'bhakti' naya
kṛṣṇa-bhakti dūre rahu, saṁsāra nahe kṣaya*

"Unless one is favored by a pure devotee, one cannot attain the platform of devotional service. To say nothing of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, one cannot even be relieved from the bondage of material existence."

(Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 22.51)

For one who obtains your mercy, the impossible becomes possible, and for one who fails to do so, the possible becomes impossible.

As one of your many followers, I too would like to please you and receive your causeless mercy. But how to best please you?

In one lecture you sum it up nicely:

Bahulāśva: What is the thing that will please you most, Śrīla Prabhupāda?

Prabhupāda: Hmm?

Bahulāśva: What is the thing that would please you the most?

Prabhupāda: Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Devotees: Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Prabhupāda: That is the simple thing. You are chanting. I am very much pleased. That's all. I came to your country to chant, that you chant also along with me. So you

are helping me by chanting. So I am pleased. But this tendency is very nice, that you want to please me. That is very good. And to please me is not very difficult.

Devotees: All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Prabhupāda: Caitanya Mahāprabhu said that “Under My order, every one of you go and preach and become spiritual master.” And what is that order? The order is that “Whomever you meet, you talk to him about Kṛṣṇa.”

*yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa
āmāra ajñāya guru hañā tāra ei deśa*

He says that “Under My order, you become a spiritual master.” To become a spiritual master under the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is not very difficult— unless we adulterate, mix in something nonsense in His teachings. If we simply present as it is, then every one of us can become a spiritual master. (Lecture, 16 July 1971, Detroit)

From your words, I extract a *sūtra*: “Practice, taste, and distribute.” It is an open secret that you wanted us to chant the holy name, worship the Deity, hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, serve the pure devotees, and reside in the holy *dhāma*, all with the utmost attention and free from offense. From the sincere practice of these potent forms of devotional service, one relishes an ever-increasing sweet taste. One who has obtained this taste develops unstoppable determination to distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others through the essential processes of distributing your books, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, and Kṛṣṇa *prasādam*—through any and all projects and programs that package the same.

Sincere practice gives taste, and taste fuels the desire to distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness far and wide. This simple process that you have given us is not only self-sustaining, but ever-expanding as well.

On this day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, I pray for your causeless mercy to always sincerely practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness and to dedicate the remainder of my life to helping others do the same.

Aspiring to be your humble servant,

Giridhārī Swami

Amala-bhakta Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Your servant,

Amala-bhakta Swami

*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,

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

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

From about 25 years ago to about 6 years ago I used to get recurring migraine headaches. They were so severe that I would just have to cancel all my plans for that day and try to sleep my way through the episode. These migraines appeared once or twice a month on an average and usually lasted for about 8–24 hours, during which time I was unable to function at all. They were getting progressively worse and more frequent. By Krishna's mercy, after much research and experiment, I discovered that if I just changed three things in my daily habits, these debilitating migraines would just go away, mostly. They still occur but they are just annoying and just a shadow of what they once were.

There was a time, about 30 years ago, when I was bolder than today, when the idea came to me that I should ask Krishna directly for His mercy, be it pleasant or unpleasant. I still try to do this every

so often. I call this Krishna-Roulette (after Russian-Roulette). How this works is simple. You just go before Krishna on the altar and say, "Krishna, whatever it will take to make me a better Devotee, please do this to me now!" Probably now you get the reason why I call this Krishna-Roulette; the resemblance to putting a loaded revolver with one bullet in the rotating chamber to your head is not abstract. Is terrifying a good word? This technique I have somehow managed to do several times. At such special times, I always preach to myself in a special way, standing on the edge of that precipice before Krishna on the altar. "My dear self, why be afraid, I know that Krishna is going to Roulette me anyway, I might as well pick up a few points by asking for it." Whenever I am going through a difficult or painful episode, I reflect back on this request.

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

The prompt for this keynote about pain comes up from an episode that occurred this year in Māyāpur. Two days before my flight back to New York City, I caught some type of Flu. This led to an opening prelude of 2 days of migraine pain, just like my old days. During that time all I could do was mostly just writhe in my bed. Sometimes during this episode of pain, I mustered up the determination to just breathe the word "Krishna" on the incoming and outgoing breaths. It was about all I could do. Even doing this exhausted me and then I would sleep for some hours.

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

When pain and sickness come, they do not ask me to look at

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

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

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

Frustration is also another interesting topic and the other part of my theme for 2019. I am more and more coming to realize that frustration is a SURE SIGN of my lack of Krishna Consciousness and nothing more. The appearance of frustration is always brought about because there is something I want that I lack. What else can it be?

The only thing I can say I actually own is my service and even the type of service and the circumstances under which I perform it are really not up to me, though I can try to optimize and tweak such circumstances when possible. When is there ever a lack of possible service in Krishna Consciousness? Am I ever frustrated because of lack of service? No, I am frustrated because of a lack of a particular service or resources or respect accorded to that service. That is what I am frustrated about. Hmmm.

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

been bulldozed.

I suppose that it is a natural born human instinct to be at least somewhat dissatisfied with one's lot in life, but Krishna Consciousness is about being satisfied, *ātmārāma*, *tuṣṭa* or *santuṣṭa*. This is specifically mentioned in *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.55:

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

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

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

I was just reading in the *Mahābhārata* that the dying Bhīṣma tells Yudhiṣṭhira, “Destiny and exertion are the two great factors that influence the lives of men. Of the two, exertion is more important because destiny is nothing more than the results of one's past endeavors. Therefore, even while achieving an unfavorable result, a king should continue to perform his duty conscientiously, without becoming overwhelmed by grief.” Destiny is just our past karma; thus, frustration is only the backwash of our past action. Who was responsible for that?

This is a no-brainer; whatever my reason for frustration is, that reason must be BOGUS. By investigating that reason, I can gain insight, deep insight into how to advance in Krishna Consciousness. What is it that I wish was different? Why exactly?

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for introducing me to this Krishna

Consciousness, because without it I would have surely already perished. In everyday things and experiences, as you have taught, Krishna continues to send me new realizations. Let me be always thankful and attentive.

Your servant,

Candrakshara Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at you lotus feet, which provide a most secure shelter for those devotees seeking pure *bhakti*.

I continue enumerating the twenty-six qualities of pure devotees, the next being *maitra*, friendly to all. Lord Kapiladeva described the qualities of a *sādhu* to His mother: *titikṣavaḥ kārūṇikāḥ suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām*. “A *sādhu* is tolerant and compassionate and therefore the friend of all embodied beings.” You have explained on various occasions that there are three types of friends. A *bandhu* is a relative, a *mitra* is someone for whom we feel affection, but a *suhṛt* is that friend who only desires everyone’s benefit, without any desire for something in return. Certainly you fulfill and surpass the definition of *suhṛt*. Just as Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura would loudly chant 100,000 names (one third of his chanting) for the benefit of all living entities, you dedicated every word, thought, and deed to bringing the highest benefit, *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, to all.

Your friendship sometimes manifested as a casual conversation to make a devotee feel better, or to share a moment of intimacy, showing how you only desired their spiritual progress. On other occasions, as seen in many of your other attributes, your friendship might appear to be something else when shown through chastisement or admonishment. As Kṛṣṇa mentions in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (12.13), when there is no envy toward any living entity, real friendship manifests, followed by compassion. Kṛṣṇa demonstrates how one divine attribute leads to another. Arjuna pleaded with the Lord to convert His casual friendship into a form that would yield the greatest benefit.

I pray that you give me the vision to see all of your instructions and indications of how to conduct my activities, words, and thoughts in such a way that they bear the fruit of *bhakti*. Your friendship has always been present in every word spoken by you, but only by your divine grace can I perceive it. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your fallen and needy servant,

Guru Prasād Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

I think that you are happy with the progress and overall health of your ISKCON. That progress can only continue if we embrace the spirit of cooperation—something you stressed in the mantra you gave us by which we could successfully execute pure devotional service to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

“Your love for me will be shown by how you cooperate among yourselves after I have gone.”

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

I offer at your lotus feet this Vyāsa-pūjā offering. Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this 123rd anniversary of your appearance day,

along with all my accumulated realizations in this life. I am eager to celebrate your next Vyāsa-pūjā with greater enthusiasm and dedication. Meanwhile, I wish to beg you for your divine mercy.

Your insignificant servant,

Vedavyāsapriya Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Today is the day we are compelled to meditate upon Your Divine Grace and assess the inconceivable gifts we received from you.

Forty-three years ago I found the shelter at your lotus feet that totally transformed my existence. Prior to that, my life was a saga of continuous suffering. Although I tried to enjoy in so many ways, all my attempts ended in endless suffering. Today I feel so embarrassed to even think of them. But then I found you, and your mercy inundated my heart with abundant joy. I am eternally indebted to you for all have given me, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

By your causeless mercy I came to know that the Supreme Lord is not only a person but that He is Kṛṣṇa, whom I considered to be the greatest hero from my childhood. You taught me that His Deity form in the temple is nondifferent from Him. Although He is not moving, He is the omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient Supreme Lord, who is also present in my heart as the Supersoul. He sees me from both within and without and is waiting for me to develop my loving relationship with Him.

Although I was born in Bengal and heard about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu from my childhood, no one ever told me that He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Rather, I witnessed all kinds of abominable activities being conducted in the name of His teachings. Therefore, I never thought of following Him. You are the one who made me aware that He is Kṛṣṇa Himself, and that He came as a devotee to elevate us to the topmost region of the spiritual sky, Goloka Vṛndāvana, where we can join Him in His eternal pastimes. Had you not come to pick me up from the gutter in which I was rotting, how would I ever have received such inconceivable good fortune?

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, it is through you that the world came to know the Supreme Personality of Godhead not as an object of fear but as our dearest friend, who is waiting for us to go back to Him in the spiritual world, where He sports with His eternal consort, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. When we re-establish our lost relationship with Him by surrendering unto His lotus feet, He allows us to enter that world of endless joy.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you made us realize that Śrīmatī

Rādhārāṇī is the transformation of Kṛṣṇa's love. She is His pleasure potency. Although They are one, They separated Themselves to enjoy Their transcendental loving affairs. Unfortunate souls who do not want to accept the existence of the spiritual reality beyond their sight mistake this most exalted spiritual relationship to be mundane and find fault with the Transcendental Couple. By so doing, they miss the golden opportunity you created for them to enter the world of endless ecstasy.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, one afternoon in Bombay I was seated at your lotus feet, looking out at the as yet uncompleted Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsavihārī temple from the balcony of your quarters. I told you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, "Although you taught me that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, I still feel that I do not know Him. However, I know you, and you are my everything. All I want is to be with you, life after life." Without saying anything, you smiled in a way that conveyed everything to me. I offered obeisances to you with a voice ringing with gratitude, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, although I am totally unqualified, please let me stay at your lotus feet forever, engaging my entire existence in your service."

Desiring to remain at your lotus feet forever as your humble servant,

Bhakti Chāru Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Back to the here and now, you may be happy to know that New York City is now about to witness a great revival of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and a growing sense of your divine presence in this world capital metropolis. Back here again, I am thrilled at the prospect of a new “Hare Kṛṣṇa Explosion.” So much attention is now being focused on this temple and its community, and so many very senior, empowered devotees are either now residing here or visiting here. And more will come.

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

carefully follow your mood and mission, making them our own.
Begging to always remain under your shelter,

Your foolish aspiring servant,
Bhakti Prabhupāda-vrata Dāmodara Swami

TRIBUTES
BY
INITIATED
DISCIPLES

**ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S HEART & HIS
GOLDEN ROPE OF MERCY**

*Jaya Jaya Śrī Caitanya, Jaya Nityānanda, Jaya Jaya
Advaita Candra, Jaya Gaura Bhaktavinda!*

*Vande Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, Nityānandau, Sahoditau,
Gauḍodaye Puṣpa Vantau Citrau, Śandau Tamo Nudau.*

“All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, all glories to Śrī Nityānanda, Who, just like the sun and the moon, have arisen simultaneously over the land of Gauda, just to benedict the fallen souls of this Kali-yuga. Generally, the sun and moon do not rise simultaneously, but in this Kali Age, the Two Brothers, just like the sun and the moon, have arisen over the sacred land of Gauda, just to light the way for the tortured and degraded souls of this Kali-yuga. All glories to Them!”

In late 1967, in San Francisco, just after his return from India, Śrīla Prabhupāda would delight in having me chant this verse each morning. He was teaching my husband and I Sanskrit and Bengali, and each morning we would come to his room and he would recite the alphabet and then we would imitate the sounds. But one morning, early in the lessons, Śrīla Prabhupāda (then still Swamiji) taught me this verse from *Caitanya Caritamrita*. I never forgot it. And each morning, when I would come for the class, he would ask, “So, Govindasi, you have remembered that verse?” And I would dutifully chant it in the sing-song manner that he taught me. Then he would smile and chuckle with delight. Somehow, it seemed to give him great pleasure to hear an ignorant young American girl, a mere 20-year-old college student, singing this verse glorifying Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda. And it gave me great pleasure to see him beam his sunshine smile that seemed to light up the whole room. Swamiji had returned from India and I felt that he was surely lighting up my whole world just as the Twin Brothers shed the brilliance of Their light on the land of Gauḍa.

And as we all know, he continued to be delighted when any of us sang the glories of the most merciful Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda.

Lord Nityānanda came to lift the most fallen, and we had definitely fallen into that category. Lord Nityānanda blocked the *chakra* of Lord Caitanya, who angrily wanted to kill Jagāi and Mādhāi, the prime examples of fallen souls in this Kali Age. Lord Nityānanda is the divine heart of love and compassion.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's heart is similarly the embodiment of this same love and compassion; his mood is the reflection of Lord Nityānanda. He once had me chanting to an ugly slug in his garden. When I pointed to the ugly creature, his face filled with mercy and compassion, and he said, with much feeling, "Chant to the poor creature!" So I knelt down on my hands and knees to chant to this lowly slug. In this way, Śrīla Prabhupāda's mercy and compassion shine through in all circumstances – in his dealings with his disciples, with worldly people, with important as well as unimportant people, and even with the slug crawling in his garden!

Perhaps the need of the day is to connect more fully with the heart of Śrīla Prabhupāda, which is so full of mercy for the conditioned souls. And to grasp that golden rope of divine mercy that he has thrown down to us from the spiritual world. Then to somehow realize our helpless condition, and humbly grab hold of that golden rope – that strong, unbreakable golden rope we call the disciplic succession – and hang on for dear life!

Unfortunately for us, in today's world, only 50 years after the departure of Śrīla Prabhupāda, we see numerous factions all vying for recognition and approval, endorsement, and all jockeying for power and prestige – and all claiming to base their philosophies on the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda. How confusing! Yet we must come to realize that the true essence of his teachings are irrelevant to such demented aspirations of confused *jīvas*.

There are those who cling to their opinions and bodily designations more dearly than to that golden rope that can lift us from this ocean of *samsāra*. It matters little whether these designations are of the proud male leader, the downtrodden or neglected female, or embittered homosexual, or whatever. They are simply fleeting designations, all based in the misconception that "I am this, I am that." Such misconceptions abound and seem to distract us at every step. Yet all are based in ignorance, in the false conclusion that "I am this mind and body, I am an American, an Indian, a man, a woman, a gay or a non-gay, white skinned or dark skinned" – there is no end to these misconceptions.

Unfortunately, most *jīvas* clutch tightly to these temporary designations, whatever they may be, and with great determination, they hang on for dear life!

Sadly, we are missing the point. These temporary designations are actually irrelevant to what Śrīla Prabhupāda, as well as Lord Nityānanda, came to teach. The gift of mercy is Lord Nityānanda's specialty, and so also it is Śrīla Prabhupāda's specialty. His heart of loving compassion is equally there for the self-important, the officially unimportant, the abused, the confused, and everyone. Even for the slug crawling in his garden.

Instead of "taxing our brains" to find ways to endorse or defend our particular variety of insanity – whether it is male, or female, gay or non-gay, green, or white, or black – we would be far better off if we humbly accept our fallen condition, and sincerely reach out for that golden rope that has been cast down to us by the merciful Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, and then personally handed to us by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Repeatedly hashing over and splitting hairs, trying to prove that males are better than females or vice versa, gays are better than both, and dogs should be given the utmost respect (as is the fad in America), perhaps we should simply accept our fallen condition, whatever role we find ourselves playing, and in all humility try to serve the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, in the ways prescribed by Śrīla Prabhupāda and the disciplic succession.

What will we gain by promoting our "superior brand" of designation, whatever it may be? Another birth in the same boat? Another birth as a male, a female, a gay, or even a dog? Is this not the ultimate insanity? We are given this golden opportunity to rise above our temporary designations and grasp that golden rope of mercy, but instead we cling frantically to our own small identity, proclaiming in loud voices that "our designation is the best!"

Even worse, some go to great lengths to establish such positions by distorting or misinterpreting Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings. For example, he clearly taught that one should serve according to one's nature and inclinations – not according to one's birth, one's parents, race or gender.

Recently in a class in India, one Indian student blurted out: "We Indians hate *Varṇāśrama*!" I was shocked. Then I understood that the common Indian conception of *Varṇāśrama* is exactly opposite of what Śrīla Prabhupāda taught. This corruption of the original caste

system, the one that is natural to all cultures, is the one now identified as the “by birth only” caste system. This was strongly opposed by Śrīla Prabhupāda, and even by Gandhi over 50 years ago.

Śrīla Prabhupāda clearly expressed that he wanted to establish *Varṇāśrama* – but not this perverted form of *Varṇāśrama* – this “by birth” caste system. Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted Kṛṣṇa’s form of *Varṇāśrama*, that is, according to one’s nature, ability, and inclination, not according to one’s birth, parents, gender, race or color.

Perhaps if we consciously learn to recognize this particular brand of insanity, it can be avoided. Like a truck stuck in mud, this type of perverted designation will spin its wheels and get nowhere.

And factually, it is irrelevant to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s gift to the world. His gift is to lift us above this present conditioned state, this identification with the body and senses, and to offer us the world of Kṛṣṇa consciousness which is beyond these temporary designations.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s gift of love and compassion, that golden thread of loving compassion extended from the heart of Lord Nityānanda, is there for all souls. It is the special gift in Kali Yuga. And Śrīla Prabhupāda, the generous commander of Lord Chaitanya’s Saṅkīrtan army, like any powerful military general even in this world, has the authority to freely give this mercy to all souls--even the most fallen ones who have become slugs in his garden!

But there is one qualification. That is humility. Without humility, how can we receive this gift? If we are busy promoting our own particular brand of material superiority, our own precious designation, taking great pride in whatever bodily designations we currently sport, how will we grasp this golden rope of mercy? Our pride in our current designation will block our way, and we will miss out on this great opportunity. Instead, at the time of death, we will be busily promoting our particular designation, so Kṛṣṇa may say, “Oh, you like this type of body so much? You are very proud of it? Then here, you please take another one similar to the one you are so proud of!”

Is this really what we want?

Quite certainly, this is not what Śrīla Prabhupāda wants for us. His continuous encouragement is to rise above these bodily designations. In fact, that’s the “square one, class 101” of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wants us to reach for that golden rope of mercy. To help us, he gave us so many enlivening practices – beautiful Deities to worship and adore, and thus get us out of our “cocoon”

or body consciousness, a world of ecstatic *kīrtana* to lift us from our tiny “body world,” and mantras and scriptures to guide us beyond the small bubble of our minds and bodies.

Let us leave the interpretations (or distortions) of scripture to the Masters, the *Ācāryas* of this glorious disciplic succession, and humbly grab for that golden rope, giving up our pride in whatever designation we presently identify with – whether it is by material standards high or low. Either way is irrelevant.

Let us try to remember we are eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa, temporarily lost and misguided, identifying with some temporary madness, distracted and wandering in this wax museum of material forms, and reach for that golden rope of compassion that will lift us from this ocean of *samsāra*.

That will be most pleasing to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your servant,

Govinda Devī Dāsī

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*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains in the 16th chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* the qualities of an *asura*. From that description, I can say with certainty that I was born in an asuric society of asuric parents. But I've learned from the prayers of Prahlada Mahārāja that even an *asura* is qualified to praise you and the Supreme Lord. Thus, I have the right to offer you my obeisances and veneration.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have created the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and many other groups that glorify you, Mahāprabhu, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. As Viṣṇu manifested His creation through great persons like Brahmā, Kaśyapa, the manus, and many others, so have you unfurled the *saṅkīrtana* movement through your disciples and followers.

As Nārada travels throughout creation glorifying Kṛṣṇa, you also traveled the world singing His glories.

As Kartikeya conquered the *daityas* and *dānavas*, so you conquered the *asuras* of the world with the weapons of *nāma, rūpa, guṇa, lilā, parikara, vasiṣṭha*—Kṛṣṇa's name, form, qualities, pastimes, associates, and paraphernalia.

As Lord Buddha, Śrī Sankarācārya, Śrī Madhvācārya, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and many others defeated opposing elements to spread their *dharmas*, so did you.

As the great founders of the *sampradāyas*, the Six Goswamis, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī, and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa wrote treatises glorifying Kṛṣṇa, so did you.

As Prahlada Mahārāja taught the glories and philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to his classmates, you taught your disciples.

As Kapila took care to explain Sāṅkhya to His mother, you also carefully explained philosophy to the materially attached, naive, and misguided souls of the modern world.

You are most exalted and empowered by Kṛṣṇa. With the backing of Mahāprabhu, you carried with you an obscure Northeast Indian

culture, and, transforming it back into the universal doctrine it was always meant to be, you spread it throughout the world, planting the seeds for a culture that will eventually dominate the world.

Your vision, organizational skills, expertise in dealing with others, and *sastric* knowledge are beyond compare. And, what to speak of any one of those qualities, who has the combination of all of them like you do?

The first words I heard from your lips were “*vande 'ham śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pada-kamalaṁ śrī-gurūn vaiṣṇavānīs ca.*” Thus, I am fond of thinking of you in that way—that is, bringing the full weight and authority of the succession.

Now I wish to complain. I want to lament the pains of my old age, but Kṛṣṇa says no—*tāms titikṣasva*—tolerate them. So, I cannot complain. I want to gossip about the faults of my godbrothers and your other followers, but that is *Vaiṣṇava-nindā*. So, I can't do that either.

However, since I'm addicted to fault finding, my only alternative is to turn toward myself. I have many faults and fears—too many to list here—and all causing my heart to be infected with *māyā*.

But almost against my will, you have injected in my heart a lasting desire to serve you. That desire is due only to your strength and mercy and not anything to do with me. But it's so well embedded that I'm confident it won't be eradicated wherever I go in this creation of *māyā*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I believe that my most egregious fault is that I did not achieve your order to spread the *saṅkīrtana* movement to the extent that you did—not even close.

Thus, I pray to continue with my attempts to spread your *saṅkīrtana* revolution – yours and Mahāprabhu's – until my death. And then kindly allow me to be born again among your followers so that I might continue to spread the celebration of Kṛṣṇa's names and *līlās*.

As your fallen servant, I cling to your lotus feet.

I am,

Dayānanda Dāsa—one who happily receives your mercy

Mālatī Devī Dāsī

*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*

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer you my full *danḍavat* obeisances, with my head at your lotus feet. I have nowhere else to place my head and my heart, or indeed my soul, except at your lotus feet.

His Holiness Bhakti Tīrtha Swami once said that he wrote to you every day during your presence and continued to do so after your physical departure to maintain his loving connection with you.

I appreciated this gesture, but found that it was not my calling to write you every day but rather once a year on your Vyāsa-pūjā day, and that even that could be awkward for less advanced persons like myself. I find my solace in talking to you every morning and evening and in absorbing myself in reading your lucid purports.

It seems that ISKCON is at a critical junction, with an increasing number of your disciples departing from this world, hoping to follow you in their service, and a great number entering our eighth decade of life, continuing out the struggle against *māyā*, hoping to somehow or other actually find ourselves with an honest taste for the holy name and uninterrupted devotional service.

I am still in that struggling camp, with my head at your feet, begging for your continued mercy so that I never again stray, begging that today I may finally chant sixteen rounds without offense, or even one mantra or even one “Kṛṣṇa” or “Rāma” without offense.

You wrote to Kṛṣṇa Dāsa on Sept 9, 1972: “You mentioned that your pathway has become filled with stumbling blocks, but there are no stumbling blocks, I can kick out all those stumbling blocks immediately, provided you accept my guidance. With one stroke of my kick I can kick out all stumbling blocks.”

My unhappy realization is that I am obviously not prepared for your merciful kick, remaining among the doglike stubborn people that you often mentioned. Now, in my old age, with no time to spare, I beg for your merciful kick and pray that I gracefully receive it.

One of your eternal dāsīs,

Mālatī Devī Dāsī

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I wish to elaborate on these most wonderful qualities that are ingredients of your devotion.

And as you have elaborated on Kṛṣṇa's qualities in *Nectar of Devotion* in detail, I would like to glorify your qualities which make up the characteristics of a pure devotee. How can anyone be so pure, compassionate, so thoughtful?

You possess 50 qualities, part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa:

- 1) Beautiful features of the entire body; 2) marked with all-auspicious characteristics; 3) extremely pleasing; 4) effulgent; 5) strong; 6) ever-youthful; 7) a wonderful linguist; 8) truthful; 9) talks pleasingly; 10) can speak fluently in all languages; 11) highly learned; 12) highly intelligent; 13) a genius; 14) artistic; 15) extremely clever; 16) expert; 17) grateful; 18) firmly determined 19) an expert judge of time and circumstances; 20) sees and speaks on the authority of *Vedas*, or scriptures; 21) pure; 22) self-controlled; 23) steadfast; 28) possesses equilibrium; 29) magnanimous; 30) respectful; 31) heroic; 32) compassionate; 30) respectful; 34) gentle; 35) liberal; 36) shy; 37) the protector of surrendered souls; 38) happy; 39) the well-wisher of devotees; 40) controlled by love; 41) all-auspicious; 42) most powerful; 43) all-famous; 44) popular; 45) partial to devotees; 46) very attractive to all women; 47) all-opulent; 49) all-honorable; 50) the supreme controller.

My dear Guru Mahārāja, you are certainly no ordinary man.

You are all these qualities and more because you are in loving relationship with Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa. And as part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, you possess all these qualities to the highest perfection.

Beautiful features of the entire body

Anyone who sees your lustrous glow cannot take their eyes off you. Your lotus feet are pinkish and my shelter. Your legs are like pillars of strength, your arms are embracing all the fallen souls, your hands gesture to all humanity to come back to Godhead. Your complexion is so smooth and golden, your teeth are pearls beckoning us to

complete surrender, with your beautiful smile. Your eyes are the reflection of the Soul of Goloka Vṛndāvana, and your tongue is always speaking *kṛṣṇa kathā* or tasting *prasāda* and vibrating the holy names “Hare Kṛṣṇa.” Your spacious ears are conch-shaped and hear the pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa and our prayers. Once, the devotees said: “Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are so beautiful,” and you replied, “I am an old man. Your eyes see beautifully, so you think I am beautiful.”

Marked with all auspicious characteristics

Rādhārāṇī has marked you with the auspicious soul of compassion.

Extremely pleasing

You know how to please anyone, from distressed mothers, to academicians, to kings and lost souls. This is manifested in your relationships. Because Kṛṣṇa is so pleasing, you also are pleasing as his ambassador. You always tell us the perfect thing at the perfect time, and you have a perfect relationship with each and every one of us – individuals, all different, and yet we are all pleased at once. Like Kṛṣṇa at the *rasa-līlā* dance. You always had time for me. When you first arrived in Bombay, I brought a small table into your room, tiptoeing, as you were sitting with your eyes closed, child-like. You straightened up and said: “The table can come here”. I brought over the table, and asked “Is the table too high?” and you immediately said, “No, it is all right.” You leaned on the table as if trying it out, and invited me so I leaned on it also. Our faces were close together, and we talked pleasantly into the later hours. . . . Oh how pleasing.

...

Effulgent

Once, when photographing you, we used your grey chaddar as a background. There was very little light, but the photos came out bright. The grey turned into gold, and a glow emanated from you in halo-like form. You light up any place you grace.

Strong

Once in Montreal, with one strong hand, you held little Sarasvatī

up, which took great strength. Then, as as Gaurasundar snapped a photo, you held Sarasvatī up again and quipped, “They will say what kind of *sannyāsī* am I?” In London during Rādhā-Londonīśvara’s installation ceremony, the throne fell and you, as if holding up the whole universe or Govardhana Hill, single-handedly held it up until we came to assist.

Ever-Youthful

Your eyes are always glowing in youth, and all auspicious lines reappear as the changing of seasons. Once Nandarānī prabhu described, “As we watched Prabhupāda in amazement, who in all seriousness, looked 20-years-old. It was unbelievable he had not one wrinkle on his beautiful face.”

One devotee gasped, “Oh Prabhupāda, you look so young today!” You smiled cunningly and said, “Oh, someone has said that I am old.”

I defy anyone to sleep and eat so little, and work so hard as you. So much so that your youthful disciples cannot keep pace with you or overtake you walking.

A Wonderful linguist

You know Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali and English. When You first came to the USA, your English was choppy. Now you have produced so many succinct volumes – smooth, poetic, and the wording exact. Who else but you could do this? You even could talk your unique nonsense language for fun.

Truthful

You said to a questioning person. “Do you want me to tell you the truth, or what you want to hear? You have instructed us to tell the truth even to enemies, and so many times in social or diplomatic situations you have spoken the Absolute Truth, uncaring for protocol. For this reason so many sincere souls have come looking and finding the Absolute Truth from you.

Talks pleasingly

Once when a distressed mother came and said that we were taking her son away from her, you said, “If your son is happy why would you object?” She understood and became pleased.

You never are unpleasing or quarrel unnecessarily. You told us this nice Bengali proverb: “It is not wise to pick a quarrel with a crocodile while living in the jurisdiction of the water.”

I said to you, “Oh Prabhupāda, you say everything perfectly.” You replied, “That is because you hear perfectly.”

Your words are always honey-combed and sweet, and pleasant. You have a way to make people comfortable and trust you. You see into our hearts and smooth us with words and deeds.

Can speak fluently in all languages

Your knowledge of Bengali, Hindi, English, and Sanskrit was appreciated by all in India.

And you have taught us the universal language, love of Kṛṣṇa.

Highly learned

“When a person is highly educated and acts strictly on moral principles, he is called highly learned. A person conversant in different departments of knowledge is called educated, and because he acts on moral principles, he is called morally stout. Together these two factors constitute learning.”

—*Nectar of Devotion*, p. 164

So many times you taught me world history, especially during your morning massage.

You taught me accounting, management skills, histories of Gandhi, British home rule, the meaning of *prabhu*, farming and medicinal techniques, economics, political nuances, practical applications of devotion, social ethics, sociology, chemistry, the analysis between material and spiritual worlds, how to be gentlemen, how to cook, even how best to wash the floor (as demonstrated in Allahabad), do your own washing in a bucket, how to cut a coconut, wrap a dhoti. All departments of knowledge are known to you. You

once said knowledge is “to know where to find something out.” We know to go to you as you know everything and reveal to us only what we can understand at the moment. But you can never run out of new knowledge to give us.

Highly intelligent

“A man is called intelligent if he has a sharp memory and fine discretion.” You demonstrate this, as you always quote from scriptures to support a point. Such a vast, clear memory is very rare.

A genius

You have never been defeated in an argument. You can refute anyone on scriptural basis and they will eventually admit defeat.

You won debates on both sides of an issue. You masterminded the great progress of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in such a short time, with so few facilities. You must surely be a genius even by material standards.

One man, here in India said that you have done more in four years than anyone else has done in twenty-one.

Artistic

Once, when you saw two young girl disciples dancing and swaying together in *kīrtana*, you directed me to photograph them. Another time you took a closed lotus, and we watched you push the end of the lotus into your other palm and deftly open each petal.

Your directions on how to build the *ratha*, how to construct a temple, and how to proceed in seven *kīrtana* parties of seven are artistic and adroit.

These are just a few descriptions of how automatically a pure devotee takes on the munificent artistic qualities of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Extremely Clever

Other displays of cleverness manifested themselves when you were alone in New York with a few of your young followers. You convinced the landlord of “Matchless Gifts” to become a trustee of a newly-formed organization and therefore the first month’s rent was given free. You taught how a thrifty treasurer acts. You were the first treasurer of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, and once when Umapati Prabhu approached you for 59 cents for a can

of paint, you said: “Oh, you should not ask the spiritual master for money.” So, in your treasury the money was only coming in which is the wish of every treasurer.

In London you spoke to me about erecting a book stall in front of the temple, in between the building and the small gate. I said, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, the law states that one cannot build on the outside of this building.” You retorted: “This is the outside,” gesturing as we were inside the gates. I then stated that the law forbids the building of anything on the immediate inside of the building. You again replied “This is the outside of the building,” as we were on the outside of the building itself. Thus you showed your cleverness.

Another time the law of one state discouraged food distribution without permission. To get permission required a lot of red tape. You said: “Do not say we are distributing ‘food’, say we are distributing ‘*prasādam*’. And from that time on no one ever objected to our *prasādam* program and permission was automatically granted.

You were asked if we could we see Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* in our impure state. You cleverly replied: “Yes, if They wish to come, who will check Them? If I want to see the king and queen it is a very difficult affair, but if the king and queen wish to see me, where is the difficulty?”

Expert Judge of Time and Circumstances

So many times we thought that a certain endeavor was premature or untimely, but you still requested us to go on and the success verifies your expert judge of time and circumstances. An example is when most of us didn’t think the ‘Bhagavat Dharma Discourses’ were held at the right time for the Bombay residents, but you showed us why it was worth trying.

You said we were unknown and if we arranged the event successfully it would be a great thing, and we should be bold and try to cooperate on this venture.

Regarding this bold attempt you told this proverb: “If you are going to hunt, then hunt a rhinoceros, and if you are going to plunder, then plunder the government treasury.” You said in that way if we were successful then everyone would say it was great and if we failed, the people would say it was an impossible thing to do.

When the distribution of *Back to Godhead* magazine first began, after some time, you ordered us to print 3,000 copies. Everyone thought that it would be impossible to distribute 3,000 copies,

but you showed that, as usual, you are an expert judge of time and circumstances.

A mother once came to you requesting that her son not take up the chanting. She said his working himself into a fever was not proper, and he should not get entangled in this movement. You said, "This boy is not entangled. He is free, and he can go with you now if you like." She was satisfied.

It is often the case that you direct our movements by your expertise, when to do and when not to do something. Your example of these qualities are demonstrating to us how to act in accord with time and circumstances.

You also said one of my favorite quotes "Art means full belly" for someone who is starving cannot appreciate art.

Seer by the authority of the scriptures

In every dealing large or small, you quote a line from the Vedic dharma. Every word, deed, and feeling you give is backed by scriptural authority. An example of how you think of scripture in relationship to even small everyday things is when one girl was very frightened by a flying insect while sitting before Your Divine Grace. After the girl became calm, the other students asked why we are afraid of small insects when we are larger and more intelligent than them. You immediately quoted a verse from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that explains that eating, sleeping, mating and defending, (fearing) are propensities of this conditioned existence and by surrendering to Śrī Kṛṣṇa we can overcome all fear.

Your Divine Grace is always seeing and speaking through the eyes of the scriptures (*śāstra-cakṣuḥ*) to anyone who has come in contact with you. You said: "It is better to quote from the Vedas. If two lawyers argue, their guideline is the law books, and if they do not accept the law, then how will the argument go on?"

Pure

In your association my love increased by your purity and example. You have certainly delivered many fallen souls and have never done anything which is impure. This is the authoritative definition of pure.

You once told me: "Never was there a moment when I have not

thought of Kṛṣṇa in this life.”

Self-controlled

Many a time whilst others were running hither and thither trying to execute something, you remained self-controlled and equipoised. You remained as undaunted as Kṛṣṇa when He patiently heard Śiśupāla’s insults at the Rajasuya Sacrifice.

An example of this was in New York (at the first temple of the society) when a crazy, intoxicated boy came in, and without removing his shoes, placed two rolls of paper towels underneath the sink and walked out making a loud noise. You were in the middle of a lecture and everyone looked at you to see what your reaction would be. You looked around and smiled saying, “Just see, Kṛṣṇa lets everyone serve Him.”

A taxi driver once asked you whether you sleep on a bed of nails. You said that it is not a great thing to overcome pain, and pain could be overcome by drugs. A real Swami is one who is self-controlled just like one who could sit in a room of beautiful women and not be agitated.

During your illness in New York, even though you were in a very weak condition you were controlled. You saw your servant sitting beside you. Although he was anxious to see to all your needs, you said: “Why are you just sitting there idly? Don’t be idle, always chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.”

Steadfast

According to the *Nectar of Devotion* a steadfast person is one who continues to work until the desired goal is achieved. The whole success of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is due to your steadfast quality.

You wanted a sign painted with the society’s name, but the treasurer said that we didn’t have even enough money for the rent. But you insisted on the sign, and by amazing happenings, the rent money came in time because influential people saw the sign. You taught us: “Just get the horse and the whip will come, but what good is a whip without a horse?”

Another time, some people did not respond even after you explained the Kṛṣṇa conscious principles. They were even critical, and we asked how our work could go on when there were people like

that. You smiled and cited a Bengali proverb: “When the elephant caravan passes by, the dogs will bark. so push on this movement even when difficulties arise.”

Forbearing

Once, when some people were not respectful I asked why they did not understand the beauty of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You laughed, and said there is a Bengali proverb which states

“If you make a dog a king, and he is sitting on a throne, and you throw him a shoe, he will run off the throne and bite the shoe.”

Oh Śrīla Prabhupāda, no one knows the meaning of suffering like Your Divine Grace, and yet you go on as if nothing inharmonious exists. You actually live in the examples of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, free from honor and dishonor, pain or pleasure, heat and cold etc.

I remember asking you not to come to London because of the cold snow, and you said weather is no concern. I saw you persevere, overcoming many challenges by your forbearance.

Forgiving

So many times we have committed offense upon offense at your lotus feet, and you said, “alright what’s done is done.”

Time and time again I have witnessed your forgiveness. You have been so merciful to our whims and insults and for this I am eternally grateful because you know the desired goal, even if we forget. Your forgiving quality, never found in anyone else, is as if Viṣṇu is thinking that His hard chest is hurting sage Brighu’s foot.

Someone stole a lot of butter, and you saw this. You called the person in and said, “We should not steal, everything is Kṛṣṇa’s. Treat other people’s property like stool.”

And then you forgave and said: “But if you have to steal, then steal butter like Kṛṣṇa as Mākhana-cora (butter thief).

In Delhi, one man who was instructed to look after some *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatams* and your mail, opened your mail and stole various amounts of money from your letters, about Rs. 2,000/-.

After he was found out, one student asked if he will have to suffer for the offense at the feet of a pure devotee. “There is only one thing to do,” you said. “Have him arrested?” the student asked. You

replied: “No, forgive him.”

My favorite pastime was when you said, “If you do something and I don’t forgive you, then Kṛṣṇa will forgive you, and if Kṛṣṇa does not forgive you, then Rādhārāṇī certainly will forgive you.”

All-Auspicious

By your auspicious movements, all demonic activities cease in our hearts. You possess all auspicious qualities.

Most Powerful

Even when the most dogmatic of questioners challenged you, you in one moment changed his whole consciousness and thinking, or completely defeated him. This is most powerful.

You once told me a Bengali proverb as follows:

“A fool will ask more stupid questions than even the wise man can answer”.

But still, you can make a dumb man speak, a lame man walk and a fool a sage, or a puffed-up scholar a child-like soul.

You are most powerful because you are channeling Krishna!

All-Famous

“A person who becomes well known because of his spotless character is called famous.”

When you first went to New York, a man invited you to his home. You went so you could talk of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but he had other motives.

When you arrived, there was a social gathering, and this man put you next to a 50-odd-year-old widow woman who wanted some social relationship. But you chanted the holy name and would not take part. The man said, “Oh Swamiji, You are not like the other swamis I have met.” So because of your spotless character and deeds.

You have now become famous, especially in Gokula Vṛndāvana, where you were given the key to the holy city where other pure souls serve and play with our beloved Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. You are also famous as Jagat Guru.

Popular

You are dear to the people in general because you are giving them Kṛṣṇa, who is all-attractive. And because Kṛṣṇa is so attractive, as are you, and all who come to see you become attracted.

When you first came to the USA in 1965, you could have sunk into oblivion, but in a short five years you became so well-known and popular that Hare Kṛṣṇa is now known throughout this previously vacant place. We have seen how hippies, mayors, presidents, Hell's Angels, scientists, distressed parents, industrialists and kings have all been won over by your divine charms. And you modestly say, "... because Guru Mahārāja is helping me, I have come out so prominent."

Partiality to Devotees

You said that when you were a father to your natural sons and daughters you would think of how they were growing, what kind of education they would get, etc. But now you have so many spiritual children, that you feel partial towards us, as we are relating on a transcendental basis, in devotion, like Lord Viṣṇu with His lotus and conch.

You shower love on Kṛṣṇa's devotees, and with club and *chakra* You show your mercy to the demonic.

You once said, "Kṛṣṇa conquered by love and conquered by killing." An article was published about your movement, and it was placed between one relating to sense enjoyments and a picture of a naked woman. When you came to the Kṛṣṇa conscious article, your eyebrows raised slightly. When it was pointed out that the magazine was not very good, you replied, "When you find gold in a filthy place, pick it out." You picked us out of the mire and made devotees out of mobs. You have found moons between the zillions of stars, oh greatest of *paramahinsas*.

Very Attractive to All Women

Because of your special qualifications you are very attractive. To women you are a son. To some women you are a brother. To some women, you are an older brother. And to all women, you are attractive. And to the women in Kṛṣṇa consciousness from all over the world you are so attractive that they gave up past habits just as the *gopīs* ran to Kṛṣṇa as He is all-attractive.

You are all of these and their supreme protector.

All-Worshipable

To me you are the prime object of worship. You are my life.

All-Opulent

You are not limited by time and space, and all opulences are possessed by you as you know Their Lordships Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. When Lord Caitanya was discussing with Raya Rāmānanda, Lord Caitanya asked:

1. What knowledge is best of all? Raya Rāmānanda answered that there is no knowledge except loving faith (*bhakti*) in Kṛṣṇa;
2. Among various kinds of love, which is the best? One who is rated as a devotee of Kṛṣṇa has the highest love;
3. Among various kinds of property which is the most desirable? Only one who has love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa can be called wealthy;
4. Among sorrows, which is the most severe? Raya Rāmānanda answered there is no sorrow as great as separation from Kṛṣṇa.

You once related this idea of limitation to a doctor who says he can cure pneumonia but not a cold, and advises the patient to go and soak his body in ice cold water to be prescribed with a cure. In the same way, there are many devotees of the Lord with limited views, but Kṛṣṇa is Kṛṣṇa and because you do as He wishes, you are filled with all opulences.

All-Honorable

When you walked on the Bowery, even the inebriated stood up for you instead of making you walk over them.

You gain the respect of the lowest and the highest, so by nature when you walk so stately with your entourage, you appear as a great king.

You are honored in any position by rich men and kings because you are the purest devotee of the all-honored Lord Kṛṣṇa.

In Amritsar as people were bowing to you, you looked over to me and said, "Just see how they are honoring the saintly persons."

Supreme Controller

Your orders cannot be neglected by any of us. In that way you are the supreme controller.

Many times you asked us to prepare something immediately and although it seemed impossible, we executed your orders and became fully engaged in the Lord's work.

In London, the work was going slowly on the building of the temple, so you gave us a date two weeks away for the initiation ceremony. Immediately, the building work was concentrated on, invitations were sent out, and although it seemed an impossible task, we followed your instructions and everything worked out nicely.

So if we follow your instructions to the letter, all our difficulties cease and upon doing this we step out of material entanglement.

When I hear your instruction, your revelations, your playful words, your voice, your footsteps, or talk, or laugh, it is like the early morning bathers at the Jamunā banks in Vṛndāvana calling out as they bathe: "Oh Govinda, He Bhagavān He Kṛṣṇa, Rādhe Rādhe."

Kṛṣṇa's teaching as understood by you is the perfect formula for all souls if they take it.

So I submit that you emulate the qualities of Kṛṣṇa for you have fulfilled the prophecies of Lord Caitanya and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. And so I pray that we can fulfill your prophetic words which are,

"This movement will be noted down in
history for having saved the world."

Thank you very much my Prabhupāda,

Gurudas

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You are like a vast ocean of devotional qualities, impossible to know the limits of. As a new student I was attracted to you and your teachings but, as I realized later, it was the philosophical concepts that excited me which were more theoretical than visceral or realized. Over time and through practice I was able to give more credit to my heart and less to my mind. As it is said, “As they surrender unto Me I reward them accordingly.”

I came to you as a previously surrendered soul to the impersonal conception of spiritual endeavor; I tried so hard to see everything as “One.” This nearly killed me, spiritually and physically. You saved me from that horrible mistake by teaching me the process for removing the cataract of ignorance so that I am now able to appreciate Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His creative ability of and all the beautiful things of His Nature. Ultimately, they are all connected to the personality of the Lord. And what a unique Personality He has! As He says, I am the taste of water, the light of the sun and moon, the strength of the strong, and so on. But, through the books that you tirelessly produced for us, you’ve revealed the very sweetness of His Personality.

I offer my unceasing thanks to you for giving me the chance to approach the house of *bhakti*. I’ve only been able to push open the heavy door of that house enough to get a glimpse inside through the small space created. That vision has given me a small taste for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and appreciating the beauty of the Deities, Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi, Śrī Śrī Rādhā Giridhārī, and Śrī Balarāma, Śrīmatī Subhadrā, and Śrī Jagannath Swami.

When I see hundreds and thousands of devotees and their children all over the world, like Russia, China, even Mongolia, now chanting and dancing in joy for Kṛṣṇa, it brings tears to my eyes and I break down in happiness that even in some small way I was helpful to you, in the beginning. And, I am so fortunate to be able to see this. Now, I pray to someday again assist you in your service wherever you may be; and I will never give up that hope and desire. Please don’t reject me.

Your eternal servant,

Madhusudan dāsa Adhikary

Happy in the Bowers of Love

Playing in the mud puddles of a universe doomed to extinction
Thinking myself wise and pretending to be artistic
I met you and my illusions slid away out from under me
replaced by *Bhagavat dharma* truths, a solid platform
You O Prabhupāda, architect of the world of ISKCON
of filaments stretching outward living nerve fibers
A global network centered in Śrīdhāma Māyāpur
spiritualizing gradually the lives of a weary planet
Opening a path to Kṛṣṇa. your books and temples and websites
catch the hands of us beggars pulling us mightily to Godhead
Where we hope to see you happy in Braja's bowers of love
So prays the poor man Dāmodara Dāsa
Aspiring grandly to a bhakta's *rasa*.

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at the dust of your transcendental lotus feet. Thusly, this is my only hope against hope, grasping, taking shelter of you.

Just recently, I read an excerpt from Rūpa Vilāsa Prabhu's book, *Without Fear*. He wrote: "At the end of class, someone raised a question which in essence asked what it was like to be transcendently situated; to be a self-realized soul? Śrīla Prabhupāda considered the question for a few moments, and then he spoke two memorable words, *Without Fear*.

"As he uttered those words I felt trembling, the hairs of my body stood on end, I had goosebumps, and felt fearless, ecstatic and emotional all at once. I felt a little self conscious, not wanting to make a display of my feelings, but as I looked around the room I saw that many other devotees had jubilant expressions on their faces. It was as though a wave of ecstatic energy had emanated from Śrīla Prabhupāda and then passed through us. For a few moments we knew what it was like to be situated in transcendence—fearless and blissful."

And that is just how Śrīla Prabhupāda was in so many instances with his magnificent spiritual strength of his pure unalloyed devotion to Kṛṣṇa coupled with genuine humility.

It goes without saying there is endless anxiety, pain, and dissension in this material world that we don't have to look for it. The longer we are in this body, for this allotted time, it can be realized all the more, the fragility of material existence. So, throughout the years, being confronted with either *ādhibhautic*, *adhyātmic*, or *adhidaivic* miseries, I know embracing that treasured solace from within of Śrīla Prabhupāda's causeless mercy, taking shelter in his *vāñī* association; with Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings resonating the inevitable truth, it is leading us all to the positive goal, love of Kṛṣṇa in devotional service, and to our spiritual master side-by-side.

And, also remembering any of the sweet, loving exchanges with His Divine Grace I cherish I was able to have. Any rapports – big or small – engulfed one in such inexplicable happiness not able to translate into words. A devotee reminded me of an incident that I had forgotten. After an evening kīrtan at 26 2nd Ave, the temple, being a narrow storefront was packed with devotees and guests.

After the chanting, as usual, His Divine Grace was offered a plate of cut-up fruit. Every movement he made was so breathtaking to see as he gracefully popped a piece of fruit into his mouth without touching his hands.

I was then handed the *mahā-mahā-prasāda* to distribute to the assembled devotees and guests. I was handing it out to everyone and at the same time not wanting to turn my back to Śrīla Prabhupāda. It was so crowded, with hardly any floor space left that while trying to distribute the fruit without turning my back to Śrīla Prabhupāda, I was stepping clumsily, and tripping over people. And then, all of a sudden, he gave a gut level laugh. After hearing and remembering that, it gave me such happiness that Śrīla Prabhupāda enjoyed what I was trying to do.

Another incident was when the Temple was moving from 26 2nd Ave to 61 2nd Ave. Śrīla Prabhupāda was scheduled to come. It was a few blocks up and we were all excited that the temple was relocating “uptown” for Śrīla Prabhupāda. It was bigger as it was previously a tuxedo shop. We were all preparing for his grand arrival. A *vyāsāsana* was built in an alcove containing three adjacent mirrors for viewing one’s tuxedo from three different angles. When His Divine Grace was seated on it, one could see him from those different angles, which was all the more relishable. A few weeks prior to Prabhupāda’s arrival, I embroidered the words, “*All Glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gouranga*” in script on deep golden yellow velvet with red embroidery thread.

The day Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived, everyone was very joyously chanting and dancing. He walked through the entrance from the street, and up the stairs. The placard I had done was hung in front of the *vyāsāsana*, just underneath his lectern. He stopped and asked who had done the inscription, then showed he was pleased. I was so overwhelmed by his kindness to notice. The sheer happiness was just being able to do that devotional service, and then it was multiplied by him being pleased. It can never be overemphasized that Śrīla Prabhupāda exhibited such a commanding, purifying presence that anyone who came in contact with him experienced this.

There is this well-known beautiful pastime I heard again recently which never ceases to amaze me. It is about the flight attendant who grabbed a bit of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s remnants from his plate of puffed rice *mahā-prasāda*. Then, she asked if there was anything that she could get for him. He asked for some hot milk, which she

enthusiastically supplied. A number of years later a SKP devotee was distributing books in an out-of-the-way place. When knocking on a door he surprisingly saw that the woman who answered had many of Prabhupāda's books. She then related that she was the flight attendant who grabbed some of Prabhupāda remnants, and then served him by getting some hot milk for him. Such is the potency of Śrīla Prabhupāda's divine grace.

Again and again, I offer my most humble obeisances to my beloved spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

I beg to remain your spiritual daughter and servant always,

Kanchanbala Devī Dāsī

Hriskesananda Dāsa

Daṇḍavat Śrīla Gurudeva,

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

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

It is again your appearance day, so I want to remember something special between us. In Fall of 1973 I had rejoined and was staying next to you in Māyāpur, along with Śrutakīrti Prabhu – he is such a sweet devotee, and a Hanumān-like personality.

I had guard duty one night, so I was patrolling the upper halls of Māyāpur Center. I remember sitting on the roof at 2 a.m. and falling asleep with a shotgun in my hands, only to be startled awake by another guard who had a gun pointed at my head, along with the response, “If this was Nam, you’d be dead!”

So as I went by your room and looked in, you called me inside. You said to wake Baradraj Prabhu to play *mṛdaṅga*, because you wanted to sing a *bhajan*. We both returned and put the harmonium on your bed, while you played and sang a Bengali song, while I played *karatālas* and Baradraj, who was an incredible musician and artist, played the drum.

I am so inattentive that I cannot remember the precise *bhajan*, but it was in Bengali, and it does take a genius to understand the essence.

After that you dismissed us, and returned to chanting *japa*. Baradraj went back to sleep, and I went on to carry a shotgun, looking for trouble.

Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Your eternal servant,

Hriskesananda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my worthless obeisances. It is a miracle that I still have the nerve to call you my spiritual master. Perhaps after many lifetimes I might actually qualify to be your disciple, but right now I have precious little standing in the company of my godbrothers, what to speak of a place at your lotus feet.

There is little I can say except “thank you.” You gave me a new life when you initiated me. I was on the methadone program, and you told me to “keep taking my medicine and keep chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and you will not need it anymore.” That is exactly what happened, and I spent a few blissful years in your service at New Vrindaban, Pittsburgh, and Los Angeles in the BBT and was able to make some contributions to your movement. I did some service but *māyā* wore me down and I became less and less of a sincere disciple.

In the last 20 years, largely due to the association of my good wife, Kadamba, I have very slowly returned to the fold. I listen to chanting most of the day at work and now chant four rounds a day. There is a very nice group of devotees here in the Visalia area that get together regularly for *kīrtana* and to study *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. What an honor it is to be accepted in their company. I pray for your mercy. Please continue to bless me with increasing attraction to the holy name, and attraction to the devotees who have truly surrendered to you.

I did accomplish one service a couple of years ago. Based on your handwritten instructions, which I somehow held onto all these years, I made some Dey’s ointment, packaged it, and tried to sell it, but it has not yet found much commercial success. Nevertheless, I am glad that I was able to carry out your instructions, and feel somehow inextricably tied to you by that endeavor.

As my memory and the rest of my body continues to fail, I can only pray for your mercy to help me remember the real purpose of life, and to remember how much kindness you have bestowed (and continue to bestow) upon me. I certainly do not deserve such mercy, but because you have given me so much in the past, I still hold out hope that more mercy is coming my way, despite my inability to even grudgingly accept it. Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your slightly grateful servant,

Ranadhir Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet, which only appeared to walk as if in the world of man but in fact walked forever in the holy dust of Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma.

I often think of the will your Guru Mahārāja dictated early on the day of his departure. In it, he used the words *sympathy* and *sympathetic* four times. He chastised one great soul, saying he “should have been more intelligent and sympathetic.” Another he complemented, saying his “sympathy for me brought me in connection with so many persons. . . . His sympathy knows no bounds.” And he offered praise to a third, saying he “is also sympathetic to me.”

In the realm of devotional service, the concept of being sympathetic carries extraordinarily meaning. The simple dictionary definition of *sympathy* implies “comforting,” “encouraging,” or “supportive.” But the more graphic definition is found in music when a passive string automatically vibrates when a second string of similar harmonic qualities is vibrated. The first string, although previously stationary, has vibrated sympathetically with the second due to being in resonance with it. They are tuned to the same frequency.

How fortunate is that soul whose consciousness is sympathetically tuned in resonance with yours, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for that soul’s consciousness will be activated and moved by your consciousness. That soul will be hard-working, compassionate, unselfish, dutiful, learned, wise, austere, blissful, humble, bold, organized, intelligent, and above all eager to constantly serve Kṛṣṇa in great love.

When the consciousness of a disciple is sympathetically tuned to resonate with the heart’s desire of his master, as yours was with your Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, then that disciple is truly a disciple, as you were a true and supremely sympathetic disciple, and will “dance” in amazing ways, as you

“danced” in amazing ways.

To be a sympathetic instrument was your prayer upon arriving at Boston’s Commonwealth Pier on September 18, 1965:

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

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

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

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

On this auspicious day in which we honor your appearance, I wish to praise your many disciples who dance in amazing ways in their sympathetic attempt to please you. But most of all I wish to honor you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, whose example of selfless, dedicated, filled-with-*bhakti* service is incomparable. It is ever-expanding, world-encompassing, and inimitable. You turned the world into a field in which Kṛṣṇa could be glorified. You’ve left your presence, your guidance, and your legacy to illuminate the standard of pure devotion in the form of your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and your *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

You’ve given so much, you’ve blessed so many, and you offer a sympathetic life to all. May we learn to resonate sympathetically with your desire to serve Kṛṣṇa. May a drop of sympathy for you and your cause take birth in my unsympathetic, barren heart. And to that heart of yours, which is fully sympathetic to your Guru Mahārāja, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara, I pray to surrender.

Your servant,

Bhūrijana Dāsa

Rukmiṇī 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*

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

We once heard that a wise astrologer saw a photo of you and said, “He can build a house in which the whole world can live”.

But what does that mean, really, ‘a house in which the whole world can live’?

In 1944, in the midst of the harsh reality of world war, you explained your vision for that house in the first issue of your *Back to Godhead* magazine.

In that first article, you wrote:

Politically India may ask all so-called foreigners to quit the shores of India, but spiritually she did never ask anybody to do so, nor will she do so even now. She will rather invite all the so-called foreigners to come and exploit the spiritual resources of India’s advancement, and this transcendental exploitation will not only enhance the glory of India but will also enrich the glory of the whole world for unity, faith and humanity.

As Lord Kṛṣṇa lovingly lifted the Govardhan Hill as an umbrella of protection for the residents of Vṛndāvana, in the same way you lovingly built a house to give protection and shelter for us from the storms of Kali-yuga.

This house you built has a veranda facing out to the world. You stand on that veranda, looking out at the suffering of the people of the world. When you sometimes see that some are being excluded, with a tear in your eye, you call out, “Bring them in, bring them in!” Or you exclaim with compassion, “Let no-one go hungry within a ten-mile radius of this house!”

As you face out to the suffering world, your glance benedicts everyone it touches, creating what you call, “imperceptible auspiciousness” as you bless all directions with the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

At its center, this house has a courtyard, with an overflowing fountain of gratitude to the Source of all life, Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa. They are the owners of this house, which you built for Their pleasure: Their worship is celebrated by every member of the household.

The veranda of this house has four pillars: mercy, austerity, truth and purity. These pillars uplift us to *sattva guṇa*, the place where we access the joy of spiritual and secret knowledge (*rāja-vidyā*, *rāja-guhyam*), giving us direct perception of the self by realization.

The interior pillars in the courtyard are five:

To cherish the *saṅga* of all *sādhus*...

To chant the holy name in humility, love and attention...

To hear and chant the beautiful *Bhāgavatam*,
enriched with your emotional ecstasies...

To revere the loving *sevā* of the Deities of Lord
Gaurāṅga and Śrī Śrī Rādhā Śyāmasundara...

And to imbibe the mood of living in such a holy *dhāma*.

In this house, there is an ambience of six loving exchanges (*dadāti pratigrhṇāti*) that sustain us and give us strength. Only in this mood can we authentically relish and share what you've given us.

This house must retain its strong, impenetrable foundation. We must be always vigilant to maintain the deep and wide foundation that you created – the principle of unity in diversity, connecting with all living beings of the world.

In this house the whole world can live. We are a joint family, a joint culture, where all voices are honored. We honor the elders, the voices of past tradition, who also need to see the bright faces of possibility in the youth. And the youth, who are the voices of the future, need to hear the discernment of experience and wisdom in the voices of the elders.

In this way, we build on our shared strengths; rather than allowing the foundation of the house to crack, due to the seepage or flooding of cynicism, small-mindedness or sectarianism.

You built this house with strong timbers of whatever is favorable to *bhakti*, and you reject the worm-eaten planks of antiquated ideas that are unfavorable to *bhakti*.

Your house rejects cheating religion, which is like inferior marble that's full of holes, and filled with wax. In the fire of ordeal, that wax would melt, leaving us to cry for what is real, sincere, and sustainable.

Your Guru Mahārāja built a marble palace to establish his mission at Bagh Bazaar in Kolkata. When his disciples began vying for the better rooms that faced the Ganges, he became disheartened. Yet sometimes he indicated that one day you would be the one to expand his mission beyond all borders.

We too must always remember that we are mere servants in your house. We must keep before us your intention in building such a house. As you foretold in 1944, you built this house, inviting the world to, "come and exploit the spiritual resources of India's advancement, and this transcendental exploitation will not only enhance the glory of India but will also enrich the glory of the whole world for unity, faith, and humanity."

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the blessing to live and serve in your house, and, following in your footsteps, to always welcome others to join us.

Your eternal daughter,

Rukmiṇī Devī Dāsī

Chintamani Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

Please accept my most humble obeisances. I can never thank you enough for all you have given us. The holy name is my life and soul, and without it I cannot imagine life, it would be so dry and have no purpose. The Deities, the *prasāda* and the association of devotees are everything.

I'm so sorry I haven't done more for you. Old age and disease have slowed me down and also affected my *sādhana*. It certainly didn't slow Your Divine Grace down, but I am not like you. If I have ever done anything to please you, I hope you will kindly remember me.

Thank you for the privilege of allowing me to be a pioneer in Japan and Manilla, to be the first to do *harināma* in those countries and open the way for more dedicated souls to receive Lord Caitanya's mercy. It was only because of YOUR desire that it happened. You are the one spreading the mercy and we are your servants.

The river of mercy is still flowing to all of us through the *paramparā*, we just have to jump into that stream of nectar of devotion by following your instructions to the best of our ability. May the blessings continue to inundate this very fallen soul and all *jīvas* on this planet for the next 10,000 years! Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, your glories will spread throughout the universe.

Please allow me to become a better servant of Your Divine Grace and others, wherever I may be. I never want to forget you or Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. With my head bowed at your lotus feet and my heart open wide, I thank you with deep gratitude for the miracle of you coming into my ego-driven pathetic life. My only desire is to be able to chant and dance eternally and have Kṛṣṇa *prema* in my heart.

Trying to become your true disciple,

Chintamani Devī Dāsī

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya
jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmlitaṁ 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 123th Appearance Day, also coinciding with the 53th appearance 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 to conduct in devotional service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa.

I recall in previous Vyāsa-pūjā *Tributes* offering (see Śrīla Prabhupāda *Tributes* 2015, pages 162–163) my co-devotees and disciples have spoken of your truly amazing educational programmes for helping humanity at large...this being a vehicle for communicating to the future leaders of society.

To further Kṛṣṇa’s desire and just 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, devotees all over the world, through your inspiration 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 can report to you wonderful services in London, and elsewhere under the leadership of Jai Nitāi Prabhu and others. It is with his grace along with other devotees that we have an oasis in the middle of London. The London Temple performs such beautiful festivals – Gaura Pūrṇimā, Janmāṣṭamī, Rathayātrā – just to name a few. There are food distribution programmes and *Bhagavad-gītā* classes. Thousands are taking shelter because of the festivals and spiritual welfare programmes enacted through your mercy and grace.

This very modest offering is an opportunity to reinvigorate oneself and catch up. May we all be inspired in your service.

It is estimated that there are now between six to seven million people practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the Western world in one form or another.

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.

Within centres of excellence, and in buildings and temples where the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is practiced, visitors should always be reminded of your valuable contribution and message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I feel there should be a grand hall called “Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Hall”. By having such a hall this shall become a magnet for attracting devotees.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in your blissful and wonderful books (over one hundred) that you’ve left behind for all humanity, we are your guardians. To be true to you and to Kṛṣṇa we must re-commit ourselves in our service to you. In one of your early articles and booklet entitled *Easy Journey to Other Planets* you state:

“People dream, of travelling to the stars, but such travel is still far away. Ancient yoga traditions, however, describe subtle pathways by which master yogis transfer themselves to planets beyond the earth.”

This book and many others take the reader to the most wonderful places in the anti-material sky which are eternal and full of bliss and beyond the reach of birth, death old age, and disease.

On this Vyāsa-pūjā, I would humbly make the following request to your most dedicated Vyāsa-pūjā *Tributes* team who take the trouble and love to reach out to so many disciples. I would like to propose that each participant should be invited to give his or her location, address, and contact details. This allows others to express their appreciation when they have been moved and enlightened by the offerings and realisations of more senior devotees. In years to come, the contact details will prove valuable for researchers and writers who wish to use the Vyāsa-pūjā *Tributes* books to advance your mission.

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 of loving Kṛṣṇa, and imbibing the science of Kṛṣṇa without adulation.

Today, of all days we seek your causeless mercy.

Your humble servant,

Cathurbhuja Dāsa

London

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your books are so amazing. Every day I am finding in them more pearls, nuggets, knowledge and nectar. Your books are so powerful with each word armed with a transcendental nuclear warhead for smashing through the illusory energy. They break up the darkness and let the transcendental light of the Absolute Truth come through the cracks. Anyone who reads your books will experience a spiritual transformation. Every single day your books are reaching conditioned souls whose hearts and minds are being purified by every word on every page.

Fulfilling the order of your Guru Mahārāja to spread the message of Lord Caitanya to the English speaking countries in the West, you planted the seed for what has become the worldwide Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Such a herculean feat could not be accomplished without the special mercy of Lord Nityānanda and therefore you are glorified everywhere as His representative.

Śrīla Prabhupāda by your mercy I came in contact with your teachings and movement at a young age, but like a fool I wasted so much of my life. I will try to do better Śrīla Prabhupāda. Please don't give up on me. Without your mercy I have no life at all. Without your mercy there is only darkness and hopelessness. My most fervent prayer is that you will always find some use for me in your service. You are my Lord and Master, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I am forever seeking shelter at your lotus feet. On this, your Vyāsa-pūjā day I offer you my most humble obeisances.

Your unworthy servant,

Swarup Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

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

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

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

*mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ
paṅguṁ laṅghayate girim
yat-kṛpā taṁ ahaṁ vande
śrī-guruṁ dīna-taraṇam*

“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 tilak on my head and at once they spontaneously say, “HARE KṚṢṆA”.

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 world wide people have become conscious of the rights of the animals to enjoy their life. This too is your mercy.

In 1969, Śrīdhām Māyāpur was a very sleepy little village, where a few Gauḍīya Maṭhas “rang the bells”; today tens of millions come to Śrīdhām 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 the vastness of your dedication and service, the vastness of your accomplishments to me means 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 *jaḡat guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Vaiṣṇava dās anu dās,

Bhakta Dāsa
Bangkok, Thailand

Dear 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*

Disciples should understand their position: they are nothing without the grace of their guru. It is abundantly clear to me that without your mercy I have absolutely no hope for becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious. This is as true today as it was when I first met you. As you said of your spiritual master, “He saved me.” Śrīla Prabhupāda, you saved all of us and when we reflect on how we were pulled out of *māyā* we can barely understand how it happened or how it was possible. Your disciples are living examples of your mercy and I, a lame man, have been gifted by you with the potential to climb mountains.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am just an ordinary person, but if I am ever able to do any service for you it is only because of the power of your instructions and service. In fact, you once wrote that by following your instructions our chanting of *sañkīrtana* will have the same effect on people as the chanting of Lord Nityānanda had on the people who heard him.

And isn’t this a fact? Young devotees, knowing little about Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, were able to turn others into devotees who then were able to make others devotees. This happened because of their faith in your instructions, You are a powerhouse of mercy and if we are connected to that powerhouse we can, in spite of our deficiencies, light the life of others.

When you went to New York, your chanting acted on the hearts of people in miraculous ways. You were empowered by Nityānanda Prabhu to such a degree that the results you achieved were no less than the results that Nityānanda Prabhu would have achieved if he personally went to New York in 1965. He worked through you and you offer that same empowerment to us. This gives me hope. If I follow your instructions I am confident that my words and chanting will act on others, not because of me, but because your power and potency will come through me.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am an example of how anyone who takes shelter of you, even though useless, can become useful. So many ordinary persons have become extraordinary by contact with you or your devotees. I pray that you make me extraordinary so that I can also make other ordinary persons extraordinary. Certainly this is possible by your mercy, and I am confident that so many wonderful things will manifest in the future if we follow your simple instructions to rise early, chant purely, associate respectfully with devotees, hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, worship the Deities and dedicate our lives to sharing this process with others.

My greatest desire is to be an example of what you teach and to share that desire with others. I beg your mercy to be able to do this.

Your ordinary servant praying for your eternal shelter and service,

Mahātmā Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

All glory to you, the *śaktyāveśa avatāra* who has come to deliver us from Kali's influence. You are the representative of Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Gaurāṅga.

You first started the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa publicly and distributing *prasādam*, cooking lunch for the guests and devotees and then inaugurating the Sunday Love Feast.

One of your disciples remarked to you, "It is *prasāda* that had me join." You replied, "Yes, you have all come from *prasāda*." Keeping a big jar of *gulab jamuns* to distribute, you appropriately called *prasāda* "our secret weapon to attract the conditioned souls."

Once during a big pandal program, the *prasāda* that was served was unpalatable. Being short-handed the devotees had hired a street sweeper. You were furious! You admonished the Temple President and GBC.

"Our main point is to attract them by really nice *prasāda*. [For] Palatable food we shall spend. What is the difficulty? Take contributions from rich persons or spend ourselves. We must give them very nice *prasāda*. People travel many miles to get a good meal and we cannot give them first class *prasāda*? Why you can't arrange? It must be done. Simply for eating they will come. Immediately you shall do it."

Jagadish Prabhū: "What sort of *prasāda* to give them?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "Give them nice *prasāda* that they are attracted. *Kitcheri, purīs, lāḍḍu, kacaurī*. Whatever they like. Do not waste. Give them first class *kacaurī, samosa, purīs*. They will be very glad. Very nice *prasāda*. What is this rubbish that the dog cannot eat? [Tasted so nasty, even dogs would not lick the discarded plates.] This is fiasco! I am very angry! If you say you have no money, I will spend. I will give. Why you give tenth class food. All rascals. It has to be thrown away. All these grains, waste of grains and energy. Hire a professional cook if need be. When I started the Sunday Love Feast in New York I was on my own. Cooking up to sixteen preparations for 200 people."

In your last days with us, you requested your GBC leaders to please at least maintain what you have given us. I am pained to see that in many Temples the standard of the Sunday Feast has significantly declined to a very low standard. Some Temples will serve a so-called feast with only three or four preparations, like *kitcheri*, *poppadoms*, *halavah* and lemonade. The Sunday Feast Program is actually meant to offer both new guests and seasoned devotees a dynamic experience, providing not only enlivening *kīrtana*, Kṛṣṇa-*kathā* and sweet devotee association, but luscious, flavorful, appetizing and abundant *prasāda*.

I seek your blessings that I can collaborate with other devotees to generate a quantity cookbook to help to reestablish your original standards for our Sunday Feast, which will create a revolution in all ISKCON Temples. Over the past few years I have been encouraged by many devotees to write such a cookbook and I have given my heart to this devotional service. Over this past year I am realizing the magnitude of this endeavor and am perplexed as to how the whole project will manifest.

What I am certain about is that only by your loving guidance will I be navigated to complete this undertaking within a year's time, as an offering for your transcendental pleasure.

Begging to remain your eternal servant,

Apūrva Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

When you engaged me in devotional service in my youth, I could work tirelessly for long hours. Blissfully, passionately, absorbed working day and night. I may not have understood the value so well or appreciated the results. Time has eroded my youth and vigor but the desire to engage in your loving service has only increased and deepened. This is also true of your teaching. This same *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* which I read with relish then, now has deepened like a huge endless ocean.

My body is beginning to fail, as you warned. It's time to now become much more conscious of my consciousness. I need to be acutely aware of selfish motivations and desires. The egos push for fame, adoration and distinction. The body's push for comfort and convenience, or the mind's push for self absorption. There is no longer the illusionary luxury of time. There is very little. The time from here to death is coming closer and closer. I was speaking with one godsister who lamented, "I'll probably have to live a long painful life". She died a month later.

While meditating about how to spend this fleeting time for your pleasure, the one reoccurring thought is to share the experience of your mercy. Yes, of course, share with the youth joining. Tell them about your pastimes and special ability of making anyone in your presence feel connected with Kṛṣṇa. Yet there is more. That is to live this truth. To be a little example of you. To acquire your mood and reflect your mercy. While this is not simply, easily acquired through one's own efforts, if the great *mahā-vadānyaya*, the merciful Lord Caitanya desires, anything can be attained.

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda did incredible, wonderful things in spreading this Movement to every town and village. How pleased Lord Caitanya must be with your determination, purity, dedication and so much more cannot be estimated. Please bless me with just a drop of this incredible ability to please Lord Caitanya and you in these waning years of my life. Give me purity of heart so my little

insignificant service can be acceptable and qualify me to be counted as your disciple.

Begging to be the servant of the most glorious spiritual master to ever exist, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, the controller, commander and center of my heart,

Nāgapatnī Devī Dāsī

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga!

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I beg for you to keep me as a particle of dust at your divine lotus feet. Your promise is valid. Through service, especially hearing the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, and by assisting you in teaching other aspiring Vaiṣṇavas what you have taught and revealed to us, transcendental loving service is rising in our hearts.

Please allow me to continue to reach for the divine treasure of Kṛṣṇa-*prema*, worth passing many lifetimes of service in this or any other plane. The taste for other, whatever it may be, is receding naturally. Faith in *bhakti-yoga* is evident in your every word and deed. You are a true *ācārya* of Śrīmān Mahāprabhu. Please forgive any offenses past, present, or future that out of ignorance and lack of maturity I may commit.

I am yours, always, your unworthy servant.

Sincerely,

Pusta Krishna Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to act as your servant to share what I have received from you with others. It is very rewarding when devotees appreciate your words and are able to change their lives to make progress toward loving Kṛṣṇa. We hope against hope that one day we can represent you purely and spread your message without motive or change. We know that without your blessings we cannot do anything in spiritual life so we pray for your blessings for courage to carry on our service in any circumstance. You have said in New York 1966:

“if you have got any distress, you have got any confidential thing, you have to submit to Kṛṣṇa, “Kṛṣṇa, I am in suffering this way. I am fallen in this tossing ocean of material illusion. Kindly save me. I can understand now that I have no identification with this material world. I am simply put here.” Just like if I am put into the Atlantic Ocean, I have no identification with the ocean, but I am subjected to the tossing waves of the ocean, similarly, we are spiritual spark, fragmental part of Kṛṣṇa. Some way or other, we put into this material ocean, and there is tossing. So I am being tossed. Don’t identify. Don’t try to solve the tossing. That is not possible. If you want to make solution of the tossing waves of the Atlantic Ocean when you are fallen there, it is useless foolishness. That is not possible. Don’t be foolish in that way. That will go on. That is Atlantic Ocean’s nature. You cannot stop it. You have to get out of it.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.2–5, New York, 1966)

Please pick us up from this tossing ocean of material existence and offer us up as servants to the lotus feet of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Please help us to always remember your instructions and have faith that we will meet you again someday. Please give us courage to serve you always and help us remember your loving presence.

Your servant,

Nārāyaṇī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Again this year, my thoughts turn to trying to put into words my tremendous feelings of indebtedness for your sacrifice in coming to the West to teach Lord Caitanya's science of God consciousness to souls starved for answers to our philosophical questions.

Your appearance day is the most auspicious day on the entire calendar for your disciples. We would not even know about any of the other auspicious days or auspicious activities if you had not appeared and made your perilous voyage to America.

As for me, I feel I owe you everything. In my life I turn again and again to the philosophy you taught us. I am blessed that my daughter and her daughters all worship Kṛṣṇa. What "wisdom" would I have had to pass on to these generations if I had not met you? Simply garbage hippie fabricated ideas about spiritual progress, not based on the time-tested science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness; not based on anything concrete. By your grace alone I can counsel them to pray and to chant, to tolerate happiness and distress and to know that we are not these bodies and this world is not our home.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you. May all my lifetimes hence be used in the service of those who follow and revere you.

All glories to your appearance here on Earth.

Your eternal daughter,

Mahāśinī Devī Dāsī

As you so succinctly taught us:

“Religion without Philosophy is sentiment,
or sometimes fanaticism, while Philosophy
without Religion is mental speculation.”

THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU

(Part Two)

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Among the pastimes I shared in *Tributes* 2018 about your last visit to Los Angeles, your public takedown of the “Gopī Bhāva Club” remains the most significant. The line you drew – from the Rādhā Kuṇḍa *bābājīs*’ advising you to retire to private *bhajan* and not go preach in the West, straight down to some of our BBT co-workers in New Dvaraka, lost in fantasies of *gopī-bhāva* – was absolutely chilling. “First deserve, then desire!” you commanded. Where would we be today without your historic thunder?

At the same time, during those early June days of 1976, so many other events were rolling round your cool lotus feet, it boggles the mind to recall how you handled them all: how your morning walks and talks about Vedic science and governance spilled over into breathtaking *Bhāgavatam* classes; how daily you continued to expand the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement worldwide on the wings of pale-blue aerogrammes; how you recorded immortal *bhajans* and *kīrtanas* at Golden Avatar Studios; how you sparred in your garden with academics, reporters, and ISKCON leaders alike, shaking everyone awake to the truth and beauty of Kṛṣṇa; how you ascribed parents’ hiring “deprogrammers” to force their children to leave the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement to the tidal wave of your BBT book distribution; how you approved Yamunā Devī’s ladies country ashram in Southern Oregon with a witty observation about men and women:

“Man is good, woman is good, when they
come together—bad. Both of them bad.”

After several days of witnessing your whirlwind of nonstop *bhakti*, I turned to my BBT roommate, Devāmṛta Brahmācārī, and said: “Hey, Devam, Śrīla Prabhupāda has been here a whole week. Isn’t it great? I don’t know how much longer I can take it!” Incredulous, Devāmṛta looked at me with widening eyes, which now spoke a silent question: why?

Why, indeed! We weren’t living with Your Divine Grace in your temple quarters, like your servant Hari Sauri Prabhu, taking care of all your needs, ready to spring day or night at the sound of your

bell. We were in our own BBT rooms across the street, Devāmṛta the proofreader, I the indexer, moving deliberately in our prescribed service orbits. Yet the sheer power of your *śuddha-bhakti* was driving us to live at a pitch of Kṛṣṇa consciousness (where there was really no time for anything else but Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa) that I wasn't ready for. It was the last time I would see you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, but looking back, I had yet to see you at all.

Today, inspired by devotees like Hari Sauri Prabhu and Devāmṛta Mahārāja, I'm becoming less afraid of your thunder. Hari Sauri has written many wonderful volumes, sharing what it was like to serve you up close and personal. And Devāmṛta Mahārāja has become a leader in helping your movement attract the younger generations to Kṛṣṇa in the new millennium. And by your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, since you've been pulling me round the ISKCON world to present my founder-*ācārya* seminar series, you've been showing me how to ride your *śuddha-bhakti* whirlwind (though I always fall off) and see you at long last in the direction of your eternal loving service.

All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Your aspiring servant,

Sureśvara Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

This letter is my attempt at glorifying Your Divine Grace on your blessed appearance day, Śrī Vyasa-puja. I would also beg to express my profound gratitude to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for accepting me as your disciple and for engaging me in your service, in the service of your followers, and in the service of your mission. In the scope of all the wonderful services I see your sincere followers performing throughout the world, I am most insignificant. I pray for the humility and sincerity to always serve you and your International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

I know Your Divine Grace to be Lord Kṛṣṇa's dearest eternal associate. You are the external manifestation of the Lord in the heart. By the mercy of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, I have been given the shelter of your divine lotus feet. By your mercy, you are accepting me, instructing me daily, and engaging me in the *yuga-dharma*, the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya.

Your Divine Grace is delivering me from the dark depths of repeated birth, death, and suffering. You have opened my eyes with the torchlight of transcendental knowledge. You have shown me the subtle false ego that, since time immemorial, has bewildered me into thinking I could dominate, manipulate, enjoy, and possess that which is in reality Lord Kṛṣṇa's own property.

I have been very slow to progress in devotional service, continually thinking that I could "take my time". Perhaps my false ego is stronger than I have been willing to admit. Perhaps I have not been sufficiently afraid of *māyā*. By your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, even I am beginning to see and understand what a fool I have been.

Hare Kṛṣṇa! How great is the beacon of your divine mercy! It is shining brightly within this dark Age of hypocrisy, greed, lust, and envy. I offer you my eternal gratitude and beg to serve your lotus feet eternally.

The greatest pain would be separation from your ISKCON and from your sincere, surrendered servants. My greatest fear is that I would not be able to hear your voice guiding, enlightening, and protecting me. The greatest blessing would be for me to progress – birth after birth after birth – in service to your lotus feet, especially by being allowed to offer your mercy, the mercy of Śrī Caitanya

Mahāprabhu, to many, many others.

Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, uplift me and protect me by your mercy. Instruct me, guide me, and order me with your powerful, transcendental words. Please save this suffering, misguided world. Please save us all, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda. Save all the souls you came to deliver. And I beg Your Divine Grace to allow me to be their servant in service to guru and Kṛṣṇa. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

With humility, gratitude, and all my heart,

Maṇḍaleśvara Dāsa

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

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

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Because of you, my life has changed completely. Every facet of my life has been transformed. And you continue, without interruption, to help me to increase and deepen this purification.

I plead that you keep on holding me close and protecting me from my many weaknesses and deviations. Please continue to bless me with the strength to always remain meek and humble, so that I can assist you in your most glorious mission, and thus make my life perfect.

One specific aspect of my life that you have helped me purify recently, is how I relate to conflict, disagreement, debate and quarrel within our organization. There are so many differences and disputes boiling all around: about child abuse; about your books; about your disappearance pastime; about your position; about initiation, Vaiṣṇavīs initiating and the list goes on.

I see three possible ways I can relate or deal with them:

One approach is to ignore them; Another is to engage with them; to enter into discussion, even debate; Another is to acknowledge them, coolly consider my own stance towards them, according to guru, *sādhū* and *śāstra*, and discuss them only when appropriate, with like-minded people, always keeping the goal in mind.

Sometimes I vacillate about which of the above – or some blend of the three – is most pleasing to you.

However, when I carefully study your instructions – your actions and your words – the conclusion becomes quite clear, although I may adjust it according to the situation, and the people involved. The major purification and realization that you have revealed to me is how to deal with such situations without resentment, unhealthy anger, malicious criticism, discouraging frustration and envy! By your infinite mercy, I am able to approach them differently now,

with one purpose, and one purpose only – to find ways to help fulfill your desire to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness to everyone.

You say different things about disagreements between devotees (my emphasis added).

“...not that there is some disagreement and I go away disgusted, no. That is not Vaiṣṇava standard. Standard should be that, never mind there is some difficulty, **my spiritual master has ordered me to do like this**, now let me do it, that’s all.” (Letter to Bhanutanya, Hyderabad, 18 November, 1972)

“Now this displeasing of godbrothers has already begun and gives me too much agitation in my mind. Our Gauḍīya Maṭha people fought with one another after the demise of Guru Mahārāja but my disciples have already begun fighting even in my presence. So I am greatly concerned about it.

Following in the footprints of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu: *trnad api su-nicena taror iva sahisnuna/ amanina manadena kīrtaniya sada harih.*

“... We must always remember this verse and be as tolerant as the tree, as we execute the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. **Without this mentality we cannot be successful.** Material nature means dissension and disagreement, especially in this Kali-yuga. But, **for this Kṛṣṇa 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... if **we fight on account**

of diversity, then it is simply the material platform.

If we are bunched up [like a bundle of sticks wrapped in a bag], we can never be broken, but **when divided, then we can become broken very easily.**" (Letter to Kīrtanānanda, Bombay, 18 October 1973)

"Our Movement is based on love and trust, so if we do not cooperate, then how is that love and trust? Follow all of the rules and regulations very strictly without deviation, chant 16 rounds, attend class and *maṅgala arati* and then everything will be alright." (Letter to Kṛṣṇavesa, Bombay, January 16, 1975)

"Now all my disciples must work combinedly and with cooperation to spread this *saṅkīrtana* Movement. **If you cannot work together then my work is stopped up.** Our Society is like one big family and our relationships should be based on love and trust. **We must give up the fighting spirit and use our intelligence to push ahead. You should accept help from your godbrothers.**" (Letter to Upendra, Los Angeles 6 August, 1970)

It may sound easy to deal with disagreements and achieve your pleasure by cooperating, Śrīla Prabhupāda, but in practice it seems to be most difficult. In fact, I believe it to be the most difficult challenge we face as a society. It requires the highest level of surrender and purity in service to you.

I take shelter in your example, which epitomizes your many instructions on the matter. When you saw that your godbrothers were not collaborating, due to disobeying the orders of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, you did not create a campaign about it. You did not try to expose their deviation, at that time, even though you did try to appeal to them assertively.

And you certainly didn't start legal action, for which you strongly criticized some of the others.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you did not allow yourself to be disturbed or distracted by their apparent inability to understand and apply the direction of their spiritual master. Instead, you remained absolutely fixed on his order to spread and preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the English speaking people.

As Kṛṣṇa describes in *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.41), you were resolute in purpose:

“Those who are on this path are resolute in purpose, and their aim is one. O beloved child of the Kurus, the intelligence of those who are irresolute is many-branched.”

You did not deviate for a moment – even for a split second – from the desire to fulfill your beloved Guru Mahārāja’s direction. There was no other consideration in your mind, no other interest whatsoever. Because you were pure, and materially unmotivated – without any personal ambition, which you describe as the greatest enemy in spiritual life. You were able to remain untouched by any kind of impediment or temptation in his service, and you achieved that gloriously, expanding his mission incredibly and inconceivably, throughout the entire world.

Your pure and infallible manifestation of the unlimited potencies of the Supreme Lord is saving us all!

My perception and conviction is that this is what you are asking of us: to be so completely surrendered in following your most basic instructions, so that we will also be able to deal with the apparently impossible obstacles to cooperating for you.

From your words and example, we learn how to deal with internal disagreement, disputes, conflict. The impossible becomes possible by integrating your perfect example with your specific and particular instructions about this subject.

You have given us clear guidelines about how to behave and progress when such disagreements create factions, disunity, disorder, and chaos and destruction. Not just that we should cooperate; not just that we should not fight; not just that we should carefully understand, always remember and apply the principle of unity in diversity. . . . but you make it possible to actually do it!

I find the “open secret” in your purport of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.48:

“...Unfortunately, when the *ācārya* disappears, rogues and non-devotees take advantage and immediately begin to introduce unauthorized principles in the name of so-called *svāmīs*, *yogīs*, philanthropists, welfare workers and so on....

The *ācārya*, the authorized representative of the

Supreme Lord, establishes these principles, but when he disappears, things once again become disordered. **The perfect disciples of the ācārya** try to relieve the situation by sincerely following the instructions of the spiritual master. At the present moment practically the entire world is afraid of rogues and non-devotees; therefore this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is started to save the world from irreligious principles. Everyone should cooperate with this movement in order to bring about actual peace and happiness in the world.”

I pray that I may spend every moment of the rest of my life expressing the gratitude I feel for your love, your kindness, your tolerance, chastisement, your words and your example. I know that you want me to express that gratitude by *living* your instructions – applying them myself and sharing them with others – not just thinking or talking about it.

Your aspiring-to-be-your-puppet servant,

Ātmānanda Dāsa

Pancharatna 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*

When will that day come
When I simply cry
As you said
“like a child crying for his mother”
When I chant
Śrī Harināma

From the beginning of your teaching us
You made it very simple
“just hear yourself chant sincerely”
Oh, when will that day come
Dropping all pretense
I chant
Sincerely

With your words and your life
You showed us the way
We must “simply be determined”
And yet, I lag behind
When will my determination
Become
Steady

And when will that day come
When you say
“what is the difficulty?”
And I will reply
“Nothing, Śrīla Prabhupāda”
And actually
Mean it

I yearn for this day
And yet I know
If I simply “stick to the process”
Despite my failings
Serving your mission
That day
Will
Come

By your fathomless mercy.

Begging to remain your servant.

Pancharatna Dāsa

My Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

I can never thank you enough for so kindly picking me up from this rotten material existence by engaging me in the devotional service of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

As a hippie, a countercultural youth in the 60s and early 70s, I desired to part of a spiritual revolution that could completely transform our materialistic planetary society creating a new peaceful and loving world social order. And I was doing whatever I thought I could do to help bring about such a transformation. After much search and endeavor it became clear that you were the only person who actually had the vision to successfully bring about such a transformation in the human society. So instead of endeavoring unsuccessfully on my own I became your disciple to assist you in your most powerful world deliverance mission.

You initiated me by a letter you sent me from London, England, dated 12th August 1971 giving me the name “Sankarshan Dāsa.” (You have written that “Sankarshan” means “one who attracts all living entities.”) When I mailed you my *guru-dakṣiṇā* I told you of my desire to spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. In your reply dated 7th September 1971, from London you so wonderfully and graciously instructed me as follows:

“I can see also that you are a very sincere and enthusiastic boy and are anxious for spreading this movement. Those are first class qualifications for making advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So continue enthusiastically as you are doing and Kṛṣṇa will surely bless you.”

Now, Śrīla Prabhupāda, by your mercy even though my body is 71 years old I am still feeling a youthful energy, an enthusiasm for making the whole world Kṛṣṇa conscious as soon as possible. I also find great strength, transcendental empowerment, in this most sublime instruction you gave in a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class in Los Angeles on 17 December 1973:

“So therefore our request is that these Europeans and Americans who have taken to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, just become perfect in the understanding of this science

and become guru and deliver the whole world.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I do not know how much longer I will remain in my present body. I could die at any minute. But my humble request to you and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is that I may remain in this material world birth after birth until your most sublime Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement becomes fully successful in delivering the world as per your order to us. In other words, when I go back to Godhead I want to be able to give you the *saṅkīrtana* report that now, by your mercy, the whole world has become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Thank you again and again millions upon millions of times for so kindly saving me from this most hellish material existence.

Your grateful servant of your servants,

Sankarshan Dāsa Adhikārī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this momentous anniversary of your appearance, we would like to give you an update on the continued progress distributing HARE KRISHNA! - The Mantra, the Movement and the Swami who started it all, the movie on your glorious life.

- Over the last six months in India, we have dubbed the film into the four major North Indian languages: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati and Marathi. The Honorable Vijay Rupani, the Chief Minister of Gujarat launched the DVD of the Gujarati version at ISKCON Ahmedabad on Dussehra; the celebration of Lord Rāma's victory over Rāvāna.

- A donor sponsored 500 DVDs which were distributed to the spiritual leaders of all groups at the Kumbha Mela festival in February.

- The ISKCON Delhi Glory of India Temple took 1000 DVDs for distribution to their donors.

- Lokanāth Swami took 1000 DVDs for distribution on Padayātrā. Since the different languages are spoken and not subtitled, even illiterate villagers will be able to view the movie.

- All in all, over 14,000 DVDs in the four languages have been distributed since January.

- Next we plan to dub the movie in the South Indian languages: Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and Telegu.

Our goal and hope is that the whole of India will come to realize that you are India's true national hero—India's greatest spiritual ambassador to the world!

- To date, HARE KRISHNA! has been screened in public movie theaters in 39 countries and has been viewed online in more than 100 countries.

- [AMAZON.com](https://www.amazon.com) is distributing the movie on DVD and also for rental or purchase on internet streaming.

- Even though the movie has been available on DVD and net streaming since August 2018, still distributors are approaching us for more screenings in movie theaters. HARE KRISHNA! is coming to the big screen in Italy in October—opening in 25 major cities. Sweden will show the movie in theaters and on TV.

- France (and French territories) - Switzerland, Luxembourg, Belgium, and French speaking Africa will soon have the movie available through Inrees TV.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have personally seen your eagerness

to preach to even one person. It is our honor, privilege and great happiness to continue to serve your desire in distributing HARE KRISHNA! to all parts of the world thus giving access to thousands to view your amazing life story and thus begin their journey on the path of lasting freedom.

With deep gratitude,

Your servants,

Yadubara Dāsa and Viśākhā Devī Dāsī

Inner Voice Productions

www.harekrishnathefilm.com

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories unto you, who are the most compassionate well-wisher of all.

I was listening to a *Bhagavad-gītā* lecture that you gave in 1966. You were speaking about how when we use things in Kṛṣṇa's service, they become spiritual. You pointed out that even these material bodies, when used in the service of Kṛṣṇa, can be considered spiritual. You gave the example of gold. When something is made of gold it is called golden. But even if something is made of some other material, but has a gold coating, it is also considered golden. In the same way, the devotee's body is made of material elements, but when used in service to Kṛṣṇa it is considered spiritual. When I was hearing this analogy of the gold I was thinking how you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are like the king in the ancient fable who was able to turn everything he touched into gold. You miraculously transform whatever and whomever you associate with into a spiritual offering to give to your beloved Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

By your causeless mercy you have taught us how to make eating, dancing and singing spiritual activities. You have provided us with volumes of transcendental literature so that we can turn studying into a spiritual education. And you have taught us that the real meaning of renunciation is not to give up things, but to always see how we can use everything in Kṛṣṇa's service. In giving us such a practical and sustainable approach to spiritual life we can see not only in our own lives, but time and again be witness to how this process of *bhakti yoga* has such a positive effect on anyone who reads your books and then makes some attempt to apply this spiritual wisdom in their lives.

We all come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness with so many variegated motives and desires and with our countless *anarthas* from lifetimes in the cycle of birth and death. But just as Lord Kṛṣṇa agreed to satisfy the hunchback Kubja, even though she had approached the Lord with material lusty desires, so Śrīla Prabhupāda, you accept all of us despite our shortcomings and materialistic ways. Even at the expense of being criticized by your godbrothers and so many others in India you are willing to accept any soul that comes your way because of your extreme faith in the potency of the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. You accept us with all our faults and then with the greatest of patience wait for the Kṛṣṇa magic to purify our state

of being. This is your great mercy upon the world, which you bestow upon us because of your great humility, tolerance, and compassion.

I was listening to another of your lectures from 1972 where you were saying that you do not ask anyone to stop trying to enjoy, but simply to enjoy in connection with Kṛṣṇa, as this is the only true way to enjoy. When I was hearing this I was thinking that we should market our Bhakti Academy at Krishna House as the place that will teach you how to really enjoy life. That is what you have given to us Śrīla Prabhupāda, the ways and means to actually enjoy and be happy by engaging in devotional service.

Recently I was reading the pastime when Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma rescued the son of their guru. When They returned with Sāndīpani Muni's son, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma asked what else They could do in service to Their guru. Sāndīpani Muni replied that They had completely fulfilled the disciple's obligation to reward the spiritual master. He said that 'indeed with disciples like You, what further desires would a guru have?' I think that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Mahārāja would most certainly bless you with these exact words. You are both the best disciple and the best Master in all the three worlds, and it will never cease to baffle me how I was so blessed to meet you in this lifetime. It is only by your great mercy. Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for giving me the opportunity to try to properly utilize my human form of life by humbly engaging in some little service for helping you in your mission.

Begging to always remain as a loving daughter and faithful disciple to you,

Jitamitra Devī Dāsī

*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,

I am here to pay homage to your achievement and to beg you to allow me to carry on your mission and also recruit and inspire others to do the same.

You have given us the ways and means for successfully gathering many resources—material, mental, social, intellectual, and spiritual resources—to further your mission. However, as you well know, we also have too often diverted those resources for our own, separate purposes while trying to hoodwink ourselves and others into thinking our own aims are really yours—and Kṛṣṇa’s.

We have a lack of faith in you. Faith is the steadfast, strong conviction that just by executing our service to Kṛṣṇa we will accomplish everything else needed—automatically, with no need for separate endeavor. (So we are informed in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 22.62).

Today I am reflecting on one service in particular, one very special, important mission you gave me that to this day remains uncompleted. It is true that this mission was furthered after your departure, yet it still awaits its consummation. Over the years I have come to take it more and more seriously, reflecting on its import not only for committed devotees but also for the entire human race.

It began during the 1976 Gaura-pūrṇimā festival in Māyāpur, when I was summoned by your servant Tamāl Krishna Mahārāja. “Śrīla Prabhupāda,” he said, “wants to talk to you.” He brought me to you, and you placed before me a plan to establish in Śrīdhām Māyāpur what you called “ISKCON Bhāgavata College.”

You also told Tamāl Krishna Mahārāja to compile a list of ISKCON devotees in the West who already had undergraduate degrees; from these would come the students at ISKCON Bhāgavata College. The faculty would be composed of me and others who had PhDs.

Then you instructed me to go to the University of Calcutta and confer with the proper authorities about affiliating ISKCON

Bhāgavata College with that institution.

Thus it became clear, as we talked, that what you wanted in Māyāpur was a degree-granting graduate research institute. (You were using the word “college” in the British sense: “A society of scholars incorporated within, or in connexion with, a University, or otherwise formed for purposes of study or instruction” says the Oxford English Dictionary, which cites “the ancient colleges of Oxford [such as Balliol and Trinity]” as an example.) You told me that students at our ISKCON Bhāgavata College would prepare their dissertations under our direction, and that The University of Calcutta would give the final exam and award the degree.

And that degree, you announced, would be: “PhDB: Doctor of Bhāgavata Philosophy.”

Having taken in this astounding proposal, I said to you, “We will need to have a big research library.” You responded, quite firmly: “Only our books.” An image of a bookshelf three or four feet long lodged itself in my mind. I knew I would have to bring up this misgiving sometime. But immediately, you wanted me to meet with our Māyāpur authorities to design a dedicated building for the college. Then I was to leave Māyāpur for Calcutta, there to consult with the appropriate authorities at the University of Calcutta regarding affiliation.

As it turned out, the university authorities were quite interested. Over a few days, I met several times with the Inspector of Colleges, who emphasized that our college would need a “large research library.” I knew this already. The Inspector then suggested that I visit the Ramakrishna Mission’s institution in Calcutta to get an idea. I did. Their library was huge.

By the time I had finished up in Calcutta and Māyāpur, you had already gone on to Vṛndāvana. There, in your quarters at the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandira, I met with you again.

You were encouraged by the university’s interest, which you seem to have expected. With some trepidation, I brought up the sticking point: “They say we need to have a large research library, Śrīla Prabhupāda. But you said, ‘Only our books.’ What’ll we do?”

“Oh!” You exclaimed at once, “We will have a huge library: all the works from the four *sampradāyas*.”

Those words of yours immediately infused me with a potent emotional mixture of relief, amazement, joy, and gratitude.

Then I suggested to you that the best way to stock this library

was to send teams of devotees to the various repositories around India to microfilm the Vaiṣṇava works there, many of which would be rare, out of print, or even in manuscript.

You approved. Further, you said that the American BBT should immediately start funding this program, and the BBT's Sanskrit department there should begin to compile a list of books.

I am sorry to have to record that, unfortunately, not much happened. The BBT Sanskrit department was enthusiastic, but their funding was limited. They did some microfilming themselves, but only of Gauḍīya literature. And while the American BBT was enthusiastic about distributing books, the opposite—acquiring them—did not light any fires.

While I was still in a state of discouragement, a letter arrived from one of our leaders in India saying that the ISKCON Bhagavata College project had been canceled because there was no longer a need to establish the college in Māyāpur. They had found, he said, “another way to get visas.” (In those days, Western devotees made up much of ISKCON India's manpower, and apparently some thought of the Māyāpur college as scheme to bring in Western devotees on student visas.)

My discouragement deepened. The next year, when I arrived in Māyāpur for the Gaura-pūrṇimā festival, Bhavānanda Swami greeted me with an urgent question: “Where have you been!?! The Inspector of Colleges from Calcutta was here two times!” I told him about the letter I'd received saying the project had been canceled. “What!” he exclaimed, astonished and outraged. I was even further discouraged.

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, were ill; I was not able see you; you gave no classes. And ISKCON—as you surely know—was soon to undergo, after your departure from this world, a series of crises that put its future in great jeopardy.

Yet I am happy to report that nevertheless, as if by *daiva* (which you called “the unseen hand of the supreme”), your desires are in the process of being fulfilled—sometimes because of our actions, sometimes in spite them. Those desires of yours are thus extraordinarily potent and resilient.

For example: the library project you wanted was picked up again and carried out over the years. Garuḍa Dāsa and I formed an “Institute for Vaishnava Studies,” and with the help of scholars like Professor Thomas Hopkins we were able to secure a generous grant for the library project, and annually teams led by devotees

were able to go throughout India copying texts. Later, Professor Charles White, from American University, was enlisted as one of the principal scholars of Vaishnavism to work on the project. After he retired, he was then able to dedicate several years to complete the project by properly cataloging the entire microform collection and getting the catalogue published.

At the same time, Prāṇava Dāsa, from Sweden, wrote his doctoral dissertation on Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Prāṇava has gone on to gather a great collection of documents and information about his subject, including writings of your Guru Mahārāja that are as yet unpublished.

Meanwhile, Hari-śauri Dāsa, who had been massaging you when we talked in Vṛndāvana, understood the importance of the project and was able to transform a donated flat in Kolkata into The Bhaktivedānta Research Centre, a first-class, climate-controlled library housing many rare books and even manuscripts.

And in Māyāpur, the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium that you wanted and described in some detail is, by your mercy, going up and filling out.

Yet now I am particularly concerned about that perfect complement to the temple, the one that you had described to me: ISKCON Bhāgavata College. I see it as the complement to that temple because the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium presents this world, this *brahmāṇḍa*, just as it is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. And this world, to say the least, is not the world that most people today can see.

I see one important function of ISKCON Bhāgavata College is to research, explore, and explain that cosmos as given in the *Bhāgavatam*. That world, the world ordinary people cannot perceive, is in fact the real world, the world that is *īśāvāsyaṃ idaṃ sarvaṃ*, pervaded and controlled by the Lord.

If we perceive our world—and ourselves as well—as separate from or independent of the Lord, we are seeing neither our world nor ourselves as they are. Therefore ISKCON Bhāgavata College, together with its adjunct, the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium, have a common mission: to train all people how to see the world and all its contents properly.

This proper way of understanding has been propagated in Māyāpur by Lord Caitanya, and it is summarized in the formulation *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*. This formulation states that while nothing is different from Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa is different from everything. In other

words, the Lord both transcends the world and includes it as well. This is our *darśana*, our way of seeing. To attain that knowledge scientifically—that is, by our own systematically cultivated direct perception—we must concentrate, purify, and intensify our consciousness, chiefly by *mahā-mantra* meditation. The principles that make this possible are conventionally thought of as moral principles, but they are in fact even more than that: they are epistemological principles, principles of knowledge. This knowledge gives us direct perception of transcendence, as Kṛṣṇa states at *Bhagavad-gītā* 9.2, using the word *pratyakṣa* for “direct perception.” Breaking it down: *prati*, in front of; *akṣa*, the eye.

In many, many places, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have set forth this *darśana*, and your Māyāpur Temple and College are dedicated to explicating it.

Here is one wonderful instance of your describing it, in the purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.33:

The conclusion is that both the material world and spiritual world are considered to be the body of the Supreme Lord. We can understand that the material body is caused by the spiritual body and is therefore an expansion of the spiritual body. Thus when one takes up spiritual activities, one’s entire material body is spiritualized. Similarly, in this material world, when the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement expands, the entire material world becomes spiritualized. As long as we do not realize this, we live in the material world, but when we are fully Kṛṣṇa conscious we live not in the material world but in the spiritual world.

*With gratitude that surpasses my means of expression,
I beg to remain your eternal seroant,*

Ravindra Svarūpa dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most *humble* obeisances.

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

The anniversary of your Vyāsa-pūjā gives opportunity to reflect on the formulas you have so mercifully left us – who can articulate better than you did?

BOOKS ARE THE BASIS

One time on a walk at Juhu Beach I asked you a question pertaining to a story in *Kṛṣṇa Book*, you stopped...looked through me...then said “Everything is in my books – READ THEM!”

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, made it clear that books come first, there is no activity that pleases you more than distributing your books.

PURITY IS THE FORCE

*trṇād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā amāninā
mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

(*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 17.31)

“One can chant the holy name of the Lord in a **humble state of mind**, thinking himself lower than the straw in the street. One should be more tolerant than the tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige and ready to offer all respects to others, **desiring none for oneself**. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.” (*Śikṣāṣṭaka* 3)

“If you catch up Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet very tightly, then you will not fall down.” (Los Angeles, January 5, 1974)

“In the beginning there may be some failures. That is quite natural. Just as a child is trying to stand, he may fall down. But that does not mean he should give up the idea. Go on. A time will come when he will be perfect. A time will come

when you'll be perfect"(Los Angeles, January 1, 1969)

"Everywhere are His hands and legs, His eyes and faces, and He hears everything. In this way the Supersoul exists." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 13.14)

(Once you told us that Supersoul even witnesses the decisions we make in dreams!)

PREACHING IS THE ESSENCE

"When one becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious, he loves everyone. If you chant loudly Hare Kṛṣṇa, even the ants and insect who is hearing, he'll be delivered, because it is spiritual vibration." (Bombay, January 4, 1973)

"Simply propagate this chanting, dancing, feasting, and following the regulative principles. These are the four pillars of success" (Letter to Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, December 25, 1969)

UTILITY IS THE PRINCIPLE

"I have given the ideas. Now you give the shape." (Vṛndāvana, October 14, 1977)

Retirement means to become cured from the diseased activities but after place yourself in healthy activities. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness." (Los Angeles, January 8, 1969)

"The secret of surrendering to Kṛṣṇa is that such surrendered devotee sees that everything is part of Kṛṣṇa's plan. Whatever is meant to be I am doing. Let me do it with my full attention to every detail. Let me become absorbed in such service, never mind what it is. Let all other considerations be forgotten and only my desire to do the thing best for Kṛṣṇa's alone pleasure be my motive." (Letter to Jayapataka, December 19, 1972)

YOU CAN PROVE YOUR LOVE FOR ME BY HOW YOU ALL GET ALONG TOGETHER

“A real Vaiṣṇava will never say that he is superior to anyone. He will say that he is the lowest of the living entities. If he says that he is superior, then actually he is not superior.” (Letter to Sukadeva, December 28, 1974)

“He who says he is **My** devotee is not **My** devotee. But he who is a devotee of **My** devotee is actually **My** devotee.” Similarly, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, a great Vaishnava poet, wrote, “No **one** has ever become liberated without the association of devotees.” (*Finding Spiritual Friends*, Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami)

“Sometimes there will be a little misunderstanding between godbrothers. That is even going on amongst liberated souls. What is important is that everyone must engage in Kṛṣṇa’s service under the direction of the spiritual master.” (Nellore, January 7, 1976)

SIMPLE FOR THE SIMPLE – COMPLICATED FOR THE COMPLICATED

My prayer to you Śrīla Prabhupāda,

That I remain eternally indebted to my godsiblings that have served you and continue to serve you with heart and soul.

That you allow me to conscientiously serve our transcendental family members, tirelessly, as servant of the beloved servants of Kṛṣṇa. Please empower me to chant the holy names of the Lord better and with more sincerity and focus than each day before.

Whatever has been lent to me in this lifetime I pray to utilize in your service, with love and attention.

I pray to always remember you and never to forget you.

Begging to remain your eternal daughter,

Vishalini Devī Dāsī

Dear 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*

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

This year, in which we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of your launching *Back to Godhead* magazine, the editors aptly chose to re-print the opening article you wrote in 1944 for the first issue ever published, entitled “Back to Godhead.”

I was stunned, pleased, and inspired by your words. They awoke in me a deeper sense of how fortunate I am to be your follower, student, and disciple. How proud I am to have a master as capable as you to guide me, protect me, and engage me in your service.

Your words were so relevant for those war-torn years! And how relevant are those same words today, a time of seemingly endless war—war between nations, war between religions, war between genders, and war between humanity and the earth itself.

Most might expect the inaugural edition of your magazine to be a time to draw the line, so to speak, to define who we are as Caitanya Vaiṣṇavas, in sharp contrast to other traditions of the world, and to focus exclusively on our unique identity and message. Yet, you chose a different path. You chose for your readers a different path. You continue to inspire me to walk a different path.

Appropriately, in that inaugural article you glorify and refer several times to your “Divine Master Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Goswami Prabhupāda” and his mission. You also introduce Lord Caitanya, “the Godhead incarnate.”

Yet, surprisingly, in explaining the purpose of your new journal—“to bring up a real relation of humanity with . . . the Supreme Personality of Godhead”—you also quote not one or two but eleven religious leaders, political leaders, and leading philosophers of the day, who are all outside the Vaiṣṇava tradition. What’s more, you don’t just mention these “leaders of all countries,” as you call them; you give them extensive and precious space in your nascent publication, allowing some to wax on for paragraphs—despite a

government-imposed restriction on paper.

You quote the Metropolitan (Bishop) of India; the President of the United States; Herbert Hoover, the former President of the United States; Sir Stanford Cripps, the Lord Privy Seal of Britain; Mr. Wendell Willkie, an American political leader; the Foreign Secretary of Britain, Mr. Anthony Eden; the Archbishop of Canterbury (unnamed); Sir Sarvapalli Rādhākṛishna, “the great Hindu philosopher”; a joint affirmation of “236 members of the British House of Commons”; and more.

It is stunning, intriguing, informative, and exemplary that you quote these personalities—especially in the inaugural edition of your publication. Why do you do so? I can never fully understand your strategies, but some identifiable reasons stand out.

First, it is significant that as a preacher, author, and ISKCON’s future founder-*ācārya*, you were aware of the influential global voices of the time. As early as 1944 you demonstrated that to engage with the world effectively we must not be isolated or unaware of events—and significant opinions—around us. You continued this strategy in 1959 with your first published book, *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, which capitalized on the global interest in space travel.

Second, you chose to use the words of these leaders to validate your message, Lord Caitanya’s message. This is the same methodology you employed years later when you directed the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust to include endorsements of academics, philosophers, and other influencers of the world in your books.

Third, you recognized that these influential people share a similar mission, or at least elements of a shared vision, of human progress beyond the dictates of the gross materialists. You continued in the same spirit years later. Wherever you traveled you directed your disciples to arrange meetings with political leaders, religious leaders, academics, industrialists, artists, media figures, and even neighbors to promote common purpose and understanding.

Fourth, you knew your movement would benefit by working in conjunction with such leaders. You resonated with their messages, and in fact you published and promoted their messages, including these: “India guided by God can lead the world back to sanity,” and “the world needs today . . . to return to sanity and moral spiritual ideals,” and “our plans will come to ship-wreck on the rock of human selfishness unless we turn to God, BACK TO GOD, that is the chief need of England and every nation.”

You even noted that you found inspiration from these leaders. You wrote, “These psychological movements of the leaders of all countries, combined with the order of my Divine Master . . . have led me to venture to start a paper under the above name and style *Back to Godhead*. . . .”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the singular great messenger of *bhakti* and going back to Godhead for this age. Please bless me, and all your followers, with broad-mindedness and the ability to appreciate and partner with others as you so beautifully demonstrated in this historic article.

Prabhupāda, please protect us from the narrow-mindedness and divisiveness that so pollute the world today. Let us not be swept away by ignorance, selfishness, or pride, sometimes thinking that we are God’s sole agents, failing to comprehend the vast plan of the Lord.

As your first *Back to Godhead* article concluded, “Godhead is one without a second, . . . and there is no bar for anyone in the world, irrespective of color, creed, or nationality, to go back to Godhead.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please empower us, your humble servants, to carry forward this great mission of love and redemption. Let us remain fascinated and inspired by your boundless compassion, remembering that all souls are the Lord’s servants and that there is “no bar for anyone in the world” to go back home, back to Godhead.

Your aspiring servant,

Anuttama Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances in the dust at your lotus feet.

Today I wrote a poem to you and naturally, it was to Kṛṣṇa, through you and it sits on my desktop. It is not for everyone's eyes as I am too proud to show the state of my heart to the world. But you know me and still you accepted me with all of the sins accumulated over lifetimes, and offences of this life.

You are the hope of the Age, sent by Kṛṣṇa to alleviate the suffering of souls entrapped by *Māyā* due to forgetfulness and lust to enjoy separately from the Lord's service. Yet, by your miracle, you engaged so many unfortunate people and your mercy has manifested in your disciples' preaching and serving others who have not had such an opportunity for devotional service. Very few in this world have received such a chance. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I love hearing your voice and the way you say "chance" when you speak of how we are just trying to give people that chance to HEAR about Kṛṣṇa.

Even in my immature stage, still I relish meeting new people and trying to share what you've spoken. You are so potent and radiant with knowledge and mercy that even though we may be in the stage of *anartha-nivṛtti*, that knowledge which you say is **Kṛṣṇa**, stunningly shines when repeated faithfully. I am absolutely confounded and amazed how we have been permitted to participate in this *saṅkīrtana* movement.

You have given us Kṛṣṇa. You have given us life. Because of you, Rādhā-Londonīśvara appeared and transformed our lives and vision of what is reality. Enough said. I truly need to walk my talk and become useful in your service. I've a long way to go in terms of purity, honesty and the qualities required for dedicated hearing and chanting.

May I one day manifest my gratitude by becoming a pure representative of what you asked us to do in this lifetime. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you blessed us in every possible way, including tolerating slow progress.

Your mercy is beyond common comprehension. Without it, we do not have a chance. It's there for the taking so our greed must be only for that taste.

I shall never forget seeing the light in your window in Mumbai

when you were translating in the night. Your light forever shines resplendent. Once bathed in it, how can we forget? You've already given us the process and the solution to all problems (including our perception of 'death') is simply to follow it.

Hearing your beautiful voice singing *Bhaja hure mana* and Śikṣāstaka brings life and hope every day.

Your lowly servant,

Sarvamaṅgala Devī Dāsī

Gostabihari Dāsa and Mahāviṣṇupriyā Devī Dāsī

Our dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, our eternal savior and the *ācārya* of the whole world!

Please accept our humblest obeisances. Though many years have passed since we were with you; your words, videos, books, and letters are as clear and urgent today as ever. When we hear your lecture clips, we are immediately brought back into your presence, by your mercy. Your potency is stronger than ever. Your words more relevant than ever.

Comparing ourselves now to ourselves then is interesting. Then we were so excited, open and sincere. We were willing to do anything and everything for you and Lord Kṛṣṇa. We actually felt like superman, that we could leap over tall buildings spiritually. We believed we could conquer the world in 18 days. While Time has shown us, we cannot even conquer over our senses in 18 years, or even in 48 years for that matter. Today, we are slower, more sheltered and still a work in progress as far as sincerity, determination and cultivation of *bhakti*.

It is as though we are always learning something new or seeing something you stated in a brand new light. Like looking through a kaleidoscope, we are seeing new angles of vision, viewing your spiritual teachings in new ways; in deeper colors; in more nuance.

All we can say is thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for this wonderful KC society that you have left for us to live in, to learn in, to grow in and to educate others by. The association of devotees is a most valuable gift and one that continues to nourish in your absence.

As so many of your disciples are now leaving this world, our turn will also most assuredly be coming. We pray to always remember you, to serve you, to feel your presence always with us, to follow your instructions sincerely, and remain in your ISKCON home that can shelter the entire world. We are eternally in gratitude to you for a debt we can never repay.

Your eternal servants, life after life,

Gostabihārī Dāsa and Mahāviṣṇupriyā Devī Dāsī

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! *Koṭi daṇḍavats* at your lotus feet. Thank you endlessly for coming to this Western country and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. I was swimming in stool and very happy when I heard you chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, and by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa, I became your disciple and servant while I was just a young boy. How fortunate that I was given an entire life to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and serve your mission.

You told us to give just this one life to Kṛṣṇa, and we listened. Material life is never giving us anything good for our hard work, but you never cheated us. You gave us the real thing. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! *Koṭi daṇḍavats* at your lotus feet. Some of us were attracted to you and your message. Our hearts were filled with love, real love. Material life means false hope and false love. It is very troublesome. You lifted us out of material life completely and you taught us *bhakti*, the language of God. Kṛṣṇa is so nice. Kṛṣṇa is attracted to *bhakti*. Thank you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving us *bhakti*. Some people who are not your disciples, they practice *bhakti* to merge with Brahman. They chant Hare Kṛṣṇa for liberation. But we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa to love Kṛṣṇa. Only you are giving the true *siddhānta*, and only your disciples will go back to Godhead.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! *Koṭi daṇḍavats* at your lotus feet. Just as you have said, every day we chant, it increases our spiritual bank account. You taught us with simple metaphors, but that is your genius. We were spoon-fed and we became nourished. Soon the whole world will resonate the names of Lord Kṛṣṇa because of you. The whole world will again become a joyous place to live. Even the terrible Kali-yuga can be transformed into Goloka by the grace of Guru. No sin is too powerful to overcome the bright sunshine of Kṛṣṇa and His holy names. The entire world is benefiting from your *darśana* and your eternal books. Nothing and no one is more attractive than God, Kṛṣṇa. When the less fortunate raise their eyes to the Lord and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, their hearts will melt with bliss, and they will fall in love with the transcendental Blue Boy.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! *Koṭi daṇḍavats* at your lotus feet. In just ten short years, you conquered the entire world. There is no man, woman or child who has not been affected by the chanting.

The entire Kali-yuga is transforming because of your potency. Even the upper and lower planets are affected!

How wonderful that you appeared and engaged us in your eternal service. *Koṭi daṇḍavats* at your lotus feet!

We wish to humbly remain your loyal servants,

Mahashakti Dāsa

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Sampradāya Ācārya

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-śvāmīn iti 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.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāñī-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.

“Let us try to understand my spiritual master who is always in blissful Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Let me meditate on him being enthused as he enthused us.”

stuvanti gāyanti prabhupādasya param-guṇāḥ sarvatra vedāḥ

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Vedas sing about your transcendental glories with hymns everywhere.

Sampradāya-Ācārya

As the waters of the Ganges are suitable to worship the Ganges herself, let your own words reveal yourself to the world.

“So we should hear from the *sampradāya-ācārya* by disciplic succession. As Kṛṣṇa recommends in this *Bhagavad-gītā*: *evam paramparā-prāptam imam rājarṣayo viduḥ* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.2].” (Lecture *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.26. Hyderabad, November 30, 1972)

Following the previous *ācāryas* like Śrīla Kavi Karṇapūra, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and your own divine spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, you have given us the list of this Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya-Sampradāya as you state in *Bhagavad-gītā* As it Is:

“Evam prāptam imam rājarṣayo viduḥ (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.2). This *Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is is received

through this disciplic succession:

1. Kṛṣṇa, 2. Brahmā, 3. Nārada, 4. Vyāsa, 5. Madhva, 6. Padmanābha, 7. Nṛhari, 8. Mādhava, 9. Akṣobhya, 10. Jaya Tīrtha, 11. Jñānasindhu, 12. Dayānidhi, 13. Vidyānidhi, 14. Rājendra, 15. Jayadharmā, 16. Puruṣottama, 17. Brahmaṇya Tīrtha, 18. Vyāsa Tīrtha,
19. Lakṣmīpati, 20. Mādhavendra Purī, 21. Īśvara Purī, (Nityānanda, Advaita), 22. Lord Caitanya, 23. Rūpa, (Svarūpa, Sanātana), 24. Raghunātha, Jīva, 25. Kṛṣṇadāsa, 26. Narottama, 27. Viṣvanātha, 28. (Baladeva) Jagannātha, 29. Bhaktivinoda, 30. Gaurakiśora,
31. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, 32. His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.

Characteristics of a *Sampradāya-ācārya*

A *sampradāya-ācārya* is a *paramahansa uttama-adhikārī* pure devotee who represents the disciplic succession, *sampradāya*, and distinguishes himself by an extraordinary service render to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Vaiṣṇava community, and the world. If I would try to write about the qualities and activities of each one of them this would be a lengthy document. For example, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī wrote *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, a biography of Lord Caitanya with full explanation of the Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava philosophy; or Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa wrote the *Govinda-bhāṣya*, the Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava commentary to *Vedānta-sūtra*. Therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda is considered the representative of the *sampradāya*, *sampradāya-ācārya*, after Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda and his activities

Śrīla Prabhupāda fulfilled Lord Caitanya's desire to spread the holy names everywhere, bestowing in that way Śrī Śrī Caitanya-Nityānanda's mercy:

“It is the concern of the *ācārya* to show mercy to the fallen souls.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 7.38)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu predicted, and was His desire, that the holy names of the Lord be heard and preached all over the world. Śrīla Prabhupāda did it and so indirectly, Lord Caitanya

predicted him too:

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

“In every town and village, the chanting of My name will be heard.” (*Caitanya-bhāgavata*, Antya 4.126)

“According to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s intentions, *ṛthivīte āche yata nagarādi-grāma sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s cult must be preached all over the world.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Madhya 8.128, Purport)

Śrīla Prabhupāda empowered by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

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

The fundamental religious system in the Age of Kali is the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. Unless empowered by Kṛṣṇa, one cannot propagate the saṅkīrtana movement. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Antya 7.11)

In this regard, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his purport to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 25.9:

“Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura then comments: ‘Without being empowered by the direct potency of Lord Kṛṣṇa to fulfill His desire and without being specifically favored by the Lord, no human being can become the spiritual master of the whole world. He certainly cannot succeed by mental concoction, which is not meant for devotees or religious people. Only an empowered personality can distribute the holy name of the Lord and enjoin all fallen souls to worship Kṛṣṇa. By distributing the holy name of the Lord, he cleanses the hearts of the most fallen people; therefore, he extinguishes the blazing fire of the material world. Not only that, he broadcasts the shining brightness of Kṛṣṇa’s effulgence throughout the world. Such an *ācārya*, or spiritual master, should be considered non-different from Kṛṣṇa—that is, he should be considered the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s potency.’”

Such a personality is *kṛṣṇāliṅgita-vigraha*—that is, he is always embraced by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. Such a person is above the considerations of the varṇāśrama institution. He is the guru, or spiritual master, for the entire world, a devotee on the topmost platform, the *mahā-bhāgavata* stage, and a *paramahaṁsa-ṭhākura*, a spiritual form only fit to be addressed as *paramahaṁsa* or *ṭhākura*.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda received the blessings from his own spiritual master Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, and fulfilled his desire of propagating Kṛṣṇa consciousness around the world:

“In 1936, just on the 13th, December, I wrote him one letter. Not 13th. I think by the beginning of December, 1936, I wrote one letter to Guru Mahārāja. I knew he was little kind upon me, so I wrote that “Guru Mahārāja, you have got many disciples. I am also one of them. But they are doing direct service to you. Some of them are *brahmacārīs*, some of them *sannyāsīs*, but I am a householder.” (...) So the reply was the same as he wanted me to do this preaching work in 1922, when I first met him, that “You try to preach whatever you have learned from me to the English-knowing people in English. That will do good to you and to the people to whom you shall preach. That is my instruction.” (Lecture, LA, February 7, 1969)

Śrīla Prabhupāda Publishes Books

For the first time in history, Śrīla Prabhupāda made the Vedic literature available in a bona fide way and understandable language to the Western people and world population in general. In his Bhaktivedānta Purports, he presents the conclusions of the previous *acāryas*, the *acintya-bhedhābheda-tattva* philosophy of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, of Lord Caitanya. He published *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* in a condensed form as *The Nectar of Devotion*, and many more books with commentaries from previous *ācāryas* like Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Rūpa gosvāmī, Śrīla Madhvācārya, Śrī Ramanujācārya, Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī, it is not possible to mention all of them in this simple offering. In addition, with full of references from *Purāṇas*, *Upaniṣads*, and *Vedānta-sūtra*.

“Thus it is the duty of the *ācārya* to publish books that will help future candidates take up the method of service and become eligible to return home, back to Godhead, by the mercy of the Lord. (...) The *ācārya* gives the suitable method for crossing the ocean of nescience by accepting the boat of the Lord’s lotus feet, and if this method is strictly followed, the followers will ultimately reach the destination, by the grace of the Lord. This method is called *ācārya-sampradāya*. It is therefore said, *sampradāya-vihīnā ye mantrās te niṣphalā matāḥ* (*Padma Purāṇa*). The *ācārya-sampradāya* is strictly bona fide. Therefore, one must accept the *ācārya-sampradāya*; otherwise, one’s endeavor will be futile. Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura therefore sings:

*tāndera caraṇa sevi bhakta sane vāsa
janame janame haya, ei abhilāṣa*

One must worship the lotus feet of the *ācārya* and live within the society of devotees. Then one’s endeavor to cross over nescience will surely be successful. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.2.31)

Śrīla Prabhupāda created a means for association of devotees, ISKCON. Śrīla Prabhupāda made known the practices of devotional service for one to be able to go through the different steps, from *śraddhā* to *premā* (pure love of God).

Śrīla Prabhupāda established *nityam bhāgavata-sevayā*. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.18)

He established the regular *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* classes to be held regularly all over the world. He even translated it that way:

“By regular attendance in classes on the *Bhāgavatam* and by rendering of service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact.”

In the *Skanda Purāṇa* this is predicted and this is another prophesy that Śrīla Prabhupāda fulfilled:

“Mahārāja Parikṣit said, ‘I will certainly subdue Kali, but how will I obtain a mature understanding of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*?’ Uddhava replied, ‘Up to this time, very few men have heard *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It will be by your mercy that the people of Bhārata-varṣa will become

acquainted with this great text. The great sage, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, whose form resembles that of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, will recite *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to you. As a result, you will attain the eternal abode of the Lord, and the fame of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will spread all over the earth (by the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda).” (*Skanda Purāṇa*)

Smarāmi satatam Prabhupāda padam, Let my mind constantly remember Śrīla Prabhupāda’s lotus feet. Whatever glorification of Your Divine Grace that I attempt is insufficient.

Begging to always be able to remember your transcendental lotus feet and somehow be able to serve you is the prayer of this lowly,

Nandānandana Dāsa

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

Dear Gurudeva, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances, *daṇḍavats* at your lotus feet.

Thank you for giving me another opportunity to glorify you on this most auspicious and most important occasion of your holy Vyāsa-pūjā. It is the same day that Nanda Mahārāja is celebrating Nandotsava.

You descended upon this Earth to save us and to make pure this planet by cleansing all the bad karma from the sinful conditioned souls. You are a Vṛndāvana resident and you manifested transcendental activities as you walked amongst us.

You give us so many many instructions and said that each and every ISKCON temple, center, book, magazine, and letter-head should carry the line:

‘His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-*Ācārya* of International Society for Krishna Consciousness’

Recognise and serve the *ācārya*

Śrīla Prabhupāda, from time to time, some problems and difficulties shake your ISKCON movement. But by your transcendental potency and Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, we come back together at your lotus feet. We have even lost some of your soldiers in the battle against *māyā*. But here, everything is incredible – all the instructions, books, temples, devotees, Deities, etc. You gave us so much in the short time you were with us. The lectures, morning walks, room conversations and letters provide many practical Kṛṣṇa conscious instructions to help us.

One very important *śloka* you mention several times in your books and in your lectures is:

*nāham vipro na ca nara-patir nāpi vaiśyo na śūdro
nāham varṇī na ca gṛha-patir no vanastho yatir vā
kintu prodyan nikhila paramānanda-pūrṇāmṛtābdher
gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsah;*

Purifying the bodily elements by identifying oneself as the eternal servant of the servant of Your Divine Grace and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

(*Bhūta-Śuddhi*)

I am by nature the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. But because of my bad fortune I have been inimical toward Him from time immemorial, and thus I, have identified myself with my body and continuously wandered in the cycle of birth and death in the material world, suffering the burning threefold miseries. Now, as a result of some unimaginable good fortune, my spiritual master's mercy has enabled me to know that I am Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant, an infinitesimal spiritual being completely apart from the gross and and subtle body. And so by the order of my spiritual master, I have obtained the good fortune of serving his lotus feet, and following in his footsteps, the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā Śyāmasundara.

“I am not a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *sūdra*;
nor a *brahmacārī*, nor a householder, *vānaprastha*
or *sannyāsī*. I am the servant of the servant of
the servant of the master of the gopīs, Śrī Kṛṣṇa,
who is an ocean full of transcendental bliss.”

(*Padyavali* 74)

In one of your lectures you instruct that one might think ‘I am a very big *brāhmaṇa*, I’m a very big *sannyāsī*’, but these are still material designations. Even though you give us so many instructions in this regard, still there are so many misidentifications with this material body.

Over and over you say in your lectures that we are not this body—not American, not Indian, not man or woman, not Russian, Latino, black, white, yellow, not an animal, mosquito, this or that. These identifications are the real problem in this world.

The great Paramahansa

Last year, by your mercy, I was able to visit Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhām for the festival of your glorious disappearance in your Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Temple, which you established in 1975. What a magnificent temple you built for the glorification of Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma! It is

possibly one of the most popular temples in Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhām. By your potency and incalculable great mercy, you knew what was going to happen in the future with this temple and all of your temples all over India.

Now especially the TOVP in Māyāpur Dhām. You gave instructions about your vision for this temple to your ISKCON movement, to all of the devotees and leaders, in particular to Śrīmān Ambarīṣa Prabhu. Thank you for this mercy. This is the most magnificent Vedic City of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu! All day long it is full of visitors taking *darśana*, eating *prasāda*, purchasing your book and taking *darśana* of your lotus feet in your Samādhi Mandir.

The Vaiṣṇavas come from so many different countries to get purified and perform devotional services. In a big hall, thousands of Vaiṣṇavas glorify your exalted personality and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

At the festival, I was trying to glorify you in a very simple way and enliven the devotees by sharing my small realizations. In 1977 in Vṛndāvana Dhām you instructed all ISKCON temples to conduct 24 hours *kīrtana*. How amazing, because the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* was chanted all over the world 24 hours a day for many days, weeks and months. With your mercy, the prophecies of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was fulfilled as the *mahā-mantra* was chanted in every town and village. This was the most important and priceless gift to the planet. You came to America to teach us the *mahā-mantra*, and you departed from our material vision chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

In the last 50 years or more, there have been so many editions and misinterpretations of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which have produced not even one Vaiṣṇava. But your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* has made Vaiṣṇavas all over the world! This is the proof of your exalted personality and position. You installed so many beautiful Deities around the world which nobody has done before. You told us that Kṛṣṇa is ready to talk with us. . . . that He has descended in *arcā-mūrti* to talk with us and be visible before us. You want us to make ourselves ready and fit to talk with Kṛṣṇa saying that He will exchange in conversation.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, great preacher and *Ācārya*! You challenged all the false swamis, false gurus, the so-called religionists, so-called philosophers, so-called scientists, so-called *avatars*, all the false incarnations of God. All these rascals, finished!

Who exposed all the rascals like you? You are the most powerful

ācārya and revolutionary personality to ever exist in this world.

You said your Guru Mahārāja never compromised when he was preaching, and you also never compromised and also told your disciples to never compromise when we are preaching. You say that a disciple is one who follows the instructions of the guru. That disciple means discipline and those who follow the rules and regulations are your disciples.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you mention that it is important that we preach the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness exactly as we have heard it from our spiritual master. The same philosophy and spirit must be there exactly. Please give me the determination to only read your precious books, always.

In a room conversation on 21 July 1975, you were asked how we can get your blessings when you are no longer with us. You replied by saying that as far as your blessing is concerned it does not require your physical presence. That if we are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, following your instructions, reading your books, and taking only Kṛṣṇa *prasāda*, etc., then there is no question of not receiving the blessing of Lord Caitanya Whose mission you are trying to push on.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please forgive me for all my mistakes and faults. On this very auspicious day, please help me by giving me the determination to follow all your instructions. Please give me your mercy and blessings to remain eternally like an insignificant dog at your divine lotus feet.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Ramanya *dās anu dāsa*

THE ORDER OF THE SPIRITUAL MASTER

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my meager attempt to glorify you on this auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā. You are the universal teacher who even posthumously can deliver any conditioned soul from the clutches of this miserable material existence.

All sincere spiritual aspirants who are desirous to understand the purpose of life can succeed, providing they follow your order, the order of the spiritual master. Upon reading the commentary of Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura on *Bhagavad-gītā*, you quoted him stating that a disciple takes the order of the spiritual master as his life and soul. Upon meeting your Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, he gave you the order to preach the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the English language to the Western world.

It is serendipity that you were given this exalted order of such paramount importance. At first you described how you were absorbed in household responsibilities and could not immediately take it up, although in your heart you wanted to. Similarly, you have given the order to your disciples to print and widely distribute your books. This order you have given vehemently, and many of us have tried our level best to follow it.

You meditated on this order with utmost seriousness for many years, and in the latter part of your life at 69 years of age embarked on the mission to fulfill it. Many of your disciples took up your order in the prime of their youth, and later facing the responsibility of family life could not continue to follow it. But now, most of us are free of this family burden and long to resume the execution of your order to disseminate Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the world at large.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, while presently we are in the fag end of our life, we want to revive the execution of your order, and follow it tenaciously till the end, just as you have shown us by your example. In

this way, by emulating you, we can experience the self-actualization of our life, that we made the sincere effort to discharge your order.

So please Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this auspicious day of your divine appearance, Vyāsa-pūjā, we fervently pray that you bestow upon us the strength and motivation to go out and preach, talk to people, tell them about Kṛṣṇa, and Lord Caitanya, and teach them what the real purpose of human life is, so nicely explained in your books. In this way all your disciples and grand-disciples can have the opportunity to fulfill your order and die in peace, confident that we have pleased you and have followed your order, the order of the spiritual master!

Your fallen disciple,

Vaiṣṇavānanda 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 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, Śrīvās Ādi Gaura Bhakta Vṛnda*

*Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma
Rama Rama Hare Hare*

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

“In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy, the only means of deliverance is the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way.”

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda who gives hope of being delivered from this decaying material world and returning back home, back to Goloka Vṛndāvana to ANYONE who follows his teachings, even if on the pathway there may be many falls.

Just as a child learning to walk may fall down many times in his or her attempts will keep trying and NEVER give up, similarly, spiritual life is exactly like that and not easy as *Bhagavad-gītā* tells us:

“Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth”. (*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 7.3)

Over the years I have had the great fortune to be fully absorbed in the wonderful *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya. Everyone who is genuinely absorbed in the great arena of *saṅkīrtana* that Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us will forget the faults in others. Fault finders and critics can only watch from the sidelines with their lip service and will never experience the bliss of book distribution and street *saṅkīrtana* of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

This famous poem explains one's attempt to serve His Divine Grace's great merciful *sañkīrtana* movement:

"It is not the critic who counts; nor the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better.

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood;

who strives valiantly; who errs,

who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement,

And who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

(Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President of the United States)

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "When the superior energy is in contact with inferior energy, it becomes an incompatible situation. But when the supreme marginal potency is in contact with the spiritual potency, Harā, it becomes the happy, normal condition of the living entity."

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the letter you sent me in 1975. It saved my life and gave me the determination to NEVER give up trying to serve you and to follow your teachings no matter what happens or how difficult the journey is.

From your fallen yet always aspiring servant,

Gauragopāla Dāsa

THE GREATEST MIRACLE EVER TOLD

How Śrīla Prabhupāda was able to bring down to this sorry planet a veritable deluge of divine grace and enact the worldwide Hare Kṛṣṇa explosion is surely one of the greatest miracles ever told. As future generations gladly hear this greatest of sagas, they will also acknowledge with awe and gratitude Śrīla Prabhupāda's immense contributions to the betterment of all humankind. It is a story worth elaborating in all of its glorious details. Every one of us can add our own personal note to that great symphony of salvation.

There we were, the sons and daughters of affluence, lost souls in the ocean of *samsāra* who somehow became captured in the great net of Śrīla Prabhupāda's universal compassion. Turning hippies into happies with his humble magic, he set about showing the whole world how much love God wants to give, miraculously delivered by one of His very own. His pure heart overflowing with divine love, Śrīla Prabhupāda was thus empowered to deliver it to even the lowest and uplift them to the highest spiritual perfection. Such power to change sullen hearts from ignorance towards devotion is very rare and miraculous, only possible for God's dearest servants.

His transcendent purity and genuineness thus captured our hearts to draw out our dormant capacity towards God's humble service. Simply by accepting his loving shelter, we were allowed precious glimpses into his own exalted state of being, into that highest realm of pure *bhakti's* secret garden. These greatest of mysteries were made accessible to all the fortunate souls who followed strictly the simple process of devotional life he offered to all.

As we continued chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and serving his mission, we gradually began to experience more of Śrīla Prabhupāda's inestimable spiritual opulences, as we came to realize that we were certainly the most fortunate souls in the universe to be in the presence of one so great. And that he had brought us all right in the middle of the greatest event in history: Śrī Caitanyadeva's *saṅkīrtana* Movement, destined to change the entire course of history. We were also blessed to vicariously experience something of the inconceivably deep love and surrender which he shared with his own great master. Many times he stated to us (his rag-tag family of neophyte followers) that he saw us all as representatives of his spiritual master, who

had sent us to help him fulfill his master's order. Such humility and purity of heart deeply moved us to dedicate everything we had to his service, for our eternal benefit. For he was the source of all our inspiration and of all our strength.

Not only was he the most enlightened perfect teacher, he was also the living embodiment of all he taught: his teachings all came alive in him. He was the ultimate *Ācārya*: whatever he taught was never theoretical but fully realized and manifested in his own pure transparent character, as the permanent point of reference for all details of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Our faith in Lord Kṛṣṇa's and Lord Caitanya's divinity (although amply proclaimed throughout the Vedic scriptures) was solidified through him alone. All our doubts were easily vanquished because we had the living proof of all these higher truths right there in front of us, fully incarnated in such a beautiful genuine soul, the most perfect pure devotee of the Lord. That was the secret of his success: his cent-per-cent surrender and devotion to his beloved Lord and his great spiritual master, Who both poured upon him unlimited potency to change the whole world.

We forever remain in awe of him. As our personal savior, Śrīla Prabhupāda lives forever in our hearts. His oceanic love and compassion has propelled us to the doorstep of eternity where he perpetually awaits us to humbly accept our offerings of grateful service. Let us continue to churn the ocean of Prabhupāda-*kathā* and repeatedly bathe in that life-giving nectar, to nourish our meager efforts to persevere in serving his mission of grace, in the constant remembrance of his enduring kindness towards us all.

Your servant,

Gokulānanda Dāsa
ISKCON Montreal

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Please accept my humble obeisances.

The merciless signals of time are chasing us – *kali* – hypocrisy and ignorance, flowery words, hate, and the screaming of war victims. We climb the mountain of civilisation; from its peak we are looking down; content and with pride we enjoy the panorama. But the valleys do not look so green any longer. Smog is contaminating the air and the waters are full of poison. It seems the gods have left for their abodes .

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, after being in the West for a short time, you wrote a postcard to your dear godbrother Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja saying: “I am totally disgusted with human civilization. Even the animals look more friendly to me.” You longed for your room in the Rādhā Dāmodara Temple. But you stayed. There in New York, in the midst of hopelessness, you manifested your nature: *para-duḥkha-duḥkhī* – deep faith, trust, love and compassion, purity in motivation, tolerance, patience—all the decorations of a pure Vaiṣṇava manifested, and with that the realm of mercy opened up: the *guru-varga*, the *gosvāmīs*, the *līlā* of Śācinandana Gaura Hari Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Avadhūt Nityānanda, the divine abodes of Māyāpur, Navadvīpa, Jagannātha Puri, Dvārāka, alas, the holy lands of Mathurā and Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s Vṛndāvana, Govardhana, Rādhā Kuṇḍa, and with them all the *līlās* there, everything manifested.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, allow my head to touch your merciful lotus feet in deep, deep gratitude. I did not expect all of that. I had no access to that substance in me. I am confused and indulge in the substitutes this world can offer. About the real substance in my heart I was ignorant. I did not know that it is possible that this mountain of ego, this ocean of ignorance can become reduced to the water in a calf’s footprint, easy to step over, nearly neglectable. I have not the *adhikāra* to receive all of that. I am a hypocrite and still bound to my sins, to the sins of the fathers and the sins and ignorance of the cultures here. You did not care for all of that. You took the risk and put this treasure in my hands. I will try not to disappoint you anymore. Eternally I want to guard your room as I was allowed to do so in Māyāpur. And if I stay awake in that service, all my *anarthas* will fall asleep, and the world of exploitation becomes a distant and foreign land to the heart. I know, I do not deserve it, and despite

my many shortcomings, please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, guide me deeper and deeper into the infinite land of dedication and divine love. This is my only hope.

Your servant,
Janmanalaya 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 Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.”

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

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for coming to the US and spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thank you for accepting me as your disciple and teaching Vedic knowledge to me and other godbrothers and godsisters. Without you, I would be drowning in the ocean of birth and death and wondering what I would do with my life. Through your mercy, you showed me love for you and Kṛṣṇa, for which I am ever indebted.

You never took praise for yourself, but would always defer to your spiritual master Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. I pray that I may be as humble and always remember and refer to you.

You showed us how to see Kṛṣṇa in everything and every living entity. You said by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, we are coating our eyes with the salve of love of God and with your mercy, see Kṛṣṇa eventually.

My prayer is to always be engaged in your service wherever you go and always be your servant eternally. I feel you’re with me when I’m chanting and reading your books. I was very fortunate to be able to see you personally and be initiated by you. I pray to always be a servant of the servant of Kṛṣṇa and be with you eternally and engage in your pastimes of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

You taught us that we are all female in relationship to Kṛṣṇa and that He is our husband, lover, best friend, mother and father. And by serving Him, we will be completely fulfilled in life and never want other superficial relationships which are temporary.

Thank you for the opportunity to be engaged in your service and one day become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

All glories to you, my beloved Spiritual Master.

Your servant,
Vilāsi Devī Dāsī

Sevānanda 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,

I have never regretted surrendering at your lotus feet since joining you in 1970, at 17 years old...not even for a second. In your ISKCON, our faith in your preaching was as broad, deep and unshakable as the Himalayas. No one ever questioned your authority or *siddhānta*.

Your Divine Grace was safe and secure, fully blessed, pure, much-loved and already famous, living in Vṛndāvana Dhāma at The Rādhā Dāmodara Temple.

However, you could not contain your compassion and bear the sufferings of the lost and struggling living entities all over the world.

Nor could you separate yourself from the orders of your Guru Mahārāja to preach in the English language in the West. Rather, you made those orders your very heart and soul!

You appeared to leave Vṛndāvana, but instead you took Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma all over the world!

The struggles, *tapasya* and obstacles which you endured were unimaginable, especially in your advanced old age. Nowadays, I am sometimes dismayed and pained at increasing infidelity in the guise of “rational sweetening”, actually, “watering down the milk” bridge preaching. Rather, you told us to “boil the milk”. If ever there was an ideal time and place for a case to be made to support this rational sweetening preaching idea, it was exactly when Your Divine Grace, came to the shores of North America. To the so-called intelligentsia, anti-war leaders, the hippy movement, the bastion of drugs, rock-n-roll, and free love rampant promiscuity, you taught, no illicit sex, no intoxication, no gambling, and no meat eating.

You were adamant and taught us to be too – to never compromise on these principles, and you never did. You taught us that you would preach to the four walls if necessary. That was your duty, and whether people came to receive or not was in the hands of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. If Kṛṣṇa was pleased with us, then He would send people, and He did. You were fearless following in the footsteps of your Guru

Mahārāja – you called him a Vaikuṅṭha Man and Lion Guru – We knew that you are also! You taught that we too should be fearless and uncompromising in representing guru and Kṛṣṇa!

It is a foolish idea that we must not preach like you did, for your style is outdated. Or that we should not quote Sanskrit in class to people that do not study your books very much, if at all. I try to tell them that you were always preaching and quoting Sanskrit *ślokas*, and discussing Sanskrit words even before the disciples knew any *ślokas*. You are always our Founder-*ācārya*, and your style is the first class standard.

You never cared much for *vox populi*, popular opinion that we should change for the public.

Rather, you said that we should change the public with purification of the holy names and the message of the *Bhāgavatam*.

No disciple, grand-disciple, great-grand-disciple, or follower of your ISKCON has any reason to be disloyal or unchaste. Nor should the youth express doubts about whatever is repeated from your direct teachings by your direct disciples. This is how Kali's forgetfulness and ignorance can come about and surreptitiously add water to the milk. Without this spiritual, cultural basis and strong spiritual family traditions, there can be no continuum!

Your beloved disciple and my dear godbrother Kusakratha Dāsa wrote poetry glorifying you and your divine teachings. While exquisitely beautiful, it is also pregnant with fully accurate expositions on the transcendental truth. I will quote from his, *Sonnets - I. 108 Flower Offerings at the Feet of My Spiritual Master*.

94. "From within Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, smiling Śrī Kṛṣṇachandra steps. The reader is surprised...a full moon seems to shine within His face. The reader's world is now at once transformed. Śrī Kṛṣṇachandra, like a sapphire, nectar-cascading, sweetest honey, glorious storm-cloud, playfully smiles as now He stands before the reader."

97. "Śrī Kṛṣṇachandra's sweet command, Śrīla Prabhupāda firmly carries, with a firm and unwavering hand. As merciful Śrī Kṛṣṇachandra speaks, so saintly Śrīla Prabhupāda walks."

Promoting your books as law books for the next 10,000 years of your Movement is our duty. We should also never

neglect your instructions regarding your disciples, your temples and systems. Who would dare, when you, the founding *Ācārya* gave us everything, accepting and loving us unconditionally, saving us and the whole wide world?

98. “Saintly Śrīla Prabhupāda walks upon this wide-world’s everywhere-going path. To the poor people of this world he talks. Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s name he places on their breath. The people of this world are startled all to see the gift they suddenly attained, Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s name now earnestly they call. They smile to see the treasure they have gained. The people of the world now dance and sing. They tremble with bliss in every limb and part. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, like a lotus blossoming, stays within each fortunate person’s heart. The people of the world are not the same, attaining the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s name.”

You were and are still the ideal and beyond compare in every way. The first thing we learned about spiritual life is, ‘do not take liberties and change the formula. No addition and no subtraction.’ Follow the *paramparā!* *Mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ.*

Māyā and Kali offer no hope, only smoke and mirrors, obstacles and organized despair. In reality, it is you alone who is our guiding Pole Star shining beacon of light. All of our leaders got all of their knowledge from you.

99. “Attaining the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s name, the fortunate smiling people of the world now sing and dance and laugh in bright sublime, trembling, overcome with glorious wild sweet blisses. A jubilant, colorful festival of all-encompassing, like-a-sweet-monsoon-of-ecstasies sweet love for lotus petal delicate, cooling like a sweet full moon, playful, witty, charming, sweet, delightful, enchanting with the bud of newest youth, all-knowing, attractive, all-insightful, Śrī Kṛṣṇa with *bimba* lips and jasmine teeth. Why is the world transformed? Ah, why? Because of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mercy.”

What Kali’s fool could minimize, marginalize, rationalize and

relativise your unlimited, pure, merciful and incomparable gifts?

102. “Merciful Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mercy has brought a priceless gift to this dark world. The eager people crowd around to see the gift. They gaze now at the million-petaled lotus flower of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s name. ‘What kind of fathomless gift is this?’ they think. Each person takes in to his home the gift. Each home is filled with sweetest bliss. In each home now the smiling people shout Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s holy name and wildly dance. You ask, my friend, how did this come about? This came from the Hare Kṛṣṇa chants. This came from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s work, stamped with love for-Kṛṣṇa’s sweetest mark.”

You taught us that when the *Ācārya* disappears, Kali infiltrates the Mission and great chaos ensues; and, it is only his direct disciples that eventually restore balance and put their *Ācārya*’s mission back on track. Therefore, your direct disciples are naturally seen as leaders in your Mission. You ordered us to preserve your Movement so, they should be sought out for guidance, and instruction, as well as be offered shelter in their own father’s house. Home is, after all, where we all belong. To do otherwise, is *Maryādā vyatikrama*, transgressing Vaiṣṇava etiquette.

“As The Supreme Personality of Godhead comes down upon this Earth to reestablish principles of religion, so His representative, The spiritual master, also comes to reestablish religious principles. It is the duty of the disciples to take charge of the Mission of the spiritual master and execute it properly. Otherwise, the disciple should decide to die along with the spiritual master.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 4.28.50, Purport). So to execute the will of the spiritual master, the disciple should be prepared to lay down his life, and abandon all personal considerations.

103. “Work stamped with love for Kṛṣṇa’s sweetest mark, tongue anointed with the sweetest nectar of words describing like a raincloud dark Vrajabhūmi’s playfully smiling master.

Śrī Kṛṣṇachandra’s form and sweet pastimes and glorious and eternal attributes and charm. Playfulness

sweet and sublime, and lilting music of the bamboo flute and constant protection of the devotees and handsomeness like a wave-filled nectar-ocean and holy names splashed with sweet ecstasies, and rarest gift of sweetly divine devotion, Śrīla Prabhupāda, working in this world, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweet magnificence unfurled."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you described how you were constantly compressed, depressed, and suppressed by your godbrothers, with Kali never resting. It seems that we may also sometimes be fated to undergo the same. It is our duty to tolerate and go on. O Master, you underwent and tolerated so many inconceivable hardships and deprivations above and beyond all human call. Since we are eternal family, surely it is only fair and right that we too endure our token share. Our eternal debt to you can never be repaid in full.

105. "Graceful and handsome form sweet and sublime, heart filled with sweetest gentleness and kindness, and sweet, playful, and divine Vraja pastimes, and splashed by nectar waves of smiling bliss, charming Śrī Kṛṣṇachandra gives to Śrīla Prabhupāda the glorious power to give sweet Kṛṣṇa consciousness alive with dizzying and colorful sweetness like a flower, of ten million, million, million petals, to give it to the suddenly fortunate people of this dark and saddened world. To Śrīla Prabhupāda I bow and prostrate. Upon the ground I lay and speak prayers sweet. I bow before Śrīla Prabhupāda's feet."

O Prabhupāda! Due to your perfection, the anointed, blessed, and empowered disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Goswami Mahārāja Thākura, he and the entire *paramparā* are pleased. Because of your pure love and your determined mission, Nityānanda Rāma, Who is Śrī Balarāma, and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Who is Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Themselves, licensed and filled you with Their blissful *śakti* and their unalloyed, golden love. Śrī Śrī Guru and Kṛṣṇa accompanied and enveloped you everywhere and in every way throughout your worldwide travels. Śrī Kṛṣṇa danced upon your tongue, as in your heart and mind, for you were a veritable *cintāmaṇi* touchstone. They walked in your every step, They spoke through your every word, and They infused your every action, word, and song with Their own all attractive, godliness, majesty and unalloyed love.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, please excuse my faults, my weaknesses, my frailties and foolishness. Accept my heartfelt glorification and my confidential pleading and praying for guidance and empowerment to make some significant contribution in preserving and expanding your mission.

Begging to remain your servant eternally,

Sevānanda Dāsa

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

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

When You said “We came to America” it seems like incorrect grammar. Because it appeared that it was only you on the Jaladuta. Then other devotees said that it is the way a *sannyāsī*, talks. But for me, when I have reflected on this statement over the years, it has come to mean all the personalities that you brought into my life.

There is a verse: *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Madhya 22.83

*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-janma-mūla haya 'sādhu-saṅga'
kṛṣṇa-prema janme, teṅho punaḥ mukhya aṅga*

TRANSLATION

“The root cause of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is association with advanced devotees. Even when one’s dormant love for Kṛṣṇa awakens, association with devotees is still most essential.”

Using this verse in conjunction with *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.18: By regular attendance in classes on the *Bhāgavatam* and by rendering of service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact.

It appears to be that our *sādhana* and our goal are like the verse 10.14.3, as Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote in his purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.24.69:

*jñāne prayāsam udapāsya namanta eva
jīvanti san-mukharitāni bhavadīya-vārtāni
sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatāni tanu-vān-manobhir
ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyāni*

“One may remain situated in his own place or his own occupational duty and still lend his ear to receive the message of the Lord from realized souls. The Kṛṣṇa conscious movement is based on this principle, and we are opening centers all over the world to give everyone a chance to hear the message of Lord Kṛṣṇa in order to go back home, back to Godhead.”

By the divine personalities that are almost too many to count, and even now whenever we recall just their names, we remember their teachings, that you brought to us. And as Bhaktivinoda wrote “thou art still living in sound”.

In each of your books we meet so many divine personalities and hear their teachings along with your purports to make sure we get it right.

Of course through *Kṛṣṇa Book* we meet Kṛṣṇa and His whole family. And five great personalities and their teachings in the *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*. Then Rūpa Goswami in *Nectar of Devotion*. In *Bhagavata-gītā* we have an introduction to *Mahābhārata* and all the great souls along with the teachings given to Arjuna that formed the very basis of our restructured perception.

Then the very book, the king of books, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* – our very means of conquest over the material potency . . . *Jaya!* Who could ever count all of the personalities and their instructions compiled with perfect descending authority?

So, thank you for coming to America with all the best people that exist.

Hare Kṛṣṇa, your aspiring disciple,

Madan Mohan Dāsa

Dear Srīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your feet. Please accept these verses of glorification on the occasion of your sacred Vyāsa-pūjā.

A PLACE AT YOUR LOTUS FEET

1)

Dear Srīla Prabhupāda,

Please grant me a place at your lotus feet...

My only shelter from the cycle of endless birth and death.

Your lotus feet . . .

My only shelter from the hurricane of Kali-yuga's toxic breath.

Your lotus feet . . .

My only shelter from unbridled senses and a stubborn, rascal mind.

Your lotus feet . . .

My only shelter in the realm of darkness where the blind will ever lead the blind.

2)

Dear Srīla Prabhupāda,

Please grant me a place at your lotus feet . . .

In the company of *kīrtaneers* who chant your mantra with deep gratitude and great delight;

In the company of preachers who recognise your mercy as the only beacon to illuminate the Kali-yuga night;

In the company of *sādhus* who relish every word within the pages of your unadulterated books;

In the company of those who cherish the *prasādam* preparations as passed down by your personally instructed cooks;

Please grant me a place at your lotus feet.

3)

Dear Srīla Prabhupāda,

Please grant me a place at your lotus feet . . .

Before I trade the potency of your teachings for another wave of populism;

Before I trade the simplicity of your teachings for another layer of corporate mechanism;

Before I trade the purity of your teachings for the mud of profit /

distinction /adoration;

Before I trade the timelessness of *kīrtana* for a flood of wanton speculation;

Please grant me a place at your lotus feet.

4)

Dear Srīla Prabhupāda,

Please grant me a place at your lotus feet . . .

Before I lose the potency of your precious books to the whims of my presumption;

Before I compromise your message for the sake of mass consumption;

Before I seek to commandeer the kīrtan with some show of false emotion;

Before I sanitise your message in another round of politically correct commotion;

Please grant me a place at your lotus feet.

5)

Dear Srīla Prabhupāda,

Please grant me a place at your lotus feet . . .

Before the instructions you gave me are submerged beneath the agenda of my own invention;

Before I hide behind a masquerade of outer form, caught up in webs of vain pretension;

Before the blanket of complacency robs me of the urge to truly serve your lotus feet;

Before the clouds of Kali-yuga darkness simply put my wayward soul to sleep.

Please grant me a place at your lotus feet.

6)

Dear Srīla Prabhupāda,

Please grant me a place at your lotus feet...

Even though I'm an ungrateful fool and rascal of the lowest order;

Even though I'm forever lost within the shadows of the mental border;

Even though your causeless mercy is my only hope of qualification;

Even though my life has been a history of endless deviation;

Please grant me a place at your lotus feet.

7)

Dear Srīla Prabhupāda,
Please grant me a place at your lotus feet . . .
The glow of which is like the lustre of a hundred million suns;
The ever-expanding shelter of which my understanding has barely
just begun;
The saffron particles of which are forever sought after by the greatest
demigods and sages;
The potency of which has been foretold by God Himself –
Mahāprabhu and Kṛṣṇa – as the shelter of the Ages.
Please grant me a place at your lotus feet.

8)

Dear Srīla Prabhupāda,
Please grant me a place at your lotus feet . . .
Which are attainable by anyone who comes in contact with your
transcendental books;
Which are attainable by anyone enamoured by your graceful gestures
and your bold, Vaikuṇṭha looks;
Which are attainable by anyone who appreciates your pastimes of
unlimited self-sacrifice;
Which are attainable by anyone attracted to your Hare Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana*
and thinks it very nice.
Please grant me a place at your lotus feet.

9)

Dear Srīla Prabhupāda,
Please grant me a place at your lotus feet . . .
Which offer shelter to any soul who comes before you with sincere
and humble heart;
Which, by your words, your picture and your *mūrti*, you're willing
to impart . . .
The greatest treasure anyone throughout the fourteen worlds has
ever gotten:
Eternal service at the lotus feet of KṚṢṆA, your beloved Lord, who
for untold ages we have so utterly forgotten.

10)

Dear Srīla Prabhupāda,

Please bless us with the shelter of your lotus feet . . .

Which are the only antidote to lift us from the wretched swamp of Kali-yuga;

The shelter of your lotus feet . . .

Which are the only bastion against Kali's cunning schemes – growing daily ever darker, ever cruder;

The shelter of your lotus feet...

Which have ushered in the *yuga-dharma* of Lord Caitanya's Hare Kṛṣṇa spring;

The shelter of your lotus feet . . .

The only way to keep your mission and your ISKCON house on track and to never change a thing.

Srīla Prabhupāda, please give us the shelter of your lotus feet.

Your fallen servant,

Sakshi Gopal Dāsa

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave us everything...

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my respectful obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you forever and a day!

At this time, when we contemplate your holy appearance in our lives and in our world, we are reflecting on everything you have given us—all of the deep and extraordinary transcendental gifts you have shared with us and we are frankly overwhelmed.

Overwhelmed by your kindness, by your sacrifice, by your deep love and wisdom and by your unflinching pure service to the Lord. The list of marvelous gifts you gave us is unlimited, but we want to take this occasion to enumerate a few of them—the gifts you have granted to each of us individually and to the world in general:

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave me/us:

- The opportunity to serve
- The absolute message of God (*Gaura vāñī*)
- An ever-increasing worldwide community of sincere and hopeful servants of Kṛṣṇa
- A treasure house of transcendental wisdom in the form of the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and scores of other spiritually empowering books
- Faith, faith and more faith that culminates in love of Kṛṣṇa
- The sweet, sweet, holy names of God – through the chanting of which, we are saved, purified, protected, empowered, and uplifted and united
- Introduction and connection to so many divine and auspicious personalities including but not limited to: Nārada Muni, Tulasī Mahārāṇī, Lord Shiva, Rūpa Goswami, Sanātana Goswami, Raghunātha Dāsa and Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, Jīva Goswami, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswami, Jāhnvā Devī, Draupadī, Kuntīdevī, Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura, Jayadev Goswami, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Viśvanātha Cakrvarti Ṭhākura, Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, Haridas Ṭhākura, Hanumān, Madhavendra Puri, Arjuna, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Gaura Kishor Dāsa Bābājī, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
- A deeper appreciation for Lord Jesus Christ and Prophet

Muhammad and their pure service to the One Lord according to time, place and circumstance

- A respect and compassion for all living beings and how we are interconnected and interdependent
- The method to become free from fear, greed, lust, anger, ignorance, envy, false pride and a host of unwanted, limiting things
- The understanding of our sweet Lord Kṛṣṇa in His ultimate personal form as Śyāmasundara, Govinda, the Original, most beautiful, powerful, loving, creative person
- The knowledge of who we really are – spiritual beings full of bliss and eternity – sparks of the One, all-encompassing Spiritual Being
- Knowledge of the proper use and perfection of our senses and our talents
- A scientific approach to understanding the material creation
- A comprehension of and to whom everything and everyone belongs—the Source and maintainer of all—Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa
- The formula for how to be peaceful and happy in this life and the next
- How to go back home, back to Godhead
- Your unflinching promise to take us back home, no matter what
- The key to the spiritual world
- Hope unlimited

Thank you dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, we beg to live a life that demonstrates our gratitude for you.

*With love,
Your hopeful daughter,
Kṛṣṇānandīnī Devī Dāsī*

FINALLY GOING

A life in preparation he had passed—
As a boy in his father's arms he learned
The way of devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa,
And then he lived a family life and earned; [1]

But all throughout his life he was preparing—
Even in his business he would read
Sacred scriptures, chant and try to preach,
Seeing that it was the urgent need. [2]

Unattached, he lived an unassuming,
But inwardly burning churning life:
He did his work and went about his business,
Raised a family, was faithful to his wife; [3]

But in his heart he saw the *jīvas* suffering
And burned within to save them from their pain.
He churned his mind to find some good solution,
Thinking how to bring them home again. [4]

His home was not this world—he was disguising himself
Just to keep his profile low;
So that *Māyā* would not stop him from preparing,
For he was and is illusion's greatest foe. [5]

In nineteen-twenty-two he met his master,
Who instilled in him the urge and gave the charge
To deliver the poor *jīvas* from disaster
By preaching in the English tongue at large. [6]

Immediately our saviour began writing;
His writings were welcome and desired.
Throughout the war for paper he was fighting,
To print the word with which he was inspired. [7]

His master passed away and he was lonely,
He cried a cry of helplessness and grief,
But his master had left him with his *vāṅṅī*,
And the order which would bring all souls relief. [8]

Slowly family life faded—
Business failed, detachment was increased.
He pursued his task of preaching by family unaided,
And soon for them our hero had deceased. [9]

Third stage—detachment, *vānaprastha*,
Living on one's own without a home.
Now, family life aside, so much vaster
His vision and his preaching field had grown. [10]

He tried in Jhansi: a League of Devotees.
It was a plan, to see if it would flower.
He wanted it, but this was just a trial run;
The plan was good, but this was not the hour. [11]

In numerous ways he tried to spread his message,
But Indians were not so much inclined.
He saw that his countrymen were indifferent,
And other thoughts were growing in his mind. [12]

Delhi, preaching on his own:
Scraping by, the true *sannyāsi* life.
Soon the fourth stage was pressed upon him—
Officially renouncing home and wife. [13]

Now he would be free to do his duty;
Now he was in every way prepared.
He was facing the greatest task in history—
No common man could dream of what he dared! [14]

He retired to Vṛndāban to write his books;
To write books he had been advised.
He was quite old, well in his sixties—
And yet a westward passage he devised. [15]

His whole life had been spent in preparation.
In his ripe old age now he would fulfill.
With his message he would go to western nations,
Armed with Guru’s grace and Kṛṣṇa’s will. [16]

After much struggle, he secured a ticket
On an ocean cargo ship Boston-bound.
An itinerant *sannyāsi*—who could think of it?—
How well his humble effort would be crowned! [17]

The dumb tongues were stuck and unable to utter
“Kṛṣṇa!”—so caught up in *Māyā*’s distractions.
The people groped blindly and fell in the gutter,
Madmen waxed madder, incurring reactions. [18]

Moment by moment the *jīvas* were falling
Down from the chance of attaining to bliss,
Forgetful of human life’s spiritual calling,
Down into animal life’s dark abyss. [19]

The black-hulled Water Messenger,
With our Prabhupād on board,
Was bearing to America
The envoy of the Lord. [20]

Inching from the weathered pier
And heading for the ocean,
She was bearing him to America
With the message of devotion. [21]

After timeless separation,
Now you’re almost by our side:
You are coming from Calcutta
On the ocean’s mighty tide. [22]

Now only the ocean’s storms
Are holding us apart.
The hour is late, but not too late;
Through the greatness of your heart [23]

You are coming to America,
Sailing on the waves,
Coming to redeem our souls,
To rescue *Māyā's* slaves. [24]

As the soul aches for the succour
That descends from God above,
We were waiting, though unwary,
For the kindness of your love. [25]

As a lost child waits its mother
With a desperate cry of pain;
As a lone girl waits her lover;
As parched land waits for rain; [26]

We were waiting for you, Prabhupād,
To sail across the sea,
With a desperate cry of anguish:
"Come to me! Rescue me!" [27]

His face turned out to where he saw no land,
But endless moving hills beneath the sky.
At sixty-nine he sailed from Bhārat's strand—
What man can understand the reason why? [28]

Below the deck, in simple saffron dress,
He spoke sometimes with the captain and his wife.
They took him as a travelling saint, no less,
Whom God had sent to bless their sea-borne life. [29]

Janmāṣṭamī was spent that year at sea,
The swelling sea, where gusty breezes blew,
But Prabhupād arranged for some festivity,
Enlivening the captain and his crew. [30]

Hot *kitchari* he cooked and shared it out
And with the simple seamen shared his mind:
"Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Lord without a doubt."
They found him stout of faith, and warm & kind. [31]

The Bengal Bay was wild with wave on wave,
Like birth & death within the worldly ocean.
Alone with thoughts of Kṛṣṇa, deep and grave,
He longed to save the world from its commotion. [32]

The ocean was a bridge of time;
His selfless purpose only patience could fulfill.
It was a huge deep for a tiny soul afloat;
Endure it though he must by strength of will. [33]

The travelling was rough afloat,
But sheltered by the Lord,
At sea and yet beyond it,
He was steady and assured. [34]

In spite of the injunction
Against swamis crossing seas,
His mission was now underway
And proceeding by degrees. [35]

Refusing to be daunted
By the elemental vast,
Tight holding to his purpose,
He would battle to the last. [36]

The ocean was his highway
And its route of shocks and rolls
Was the path to Kṛṣṇa's service
And the service of all souls. [37]

Deep down the ship prowed, then rose high,
Mounting a swelling wave in a sea-sick rhythm & roll.
In a cramped hold, the great soul found no rest,
Sitting or reclining, and the rains roared through the sky. [38]

On the Red Sea, there fell incessant rains,
And in his chest his heart was seized with pains.
Would he die at sea, as some had said?
If storms persisted, he could soon be dead. [39]

What is the pain of one who's spotless pure?
Only he and Kṛṣṇa fully knew
Just what the pure devotee would endure,
To serve his Lord just what he'd dare to do. [40]

Why Haridās was beaten? Why indeed
The Pāṇḍavas their kingdom were denied?
Why was Prahāda persecuted?
Why was Rāma banished? Christ why crucified? [41]

We ask but can the answers not demand.
The Lord unfolds His plans at His own pleasure.
The devotee who knows that all is best
Alone can see in suffering a treasure. [42]

Prahāda never doubted: "If the Lord
Is powerful and just, then why am I,
Who ever have the Lord so well adored,
Being tortured and in anguish made to sigh?" [43]

No! He confronting demons felt no pain
But ever in remembrance of God
Attained the Lord and went to His abode,
Following the path the saints have trod. [44]

Twice in two days his heart was gripped with grief—
"But if it comes again, I'll not survive!"
The winds and rains were giving no relief.
Would Prabhupād arrive at land alive? [45]

On the night of the second day,
Śrīla Prabhupād had a dream—
Lord Kṛṣṇa in His many forms,
All of them supreme, [49]

Was rowing a boat personally
And urging him along:
"You can sail across this sea!
Come, Prabhupāda, come!" [50]

Lord Matsya saved the Vedas
And His scaly body shone,
As He swishing through the waters
Waved him on, waved him on. [51]

To save the sacred Vedas
From the sinful inundation,
Prabhupād must reach the West
And start his publication. [52]

To print and distribute his books
Was ever in his heart;
And now he must arrive alive,
Secure some help and start. [53]

The Western world was drowning
In an ocean of transgression,
Amidst the flood of which
The Vedas hardly found expression, [54]

And countless bogus gurus
Had deceived the population
And had drowned the Vedic message
In a sea of speculation. [55]

“Come, Prabhupād, O Prabhupād,
Come sail across this sea!
There is nothing insurmountable,
When God is there with thee!” [56]

Lord Kūrma, of the nectar-churning *līlā*, urged him on:
“America is needing you!
Come, Prabhupāda, come! [57]

The nectar born of *saṅkīrtan*,
By vigorously churning,
Will quench the morbid thirst of those
Whose hearts with lust are burning.” [58]

Mohinī-mūrti, favouring the gods, the nectar stole,
But Prabhupād would favour all,
If he could reach his goal. [59]

The Lord was very pleased with him
And sanctified his plan—
Immortal quaffs of Harinām
To give to every man. [60]

Lord Narahari pledged His aid,
Lord Boar was by his side,
Lord Kalki, mounted on His horse,
With Prabhupād would ride. [61]

Lord Rāmachandra with His bow
With Prabhupād would go,
Lord Vāmana and Paraśurām,
The slayer of the foe. [62]

Lord Buddha and the other forms,
Unlimited in power,
Now stood by Śrīla Prabhupād
At this his darkest hour. [63]

“Come, Prabhupād, O Prabhupād,
Come sail across this sea!
There is no fear for one so dear
To the Lord of all that be!” [64]

Lord Balarām & Kṛṣṇa were like little boys at play:
“Come along! Come along!” They cried,
Inviting him to follow in a most delightful way,
With a laugh and a leap They hied— [65]

Running with a frolic through the forest glades of Vraja,
The all-attractive Godhead with His omni-potent brother,
Who deliver the most fallen in Their forms as Gaur-Nitāi
Echoed and re-echoed the assurance of Their cry:
“Come along! Come along! Come along!” [66]

If Kṛṣṇa were a Hindu god,
Then why the ocean dare?
Since Kṛṣṇa is the God of gods,
He is for all to share! [67]

Let others taste the nectar too,
The fallen souls endow
The view of Kṛṣṇa playing flute
And Rāma wielding plough. [68]

The world will glad embrace Them both
And make Their love life's goal,
For love of God is in the heart
Of every spirit soul. [69]

“Come, Prabhupād, O Prabhupād,
You'll sail across this sea!
The Lord is here with you sincere,
And what He wills will be!” [70]

He recovered and ate *bhāt-kitchari*
As the cruising ship plied on,
Through smoother waters now—
It seemed the stormy days were gone: [71]

Suez, Mediterranean, South of Italy, Gibraltar
And out onto a broad and peaceful ocean.
It seemed as if Lord Kṛṣṇa had the ocean in a halter,
For even the Atlantic had renounced its wild commotion. [72]

“If the Atlantic would have shown its usual face,
Perhaps I would have breathed my last at sea,
But Lord Krishna has taken charge of the ship
And is making all arrangements for my safety.” [73]

The crossing lasted thirty days.
Chaitanya-līlā was his heart's companion.
He thought of the unfriendly risks and dangers
So far from his sweet Lords and Śrī Vṛndāban. [74]

Vṛndāban life was natural and sublime,
Serving Kṛṣṇa there in Kṛṣṇa's home.
If life at sea was alien and strange,
Then what about the land beyond the foam? [75]

And the task ahead,
The risks he'd have to take?—
But all would be
For Kṛṣṇa's service's sake. [76]

Then Prabhupād a page of poem penned,
Confiding in Śrī Kṛṣṇa, his dear friend,
Announcing in his verse a vision bold
Of how his guru's mission would unfold: [77]

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī,
A favourite of the Son of Sachī,
In Kṛṣṇa's service is without compare.
He is the great and saintly teacher,
Foremost scholar, worldwide preacher,
Bestowing Kṛṣṇa-bhakti everywhere. [78]

By the power of his behest,
From town to town throughout the West,
The fame of Lord Gaurāṅga will expand,
And on each tongue the globe around
The Name of Kṛṣṇa will resound
And love of God will inundate the land. [79]

Oh then there will be bliss o'erflowing,
Like a mighty ocean growing,
Lord Chaitanya's mercy will be spilled—
And when the sinful, full of grief,
In Kṛṣṇa-*prēma* find relief,
The pure devotee's wish will be fulfilled. [80]

The world would drown in Harināma's tide,
For pure devotee's wishes never fail.
Alone, and coming closer to th'unknown, he prophesied
That Lord Chaitanya's mercy would prevail. [81]

As the boat slowly entered Boston harbour,
No one knew of the extent of change to come,
But history was changing at that moment
From no pure devotee in the West—to one! [82]

The early morning mist lifted its veil,
And the city sprawled in vision—lifeless, dead—
The dirty streets and buildings of illusion,
Where Kali-yuga victims grew and fed. [83]

The captain could not guess the deep intentions,
The inner contemplations of that soul,
As they strolled through streets of people rushing off to work,
And Prabhupād was fixing on his goal: [84]

How would he change them, feed them food anew,
Turn them from their sense delights, false pleasures,
Turn them from the filth on which they grew
And give them real truth, eternal treasures? [85]

How could he convince them of the myth of it,
The vanity of hoping for delight
From sense enjoyments, which are flickering shadows,
Reflections of reality in night? [86]

Only the expert mystic, Kṛṣṇa, knew,
And Prabhupād with submission turned to Him:
“Lord Kṛṣṇa, please empower me to preach Your word;
I am a puppet dancing at Your whim.” [87]

MARKINE BHAGAVAT DHARMA

Great mercy You have shown, Lord Kṛṣṇa,
To this worthless one.
You’ve brought me here by Your desire:
Now let Thy will be done! [88]

I take it that You have some plan
To spread Your grace abroad;
Why else would You have brought me
To this dreadful place, O Lord? [89]

By ignorance and passion
Are these people covered quite;
In topics of Lord Vāsudev
They do not take delight; [90]

But by Your causeless mercy,
The impossible is done.
Please work Your mercy-magic,
O Supremely Expert One! [91]

The mellows of devotion,
Oh! how will they comprehend?
Incline their hearts to *bhakti*, Lord,
Your power of mercy lend! [92]

By Your decree the people here
Are under *Māyā*'s rod,
But if You wish, they can be freed
And relish love of God. [93]

Their bondage and their liberation—
Both rest in Your hand.
If You want them to know You,
They will surely understand. [94]

The Bhāgavat is You, O Lord,
Enshrined in sacred sound.
By him who hears repeatedly
With reverence You are found. [95]

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, who is the
Supersoul in everyone’s heart and the benefactor of the
truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment
from the heart of the devotee who has developed the
urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves

virtuous when properly heard and chanted.”

“By regular attendance in classes on the *Bhāgavatam* and by the rendering of service unto the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact.”

“As soon as irrevocable loving service is established in the heart, the effects of Nature’s modes of passion and ignorance, such as lust, desire and hankering, disappear from the heart. Then the devotee is established in goodness, and he becomes completely happy.”

“Thus established in the mode of unalloyed goodness, the man whose mind has been enlivened by contact with devotional service to the Lord gains positive scientific knowledge of the Personality of Godhead in the stage of liberation from all material association.”

“Thus the knot in the heart is pierced, and all misgivings are cut to pieces. The chain of fruitive actions is terminated when one sees the Self as Master.”

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.17–21)

From ignorance and passion’s modes
They’ll gladly gain release,
And all the troublesome desires
Within their hearts will cease. [96]

I beg the benediction, Lord,
To make this message flower
Within their hearts, but I am low
And lame and void of power. [97]

Nonetheless, You’ve brought me here
To speak Your message true.
Now, O Lord, please do with me
Whatever pleases You. [98]

O Guru of the universe,
O Master of all arts,
Please decorate my words
So they may change these people's hearts! [99]

Your grace can make my words so pure
That all will find relief
And be, by hearing, fully freed
From misery and grief. [100]

If You have brought me here, O Lord,
To dance as You desire,
Then make me dance, then make me dance,
O Lord, as You require.
Just like a wooden puppet,
Let me dance as You require. [101]

Although I can no knowledge
Nor devotion truly claim,
I beg You, Lord, to now fulfill
The import of this name. [102]

Signed, the most unfortunate insignificant beggar,
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
On board the ship Jaladūṭa, Commonwealth Pier, Boston,
Massachusetts.

Dated: The eighteenth of September, 1965.
Boston was heavy, but *Bhāgavatam* heavier still.
Even in Boston the *bhakti* science could work its will—
Transcendental sound, piercing the deaf ear
And cutting the stone of the heart:
Lust-fire-smothering, heart-altar-cleansing,
Smashing illusion apart! [103]

These people who ate meat, who had sex like dogs,
Could rise to human behaviour;
Their lives complete, to the level of gods
Could rise, by the grace of their saviour. [104]

Those who were desperate
Could shelter at last,
Their agonized minds
But things of the past, [105]

The knots of their hearts
And all misgivings shaved sheer,
Cut to irreparable pieces,
If they could hear. [106]

If they could hear, they could break the karma-chain
That bound them to repeated births of pain. [107]

If they could hear, their progress to disaster would stop,
And they would see the Self as Master. [108]

A wondrous transformation could take place,
If Kṛṣṇa would vouchsafe His gracious glance:
Those who were downcast could rise to glory—
Prabhupād had come to give that chance. [109]

Feeling himself an insignificant beggar,
He begged the Lord his spirit to inspire.
“O Lord, be merciful, deliver them!”
Within his heart was just this one desire. [110]

EPILOGUE

Why should a holy man hanker for money and travel?
He should stay in Vṛndāban, protecting himself from temptation.
A *sādhu* especially should never cross over the ocean
To countries so sunken in sensual gratification. [1]

It's true, if he can remain without cheating
Just worshipping Kṛṣṇa in solitary prayer,
Then he can do without travel and preaching,
Leaving aside all the souls in despair. [2]

But when you have orders incumbent upon you
And previous *ācāryas* urging you on,
And when you have heart which is soft with compassion,
You cannot sit idly—then things must be done. [3]

Those who are shelterless, lost and unholy,
Outside the hope and the scope of the dhām,
They must be rescued and brought in to harbour,
Saved from the storms and enshored in the calm. [4]

When you have heart which is big with such yearnings,
Then you may hanker for money and all,
For even a *sādhu* has need for some earnings
To fully respond to the missionary call. [5]

Why should a holy man hanker for money and travel?
He should stay in Vṛndāban, protecting himself from temptation.
Why Prabhupād came is a mystery we can unravel—
He left his own comfort to save us from our degradation! [6]

Your servant,
Chitraketu Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my eternal obeisances at your effulgent lotus feet.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for revealing among so many other things, that understanding things as they are often includes three components.

You have taught us try to understand the three modes of material nature as described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

You revealed in the very first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* how the threefold miseries experienced by every *jīva* soul, can be remedied by the truth-filled path of *bhakti*.

You taught that according to the Vedic principles, there are three stages of spiritual advancement known as “*sambandha, abhidheya, prayojana*” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 7.73, Purport).

You clarified there are three divisions of energies; spiritual, material and marginal.

You taught by example and emphasized the most important of all three-set things, namely; who the Supreme Lord is, who the individual *jīva* soul is, and thirdly, what the ecstatic true nature of the love flowing between the Lord and the individual soul is.

You clearly showed us that this three-phase dynamic current of spiritual perfection is not fully realized by those confined by monism and dualism.

The threefold working model of perfection starts with service offered to the master from the student seeking divine knowledge and blessings. By such divine blessings only is perfection initiated and attained.

It is the *bhakti*-defined reality of knowing one’s relationship to Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a loving servant, which includes a flow of love back to the devotee in an intrinsically intimate and individual way from the Lord Himself, which defines not only one’s identity and greater reality, but one’s loving capacity and purpose fulfilled.

You often compared the sun to the Supreme – showing the multiple energies of heat and light as originating from one source. As a representative of the Supreme, you have lit up the world with the brilliantly luminous literature and purposeful lectures you continuously radiated – along with the warmth of love mercifully showered like the sunshine on both the land and sea – to the fortunate as well as the stone-hearted.

You showed us a type of love which was rooted in humility and sacrifice for your beloveds, which bestowed an ecstatic outcome beyond calculative capacity.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for giving so many of us your shelter, as an affectionate and supremely qualified spiritual father and grandfather.

Your servant,

Bhojadeva Dāsa

Sharanagata Devī Dāsī

My dear Śrīla Prabhupada,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. I am writing this offering to you as one who has had a rough time riding the treacherous waves propelling me through this material world. I have not always followed your instructions very well and have been tossed about relentlessly by the modes of nature. I am not deserving of your mercy. Even given all my defects and inability to be a steady devotee, somehow or other I have made some advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness despite these disqualifications and failures.

You have given us the priceless jewel, the most confidential knowledge, the secret of the true purpose and meaning of our lives here on this Earth. How can I ever repay your causeless mercy and kindness upon me? It is not possible. Therefore, I beg you to please forgive my countless offenses and allow me to continue to serve you in some small way for the rest of this lifetime and into the next and beyond.

“Nāyam ātmā bala hīnena labhyaḥ,” without the grace and causeless mercy of Lord Nityānanda, no one can make any advancement. Thus, I am begging your mercy and the mercy of Lord Nityānanda and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu to please kindly save me and allow me to serve you all.

I was young when I met you and had no idea of who you really were, the pure and glorious representative of our Lord God, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who came to this world to save the suffering souls embodied here. All glories to your Divine Grace, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I am hoping against hope that I will be blessed to see you again at the end of this arduous journey called life.

Written with love from your fallen servant,

Sharanagata Devī Dāsī

Bhubaneswar Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances

We would like to repay you for giving us a life of bliss and knowledge, though it is not possible. Like catching the tail of a dog to cross the ocean.

You clearly explain what's what and who's who – no room for speculation. You gave the do's and don't to make progress in spiritual life as given by past *ācāryas*.

Your instructions – chant sixteen good rounds, follow four regulative principles, attend the morning program and much more. You stressed in your purports, life comes from life, not chemicals, they never went to moon and that *bhakti* was the best way to perfection.

We are trying to give our life of full surrender. We hope to obtain love of God – Kṛṣṇa *premā*, it is only by your mercy.

Thanking you for the treasure of devotional service.

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Yours servant,

Bhubaneswar Dāsa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances.

On this auspicious Vyāsa-pūjā occasion I will repeat the sacred words from Śrī Guru Vandana.

“Your lotus feet Śrīla Prabhupāda, are the only way by which we can attain pure devotional service. I bow to Your lotus feet with great awe and reverence. By Your grace one can cross the ocean of material suffering and obtain the mercy of Kṛṣṇa.

“My only wish is to have my consciousness purified by the words emanating from your lotus mouth. Attachment to your lotus feet is the perfection that fulfills all desires.

“You open my darkened eyes and fill my heart with transcendental knowledge. You Śrīla Prabhupāda are my Lord birth after birth. From you ecstatic *premā* emanates. By you ignorance is destroyed. The Vedic scriptures sing of your character.

“O spiritual master you are the ocean of mercy, the friend of the poor, and the lord and master of the devotees. O master! Be merciful unto me. Give me the shade of your lotus feet. Your fame is spread all over the three worlds. I take shelter of Your lotus feet.”

I would like to thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for offering transcendence to this prodigal soul. You are the personification of ‘amazing grace’. Your Divine Grace is a miracle of humility with towering Kṛṣṇa *prema*!

Jubilation swells within my heart at meditation on your mercy to all the fallen conditioned souls in this Kali-yuga.

Your sacrifice knows no limits, and is absolutely extraordinary, the result is still growing by leaps and bounds all over the world.

By your almighty compassionate heart, full of grace, this whole dark world is so much brighter.

Whether someone was elite or a brute, You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, made no distinctions in sharing your divine mercy. You glanced

upon us all. And some of us felt that shadow of Kṛṣṇa *premā*.

The most essential effect of your mercy is to be blessed with pure devotional service. However, I do not possess even a fraction of a drop of devotion, and therefore I have no right to receive this mercy, but still, you are so loving and kind that I feel so blessed and graced. I am a mercy case but you are a bank and a mine of transcendental love. And this thought gives me some hope, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

It seems our unutterable sense gratification, piggery and demoniac mentality was not a disqualification in receiving your loving blessings. Your activities, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are truly inconceivable, unfathomable and incomprehensible!

And though I may be just a lowly inmate in this material prison house and you a Vaikuṅṭha personality, still I am receiving a tiny glimpse into your greatness.

Please bless me to have full faith in your merciful directives.

I pray to be able to share your transcendental association, in the form of your literatures, and activities with all I meet.

And furthermore Śrīla Prabhupāda, may I always remember and never forget your divine lotus feet!

I stand to be corrected and inspected.

Your aspiring disciple,

Arjuna Dāsa

Dallas

Beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace, who carried forward the mission of Lord Caitanya into the Western world.

Scarborough, North Yorkshire

Kīrtana at home

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

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

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

[sings]

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

[repeat many times]

[speaks, full of wonder]

“What’s that floating on my voice? – it sounds like the sound of honey.”

(So this is what it feels like when the heart breaks!)

You brought this holy name

So carefully – He never touched the ground.

You charmingly persuaded Sumati Morarji

Then had the two heart attacks on the boat.

You let your disciples share your blue towel;

You fed them with your own hand,

Padding around in bare feet,

Spooning out *prasāda* – “Take more!”

You had to bear a conspiracy against you.

(Why else would you have spoken up in your purports?)

There’s no one like you, Prabhupāda.

Let me take birth a million times –
I just want to be near you.
I've been here before
Notably in days of yore
(I mean the Middle Ages)
Looking for God, but
– Not quite there.
And now you're here,
Everything is okay.
In your last weeks, in your room
Devotees were crying.
And Gopāl Krishna said,
“You are the inspiration, Prabhupāda.”
There was never a truer word spoken.
And you replied:
“That I shall do, until the last breathing.”
And so I beg the Lord
That I'll always have love for you, and gratitude –
Until my last breathing.

Your fallen, conditioned servant,

Govardhana Devī Dāsī

Though I want to celebrate you Śrīla Prabhupāda, for so many things, there is one that stands out as most prominent; that you tirelessly and selflessly sacrificed your life for the ultimate benefit of others.

No personal motive, no personal agenda. Pure. Cent per cent. Only for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa and to benefit others.

One may be a philanthropic man or woman of this world. But on the material plane there is always the agenda, whether it be gross or subtle. I may go out of my way to help others – my neighbor, my wife, my son, my friends, the innocent animals, the poor, my company, my country, etc. Though certainly noble, there is always an underlying motive. That is natural in this realm.

But who exists ONLY for the benefit of others in this world? Who exists only to please the Supreme Lord? Is there such a soul? Three hours of sleep a night...one who retires at 10 p.m., and rises at 1 a.m., day-in and day-out without fail wherever they are in the world. However grueling their schedule and chronological age, they wake to translate and write illuminations of *Bhagavat* wisdom as directed by God Himself – only to benefit others. Who can do this? Where is such a person to be found?

Of course we know the answer. That person is none other than A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

What is given in these books that you've painstakingly revealed? The ultimate panacea for all forms of suffering. Nothing else. Only to benefit. Only to bring the soul in closer proximity to the supreme soul, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Only to help the soul find his or her place at Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet and return to that eternal realm where once having gone one never returns.

I heard you say in a lecture that the Vṛndāvana mood is based on exclusively thinking, feeling and willing only for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa.

That is real purity.

Others may engage in welfare activities, but they do not understand the eternal fundamentals of real welfare work, nor the true formula for world peace, individually and collectively:

bhoktāraṁ yajña tapasāṁ, sarva loka maheśvaram

“...that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme enjoyer of ALL activities and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme benefactor.

A person in full consciousness of Me, knowing Me to be the ultimate beneficiary of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all planets and demigods, and the benefactor and well-wisher of all living entities, attains peace from the pangs of material miseries.” (A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda).

The conditioned souls within the clutches of illusory energy are all anxious to attain peace in the material world. But they do not know the formula for peace, which is explained in this part of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The greatest peace formula is simply this: Lord Kṛṣṇa is the beneficiary in all human activities. Men should offer everything to the transcendental service of the Lord because He is the proprietor of all planets and the demigods thereon. Unless one understands these bare facts, it is not possible to achieve peace in the world either individually or collectively. This is the sense of Kṛṣṇa consciousness: Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme predominator, and all living entities, including the great demigods, are His subordinates. One can attain perfect peace only in complete Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, were in complete Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You were in perfect peace and equipoised in all situations. You saw Kṛṣṇa face-to-face. You were with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord of the cosmic manifestation, in Goloka Vṛndāvana when He asked you to come to this realm and, “just write these books”. You revealed to Bhavānanda that you did not want to come here. But just like in *Bhagavad-gītā* when He spoke to Arjuna and instructed him to fight, Kṛṣṇa encouraged you and gave you His assurance that, “you just write these books, I will arrange everything – just write these books”.

Once Sudama was in your room and you were crying tears of love and gratitude. Sudama was concerned and inquired why you were crying. You said, “Because Kṛṣṇa is so kind and beautiful, and He is standing right there in the long grass” as you pointed outside the window.

Who else is there like you on the planet? One who sees God, who talks to God face-to-face?

Everything you did had one motive only: to please your guru and Lord Kṛṣṇa to help benefit the conditioned souls.

You often shed tears of compassion as you contemplated the suffering condition of people in this world. And thus you pushed your followers to imbibe this mood of mercy and magnanimity. “Somehow or other, just get them to take a book”, you implored. “Somehow or other bring them to Kṛṣṇa consciousnesses”.

Selfless compassion to the extreme exhibited 24/7.

And you did this with an uncanny ability and boldness to present the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God. And He did help you, fully empowering you as a *śaktyāveśa avatāra* as the world watched in amazement. Hare Kṛṣṇa became a household name within a few short years.

You did this with charm and candor, wit and wisdom, roses and thunderbolts. Some of those thunderbolts came in the form of so-called political incorrectness. You weren’t concerned about offending the oft times sentimentally motivated paradigms of modern humans. You exposed the moon landing, describing it as a hoax. You rallied against modern politicians, you rallied against the feminist movement, you called a spade a spade, even though it often ruffled feathers. You saw through the layers of illusion and you were never afraid to boldly yet nonchalantly tell it like it is. You weren’t afraid of what others thought . . . you simply represented the truth as spoken by Lord Kṛṣṇa.

One time in Australia you undeniably defended the the position of guru to reporters, stating that the guru can most definitely drive in a Rolls Royce because he is the bona fide representative of God therefore he must have the best car. You immediately put them in their place with boldest brilliance.

Then when Bhakti Tirtha Swami complained about persisting prejudice in ISKCON, rather than being concerned in a “politically correct” manner you took a different approach. You chided him by saying that if he was affected by this then it was a symptom of being on the bodily platform. Boom.

And you never hesitated to show genuine love, yet at the same time nipped the pride of your disciples in the bud.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you displayed unmistakably profound love and affection for your disciples yet never at the expense of their

advancement. That was your love, for you saw only what was necessary for each individual soul in their progressive march back to home, back to Godhead.

Your mission is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission:

“Everyone become guru and liberate the land.”

It is now our mission, each and everyone of us.

There is an urgent need for Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the world, now more than ever. There are forces at play in *Māyā's* kingdom which bewilder us, divide us, incite harshness and violence and abuse. At any moment unrest and war or natural calamity may befall us. Let's face it, it's not pretty and it's not getting any better.

Yet, there is great hope and cause for deep inspiration and encouragement. That hope is the message that you have given in your Bhaktivedanta purports. That message is who you are. It is how you lived your life as the perfect master – the *Ācārya* – one who teaches by example, cent per cent.

That is what we aspire to.

Everything for the service and pleasure of guru and Kṛṣṇa, and only to benefit others. Let this become our creed. Let it be indelibly imprinted in our minds and hearts along with the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Let it guide our decisions, our ways of living and acting and relating to one another and the world. Let it help us rise above our differences and strive for the unity in diversity that Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted in his mission. Kṛṣṇa will help us and empower us to do wonderful things. It is already happening in so many ways.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, Let us simply be your humble instruments, and just like a puppet in your hands, you may make us dance, make us dance as you like. . . . within this beautiful house you built: your glorious, supernatural, life-changing and world saving movement, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*

With deepest gratitude,

Your aspiring servant,

Bādarāyaṇa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I could write lots of flowery words
And fancy turns of phrase
But here I submit a simple rhyme
To offer you my praise

You are my only shelter
I realise more and more
There's nothing else worth anything
In this material world

That wonderful devotee
Steadfast, passionate, true
Has now been taken away from me
Now I must turn to you

The Lord gives and he takes away
All our mundane roles
Till we're left with no other choice
Than to purify our souls

How fortunate I am surely
To have met you face-to-face
You are my only refuge now
Prabhupāda, Your Divine Grace

Your servant,
Ramya Devī Dāsī

Mṛgākṣī 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*

I thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda
For this life we are given
To know how we are driven
From the Place we want to Be

How the Nature
Is the Nurture
How God's Love is
All there is

Contained in this world
Hidden under forgetfulness

As families we are blessed
To receive each soul
In their journey back

Each special person
Has a purpose
In Kṛṣṇa's Plan

You have taught us
How to use our skills
And to be present
Within

Just a moment is all
That it takes
The Will to Begin

As we feel the depth
Of who we are
We see all others
Are the same

Respecting individuals
Serving without blame

The Power of Such Love
Carries our life on

Not in fleeting distress
And happiness
But solidly standing
On the bow

Like you did for us
Śrīla Prabhupāda
You give your All

So I offer you my
Heart and mind
As I drop loads
From my back
Trying to find
My soul

Only You
Dear Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Are the Knower
And the Doer
I don't want this
World of lack
I want to reach
My final goal

As a touchstone changes
Everything to gold
I have tasted glimpses
Of the holy name's abode

Yes, thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda
For this life that we are given
As we make sure we
Are driven to do our best
As examples of your love
for our children

All Glories to His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda!

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful obeisances at your lotus feet, again and again.

If not for you and your ceaseless mercy, I do not know where I, your ineffectual and failing servant, would be in this world of nescience. Each time that I enter into one of your glorious temples, participate in *Harināma saṅkīrtana*, partake in the preparation, distribution, or consumption of Kṛṣṇa *prasāda* in the association of your disciples, the same thought comes to mind; If not for you, my dear Śrīla Prabhupāda NONE of this would be possible! If not for you, my dear Śrīla Prabhupāda we here in the West would not have the opportunity to engage in the practice of *sanātana dharma* that you so patiently taught to us. For that I thank you and will be forever grateful with every fiber of my being. Your causeless mercy cannot be taken for granted — it's simply not possible. In my humble way, I will attempt to pass your matchless gifts on to others as you passed them on to us.

Your eternally thankful servant,

Rukmiṇī Priyā Devī Dāsī

Jagaddhātrī Devī Dāsī

Once again I have the opportunity to reflect on the unlimited patient loving mercy you have bestowed on this soul. Your embodied presence with us was so short . . . yet the blessing emanating from your lotus lips reverberate within my heart even today.

I pray I may always be allowed the association of your true servitors, so I can continue on this sublime path of *bhakti* . . . your loving guidance leads me to hear from saintly Vaiṣṇavas to encourage me on this intricate and slippery journey when *Māyā* Devī is pulling so hard.

May I always have the shelter of your lotus feet, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your fallen servant,
Jagaddhātrī Devī Dāsī

I AM YOUR INSTRUMENT . . . PLEASE USE ME!

Each day I go on *sañkīrtana*,
I feel your blissful reciprocation
Forged in the fire of trial and error
Distributing your books to souls from every nation!

I'm a work in progress,
48 years in the making,
Due to my lack of sincerity
I'm still so much lacking.

Though I'm a great fool,
I am still your tool
please use me a little,
play me like a fiddle.

By your mercy I'm learning to care
these great works I'm eager to share
Because I understand that Kṛṣṇa is feeling pain
for the poor souls in this material domain.

Whatever talents I appear to have
are in reality gifts from you
Kṛṣṇa is the ability in man
So obviously the credit goes to you!

And without you, my dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,
I wouldn't have a clue,
So truly everything worthwhile in my life
I owe completely to you, my dear Guru.

Thank you, thank you, thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda
I shudder to think what would be my fate
had you not come to America and given your mercy
My life would be filled with misery and hate!

Instead of the carrot of sense gratification
You gave us the key to eternal life
Beautiful Deities, wonderful devotees, sumptuous *prasāda*
you've given to end our strife!

And of course, your books which are beyond compare
And the topmost holy names, *Hare Kṛṣṇa*, *Hare Rāma*
Chanting and dancing all the way back Home
Relishing every step of the way, performing *Harināma*!

I owe everything to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda
Life after life I beg to serve your lotus feet
And soon one day back in the spiritual abode
I long to see your smiling face and once again meet

For your pleasure, I offer your books distributed for the year 2018: 772 *Perfection of Yoga*, 258 *Perfect Questions, Perfect Answers*, 373 *Chant and Be Happy*, 2918 *Higher Taste* cookbooks, 118 *Science of Self Realization*, 3150 soft-bound *Bhagavad-gītas*, 70 hard-bound *Bhagavad-gītas*, and 165 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatams* Total: 7824 books

Having had total knee replacement in mid 2018, I found *saṅkīrtana* to be my physical therapy, mental therapy and spiritual therapy all rolled into one! Thank you so much, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Aspiring to be your eternal servant,

Mohanāśinī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I bow down, prostrated at your feet. All glories unto you.

After being touched by the words emanating from your lotus mouth, my heart became filled with true knowledge. My ears started to hear properly, my eyes could see things as they truly are. A new world emerged right before me.

Mingling with the blind has become awkward as I now rejoice only in the association of devotees. What can be said in conversations with people who do not know the existence of their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa? I consider myself and the devotees as members of the same family, and you are the one we look up to as our father.

You took the trouble to cross all the oceans of the world to aggrandize that association of devotees, and you built a universal house that can give shelter to all humble souls.

It is with awe and reverence that I salute the unfathomable compassion you manifested toward us, the conditioned souls of this Kali-yuga.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Your most unworthy servant,

Praghoṣa Dāsa
Montreal Temple

Sarvani Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*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*

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Your Divine Grace.

Another year has passed since I last attempted to pay homage to your saintly appearance in this material world. As I reflect on the past 40 years, before and after I encountered Your Divine Grace, It has been increasingly and repeatedly proven that you have graciously, in your humble way, made it possible for the light of the ancient eternal sastric truths to become available to the darkest and most fallen regions of Kali-yuga. Among the countless teachers, philosophers, scientists, and others who have speculated and expounded upon this material nature and reasons for its existence you stand superior.

With great effort and energy you have successfully given the whole world transcendental knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, by revealing His pastimes and spiritual abode. You have supplied this knowledge through your many books, lectures, and letters, which give the answers to such questions as: Who is God? Who am I? What is my relationship with God? How and why was this world created? Why am I suffering? How does one find eternal lasting happiness? How does one break out of this repeated cycle of birth, disease, old age and death? How does one qualify himself to go back home back to Godhead? Your wisdom in teaching others is indeed unsurpassable and through your tireless efforts and mercy remain available for future generations to come.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in your lifetime you have exhibited a level of inexhaustible knowledge, sincerity, wisdom and transcendental experience that is rarely seen in this world, what to speak of the love and dedication you have demonstrated in wholeheartedly serving the wishes of your spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, in helping him to propagate Lord Caitanya's mission by spreading the holy names to every continent, town and village on the planet.

In fulfilling your service to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga you encountered many obstacles, yet despite any hindrances in your path you never wavered in your determination and full reliance upon Kṛṣṇa's merciful intervention to succeed. You were fearless! Through your example you gave us glimpses of how Kṛṣṇa's magical potency was determining the outcome of any pure attempt to serve Him, demonstrating to us how Lord Kṛṣṇa was ultimately in control of all endeavors. In this way you helped to increase your student's faith, enthusiasm and determination to serve you.

As my present physical body increases in years, becoming elderly myself, I continue to be amazed at your fortitude and miraculous ability to have served in such a superhuman capacity that you did while traveling the world many times over. Now it is up to each of your devoted students to follow in your footsteps to the best of their ability and to stay true to your teachings and instructions. Please continue to bless our humble attempts.

The world is indebted to you, as am I dear Śrīla Prabhupāda. How fortunate it is to have encountered your divine presence and mercy this lifetime. I can only humbly pray that I may someday please you and actually become qualified to serve your lotus feet and continue to somehow serve Lord Caitanya's mission in future lifetimes.

Begging to remain your humble servant, with heartfelt sincerity and loving gratitude,

Your spiritual daughter,

Sarvani Devī Dāsī

Kadamba Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Causeless mercy.

I am so happy that I arrived at your Los Angeles temple when I did in the Spring of 1973. You were staying there for some time. I never meant to stay, but I was visiting my sister who had been your disciple for several years at that point. I mistakenly thought I had somewhere else to be and something else to do with my life. Thank you for letting me stay among your devotees and do some service to your mission. (I am still not sure on what grounds Kṛṣṇa allowed me to stay!)

I never knew much about you. Sometimes, when I hear the memories of your disciples I am amazed at what the devotees did with you. I am so happy that I could be part of your ISKCON, even as a small participant. I think mercy is intrinsically causeless – that is the nature of mercy. The person giving mercy is not obliged to do so, but gives it anyway. That is how you are to us, your disciples, and to the world as a whole. You are the embodiment of causeless mercy.

“According to their karma, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe...Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. By the mercy of both Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service.”

(*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Madhya 19.151)

Everyone is seeking shelter, and you have given us the wonderful shelter, the ultimate shelter of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Causeless mercy.

Thank you, from your unqualified but grateful disciple,

Kadamba Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this glorious day of your appearance, I repeatedly offer you my respectful *danḍavat* obeisances with deep gratitude, emotion and all humility in my command.

In this world, according to the scriptures, you are the most confidential servant of the Lord and the external manifestation of the Paramātmā.

You are His transparent via medium through whom the Lord has chosen to reveal Himself to me. He surely sent the right person!

You taught me that as I am an infinitesimal part and parcel of the Lord, my position is to be always subordinate to Him. Unfortunately, during my conditional life, out of my choice for independence which led me to be put under illusion, I had placed myself in the center, subordinate to none and determined to be the ultimate *puruṣa*, or enjoyer and controller of everything and everyone. But thanks to your entrance in my life, dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, I was convinced to “vacate” this throne in my heart, unrightfully occupied by my false ego, and make the space for the Lord and His devotees to reside there for ever.

After millions of lifetimes covered by *māyā* it is not easy to give up attachment to egocentric independence and apply complete surrender to the will of somebody else, unless you have high esteem, trust and love for that person. And in the material existence is almost impossible to find somebody who will provoke these precious feelings in you without disappointing your expectations after some time. But you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, with your teachings, books and behavior, gave the highest blessing I could ever have in millions of lifetimes. You gained this complete trust which you never betrayed!

Your effulgence and saintliness made it obvious, even to a puffed up fool like me, you were the one sent to deliver me!

Your experienced guidance led me to give up my doubts and defenses and enabled me to submit to you completely.

As I found afterwards, it was not only spiritually healthy for me to do so but, it was the unique way to live in harmony with the Lord’s will and be happy. Only because of you I was able to unlock my energy, talents and potential and feel thus useful by being allowed to use them in the service of someone I finally found worthy and lovable.

The nature or *dharma* of the soul is to eternally engage his complete energy for the pleasure of the Lord, out of pure love, thus experimenting a full and always increasing satisfaction. The Lord is exercising an irresistible attraction to all living entities and keeps them so much bonded in love with Him that they all spontaneously engage whole-heartedly in activity for His pleasure. And when they see that their endeavor is able to produce even the smallest pleasure to Him, they become infinitely happy. But this is only thanks to the Lord, Who is able to provide the inspiration, and provoke that necessary attraction and love to the living entities, to make them want to give themselves to Him, to be enjoyed by Him, to be possessed by Him to forget themselves for Him and so on.

When the living entity falls in the material world, he tries to exercise again this nature of service and love but can't find anyone capable of providing the same attraction and inspiration as the Lord was doing. He tries to place his love and service to a member of the opposite gender, to his children, relatives, friends, citizens of his country, members of a certain political party or ideology but each and every time gets disappointed by the egoistic nature of the others and his own exaggerated expectations, because nobody of course can substitute the great, all-attractive Personality of Godhead. Often the result of such repeatedly failed attempts in finding fulfillment in loving and serving is that one gives up trying and retires in themselves hoping to be happy by serving just themselves and their bodily demands. But this is not possible and they become perpetually frustrated and depressed.

That's the value of you Śrīla Prabhupāda, because your pure and sacred personality and mission enabled us to find the worthy person and cause for our love and service to finally be liberated and expressed in its fullness, thus giving real meaning and value to our lives. Our zeros were able to become tens, hundreds, and thousands by placing the ace of Kṛṣṇa in the front!

You inspired us to accomplish unbelievable feats because you instilled that faith in our hearts. The same faith you had in the words of your spiritual master, in the holy name, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and in Lord Caitanya!

We happily placed you in the center of our existence, molding our lives around your instructions and desires and you didn't let us down!

Daily, we still experiment the benefit from applying these instructions. We didn't find any trace of personal interest in these

instructions, separate from that of the Lord, and our faith to them therefore has always only increased.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for this greatest benefit you brought into our lives. Your effulgent personality is still present in my heart and that of thousands of others and provides guidance for exiting this material entanglement and returning to our eternal service to the Lord.

Materialists do not understand our total dedication to the service of one man, the exclusive study of only his books, your absolute position in our lives, but they only cheat themselves by accepting the differentiated relative positions of material existence under the spell of *māyā*.

As far as we are concerned, we are happily situated under your authority and if Lord Kṛṣṇa ever ask us what we are doing in attempting to serve Him, we will say that it was you who brought us to Him.

I am deeply grateful for having received your association. With time, this appreciation and love has only increased, I pray to be allowed to convey to others the same faith to you and your teachings and bring further glory to your good name and that of the Lord.

On this occasion I would like also to express my gratitude to your disciples, without the help of who I probably wouldn't have met you. Especially your first disciples who were able to recognize your greatness and engage in your service.

When I joined your movement in July 1972, in Los Angeles, ISKCON had already been established and there were many nice temples and devotees. In Los Angeles, there was a very nice building with about 70 devotees living as full time *brahmacārīs* and a large community of *gṛhasthas* around it. That made it easy for me to move in, be systematically educated about your greatness and that of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and apply practically your teachings.

But those who met you while you were still wandering alone on the streets of New York, didn't have anyone to explain to them who you really were, neither there was any temple or program established to teach them what it was all about! They relied solely on their own understanding and intelligence, helped internally by the Paramātmā surely to be able to develop appreciation and faith in you to the degree of becoming your full time followers. If it was me in their place, would I be able to recognize you and act thus? I don't know. I think there should be much credit to them as they were not only able

to recognize you and accept untold austerities for helping you start the mission, but also for accepting public scorn and disapproval for their choice. They were seen as radical, extreme, fanatical and often dangerous elements of society and they were rejected by all. Not an easy position to be in. So how can we not be thankful and grateful to those special souls who paved the way for millions by being the first to follow you and assist you when there was no ISKCON with all its facilities existing today!

All glories to Your Divine Grace, eternally.

Your insignificant aspiring servant,

Citraka Dāsa

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

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

I offer my humble obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, my ever well-wisher and eternal guide.

Just as the Lord [in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.6.22] appeared before Nārada, explaining that His appearance was “just to increase your desire for Me, because the more you hanker for Me, the more you will be freed from all material desires,” similarly, you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, appeared before us to free us from material desires and to create our good fortune.

Your life absorbed in the ecstasy of *kṛṣṇa-kathā* and *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana* was contagious. From you *prema-bhakti* emanated; by you ignorance was destroyed. We were sublimely attracted . . . wanted what you had. “But happiness just by hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa? Yes!” You said that Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all pleasure.

“What a relief! I can drop all these elaborate plans I’ve had because they’ll never satisfy me.” In a moment you created within us faith in loving service to the beautiful form of Kṛṣṇa, though previously we had no concept at all of the Personality of God. You had planted the seed!

You were lovingly and urgently giving Kṛṣṇa consciousness to whoever came to you with great personal care. You were teaching by words and example, as Lord Caitanya did, *vairāgya* (renunciation), *vidyā* (knowledge) and *bhakti-yoga*. There were some rules and restrictions, though . . . avoid these things, rise early, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa . . . at least sixteen rounds.

“Oh, this is serious! I have to commit myself. Okay, whatever Prabhupāda says.” Surrender came naturally and spontaneously. “And this is an international society, like a big family, with many blissful brothers and sisters. Yes, how sweet! Śrīla Prabhupāda is our real father and well-wishing friend.”

But we only saw our well-wisher briefly. The Lord told Nārada [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.6.21], “I regret that during this lifetime you will not be able to see Me anymore. Those who are incomplete in service and who

are not completely free from all material taints can hardly see Me."

Though we can't see you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we can still hear from you and follow your instructions. You gave us the ways and means to gradually become perfect in service and completely free from all material taints. Thus we are confident that we shall see you again.

Although a fool, with great hope I try to follow in your footsteps.

Always desiring your mercy,

Pr̥thuśravā Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Once again, and quite quickly it seems it is time to try and offer you glorification and thanks for all that you have done, and are doing for me. In one sense it is so easy to glorify you because any and all verses of the scriptures describing the position and qualities of the spiritual master are describing you perfectly.

In the *Vāyu Purāṇa* an *ācārya* is described as one who knows the import of all the Vedic literatures, abides by their rules and teaches his disciples to act in the same way. As your name Bhaktivedanta implies, you know all the Vedic literatures and their purpose and essence as well.

You were empowered by your spiritual master, His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Gaur Nitāi, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa to spread their teachings throughout the world. You made the most sublime and esoteric Absolute Truth of *acintya bhedābheda tattva* easily understandable to uncivilized two-legged animals known as hippies. Your books were received and appreciated by university professors and the intelligent class of men as well. Living your life as an open book, you showed how you applied Kṛṣṇa consciousness with love and compassion as your overwhelming motivation in everything you did.

To have been fully empowered to a degree unseen before in this world, we have heard how you chanted, prayed and begged for the blessings of Śrī Advaita Ācārya and Śrī Śrī Gaur Nitāi in Santipur Dhāma. Similarly, you spent years in the Rādhā Dāmodara temple chanting praying, crying, and begging for Rūpa Goswami's blessings as you wrote your Bhaktivedanta purports to the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, preparing to undertake an impossible mission given to you by your spiritual master. Because you served the holy names of the *mahā-mantra* with complete faith and *dainya* - utter humility, your accomplishments will be remembered and glorified for the rest of the Golden Age of Lord Caitanya in this Kali-yuga, despite your feeling completely unqualified to succeed in executing the impossible task of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the West.

As *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.17.27 quotes Lord Kṛṣṇa:

“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.”

Only a direct manifestation of the Lord and a genuine representative of Lord Nityananada could have spread the teachings of Lord Caitanya and Lord Kṛṣṇa to practically the entire world. You planted fertile and potent seeds of love of Godhead in the hearts of so many people; many of whom you are using as your instruments to continue spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness exponentially to every continent, to every country and before all is said and done, to every town and village of this world.

Not only are you a representative of all the demigods, but they all desired to glorify, serve and get your association and the dust from your lotus feet. You told us demigods were lining up to take birth in this movement of Lord Caitanya’s in the mighty branch of His tree known as ISKCON.

I find it hard to understand how anyone who has received your blessings and the blessings of your followers through association of, and service to, this Movement can leave or become fixated on the shortcomings and faults of your followers, who sometimes fall short of properly representing you and your message of love of Godhead. As for myself, I know that this Movement and your followers are the means through which you continue to shelter, guide, and give your all compassionate mercy to this insignificant and lowly disciple. I have so many faults and bad qualities despite which you continue to love me and care for me by helping me become reinstated in my eternal identity as a servant of the servant of the servants of the Lord. You do this throughout the experiences of my life, through my purified consciousness, and through many of your selfless and kind servants.

In this connection I can’t help but remember Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s meditation on the blessings he sought from Lord Nṛsimhadeva here in Māyāpur dhāma. He prayed, “when will I hear the Lord mercifully say to me.”

“Dear child, stay here happily in Gaura dhāma. Worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and develop attraction for the holy name. By the mercy of My devotees, all obstacles are transcended. With a purified heart just worship

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the abodes of sweet nectar.”

I feel the same instructions and blessings from you blossoming in my heart and my gratitude is ever expanding. My focused desire is simply to give you my life and all it includes, my words, thoughts, and deeds, as a miserably insufficient token of gratitude for giving me the opportunity to serve in Lord Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* movement, even if only as a tiny peon. I daily pray to remain fixed in this consciousness and not to have it degenerate into the temporary sentiment of an elephant taking bath.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your mercy is all I have of value and I simply want to grow in a way pleasing to you, hoping you’ll be pleased to give me more.

Falling at your feet and in the shelter of your instructions and followers,

Rajendrānandana Dāsa

Madhusevita Dāsa

My most dear Father and Master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Time is taking its toll on me proportionately to my lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

How many more years I will be able to celebrate your Vyāsa-pūjā with a lucid mind is not for me to know, but I pray to Lord Nityānanda to keep infusing my heart with some inspiration for the purpose of glorifying you, who are the very meaning of my life and the lifeblood of my every attempt to become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

I know you are present.

I know you are observing every aspect of your ISKCON.

Are you satisfied with our service?

Have we been able to imbibe and foster your impeccable strategy for establishing Kṛṣṇa consciousness amidst the changing times and circumstances of the material world?

Please don't give up on us.

I, for one, still feel like a child badly in need of his father's protection.

Never mind what the outward appearance may be: projects, disciples, achievements . . . In my heart the dire need of your sustenance is ever increasing, and so is the fear of losing your mercy.

Kindly forgive these rambling, incoherent words of mine that can't glorify you properly, but the only certainty I have in life is that for a castaway like me you are the only shore.

Whatever it may take, allow me to rejoin you at the end of life.

Your persistent servant,

Madhusevita Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my humble obeisances!

Every day I do my humble service
To your *mūrti* dressed in golden silk
It's your own complexion golden smooth
In the morning I am not the first to enter
But when I come I remove your shawl
So you can touch the flames of Panca Tattva's
ghee lamp first
The Temple Room belongs to Them and you
And we are just the servants
Singing, dancing, hearing S.B.
Cleaning away the dust from the floor and our heart
The few golden years before the soul depart

So many years have passed
And many of your servant disciples have also passed away
To continue to serve you in another body
In another universe or on this planet
Only Kṛṣṇa knows, please pray for us
That we may not fall down from
The Vedic path please help us pray
To find the way out of illusion – painful, ignorant confusion

My memories of you are few, but golden jewels
That help me find my way through darkness
It is so painful to lose contact with oneself
The soul or consciousness my inner self and nothing less
Please let me hear your voice, which leaves me
With no other choice but to surrender
We are not the body, the soul has no gender

To hear your lectures is the right medicine
Every morning when I do my service I hear your voice
Which gives me strength – philosophy, the truth
Without your inspiration, mercy, kindness
I cannot live a moment more, my soul my inner core
Will drown in the water of forgetfulness more and more
Let me rather drown in Lord Caitanya's preaching mercy
Singing, dancing, serving, presenting
saṅkīrtana for everyone
These few years before we all are gone

Gone but where? To the Lord's abode for those
Who are pure and free from all material desires
And those who are not pure may come back
But are not left alone as long as your instructions
Are their ideals held above their heads, or carried
in their hearts?
Planted in their hearts, so please, O master
Protect us from illusion, give us a new life to be
spiritually free
So that we can reach the spiritual
perfection just a little faster

I may be sentimental, I may be a fool
But to be a fool before the guru is an ornament
To wear that purifies from pride simply serving
Simply chanting, rejecting lust and anger, greed
For worldly aggrandizement there is no need
But for the suffering the heart should bleed
I feel quite happy living in the temple
But I am afraid to die followed by the question why?
We have to die?
I am trying to surrender so please accept me as I am
After meeting you and your devotees
My life changed...nothing was the same like before

Better late than never; you are the only one
Who can fan the spiritual spark
I am a graduate from the school of hard knocks
My brothers who have greater love and dedication
For your lotus feet
Are giving me shelter
Now when old age is pinching
The need to surrender becomes almost acute
I have to look in His direction
To find and see Who is really transcendently cute
I open my mouth to chant
For so many long and lonely years
I was silent mute, a sensual brute

All glories to Your Divine Grace
My only access to Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet
I fall before you
Please let my face bathe in the dust of your lotus feet
You are the only one I really need to serve and meet

Your humble servant,

Ariṣṭahā Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my repeated obeisances. All glories to you! All glories to you!

I had the good fortune to be in the Atlanta temple when you visited in late February 1975. I will never forget the first time I came into your presence and heard you speak. You glided into the temple room like a transcendental autocrat, glowing like a demigod, amid a roaring *kīrtana* from several hundred devotees and offered your prostrated obeisances to Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi, at that time the largest brass Gaura Nitāi Deities in the movement. After offering prayers and bathing in the *darśana* of the merciful Lords for several minutes and indicating your pleasure in seeing the beautifully decorated Deities and altar, you then came over to the other side of the temple room. With all humility you climbed onto the *vyāsāsana* and again relished Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda's sweet *darśana*. They saw you, and you saw Them in a reciprocal loving exchange. The crowd went quiet, and all the assembled devotees fixed their gaze and attention on your divine form.

Then you spoke to the gathering of mostly young devotees. These were the very first words I directly heard from your lotus mouth. You said, "So, I am very glad to see you and I am coming, first of all Mexico City? (yes says one devotee) So Mexico City, then Caracas, then Miami, but I see your temple is the best. (*Haribol!* Jai Prabhupāda! the devotees cried). So, Caitanya Mahāprabhu is very kind, *Parama karuṇa pahū dvi jana*, the two Lords, Nitāi Gauracandra. Nityānanda prabhu and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, They are very kind. 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 you first of all surrender. Caitanya Mahāprabhu does not demand surrender (then with your voice choking in transcendental ecstatic emotion and tears flowing from your eyes you continue). He is so kind. So, take shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and be happy. Thank you very much," you say as you cut your arrival address short trembling in great ecstasy. Being mesmerized by the magic of the moment, again the devotees roar *Jai Prabhupāda! Haribol!* Reclaiming your composure, you climb down from the *vyāsāsana* as the devotees erupt into another spontaneous *kīrtana* and you glide out of the temple room.

In retrospect, these first few emotion filled words I heard from you set an ideal of behavior and introspection for the rest of my life. You spoke while having *darśana* of the two merciful Lords, Caitanya and Nityānanda. These Deities inspired you to speak from the inner core of your heart seeing your American disciples worshiping the two Lords in the newly acquired Atlanta Temple. You knew the potency of the the philosophy given by Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi, the sublime message of chanting and dancing and feasting that would deliver the fallen souls of Kali-yuga. This simple message of loving Deity worship combined with hearing and chanting in the association of the devotees of the Lord is enough to free anyone, even this fallen and insignificant soul, from the clutches of the illusory energy.

Today I approach you as a beggar. Those same two Lords have entered my life, this time not as Gaura Nitāi but as Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma Govardhana śilās. I beg that I too can experience Their *darśana* as you did and realize the profound depths of mercy and compassion that you felt on that day when I first saw you. Despite the various imperfections of your ISKCON society and the need for establishing correct *siddhānta* and essential reforms, I beg that I can somehow or other hold onto your two lotus feet and obtain the shelter of those two merciful Lords.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a very broad and deep ocean. Most of the time I barely put my toes into that ocean of divine Love of God. Despite my many shortcomings I desire to swim deep and surf the waves of loving nectar as you showed me and all the other devotees that special day in Atlanta. I beg that those memories of you overcome by ecstatic emotions remain fixed in my consciousness and inspire me to swim deeper and deeper into that limitless ocean of pure *premā bhakti*.

Your fallen and insignificant servant,

Rāmanātha Sukha Dāsa

Indriya Damana Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Sent by the Lord, you came down to this hellish material world in order to save the conditioned souls and, in your causeless mercy, you accepted this insignificant soul as your aspiring disciple.

The extent of your glory is unfathomable because you are the divine ocean of mercy personified. It is impossible for me to pay the debt I owe you but, may I, by your mercy, give you satisfaction and thus, make my life successful.

Your servant,

Indriya Damana Dāsa

Dearest Guru Mahārāja,

While chanting *japa* in the deepest morning night, a strange thought came upon me. Some may call it a realization, others, perhaps, a revelation of some sort. But I did stop chanting for a while... Aye, indeed there was a definite, precise feeling of pain... chanting the *mahā-mantra* made me feel separation. And it burned a bit, enough to make me wonder...

Now, I do have a small framed replica of a poster of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa I cherished when I was 17 years old in Montreal, and also the blue Macmillan *Bhagavad-gītā* I always glance upon while chanting when night retreats. These two visuals hooked me up as a teenager and hopefully always will. So I was feeling this separation, *japa* beads rolling at the tip of my fingers, and then it hit me...

"My dear friend, (speaking to myself) the golden framed picture of this young divine couple, and this black figure of Lord Viṣṇu on the *Bhagavad-gītā* is not the cause of the feeling of separation you are sensing right now." So I closed my eyes. First came the typical 'temple smell' of strawberry incense mixed with Kṛṣṇa's kitchen cooking...and then, there you were, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Separation from *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* has no meaning to me without Your Divine Grace.

So, okay, I shall go on chanting the holy name of this dark blue Boy God with His uniquely sweet cowherd Girlfriend, bedecked with Syamantaka jewel, fresh flower garland and all. Add to this the ever swirling Gaura Hari and my most merciful Nitāi, my eternal Lord and full moon of my heart, arms raised in ecstatic love. Oh Kṛṣṇa, who can understand these mysteries? But still, all of this bliss sums up and finally takes shape in the form of your lotus feet, gently lying there, eye-level when I am sitting by your *vyāsāsana*, just a few inches away. There they are, golden toes, merciful, throbbing, effulgent. I do not have to look further up; I know your eyes are ever glancing all the way up to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *samādhi* at Rādhā Dāmodara Temple. I feel lonesome. I miss you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. *Tu me manques tellement...*

This whole thing about *vipralambha*, all these higher realizations, only have sense if you are in the center of the picture frame, Gurudeva.

Lord Caitanya? My sweet Nitāi? Radhe! Radhe? Oh yes... all of this is indeed very transcendently picturesque, but when I open my eyes in the black morning's night, all I have left in my hands is

my wee bead bag and in mind your sandalwood scented lotus feet.
“Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa”, I hear myself chanting, but you are the
jewel of separation, Śrīla Prabhupāda. *C’est tout ce que je mérite, et
c’est dījīn beaucoup...*

Your unworthy disciple,

Avyaya Dāsa

France

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your holy lotus feet. All glories to your staunch and extraordinary service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead!

Our old age is ordinary. Your old age is revolutionary. As per your astrologer's prediction at the time of your appearance in this world in the year 1896, you created a global spiritual revolution at the ripe old age of 70 by spreading the glories of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu all over the world. You have (re-) introduced us to the Kṛṣṇa culture. I am writing "(re-) introduced" because in our previous lives we may well have been in touch with Kṛṣṇa culture, as you explain in your letter dated May 5th 1967 to the late Kīrtanānanda Prabhu:

"I think some of you like yourself, Satsvarūpa, Brahmānanda and Mukuṇḍa and Gargamuni, Acyutānanda and all of you had already cultivated this Kṛṣṇa consciousness in your past lives, now Lord Caitanya wants that this movement should be spread in the western countries, so most probably in your previous births you were all Indians and cultivated this Krishna Consciousness. Now Lord Caitanya has placed you in the Western part of the world so that you can now combine together and broadcast the holy message all over the world."

In *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* 10.36, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: "I am also the gambling of cheats and of the splendid I am the splendor. I am victory, **I am adventure** and I am the strength of the strong." And transcendental adventures we have truly experienced under your guidance, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I was present at Schloss Rettershof, Frankfurt, Germany, that winter weekend morning of 1974, when German police came in force during morning *prasāda* to thoroughly check us out with their dogs and submachine guns. During the whole week we regularly went on travelling *saṅkīrtana* to distribute your books and sometimes your records as well, such as your *Kṛṣṇa Meditation* album, for which you expressed much appreciation:

"My Dear Hansadutta Dāsa,

Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter dated October 11, 1974 and also the new German books *KṚṢṂA*, *TLC*, and *LIFE FROM LIFE*, and also the

record “*Kṛṣṇa Meditation.*” I thank you very much. It is all very nice. May Kṛṣṇa bless you with more and more publishing work. I am always thinking of your Frankfurt Schloss center. The songs which I have recorded there I have heard today on the record, and they are very nice, especially the “*Prayers to the Six Goswamis.*” It has come out very successful on the whole. I hope the German people will like the Bengali tunes. What is the report of how they are selling?” (Letter dated 12th November 1974)

During the weekend we congregated for *sādhu saṅga*, ecstatic *kīrtanas* led by Hansadutta Prabhu and of course for new stock of books and records. The police came because some of the distributor’s techniques were just a little too invasive on our unwitting participants.

In August 1976 again we met you at the French Castle New Māyāpur, Luçay-le-Mâle and went on to India overland. The purpose was to import four buses for Indian *saṅkīrtana*: two big and two smaller ones. I recently happened to mention this trip to my daughter. “Big trip,” she commented. In your honor, her mother called her Abhaya Caran.

In 1977, I was present at the original Māyāpur, when the Mohammedan villagers attacked Māyāpur Candradoya Mandir. Many devotees were seriously injured. I remember seeing at least one devotee with a bloodied head. My tongue and ultimately Kṛṣṇa saved me from the main thrust of the attack, as I was attached to tasting a form of candied pineapple available in the Navadvīpa sweet shops. On the way back to the temple, a rickshaw man still tried to grace me with a couple of blows, but a devotee from a Gauḍīya Maṭha on Bhaktisiddhānta Road saved me. He was unable to speak but motioned for me to come and take shelter at their temple, lest I would be in big trouble. A few days later the tricky Krishnanagar police invited the devotees to the police station to make their deposition and arrested them simultaneously. Again Kṛṣṇa saved me and rightly inspired me to decline the invitation.

You were absent from Māyāpur. But they would have liked to apprehend you. Prabhupāda: “...they would have done. The first news was that ‘The founder was not there.’ Otherwise the police would have charged me, that ‘He has given order.’”

(Room Conversation, 15th July 1977, Vṛndāvana)

My main contribution to your transcendental mission would

have to be book distribution. “Therefore this rumor that within a few years there will be police repression and people will have no more money to buy books and *sañkīrtana* will stop is completely bogus. Whoever told you that is a rascal, saying it in my name. I never said that. Rather *sañkīrtana* movement will expand, continuing so long as we are sincere. When I came in the beginning I began to expand it and it is now going on and there is no question of it stopping. **Therefore go on with your lifetime plans making secure in distributing of books.** There is no cessation. This movement is eternal.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda letter dated May 8th, 1974 to Govinda Dāsa)

As per your wishes, the vast majority of books were sold indeed. I remember however, one year in the mid-eighties, giving out sometimes 1800 small Prabhupāda books in Perth Mall, Western Australia in a day. In these times there was plenty of Laksmi from the December marathons. Consequently there was a huge accumulated stock of books that needed to find readers. Most willing recipients would get three, four or five books at a time.

Since my arrival on the east coast Australia in 1997, I have been travelling wholly or partially every year between Merimbula, New South Wales, and Port Douglas, Queensland for the purpose of book distribution. The distance between these two cities is 3200 km.

I have also circled Australia (Brisbane, Perth, Darwin, Brisbane) a number of times for book distribution – all surface travel except for an occasional Brisbane to Perth flight. I even managed to include a book distribution trip to Tasmania once. To live in a *sañkīrtana* van for up to eight months a year represents significant *tapasya* or austerity. On the assumption that ISKCON temples will look after their congregation, my general policy was to possibly go to all those town and villages, which lacked an ISKCON temple so that they may also get some drops of your divine and redemptory mercy in the form of the words and sentences contained in your books.

Altogether I do not know exactly how many Prabhupāda books I would have distributed. Is 100,000 perhaps a conservative figure? How about 200,000?

I have also distributed many thousands of BBT cookbooks. In your letter dated June 15th, 1969 to Krishna Devī Dāsī you write: “Actually, the practice of meat-eating is very detrimental to spiritual life, because in spiritual life the goal is to become free from all sinful reactions, and meat-eating means simply to force oneself to suffer the sinful reactions of killing our fellow living entities. So as

many people will be taking to practicing spiritual life through the influence of our *saṅkīrtana* movement. **Such cookbooks will be very important** and you should work for this as you are able.”

Book distribution certainly requires a lot of physical stamina, which fades away with old age.

Without intending to sound presumptuous, I may say that I have one thing in common with Śrīla Vyāsadeva as described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto One, Chapter Five: On the whole I am sad. Perhaps it is due to my shortcomings. Sometimes I think that subject to your pleasure it would be best for me to leave these particular sets of material circumstances quickly and painlessly and join you with invigorated strength. In *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.13, purport, you write about the relationship of Arjuna and grandfather Bhīṣma:

“This individual soul finally changes the body at death and transmigrates to another body; and since it is sure to have another body in the next birth—either material or spiritual—**there was no cause for lamentation by Arjuna on account of death, neither for Bhīṣma nor for Droṇa, for whom he was so much concerned. Rather, he should rejoice for their changing bodies from old to new ones, thereby rejuvenating their energy.** Such changes of body account for varieties of enjoyment or suffering according to one’s work in life. So Bhīṣma and Droṇa, being noble souls, were surely going to have spiritual bodies in the next life, or at least life in heavenly bodies for superior enjoyment of material existence. So, in either case, there was no cause of lamentation.”

Moreover you have kindly informed us that in *Mukunḍa Mala stotra* 33, King Kulashekhara prays:

*kṛṣṇa tvadīya-pada-paṅkaja-pañjarāntam
adyaiiva me viśatu mānasa-rāja-haṁsah
prāṇa-prayāṇa-samaye kapha-vāta-pittaiḥ
kaṅṭhāvarodhana-vidhau smaraṇam kutas te*

“My Lord Kṛṣṇa, I pray that the swan of my mind may immediately sink down to the stems of the lotus feet of Your Lordship and be locked in their network; otherwise at the time of my final breath, when my throat is choked up with cough, how will it be possible to think of You?”

There is a third instance where you confirm the fact that servant of Kṛṣṇa is totally detached from the material tabernacle: In a lecture on 18th November 1968, Los Angeles. There you explain nicely that

he who has devoted his life's time and energy to the service of the Lord is truly *sādhū*. The *sādhū* received the following benediction: *Jīva vā mara vā sādhoḥ*, "My dear saintly person, either you live or you die, as you like."

In conclusion I would like to quote *Isopanisad* mantra 17, which is addressed to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in its original context but which can also be addressed partially to His empowered representative, Śrīla Prabhupāda:

"Let this temporary body be burnt to ashes, and let the air of life be merged with the totality of air. Now, (or in the not so distant future-my personal addition), O my Lord, please remember all my sacrifices, and because You are the ultimate beneficiary, please remember all that I have done for You."

I thank you very much Śrīla Prabhupāda, as well as all Mahārājas and Prabhus involved in the practical side of this undertaking, for this enlivening opportunity to write a few words on the occasion of your 2019 birthday celebration, also called Vyāsa-pūjā ceremony because "The spiritual master is the representative of Vyāsadeva also." *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* 18.75, second last sentence of the purport.

*I beg to remain,
Your humble and grateful servant,*

Yadavendra Dāsa

Tattvavit Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

In December, 1936, you were forty years old when your spiritual master's response to your letter came—written two weeks before he passed on:

“I am fully confident that you can explain in English our thoughts and arguments to the people. . . . and convey the novel impression of Lord Caitanya's teachings to the general public.”

Thirty years later, in America, you began the Hare Krishna movement as this service to your guru and saw him reciprocate:

“If there is any credit, it goes to my spiritual master, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Goswami Prabhupāda, who is helping me by sending so many good souls to this movement. My business is just to carry out his order. That is the way of the disciplic succession.”

On this hundred and twenty-third anniversary of your appearance in the world, I thank you for the many blessings of the disciplic succession.

You can give us blessings, because we are your spiritual children and you have taken responsibility for engaging us in the service of Krishna. You gave us “all instructions” how to become immortal. We can follow them and be responsible devotees.

Your servant,

Tattvavit Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet which are the shelter of all those aspiring to find relief from the pangs of material existence, by engaging in the service of the Lord, under your expert guidance and loving care.

Thank you for accepting me as a disciple and a daughter in your ISKCON family, for your trust and for your unconditional love. This year is the 45th anniversary of your formal acceptance of me through Harināma initiation. At that time, I was almost totally clueless but, by Kṛṣṇa's grace, I understood the most important thing – that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, know everything and therefore, you are worthy of taking shelter of. Thus began a journey of self discovery like no other.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have never ceased to amaze me. I am still striving to fathom your greatness and realize your genius. I pray for ever-increasing understanding. You are the embodiment of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa – selfless and pure. You struggled against all odds in order to establish the seed of the creeper of devotion in the Western world. Daily, we are seeing how it has taken hold, has grown and has continued to spread to every town and village, all over the world. In your books, you have written that severe austerities are not possible in these modern times of Kali-yuga. Nonetheless, in order to accomplish your mission, you willingly accepted so much extreme difficulty and *tapasya* at a very advanced age. You did this all for the pleasure of your beloved spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. The execution of his divine instruction is an extraordinary feat that stands as a testament to the strength of your devotion. You have bestowed upon the world the king of education and revealed the most secret of all secrets.

Any offering that I could possibly make to you, on the most auspicious day of your appearance, would be like the offering of a little Ganges water to Mother Gaṅgā. You have created whatever qualifications I may have. Your mercy is all I am made of. I can only offer you my life, (which already belongs to you) and a fervent prayer that you please, continue to engage me in your service birth after birth.

In sincere gratitude, I remain, your aspiring servant,

Rāsālilādevi Dāsī

Jagad Guru, Śrīla Prabhupāda, *kī jaya!*

My glorious master, on this wonderful day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, I humbly submit this offering to you.

Coming from such an unworthy disciple, it will have no merit except one – that it is a sincere attempt to glorify you, who is most dear to Rādhā Kṛṣṇa, Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda and our *paramparā* of luminaries in the vast sky of devotion.

*titikṣavaḥ kārūṇikāḥ
suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām
ajāta-satravaḥ śāntāḥ
sādhavaḥ sādhu-bhūṣaṇāḥ*

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

This verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.25.21 is one that you have quoted often and is a special verse to me. It reminds me of how frustratingly far I have to go to be decorated with any of those deep qualities. But the verse more importantly enables me to meditate on your character most sublime, because you are embellished with all of these virtues in full, like the Gaura Pūrṇimā moon in Māyāpur.

In the purport to this verse, you state:

A *sādhu* is a devotee of the Lord. His concern, therefore, is to enlighten people in devotional service to the Lord. That is his mercy. He knows that without devotional service to the Lord, human life is spoiled.

A devotee travels all over the country, preaching.

Tirelessly, and with the courage of a saintly king of yore, your mercy to spread the word of devotional service leaves us in awe. At 70 years of age, you braved the wild ocean, weeks of seasickness and heart attacks that took you to the brink of death. All these travails you heroically endured for us and in order to fulfill your spiritual master’s instructions.

In such a short time, you revolutionized the world – a spiritual revolution that is coming to fruition in all its power with every increasing year. Temples abound on every continent, your TOVP is being built – a great, living monument testament to the fulfillment

of your desire and that of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, our great predecessor *ācārya*.

Fifty years later, *kīrtana* has spread around the globe like wildfire, vegetarianism has become mainstream, and an increasing desire by the general population to protect the cow in the burgeoning popularity of veganism bears witness to the work and sacrifice you did, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Attributing these achievements to you is not based on sentiment, but real, tangible facts. How could this have happened without you bearing the flag of Vaishnavism?

You are the most tolerant of spiritual masters. You forgave wrongdoings so many times, telling your disciples that if they can't live with a transgressor and can't forgive, then "Send him to me; he can live with me".

So forbearing and merciful, you tolerated our ignorance and lack of refined qualities. In the early days, you did all the cooking, serving *prasāda* to us tousle-haired hippy youth who found their way to your door. You would even line up in the queue to use the bathroom with your students. So dull in the head, no one thought to allow you to go first – at the very least.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you never put yourself first. You always took the humble position. But when confronted with impersonalists and *māyāvādīs*, your roar was lion-like, defeating the nihilists arguing: "There is no God. Or 'I am God'."

Friendly to all living entities and no one an enemy meant that everyone was drawn to you. Your glance was penetrating, looking deep into the very heart of those you encountered, seeing who they really were – wayward servants of Kṛṣṇa. How you exhibited this friendliness constantly. My mother and eldest brother met you in 1973 at the installation of Rādhā Vallabha in Melbourne, Australia. How friendly you were, that you shook my mother's outstretched hand as she stood waiting in the corridor.

Once a disciple said to you, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, everyone loves you."

You replied: "That is because I love everybody!"

You wept to see the materialists struggling with the peak hour rushing to work in Melbourne. "How can they be saved?" you said, with tears of compassion streaming down your lotus face.

Being in your presence was like being sheltered in a transcendental bubble. Time stood still, and your peacefulness made our restless

hearts becalmed. Living in Māyāpur in those days meant that I saw you frequently. In 1976, you even spent two months in Māyāpur *dhāma*, which meant long *darśanas* in your quarters every day. Sometimes you would talk; other times you would be chanting *japa*. It put us on a different plane of existence: we were in the company of a personality who was one of a kind, who was in direct communion with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

During one such *darśana*, a disciple asked you if the pure devotee sees Kṛṣṇa everywhere. You held out your right palm, cupping it as if you were holding water. You said: “In a drop of water, the pure devotee sees the Lord, His associates and the spiritual world.”

As you once said, “If we knew who you were, we would faint.”

Listening to your lectures now, reading your purports, I shake my head in wonderment at our great, good fortune. How kind Kṛṣṇa is, sending you to us, wallowing in our misery and sin.

All your characteristics are sublime, beyond the touch of the material world, like a lotus flower floating on the muddy water. How you speak, your erudition, your friendliness, your tolerance and mercy, your total trust in Kṛṣṇa, always calm, even when you had to be angry with us, setting the perfect example of what the perfect devotee is and how he acts.

I’m a fool, Śrīla Prabhupāda, but keep me close, I beg you. I’m not deserving of your kindness, but be kind to me anyway. Keep me serving. Keep me in ISKCON, at your lotus feet, then bring me back to you.

Your servant and disciple,

Krishnarupa Devī Dāsī
New Govardhana, Australia

Haripāda Dāsa and Phalini Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

We have just returned from a 28-day tour of *harināma saṅkīrtana* and preaching the glorious teachings of Your Divine Grace from South India to Mumbai. We beg you to accept our small service and we thank you for engaging us. Please bless us to continue trying to serve your mission with our full energy until our very last breath.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are Lord Caitanya's *senapati bhakta* and you are the effulgent moon among Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's disciples. Your service to the Lord's *saṅkīrtana* mission is glorious and immeasurable. Our service is microscopic in comparison. We cannot hold a candle to the sun of your service to your Guru Mahārāja and Lord Caitanya. We are small and vulnerable, and we need your constant protection. Please protect us, Śrīla Prabhupāda, as we ride around India on Kṛṣṇa's trains, and keep us safely and steadily on the razor's edge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Please purify our hearts and empower us, Śrīla Prabhupāda, as we endeavor to preach *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and to chant the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Please use us as your instruments to touch the hearts of all the souls we meet. Make us dance, make us dance, make us dance, Śrīla Prabhupāda, as you like.

Praying to be always safely situated as particles of dust beneath your lotus feet.

Your insignificant son and daughter,

Haripāda Dāsa and Phalini Devī Dāsī

Please accept my humble obeisances.

In 1922 (97 years ago), you first met Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta. In your childhood your father had invited many *sādhus* and *sannyāsīs* to your home, but you were not too impressed by them. So when your friend asked you to meet a *sādhu* from Māyāpur (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta) you were not so keen to go. But your friend insisted, and eventually you agreed to meet him. You spoke with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta and he preached to you (and your friend) for several hours about the importance and urgency of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* Movement. Afterwards, your friend asked you what you thought. You replied:

“He’s wonderful! The message of Lord Caitanya
is in the hands of a very expert person.”

You accepted him as your spiritual master – not officially, but in your heart. You thought that you had met a very nice saintly person.

So this meeting changed the course of your life and eventually, 43 years later at the age of 69, you arrived in the USA. At the request of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta you tried to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the English speaking people in the West. Many heard from you and many accepted you as their spiritual master. When you left us in 1977 you had about 4,500 initiated disciples. This is the power of the *paramparā* system. Now 2019, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness Movement is spreading far and wide all over this Planet – every town and village is the prediction – so we would like to thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for taking the instruction of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta as your life’s mission.

Your unworthy servant,

Jagadvīra Dāsa

Dīna-śāraṇa Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

At your lotus feet
I bow down again and again,
Especially on this, your glorious appearance day!
Their emanating cooling grace
Makes them the ideal place of surrender.
Never wanting to leave them ever again . . .

So I am today at your lotus feet . . .

After Dhruva's many years of severe
austerities and penances
To achieve a kingdom greater than his father's,
The Supreme Personality of Godhead finally appeared . . .
Dhruva Mahārāja was speechless . . .

So I am today at your lotus feet . . .

Only when the Supreme Personality of Godhead
Touched His conchshell to Dhruva Mahārāja's forehead
was he able to glorify Him . . .

So I am today at your lotus feet . . .

The Supreme Personality of Godhead
Granted Dhruva Mahārāja more boons
Than he could ever desire . . .

So I am today at your lotus feet . . .

Though apparently rendering selfless devotional service,
I am in reality
Completely entangled and absorbed
in material activities . . .

So I am today at your lotus feet . . .

By your unlimited mercy
You are rewarding me with much more
Spiritual transcendence than I could ever wish . . .

So I am today at your lotus feet . . .

As Lord Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna
That all persons on the battlefield
Were already dead
And that just by surrendering unto Him
And faithfully performing his *kṣatriya* duties
Arjuna would reap all fame and glory . . .

So I am today at your lotus feet . . .

Similarly Lord Caitanya predicted that
When we surrender unto Him
And faithfully perform our preaching duties
The holy name will be chanted in
Every town and village . . .

So I am today at your lotus feet . . .

For all the incredible mystical deeds you are performing
For the pleasure of your spiritual master
And the welfare of all sentient beings . . .

So I am today at your lotus feet . . .

At your lotus feet
I bow down again and again,
Especially on this, your glorious appearance day!
Their emanating cooling grace
Makes them the ideal place of surrender.
Never wanting to leave them ever again . . .

So I am today at your lotus feet . . .

Wanting to be your insignificant servant,

Dīna Śāraṇa Devī Dāśī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my most humble obeisances at the dust of your divine lotus feet! In the mood of Lord Caitanya, you have so kindly bestowed the seed of devotion to all! I want to hold on to your gift with my heart and soul. This is the most precious and rare benediction anyone could possibly hope for, and you have given all instructions on how to perfect this life and actually attain love for you, the Vaiṣṇavas and our dear Lord Kṛṣṇa! I am exceedingly thankful that the opportunity to have devotee association and to serve you for the duration of this life is about to manifest.

Please bless me that I escape the modes of passion and ignorance and dive into the transcendental goodness that awaits me. I beg forgiveness for any and all offences I may have committed. I pray that Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī frees me from all my sins and inauspicious qualities. I want to be earnest, sincere and caring in my devotional life. I want to somehow or other become more and more deserving of your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda! At every moment may I become grateful for your unlimited kindness and try to serve you to the best of my ability!

Aspiring to become a real disciple.

Your servant,

Lalitā Devī Dāsī

Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Please accept my prostrated *daṇḍavats* at your lotus feet.

Those feet, which can give shelter to all those who take shelter in their cooling shadow and become free from all anxieties.

All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, when I fell on the floor of the VIP lounge in Frankfurt Airport 1974 and looked upwards, getting the first glimpse of Your Divine Grace, tears shot into my eyes. Realizing then, that prior to this very moment I never experienced freedom of fear, I felt liberated from the dictate of time, simply blissful as never before. How many life times I had to wander before meeting you? How many times I experienced birth and death before finally being rescued by you, a savior, who came unexpected, making everybody feeling the same as I did – timeless and secure, saving us all, giving us life in a place filled with death.

Years passed, just flashes in eternity, and I still fail to understand the scope of your mercy and the fortune so causelessly bestowed upon me. Seeing friends mutating into unrecognizable forms, becoming institutionalized icons, petrified in their own way, bereft of the mercy channeling preaching spirit, seeing opportunists trying to benefit materially from what you gave, fools and rascals taking apart what others established. But seeing those who embrace your lotus feet again and again crying out for shelter, I learned to value any opportunity to chant your glories, to value any minute which you, worshiped by your faithful followers, are present in your instructions, your recorded words and your ever-fresh glances and movements.

More as ever your warnings are coming true, and those who don't listen are doomed, disappearing into the non-human forms of life again. Most of people I meet on the street seem to be wasting their life in this valuable human form, their lives already conducted in animalistic fashion.

Even worse, due to their sinful lives, haunted by beings coming from lower planets, they are becoming walking ghosts, ghastly images of anger and pain, ready to inflict misery upon others any time. How empty is life without Kṛṣṇa consciousness! How urgent is the message you delivered! And how rich even the most materially impoverished ones can become, when accepting the shelter of Your Divine Grace!

Those, who still go out and distribute your precious books are the ones who are at the source of your mercy, delivering it to others. They may not be the most academically educated, but their realizations are profound and real, making them into real sages in these dark Kali-yuga days. Such devoted Vaiṣṇavas, delivering your books to the 'steel framed ones', are the real benefactors of the society, counting their own blessings day after day.

They are the ones who still bring the prestige and honor your Movement deserves. Your books speak for themselves, commanding dignity for those who can grasp even a few words while glancing over them. Your books are the only remedy, their very presence creates an atmosphere of sanity and tranquility in the midst of the insanity surrounding us all.

As if idealism was removed even from the young ones, their brains as if sucked out by remote agency, they walk like zombies staring into their digital gizmos, thinking themselves to be active while being turned into passive consumers of what was already chewed by others. Where did the creativity go? Where are those, who were ready to give their lives for your mission without any regret? In 1972, I joined such young men and women. Will they come again?

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, my life is one continuous illustration of your mercy as I still walk freely, without any institutional support, meeting envy the same way you did, seeing spiritual ideals being compromised by materially motivated invaders, even demons, ready to question the basis of what you gave. There is nothing what is happening today that you didn't see and have to overcome. You saw it all and you prevailed, finally doing what nobody ever did before, planting the seed of *bhakti* in the desert-like Western world.

How precious are those who are still ready to become ostracized for the sake of their conscience and for the sake of protecting your words! This is the ISKCON I love, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and those are the devotees I wish to serve. Traveling, I see them here and there surviving, often entirely unrecognized, again and again seeking some ways to serve your lotus feet. Seeing such jewels is for me invigorating, giving me the hope that in this lifetime I may be still of some use for you.

If you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, judge me fit to somehow serve you again in my next lifetime, that would certainly be the perfection of my life.

Is there a chance? Please, please Śrīla Prabhupāda, you

already showed me such unexpected mercy in this lifetime, maybe there is a hope I can be engaged in Your service again. I don't see much more further, my destiny is unclear to me. But wherever you are, there is safety, there is morality, there is victory and strength, and there is bliss as never experienced before.

In your presence, absolute satisfaction can be achieved, as those flooded by your mercy desire nothing more to achieve in their lives.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, it is terrifying to see how so much degradation took place in the last 50 years alone. What was considered 50 years ago to be "controversial" is now established as standard. The degrading influence of Kali can be felt everywhere. Those without any connection to your words are doomed to be degraded fast.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for coming in times of the most urgent need . . . times which never pass. Your words are as urgent today as they were 50 years ago, eternally true and eternally fresh.

*Praying to remain your eternal servant,
Your servant,*

Maṇḍhara Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glory to the shelter of your lotus feet.

I am grateful beyond what words can express for all of the incredible contributions you have made and continue to make to my life and all who take advantage. I still have not realized the magnitude of what you have made available.

I am grateful for the opportunity to engage in devotional service and glorify our Lord in various ways.

I truly want to say that “My only wish is to have my consciousness purified by the words emanating from your lotus mouth”, but instead everyday I say “I’m sorry.” I know better. You have taught all of us the process for attaining the highest and ultimate goal, but I lag behind. Way behind.

I pray to you that I can be better, do better and become a worthy and useful disciple in your mission of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In spite of my disqualification, I find solace in the words you spoke in a room conversation in Indore on December 12th, 1970:

And there is Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura’s *Prārthanā, āśrāya laiṅyā bhaje, kṛṣṇa nāhi tare tyāge*, ‘One who takes *āśrāya*, shelter of a devotee, Kṛṣṇa does not give him up. Kṛṣṇa accepts him’. *Yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādah* . . . Because if that person who is giving shelter, if he’s pleased, Kṛṣṇa is immediately . . . If he recommends a fool, ‘O, Kṛṣṇa, here is a devotee!’ Kṛṣṇa will accept immediately. It doesn’t matter whether he’s a fool or rascal. Because he is recommended by representative, he will be accepted.

You are my only hope.

Your servant,

Kamalini Devī Dāsī

My Divine Lord, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

When I first joined the devotees in Berkeley, California, back in 1970, I was only 16 years old and very much into the hippie movement. Little did I know that joining those devotees would stir my life in a different direction. Unfortunately I didn't stay with those devotees for very long, but I did try to help with the opening of the temple in Mexico City a few months later. However, I also didn't stay there for very long, instead I came to Los Angeles where although I lived about 45 minutes away from the temple, I would come regularly to chant, do service and associate with the devotees. I also had a little altar at home and was chanting my rounds and trying to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to whoever I could.

Then one afternoon when I came to the temple all the way from Whittier, my old friend Umapati Prabhu said to me, "do you know who just arrived?" and I said, "Who?". "Śrīla Prabhupāda!" he replied.

I had been longing to meet you and when he said that to me I almost jumped in joy thinking that I was finally going to meet Your Divine Grace.

Umapati said that I should come early in the morning and attend your class. I will never forget that morning. I had managed to buy some flowers to bring to you, and I presented them to you outside the temple as you came out through the back door. You were so kind and so graceful accepting them from me. And when you put your divine hands together and smiling, said to me "Thank you very much," my heart just melted. From that moment in my life all I ever wanted was to be with you, my divine master.

I did move to the temple and began doing full-time service while attending all the temple programs. Every time you were here, I would go to any extreme to get close to you. It was such a magical experience being in your divine presence. I just could not get enough of it.

Kṛṣṇa knows all of our desires and our needs, and He is most kind and merciful to everyone. In my case, Kṛṣṇa knew how much I longed for your association. Very kindly he allowed me to obtain that close association with Your Divine Grace on so many different occasions, even though I am most unworthy and very fallen.

Kṛṣṇa even allowed me to travel with you by plane back to Mexico City, where you so mercifully gave me first and second initiation on the same day considering that I had been waiting for quite some time already.

Both of my parents had the opportunity to meet you, in Los Angeles and in Mexico. My brothers and my sister met you too, and you were so kind and merciful to them it changed their lives forever. Even my grandmother began to chant after I showed her some footage I had taken of you with my Super 8 millimeter camera. My mother who used to chant her *japa* regularly also taught my grandmother how to chant *japa*. What more could I ask for?

Then, after returning to the New Dwarka Temple in Los Angeles and doing daily book distribution and many other services there for another year, I was sent to Vṛndāvana, India. When I arrived there, I went in front of Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara and prayed to please allow me to become your personal servant.

By then, the Manager of the temple, Mahāvīra Dāsa had decided to go back to Canada, and I was asked to take his place as the Vice President Manager of Śrī Śrī Krishna Balaram Mandir. It was a divine arrangement by Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara, to grant me that desire I had prayed for. Because when you came to Vṛndāvana with your dear personal servant Upendra Prabhu, he engaged me in your personal service on a regular basis.

To this day, I still cannot believe my luck and my good fortune, (of course, you once said that it was you who gave us our good fortune, and it is so true) but I, who was so fallen, so nonsense, so insignificant, so offensive, was given the unique opportunity to associate and render so much personal service to Your Divine Grace.

All I can say is thank you, thank you, thank you Divine Father. You know and you knew back then that I am most unworthy and undeserving, but still, you so kindly and mercifully allowed me to serve you personally at so many different times from the blessed day I met you. I know I can never repay you for all the mercy you have always bestowed upon me.

Well, I'm 65 years old now, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and for the last few years I have been experiencing all the great miseries that come with old age and life in this material world. Some days it all seems so difficult. My only solace is to think of you and your beautiful soft lotus feet which I used to massage in Vṛndāvana.

Now, by the Lord's special mercy on me, I have become more

serious about my responsibilities to you. I am chanting all my rounds every day, rendering regular service to your beautiful *mūrti* form, and the beautiful Deities of Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi.

I am studying your books more carefully, and I am trying to preach about your glories and the glories of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa as much as I can, to whoever I can. But all of this is nothing compared to what I should be doing for you. Please forgive me for being so useless. Please engage me in your service, and in the service of all those faithful devotees who serve your divine Mission.

I miss you so much my Lord, and even though you have never gone from my life and are always with me, still, how I wish I could see your smiling face again, touch and massage your celestial divine body, carry you like I used to, make some food preparation for you, talk to you and hear you talk to me . . . just be in your divine presence again.

I do have faith that if I attach myself tightly to your divine lotus feet, and your divine instructions, Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara may grant me the opportunity to be with you again. And I really don't care where that may be, as long as I am with you.

You are my Eternal Father, my Lord and Master, my Life and Soul.

Please forgive me, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for being so fallen, for having so many bad qualities, for all the offenses that I have committed at your lotus feet, at the feet of all the Vaiṣṇavas and all the living entities of this world.

Please forgive me for all the sins that I have committed and all the nonsense that I have done. Please let me serve you more and more. Let me be like you, let me be with you. I am drowning in an ocean of sorrow because of the separation from Your Divine Grace.

My dear godsister Kusha Devī Dāsī very rightfully said that "We all are nothing but Prabhupāda's *prasāda*," and that is so true.

We love you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we love you so very much. We are nothing without you. Please let us be with you again. Let us take shelter at your beautiful, soft, golden, and wonderful fragrant lotus feet which you so kindly and mercifully allowed me to place on my useless head.

All glories, all glories to you O divine Lord, divine Master, eternal Father, Śrīla Prabhupāda, *kī jaya!*

Signed by the most wretched, unworthy dog,

Jaya Gouranga Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

I had the good fortune to live at your magnificent temple, Hare Krishna Land, Juhu, Bombay, for five years from 1990 to 1995. There are the twin round towers of the original guesthouse, and now a huge, new guesthouse built on the back of the property. The entire top floor of one of the round towers is your living quarters. It comprises a kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, large *darśana* room, two entry rooms and a smaller room with a desk. Also seven balconies that you loved, overlooking the temple and the glorious swaying palm trees of Hare Krishna Land.

Daily, back then, I prepared your breakfast of at least six different fruits, cut up into small *katories*, *panir*, milk and juice, sweets, etc. I also offered a *dabba* full of *sandesh*, left on your translating table so you have it for your midnight translation sessions. These offerings are still going on, daily, for your pleasure.

During those years I helped to manage and write for *Hare Krishna Today*, a magazine published for the Life Members of Bombay, at that time numbering several thousands; now there are over 25,000. In 1994 I interviewed Mr. P. L. Sethi for an article. He was the main person who helped rebuild the temple when the temporary temple at Juhu had been destroyed. This was a dire emergency as Śrī Śrī Rādhā Rāsabihārī had no structure to shelter Them, and a demoniac group tried to stop the devotees from rebuilding. The *gunḍās* were threatening to come back *en masse*, 150 men to create a disturbance if the rebuilding construction began. Mr. Sethi told them, "Let them come. They are one hundred and fifty, but we have two hundred bullets!" He and his second son, Brij Mohan, guarded all night long with a shotgun and a rifle.

Mr. Sethi was in the construction business, so he had access to all the materials they needed, as well as the workers. At 9 p.m. Sunday evening, in the pouring rain, he organized 40 masons and 40 laborers to make walls, plaster, paint and install a cement sheet roof. Even though it was raining they finished by 4 a.m. Monday morning. When Justice Nain, who was handling the case, heard that they had rebuilt, he declared: "What is built is built, and no one can demolish it." This was a victory for which you were very appreciative, Śrīla

Prabhupāda, and you praised Mr. Sethi for his bravery and service.

Mr. Sethi first met the devotees in 1971 when they were staying at the Akash Gaṅgā Building on Bhulabhai Desai Road in Bombay. When he heard that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, were arriving, he was eager to take your *darśana*.

Mr. Sethi: "Guruji asked me what business I was in. I told him the construction business. He wanted to know what I did after awakening in the morning. I explained that after bathing I took tea, breakfast, and left for work. Prabhupāda shocked me with his next words: 'What is the difference between a pig's life and your life? One who doesn't do *pūja* or *japa* or pray to Kṛṣṇa is like an animal.' Then I told Guruji that I didn't have such association with saintly persons to advise me in spiritual life, and he told me that his disciples will come to my home every Sunday to perform *nagar kīrtana*."

For the next year, every Sunday the ISKCON devotees went to Mr. Sethi's house in Goregaon where he joined with his friends, and together they all went to neighboring areas such as Malad, Borivali, and Kandivali, chanting the holy names of the Lord and selling *Back to Godhead* magazine. In this way, every Sunday they walked not less than 10 or 12 kilometers before returning to Mr. Sethi's house for a feast.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, when you purchased the Juhu land, it was Mr. Sethi who hired a vehicle to bring the Deities from Bhulabhai Desai Road to Hare Krishna Land. At that time the devotees underwent severe austerities because the living conditions were difficult: they stayed in huts without bathrooms, the place was rat-infested, there was not enough money for proper food.

Mr. Sethi: "Śrīla Prabhupāda wasn't interested in just acquiring a large number of disciples, but he wanted that they should be surrendered to Lord Kṛṣṇa. I have seen the devotees undergo so many difficulties for this Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but as they went to so much trouble, their devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa increased daily."

From this time on, Mr. and Mrs. Sethi became like a father and mother to the foreign devotees. The Sethis moved to Juhu in 1973 and you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, gave the name 'Vṛndāvana' to the Sethi house.

Just before moving into their Juhu house, Mr. Sethi was ill for three months. The nerves on his neck were badly entangled. An orthopaedic specialist told him that if he made a sudden move, he could die at any moment. Not even able to lift a cup of tea with his hand, he felt completely debilitated.

The physician told him he was in need of an operation, but as they had no qualified doctor for this particular surgery in India, he would have to go to London. He booked the trip to the UK, and then they found out that you had arrived in Bombay. Mr. Sethi's son Brij Mohan brought Mr. and Mrs. Sethi to see you. You gave Mr. Sethi your garland, and you were very concerned to see that he was wearing a neck brace and a lumbar belt. You immediately cancelled your appointment in Walkeshwar and went to their place in Goregaon.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you told Mr. Sethi, "Life and death are not in the hands of doctors. Remove these belts." Mrs. Sethi started crying and Brij Mohan was so scared that he asked: "Swamiji, what are you doing? It is against the medical advice." Even he had tears in his eyes. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you continued: "There is no need of going to London, you need to get a proper massage on your neck." You prescribed the Ayurvedic medicine Yogindra Ras which is a nervine tonic, and you told them that there was only one shop in Bombay that carried this medicine in its pure form, and that was in Kalbadevi. You finally assured Mr. Sethi, "You will be alright; nothing will happen to you."

Mr. Sethi found the right person to massage his neck in Malad; after fifteen days he was fine, without surgery. Later, after one month, he encountered the big orthopaedic surgeon, who was astonished and said to him: "Sethi, you are living? I thought something must have happened to you. And you are driving the car!"

Mr. Sethi told the physician, "What you doctors cannot do, my Guruji did for me." He had full faith in you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Mr. Sethi's father was farming with cows in Northwest India, Himachal Pradesh, in the town of Nalagarh, North of Chandigarh. Mr. Sethi received word that his father had taken ill and was in a coma, breathing with oxygen, so he was planning on traveling there in a bus as soon as possible. When you heard this, you told him: "You may go to visit your father, but he will not be sick, he is okay." Mr. Sethi got on the bus, and as it was about a thousand miles from Bombay to Nalagarh, it took over a day to get there. When the bus arrived, Mr. Sethi's father was there to greet him at the bus station, alive and well! Another astonishing reason for Mr. Sethi to place his complete faith in you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

When Mr. Nair expired, Mrs. Nair brought the deed to present to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. She placed the deed at your lotus feet and

began to cry, saying: "Whatever I have done or whatever mistakes I have committed, please pardon me." The deed was then finalized and everything was done in that regard. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you phoned Mr. Sethi at 11:30 p.m. and requested that he come to the temple. Mr. and Mrs. Sethi went in their night clothes. Even though it was past midnight, with your usual keen foresight, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you announced: "Now that the deed is finalized I would like to start immediately collecting funds for the temple." Mr. and Mrs. Sethi looked at each other, they had left home in the middle of the night in their pajamas with no money on them. But Mr. Sethi had an ardent desire to give the first donation for the temple. He saw that his wife was wearing four gold bangles on her wrists; she removed them after she noticed her husband glancing at them. He presented them to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and you were elated and said: "The donation for this temple starts with gold."

On a poignant note, in those days it was Mr. Sethi's habit to drive Śrīla Prabhupāda from his quarters in the BBT building to the temporary temple. Once, Mr. Sethi was ill for three days and couldn't go to the Mandir.

Mr. Sethi: "I said to my wife, 'Why isn't he asking someone to call and inquire about me?' Shortly thereafter someone knocked at my door and when I answered it was Śrīla Prabhupāda himself! I said, 'Guruji, you?' He replied, 'Why are you so surprised? You were wanting me to come and now I have come. You thought that no-one was caring, so I came myself.' Then all the devotees came for *kīrtana* and *prasāda*; see how kind Śrīla Prabhupāda was!"

Śrīla Prabhupāda, by your association, Mr. P. L. Sethi and his family developed the utmost respect, admiration and love for you. Please help me to serve you and push on your mission, so that others may be given the blessings of your association as well.

Aspiring to serve you,

Nartaka Gopāla Devī Dāsī
ISKCON Miami/ISKCON Alachua, Florida

Rathayātrā Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda;

I was born in the darkest ignorance,
by your mercy you opened my eyes with the
torch of knowledge,
I offer my respectful obeisance unto you.

Inspired and guided by you, your disciple Jitarati Dāsa is
now on his second printing of
another 5,000 sets of your *Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam* (10 Volumes per set).

These *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sets have only your translations/
purports up to 10th Canto, Chapter 13, Text 64,
full *Kṛṣṇa Book* added, all original color pictures,
enclosed in a beautiful sturdy case for display.

My humble offering,
as a very small insignificant bug
compared to your other disciples:

1) Distribution 50 sets of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*
(1st printing) of these pure books in India,
the rest were shipped to UK and USA.

2) Distribution of 60 Hardback *Bhagavad-
Gītā As It Is* (1972 edition) with many small
books during Kārtika in Vṛndāvana 2018.

10 sets of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* were distributed in
Bangalore, South India,
40 sets of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* were sent to Vṛndāvana
and brought by Danish second-generation devotees who
are serious about distributing your original books.

These enthusiastic Danish devotees are distributing your
transcendental books using their hand-made carts
in Vṛndāvana and Māyāpur during festivals.

2nd printing of 5,000 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*
sets (under your BBT label) will be ready for
distribution in India/Asia by Mid July 2019

Our goal:
One million pure books of yours distributed worldwide
by your sincere disciples and well wishers.

I humbly thank you for your continuing guidance
over the last 40 years, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

My only desire is to distribute and read your transcendental
books, chant 16 rounds, follow the four regular principles,
listen to your lectures/classes regularly and stay
steady doing my daily morning/evening programs.

In my thoughts daily is how to obey your personal order
“distribute my books” for your continued blessings.

“He lives forever by His Divine Instructions
and the follower lives with Him”.

Your disciple and eternal servant,

Rathayātrā Dāsa
ISKCON Vṛndāvana

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

All glories and obeisances to you. You are very dear to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa having taken shelter at His lotus feet for all eternity.

As the beloved disciple and servant of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, you are so mercifully preaching the message Lord Chaitanya all over this world, and saving millions and billions of souls from impersonalism and voidism, and hellish conditions, and giving them the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His holy names.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare/
hare rāma hare rāma
rāma rāma hare hare*

You are a most glorious *nitya-siddha* devotee directly from Goloka Vṛndāvana, and a very special rare *śaktyāveśa avatāra*, because you are the Commander-in-Chief of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* army. What a glorious position! It is my inconceivable fortune to have been blessed by you, to have been given a spiritual name by you, and to have your association in so many ways. In hearing your recording of chanting the *mahā-mantra* *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare*, reading and hearing your amazing words of wisdom in your many transcendental books, hearing and seeing many audio and video recordings of your classes, morning walks, *darśanas*, *kīrtanas* and many *maṅgala āratīs*, you are still here with us. You are always with me too. I see you in my mind, and I feel your presence in my heart.

Your transcendental books of knowledge about the Absolute Truth of everything are doors and windows into the spiritual world, where your words take us on a path back to Kṛṣṇa. Your books and words are torchlights in the darkness of this material world, showing us the way back home.

Thank you for every little drop of Kṛṣṇa consciousness you have bestowed upon me by your divine grace, and for your encouraging words of wisdom that get me through this life.

Please accept my most humble and respectful obeisances from my very heart, millions and billions of times for all eternity.

Your most fallen servant,

Lelihana Devī Dāsī

Medhavi 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*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

At this time each year, myself and all your servants, search our hearts to find the emotions and words to glorify your wonderful achievements of establishing and spreading the Kṛṣṇa-consciousness movement all over this world.

In the process, you have saved us from lives of abject misery and showed us the path to a life of blissful service to your beloved Lords Śrī-Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

According to the degree of our sincerity and intelligence, we are following your directions. Some appreciate their importance as the only way to attain pure devotional service. They allow their eyes to be opened and their hearts filled with transcendental knowledge coming from your lotus mouth.

“The perfect disciples of the ‘*ācārya*’ try to relieve the situation (of the disappearance of the spiritual master) by sincerely following his instructions.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.28.48)

I find myself dawdling on the path, regularly fooled by *māyā*’s false promises, unaware that the remaining time is short.

Why is it that I am such an unfortunate fool that I do not take your words seriously and grab the opportunity to serve you fully with life and soul.

How do I remain satisfied in material entanglement? How can I perform some service just for your pleasure.

Somehow, there is little impetus to leave the comfort and apparent security of my current situation and expose myself to simply depend on your mercy.

I had a very short dream once of finally catching up with a seriously serving godbrother who was briskly walking beside you. Noticing me, you commented, “And where has he been?”

It made me realize that I offered myself for your service at

initiation, but I have failed to fully honor that promise.

What a lowly and despicable person I have become.

What can I do but beg forgiveness for my useless condition, and sincerely pray that you utilize me once again in your service.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please do not allow these words to just be 'lip-service,' but real re-commitment to you.

Your mercy is all that I am made of.

Your lowly servant,

Medhavi Dāsa

My dearmost Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my worthless obeisances at your beautiful lotus feet. All glories to you, my beloved spiritual master.

I like to think about you, especially when I am grabbing an elusive quiet moment.

I like to remember you dancing in front of Lord Jagannātha with your arms high above your head and your feet swinging with that unforgettable gait along Piccadilly, down Haymarket into the heart of London. I like to remember the feeling that went through my body when I realised you were right behind me, circled by my godbrothers.

It makes me smile.

I like to remember you sitting on that seemingly oversized armchair we called a *vyāsāsana* in Bombay. It so dwarfed you but despite the sparkly orange material it was made from, you so outshined it with your lustrous bodily hue. I like to remember the full *daṇḍavats* I paid to your lotus feet whilst you were seated on that *vyāsāsana*. I like to remember fixing the umbrella that stood above the *vyāsāsana* in its crooked way.

It makes me happy that I was able to do some small service for you.

I like to remember you stopping to talk to me on the stairs to your Juhu apartment. You asked me if I was chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. When I said yes, you said 'Jaya'.

It makes me feel cared for that you took the trouble to ask.

I love to remember that you invited the Bombay street children into your apartment because you had heard them chanting so enthusiastically. Which important person gives their precious time to a seemingly bunch of ragamuffins?

It makes me really appreciate your spiritual vision.

I like to remember dashing to the Bombay airport to greet you. Your face smiling as you appeared before us, as if by magic. I even like to remember dashing to the airport when you were leaving! Not because you were going, but because at least I was right there with you. Anyway we, in Bombay, knew you would be back soon as we lived in your office.

It makes me happy that I shared at least a small part of your journey with you.

I like to remember being in Ahmedabad with you. I like

to remember how you charmed the Gujarati people with your fascinating stories. In the evenings there was the pandal programme where people thronged to hear you. You preached like a lion! It was a boiling hot April, my first in India. No one had prepared the English girl for the heat of an Indian summer. Someone served Limcas at the pandal; we would not dream of drinking them before you. You didn't drink yours for a long time. I waited not too patiently, desperate to drink that cool soda. Elegantly you drank from the bottle, and I hurriedly swigged mine down.

It makes me laugh that I kind of drank a soft drink with you.

I love to remember you doing that first *ārati* to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. It's your smile as you look out to us; it kind of brims with self-satisfaction and happiness. There is such a sense of achievement surrounding you. A battle won.

It makes me feel so privileged to have been a witness.

I like to remember the feel of the rose petals under my feet. That day buckets of rose petals were liberally scattered around as an offerings to Their Lordships Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. They were all pink and it seemed as though they were knee high but I think that is just my imagination going wild and actually they were just up to the ankles. But still, imagine the opulence of so many rose petals.

It makes me think I had a glimpse of what it must be like with you in the spiritual world.

I like to remember sitting in your *darśana* room. When you would first arrive at the temple we would all pile into your room to greet you. One time you had been in a car crash in Mauritius, and you rolled up your *dhoti* and showed us your swollen knee. I don't like to remember your swollen knee or the concern in your voice.

It makes me think what an honour it was to be there when you shared that sad event so candidly with us.

I like to remember the good manners you always displayed. I was privy to them once when you walked in on me cleaning your bathroom. Your head popped around the door and asked in such a polite way, 'May I come in?' Always the perfect gentleman.

I like to think that I was your toilet cleaner.

I like to remember you sitting under the Tamāla tree in the courtyard of Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Temple. Whenever I am there, I like to try to work out exactly where it is you were sitting as there is a wall around the tree now.

It makes me think how lucky I am that I got to sit in the shade of

that majestic tree with you.

I don't like to remember November 14th, 1977. It makes me sad, very sad.

But I do like to think about August 13th, 1965, the day you strode up the gangplank of the Jaladuta and changed the history of the planet. I like to remember the strength you had when you boarded the Jaladuta. You were already 69 years old but embarking on the adventure of a lifetime. Now I am only three years younger than you were when you boarded the Jaladuta, and the thought of what you did is just awesome. I, now being nearer the age you were when you embarked on your grand adventure, can more fully understand the physical challenges you faced, and all I can say is how did you do it? At a time in life when mere mortals like I are slowing down and contemplating retirement, you were speeding up! How did you do it? When I was young I knew your triumphs were practically unachievable, but now, at this age, I understand more the age-defying miracles you performed.

It makes me think how lucky I was that your journey brought you to this green and pleasant land where I met you and your devotees.

It makes me feel sad when I think about you all alone in New York, then I remind myself that you were not alone, Kṛṣṇa was by your side constantly.

It makes me happy to remember you not alone but surrounded by your devotees dancing through the streets of London on that oh so memorable Rathayātrā day in 1973. Success in such a relatively short period of time . . . 1965 to 1973, eight years.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, YOU make me happy.

May I please continue to appreciate your uniqueness, and please allow me to continue serving you.

Your servant,

Mokshalaksmi Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you on this divine day of your appearance in this world.

Once again, I come before you to offer you my deepest gratitude for giving me the opportunity to perfect my life. As I become more attached to you and your instructions, I realize what a great boon you bestowed on the world by appearing here.

Kṛṣṇa comes here to this material world to save the conditioned souls, only once in a day of Brahmā. Lord Caitanya comes here even less often, so to have been born so soon after the holy appearance of Lord Caitanya is such a wonderful benediction. Without you, though, it would mean very little to us souls born in the degraded Western countries. By your great sacrifice and example you have changed the face of the world. When I think of how ignorant I was before meeting you I shudder in embarrassment. Of course I am still a very real product of Kali-yuga, but, by your mercy I have a little understanding of how foolish I was and an inkling of how to actually be a human being.

Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī composed the famous verse, “*Kaivalyam narakāyate*, etc.”, wherein he says that, “For devotees of Caitanya Mahāprabhu who have attained His glance of mercy, impersonal liberation is hellish, the heavenly planets are a phantasmagoria, the poisonous fangs of the snake-like senses are broken and harmless, the universe is filled with ecstasy, and Brahma, Indra and all the gods seem like insignificant insects. May that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu be glorified.”

Of course, he was, according to Kavi Karṇapura an incarnation of Tuṅgavidyā, one of the *aṣṭa sakhīs*, so it’s understandable why he felt like that, but even for Kali-yuga specimens like me, those feelings expressed in this verse have a ring of truth about them.

I cannot say that I have attained the merciful sidelong glance of Lord Gaurāṅga, but I certainly know theoretically these truths. The world is full of ecstasy when we try to give Kṛṣṇa to others. Even in my own small way, when I go out to distribute your books or go on Harināma, or read about Lord Caitanya’s activities, the attraction of material enjoyment has certainly slackened, and the world seems full of ecstasy.

You were, and are, such a dear devotee of Kṛṣṇa, because of

your deep humility and compassion for us fallen souls. By hearing you speak, all our doubts are cleared away, and the sublime torch of knowledge lights up our lives.

I often pray to be empowered to spread the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and to develop the qualities that will attract the fallen souls. It seems that it will take many lifetimes to become a genuine disciple of yours, which is what people need to see. But still, I will keep trying, and I hope that by attachment to your lotus feet I will achieve the perfection that will fulfill all desires.

You are changing the world because of your sincere desire to help others, and thus you have saved so many souls rotting in this world. Please use me as an instrument to do some good in this world.

I beg to remain your disciple birth after birth.

Your aspiring disciple,

Ādikartā Dāsa

With You in the Center

Four decades have passed since present you were
Disunity has your displeasure incurred
We strive to regain our focus on you
Our rivalrous vision nearly broke us in two.

Decisions were made, not always the best
False pride and false ego, created a mess
Māyā allured, and we took the bait
With you in the center, we won't deviate.

FOUNDER-Ācārya, your pivotal position
You are the core, the heart of our mission
Following you is where we belong
With you in the center, we stay very strong.

Getting older, we see more clearly
Follow you nicely, or suffer severely
The obvious truth continues to show
With you in the center, the best way to grow.

Putting aside all ill-motivations
Creating instead harmonious relations
Keeping all our priorities straight
With you in the center, we cooperate.

Serving each other, in a mood of joy
Humble acts please, never annoy
Supporting each other, fanning our flames
With you in the center, we chant Kṛṣṇa's names.

We follow you without hesitation
Your smile the spark of our elation
To please you deeply, our sole meditation
Serving Lord Kṛṣṇa without cessation.

Just love Kṛṣṇa, you implored us to try
With you leading us to the spiritual sky
True meaning of life, now totally clear
We see you're not gone – Oh yes, you're right here!

Serving you at ISKCON Tucson, Śrīla Prabhupāda, with all my heart,

Sandamini Devī Dāsī

All glories to you, Father,
Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.
Gratefully I bow to you,
O Blessed servant of God.

Merciful Lord Kṛṣṇa
Manifest His love undue
Through a simple, humble vessel;
His powerful instrument is you.

Not wanting us to suffer,
The Lord has sent you here.
You've come to give the greatest gift,
Relieving us from fear.

Miraculously it was for me
That your *Gītā* did appear.
Your words profoundly touched my heart,
Revealing God's will so clear.

The words that keep on echoing
Within my mind and soul:
"The Supreme Personality of Godhead,"
Our life's most precious goal.

I never did imagine God;
A personality
With relationships of joy and play;
Full of activity.

Your heartfelt words on paper
Did plant the *bhakti* seed
Unknowingly within my heart;
A miracle indeed.

You revealed that Kṛṣṇa's mercy
Is continually there.
Your firm, devout and living faith
Made magic everywhere.

You personally showed us
To see that Kṛṣṇa's grace
Is everything that happens,
When we pause to see His face.

Kṛṣṇa's ever fresh and new
Not bound by time or space,
Fulfilling all our deep desires
With His miraculous grace.

Kṛṣṇa is a Personhood,
The most alive and real.
And when we put our trust in Him,
Our hearts He'll surely steal.

The moments that you shared with us,
When tears stirred in your eyes,
Opened up our hearts to yearn
For what you realize.

Kṛṣṇa wants to dance with us!
How can we clear that space?
Allowing Him to take the lead,
Feeling safe in His embrace.

You've granted access to the Lord
By teaching us to serve.
Your grace awards us Kṛṣṇa;
A boon we don't deserve.

For all the multitude of gifts,
For your deep, devotional mood;
I pray that I may ever feel
A living gratitude.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Your servant in training,
Sukhavaha Devī Dāsī

Vidyānanda Dāsa

Prabhupāda saved me. Prabhupāda you saved me. You're my only shelter.

Thank you very much for saving me!

Jai Prabhupāda!

Hare Kṛṣṇa

Your servant,
Vidyānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful obeisances. All glories to you!

Although you have left this world physically, you are still here spiritually. You are present in your books, talks, *kīrtanas*, pictures and *mūrtis*. You are still benefiting countless souls with Kṛṣṇa consciousness and will continue to do so throughout this Golden Age of Lord Caitanya. You will remain the Founder-*Ācārya* Spiritual Master of your International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.

You are so merciful that you make the unfortunate fortunate. You allowed us to serve you directly and indirectly. That will continue throughout this Golden Age. I beg to be allowed to serve you and your mission for the rest of my existence.

Thank you for delivering us, Śrīla Prabhupāda. So many devotees are coming to you. You gave us the best life we can live full of peace of love of you and our sweet Lord. I hope to join you too when my time comes.

By following you we have no fear of death. It is an inevitable change of body, and if we follow you we will come to you. Thank you for your 'Matchless Gifts' of Kṛṣṇa consciousness! We owe you our lives because you gave us our lives. Please continue to bless us all.

Your eternal servant,

Gauridāsa Pandita Dāsa

Memories of Śrīla Prabhupāda!

I first saw Śrīla Prabhupāda at the San Francisco Rathayātrā in 1974. When Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived at the festival the cloudy sky opened up shining a beam of sunlight on Śrīla Prabhupāda as he sat down on Lady Subhadrā's cart. That was so amazing, showing us how special Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee is. His fame is spread all over the three worlds! Later on, at the Rathayātrā site, Śrīla Prabhupāda said if America became Kṛṣṇa conscious, the whole world would follow and become like Vaikuṅṭha. The crowd of thousands loved hearing that and chanted loudly, Haribol!

The next day after Rathayātrā I joined the movement and got to meet Śrīla Prabhupāda in person along with the other Rādhā

Dāmodara devotees. I was nervous to see him at first as I entered his room and gave him a long stemmed red rose. My nervousness subsided though as I saw how sublime Śrīla Prabhupāda was. He was sitting behind his coffee table desk with one leg up with a serene smile. As I offered my obeisances my body trembled having met such a wonderful pure devotee as Śrīla Prabhupāda.

We all offered our flowers to Śrīla Prabhupāda, and after we settled into our seats he began to speak. He said, “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.” (Room conversation, San Francisco, July 1974) Śrīla Prabhupāda went on talking as we all listened intently. Being with him even for a few minutes was so precious to us. Those are memories that we will always treasure.

The next time I got to see Śrīla Prabhupāda was at the Atlanta Temple in 1975. He was so ecstatic as he led a *kīrtana* on his Guru Mahārāja’s appearance day. He gave an ecstatic lecture that made us laugh and cry. Again in his room he told us if we remained *brahmacārīs* we would go back to Godhead, and if we got married it would be a 50% chance!

He told us if we studied the 7th Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* we would become good preachers because everything was there in that chapter.

We all had matching ‘Prabhupāda hats’ and vests. Minaketana Rāma Dāsa made a hat for Śrīla Prabhupāda but it was too small. Still, Śrīla Prabhupāda put it on the top of his head and it looked funny so we all laughed, except for Minaketana Prabhu, who was a little stressed out.

One devotee asked Śrīla Prabhupāda what pleases him the most. He replied, “If you develop your love for Kṛṣṇa, that will please me the most.” All of the devotees loved that answer.

It was nice being on the Rādhā Dāmodara Party because we could see Śrīla Prabhupāda when he was in America. He was such a pleasure to meet because he was so merciful and personal. Often he was humorous and he always made sure all of his guests received *prasāda*. He was the topmost host for all his devotees and guests.

The next time I saw Śrīla Prabhupāda was in Chicago in July of 1975. We had a huge Deity installation and initiation ceremony. A hundred and eight devotees were to be initiated. Four sets of Gaura Nitāi Deities were installed for the newly converted bus temples.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was asked by a female reporter why we shave our heads. He replied, “Why do you shave your legs?” He said better to keep a cool head. We never knew what Śrīla Prabhupāda would say, but it was always interesting.

The next time I saw Śrīla Prabhupāda was in Vṛndāvana. He gave me second initiation on December 3rd, 1975. Shortly thereafter I became a *pūjārī*. We *pūjārīs* used to sit in front of the altars when Śrīla Prabhupāda gave class. I remember him saying that all the devotees should go to Vṛndāvana and get trained up for at least two years then go out and preach for 50 years; then retire in Vṛndāvana and go back to Godhead. He also said being a *pūjārī* and being his personal servant were the two most dangerous positions in Kṛṣṇa consciousness because familiarity breeds contempt.

Śrīla Prabhupāda came to some of our *pūjārī* meetings. We had a lot of questions about Deity worship. He said punctuality and cleanliness were the most important things in Deity worship and if we tried to follow all the details of the *Hari Bhakti Vilāsa* we would go crazy!

One day, Śrīla Prabhupāda came to greet the Deities in Vṛndāvana and made a comment to Revatīnandan Swami as he greeted Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi. Since I had dressed Them, I wanted to know what Śrīla Prabhupāda said, so I asked. Revatīnandan Swami said that Śrīla Prabhupāda said in the West they sometimes dress Gaura Nitāi to look like girls, but here in Vṛndāvana, They look like boys. I was glad to hear that.

Śrīla Prabhupāda came to Vṛndāvana quite often which was always ecstatic for us. One time he went into trance chanting *Jaya Rādhā Mādhava* before class.

Śrīla Prabhupāda allowed me to serve him personally and many amazing things happened all the time. He fasted for weeks yet had the strength to preach. He said he was ‘living proof’ that the soul was not dependent on the body for subsistence, but rather the body is dependent on the soul.

Another time Śrīla Prabhupāda said that he appeared in this world for two reasons; to establish Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and to defeat the rascal scientists. He did both very well for all our benefit.

Śrīla Prabhupāda translated his books all night long and only slept a couple hours after his translating work. He was always amazing. We are so fortunate to have all the

recordings we have of him so unlimited souls can benefit from him throughout this Golden Age of Lord Chaitanya. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!

ŚRĪ GURU VANDANA

The lotus feet of our spiritual master are the only way by which we can attain pure devotional service. I bow to his lotus feet with great awe and reverence. By his grace one can cross the ocean of material suffering and obtain the mercy of Kṛṣṇa.

My only wish is to have my consciousness purified by the words emanating from his lotus mouth. Attachment to his lotus feet is the perfection that fulfills all desires.

He opens my darkened eyes and fills my heart with transcendental knowledge. He is my Lord birth after birth. From him ecstatic *premā* emanates; by him ignorance is destroyed. The Vedic scriptures sing of his character.

Our spiritual master is the ocean of mercy, the friend of the poor, and the lord and master of the devotees. O master! Be merciful unto me. Give me the shade of your lotus feet. Your fame is spread all over the three worlds.

Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*

Chaitanya Chandra Dāsa

*viditākhila bhaktisudhājaladhe
rasikākhila veda purāṇagite
śaktyāvātāra nitāicāṅdaraṇam
bhakti-vedānta svāmī me śaraṇam*

O, ocean of all knowledge of pure *bhakti*, master of expounding the purport of *bhakti* in all the *Vedas*, *Purāṇas* and *Bhagavad-gītā*, you are a manifestation of the power of the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda. O, Śrīla Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, give me refuge.

*bhadraṅvatsarabhūta yatīndravibho
tamanāśakajāta bhaktivedānta
janīmohanirāsana dakṣaṇidhe
bhakti-vedānta svāmī me śaraṇam*

O, exemplary *sannyāsī*, who appeared on Earth in the auspicious year and an auspicious family; O, Śrīla Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, you are born to eradicate darkness of ignorance; you are expert in destruction of delusion of people in general; O, Śrīla Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, give me refuge.

*bhakta-gaṇa senāpati eva bhavān
janapāpanirāsana nitāi śakti
paripālaya dīnamimam kṛpayā
bhakti-vedānta svāmī me śaraṇam*

O, Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, you are none other than *senapati bhakta* of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu; you destroy the sins of people by manifesting the power of Lord Nityānanda. Please protect this poor and fallen servant out of compassion. O, Śrīla Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, give me your shelter.

*bhaktivedānta darśanarakṣa śakti
bahudhā kṛṣṇa śāstra pracāraka te
rādhā-tattva vicāraṇa cārumate
bhakti-vedānta svāmī me śaraṇam*

By your power you are always protecting the philosophy of perfect unity of *Bhakti* and *Vedānta*, you are spreading the teachings of Kṛṣṇa in many ways. You are the master of exquisite analysis of the Supreme Principle of Rādhā-tattva. O, Śrīla Bhaktivedanta Swami

Prabhupāda, give me your shelter. (4)

*vijitākhila śatrusamūha yate
karuṇāmṛta pūrīta nitāi śakti
chala varjita japasamādhijuṣā
bhakti-vedānta svāmī me śaraṇam*

O, Śrīla Prabhupāda, just by your smile you are winning many of your opponents, showering them with the nectar of compassion. Without any duplicity you are absorbed in the *japa*, chanting of the holy names with delight. O, Śrīla Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, give me your shelter.

*guru bhaktisiddhānta pāda nate
bhakti mārga janāvana kāryarate
rasa mānasa nāmasudhā ramate
bhakti-vedānta svāmī me śaraṇam*

You worship the feet of your guru, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. You are ever engaged in activities of protecting the people following the path of pure devotional service, *bhakti-mārga*. You are immersed in the bliss of the nectar of the pure holy names. O, Śrīla Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, give me your shelter.

*bhava-bhīkara-vārinidhiṁ taratā
rasa nirjita godvija bhūmipate
bhavatāmatibhaktimatāṁ nidhinā
bhakti-vedānta svāmī me śaraṇam*

By crossing the ocean of fearful material existence, you are leading all true devotees and are the treasure that decorates them. By your virtues you have circled the Earth and specially established brahminical culture of cow protection. O, Śrīla Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, give me your shelter.

*kṛṣṇa-balarāmapūjanalīna mate
lalitā paramparā svarūpa guro
yugadharmā virāga viśokapradanī
bhakti-vedānta svāmī me śaraṇam*

O Guru, you are performing worship of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma that is purifying us all. You are the embodiment of the *paramparā* of Śrī Lalitā Sakhī. O Śrīla Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, give me your shelter, which grants detachment from matter and absorption in the *yuga-dharma*, the chanting of the holy names and freedom from sufferings.

*śrībhaktivedāntāṣṭakaṃ śreṣṭhaṃ caitanya candra dīnadāyadāsa
śrīla Prabhupādaprītyai racito'yaṃ guṇāñjaliḥ*

May this Bhaktivedanta Aṣṭakaṃ, an offering by poor Caitanyacandra dīnadāyadās, be pleasing to our dear Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.

Your servant,

Chaitanya Chandra Dāsa

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

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

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṅī-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 Chaitanya deva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this most blessed day of your divine appearance. I want to thank you for the unfathomable mercy that you have given to all of your followers. Your appearance in this dark world, in this most degraded age Age of Kali, is the greatest benediction that anyone in this universe could ever ask for.

Anyone who takes shelter of your lotus feet will never be disappointed.

Your appearance in this world was predicted by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the previous *ācāryas* and the *śāstras*. You have spread the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over this planet.

The real gift of the pure Vaiṣṇava is his *vāṅī*. And how generous you are in bestowing that gift upon us! Your *vāṅī* is with us in the form of your books, which consists of thousands of pages of your devotional ecstasies. You also left us your recorded audio lectures, conversations, *kīrtans* and *bhajans*. Thousands upon thousands of hours of your divine sound vibration that is coming directly from Goloka Vṛndāvana.

As Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura says. “*Golokera prema dhana hari nāma saṅkīrtana*”. The vibration from the *uttama adhikārī*, from a *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee is coming directly from Goloka Vṛndāvana. As you personally told Bhavānanda and Upendra prabhū in Los Angeles, Lord Kṛṣṇa personally requested you to come down from Goloka Vṛndāvana to write these books.

“Your fame indeed is spread all over the three worlds.”

There are several instances when you commented to some of your disciples that Lord Brahmā, that Nārada Muni were coming regularly to see you. If the creator of this universe, the greatest being of this whole, vast universe containing millions upon millions of planets...if he coming to see you, if Nārada Muni is coming to see you, then how valuable and rare is your association? You are so great that even these greatest of personalities are eager for your association. Your exalted nature is inconceivable!

And all we have to do to get your priceless association is to simply open up your books and read. If we are illiterate or if we are not inclined to read, then all one needs to do is listen to your audio and let that divine sound enter into their ears. How much easier can it be?

In San Francisco in 1975 when a reporter asked you what would happen to your movement when you die. You responded by saying “I will never die, I shall live in my books and you will utilize.”

All of your followers pray to you every day at your *Guru-puja*:

guru-mukha-padma-vākya
cittete koribo aikya, ār nā koriho mane āśā

“My only wish is to have my consciousness purified by the words emanating from His lotus mouth.”

This is the way to all auspiciousness.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.20.24–25), when Lord Viṣṇu appeared to Mahārāja Pṛthu and asked Him for a benediction, Mahārāja Pṛthu replied:

“My dear Lord, I therefore do not wish to have the benediction of merging into Your existence, a benediction in which there is no existence of the nectarean beverage of Your lotus feet. I want the benediction of at least one million ears, for thus I may be able to hear about the glories of Your lotus feet from the mouths of Your pure devotees.”

“My dear Lord, You are glorified by the selected verses uttered by great personalities. Such glorification of your lotus feet is just like saffron particles. When the transcendental vibration from the mouths of great devotees carries the aroma of the saffron dust of your lotus feet, the forgetful living entity gradually remembers his eternal

relationship with you. Devotees thus gradually come to the right conclusion about the value of life. My dear Lord, I therefore do not need any other benediction but the opportunity to hear from the mouth of Your pure devotee.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda says in the purport to verse 25 that: “A pure devotee always engages in the service of the Lord, taking shelter of His lotus feet, and therefore he has a direct connection with the saffron mercy-particles that are strewn over the lotus feet of the Lord. Although when a pure devotee speaks the articulation of his voice may resemble the sound of this material sky, the voice is spiritually very powerful because it touches the particles of saffron dust on the lotus feet of the Lord. As soon as a sleeping living entity hears the powerful voice emanating from the mouth of a pure devotee, he immediately remembers his eternal relationship with the Lord, although up until that moment he had forgotten everything.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, from Mahārāja Pṛthu’s prayer we can understand that we have the greatest benediction at our very fingertips; Hearing from the topmost pure devotee, whenever we want. Mahārāja Pṛthu was a cent per cent pure devotee, a śaktyāveśa avatāra, and similar to you all the symptoms of love of God were manifest in Him. He wanted at least a million ears to hear. How eager he was to hear from a pure devotee like you! Mahārāja Pṛthu is showing us the way to perfection.

Unfortunately, many of us do not take the time to hear directly from you daily. We become easily distracted and do not realize the importance of keeping you, the topmost pure devotee, in the center of our daily lives.

Following in the footsteps of Mahārāja Pṛthu, I pray that you please awaken within all of your followers’ hearts the intense desire to hear from you. Please give all of us the desire to have at least one million ears to hear your divine *vāṇī*.

The more we bathe ourselves in the words and vibration coming from your lotus mouth, the more we will feel your presence and the more all of our *anarthas*, our material desires and impediments to pure devotional service will vanish. Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for your causeless, inconceivable mercy.

Your aspiring servant,

Tejaprasak Dāsa

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Eternal Field

There was once a grand and glorious field. Wide and open, extending as far as the eye could see, it was bordered on all sides by ancient and magnanimous trees bearing many branches laden with fruit. These trees appeared like a mountain range majestically holding the clouds upon their summits.

Far to the east of this field, which seemed to fulfill the desires of all who walked upon it stood Śrīla Prabhupāda, dignified, aristocratic, confident, and alone. Next to him sat a simple metal trunk – it carried everything he needed for his mission. This trunk had the unique quality that its contents could never be exhausted. Many times over and over again he would see it empty and refill itself, so that all the world could receive its merciful gifts.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's every move was determined and revolutionary, meant to lead and enlighten all who took shelter of him. Like an expert conductor of a symphony orchestra, he brought harmony and precision to the mission bestowed upon him by his spiritual master.

In his left hand Śrīla Prabhupāda held an elegant cane which swung forward, tapping the earth as he walked. In his right hand he carried an effulgent saffron bead bag. On his sacred beads he chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, and as he walked the Lord's blessings were in his footsteps.

Śrīla Prabhupāda moved around his field in transcendental happiness. His saffron robes blew in the wind making it appear as though he were gliding, and I saw the earth begin to change beneath him. Mother Earth was responding to this call of the sages as she churned herself, tossing about rich dark soil nurtured from deep within her heart. Thus she made herself ready for the sanctified seeds Śrīla Prabhupāda was about to lay upon her.

And so he did. Moving through this glorious field he planted his seeds. He threw them so high and far they darkened sky before falling to earth like soaking rain. By the power of his devotion and love, as soon as these wonderful seeds settled on the nurtured soil they sprouted into tiny seedlings. Their roots held tight, and were blessed by this master gardener.

Some might question whether such a field could exist in a place

like New York City, and I say yes! This timeless and endless field took over the entire world, for it was of a different nature. It was a spiritual field in which only the most fortunate were able to grow.

Everything became quiet. A peace pervaded the earth that seemed to warm the hearts of all. Then in a great herd from far away and all directions, they came. The dust raised by their march flew up high resembling flocks of birds on a great migration. As they approached, their many languages created a tumultuous cacophony of sound. Then it became a revered celestial choir. In perfect unity everyone focused on Śrīla Prabhupāda, and that saintly spiritual master led them in a divine song that awakened the heavens and shook the earth, changing it forever!

*Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*

Their march was five thousand strong as they filed into the arena of sacrifice. Each stopped directly in front of a seedling, as though these fortunate souls too had sprouted from the earth. With unblinking eyes focused upon their beloved guru Śrīla Prabhupāda, they listened with rapt attention to his sacred words as he defined the truth, spoken concisely with pure eloquence.

The small, precious seedlings were not ordinary. Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed his disciples precisely how to care for them, explaining every detail and avoiding any room for speculation. The faithful followers were assured that their care and devotion would bear fruit if they adhered to the words of their spiritual master and did not alter them in any way. Śrīla Prabhupāda called these cherished plants the *bhakti-latā*.

Teaching his disciples the nine processes of devotional service, Śrīla Prabhupāda showed them how to care for their saplings to assure they grew strong and healthy. And oh, what a garden grew! Under the direct care of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda the young plants grew strong and full, emanating a unique aroma that pleased Mother Earth. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the divinely empowered gardener cultivating the hearts of all surrendered souls.

As with any garden, some plants died, especially in the beginning stages of their growth. For a young seedling, too much water or too little can be equally disastrous. Śrīla Prabhupāda told us not to be astonished by who goes away, but to be amazed by who stays. To

disobey your order or think you an ordinary person will leave us confused. Without your instructions how can our *bhakti-latās* grow? Kṛṣṇa sent you to save us.

Could our fragile seedlings survive if uprooted and planted somewhere else, thinking you did not give us everything needed for them to flourish? *Guru, sādhu* and *śāstra* instruct that it takes time for the *bhakti-latā* to reach the Lord's lotus feet and bear fruit. If we continuously hear from Your Divine Grace, the roots of our devotional creepers will strengthen and grow deep into the earth. Only this can protect us from illusion, for you always speak the truth.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, we pray to remain your loyal and dependent disciples rooted safely at your lotus feet. We have grown under your tutelage and know only you as our master. Kṛṣṇa belongs to you. You can deliver Him to us though we remain unworthy, when the time is ripe for the *bhakti-latā* to bear fruit.

Your servant,

Samapriya Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances to your divine lotus feet.

I will express myself in a not too orthodox way for a Vyāsa-pūjā offering. I felt the need to write you a letter, as if you were physically here and you could receive it by mail – as in the old days that I long for so much.

There is no time of day that one does not think of you. Your constant presence is the sun that illuminates my understanding and makes me see things as they are. Having met you has made me know. Having served has given meaning to my life. Having you with me in the form of wise practical teachings sustains me and arms me with courage.

Thanks to you I can distinguish the real from the false in everything I see, read, listen, and in everything I analyze, write, do, think, say, or deduce with respect to my present and my past. You are the cornerstone of my conscience, the indispensable reference to determine what is right and what is wrong, and to guide my steps in the right direction.

Listening to your wise words every day nourishes my soul, inspires everything I do, and consolidates my personal growth. To be able to report myself writing these lines, expressing my admiration and gratitude, knowing that you will receive them wherever you are, satisfies my soul fully and makes my existence more bearable.

Thanks to you, the tribulations that life brings in this world do not intimidate me or make life bitter. Your exemplary behavior exerts a powerful influence on me. The superhuman effort sustained during the twelve years of your pilgrimage through the world preaching vigorously, creating temples, and at night translating and commenting on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is an unprecedented feat in the history of Vaishnavism, and in that of the whole world. When you left Planet Earth, the illustrious Vaiṣṇavas of Vṛndāvana said that the authenticity of an *ācārya* is verified if after his departure the mission continues to function. Now not only is the institution created by you still functioning, but it expands beyond all expectation.

Everyone can see the insurmountable caliber of your complete surrender and devotion to Kṛṣṇa, and your competence as an unrivaled *ācārya* to disclose Kṛṣṇa consciousness even after your departure. In my view, just as the *Mahābhārata* is considered the

fifth *Veda*, and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura the seventh *gosvāmī*, your encyclopedic literary contribution is the sixth *Veda*, and your outstanding holy personality, the eighth *gosvāmī* on the list.

Now that I am the same age as you were when I met you, I perceive and value your heroism and your greatness more, and that makes me intensify my interest in reading your books and talking about you to others.

The words “thank you” are not enough to express the great gifts with which I feel blessed day-after-day by Your Divine Grace. By just remembering you, my Kṛṣṇa consciousness expands to infinity. My only wish is to meet you again after death to have your *darśana* and adore you for eternity.

When I think about my mistakes, I feel that you correct me severely, but when I pass on your teachings to others, speaking or writing, I feel you assist me. Your kindness to me is real, otherwise, how could a being as unworthy as myself understand and practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness – despite being forbidden to direct *kīrtans* and giving class in your temples?

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for keeping me connected to your divine person through your stimulating inspiration. You are my *guru*, my father, my friend, my adorable deity and my permanent refuge for eternity.

Your humble servant,

Śrī Padāmbuja Dāsa

All glories to you Śrīla Prabhupāda!

All glories to your devotees and your devotees' devotees!

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

From deep in my heart I want to thank you thousands of times for the ocean of joy you have immersed my heart in!

Why?

Whatever I do, sing, cook, eat, think, write, compose, translate, teach, hear, learn, paint, all my activities, and every second which I invest thoughts about your Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and how to spread His/your holy names, has become meaningful for me. To me, everything in my life has become honeysweet and important, because you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, have given us the instruction:

. . . to do everything as an offering for Kṛṣṇa, to think always of Kṛṣṇa, dovetail everything, all energy for Kṛṣṇa, and never forget Kṛṣṇa!

And most importantly, nothing is lost, whatever money, time, energy and love I have invested.

So, I feel happy with no end, because you gave my life a meaning and a licence, a 'reason d'etre' for my stay in this world.

Happy, because you gave me the most valuable instructive books – about Kṛṣṇa and the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Even though nobody cares for me, I know Śrī Kṛṣṇa does, and and YOU DO!

Thank you for putting the PLUS in front of the life of me, this insignificant *jīva*!

Yours forever, aspiring to become your humble and loving servant,

Śubhāṅgī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to your divine appearance day, the most blessed event of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā.

While listening to your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lectures, I came upon verse 7.9.28. In it, Prahlada Mahārāja requests the Lord to keep him engaged in the service of his spiritual master Nārada Muni, who had saved him from falling gradually into a blind well full of snakes. He felt this to be his first and foremost duty. And then he added the following: “How could I leave his service?”

I was deeply touched by the reality of this statement. Reflecting on my own situation I could immediately identify with what Prahlada Mahārāja said.

It is on occasions like your annual Vyāsa-pūjā that we commit ourselves again to serve you to our last breath. We are so much indebted to you that even lifetimes of service cannot pay back what we owe you. Had we not met you we would have glided further and further into the dark well of material existence in which we were already sunk quite deeply. By your causeless mercy you gave us the means to get out of this fearful situation.

By some incredible good fortune we were chosen to be the recipient of this *guru kṛpā*. Even now it seems to me to be miraculous, something like winning the jackpot of the lottery. It’s too good to be true – as we realized much later after our ignorance was removed to some degree.

In order to really show proper gratitude we can only pray to the Lord to keep us engaged in your service as a menial servant, *so ’ham katharin nu visṛje tave bhṛtya-sevam*.

You not only pulled us out of the dark well of *māyā* but you also gave us meaningful *sevā*. And to me the most important aspect of your saving grace is service to Your Divine Grace and consequently service to Kṛṣṇa. In this way you gave us back our real life.

“Message of service
Thou has brought
A healthful life
As Caitanya wrought
Unknown to all
It’s full of brace
That’s your gift
Your Divine Grace.

Every day I am grateful for this opportunity to serve you, however imperfect this *sevā* may be. I pray to you to Your Divine Grace to never reject this servant of yours. As you mention in the purport of the above verse.

“This is the secret of success. First we should try to serve the spiritual master and then one should try to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

Practice makes perfect. I am therefore begging with all humility at my command for continued service at your lotus feet. You taught us that the only way to eradicate offenses against the holy name is to keep on chanting with full faith and conviction. Similarly, I am convinced that by simply executing your instructions to my best capacities I can someday attain the desired goal of the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Kṛṣṇa *premā*.

Śrī guru karuṇā sindhu adhama janāra bandhu – you are the ocean of mercy, the friend of the poor and master of devotees. *Guru mukha padma vākya cittete kariyā aikya* – my only wish is to have my consciousness purified by the words emanating from your lotus mouth.

Please bestow upon this fallen soul the ardent desire to always want to hear your divine instructions and be absorbed in reading your transcendental books and 24 hours a day remain engaged in your service and the service of your dear followers.

Your fallen servant,
Śrīniketana Dāsa

Beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda

Please accept my humble and respectful obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

You are the personified mercy of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi bestowing upon the whole world the supreme benediction: pure devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, The Supreme Personality of Godhead.

You are incomparably magnanimous and no one can compete with Your Divine Grace. You are the embodiment of the real *mahā-bhāgavata*, with no shadows or blemish.

You are unmistakably the apotheosis of devotional purity, the quintessence of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

In your teachings, every phrase and each single word conveys pure love of Kṛṣṇa, injecting, from the absolute platform, unalloyed Kṛṣṇa consciousness into the life of any sincere soul seriously willing to listen.

Your desire to please Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, shines through, as your one and only desire. Not even the most subtle speck of separated self interest can be spotted in Your Divine Grace's personality, speeches, plans and behaviour. Just as your own presentation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *Bhagavad-Gītā* is "*as it is*", Your Divine Grace is the manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee "*as it is*".

As your disciples and representatives, it is our only duty (and our only glory) to reflect, like a mirror, Your Divine Grace, as you are, without unwanted superimpositions.

We want to bring everyone we preach to, in to close contact with Your Divine Grace, enthuse them into reading your transcendental books, make them listen to your lessons and discourses, show them the way in which you have practically applied your pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness in every single aspect of devotional service, aiming solely to please the Lord. So that, by constant association with Your Divine Grace and by coming to know you more and more, they will absorb your pure devotional mood. They will become more and more irresistibly attracted by Your Divine Grace and real love for you will inevitably be evoked in their heart.

sThen, whoever they'll meet and whatever that they'll see and hear, they will be able to detect and recognize if you are present there or not and, with the desire to please Your Divine Grace, they will clearly know what to accept as real or to refuse as false; and this will be their greatest fortune.

In that way Your Divine Grace will be pleased, Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi will be pleased, and our own life will thus be successful.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to allow me to bring to your lotus feet whatever little service I am able to offer.

Your servant,

Narakāntaka Dāsa (Tridaṇḍi Dāsa)
Radio Krishna Centrale - Terni, Italy

Gandhi said, “Speak only if it improves upon the silence.”

This is a nice policy to adhere to in general, and to also give guidance to our thoughts, words and subsequent deeds. This, after all, is the basic nature of Brahminical action!

*Putting this “head on society” is Śrīla
Prabhupāda’s mission in a nutshell...*

“Distribute my books in every language, and in every nook and corner of the world”! But, don’t *just* distribute them!

READ them!

Know what is IN them!!

Become well-versed in the mission, and its message!!!

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

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.

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, there were many nice developments here in New Talavana’s holy *dhāma* over the past year by Sri-Śrī Rādhā-Rādhākānta’s mercy!

For instance, we were blessed with a wonderful visit from H.H. Bhakti Chāru Mahārāja, when he delivered a seminar on Vaiṣṇava Etiquette at the end of April 2018. The devotees were appreciative of the importance of recognizing the relationship between having personal humility, and receiving the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *paramparā*.

In trying to do my part, in mid-June, as a member of this

community's Frontier Club, I made a presentation to our Community Management Team (CMT) asking if we could assemble an orientation document to give new devotees some basic guidelines toward proper Vaiṣṇava etiquette. We were given the assignment and are working towards completing this service.

One of the developments from this effort is an application for membership in the community that includes a full background check to identify any danger to our most fragile members of the community.

Later, in mid-June I had the good fortune to meet H.H. Bhakti Rāghava Swami for the first time during his visit and interview sessions on Vaiṣṇava Vedic Sociology. I am very impressed with his point of view, and course of action in achieving accreditation for his preaching platform.

Mid-July I announced the upcoming September "2nd Annual Permaculture Design Course". I also presented a proposal to the CMT about the purchase of a wide screen TV for projecting the Permaculture Course on; it was unanimously approved.

Around mid-August I was asked to become the CMT secretary and have continued as such since then. I transcribe the minutes of the meeting into a finished document file that will become a permanent record of Their Lordships direct and indirect pastimes.

The third week of August I went with Yogindravandana Prabhu to the USDA office to inquire about excavating lakes to dam the watershed, for freshwater reservoirs at 6 locations on the property; around which we can later plan lake-front homesites. It is currently depending on us to find a qualified engineer to assess the potential of this objective.

The first weekend of September we held our annual Cow Festival which was coordinated by the second-generation devotees. They did a wonderful job. As a result, we congratulated them with a celebratory Succession meeting, and invited them to participate more frequently in managing other projects.

As a secondary result of our visit to the USDA in August, we ordered 100+ fruit trees in December. They are the basis for our first "food forest fruit tree guild" here at New Talavana Dhāma.

During the first week of January we were honored to have H.G. Sureśvara Prabhu present his lecture-series on your position as the 'Founder-Ācārya' of our mutual ISKCON 'home'; Thank you so much!

Although it addresses the divisive issue of 'ritvik-ism' by inclusiveness; in my humble opinion, it missed the opportunity to

highlight your life-long quest to convert us from our addiction to urban life. Your contiguous effort to establish our appreciation for Kṛṣṇa's rural-centered lifestyle of simple living is rarely identified or acknowledged, and, I let it be known!

Lord Nityānanda's appearance was on February 17th, and by Kṛṣṇa's grace and your blessings I took the opportunity to visit Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma in Alachua for the occasion. I especially wanted to beg Sri-Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma (especially Śrī Baladeva) for His kind blessings, by removing the obstacles of ignorance from my life, so that I may become blessed with the good fortune of making intelligent decisions in your service!

What a wonderful experience it was. I reconnected with many old friends from my earliest experiences while you were still physically present here. I also met many new friends. As a result, *special opportunities* have become realized for expanding my service to you in this 'new-year' of your appearance anniversary!

For instance, I have been invited to coordinate a 'partnership' with the community through my current service in Permaculture Design & Consultation. This will be a basis for establishing an "Eco-Tourism" outreach program. Thank you for inspiring me to go!

And, my gratitude is also unbounded as I cultivate a relationship that was obstructed so many years ago . . . It is my 'new-lease-of-life' in your service!

The ending of February was a very productive pleasure. The fruit orchard demonstration site was finally plowed, then holes were augered and planted; now the trees are very healthy and vibrant! I am also happy to see a new surge of interest in helping to complete the demonstration site from several others in the community.

The last weekend of February brought an especially 'positive' sign from the second-generation devotees. They have been communicating amongst themselves about taking the initiative to research growing hemp for financing community projects that need development; and to also produce hemp products to use ourselves.

The month of April brought a new neighbor to our community. 'Bhakta' Ben had heard of our farm and inquisitively visited; during which it was revealed that he is also a graduate of Geoff Lawton's Permaculture Design Course (2018). His potential participation can add much needed momentum to our expansion plans.

On Rama Navami (04-13-2019), Viśvambhara prabhu presented the full proposal for the hemp-based business that the

second-generation devotees want to pursue. It takes great sincerity to cooperatively organize in this way, and they are aligning themselves to the task very well. It is encouraging to see!

In this meeting, the beginnings of a partnership-business plan were discussed, and was further discussed and recorded in the CMT Meeting Minutes the following morning. It appears to be very a very promising stepping-stone for this community which can help to finance many projects along the way.

Speaking of Rāma Navamī, it was exactly 45 years ago today that Sri Śrī Gaura-Nitāi were installed on the altar in New Naimiṣāraṇya Forest in Coconut Grove, Florida. I am so fortunate to have received Their special mercy to arrive there on the very day of Their arrival. Within two years They had me serving Them as Their Head Pūjārī... my gratitude is boundless!

With all of this causeless mercy in my life, I can only offer my 45 years of humbly prostrated *daṇḍavats* at your feet!

I remain your servant in the groves of New Talavana Dhāma,

Laṅgaṇeśa Dāsa

Ashalata 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,

Please accept my most humble obeisances on to your lotus feet again and again.

Today is a very, very, very auspicious day, your Vyāsa-pūjā.

What can I say about a spiritual master like you who is full of all good qualities? To describe all your qualities is beyond my capacity. You are the best devotee, best disciple and best guru who is an extraordinary personality and direct messenger of Kṛṣṇa.

You are compassionate. Just to deliver all of mankind you went through so many austerities at an advanced age and did not care for your own comforts. You travelled the whole world multiple times to spread Mahāprabhu's message. You are so kind you –

Introduced *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* – not only in English and Hindi but in so many different languages so that people speaking almost any language in the world can take advantage of their lives and become successful. You are not only *pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*, you are the whole world *tāriṇe*.

People are reading your books and understanding the purpose of life. That is why more and more people are becoming devotees; more and more centres are opening, and more and more temples are being built.

Your vision of the TOVP is manifesting as a huge and unique landmark where millions of people will be attracted from all over the world to come and have *darśana*.

The ISKCON Movement is all over the world and your glories have also spread all over the world. It is happening because of your sincere efforts to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

Around the world, Kṛṣṇa's name and the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* are being chanted and Deity worship is being done 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in one part or another of the world because of different time zones. This amazing accomplishment is all because of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Because of your purity and dynamic power, ISKCON is still going and growing.

I am very fortunate to have you as my guru. You are the genuine guru who opened my eyes to the real truth.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please give me the strength to become your pure disciple and Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee.

Thank you so much for all the mercy all the nectar and all the pastimes you have given us.

You have delivered us from the material ocean and material entanglement by giving us the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, and sending us on this joyous spiritual journey.

The whole family still remembers your pastimes and personal association. That is why we are always encouraged to serve you and Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa in whichever way we can.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please keep showering your mercy and blessings upon us. Keep us always at your lotus feet so we keep serving more and more, regardless of any circumstance.

All glories, all glories, all glories to you Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your worthless servant,

Ashalata Devī Dāsī

Śubhavlāsa Dāsa

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

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

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

For me there is no better day than your Vyāsa-pūjā. This is the most happy time of the year and I am fortunate to be able to write something on this most auspicious day, your appearance day.

Someone once asked me to describe the fortunate, and the *most* fortunate event in my life. As far as I am concerned, with my little knowledge, the fortunate was when I met your disciples in 1969 and came to know about ISKCON. The most fortunate days were when I had your *darśana*, association and received *dīkṣā* initiation from Your Divine Grace. These fortunate days are the breath of my life that have sustained me in service to you and your movement over the last five decades.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have given our life meaning by giving us the concept and highest information of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Your realizations, and to know that by remembering Kṛṣṇa and by serving you, we can go back home, back to Godhead is the most fortunate knowledge.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, there is no end to your causeless mercy. I can go on for hours speaking and writing your glories, but you know what is in my heart. Simply said, you are our Jagad-guru who will deliver millions of souls to Kṛṣṇa over the coming decades and centuries as your movement continues to flourish.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your instructions and standards have resulted in the best knowledge, the best book distribution, the best preaching, the best *prasāda* distribution, the best *harināma sañkīrtana*, the best Deity worship, and more. It is only because of your mercy.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the most important messenger of Lord Caitanya, delivering Kṛṣṇa As He Is to the entire world through *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I was useless without your mercy. Kṛṣṇa

is yours, and I can only come behind you saying Prabhupāda, Prabhupāda, Prabhupāda, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa. I am forever indebted to you for all the mercy you have given me.

You have blessed me with faith that in spite of all the troubles, horrors and suffering in this world, there is a way out, that the real friend and saviour is Lord Kṛṣṇa. You came and started Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's Western army, ISKCON, to fight against *māyā* and Kali-yuga with the aim to take everyone back to Kṛṣṇaloka. The result of these efforts are being seen worldwide through chanting, book distribution, temples, restaurants, farm communities, festivals and outreach. This is because of your power and purity. Without your mercy, we would be useless to carry out your instructions to continue this preaching. It is your power that is pushing and guiding us, and we feel your constant presence. It is you who is ensuring the success of your ISKCON movement.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you again and again for what you have given us – your personal association as well as your association through your books and devotees. This assures us to not forget Kṛṣṇa, and always remember Him.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, my request is as always, please keep me in the dust of your lotus feet and in the service of your ISKCON. Please keep my heart fixed on the guidance you gave us so that I may serve you and Lord Kṛṣṇa to my utmost capacity.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am forever yours and indebted to you.

Your insignificant servant,

Śubhaviḷāsa Dāsa

Haridāsa Dāsa

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

When I first came to your Henry Street temple in New York City, a kind disciple of yours, Viṣṇugadā Prabhu, recommended I become accustomed to listening to your recorded lectures. This was helpful advice because it put me in touch with your transcendental sound vibration . . . your chanting of the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Though you were not physically present at that time, your “separated energy”, as you once described the recording of your voice, was there. “Such a nice thing is coming out,” is how you referred to the tape recorder’s accurate reproduction of your voice. And it truly was, and still is, *such a nice thing*.

One day, several years later while walking in the courtyard of the Dallas temple grounds, I heard you say on a recorded lecture, “You must be fully convinced, *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*.” You said it with such great force that the sound vibration, though separated from your physical presence, has remained with me as if you had said it to me face-to-face. Thank you for stressing this so forcefully. Under your guidance, I am on the path of becoming fully convinced about this and to the proportion that I am, then I can be of some use to you in the *sañkīrtana* Movement.

Although I am unable to reciprocate with you properly because of the disproportionate greatness of your gifts when compared to my meager service, still I hope to somehow please you by following your instructions, understanding your desires, and becoming a surrendered disciple of Your Divine Grace.

The servant of your servants,

Haridāsa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

By your fathomless mercy, in August of 1976, Gopāl Krishna, your GBC in India, sent Aksoja and I to Hyderabad from Juhu to become your body guards, a service which we continued intermittently until your disappearance.

I remember in December of that year you again came to your ISKCON Hyderabad temple. One day during the evening *darśana*, a Marwari gentleman brought his son and offered him to Your Divine Grace for spiritual training, which pleased you very much. You instructed your servants that the young man should be engaged in service and kept in your personal entourage. This Madwari's son was given the bodyguard service in the evening up to midnight. When I came at midnight to take up my service shift, you were standing outside your room. "I am ringing the buzzer but no one is coming," you told me. I went to the window of the next room where your servants were sleeping along with a few other senior devotees but the door was shut and no one responded to my knocking or calls. I was trying to open wider the slightly open window near the door when I felt you hold my elbow and move me aside so that you could look inside. Someone finally got up and opened the door, "Call everyone," you instructed.

When about a dozen or so disciples had gathered in your *darśana* room still rubbing the sleep out of their eyes, you angrily chastised us. The Madwari's son had been fast asleep, having pulled up two chairs in front of the door to your quarters and obstructing your access to the bathroom. When you tapped him with your walking stick to awaken him, he panicked and fled. "Now he won't come back," you said, irritated that we had not engaged him properly. We never saw him again. Then you chastised the temple management about the *chowkidhar* failing to ring the hours on the temple bell. We were shocked as you angrily shouted at us. Then you suddenly told a humorous analogy, and the room resounded with nervous laughter. I realized that you were actually totally transcendental to anger and were just trying to penetrate our mode of ignorance with your forceful instructions.

After the few months of being in your close proximity I was amazed how one could not perceive a single fault in you – I could not find a single defect in your activities, words or character. I realized that you were a living saint, a pure *sādhu* of the topmost category and the most compassionate well-wisher of us all.

Recently, after 44 years of continually trying to follow your instructions and so often failing, I became despondent. Taking shelter in the divine instructions of your transmundane books I was so pleased to find the solution to my problem. In your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, sixth canto, chapter one, verse 14, Sukadeva Gosvāmi explains that sins are like the dried leaves of creepers beneath a bamboo tree, which may be burned by fire although their roots remain to grow again at the first opportunity. Verse 15 gives the solution, ‘Only a rare person who has adopted complete, unalloyed devotional service to Kṛṣṇa can uproot the weeds of sinful actions with no possibility that they will revive. He can do this simply by discharging devotional service, just as the sun can immediately dissipate fog by its rays.’ In your purport you state, ‘Not everyone can become Kṛṣṇa conscious.’

I often lament and pray, ‘Oh, when will I become Kṛṣṇa conscious.’ It sometimes seems hopeless, I am so foolish and fallen. In Verse 16 Sukadeva Gosvāmi says, ‘My dear King, if a sinful person engages in the service of a bona fide devotee of the Lord and thus learns how to dedicate his life unto the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, he can be completely purified. One cannot be purified merely by undergoing austerity, penance, *brahmācārya* and the other methods of atonement I have previously described.’

Your purports to these verses are so wonderfully enlightening. You elaborate, ‘*Tat-puruṣa* refers to a preacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, such as the spiritual master. Śrīla Narottama dāsa Thākura has said, *chāḍiyā vaiṣṇava-sevā nistāra pāyeche kebā*: “Without serving a bona fide spiritual master, an ideal Vaiṣṇava, who can be delivered from the clutches of *māyā*?” and ‘One’s sinful reactions are automatically vanquished as soon as one begins serving a pure devotee; no separate endeavor is required.’

Also, ‘*Tat te ’nukampāṁ su-samīkṣamāṇaḥ* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.8). He does not protest, “Oh, I am such a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Why have I been put into this misery?” Instead he thinks, “This is Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.” Such an attitude is possible for a devotee who engages in the service of Kṛṣṇa’s representative. This is the

secret of success.’

Verse 17 continues, ‘The path followed by pure devotees, who are well behaved and fully endowed with the best qualifications, is certainly the most auspicious path in this material world. It is free from fear, and it is authorized by the *sāstras*.’ And in the purport, ‘One should fearlessly follow the twelve *mahājanas* and their line of disciplic succession and thus be liberated from the clutches of *māyā*.’

The lecture on verse 18 that you gave on the 18th of May 1976 in Honolulu is one of the most powerful wake-up calls I have heard. I highly recommend those who read this to check it out. Wake up, O spirit soul, living in this material world is simply full of miseries. Learn how to stop suffering.

In your absolute and nectarean *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā, chapter seven, verse 27, the method of uprooting our sinful desires is nicely explained, *haila bīja nāśa*, ‘When the five members of the Panca-tattva saw the entire world drowned in love of Godhead and the seed of material enjoyment in the living entities completely destroyed, they all became exceedingly happy.’

In the purport to this verse, you quote your Guru Mahārāja, ‘In this connection, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura writes in his *Anubhāṣya* that since the living entities all belong to the marginal potency of the Lord, each and every living entity has a natural tendency to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, although at the same time the seed of material enjoyment is undoubtedly within him. The seed of material enjoyment, watered by the course of material nature, fructifies to become a tree of material entanglement that endows the living entity with all kinds of material enjoyment. To enjoy such material facilities is to be afflicted with the three material miseries. However, when by nature’s law there is a flood, the seeds within the earth become inactive. Similarly, as the inundation of love of Godhead spreads all over the world, the seeds of material enjoyment become impotent. Thus the more the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement spreads, the more the desire for material enjoyment decreases. The seed of material enjoyment automatically becomes impotent with the increase of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.’

Thank you for your Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, ISKCON. Thank you for the uplifting instructions in your glorious books and your recorded lectures and conversations.

Thank you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, for engaging me in your service by keeping me in the service of your ISKCON and in the

service of your disciples, grand-disciples and great-grand-disciples. This service is my only hope and is your saving grace. Please kindly always engage me thus.

Falling at your divine lotus feet, this nonsense servant of yours weeps for your continual mercy, and begs to remain,

Your servant,

Arjuna Dāsa
Mauritius

To my dear spiritual master and eternal father, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Not only are you the eternal spiritual master for us, your disciples, you will also be known for eternity as the spiritual teacher who established Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the Western world. The significance of this feat is immeasurable. To be the disciple of such an important personality is not only an incredible honour, but also a huge responsibility. You have invested in us the responsibility both to carry your mission forward and to guide others to do the same.

As you said, an *ācārya* is one who teaches by example. You also said that we should follow the path chalked out by the *mahājanas*, and that great personalities, while they should not be imitated, should be followed. As the Founder-*Ācārya* of ISKCON, you taught us by your example and you chalked out the path for us to follow. As you said that an *ācārya* makes adjustments according to time, place, and circumstance, this is exactly what you did. It was not only your devotion, your compassion, and your determination to follow your guru's order which made you successful, it was crucially your intelligence and bold initiative to make adjustments according to time, place, and circumstance that made it possible for you to capture the hearts and minds of so many young people for Kṛṣṇa.

While we certainly cannot imitate you, unless we follow in your footsteps by using whatever intelligence and resourcefulness we have to find new ways to present Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the Western people of this century, then our efforts will continue to produce limited results. While Kṛṣṇa consciousness is spreading nicely in India and Russia, and also among Indian people worldwide, which is very good news, there is currently limited success with Western people, who were your primary targets. You said that if Kṛṣṇa consciousness is accepted by the West, it will sweep the world. Śrīla Prabhupāda, please bless us with the strength and intelligence to do whatever we have to do to carry forward your mission, which is to deliver the Western countries (and subsequently the world) from impersonalism and voidism.

Your aspiring servant,

Jagannātheśvarī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

Thank you for accepting me as your disciple. I can't imagine what my life would be without your constant guidance. Your words are my strength. Your Bhaktivedanta purports and lectures clear away the confusion of material identification. Your order to chant 16 rounds and avoid offenses is my anchor and protection, and your thousands of sincere followers are my hope and inspiration.

I'm so slow to make progress on the path of devotion. I wonder what offenses I must have committed that *bhakti* does not sprout in my heart. I desperately need to enter deeply into the nectar of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the holy name.

You clearly have firm faith in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Your prayer on the Jaladuta, *Markine Bhagavata-dharma*, shows how essential the *Bhāgavatam* is to your mission. Clearly your hope for us is that we can be awakened in all respects by carefully reading your books and chanting the holy name. *Bhāgavatam* itself says [in verse 1.1.2],

This beautiful *Bhāgavatam*, compiled by the great sage Vyasadeva [in his maturity], is sufficient in itself for God realization. What is the need of any other scripture? As soon as one attentively and submissively hears the message of the *Bhāgavatam*, by this culture of knowledge the Supreme Lord is established within his heart.

And you, who are the personification of transcendental knowledge and devotion to Kṛṣṇa, conclude your poem with heartbreaking humility:

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

On your divine appearance day, I pray that you give this fallen servant a drop of faith to attain the treasure of the name of Kṛṣṇa. Please let me truly understand your message, and please give me the strength and intelligence to share it.

Your aspiring servant,

Baḍa Haridās Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my worthless obeisances to the dust of your lotus feet. O Śrīla Prabhupāda! O father of my soul! You came to answer our cry! You gave us Kṛṣṇa!

You have gracefully bestowed upon me the *mahā-mantra* which is like divine magic. This mantra is like the constant heartbeat of the whole universe. It transcends the limits of this planet and transports us to the realm of Kṛṣṇa where anxiety does not exist.

You opened my eyes to the divine world from where you came and are trying to lead me on the path which leads to attaining the goal of life.

The love with which you flooded my heart has given a meaning to my life.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, O master! you enlightened my dark existence with your brilliant words that still echo in my ears.

Oh Jagad-guru of my heart! you always stressed in your instructions that human life has a purpose. You gave us the chance to obtain this knowledge and realize the truth.

Truth gives bliss to Mother Earth, but it is extremely hard to find. Only Kṛṣṇa will bestow the quality of Truth to those who desire to serve Him.

You explained that we are spirit souls and have the power to overcome material suffering. You have planted the sprout of trust in the garden of my uncultured heart.

I am eternally grateful to you for having plowed and softened the hard and dry terrain of my heart.

Like Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura said: "O my master! When will I be benedicted with your mercy and finally be successful in my life? I am so fallen that I have no strength or intelligence. Kindly Take my soul and make me like you."

Your most insignificant servant,

Narmadā Devī Dāsī

O Prabhupāda, brilliant moon in the firmament of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s glorious disciples, I offer you obeisances again and again and again.

1

You are like the Ganges water, emanating from the lotus feet of the Lord, which cleanses the mind, removes the sins of countless births, and brings joy. Unlike Gaṅgā Devī, whose flow is limited to a single continent on earth, you spread unmatched mercy everywhere, fulfilling the astonishing prediction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

O Prabhupāda, brilliant moon in the firmament of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s glorious disciples, I offer you obeisances again and again and again.

2

You left Vṛndāvana to take the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* around the world, and you returned to Vraja to enter into Kṛṣṇa’s *līlā* after bringing thousands of sincere chanters to the *dhāmas*. One of your godbrothers, while visiting Māyāpur during a Gaura-pūrṇimā festival that you presided over, on seeing hundreds of Westerners with *tilaka* and *japa mālā* in Vaiṣṇava dress sincerely serving, chanting, and dancing, exclaimed, “Inconceivable. Inconceivable. He has done the inconceivable!”

O Prabhupāda, brilliant moon in the firmament of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s glorious disciples, I offer you obeisances again and again and again.

3

You illuminated the black night of Kali by spreading the immortal sweet nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s holy names. Like Prabhu Nityānanda, you boldly called out everywhere, “Please chant! Please chant!” You are very dear to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the celebrated *ācāryas* who resurrected Gauḍīya Vaishnavism from disrepute and misunderstanding. Kindly place your lotus feet in my heart and take me forever into your service at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma. I have no other desire.

O Prabhupāda, brilliant moon in the firmament of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s glorious disciples, I fall at your feet again and again and again.

4

O topmost swan of transcendentalists who are worshipable by the demigods and realized saints, taking the order of your guru on your head, you blessed the most fallen with entry into Śrīla Rūpa gosvāmī’s unparalleled *rāga-mārga* for the price of sincerely chanting Kṛṣṇa’s names, and you invested us with your unprecedented faith in Nāma Prabhu and devotion to guru. Nityānanda Rāma endowed you with His personal potency, inspiring you as a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* extraordinaire to give the highest treasure to the lowest people.

O Prabhupāda, brilliant moon in the firmament of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s glorious disciples, I offer you obeisances again and again and again.

5

At night, you tirelessly picked the ripened fruit of the *amala-purāṇa*. Handing it to us with great care, you made us drink the sweet nectar over and over to cure the jaundice of our material existence. When you saw that Gaura-Nitāi Deities awaited you in places you had never before visited – served by sincere souls in *mleccha* lands who were changed by your books – you cried in ecstasy. You are my *prana*, my life force; you are the very life of my life. I’m drying up in the fire of separation from you. Without your mercy I cannot go on.

O Prabhupāda, brilliant moon in the firmament of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s glorious disciples, again and again and again I offer obeisances at your lotus feet.

6

The ocean of nescience is infested with the dangerous *timinḡila* fish of desires for enjoyment (*karma*), desires for material perfections (*yoga*), desires to renounce the world and merge into Oneness (*jñāna*), the denial of the self, the world, and the Lord (*śūnyavāda*). With ease you destroyed all these monsters who were ready to swallow us and placed us in the boat of the lotus feet of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa to take us across the treacherous ocean. We live only by your mercy.

O Prabhupāda, brilliant moon in the firmament of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s glorious disciples, I fall flat at your lotus feet again and again and again.

7

Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā Devī’s astonished expressions exclaim the glories of the *gopīs*’ unmatched love for *svayam-bhagavān* Kiśora Kṛṣṇa, the charming prince of Vṛndāvana. Those with *adhikāra* could understand how you broadcast this confidential truth through elaborate Rathayātrā festivals, enticing thousands to pull the ropes and take *prasāda*, thus giving them *bhakti-sukṛti*. On the ratha, you took your seat at Subhadrā’s lotus feet, surrounded by hundreds of wildly chanting disciples, and triumphantly followed the Lord of the Universe down Fifth Avenue in the same city where you sometimes went hungry ten years earlier, having arrived as a pauper of pocket but not of heart.

O Prabhupāda, brilliant moon in the firmament of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s glorious disciples, I offer you obeisances again and again and again.

8

You introduced us to our Friend, Maintainer, and Protector and filled us with hope and confidence that we could do the impossible and achieve our ideal in this life. Bolstered by you, as we walk through the inevitable acid tests and suffering in this world, we repeatedly take shelter of your *vāñī* and the association of devotees you created. Holding tight to the holy names, we constantly remember the import of the verses *tat 'te nukampām* and *yasyāham anugṛhṇāmi*. After returning to the *rāsa* dance, Kṛṣṇa told the *gopīs*, “Some people think I wish to create calamities for My devotees. These complaints bring Me great sorrow.” May I fully trust; may my vision be clear and steady.

O Prabhupāda, brilliant moon in the firmament of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s glorious disciples, I fall again and again and again at your lotus feet.

9

Your powerful eyes locked onto mine and said, *I am your old friend*. In the next second, you showed me the eternal future and forever derailed my ill-fated trajectory. Your penetrating gaze has become the indestructible adhesive that binds us together. Such is the power

of even a fraction of a second of your glance. O Prabhupāda, when will you again cast your glance on me?

O Prabhupāda! O Prabhupāda, my friend, my master! You are the brilliant moon in the firmament of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's glorious disciples, I fall again and again and again at your lotus feet.

Your servant,

Prāṇadā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful obeisances. All glories to you!

Another year has passed, and by Kṛṣṇa's mercy we have located a total of 831 of your 4,750 disciples and they are participating in discussions regarding your teachings in our Facebook group entitled "Śrīla Prabhupāda's Disciples, My Godbrothers & Godsisters". I have asked all of them a few times to write their *Vyāsa-pūjā* homage to you. It is our great fortune to be able to write words of love to you, and even greater fortune to be a living example of that love by assisting you in your mission.

Although this reunion *saṅga* of your original disciples may be unknown to most of your GBC leaders, I am sure you value it greatly. If you were here physically with us today, you might ask me how to contact this and that disciple so that you could speak to them or write to them. In our *Prabhupāda Līlā VII*, you said " Lord Caitanya is God. He can spread this Movement all over the world in one second without the help of anyone, if He likes. I am simply a servant of God. I require so much assistance to help me spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. If someone renders even some small service to help me, I am eternally indebted to him (or her). You have rendered so much assistance to me, how could I reject you?"

Please help me to increase my appreciation for all of your pioneering disciples that helped you to establish your ISKCON mission. Many need help, have been forgotten and are neglected. Please help me to locate what is left of the 4750 that you initiated so that I may be of some service to them in any way that you desire.

I do not remember the source of this story, but I read once that a disciple asked you where you were going next to serve, and you said you were "going to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the hellish planets".

I beg you to keep me as your servant, birth after birth, wherever you may be. I cannot live without your guidance and association. Please help me to recognize this in the hearts of your followers.

Your aspiring servant,

Gaura Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

Recently I was reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Canto 12 Chapter 6, “Mahārāja Parikṣit Passes Away”. After hearing the entire *Bhāgavatam* from Sukadeva Goswami, Mahārāja Parksit expresses his appreciation and gratitude in the following verse:

*nāty-adbhutam aham manye
mahatām acyutātmanām
ajñeṣu tāpa-tapteṣu
bhūteṣu yad anugrahaḥ*

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.6.3)

“I do not consider it at all amazing that great souls such as yourself, whose minds are always absorbed in the infallible Personality of Godhead, show mercy to the foolish conditioned souls, tormented as we are by the problems of life”.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as described in this verse, you are that great soul who has mercifully come to give us relief from the suffering of material existence. Just as Sukadeva Goswami spoke *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to Mahārāja Parikṣit you have given us conditioned souls transcendental knowledge in order to deliver us from the sufferings of materialistic life. By your lectures, your books, the chanting of the holy names, Deity worship, book distribution, *prasāda*, devotee association, your movement, and so much more, you have given us everything we need to achieve perfect realization of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person, and be with Him again.

You are that great person that can deliver the entire universe, and change the course of history by changing this godless civilization of Kali-yuga to a civilization guided by saintly pure devotees. You are empowered to change this Age of Quarrel and Hypocrisy into a Golden Age of Enlightenment and pure spiritual bliss. In the course of history only the greatest personalities can change the course of human events. You are one of those greatest of personalities. We can already see the changes taking place. Many people are not only giving up eating meat, but also giving up any dairy products to protest the abuse of cows. And, a devotee has seriously entered the race for president of the US!

After practicing for so many years, (or at least it seems that way), I'm beginning to realize a small bit of what you have given us; the *Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu*, or the nectarean ocean of the mellows of devotional service. Kṛṣṇa is the most beautiful, all-attractive Lord, and the reservoir of all pleasure, and you are giving us an opportunity to relish that pleasure and happiness. Seeing our fallen suffering condition, you wanted to make us happy again in our original spiritual position.

I recently had a dream that I was in a room with you, and we were going to stay in that room overnight. There was a bed there that you went to sleep on. I also had a bed that was at the foot of your bed. I was lying down on that bed, and all of a sudden, I realized that your feet were resting on my body. I had a beautiful *darśana* of your wonderful lotus feet. I then thought that now is my chance to massage your lotus feet. I looked at your face to see if there was any indication whether you would mind if I did that, but it looked like you were sleeping, I decided that I would go ahead and do it. At that moment my sleep broke. I felt blessed that your feet had touched my body, but I was disappointed that I could not massage them, even if in a dream. Afterwards I realized that I could serve your lotus feet in the best way, by serving your mission. That would be a better way to serve your lotus feet than by massaging them. Currently my wife and I are engaged in your "family business" distributing your books. We feel fortunate to be able to serve your mission in that way. I pray that I can continue to serve your lotus feet by serving your mission in whatever way that is necessary. Please forgive me for my offenses, and please continue to give me shelter under your divine lotus feet. I fall down at your lotus feet and beg to always be your servant.

Aspiring to be your servant,

Cakri Dāsa
Dallas, USA

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to you.

Had you not come to the West to preach the *sañkīrtana* process of chanting Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy names, we would be bereft and left to wander aimlessly, in the material world of birth and death. You "hatched a plan" (your words), to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness by transcendental book distribution. Your books are the most relishable, and enlightening books on the planet! There is no comparison anywhere. And that, in and of itself, is a great understatement.

Somehow or other, although I am extremely unqualified, you have kindly allowed me to be an instrument to distribute your books. I can only hope and pray that the people that have received those books will read them, and become as fortunate and hopeful as you have made me. I owe my very life to you. And that is not an exaggeration. You have given us everything we need to attain God consciousness, and self-realization in this dark and troubling Age of Kali-yuga.

Your kindness, compassion, and love for all living entities is legendary. You warned us about 'Prabhupāda says' stories, but I want to repeat this one because it seemed so in line with Your Divine Grace's compassion. I was at a zoo and was observing a lion in a cage. The devotee next to me told me that your disciples once took you to a zoo. You saw the animals cramped up in cages, and you commented that these animals were meant to roam free, but now they are all being kept confined. You said this with tears rolling down your cheeks.

Thank you for the unlimited compassion you have shown this wretched, lowly soul. It is said that the disciple can never repay the spiritual master. I pray that lifetime after lifetime, I may be engaged in your service, a pure and most dear devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Thank you for bringing me into the fold of the association of all your very sincere disciples. May I never stray, but come closer and closer to following the instructions that you have given me.

You are without a doubt, a great, modern-day Messiah, who can deliver the entire planet from the cruel meshes of birth and death. Thank you for the facility for experiencing the bliss of *kīrtana*, beautiful temples with gorgeous Deities, and transcendental delicious food, in the form of Lord Kṛṣṇa's *prasāda*!

Happy appearance day, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your hopeful, aspiring servant,

Drumila Dāsa

Hari Chakra 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 and always remembered Śrīla Prabhupāda:

From this sacred place in Māyāpur, where we meet thousands and thousands of devotees from around the world celebrating the great festival of Gaura Purnima 2019, I want to tell you that I had a beautiful vision:

Dear Lord, your great dream to gather all the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the world, in this holy place, to sing the glories of Lord Gaurāṅga and Nityānanda, has been fulfilled!

Today, after 50 years of His blessed appearance on this Planet, we can see how you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, with your determined work, enthusiasm, patience and faith in your beloved spiritual master Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Goswami Mahārāja, achieved this and many other goals.

Here is the great spiritual City, with its imposing planetarium, an example for the whole world! I can only admit that although I would like to follow your blessed steps, I feel that it is impossible, since I have neither the purity, nor the sanctity, nor the necessary forces, to achieve it.

Please let me lie in *daṇḍavats* and embrace your divine lotus feet, and with tears of love, recognize your marvelous work, which in thousands of years will never be surpassed by anyone else.

Your everlasting servant,

Hari Chakra Dāsa

Bhaja Govinda Devī Dāsī

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to your uncompromising service to your beloved guru, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, to save us from a hellish condition you came.

Offering us a path to redemption by the chanting of the holy name.

Many years have passed; many of your servants are gone from our sight.

We strive on with steadfast hope and determination to weed out offenses and avoid the influence of *māyā*. You are here to help us fight.

I am begging for your mercy to keep me close and never take for granted what you have given.

Begging to remain your humble servant,

Bhaja Govinda Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my obeisances at your lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, each year it becomes more difficult to be away from your transcendental association, and I ask your forgiveness for my many shortcomings as your disciple.

I'm eternally grateful for the Kṛṣṇa consciousness that you have given to me. The holy names, devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, devotee association, *kīrtanas*, *harināmas*, your transcendental perfect books, *mahā-prasāda*, Deity worship and book distribution.

All because you bothered to come to the West to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to people who were in modes of mostly passion and ignorance.

Whatever good qualities I have developed are only due to Your Divine Grace, as I have no good qualities. Whatever intelligence I have in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is only due to your causeless mercy.

Whatever good things that have transpired in my life since I came to you as your eternal disciple are only due to your mercy upon me! Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Thank you for my wonderful godbrothers and godsisters. Thank you for your grand-disciples' association!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you came to Philadelphia Temple in July 1975 to rescue me and other godbrothers and godsisters. I am eternally grateful for your mercy to me and us. I pray for my godbrothers and godsisters outside, I ask you bless them all now, as its not been an easy journey in Kṛṣṇa consciousness without you.

Many thanks are not enough to pay the eternal debt. Even a billion thanks would not be enough!

It's said a person's actions speak louder than words. I tried to serve you my best while I was in your institution and circumstances beyond my control put me outside in 1987. Nevertheless I've always tried to serve you and practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I hope I can for the remainder of my life in some way become a helper to your preaching Mission in ISKCON. This is my firm desire and only by your blessings can this happen. Please forgive my multiple offenses to you and your devotees. Since you passed from our vision I have seen your instructions about "I am in my

books” become a reality for those in and out of ISKCON who take that seriously.

On each day, I am concerned for the future of ISKCON, and I am at your lotus feet as a disciple who asks your help you restore it. I am concerned your transcendental books and ISKCON remain as you gave them to us.

By Lord Kṛṣṇa’s mercy and arrangement, I was sent to Russia. I live here, and still I am trying to be a devotee and your disciple. I am grateful for the association of your grand-disciples, the wonderful Russian devotees, and I ask your blessings to serve them.

I also ask you to bless all the Russian devotees who struggle with obstacles and problems from opposition and sometimes with the material energy here in Russia. Please bless them to study your books and follow your instructions on Kṛṣṇa conscious standards and practices as you wanted us to follow in your ISKCON Movement.

All glories to my eternal father and spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Thank you for everything in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Your fallen disciple,

Jaya Mādhava Dāsa
Moscow, Russia

Hare Kṛṣṇa,

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda,

The mission which Śrī Kṛṣṇa entrusted Śrīla Prabhupāda with is so grandiose and magnificent, that it remains impossible for us to pay back to them the gift they gave to us with infinite divine grace.

We can only try to give such a gift back, by donating it to others, because it belongs already to them since eternity. The picture of the truth you pointed out, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is so complete, as Śrī Kṛṣṇa is complete, *purṇam*. You donated us Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is also unique, as Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Unique.

The only goal of life is to make known the knowledge about Śrī Kṛṣṇa which Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave to you, and you distributed to us.

I know that you are still present with us as Śrī Kṛṣṇa is also present with, advising and helping us to maintain the same way and the same devotional style you taught us. Only such methods can be successful, in the planes of the Supreme Lord.

Your humble servant,

Vaibhava Dāsa

Jaygurudeva Dāsa

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

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

I offer my humble obeisances to Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa Parivrājakācārya 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, having fully taken shelter at the Lord's lotus feet.

I offer my prostrated obeisances to Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, the dearmost servant of His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda. He is spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the Westernised capitalist world, soundly defeating atheists, *māyāvādīs*, who claim that God does not have a form, and the adherents of the atheist doctrine that everything is ultimately void.

Abrahamic religions

Failed to confront and defeat atheism

Which currently dominates most discourses in our
secular democracies

Be it in the media

Or at universities.

The line of demarcation between religion and science

Has been drawn since more than two centuries

Science is the religion of evolution

Sharing the belief in an unknown cause

While Abrahamic religions share the belief in an unknown creator

It is belief against belief, after all.

The science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness

On the other hand

Has nothing to do with religious belief

It is based on the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa in His *Bhagavad-gītā*

The science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness
Does not profess mental speculation
Nor does it preach dogma, man-made doctrines or some magic
It teaches what the Supreme Personality of Godhead
Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva and Devakī, the
Darling of Vraja
Taught trillions of years ago to Lord Brahma
Who taught it to the President of the Sun Planet, Vivasvān
Who taught it to Ikṣvāku and then to the Manus, the Progenitors
Of uncountable generations of women and men.

For this and many other reasons
Kṛṣṇa consciousness
Will prevail against atheism and flourish –
for the next ten thousand years!

Thanks to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda,
For it is you who has single-handedly
Delivered Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the world
In order to defeat the rule of demonic science and ruthless atheism
In all aspects of human civilization
You delivered Kṛṣṇa consciousness in a most selfless way
Acting strictly on the order of your Guru Mahārāja
The evangelical angel of the gospel of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu
The Great Savior from the East

Your insignificant servant,

Jayagurudeva Dāsa

My dear Gurudeva, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your merciful lotus feet.

All glories to Śrī Gaurasundara and Śrī Nityānanda Rāma!

It is 2019, and Kali is showing her powers. The chaotic atmosphere of the world-countries led by unqualified leaders keep the ruled citizens in a constant state of anxiety. More than ever your teachings enter our ears as a soothing balm, cooling and nourishing our intelligence.

The constant enthusiasm needed to happily maintain our *sādhana* feels more like a struggle to perform a great feat. When the modes of material nature wring our subtle body dry we have learned from you to keep chanting and find shelter in the words of knowledge from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Gītā*. Although the weight of the mental body can weigh quite heavily on us, we are able to connect to the transcendental realm like magic through chanting, prayer, and service. We then feel that all is well as we find peace among chaos.

Śrī Caitanya's mercy coming through the holy names of Hare Kṛṣṇa and Rāma has such potency that it can break through the stone surrounding our hearts and turn that stone to dust. Once again our hearts can function to experience love, compassion, sympathy, and empathy—all the qualities that help so very much to serve the purpose of your mission: "Take the holy names to every town and village!"

As we age and notice the effects of time on our material bodies, our appreciation of you deepens. At the advanced age of 70 years old, you started your voyage to every town and village. The world appeared small as you circled it many times within 12 years, fulfilling Śrī Caitanya's desire. As time ticks away I pray to always feel inspired under the shelter of your lotus feet, practicing devotional service, so one day, desire to serve our sweet Lord will sprout spontaneously within me.

The spiritual world descriptions given by you with seasons that change according to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's desire are amazing! Creepers, rocks and rivers are conscious beings! Even musical notes are individual personalities! How fantastic that the dust is conscious and has a unique relationship with the most attractive supreme truth Śrī Nandanandana, and Śrī Rādhā's expansions create variety for His pleasure! There is no anxiety in the spiritual world, only pure ecstatic

love! That pure love imbued by its own nature only increases with every exchange!

Thank you my dear Śrīla Prabhupāda for opening my eyes to this reality of transcendence. I am forever indebted to you for pulling me into your boat of steady passage through the material ocean.

I pray today that my intelligence and heart stay focused on your guidance and direction.

I pray today to serve those who serve your mission.

I pray today for humility and appreciation of your shelter.

Thank you, Gurudeva, you are my life and soul!

In gratitude,

Your servant,

Jaya Gaurī Devī Dāsī

Please accept my humble obeisances, all glories to you Śrīla Prabhupāda, my eternal spiritual master and Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the installation of your beloved Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Londonīśvara, the most beautiful Deities who have so kindly come and bestowed Their mercy on London by your invitation. Now they are situated in Soho Street Temple and continue to shower Their unlimited mercy.

I am eternally grateful that by your grace I was able to find the real purpose to this life. Having searched everywhere, the *devatā* situated in my heart directed me to you, the greatest spiritual master of this Age, my search was over. The clear revelation of being different from this body came simply by opening your *Bhagavad-gītā*. From there it was a simple matter to surrender to you and in so doing discover the real truth that is being hidden.

Your ISKCON movement is ever expanding, and more and more souls are finding the transcendent nectar from within your books.

Devotees are regularly carrying the *mahā-mantra* on *saṅkīrtana*.

The onslaught of *Māyā* is ever present, and it is only your endeavour of giving this unlimited mercy to the fallen souls of this Age that is spearheading the *saṅkīrtana* movement.

The purifying effect of your books and the holy names is booting Kali, and yet there is still so much to do.

Establishing Varṇāśrama still seems a long way off, but as you have said to do this, it will happen.

I can see there is no other shelter than this *saṅkīrtana* movement. You have carried the line of *ācāryas* to this grey place, and it is by your great mercy we are able to function in a sane manner.

I bow to you again and again and again.

What would I have done were you not to have come and picked us up, allowing me a place at your feet.

Please forgive me for my offences and allow me the continued shelter of your divine lotus feet.

You are the most perfect representative of the Lord.

Your eternal servant,

Ātmātma Dāsa

In Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, we read of devotees of different Deities. Lord Caitanya prayed to Kṛṣṇa, *ayi nanda tanuja kiṅkaram*, but Venkaṭa Bhaṭṭa, for example, was attached to Lord Nārāyaṇa. There are also the examples of the esteemed Rām bhaktas, Murāri Gupta and Anupama, and so on. This variegation of *iṣṭa devatās*, personal Deities, does not contradict the principle of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the *summum bonum*, the one and only source of all that be. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa promises a special relationship with His pure devotee:

“But those who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditating on My transcendental form – to them I carry what they lack, and I preserve what they have.”

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.22)

Despite his exclusive devotion to Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted even Lord Jesus Christ as *śaktyāveśa avatāra*, because Christ preached that, “there is spiritual kingdom, there is God, and I have come to reclaim you to back to Godhead, back to home.” (Lecture on *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Madhya, 20.367–384, New York, December, 31, 1966)

By aiming for exclusive devotion for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I assume that the love for Christ my early guides endeavored to imbibe in me is preserved and in fact enhanced. As Prabhupāda’s disciple, I better understand and obey the *Bible*, not killing animals for example, the criterion Śrīla Prabhupāda expected of true Christians.

On the other hand, material motivation leads to idol worship. To obtain heavenly delights, worshipers of surrogate gods achieve only repeated birth and death, when returning to earth after their pious credit is exhausted, as Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā* 9.20–21. Worse yet are those who imagine a Deity whose worship is a means to self-deification. Pure devotion is free from these tinges of selfish gratification.

Recently, I spoke to high school religion students in the north of Sweden (the northernmost country Śrīla Prabhupāda personally visited). There, I explained that the *iṣṭa devatā* concept is misunderstood as Hindu polytheism/pantheism. The teacher asked me respectfully if I had my own Deity. I answered that there is a

secret: In the *Padma Purāṇa*, Lord Śiva tells Pārvatī:

tadīyanam samarcanam, “O Devī, of all forms of worship, Viṣṇu worship is the highest. But higher than that is the worship of (*tadīya*) all the things belonging to Viṣṇu.”

I told the teacher and students that I worship my spiritual master. Lord Caitanya instructed Sanātana Goswami that Tulasī, *Bhāgavatam*, Vaiṣṇavas and Mathurā are worshipable Deities:

“*Tadīya* means the Tulasī leaves, the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, the birthplace of Kṛṣṇa (Mathurā), and the Vedic literature *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Kṛṣṇa is very eager to see His devotee serve Tulasī, Vaiṣṇavas, Mathurā and *Bhāgavatam*.”

(*Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Madhya 22.125).

Śrīla Prabhupāda must be honored as my Deity; Prabhupāda introduced me to the worship of Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa, as well as all the “*tadīyas*”.

The conclusion is that exclusive worship of Kṛṣṇa does not preclude the worship of His most intimate servant, Śrīla Prabhupāda. As Śrī Kavi Yogendra confirms:

“Therefore, an intelligent person should engage unflinchingly in the unalloyed devotional service of the Lord, under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, whom he should accept as his worshipable deity and as his very life and soul.”

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.37)

Praying I may always remember Śrīla Prabhupāda, and quote him without difficulty,

Your servant,

Yogindra Dāsa
ISKCON Almvik farm, Sweden

This year, 2019, marks 50 years since Śrīla Prabhupāda first came to England. Together with the assistance of his early dedicated disciples, he established ISKCON's first Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Temple, the much-loved Bury Place in the capital city, London, installing Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Londonīśvara.

His disciples met him at the airport with a grand reception – ecstatically chanting the *mahā-mantra*, dancing in joy to have their beloved spiritual father finally making his appearance at Heathrow Airport.

Devotees had arranged a press conference, and Śrīla Prabhupāda fearlessly and boldly spoke his message. “I have come to teach you what you have forgotten,” he authoritatively told the eager journalists. Soon after, he was whisked away in a white Rolls Royce to the estate of the famous Beatle, John Lennon, who had kindly invited devotees to stay at his Tittenhurst Estate. Devotees had prepared a room for Śrīla Prabhupāda on the second floor of the servants quarters, and here Śrīla Prabhupāda gave audience to John Lennon, his wife Yoko Ono and George Harrison – who later donated the famous Bhaktivedānta Manor to the devotees.

In his usual indomitable manner, Śrīla Prabhupāda explained the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, quoting from the *Bhagavad-gītā* to these young, famous, influential stars.

*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas,
tad tad evetaro janaḥ*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 3.21)

“Whatever action a great man performs, common men follow. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues.”

He suggested that these young leaders try to understand this philosophy, and if they took up the teachings, surely there would be a revolution in consciousness throughout the world.

And we have seen that revolution in consciousness gradually affecting the whole world. Just as Lord Chaitanya Mahāprabhu had predicted that the holy names of Kṛṣṇa would be heard in every town and village. Thanks to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda – for you taking up the mission of your own spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta

Sarasvatī Ṭhākura – taking his teachings as your life and soul.

Not settling for a devotional life of piety in Vṛndāvana, you could so easily have stayed there and perfected your life in serving and worshipping Kṛṣṇa. But out of your great compassion and desire to serve and please your Guru Mahārāja, you single-handedly brought the message of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to America, then England, then the whole world.

This last year I have been listening to many of the wonderful heartfelt memories recorded by your disciples. One female devotee had met and interviewed many people who had met you in those early days in Vṛndāvana, before you came to the West. They talked of you Śrīla Prabhupāda as a deeply spiritual devotee, fixed in devotion, but weeping and begging for the mercy of Rūpa Goswami, of Advaita Acharya. Considering yourself to be fallen and unqualified to do so, you begged for their mercy so you could serve your spiritual master. Such humility, yet with such strength and conviction you boldly spoke the message of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, a message that had never been received before...especially in the West.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have been the ambassador to the West, ushering in the Golden Age within Kali-yuga. It is still early days – just over 50 years on, but it is enthralling to imagine that all over the world people are now dedicated to chanting the *mahā-mantra* – in their private meditation and through congregational chanting – *saṅkīrtana*.

The transcendental literatures that you so carefully and painstakingly made available for everyone are creating a revolution in the world, raising the consciousness. When we go out on street *saṅkīrtana* we feel uplifted, as though we are no longer in or of this world, but rather in the dancing party of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu! This gift you have so kindly given us.

Thank you for your kindness and your mercy,
Thank you for your tender loving care.
It's so good to know that you are with us.
It's so good to know you are there.

Each sunrise and each sunset
Reminds us of your hand
You smiling down upon us
Helps us to understand

Nothing is without your Lord
Each simple breathe we take
Your guidance and your presence
With every move we make.

Thank you for your kindness and your mercy
Thank you for your tender loving care.

Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Jagad guru,
Saviour of the world,
Kindly continue to bestow your causeless mercy on us. Keep us
ever close to your lotus feet, and bless us so that we may be useful
instruments in your guiding hands, now and forevermore.

Your foolish and fallen daughter,

Jānakī Devī Dāsī
ISKCON Leicester

Punyatama Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet on this auspicious day of your appearance in this world.

I have just read the last ten years of my offerings to you. There are no limits to what can be said to Your Divine Grace in appreciation of your association on this journey of life.

You stepped off the Jaladuta – a spiritual warrior with the *mahā-mantra* and your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatams* and all the residents of your books. And today, 52 years later, the preaching has spread to all seven continents with 592 Rathayātrās performed last year by your global family of ISKCON.

The distribution of your books is increasing rapidly. So much *prasāda* is being distributed in so many temples like so much Jamunā *jal* put in all bodies of water, purifying so many souls.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. I often wonder how such a huge mission is possible. Some devotees doubt that the mission to bestow benedictions upon all means all. The material world is just a cloud in the spiritual sky and can be completely liberated in the blink of Kṛṣṇa's eye.

I pray daily for the completion of your mission, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and pray to serve that mission until it's complete and this current material world is empty.

If your mercy can awaken me, then there is hope for all.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your eternal servant, birth after birth,

Punyatama Dāsa

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most unworthy obeisance again and again, but also let this obeisance blossom anew and more profoundly with each offering. As the years pass, I do appreciate you more and more. That, and only that, I dare say, may be my one qualification in this life and in any others that follow.

Today, I am inspired by the words of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who writes about a divine interaction between Jīva Goswāmī and Nityānanda Prabhu. The words are reproduced in the Ṭhākura's *Navadvīpa-dhāma Māhātmya*,

*sei-kāle gaura more kahilā vacana
ohe 'jīva' kara tumi śāstra adhyayana (41)*

*adhyayana samāpiyā navadvīpe cala
nityānanda-śrī-caraṇe pāibe sakala (42)*

“At that time Śrī Gaura instructed me, ‘O Jīva, study the holy scriptures. When you have finished, go to Śrī Navadvīpa, where you will receive everything at the lotus feet of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.’ ”

Śrī Jīva took Mahāprabhu's instruction seriously, and so should I. The teaching of this verse encapsulates all that I have learned from you in nutshell form: In other words, the verse has general application. Śrī Nityānanda is representative of Guru Tattva, and Navadvīpa of a superlative spiritual environment. While Mahāprabhu undoubtedly instructed Jīva in terms of these specifics, I, too, must surrender to a bona fide preceptor — Your Divine Grace — and live in a holy land, or make my home and surroundings holy, just as Navadvīpa is holy. You were clear on how I — and everyone else — must do this, and so I will not burden you with more pleonastic words. Please allow me to follow Śrī Jīva's example and to thereby really have *darśana* of you by living according to your teachings.

Your aspiring servant,
Dāsānudāsa Satyarāja 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,

On this very auspicious day of your divine appearance, I bow down at your lotus feet and submit some humble words as offering. You have given us, in fact to the entire world, the gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which includes many other gifts that would help us progress on this spiritual path leading to eternal blissful existence. On this day, I particularly think of your specific gift introducing us to writings and songs of great saints and *ācāryas* of our *sampradāya*.

These songs carry special spiritual potency within them because they summarize the essence of Vedic scriptures and provide them in the form of relishable “juices”. Anyone who gets interested in them, understands and remembers them would be blessed with love of Godhead.

If you had not come, we would not have known about such great personalities like Sri Sarvabhauma Bhaṭṭacharya, the six Goswamis of Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Srinivasa Ācārya, Śrīla Krishnadāsa Kavirāja, Śrīla Govinda dāsa Kavirāja, Śrīla Locana dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Vrindavan dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Even to think of these great personalities is a great benediction for us.

I sing the *Śrī Guruvāstakam* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura daily, I recently reflected a bit more on the message of this song which glorifies a genuine spiritual master who is immersed in the love of Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa. Now I wonder if Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī knew that in future Your Divine Grace would appear to demonstrate in person the nature and activities of a genuine spiritual master, as Śrīla Ṭhākura portrayed in this *aṣṭakam*.

The spiritual master is an ocean of auspicious qualities, including compassion, outpouring of which puts out the “forest fire of conditional life of repeated birth and death, by delivering souls all over the world.”

—*You assured us on several occasions that just by following your simple instructions, the devotees would, upon leaving this material world, will go back home back to Godhead.*

The spiritual master chants the holy names of Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu and dances in ecstasy. He plays various musical instruments while singing, and relishes the mellows of pure devotion within his mind, which causes quivering in his body, joyful horripilation and tears flow from his eyes like waves.

— *Many devotees had noted several instances, in different places, manifestation of such symptoms even when Your Divine Grace tried to control them.*

The spiritual master is engaged in the temple worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Deities (Śrī Vighraha). He trains and engages his disciples also in such worship. Following the example of the spiritual master, they also dress the Deities in beautiful clothes and ornaments, clean the temple and perform other aspects of worship.

— *Many visitors, even on their first visit admire the gorgeous decoration of the Deities, the clean, peaceful environment with spiritual vibrations, nice, tasty prasāda, etc. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to state your ISKCON has set the standard for Deity worship in all its aspects around the world.*

The spiritual master offers four kinds of delicious food in the temple worship. When he sees that the devotees are satisfied by eating the remnants of the offering, *bhagavat-prasāda*, he is also satisfied.

— *Śrīla Prabhupāda, you introduced to your early disciples the understanding that the Lord is a person, “The Supreme Person”, who also relishes food items offered with love. Your senior disciples in turn trained others in this process of devotional service. Now all over the world, ISKCON temples, preaching centres, and Govinda's restaurants operated by the*

devotees are recognized for quality, tasteful and nourishing food items.

The spiritual master is always eager to hear and chant the unlimited glories of Śrī Śrī Rādhikā and Mādhava, Their conjugal pastimes, qualities, forms and names. The spiritual master always aspires to relish these.

— Your Divine Grace didn't want to exhibit your internal meditation in this regard. Yet there were instances whereby Your Divine Grace became fully absorbed within while chanting the song "Jaya Rādhā Mādhava" and became oblivious to the external world.

The spiritual master is very dear because he is expert in assisting the *gopīs*, who at different times make different tasteful arrangements for the perfection of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's conjugal loving affairs in the groves of Vṛndāvana.

— You gave instructions very precisely how each painting done by your eager disciples should depict anything about Vṛndāvana, Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa, and various sceneries related to them. Thus you provided to people in general the "windows" to the spiritual realm of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. These transcendental pictures adorn the walls of ISKCON temples all over, in your books, and even occasionally in the public environment.

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 the bona fide representative of Śrī Hari.

— The devotees know this fact, since the very term "The servitor Godhead", an appellation to the spiritual master, is given by Your Divine Grace. Śrīla Prabhupāda, out of causeless mercy the Supreme Lord brought me to your shelter. The fact is I am still attached to the body and to the material enjoyment. The commonly used modern phrase "Fake it till you make it" certainly depicts my situation. I do hope to "make it" as a serious and sincere disciple. I know I am spiritually weak and cannot "make it" on my own without your mercy. You have given me the association of wonderful devotees and the opportunities to serve you by serving them. Please keep me

on your leash and don't let me go astray.

*Gurudeva! Kṛpā bindu diyā, koro' ei dāse, tṛṇāpekḥā ati hīna
sakala sahane, bolo diyā koro' nija māne spṛhā hīna*

“Gurudeva, give to this servant just one drop of mercy. I am lower than a blade of grass. Give me all help. Give me strength. Let me be as you are, without desires or aspirations.”

Your worthless humble servant,

Guruprasad Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

There is no limit in the number of ways you can be praised as the complexity and depth of your actions and teachings are boundless, so how can I ever know you?

From the commencement of my mundane sojourn, my heart was wrapped in a see-through covering. Like glass stopping the outside from touching and interacting with what lies within. If one looked a heart was clearly perceived, yet it cruelly coveted and selfishly exploited. Wanton promiscuity pervaded every desire with no concern for others, just conceitedly guided by profit and pleasure. Even though it was the goal, happiness eluded every action. Unexpectedly, by unfamiliar circumstance you appeared in my field of action, and although sinless and saintly in character, unwantedly the egotistical values and attitudes that had for eons strong-armed me forward were still relied upon to extract and capitalize for my personal benefit, even from you.

I strove to obtain your personal association every time the opportunity arose. Although my attempts were awkwardly executed and selfishly motivated I felt fortunate, especially when I sat in front of you in private on one occasion. Yet despite these fortunate moments, and my ardent desire, I never felt as though I had your personal association. I had heard so much about you, yet you existed beyond my reach.

In contrast, just a moment with others and I had them pegged; out of arrogance and self-importance I knew all I needed or wanted to know about them. But you were different, my mundane mind couldn't begin to plan a way to win your personal intimacy. How could I have been so close, and yet, so far? I helped clean your room, fetch water, deliver your freshly cleaned *dhotī* and *kūrtā*, I even handed you *guru dakṣiṇā* in private. Yet, it seemed like I never once touched you. I was comparable to a droplet of water rolling across a lotus leaf never affecting its surface. There are many reasons why, but essentially you weren't of this mundane world, you never aspired for profit, adoration or distinction, however, this did not stop me trying.

In Melbourne, and in India, you compassionately evaded my grasp at each attempt. As a *bhakta* I thought that getting the spiritual master's attention was how to advance in transcendental

understanding, and oh . . . how much I craved that notice. Misguided by materialistic conditioning I believed I needed to gain your personal recognition and personal association. Possessing a high opinion of my ability and worth I selfishly attempted to capture you for myself by focused attentive looks during class and *guru pūjā*, or by placing myself in prime locations when you walked from your private quarters, the temple room and your car, or on morning walks. Despite my ardent desire to be close to you, you were like the end of a rainbow, one may think they know where it can be found, yet its very nature keeps it constantly out of reach. Although I recognized my mundane conditioning kept you out of reach, still it didn't stop me trying. I was convinced that personal association with you was how I would become perfect and how I could please you, once I made myself known.

My illusion was to think that your *vapu* was the goal. It took time, but I finally learnt that your *vapu* was a temporary manifestation of your ultimate truth. All along you instructed that your *vāñī* was more important. Your *vāñī* is the true manifestation of who you really are. You are undoubtedly the embodiment of your spiritual master's instructions, and the pure expression of the mind and heart of all preceptors in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava line going back to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. It is all you are made of, it is who you ultimately are. You took to heart each and every teaching of your beloved Guru Mahārāja as your life and soul and are non-different from those instructions. Ultimately, this truth is the only way to intimately know you.

It was because of mundane sentimentality and habitual selfishness that I thought I had to have your recognition and acceptance if I was to progress in spiritual life, however it soon became apparent that you could only be known, and I could only find satisfaction in my relationship with you, by filling my mind and heart with your instructions. There was no other way!

How wonderfully strange and profoundly mystical spiritual life is, the complete opposite of material life, I can only really know you by following your instructions and not by personal association, while the greatest ecstasy is achieved by being in separation from you not by being in personal contact. I use to think I was so unfortunate because I wasn't like the *sannyāsīs* that appeared to be constantly by your side getting your personal care, or your servants that offered personal bodily service travelling with you from one

place to another.

Yet, today I warmly look back on those earlier times feeling unrepayable gratitude and appreciation for the loving kindness you displayed towards me, thankful that you knew what was best for me when I did not, as I chased after my material concept of spiritual association. You taught me that the sopiness I displayed would not help me advance in spiritual life. Any ordinary man would have taken advantage of my naive neophyte displays of affection, yet your greatness is revealed in how you remained detached and aloof, not prone to exploit my weaknesses. This mood of yours only attracted my heart even more as you realigned my misguided attitudes shifting me towards the path I should have been following; taking your instructions as my life and soul.

You never compromised in your instructions teaching that *vāṇī* surpassed *vapu* every time. This was achieved with each of your disciples in slightly different ways depending on their need. Sometimes this was understood immediately, and those disciples immersed themselves in their service, while other times this was accomplished by severe rebuking words. With others you repeatedly distanced yourself from close association giving them one new mission after another, and still others by love and affection. Each of the many methods for spiritual course alignment you employed were dependent on the sincerity and nature of the disciple, but each executed out of loving kindness.

I can testify to the power of such course realignment as a dose was once given to me by a *sannyāsī* after following him around Māyāpur for too long. I innocently wanted to catch each and every word he spoke, but the *sannyāsī* had my advancement at heart, loudly booming out for hundreds to hear, “Why Are You Following Me, Go And Do Something”. I was stunned motionless for some moments then soon realised those words were tailor-made for me by you via your representative, sent to knock away at my false ego. Following your instructions gave me that understanding. Intensely humbled they triggered me to regress within causing me for the rest of my life to contemplate and seek out the dirt within my own heart first. I questioned my motives for each action performed or thought that penetrated my mind. I went back to the basics of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, re-building a stronger foundation for my thoughts and actions. During my restructuring process I came out an altered individual, more serious about spiritual life, convinced that *vāṇī*

eclipsed *vapu*. The *sannyāsī* could have allowed me to follow along, but he understood that mundane sentimentality would be my ruin.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I will never be capable of understanding even one of your wonderful qualities or pastimes, what to speak of knowing you or the depth of your awe-inspiring nature. The mundane reality I was trained to conceive of, which caused me to pigeonhole everything and everyone into neat little boxes restricted me. The transcendental reality is actually stranger and much more complex than I could ever have imagined, yet you freely revealed the truth of my spiritual nature and my eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. You opened my consciousness up to the wonderful nature and pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. You have awakened me to this exalted reality giving glimpses, permitting me to perceive this wonderful world that you permanently reside within and that awaits me.

Although I may never understand the unfathomable complexities of your nature, I am never without you, you are always present in my mind, and your instructions fill me with your presence in the sweetest ways. My mind's eye is always with you, and my heart empathises with your desires. I am never alone while I follow your instructions. However, having said this I know deep within my heart that if I had the opportunity to gain your *vapu* right this moment I would follow you all day long never leaving, but perhaps hiding behind corners so you couldn't see or rebuke me. I pray for full faith in your instructions forever.

Your eternally grateful servant,

Pauruṣa Dāsa

My dearest Father Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I bow down at your soft lotus feet again and again. You built a house the whole world could live in, and with a drop of divine affection, invited all *jīvas* to live there happily. You distributed the beautiful *mahā-mantra* to put out the burning fire here.

Due to the fundamental illusion of false identification, all souls continue in a beginningless sojourn with no help or guidance. We suffer incredibly without knowing how to get help.

Being the best friend of the whole universe, and knowing the anguish of His tiny parts and parcels, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa sent you, His beloved, to rescue us. You brought *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. You are still here in those books!

You created an undefeatable *yantra* of chanting, dancing, serving, feasting, and helping one another to live in consciousness of our loving Lord and His associates. *Sādhu-saṅga* is the rarest medicine, yet you made it ample. Even the most unqualified, can enter into that transcendental wave by approaching with a spirit of service and surrender.

Now so many years have passed. I feel extreme separation. Circumstances have changed. Most of us do not live within the fold of your 24-hour Lakṣmaṇa-rekhā now. We live outside, maintain jobs, and try to practice as much as we can. But every moment, I still depend on your mercy.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda! In any future birth I must take, please accept me as an applicant for your service again. All sincerity and goodness lie within your mercy. Please give me a drop so I can enter into the 24-hour service bliss of devotional service.

I pledge my future to your feet. Please also utilize me for the rest of this birth, though I may be lacking. By your grace only, I could do any service to assist you in pleasing Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Prabhu.

I know the holy name of Kṛṣṇa will dance on the tongue of those who serve with faith and love. That is the wealth I would like to aspire for birth after birth. One day I hope to serve the Divine Couple under your grace.

Your dependent daughter,

Tāmrā Devī Dāsī

Dear 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*

Your transcendental gifts to the world are numerous – the holy name, your translations of the Vaiṣṇava *granthas*, the Deities in the temples, and your disciples. One gift that has especially affected me this year is your gift of making the holy *dhāmas* accessible to all of us. For many years, I had been unable to take advantage of the visiting Vṛndāvana. My exile may have been self-imposed due to my own shortcomings or immaturity, but I think it was mainly due to the weight of my *dhāma aparādhas* during my previous visits in the distant past that had put what seemed like a permanent block to my again entering the *dhāma*.

This year, somehow or other, by your infinite mercy you saw it fit that I again be given the chance to enter your beloved Vṛndāvana. With great happiness I was able to again sit at your lotus feet in your Samādhi Mandir, I was again able to lay prostrate before Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, Rādhā-Śyāmasundara and Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi. I was again able to bathe in your deep mood of surrender to Guru and Kṛṣṇa in your personal rooms at Rādhā Dāmodara Mandir.

I remember how years ago you had requested that devotees should make the annual pilgrimage to the *dhāmas* to be purified and strengthened so that when back in their respective preaching fields, they could face the forces of *Māyā* with renewed vigor and commitment. Now I see clearly what you meant by this instruction since my desire and resolve to practice spiritual life more seriously and sincerely has been kindled just by the short time in the *dhāma*. I would like to be able to go every year to be at your lotus feet in Vṛndāvana, and I pray today that you continue to show me your mercy so that I can make this a reality.

I beg to remain your eternal servant.

Āṅkotha Dāsa

For Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Whatever your order
Forever I comply
Through all my lives
You're by my side
This relationship eternal
No one can take away
No matter what they think
No matter what they say
Your mercy unending
Showers down
Like torrents of rain
From the rain cloud
Extinguishing the fire and pain
And entrance I gain
To that plane of existence
So near, yet so far away
As brilliant as the sun
As clear as day
Pastimes eternal
Dancing and chanting the names
Old age, sickness and death no more
Your continual mercy I implore
For one and all
This deaf, dumb and blind fool
As the lowest is first
I come cursed in hunger and thirst
You planted the seed
Now let there be greed

Vaikuᅇᅇᅇᅇ Mūrti Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

All glories to you and your loving heart.

I have known so many of your devoted disciples. Just beholding the beautiful paintings of your exalted self, painted by Guᅇamayī Devī Dāsī and Mukuᅇᅇᅇᅇ Mālā Dāsa have been so inspiring for me. And Locana Dāsa, your very own sculptor, has lovingly placed your *mūrti* in temples throughout the world.

Thank you for staying with me through all the years. I am so grateful for my spiritual family, with you as our spiritual father.

Your servant,

Vaikuᅇᅇᅇᅇ Mūrti

Tattva Darśinī Devī Dāsī

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

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

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

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

Remembering you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is not sentimental, but is the essence of our existence. We remember you not only by reading your books, but the whole day and every day as we serve your mission.

It is you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who gave us Kṛṣṇa, so therefore we cannot think of Kṛṣṇa without thinking of you first. Service to the bona fide guru is personal and unlimited. Every devotee has their own relationship with the guru.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were against slaughterhouses, free sex, contraception, abortions, women’s liberation and homosexuality. In the early days of ISKCON, when devotees complained that you were preaching to strong and attacking, your reply was that a preacher must not be sentimental and should be attacking. Many could not accept your message, but those who did remained in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and dedicated themselves to the society.

You elevated people to spiritual life, convinced them and gave them the experience of the Absolute Truth; you were fearless. You always stressed that these are not your personal opinions, but simply repeating what Kṛṣṇa said. Just like the postman, he delivers the mail, as it is; he doesn’t take out or put in. We should not therefore, implement things now that were are not implemented when you were present on this earth.

Śrīla Prabhupāda would be pleased when followers would not compromise in their preaching because his guru said that compromising means cheating.

Some have knowledge of the highest truth, but are reluctant to

give it to others, because they want to appear to be nice for their own sense gratification, and would be liked by many who do not want to hear the truth. A preacher would not be rejected, insulted or physically assaulted if he refuses to compromise with the truth.

Some are against devotees who are preaching strongly, but devotees must speak out strongly to save the foolish rascals and to save the whole world. The stronger preacher always cultivates love for Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were straightforward in your preaching and could present controversial points expertly so that others would not be offended. You once told a mātājī that she should preach aggressively for Kṛṣṇa. But why is it that some devotees keep saying that we cannot preach the way we used to in the early days of ISKCON? They say that people will leave, but Śrīla Prabhupāda, if we have faith in you and Kṛṣṇa, all the impossible becomes possible. The serious ones would definitely stay in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I may not always implement your instructions fully due to my weakness but I never doubt them, because I know you can never be wrong. In a Letter to Sankarsana Prabhu in December 1972, you said:

“The highest development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness understanding will be when we are able to give any and everyone the truth but in such a manner that they will respond in a positive way.”

Your most fallen and humble disciple,

Tattva Darśinī Devī Dāsī

Matsya Avatar Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I pray to you to accept my reverent regards to your lotus feet.

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

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

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

Despite the prayers I offered to God, my intense religious studies and my urge to make contact with Him, all my efforts were manifestly useless until you provided me with your first *darśana*. I feel, I know that you moved my life in a new, decisive direction: You enlightened, inspired, educated, accompanied and supported me to date, through your living example of a person in love with God, flagrant expression of pure *bhakti*.

Before I met you, trying to find myself, I unknowingly began to look for God and while looking for Him I met you. And on that blessed morning at the end of August 1976, you redirected me to my path on the search for God. At that time God was already on my consciousness, but vaguely. You rekindled my memories and renewed my desire to serve Him, by placing Him in the centre of the flower garden of my heart.

I feel, I know that you have been my spiritual catalyst, my transformer. I feel, I know that your blessings turned into reality what I had been craving for years, or for countless lives. I feel, I know that thanks to you, I could authentically ask myself questions on matters such as Being, Knowing and Will, but only after meeting you I really could. You reactivated those consciousness functions of mine which have guided me to realize my loving relationship with God. This realization can be only launched through the ineffable grace of a pure devotee of His who, out of sympathy and mercy, is dedicated to restore suspended loving relationships between wandering souls and Him, the supreme eternal Friend.

Since I was a kid, I felt a sort of attraction to God, but in my teens it decreased in intensity until it became a rare sentiment of absence which I did not succeed to focus properly, if not by blind abstractions. Nevertheless, I sensed that my remembrance of God, as vague and mutable as it was, predated any others

of mine or, better, I perceived it as a sublime reminiscence which was lying in the heart of my deepest memory. The reminiscence seemed to me like an object fallen in deep, troubled waters, that can be only vaguely in sight as an undefined form, at least until the storm has passed over. Like in such dreams, although one has lost sight of the images, the content crosses the darkest edge and lights consciousness, not as it were a clear visual stocked in memory, but rather being perceived as a permanent breathing drops of sweetness, originating from an unknown inner source.

I feel, I know that I could remember my relationship with God only vaguely, confusingly, remotely. It was like I had lost a treasure, whose foggy imprint I still retained in my deepest memory. Seeking and finding it had become the aims of my life, and you greatly stimulated me to research that treasure. I feel, I know thanks to you, that the four passions of the human soul – desire, joy, fear and sorrow – have been degenerated as a result of conditionings, and that the embraces of true pleasure are authentic only when firmly connected both to Your Divine Grace and the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. All the rest is but a mirror game, whose reflections are as deceptive as persuasive *Māyā's* whispers. Thanks to you only, I have been able to avoid such spells until now. Mere recollection of memory are now passions such as lust, power, richness, success, honors and awards, powerful friends, mundane loves. In so far as they are disconnected from the relationship with God, they cause burning and lasting suffering by confining the soul to the conditioning world. You taught me to recognize and avoid them and consequently I began to live authentically.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I request you to accept my reverent regards to your lotus feet and to continue inspiring me to offer to you, from the heart of my heart, any desire, any thought, any single word, any act.

*Your affectionate devoted servant,
Entirely depending on Your Divine Grace's inspiration,*

Matsya Avatar Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to your lotus feet.

Thank you for the wealth of transcendental knowledge you have brought to us. The more I know, the more I understand how little I know, since this is a realm of learning that has no end. I have understood that what I know is not mine. I can only actually begin to understand transcendental knowledge by giving all credit to the line of teachers that have passed it on. Similarly, I can only hold on to it by passing it on to others who are hungry for this help.

I understand that “it’s not *what* you know, but *who* you know”. Entrance into the land of love is by invitation only. The secret of love can only be given by a person who has it. This knowledge employs so many thoughts and words that are only of significance because of the Supreme Person they describe – the qualities and feelings that come from and are reflected to the most excellent, beautiful Friend whose beauty and excellence forever expand on and on. It is the *Living Person* behind the information that we are getting to know through study, ritual, and so many activities.

My disease is that for so long I have perceived existence in a very impersonal way. I have perceived my life as just happening in a vacuum, in a sterile, lonely condition coming from nowhere in particular and going to nowhere in particular, dry and lonely, callous and unfeeling. I must still have remnants of this in my psyche, otherwise, I would be remembering Lord Kṛṣṇa at every moment. Without divine intervention, how could I hope to be cured?

Now, because of your mercy, due to some unimaginable good fortune, I am receiving benediction from the family of love, an unbroken chain of souls who are overflowing with gratitude and compassion. They are filled with sweet, rich, nectarian affection for Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Śrī Gaura Nityānanda, and all of Their parts and parcels.

How can I serve you? Only by filling up with your mercy till I am overflowing, and then doing what comes naturally – passing it on.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the answer to my prayers of many lifetimes. You are my real treasure and my only real solution. Thank you for kindly helping me to wake up to my real life.

Your aspiring servant,

Gopīmātā Devī Dāsī

Beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I fall with utmost humility at your divine lotus feet, begging that by your infinite mercy this wretched soul may someday soon become your true follower in order to please you! If I can become an honest and sincere pure devotee in this lifetime then I can claim to be your true follower. Evidence and proof of such a change of heart will be how much I am able to reflect your love for guru and Gaurāṅga to all I meet.

This mood of pleasing guru as one's life and soul is the ideal you set by your internal daily meditation and tireless global outreach work. Your Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Goswami Mahārāja also exemplified this pure sentiment to his Gurudeva Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī.

In this regard, your Guru Mahārāja wrote these most profound words which I have chosen as my meditation upon you, my dear most friend and well wisher, in this year's most holy celebration of your divine appearance. I pray this meditation on the words of your gurudeva will penetrate the steel frame around my heart!

"He used to say, "To wake up one sleeping soul, to make one conditioned soul aware of his real identity, one should be willing to give gallons of blood."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was extremely affectionate to his disciples, and if he found out any one of them was bewildered by *Māyā* he would shed tears. In confronting those who had a demoniac mentality, he was deadly like a thunderbolt. Yet in his loving relationships his heart was softer than a flower. In any of his Maths, if any of his servants had to face a difficulty due to lack of money, Śrīla Prabhupāda used to take great care to send that money as soon as he heard about it. He could not bear the thought that a devotee had to undergo hardships due to lack of money. He used to become very concerned if he heard of any devotee being ill. His affection could not be compared with that of millions of fathers and mothers.

If we were ever sad and miserable, as soon as we sat near him, all sadness went away due to the shower of his unlimited affection. Even his chastisement seemed very sweet.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda has chastised me," we would say with great pride, and considered ourselves to be very fortunate. All difficulties in our service were made worthwhile a million times over when we

could see the signs of pleasure on his affectionate lotus face. What we felt can be expressed by this verse of Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura in his book *Śaraṇāgati*:

*tomāra sevāya duḥkha haya yata, seo to' parama sukha
sevā-sukha-duḥka parama sampada, nāśaye avidyā-duḥkha*

The suffering that comes from Your service is also our supreme happiness. Both the suffering and the happiness that come from Your service are our greatest treasure, and they destroy the miseries that come from ignorance.

If we could not properly perform some service which had been ordered by Śrīla Gurudev, it would cause us great sadness. Our service to Śrīla Gurudev seemed to consist of everything: devotion, worship, meditation, realization, austerity, and sacrifice. He was most dear to Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, if we could somehow bring him some satisfaction, we considered that the highest fulfillment of our devotional practice.

If Śrīla Prabhupad went away from us for a few days, our hearts would ache in separation. We would think day and night, "When will he come back again?"

Alas! How many years have passed since he left this planet! How am I spending my days in this long separation from him? Why is my soul still living here? For the sake of what kind of happiness? Perhaps due to my offenses to the holy name and at the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupad, my heart has become hard like a thunderbolt and it does not feel any pain anymore. If I really loved him, how could I live this worthless life here? O merciful lord, please protect this fallen servant of yours. Even though I'm so fallen, so sinful, and so deviated from the path of devotional service, please pick me up and put me at the shelter of your lotus feet.

Once you did give me shelter at your lotus feet, considering me the servant of the servant of your servants. We also got the assurance that if necessary, you would come here again and again to rescue the fallen souls, like myself. O merciful Gurudev, your heart is so full of affection! Please forgive all the offenses I have committed at your lotus feet, knowingly or unknowingly. The day before you left us, I clasped your lotus feet on my chest, and you looked at me with eyes full of affection. Please remember that. I am stupid, ignorant, bereft of scriptural knowledge; I do not know what is good or bad for me. Please correct me and make me worthy of your service. Please make

me understand what my faults are and what my offenses are, so I will have the privilege of serving you. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said to Murari Gupta,

*sei bhakta dhanya, ye nā chāḍe prabhura caraṇa
sei prabhu dhanya, ye nā chāḍe nija-jana
durdaive sevaka yadi yāya anya sthāne
sei ṭhākura dhanya tāre cule dhari āne*

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 4.46–47)

Glorious is that devotee who does not give up the shelter of his Lord, and glorious is that Lord who does not abandon his servant. If by chance, a servant falls down and goes somewhere else, glorious is that master who captures him and brings him back by the hair.

You gave me the Tulsi beads so I could offenselessly take the holy name. But alas, I am still indifferent to that. My worshipable godbrothers, who are all my well-wishers, have set such examples for me by their own actions, but I was not inspired by that. I do not have the desire to take the holy name, what to speak of having love for the holy name. Have I been deprived of the mercy of the holy name due to my offenses at your lotus feet and the lotus feet of the Vaiṣṇavas? O merciful Prabhupad, please give me love for the holy name. Please inspire me. Let those lotus feet of yours, which I had the good fortune to hold to my chest and which are more cooling than millions of moons, be installed and be worshipped in my heart for all eternity. This is my only prayer to you.”

Jaya Śrīla Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī!

Jaya Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī!

Jaya our dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Submitted at your lotus feet by a wretched and insignificant indragopa,

Daiva Dāsa

*Jaya Om Vishnu-pada paramahansa parivrajakacharya ashtottara-shata
Śrī Śrīmad His Divine Grace Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Mahārāja Prabhupāda ki jay*

All glories to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who has taken shelter unto the lotus feet of the Lord, who is in the most elevated form of *sannyāsa* (*paramahansa* or transcendental swan), who travels around the earth preaching and is on the transcendental plane.

In this age of Kali-yuga you adhere to the most magnanimous incarnation of the Lord, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The mercy of the *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* Śrīla Prabhupāda, and so many pure Vaiṣṇavas, are our great fortune, and the relationship with the spiritual master always remains with us because its eternal.

The causeless mercy of the Lord is what is really worthy, so to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, you first need the mercy of the pure devotee which can attract the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Prahlada Mahārāja says nobody can understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead without going to a pure devotee. This is the way to advance in spiritual science. We must accept the words of an *ācārya*, a bona fide spiritual master who clarifies the path of spiritual advancement.

This is the secret of success. The spiritual master who is surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and has no other occupation other than the Lord is considered the best of the *paramahansas*, a true pure devotee, who strictly follows the instruction of the previous *ācārya*. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says in the song ‘Suddha-bhakata Carana Renu:’

*suddha-bhakata-caraṇa-reṇu,
bhajana-anukūla*

*bhakata-sevā, parama-siddhi,
prema-latikāra mūla*

‘The dust of the lotus feet of pure devotees, enthusiastic devotional service, and service to the pure devotees of the highest order are the roots of the creeper of devotion.’

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Madhya-līlā 7.47, Lord Caitanya went

to see Sarvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya to whom he gave permission to go to South India to see his brother Viśvarūpa whom had taken *sannyāsa*. Sarvabhauma felt overwhelmed, and taking Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s lotus feet he gave his sorrowful answer:

*bahu-janmera puṇya-phale pāinu tomāra
saṅga hena-saṅga vidhi mora karileka bhaṅga*

‘After many lifetimes due to some pious activity, I got Your association. Now providence is breaking this invaluable association.’

We are certainly very fortunate to participate in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *līlā*. Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “I will never die, I will live forever through my books”. He hasn’t left us, but is in the hearts of those who serve His mission. He is our eternal well-wisher. All we have to do is to implore his goodwill and make that the miracle of our lives. “He lives forever by his divine instructions, and his follower lives with him.” One million thanks Gurudeva, venerable Vaiṣṇava, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your eternal servant,
Rāma Svarūpa Dāsa

Rohiṇī 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*

I offer my obeisances unto the lotus feet of my divine spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who had the mercy of preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. He gave us the opportunity to serve his lotus feet and Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet – an opportunity that you can't obtain so easily in any lifetime. That's why we were so fortunate to have such an exalted personality on this planet.

The energy that was felt in every temple when Śrīla Prabhupāda was physically present was so divinely attractive that it would catch you in the Hare Kṛṣṇa world. You can still feel that energy, but from my personal experience, when Śrīla Prabhupāda was still present, that energy was felt in a very special way.

It was in that time when my husband, Ānanda Svarūpa Dāsa and I met and participated in this beautiful movement. It was experienced first by my husband, and then by me, because my husband was the one who preached to me.

With humility I give my obeisances to the lotus feet of my divine spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your eternal servant,

Rohiṇī Devī Dāsī

Uttarā Devī Dāsī

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

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

I offer my most respectful obeisances to the divine lotus feet of my beloved spiritual master A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

All glories to you Śrīla Prabhupāda! Who is a great bona fide master in the millenary chain of disciplic succession that comes from the Supreme Lord Himself.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Who was honored with the title Bhaktivedānta for your devotion and erudition and is the most prolific writer of Vedic literature.

All glories to you Śrīla Prabhupāda! Who is a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*, an incarnation empowered by Kṛṣṇa, who is *patita-pavana*, the savior of fallen souls. You are so magnanimous that you keep saving us like nothing or no one has done so far.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Beloved Gurudeva, you conquered and continue to expand within hearts all over the world. You continue to steal the hearts of everyone who knows you. That is your glory.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Whose feet resemble the petals of the most beautiful lotus flower. Please allow us to remain in a corner under the shadow of your divine feet.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Who was, is, and will be forever our eternal well-wisher.

And before my sweet spiritual master, He with a pure heart, I will eternally prostrate, placing my forehead before you.

Jay Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your eternal servant,

Uttara Devī Dāsī, sons, and grandchildren
Monterrey, Mexico

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as we assess the current state of our beloved ISKCON I must say that many things seem to be going quite well:

Book distribution increased slightly over 10% worldwide in 2018. This is due to increasing numbers of devotees dedicating their time and energy, not only toward going out to distribute your books, but finding more opportunities and venues for book distribution as well. For instance, programs such as the Motel Gītā Program have been very successful and your books are also being marketed world wide via the internet, not just in read format but in audio format. This all good, but if we desire only to please Your Divine Grace and deliver the fallen conditioned souls we can certainly do much better.

Prasāda distribution is increasing with the worldwide efforts of Food for Life, many successful and expanding *prasāda* restaurants, large festivals that attract many people, and increased outreach programs at your temples. Whereas *prasāda* distribution is on the increase we must still dedicate ourselves to increase it for your pleasure and the benefit of human society.

Kīrtana is more popular in the world than ever before and is attracting more and more people to hear, chant and dance while tasting the nectar of the holy name. With *kīrtana* so popular and widely accepted, now is the time to follow in your footsteps and increase our *Harināma* efforts more and more.

With book distribution, *prasāda* and *kīrtana* on the increase we are enabled to spread Kṛṣṇa *kathā* by preaching more and more, face-to-face to those who become attracted to this delightful process of *bhakti* with which you have blessed the entire world.

We have even discovered how to harness the power of the internet and turn it into a valuable resource for our preaching efforts.

The result of following your program of book distribution, *prasāda* distribution, Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana* and Kṛṣṇa *kathā*, is that many new

people are not only being attracted, they are becoming attached to this Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life that you have given us. Increasing numbers of qualified people are sincerely giving their lives to helping spread your ISKCON Movement. These people who are coming to ISKCON today seem to be much better candidates for spiritual advancement than we second generation devotees ever were. They do not seem to be as degraded by the modes of material energy as we were. Therefore, so many of them are making rapid advancement and are making great contributions to you and your mission. They are the heirs of and the hope for the future of ISKCON.

With so many qualified new devotees coming to join your ISKCON family, I am feeling an increasing responsibility to see that they are cared for properly. For them to increase their advancement and become empowered to inherit the leadership of your ISKCON Movement we, the leaders of your society, must see that they receive the Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy just as you so kindly delivered it to us; unalloyed, untainted, unaltered and pure.

This means that we must continue to increase our surrender to you and your mission by more and more strictly adhering to your mood and mission and avoid any outside influence or distraction from the material energy. For the newer devotees, to have full access to the resources that you have so mercifully given the world to escape the allure of *māyā*, we must do a better job of setting the proper example for them to follow. It is imperative that we take all precaution to avoid becoming infected by the illusory energy.

At a time when many of the ISKCON world leaders are seemingly divided on so many important issues we must make it our priority to see the world through your divine vision by taking guru, *sādhu* and *śāstra* as our only authority. With the increasing division that we are experiencing at present I am concerned that we are not doing a very good job of that.

Keeping the importance of unity in diversity in mind we must focus more on that which unites us. You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are our uniting factor. If we keep you in the foreground of our aspirations, decisions and activities we will succeed and we will be empowered to spread your Movement, Lord Caitanya's Movement, all over the world. To the degree that we do not keep you in our hearts, with full surrender to your mood and mission, we will simply quarrel and struggle. This is not the proper example for us to set for the third generation of ISKCON.

So, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am praying to you for your continued mercy. Please help us to become more worthy and better equipped to care for and properly train your grand-disciples by always sincerely putting you first and foremost in all that we plan, all that we decide, and all that we do. This is the proper example for us to set for the next generation. The future of your ISKCON depends on this.

Please give us your continued mercy by empowering us to enhance our unity while maintaining our diversity and removing our division. Because we are a worldwide movement we will always be diverse. If we are influenced by the material energy we will always be divided. If we keep you as the absolute center we will always be unified.

Your aspiring servant,

Jīvānanda Dāsa Vanacārī

Saṅga Ṭhākura Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

All I want, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is to serve your disciples and followers in any way I can.

Because my sense of identity swings back and forth, there seems to be some limitation to my full surrender. But I am confident that if I can chant with attention and feeling, then my misgivings and attachments will fade away, and not thwart my desire to follow you.

I very much value the association of devotees, and I hope to do my part by inspiring everyone I meet in some way.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have given us a lifetime of liberating transcendental instructions. They enable me to lift my anchor, and free me from the chains of my self-confinement.

Your qualities and pastimes move me to go deeper, and risk being uncomfortable to please you. I am very encouraged by my friends in devotional service – all sincere followers of your prescriptions.

I offer my obeisances to all the devotees everywhere, and I beg to remain in your transcendental family, as a humble servant of your servants perpetually.

Thank you very much, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your hopeful disciple,

Saṅga Ṭhākura Dāsa

Dear Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace and all the spiritual masters in *paramparā*!

You mercifully came to Paris in July 1972, at the Jardin du Luxembourg, to perform an initiation ceremony for all West-European *bhaktas*, and I was only 15 years old, attracted by the fire in that public park. Born of a practicing Christian family, I was following Lord Jesus' teachings as a Scout Guide in high school at that time.

You were calling all pious souls to join your Society and unfortunately I was just learning English and not yet ready to follow you: "If you want Fraternity, Equality simply join this movement" you told us, and "Disciple means Discipline". I had some ideas of these things, but you grabbed my soul with your piercing glance. I felt embarrassed and out of place in this *saṅga*. I thought you were all Buddhist monks celebrating around a fire. I had no idea of Vedic culture and Kṛṣṇa conscious literature, but you kindled my spiritual nature and heard the cry of my soul. Thank you for saving me.

You left so swiftly and gracefully as it started raining, and I was puzzled. I came home and went deeper in my own religious books and personal spiritual engagement. You were so focused, grave and determined. You invited us to reform our lives, question our religious beliefs and strengthen our faith. I looked for you at a Buddhist center in Paris but everything was empty, dead and even though I met some devotees at the American center and in the streets of Paris, I could not relate with their unworldly mood. Later on, I was guided to a center of Transcendental Meditation near my home and became a vegetarian. I participated in humanitarian work and studied philosophy. A friend at TM introduced me to your temple rue Lesieur, and I got immersed in *bhakti-yoga*. All that was new to me and I started connecting with Kṛṣṇa consciousness deeply. I bought your books and records and started hearing and reading at home. It's only when I was 19 years old that the law changed in France, and I could be an adult by 18, instead of 21 years old. I resigned as a primary school teacher on-training and joined the temple full time as a volunteer missionary, relishing the higher taste of devotional service in the association of your dedicated disciples in Paris.

I finally surrendered to your lotus feet in May 1977, and accepted

you as my final authority after completing the reading the first volume of your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in French, and prostrating on the landing at seeing your glance again over my shoulder as a concerned father acknowledges the coming back of his lost daughter. I started chanting with *karatālas* near your *vyāsāsana* after service and was thrilled to receive the name Krishna-kīrtana upon initiation. I took to heart your teachings and instructions and understood the authenticity of the Vedic tradition and disciplic succession. I went on traveling *sañkīrtana* with my godsisters and distributed your books heartily knowing that it was a service you appreciated very much. After sharing the scores, my leader said you gave me the blessings of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for my big results (eventually more than 100.000 big books all together in a few years). I was thus accepted as your disciple before you left this material world and you promised us that you would take us back to Godhead as long as we chanted the minimum number of 16 rounds of beads of the *mahā-mantra* Hare Kṛṣṇa on our *japa* beads daily and followed the four regulative principles of freedom. You told us that your books were the law books for the next 10,000 years and that you live in your instructions and with those who follow them.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for saving us from material entanglement and restoring us to our eternal relationship with the Supreme Lord and His beloved consort in the transcendental realm of pure devotion in the spiritual world.

Please Śrīla Prabhupāda empower me to encourage and inspire virtuous ladies to take up this amazing process, that you gave us so generously, and thus always feel your presence by my side in all situations I'm in, by the Lord's mercy.

*I beg to remain your humble servant and the servant of your
dedicated servants,*

Your Krishna-kīrtana Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my *koṭi daṇḍavat praṇāms* in the dust of your lotus feet.

In one of your lectures you stated that because the spiritual master is completely surrendered to the wishes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he or she is “perfectly capable” of caring for and guiding the disciple.

That means that you are “perfectly capable” of caring for and guiding me. . . . if I will only allow you to do so.

In a feeble attempt to surrender to your care and guidance, I beg you to grant me the privilege of assisting you as you assist the Gopīkā, Śrī Rādhā, as She serves the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā Kānta and never let me wander away from that service.

Your unwilling servant,

Mahāpurāṇa Dāsa

Kośarūpa Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

With each rising and setting of the sun, another day passes.

How have I served you?

Have I attentively called out with love and affection to Nitāi-Gaura, Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma and Rādhe-Śyām while chanting *japa*?

Have I served you and Lord Caitanya by sharing your message with those less fortunate?

Have I sacrificed my comfort and pleasure to care for others?

Have I etched out time to read from your books, hear your class and relish your singing?

Have I reflected deeply on your teachings and applied them today?

Did I remember to look for the Lord in each person's heart?

Did I offer prayers for others?

Did I sing in a prayerful mood the *mahā-mantra* and "Śikṣāṣṭaka" prayers?

Have I remembered you Śrīla Prabhupāda, remembered you are here with me, at every moment?

With the setting of the sun, I ask myself, has this day brought me closer to you?

Is my longing to be with you and serve you greater?

Are you pleased Śrīla Prabhupāda, with my humble endeavors?

More importantly, are you pleased with the condition of my heart?

When, oh when, will my heart be completely purified so I may offer you a beautiful sitting place, a golden *vyāsāsana*, decorated with fragrant flowers and brilliant jewels, within my heart?

When will my inner life and outer life be one of constant *śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam* and *smaraṇam*? When will *prema-bhakti* awaken in my heart and my gratitude flow like a river to the shelter of your lotus feet?

Your daughter and aspiring servant,

Kosarupa Devī Dāsī

Your Many Gifts

The gift of your presence on US soil
With the rest of the world to follow
Is a history great. . . His story of late
To enlighten a world gone so hollow

Know the Guru to be Myself, said the Lord,
Eleventh Canto *Bhāgavatam* (*ācārya mam . . .*);
I've appeared throughout time to teach you and all,
Many forms have I donned to beseech you: "Don't Fall!"
– Just to reach out and guide you all home!

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, when you arrived in 1965
With the phenomenon-you were bringing,
Our mom, 24, had 11 years more worth of time and miles
before we could greet you amid singing!

All in good time, our mom came alive hearing George's *My Sweet Lord*

Touched by your grace, this song from above of devotional love
reached our place, 2000 miles away (MI) from where we would meet
you.
Despite the odds, by the sheer grace of God, '76 saw us to LA to greet
you.

Your amazing grace of the color gold arrested my mind—and
touched my soul
And though you were grave, I could tell you're my friend since a
time long ago.
Dependable love poured forth from your eyes as I walked straight
into your gaze,
And as I explored, my heart realized that your purpose could guide
my ways.

And so it was for my sister and I who wanted to go to your school
Calling friends to collect our extras including new bikes that were
white and so cool

Mom felt it too so she also eschewed all that wouldn't fit into a box
And the 22 hour trip was another threshold – a fresh new chapter
unlocked!

Saint Raghunāth Dāsa says it well when of Śrī Guru's grace his
ecstasy swells:

Nāma-śreṣṭham: You have given us the holy name;

Manum api Śacī-putram: and taught us of the son of Śacī who came
(to deliver the name and teach how through serving the name we
may be delivered) . . . and oh! He Himself is known by different
holy names, Being one and the same as this Lord and divine name!
Śacī-putram is said to be the hidden incarnation, so we wouldn't have
known Him without what you gave. Jaya Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Deva!

Atra Svarūpam: Such deep secrets you revealed, including the
eternal identities of Śrī Caitanya's personal associates, like Svarūpa
Dāmodara Gosvāmī.

Rūpam tasyāgrajam: Plus the superlative Saints, Śrī Rūpa and his
elder brother the great Śrī Sanātana, hearing of whom the knots in
our hearts are undone.

Uru-purīm Māthurīm goṣṭhavātīm: You've shown us Śrī Mathurā-
Maṇḍala, within which is Śrī Vraja Dhāma; and how in this whorl
the Lord of Love plays with His cows, friends, Loves, dad and mom.

Rādhā-Kuṇḍam, Giri-varam: Deeper still, you've shown us Her
special lake and hill in this transcendental love land, which we
might otherwise miss or misunderstand. Without your mercy, we'd
offend and misjudge, being barred from above for being dull *with
our sensuous gaze of inspection*. Śrīla Prabhupāda, your guidance is
key for our reaching perfection! Thank you for teaching, for giving
us direction! May we please you somehow..

Aho! Śrī Rādhikā-Mādhavāśām: Without your grace, who could
begin to know of the divine Love of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava? You show
that THEY are the original seed of love—without your grace, whose
seed of devotion could grow?

You manifest again and again, like it was said to Uddhava back then; to teach us further from above how Mādhava-Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavān, greater than the greatest, Possessor and Controller of all, is completely controlled by pure ecstatic love, *bhakti* personified, Śrī Rādhikā. And thus as we souls start to grow in pure love, Oh! You hint of Her Service, pointing the way, saying you'll take us there, "Don't be nervous!"

Prāpto yasya pratitha KṚPAYĀ Śrī Gurum̐ tam nato 'smi:

O Śrī Gurudeva, I surrender at Your lotus feet in appreciation of the magnitude of your divine, causeless mercy. But to be honest, I must admit defeat by my own mind and general ignorance of how I'm inclined since such a long span of time! All of this you already know; kindly keep me tucked in your fold . . . correct me and please, don't let me go! Teach me to please you; through me let your glories show!

Your eternal aspiring disciple,

Kilimbā Devī Dāsī

There is so much more to say, but I'm grateful every day for these most special gifts you gave us in our own language, which we read with gratitude and wonder each day:

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam; Bhagavad-gītā; Nectar of Devotion;
Caitanya-caritāmṛita*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

All glories, all glories to Your Divine Grace. Wherever I would travel in India I often heard it said: *Aap ka guruji bahut accha hai*: “You have a wonderful spiritual master.”

But there is another reason that I universally heard your praises from the public at large. Obviously it is because only the greatest spiritual master could have saved such a worthless scoundrel as me from the horrendous fate that awaited me in the *mleccha-deśa* of Kali-yuga.

Thank you, O Śrīla Prabhupāda, for allowing me to try to represent you. My relationship with you as your humble servant has made everything in my life meaningful — since only activities that please Śrī Guru and hence the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa have any value or meaning at all. I place my head before your feet and offer *koṭi koṭi daṇḍavats*.

Please bless me to continue as your eternal servant. I wish for nothing else, but to remain...

A lowly beggar at your lotus feet,

Patita Pavana Dāsa Adhikary

THE BEST GURU

In Ayodhyā *tīrth* where Rāma ruled,
And Rāmānandīs sing both night and day;
These *bhaktas* by their penance fueled,
Blessed me with the words they'd say,
“*Aap ka guruji bahut accha hai.*”

At Kāśī by the Gaṅgā's shore,
I met a *yogi* along the way,
Singing hymns to God of ancient lore,
He said to me when I paused to pray,
“*Aap ka guruji bahut accha hai.*”

At Yamunotri in a *ṛṣi's* cave,
Beside Kalindi's tumultuous spray,
Freely blessings *sādhus* gave,
When obeisances I'd humbly pay:
“*Aap ka guruji bahut accha hai.*”

At the Western *dhāma* of Dvārakādhīś,
Where the Sun lights the shore with golden rays,
A *paṇḍita* there beside the beach,
Said, “By *guru's* grace your *dharma* stays,
“*Aap ka guruji bahut accha hai.*”

To Ujjain where Kāla's Lord does dwell,
I ventured there in the month of May,
A *brāhmaṇa* blessed me as I rang the bell,
“Your *guru's* shown you the proper way,
“*Aap ka guruji bahut accha hai.*”

In Odisha state at Puri *dhām*,
Where lives Jagannātha beside the Bay,
I met a servant of Balarāma,
Who said, “Serve the Lord and never stray,
“*Aap ka guruji bahut accha hai.*”

At Pañcavaṭī, once Daṇḍa's trees,
Now rise granite temples tall and gray,
Some pilgrims beckoned unto me,
They bade me sit and passed their tray,
"Aap ka guruji bahut accha hai."

Where rivers flood in monsoon rains,
Or the summer sun burns the sky for days,
Along scorching sands of Rajasthan,
Where horseback warriors live in clans.

On sojourns through Himalayan snow,
Or deep in jungles where tribals go,

In the *vaiśya's* mansion, or the prison cell,
In ashrams where *tapasvīs* dwell,

In halls of learning or on village roads,
I'd hear them say before I'd go,

Just like an echo along my way,
"Aap ka guruji bahut accha hai."

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my unlimited obeisances at your lotus feet.

Although I am unworthy, somehow you have accepted me as your servant. I can only fathom an inkling of your glories with this limited mind, and pray to be able to understand more. I wonder at your mother holding you in her lap as a young child and gazing at you with love: Did she have any idea of who you were and what you would accomplish? You are truly a wonder. As Śrīla Rūpa Goswami understood Lord Caitanya's *mano-'bhīṣṭam*, innermost heart's desire, you too understood your guru, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta's heart, and came to the West to fulfill Lord Chaitanya's prophecy to spread Kṛṣṇa's holy name to every town and village.

You came to America at an advanced age, practically penniless, and did the inconceivable. You had complete faith that Lord Kṛṣṇa would provide what you lacked and enable you to serve Him in this way. Did you have any idea what you would actually accomplish, or who would be attracted to your message? Lord Caitanya perfectly timed your arrival on these shores when the time was ripe and the dissatisfied youth were searching for the truth. The scene was set, and you played your part, injecting Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name everywhere you went. You did the inconceivable and turned us hippies into happies. I am amazed at what you accomplished, as well as the fact that I was born into this time and was allowed to be a small part of this mystical transformation. I was young and had no idea who you were, only that I could see that you were REAL, and spoke and walked the truth. I still can't comprehend your glories but pray to be allowed to stay in the shadow and protection of your lotus feet.

Begging for a drop of your mercy,

Rūpa Mañjarī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories unto you.

Back in the 70s, on a morning walk, I asked you a question.

I had read this verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*aho bata śva-paco 'to garīyān
yaj-jihvāgre vartate nāma tubhyam
tepus tapas te juhuvuḥ sasnur āryā
brahmānūcur nāma gr̥ṇanti ye te*

“Oh, how glorious are they whose tongues are chanting Your holy name! Even if born in the families of dog-eaters, such persons are worshipable. Persons who chant the holy name of Your Lordship must have executed all kinds of austerities and fire sacrifices and achieved all the good manners of the Āryans. To be chanting the holy name of Your Lordship, they must have bathed at holy places of pilgrimage, studied the Vedas and fulfilled everything required.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.33.7)

I asked you – since I was chanting Kṛṣṇa’s name – whether I had been living in my previous life in India to do all these things?

You were vividly amused when you heard my question, saying: “That may well be so.” Then, however, you became very stern and added, “But you should never think like that. I created your good fortune.”

And that is so.

Not only in my case, you have created good fortune in the lives of initially thousands, then hundreds of thousands, and now, even millions of people all over the world.

Seeing a huge movement set into motion with numberless devotees and huge temples being built all over the world, it becomes clear that you have saved the world, giving *divya jñān* transcendental knowledge to all who are willing to hear you:

As it says:

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

“He opens my darkened eyes and fills my heart with transcendental knowledge. He is my Lord birth after birth.”

Indeed:

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
caṣṣur unmlītaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

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

What would have come of us if you would not have come to the West to rescue the fallen souls from the fangs of *māyā*?

Before departing from planet earth, as recorded in *Brahmā-vaivarta Purāṇa* Kṛṣṇa predicted that people all over the world will come to the chanting of the holy name and that this most auspicious phase in *Kali-yuga* will last for a very long time:

“For 10,000 years of *Kali* devotees of Mine will fill the whole planet,” as Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains to Gangā Mātā (*Brahmā-vaivarta Purāṇa* 4.129.59).

Indeed, He Himself descended 4,500 years later, as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, to inaugurate this monumental change in the consciousness of humankind, predicting:

ṛthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma

“In every town and village of the world, the chanting of My name will be heard.” (*Caitanya-bhāgavata*, Antya-khaṇḍa 4.126)

Indeed, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you yourself have been an integral part of a plot conceived five thousand years ago by Kṛṣṇa Himself: In the 16th century, Locana dāsa Ṭhākura recorded a prediction made by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya:

mora senā-pati-bhakta yāibe tathāya

“My *senā-pati*—my commander-in-chief will come and spread the chanting of the holy names around the world.”

I have no words to express my gratefulness to you.

My brain is failing to count the blessings you have bestowed upon this poor soul and indeed the whole world.

On this auspicious day of your *Vyāsa-pūjā*, I fall at your feet to beg for your protection.

Please forgive my thousands of failures and deficiencies I have displayed over so many years.

Let me remain your humble servant,

Ṛthu Dāsa

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